BULLETIN

of the C B A Churches Committee

St Mark, Lincoln

Number 5 October 1976

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The Bulletin of the CBA Churches Committee appears three times a year. It is sent free of charge to Diocesan Archaeologists, and is available to others for the sum of 30p per copy, or an annual subscription of 75p.

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Published by the Council for British Archaeology, 7 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5HA

NOTES

Archaeological Potential of Redundant Churches

Section 3(4) of the Pastoral Measure 1968 states that 'Before deciding to make a recommendation that a declaration of redundancy be made in respect of any church, the (Pastoral) Committee shall also ascertain the views of the Council for the Care of Churches (now Council for Places of Worship), and shall obtain from them information about the historic and architectural qualities of that church and other churches in the area and the historic and aesthetic qualities of their contents.'

In the course of preparing such reports the Council for Places of Worship will consult the Diocesan Advisory Committee. In those dioceses where the Consultant sits as a member of the DAC this is clearly an opportunity for the Consultant to contribute an appraisal of the archaeological potential of the site and building. At present it seems that little archaeological information is being received by the CPW from DACs.

Annual Conference of DAC Members

The 23rd Annual Conference of Diocesan Advisory Committees was held at Christ Church College, Canterbury, from 7 to 10 September. After two short papers on churchyards had been read by representatives of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, a reception was held in the Crypt of the Eastbridge Hospital, where an exhbition on the care of War Graves' Cemeteries was formally opened. In the evening, members were given a tour of the Cathedral, which had been specially floodlit. On 8 September there were sessions on the repair of churches, the re-ordering and re-development of chancels, and church lighting. In the afternoon members either visited Westwell, Eastwell, Boughton Aluph, Chilham and Chartham churches or the Cathedral Stained Glass Workshop, the Cathedral Stonemason's Yard, and the Cathedral library. In the evening a reception was given by the Canterbury DAC followed by the film A Future for Our Past. On 9 September separate group discussions took place on the sale of treasure from churches, the disposal of contents of redundant churches, archdeacons' certificates, and the structure of DACs for the future. In the evening lectures were given by J Newman on SPAB: the first ten years, R Marks on Stamford, St John's: conversation of medieval stained glass, and B Clarke on the commissioning of new works of art in churches.

Changes

Exeter: Reverend Peter Beacham has been appointed as a full member of the DAC.

Gloucester: Miss Carolyn Heighway succeeds Mr Alan Hannan and has been appointed a full member of the DAC.

Salisbury: Mr Desmond Bonney now receives DAC minutes.

HOW NOT TO RECORD GRAVEYARDS?

Leslie White

The comments below were prompted by the publication of How to record graveyards by Jeremy Jones (CBA and Rescue, 1976).

1 Historical principle and the nature of the evidence

Monumental inscriptions are an original source of historical evidence. Like other historical evidence, their use for reconstruction of the past must comprise two stages: (1) accurate transcription of what is written so that it becomes available to all others, and (2) analysis of its contents in conjunction with other historical evidence. It must also be available to others in any future generation, who are entitled to express different interpretations from those who have gone before. Unless the inscription is recorded in such a way that the original can be reassembled, this basic principle is broken.

One of the three methods of recording in the archaeological booklet is illustrated by a pro-forma for Llangar churchyard. This is a confusion between the original data, that does not survive in its original form, and the subsequent analysis. Parts of the archaeological recording form seem to have been based upon it.

The finds from an archaeological excavation are nearly always representative samples of very much larger populations of these objects. The chief interest for the archaeologist lies not in the original finds but in subsequent analysis and 'synthesized description'. In contrast a monumental inscription of the 18th century has historical information that, however unimportant it may be in a national context, is almost certainly unique in that it would not be duplicated anywhere else. The interest of the average genealogist or family historian does not lie in any subsequent analysis but in the original data. An attempt to fit historical data of the second category into recording methods standardized for the first is bound to give rise to difficulties.

2 Publication and accessibility

As Jeremy Jones points out, publication of original monumental data is unlikely to prove feasible. In any case, if the DoE's Principles of Publication in Rescue Archaeology is accepted, original monumental data qualify for Level II (recording forms and notebooks) that in archaeological terms are below publication and of interest only as a basis for subsequent analysis. No genealogist would subscribe to this view.

Clearance of monuments from churchyards through private Acts of Parliament since 1964 and the Pastoral Measure since 1969 have required a copy of the inscriptions to be deposited with the Miscellaneous Section of the Registrar-General. In other words, monumental inscriptions have been classified as local records of national interest, whereas it appears from the booklet that monumental inscriptions are being re-classified by the CBA as local records of local interest. Since families have for several generations frequently moved about, the requirements of such bodies as the Society of Genealogists or Federation of Family History Societies would be for central accessibility. In the past this has been provided by libraries such as that of the Society of Genealogists. Most county record offices have as yet few copies of monumental inscriptions.

It is surprising that the CBA should expect sale of the booklet to those whose interests are disregarded by providing insufficient space on the recording form for the complete copying of inscriptions, and by restricting access of whatever is recorded to local residents.

3 The recording form

When Jones first produced his recording form it seemed to be an experimental archaeological approach to churchyard recording. It now seems that there has been a shift of emphasis to the view that the form is suitable for everyone on a national basis. This has created a new situation. Among the shortcomings of the form one might mention:

(a) Questions requiring answers of definitive reference that do not of themselves provide historical gravestone information (e.g. memorial number and letter; number of photographic negative).

(b) Endless repetition of answers that must always be the same for every gravestone in the churchyard.

(c) Needless duplication of the same answers in reply to differently numbered questions.

(d) Confusion of the original recording with subsequent analysis.

(e) Information inherently unsuitable for mathematical analysis because of chance factors that are ignored or for which no estimate of error is available.

(f) Information too superficial or inadequate to be a suitable basis for later analysis.

(g) Questions that without further definition appear unlikely to provide comparable answers from different recorders.

After sorting unsatisfactory questions out of the recording form a residue of three useful questions remains: no.8 (material, though the addition of the words 'and Geology' transfers the answers out of reach of the average recorder and into the domain of the specialist); no.9 (stone mason or undertaker); and no. 12 (technique of inscription).

The many unsatisfactory features of this questionnaire have arisen because of the objective of coding the answers by number for transfer to punch cards and ultimate use for computerization. A conflict has arisen between present recording and future analysis. The latter has been given priority at the expense in some cases of accurate and comprehensive recording.

4 Mathematical analysis

Since the introduction of statistical methods in the 1920s a number of risks have appeared:

(i) Without caution mathematical analysis can become an end in itself rather than one component in a set of tools

(ii) Failure to acknowledge that the scope of all mathematical analysis is limited by the limitations of the primary data

(iii) Omission of necessary qualifying information without which the time and effort of collection of primary data may not be justified

(iv) Replacement of estimates of error of primary data by the belief or assumption that such precautions are not necessary since computerization takes care of everything

To give an example, question no.7 of the recording form purports to deal with memorial type. Since Jones has included in Figs. 6 and 7 thirty-two different types, and on pp. 31-2 has listed fifteen, including five which do not appear in Figs. 6 and 7, at least thirty-seven types of memorial are available for consideration. Yet the questionnaire gives only four options with 'others': a reduction which is surely inadequate. The inadequacy is a result of the conflict which is inherent in reduction to numbers between recording and the needs of subsequent analysis.

The first of the options listed in question no.7 is '1 flat'. Flat stones in churchyards comprise (a) ledgers originally designed as flat stones, probably for use inside the church and thrown out in the 19th century; (b) the top slabs of altar and chest tombs; (c) fallen head-stones; (d) flat stones linking head- and foot-stones; (e) low coped stones; (f) body- and coffin-stones which the inexperienced recorder might easily describe as 'flat stones'. After adequate recording has been eliminated from question no.7 to be replaced by a box number 1-5 all that is left would seem to amount to a percentage of flat stones, most of which would not originally have been genuine flat stones.

This is not a criticism of computerization, which obviously has the potentiality of a very powerful analytical tool. But, to be valid, computerization requires careful and experienced treatment of data which does not seem to have been forthcoming in the preparation of this booklet.

5 Professional and amateur recorders

There can be no doubt that the demand for and interests of archaeologists will continue to be centred upon rescue excavation. Post-reformation monuments will continue to be looked on as outside the main stream, and moreover an activity not nearly as well established as major fringe activities such as marine or industrial archaeology. I believe that the collection of data must be based on direction of students or an attraction of amateur part-time recorders. It is stated that the purpose of the recording form is to prevent important information being left out. It might be equally valid to state that the form is so rigid in application that in allowing the recorder no scope for individuality it could well prevent important information being put in.

When an amateur takes up a hobby he considers the cost. The booklet gives the cost of recording as not likely to exceed £30 for a churchyard. This is meaningless unless the number of stones in the churchyard is stated. The 1976 Churchyards Handbook gives the cost of recording by the Jones/CBA method at 30p per stone (at 1975 prices). When the writer wrote a report on gravestones he noted that the average number of stones in the last eight churchyards he had recorded as being 380. This would give the cost per churchyard as £114. For genealogists dependant upon their own resources the cost of recording by CBA methods appears to be financially impracticable.

Since a task estimated in the editor's preface to involve perhaps as many as 20 million stones is so patently beyond the capacity of a handful of professional archaeologists, any booklet on recording must give high priority to the attraction of new recorders to the subject. It is a matter of regret that so little attention has been given to the interests of recorders in the preparation of the booklet.

(Dr White is a member of the Society of Genealogists and of the CBA Churches Committee. He wishes to make it clear that the views he has expressed above are his own; no other member of the Society of Genealogists has been consulted and the article does not represent the considered view of that Society.)

CASES

Excavations at St Mark, Lincoln

Christina Colyer

The sites of two redundant churches in the city have been made available to the Lincoln Archaeological Trust for examination prior to their redevelopment. One at St Paul-in-the-Bail in the upper town, occupies a site which was reputed as early as the 12th century to have been that of the first Christian church of Lindsey, founded by Paulinus as Bede relates. The other, St Mark, lies in the southern suburb of Wigford. Work on the former is unlikely to be completed for at least another year, but at St Mark, where total excavation of the church has been possible, investigation of the post-Roman levels is now nearing completion.

I am indebted to the Church Commissioners and Lincoln City Council for access to the site, and it is a pleasure to acknowledge my colleagues Michael Jones and Brian Gilmour, joint supervisors of the excavation, and Carol George and Jane Pickering for preparing the drawings.

The large Victorian church of St Mark, built in 1871-72 and the fourth stone church to have occupied the site, was declared redundant in 1969 and demolished in 1972, its centenary. Built by the Lincoln architect William Watkins in 13th century style, the church consisted of a high aisleless nave ending in a polygonal apse beside a tall slim tower and spire 'of original design'. At the time of its construction and at its demolition a number of Norman architectural fragments and sepulchral monuments, some pre-Conquest, were found, clues to the earlier history of the site.

The church of 1872 replaced a single-celled Georgian church built in 1786 of which a Grimm drawing and several photographs are extant. It comprised a nave only 40ft long and 20ft wide with a pentagonal apse at the eastern end and a wooden bell-cote. Its plan was recovered from Victorian robber-trenches and a patch of the floor composed of re-used medieval glazed ceramic tiles based on mortar had survived. The church was small - 'a mean little building' - described in Brooke's Survey of Antiquities of Lincoln in 1840-48 as 'having neither beauty nor antiquity to detain the stranger'.

The medieval church which preceded it was built in the Early English style of the 13th century and incorporated a large tower which had itself been added to an earlier church. For the recovery of details of this church, archaeological, documentary, and architectural information has been complementary. It underwent a number of alterations and additions during its long life and was not finally demolished until the Georgian church was built, but its tower had been blown down in a gale of 1720 when the land it had occupied was given over to graveyard. A sketch of the church appears on John Speed's map of 1610, which shows it with a large two-storeyed structure extending from its south side. This structure is referred to misleadingly by late 18th and 19th century antiquarians as a 'transept', but excavation has identified it as a large porch added in the late 15th or early 16th century. The western wall of the porch incorporated a vaulted burial chamber which housed 76 skulls and fragments of skeletons, probably those displaced when the porch was constructed.

Two other drawings of the medieval church have been traced. The earlier, by Samuel Buck dated 1724-25, shows the south elevation with Early English arcading built against the porch. The arcading here must have been repositioned and perhaps once formed part of the rood-screen. In its original form the church appears to have had a stone screen, although postholes indicate that a later replacement was of wood. The other drawing, in the Ross Collection, shows the church in a much ruined state just before it was demolished. Both portray windows of a variety of styles.

Excavation has shown that initially the 13th century church consisted of a nave of three bays, 45ft long and 20ft wide, similar dimensions to those of the church it replaced. Claarly the purpose of rebuilding (of the nave at least) was aesthetic, Gothic superseding Romanesque. The new chancel, although square-ended like its predecessor, was much elongated. Some details of the interior of the church have been recovered in spite of severe disturbances to the interior caused by the deep foundations of the Victorian tower and by burials within the nave of the Georgian church. These include the base for the pulpit built relatively late in the life of the church and the position of the screen between the nave and chancel. In the 14th century a north aisle was built, to which was added a chapel on the north side of the chancel at some time before 1423, when a burial there is recorded.

Stratified pottery, historical evidence, and the architectural form agree in assigning the date of the foundation of the Romanesque church to within the second half of the 11th century. The earliest documentary reference to St Mark's, an unusual dedication, dates to 1147, when it was included in a list of churches given to the Precentor by Bishop Alexander. The churches given to the Percentor were those which had been granted by Henry I to the Bishop in his writ of 1100-1107 and which had not yet been assigned to a particular prebend. Documentary sources show therefore that there was a church on the site by the start of the 12th century by which time the king had acquired the advowson.

Although the church was small it was constructed on massive foundations 5ft wide and 7ft deep. The nave was of similar plan, though slightly narrower than the Early English church which replaced it, and the large west tower was added during its life. The small chancel was square-ended with an exceptionally norrow chancel-arch. Some of the mortar floor of the church had remained in position and a deposit of ash, charcoal, and lead droplets has been tentatively interpreted as debris from the roof. Within the chancel two deep depressions running north-south, one just inside the chancel arch, the other against the east wall, and both certainly contemporary with the life of the church, probably mark the successive positions of the altar with a reliquary beneath. Although the stratigraphical relationship between them had been destroyed by later burials the most likely interpretation is that the depression adjacent to the chancel arch represents the original position of the altar, which was later moved to the extreme east end in accordance with a change in liturgical practice. Several interpretations are possible for the timber slot found within the nave parallel to and c. 8ft from its west wall. The most plausible explanation stratigraphically is that it represents part of the structure of a timber west gallery which required modification or demolition when the tower was added during the 12th century.

A burial ground occupied the site in the period immediately preceding the construction of the Norman church, by which many burials had been disturbed. None extended further west than the west wall of the nave. All were orientated, but two of the earliest (in the area later occupied by the nave), although unfortunately stratigraphically isolated from the Saxon structure elsewhere on the site, followed more exactly the alignment of the Roman buildings, of which some walls appear to have been upstanding and visible into at least the 10th century. A number of charcoal burials were located, the main concentration lying beneath the construction levels of the chancel and to the south. The site has produced over 30 decorated grave-covers and markers most of them attributable on stylistic grounds to the pre-Conquest period. All but one were found divorced from their original contexts, mostly re-used in 13th century buttress foundations or in the footings of the Romanesque church. Only one, a grave-marker, was upright in position in the pre-Conquest burial grouns.

Where was the church at this period? No trace survived, but it is not impossible that one had existed in the same position as the Norman church. The tan-

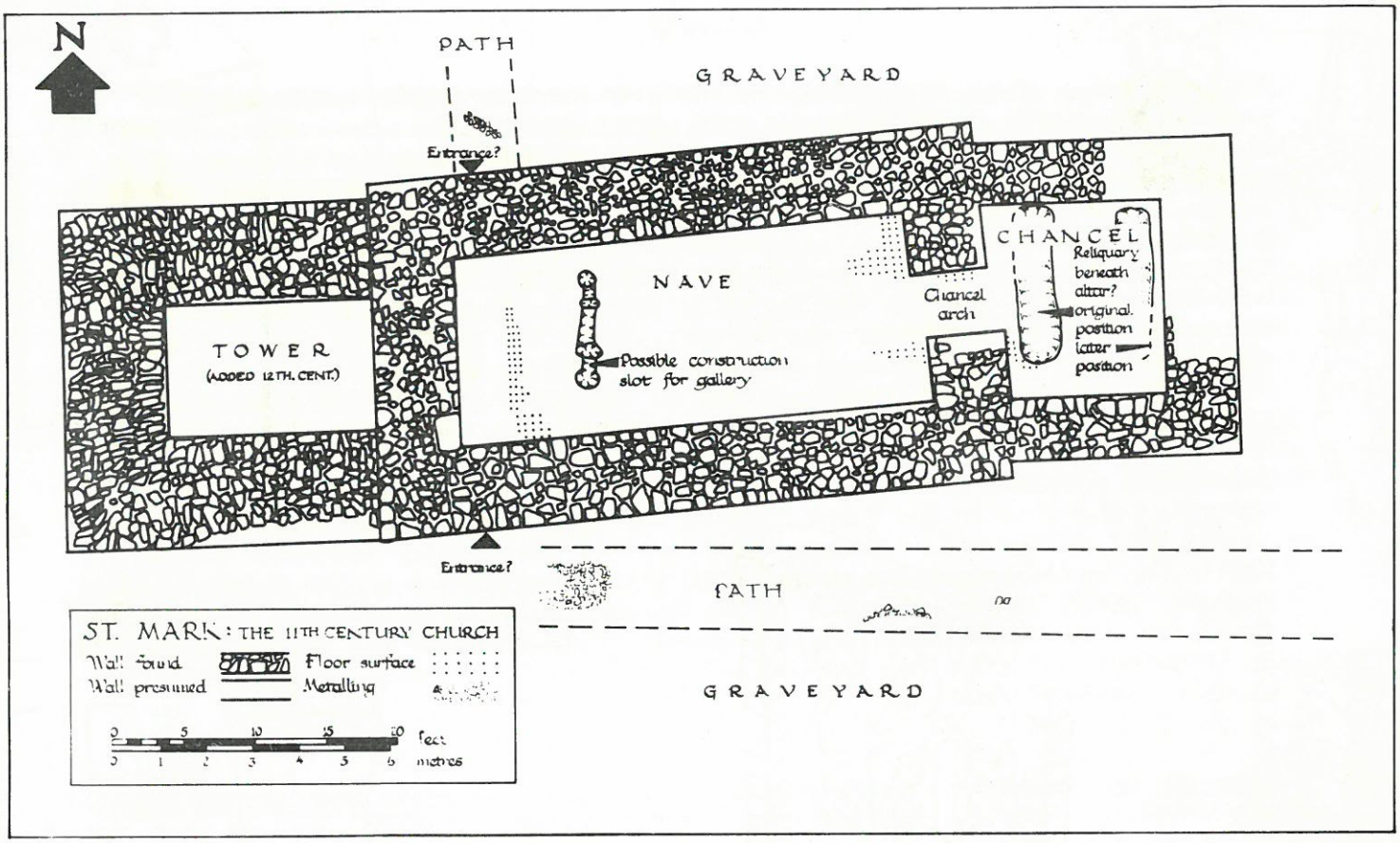

Fig. 1. St Mark, Lincoln: the 11th century church

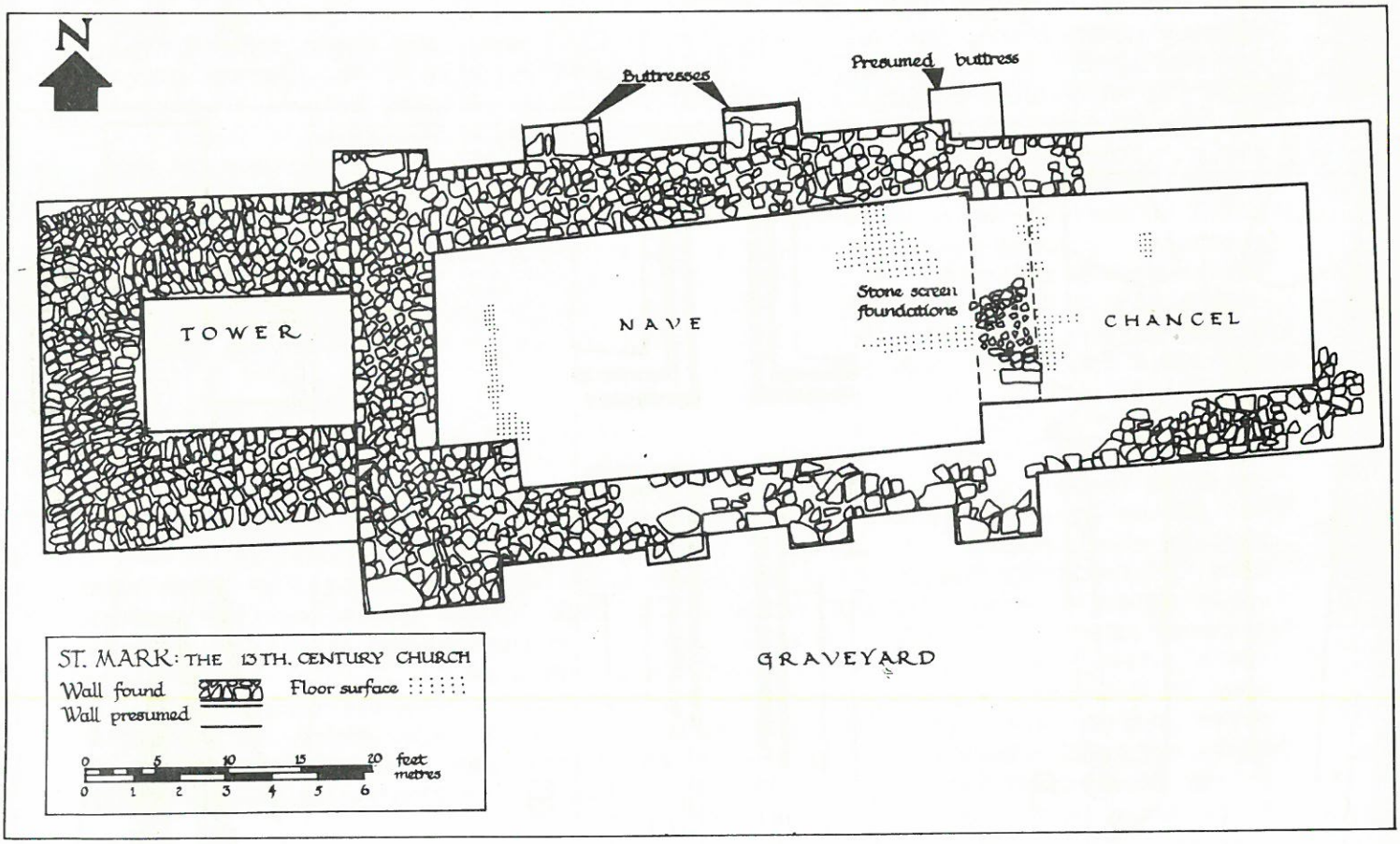

Fig. 2. St. Mark, Lincoln: the 13th century church

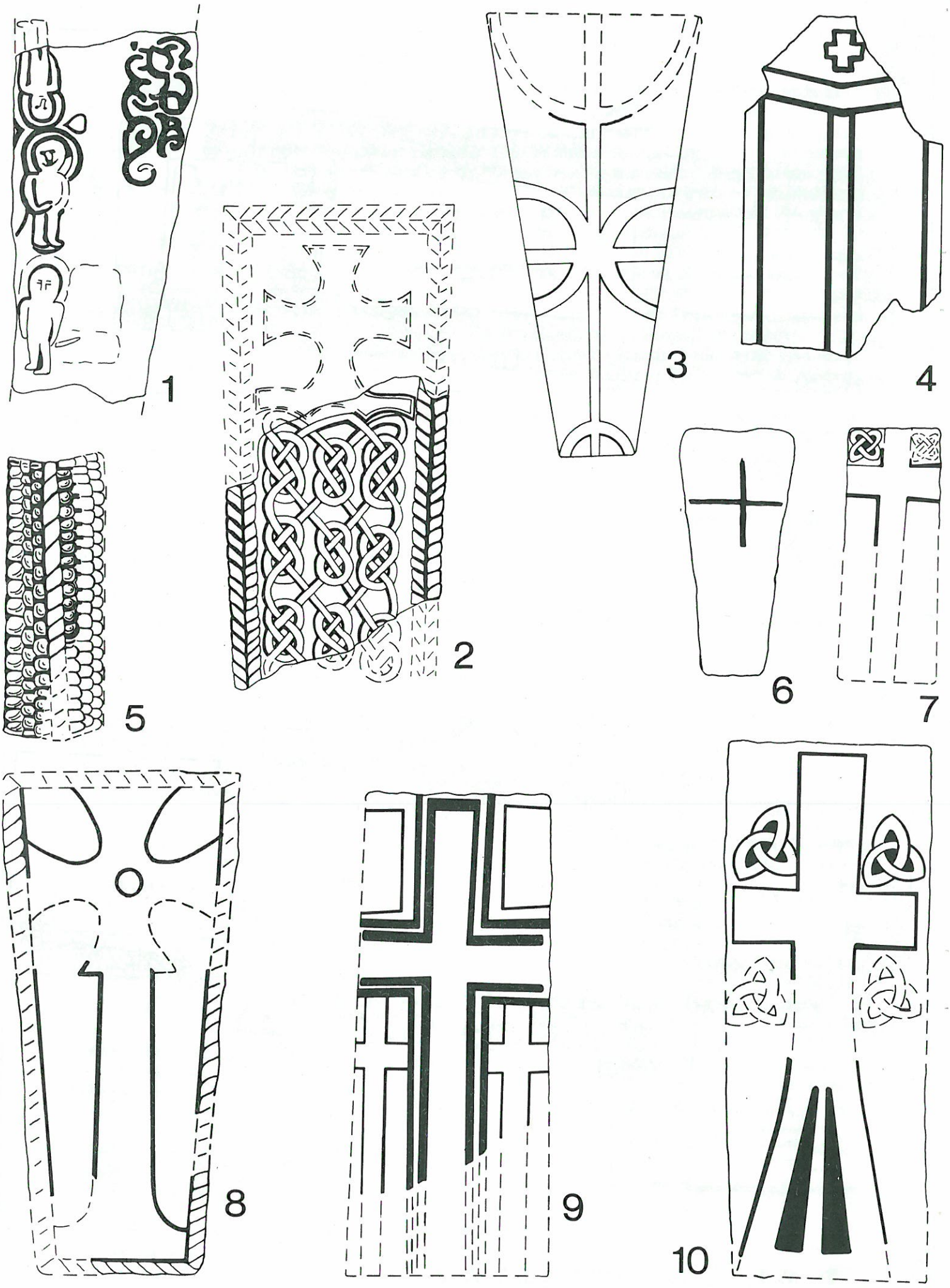

Fig. 3. St. Mark, Lincoln: pre-Conquest grave covers and markers

talizing evidence for post-Roman structures antedating the use of the site as a burial ground poses numerous problems of interpretation, and since excavation is still in progress at the time of writing (August 1976) a definite statement is premature. Nevertheless, part of the plan of a timber building on the east-west (ecceesiastical) alignment, not parallel to the Roman buildings which are perpendicular to Ermine Street, has been recovered under the burial ground to the south of the series of stone churches. In addition a possible post-Roman re-use of the latest of the Roman buildings is at present under investigation.

The church of St Mark lies in the suburb of Wigford, which by the early 12th century when the earliest relevant records survive boasted eleven churches, including two surviving examples with pre-Conquest towers (St Mary-le-Wigford and St Peter-at-Gowts). In addition the Domesday Survey provides slight evidence that the suburb was prosperous at the time of the Conquest, for a number of important persons held lands there. The excavation of this superficially unremarkable site may be typical of the development of ecclesiastical buildings in Wigford and it is undoubtedly helping to throw light on the obscure history of the suburb by providing the kind of information for which documentary sources are at best limited and at worst silent.

St Cuthbert, Ormesby

Marilyn Brown

The Parish Church of St Cuthbert lies in the old village of Ormesby, about 4 miles south of Middlesbrough in the Diocese of York and in the new County of Cleveland.

In 1974 the Diocesan Advisory Committee informed the County Archaeologist for Cleveland that the Parochial Church Council had applied for a Faculty to re-lay the floors of the nave and vestry, which were suffering from damp. Discussions took place with the Vicar and the Church Architect and permission was given for the excavation of a limited area, immediately prior to the alterations, and for observation of the reconstruction work.

Ormesby Church was enlarged and rebuilt between 1874 and 1876. It consists of chancel, nave, north aisle, tower, vestry, and north porch. It has not been possible to trace any photograph, drawing, or engraving of the building prior to this date. There is a very small ground plan giving only the line of the exterior walls on the tithe map, and a copy of a seating plan supposed to date from 1808, which shows a rectangular structure with no aisles. Whellans Directory of 1859 describes it in a few words as 'a low structure with a bell cote'.

A church and a priest at Ormesby are mentioned in the Domesday Book. A portion of a hogback with wooden shingles and two pieces of what appear to be parts of an Anglo-Viking cross shaft suggest a church on the site in the 10th century. A capital decorated with a rams-head dating from the 12th century probably supported the chancel arch. There is a piscina of the same date and two pillar bases, one round and one hexagonal, indicating an early aisle. A fine collection of medieval grave covers has been built into the south wall. The present structure above ground is entirely Victorian and some evidence for the dating of the earlier churches on the site could be drawn from the carved stones which the Victorian builders had either built into the walls or placed in the north aisle of the new church.

Because of lack of church funds, it was decided to carry out the work in two stages with the most urgent work, including the vestry floor, being carried out in May 1975. The vestry lies on the south side of the church, opposite the

north doorway. After the Victorian floor and the underlying rubble had been removed, the rubble foundation of a wall at right-angles to the south wall of the church was uncovered. A fragment of 16th century pottery was found on the surface of this structure. The foundation butted on to the wall of the church which was still continuing south at the section. It was not possible to extend the trench further without undermining the Victorian foundations. Examination of the various local newspapers for the period of the reconstruction brought to light the fact that an arch had been discovered blocked up in the south wall leading to what was presumed, then, to be a chantry chapel. No medieval documentary evidence has yet been discovered to support this view.

The foundations had been dug through for a burial. In the fill of the grave a piece of 13th century pot was found. The burial had in turn cut through an earlier and extremely fragmentary wall, on the same line as the previous one. This wall may have belonged to a south porch or some form of chapel or porticus.

In the presumably post-medieval blocking of the entrance from the church to this southern adjunct, a cross head of Anglo-Viking date was discovered. It had a central boss and crude interlace on its arm. The stone and the indifferent quality of the carving were similar to the two pieces found in Victorian times. The cross was free-armed with a plain border.

The following year sufficient money was available to permit the reconstruction of the floor of the nave and north aisle. The Archaeologist excavated an area in the nave, adjacent to the north aisle, to provide a control against which structures that were seen in the process of the excavation by the workmen could be assessed.

Beneath the Victorian floor and sub-floors the demolition level of the medieval church was discovered. Mixed with the rubble was plain window glass and a piece of window lead, together with white plaster, shell and human bone. Also in this level were three pieces of alabaster, all of which came from the edge of a plaque or monument. This may have been destroyed at an earlier date, leaving only the edges to be mingled with the material demolished in 1874.

Beneath the rubble the line of the north wall was discovered. A Victorian central heating trench ran immediately parallel on its north side, destroying any stratification there. The wall was a very solid structure of coursed ashlar blocks mortared together. The interior was also of coursed blocks levelled up by sand. It was 3ft wide. The wall had been cut at the time of the reconstruction for the insertion of a pillar base. There was no indication of a medieval predecessor for this pillar and it is probable that there was no north aisle in the medieval period. On the inner side of the wall a channel covered with stone slabs was discovered. One side of each slab rested on a rebate which was an integral part of the north wall, while the other side rested on a row of stones. The bottom of the channel was hard and flat, and apart from a drift of dust, it was still hollow. The channel was 20cm wide and 15cm deep.

During the course of the watching brief this same channel was detected just inside the south wall. Here the channel consisted of two rows of upright stones and a capstone. It was not tied into a wall. The implication is that there was a south aisle. The channel also ran across the front of the nave. It was unfortunate that the Victorian foundation for the reading desk cut through one junction and the pulpit through another, so that it was not possible to see the structure at the corners. At the back of the church, the channel had been destroyed by central heating flues and the construction of the tower in 1905.

The whole structure of the channel spoke of considerable care. Certain of the upright stones had been re-used from an earlier building. They were coated with a thick white plaster. Some of the capstones were tooled. Beneath the channel

were several skeletons, one of which had been disturbed by the building of the channel. These were buried parallel with the north wall. There was no evidence for dating with the burials. Below the skeletons was a level containing fragments of human bone but no structure or identifiable inhumations. In this level was found a pot-sherd of a gritty fabric, which it is not possible in this area to date more closely than 10th to 12th century. Stratigraphically the channel is dated between the 10th century and 1874.

The purpose of a channel around the interior of the church is not immediately obvious. It has been suggested that it may be a resonance channel designed to improve the acoustics of the church. Ormesby Church was among the early 12th century grants to Guisborough Priory and the canons established a grange there, but there is no evidence that the church formed part of a daughter establishment.

A parallel may be noted from the excavations at Whitefriars, Coventry, where a channel was found in the 14th century choir of the priory church. This was much larger, about 3½ft square and irregular, in marked contrast to the Ormesby example.

The excavation and observation at Ormesby illustrates the amount of archaeological evidence available even for a church which was totally rebuilt in the Victorian period.

MINOR INVESTIGATIONS

Effort and reward - the case history of a redundant church in Essex

Christine Couchman

The old church of St Michael, Latchingdon, in Essex, is situated well away from the nucleus of the village. It has not been in parochial use since 1851, although until about 1962 an annual service was held at Easter. The fabric of the church was neglected, and in February 1972 the building was declared redundant.*

In March 1973 an application was made by Mr J Dunlop, a London businessman, to convert the church into a house. The application was refused, on planning grounds, in October of the same year, but by then local concern for the building had hardened into opposition to the scheme, and an old society, the Friends of St Michael, was re-formed. At the beginning of November 1973 the applicant lodged an appeal against the refusal with the Secretary of State, and the decision was reversed exactly one year later.

Mr Warwick Rodwell, who at that time was the Diocesan Archaeological Consultant, regarded the church as a possible candidate for the site of one of the minsters of the Dengie peninsula. When planning permission was finally granted he pressed strongly for investigation in advance of conversion.

I became involved in the project in the Spring of 1975. At the end of April I approached Mr Dunlop on behalf of Mr Rodwell to request permission to carry out archaeological work at the church. Unfortunately, since there had been no archaeological involvement at the earlier stage of the planning application, there was no statutory obligation on the owner to allow archaeological investigation. However, Mr Dunlop said that he would have no objection once the church became his, and he later agreed to total excavation provided that this did not delay conversion works.

At the beginning of July 1975 a formal request was made to the Department of the Environment for funds to carry out a total examination of the church. As it was uncertain whether the Department would respond, Maldon District Council was also approached for a grant: an application which later led to difficulties.

Meanwhile, Mr Rodwell was appointed Director of CRAAGS and so was no longer available to direct the investigation. After attempts to hire a director on a contract basis it was agreed that I should undertake the work.

At this time there appeared to be a likelihood that conversion work would start immediately the sale of the church was completed. Accordingly, I telephoned Mr E J Robinson of the Church Commissioners, asking if it might be possible to carry out the investigation before the church changed hands. This request was refused, on the grounds that archaeological work might intensify local opposition to the whole scheme. There was no indication during the course of this conversation that the Church Commissioners had any objection in principle to archaeological work. Mr Robinson did say that it would be well to seek the goodwill of the local residents, and stated that excavation ought to be restricted to those areas of the building which were to be disturbed by the builder during the course of the conversion. Such limitations would obviously reduce the usefulness of investigation, and render the remaining area less informative. I was not yet aware that the Church Commissioners considered themselves to be in a position to refuse permission for the future investigation (i.e. after the sale had taken place).

* The lower part of the churchyard remains in use.

Late in August I received a telephone call from Mr S E Gray, also of the Church Commissioners, with whom I had not previously dealt. He told me that he had just heard of my proposal to excavate, and that the Church Commissioners would refuse to give their concent. He added that Mr Richard Morris and Mr John Hurst had told him that excavation was unnecessary. I was at a complete loss to understand this extraordinary turn of events, as was Mr Morris who told me that his actual comments had been made to the Advisory Board, and that in view of the difficult local situation he had stated that he had no wish to campaign for action which would be likely to compromise negotiations for the disposal of the building. In view of the fact that Mr Dunlop had already agreed to the proposal for archaeological investigations, this new objection was hard to accept. Mr Morris undertook to discuss the case with Mr Gray. Shortly afterwards I heard from Mr Gray that investigation would be permitted on three conditions:

1 Goodwill for the work should be obtained from those living locally.

2. Should any human remains be discovered, these should be disposed of in accordance with the instructions of the local health officer and the Home Office (this in spite of the fact that I had been told verbally that I was not to disturb human remains).

3 Investigation was to be permitted only in those areas to be disturbed by the builder, to a depth and width to be agreed with the architect (Mr Lorrimer), which should not in any case exceed those indicated on the plans approved by the Commissioners. (In the event I was informed by the Chief Building Inspector of Maldon District Council that he would not have accepted the depth shown on the plans as adequate).

I now wrote to Mrs Jeanne Robinson, Secretary of the Friends of St Michael, Latchingdon, explaining my aims and asking for her co-operation. At this point a major problem arose. I had been at work on another excavation during most of August and September, and I had not had time to write to the Latchingdon PCC before two local newspapers picked up my request for a grant from the Minutes of a meeting of Maldon District Council. News of the project appeared under such headlines as BIG CHURCH DIG HAS VILLAGERS UP IN ARMS, and CHURCH SURVEY ADDS INSULT TO INJURY. Immediately I wrote to the PCC, explaining why I had not contacted them before and drawing attention to the numerous inaccuracies in the newspaper reports. The PCC members had been upset by the reports, but gave their goodwill nevertheless, as eventually did Mrs Robinson.

In mid-October the local newspaper accounts anticipating the investigation filtered through to Mr Gray. I received a second letter from him, suggesting that in view of the regrettable publicity it might be necessary to withdraw consent for the investigation. I wrote a letter giving an account of what had actually happened to which Mr Robinson, not Mr Gray, replied, accepting my explanation.

In November I received a grant from the Department of the Environment which was adequate to carry out the full excavation from which I was now barred. It was now a matter of waiting until the sale went through. Nobody seemed able to tell me when this would be. In mid-November I had a site visit with the architect of the scheme, Mr Lorimer, and Mr Michael Wadhams, one of the County Council's Listed Buildings advisers. During this visit the architect was given a considerable amount of preliminary information on the history of the building which his structural engineer subsequently used in his report. Later Mr Lorimer sent me a bill for his preparation of an agreed schedule of defects which was required before I began work.

The sale was finally completed in early February 1976. One last delay occurred when the County Council's insurance officer (a cautious man) took fright at the schedule of defects and informed me that he was doubtful whether he could

persuade the insurance companies to accept the risk. Fortunately he was reassured by a member of the Architect's Department. Work actually began, I think to everyone's astonishment, on 15 March.

With hindsight one is tempted to say Parturiunt montes, nascitur ridiculus mus. The amount of effort expended in negotiating for archaeological action does seem to be absurdly large in relation to the small amount of work it was eventually possible to carry out.

(Miss Couchman is a member of the Planning Department of Essex County Council.)

The role of the Consultant

Daryl Fowler

Results recently obtained from a small excavation beside one face of the tower of the church if St John, Wotton, in Surrey, have re-awakened my concern about the view which is expressed by some archaeologists that 'if we cannot dig all of the church it is scarcely worth investigating any of it'. The value of the total exploration of a church and its site is not in question, but the fact remains that the majority of repairs and maintenance operations in churches are small, and it is these jobs which most frequently lead to archaeological loss and occasion opportunities for investigation.

An additional twist to this problem lies in the fact that in many cases we do not yet know what questions to ask about individual churches. Recent investigations have shown that even so-called simple buildings may have undergone highly complex evolutions. But as each church is maintained, the archaeology and the medieval fabric (if any distinction exists between the two) are being progressively eroded by small-scale works. Examples encountered include a new soakaway; re-ordering involving the removal of a front row of pews and the remaking of a narrow strip of floor beneath; repointing a wall face. The Consultant who investigates or records in advance of such operations is faced with the problem that the results he obtains may be difficult to interpret (or publish) in isolation. Quite apart from this, it is rarely possible to predict such works far enough in advance for inclusion in the annual estimates submitted to the Department of the Environment. The Consultant thus has to arrange work on an ad hoc basis and must often rely on the assistance of unpaid helpers. If the Consultant is willing and experienced amateurs are available then there may be no problem, although difficulties may arise if the work had to be carried out to a strict timetable, or if the architect insists on conditions (e.g. concerning reinstatement or insurance) which cannot be met within a shoestring budget.

Other factors tend to be overlooked. Any recording is only as good as the grid or fixed points to which it is related. Future investigators must be able to co-ordinate their recording with work undertaken now. Moreover, if the results of limited investigations are to be published, the information will have to be printed in greater detail than it might appear to deserve. Recent thoughts on publication from the Establishment suggest less detail rather than more, but this places a heavy responsibility on the archive or museum not to lose the primary data.

The results of a small investigation will sometimes suggest or confirm an interpretation of a church; more usually the crucial evidence lies outside the area available for examination. Situations also arise in which it may be considered essential to preserve an area of undamaged deposits until both interior and exterior or above- and below-ground evidence can be worked on simultaneously. Incumbents and church architects change frequently, and there

is a need to develop a warning system for such vital areas of a church. Many small jobs take place without reference to the DAC: how often does one visit a church, find some minor operation in progress, and think 'I wish I had known they were going to do that'?

One possible improvement would be to modify the existing quinquennial survey procedure so that each survey also includes a report from the Consultant. Ideally this would be based on a joint survey with the architect, or at least after discussion with the inspecting architect. At present all new quinquennial surveys in the Diocese of Guildford are checked, and where appropriate an archaeological note is added and circulated independently to the various parties concerned. This arrangement has its drawbacks, however, since without a contingency fund to guarantee action there is a risk that such reports will quickly become recognized as 'more paper' and will simply be filed away and forgotten.

Nor are funds the only need. An expanding programme of education is badly wanted, not only to teach archaeologists about 'fabric archaeology', its methods and the complicated administrative background, but also to teach architects about the aims and requirements of archaeologists. Many courses now deal with the conservation, renewal, and repair of historic buildings, but none of them teaches the archaeological aspects of such work. This is an area where the Churches Committee could make a major contribution.

(The author is an architect and Guildford Diocesan Archaeological Consultant.)

LETTER: The problems of survey

Dear Madam

I am sure Mr Aldsworth will not mind if I take up some of the points that arise from his article in Bulletin No. 4. Of course it is good to see archaeologists, who have a long-standing tradition of three-demensional recording and thinking, lifting up their eyes above the top-soil horizon, but I believe that some of Mr Adlsworth's points could be misleading to many readers.

The imposition of a recording grid on a building is useful for recording points or individual locations, but there is a risk that it will become too rigid to allow for the recording of a wall-face within a reasonable time. Gridding a wall with nails and string, whilst a useful aid, can become to some field workers more important than recording the wall itself. Numerous practical problems arise: how to get the nails in the right place; how to keep the string taught. Unless stainless steel nails are used the nails should be removed after the recording has been finished, as the rust will damage the very wall that is of interest. The architect to the church should insist on this unless special precautions are taken. Nails should only be driven into mortar joints.

The type of elevation drawing illustrated by the Deerhurst wall must be seen as only one stage in the recording process. The wall as it is drawn is in fact an illusion, as the wall is unlikely to be absolutely vertical or even true to an inclined plane. To achieve an absolute record either the three-dimensional co-ordinates of the corners of each stone should be shown or else the elevation would need to be supplemented by sections in the horizontal and vertical plane at (say) half-metre intervals. To consider this as a problem of cartesian geometry brings us back to the academic approach, ideal but complicated to use on site. A computer could be used to hold and process the co-ordinates, but it would be difficult to publish in an understandable form. At this extreme the same results could be obtained by two or three station readings with a theodolite, a sort of three-dimensional plane-tabling, with a calculator drawing it up.

Perhaps an answer is to combine the normal elevation with a scale axonometric projection of every wall face. This would show all the setbacks, projections, changes in plane of the wall surface, voids, etc. Another advantage of this method is that it is possible to show layers abutting a wall face and their three-dimensional characteristics in front of the wall. This is a major weakness with the current methods of recording. Also it could enable the showing of layers that occur inside the wall itself, and for crucial areas even both faces of the wall at the same time.

If it is thought to be essential to superimpose a rigid grid on a building, use should be made of laser surveying equipment as this would considerably speed up the work.

There is a need for far more discussion of the techniques and analytical methods of archaeology. Perhaps the Bulletin will provide a forum for such a debate.

Yours sincerely

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BOOK REVIEW

Christine Couchman and John Hedges, Redundant Churches in Essex 29 x 21 cm, 48pp, 24 figs. Essex County Planning Department 1976. Price £1.00. Obtainable from County Planner, County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex.

In recent years Essex has led the way in many aspects of church archaeology. Rivenhall is arguably the classic church rescue investigation of the first half of this decade; the Rodwells' pioneering survey of all churches in a single archdeaconary is about to be published; and now the County Planning Department has produced an up-to-date appraisal of church redundancy in Essex.

Although the authors are archaeologists the Report is not an archaeological survey, but rather a planning policy document which takes account of archaeology. Archaeology is thus seen in a realistic context: as an aspect of redundancy rather than as a self-contained problem. The stated aim of the Report is two-fold: to highlight the growing problem of redundancy in Essex, and to formulate a policy for the preservation and conversion of churches no longer required for worship which is both realistic in planning terms and yet takes account of the needs of recording.

On these terms the Report is a valuable addition to a growing body of literature dealing with a difficult problem. Readers will find a balanced survey of the archaeological, architectural, and landscape factors; summaries of the Pastoral Measure 1968 and related legislation; a manifesto for church conversion and alternative use; and five useful appendices. The core of the Report is entitled 'Uses for Redundant Churches'. Here the authors explore the possibilities of community, agricultural, educational and individual uses against a background of fundamental planning principles. The Report is of particular importance and interest because it has been prepared by a County Council. In some areas local authorities have been accused of being indifferent to the problems of redundant churches; cases have occurred in which local planning authorities have refused permission for the conversion of suitable redundant churches; such refusals can prevent or impede the change of use which might give churches a new lease of life.

The Pastoral Measure 1968 is a piece of legislation of formidable complexity, and the fact that the Report contains few errors is an indication of the thoughtful and conscientious approach of the authors. However, the Chairman's statement that the law does not permit the reduction of a redundant church to a graceful ruin is incorrect (p. 5); the discussion of listing criteria (p. 9) misses the crucial point that medieval secular buildings are almost always classified Grade I because they are medieval, whereas medieval churches are not; the summary of redundancy legislation excludes the process which leads up to the declaration of redundancy and thereby ignores the important role of the Council for Places of Worship (which is of relevance to planners); Appendix 3 makes no mention of the parts played by a Redundant Churches Uses Committee and the Church Commissioners. On p. 19 it is stated that 'listed building consent is required for the demolition of any listed church irrespective of its use for the time being'. On p. 21 this is qualified by the statement: 'Anglican churches which are listed....are exempt from the need to obtain listed building consent for their demolition if, and only if, a Redundancy Scheme is in force providing for their demolition'. This is the Catch 22 of the redundancy process: a listed church will normally be demolished only under the provisions of a Redundancy Scheme.

The cardinal principle that archaeological examination should involve both above- and below-ground work is grasped, but the misleading term 'excavation' is once used in a context where 'investigation' might have been more appropriate. This

is not a trivial point; the popular view of the archaeologist as one whose interests are confined solely to what is buried underground is still strong; the use of terms which convey the true nature and scope of enquiry is to be encouraged.

Portions of the Report read uneasily, like an early draft, and just occasionally the authors lapse into that strange dialect spoken by local government officers wherein simple, necessary points are rendered obscure. Thus on p. 11 we read that even the worst Victorian restorers have something to offer because of their 'preferential historicism'. As a rule, however, the authors tackle a difficult subject in a concise and workmanlike way. Although the Report is naturally confined to the situation in Essex it contains much information which is of general relevance. The Report deserves a wide circulation, and now that Essex has entered the field it is to be hoped that other Counties will soon follow.

Richard Morris