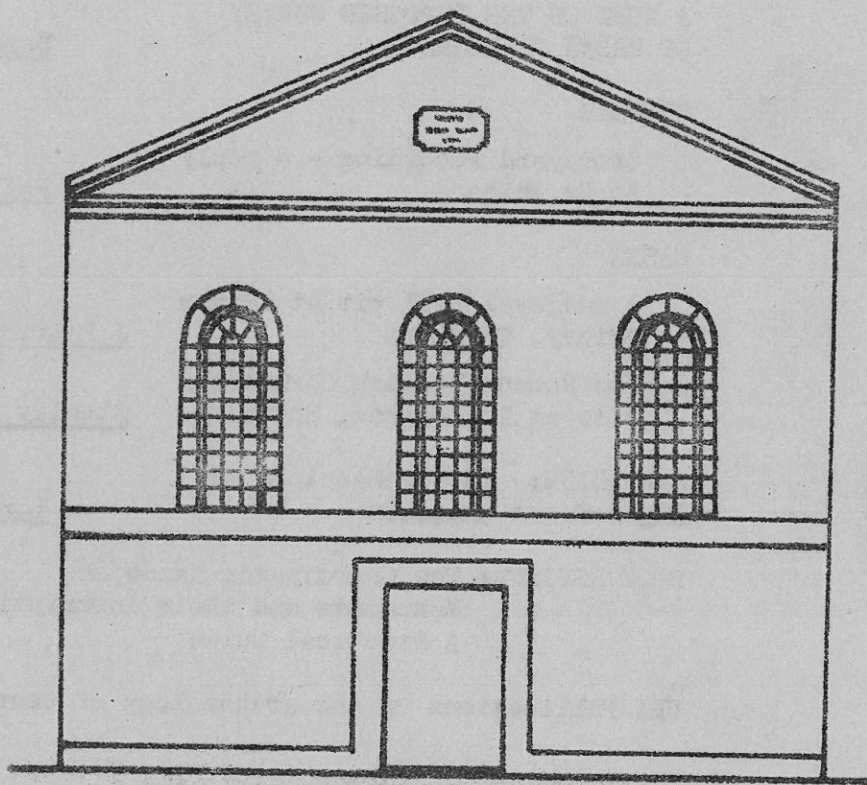


BULLETIN

of the C B A Churches Committee



Welsh Baptist Chapel, Upper Maudlin Street, Bristol 1840

Number 6 March 1977

C O N T E N T S

Page 1	NOTES	
	Graveyard recording	
	The role of the consultant (from Bulletin 5)	
	Latchingdon (from Bulletin 5)	
	Changes	
2	NONCONFORMIST PLACES OF WORSHIP	<u>C F Stell</u>
4	NONCONFORMIST CHAPELS IN BRISTOL	<u>David Dawson</u>
7	A NOTE ON THE PROPOSED SURVEY OF URBAN CHURCHES	<u>Derek Keene</u>
9	SURVEYS	
	Graveyard recording - a reply to Dr White	<u>Philip Rahtz</u>
12	CASES	
	A medieval bell pit at Norton Priory, Cheshire	<u>J Patrick Greene</u>
	The Romano-British Christian site at Icklingham, Suffolk	<u>Stanley E West</u>
16	SYMPOSIUM: The archaeology of Anglo-Saxon churches	<u>Lorna Watts</u>
17	BOOK REVIEWS: The Churchyards Handbook Monuments and their Inscriptions: A Practical Guide	
19	CBA Publications on the Archaeology of Churches	

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.

Contributions should be sent to the Editor, Mrs Ruth Taylor, Department of Archaeology, City Museum and Art Gallery, Birmingham B3 3DH.

NOTES

Graveyard Recording

Individuals and groups engaged in the recording of graveyards may be interested to know that it may be possible to share the costs of photography with the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments. The RCHM will consider paying for photographs of gravestones in exchange for ownership of the negatives and the copyright. The RCHM will process the negatives and make prints available to the local recorders. Anyone interested in striking a bargain of this kind should first write to Mr E Mercer, RCHM, Fortress House, 23 Savile Row, London W1X 1AB, giving an outline of the proposed project.

The role of the consultant

Bulletin No. 5 contained an article by Mr Daryl Fowler entitled 'The role of the Consultant' which drew attention to the difficulties of interpreting and storing data derived from minor investigations occasioned by schemes of church repair and restoration. Information acquired in the course of such projects may be difficult to publish on its own, and there is a risk that the primary data may be either lost or forgotten.

One solution to this problem may lie with the National Monuments Record, which is considering a microfilm system of information storage which combines the advantages of a basic card index with the capability of storing relatively large quantities of information (notes, maps, plans, etc). If this method is adopted then the main further need will be to ensure that the existence of a record from any particular church is adequately advertized. With this in mind we suggest that:

- 1 a note drawing attention to the material is entered in the parish fabric logbook;
- 2 a further note is published in the appropriate county or local journal;
- 3 a copy of the note is deposited in the diocesan archive.

Archaeologists who are interested in the NMR proposals should contact Mr Alan Aberg, NMR, Fortress House, 23 Savile Row, London W1X 1AB.

Latchingdon

The fifth Bulletin of the Churches Committee contained an article by Miss Christina Couchman which described the negotiations leading up to an archaeological investigation in the redundant church of St Michael, Latchingdon, in Essex. The Editor wishes to make it clear that the views expressed in the article were those of the author alone, and regrets any offence which may have been unnecessarily caused to individuals named in the article.

Changes

Bath and Wells:	Mr W J Rodwell has been appointed consultant (non-attending)
Winchester:	Mr D Hinton has undertaken to serve as acting-consultant
Durham Cathedral:	Professor R Cramp has been appointed consultant

Nonconformity in England and Wales, unlike that in Scotland, has developed on lines sometimes far removed from the established church. Its growth has been enhanced by many diverse factors, not least being the attitude of the establishment itself in discountenancing the comprehension of Presbyterians in the 17th century and of Methodists in the 18th century, which, together with the effects of the Oxford Movement has left in the ranks of dissent many who might otherwise have remained or become loyal to the Church of England.

In the number of meeting-places, and perhaps too in the number of active adherents, Conformists and Nonconformists are fairly evenly matched. Against the 18,000 parish churches may be placed the figure of 15,000 places of Nonconformist worship. There are, however, two very important distinctions, firstly in the age and quality of the buildings themselves, and secondly in the manner of Church government.

The number of parish churches in England and Wales in 1801 was 11,379, the figure for other denominations being 3,701. In 1839 the number of chapels occupied by the eight leading Nonconformist denominations had risen to 8,765, and in 1851, when the number of Anglican buildings had slowly reached 14,077, those of other denominations had shot up to 20,399, although even so the number of actual sittings provided by the Church of England was still slightly in excess of the others (5,317,915 against 4,894,648). By the end of the 19th century the positions were reversed, the continued growth of chapel building resulting, in 1896, in a figure for the ten leading Nonconformist denominations of 7,600,003 sittings compared with 6,778,288 for the Church of England. A rapid decline in the number of Nonconformist places of worship during the present century has not only reduced the number to figures comparable with those of a century ago but has left in its wake a problem of redundancy far greater, numerically, than that faced by the Church of England.

Of those chapels and meeting-houses standing in 1801 only about one in five now remains; many were lost by rebuilding in the 19th century but over eighty have disappeared since 1940, greatly enhancing the archaeological value of those few that survive. On the other hand, many of the chapels which proliferated during the 19th century, and which are now proving an embarrassment to their owners, are of no great architectural merit. This is particularly true of the largest of the Free Church denominations, the Methodists, who, of about 8,000 chapels still in use, have only some four hundred which appear on the statutory lists of the Department of the Environment. This compares very unfavourably with the Church of England, where 11,000 of the 18,000 parish churches are listed buildings. The proportion of listed buildings is higher for some of the older denominations, the Quakers and the Unitarians being especially notable, the latter having perhaps 50% of their chapels eligible for statutory listing.

Besides the obvious difference in age and quality between the average Anglican and Nonconformist place of worship there is the marked distinction between the unified structure of the Church of England, complex and authoritarian though it may appear to the outsider, and the diversity which is intrinsic in the nature of dissent. This diversity is apparent not only in the many different denominational names but also in their internal organization. The centrally organized churches, of which the Methodist Church is the largest, together with the United Reformed Church which continues many of the forms of government inherited from the former Presbyterian Church of England, the Quakers and the Moravians, contrast with the more highly independent churches such as the Baptists,

Congregationalists, and Unitarians, where the word of the Church Meeting, the Trustees, or the Management Committee is, according to their different constitutions, as final and unalterable a law as that of the Medes and Persians.

In matters affecting alterations to their buildings, and to some extent also in the field of closure and demolition, this local autonomy appears to extend even to the more highly organized denominations, in none of which are any advisory bodies available, even for voluntary consultations, comparable with those which exist within the structure of the Church of England. The absence of much specialist advice together with the exemption of listed places of worship from statutory control of any work short of complete demolition is a problem deserving urgent attention. None of the denominations appears to exercise any effective control on alterations or on the closure of chapels which for architectural reasons ought to remain in use until their cases can be more widely discussed. Precipitate closure followed by neglect and dereliction has too often been the fate of listed chapels which might otherwise have been saved. One remedy for the general failure of the denominations to appreciate the visual and historical importance of their possessions lies in a more enlightened public interest. This is already taking place, but, until a greater measure of understanding is reached by those who are directly responsible for it, a continuation on the unannounced, unnecessary, and irretrievable attrition of an unappreciated heritage must be expected.

The present danger is not only that of the visual loss which comes from demolition but also of the lack of that prior notice without which adequate recording is impossible. The importance of recording is particularly evident in the matter of inscriptions both in chapels and burial grounds, for which no adequate provision yet exists and which could most usefully be carried out by local amateur effort without waiting until an emergency arises. The loss of valuable fittings from chapels of which clocks, tables, and particularly communion plate may be mentioned, is another matter of current concern. Unlike the buildings themselves these are not usually in the care of the trustees and, through them, of the Charity Commission, but may be disposed of by congregations at will. This has resulted in ill-advised sales and a failure to maintain a record of items disposed of.

While every sympathy must be felt for Nonconformist Churches whose buildings are affected by problems of redundancy or decay, the proportion of Chapels and meeting-houses of importance is not such that the Churches, and particularly the more centralized denominations, should, with reasonable assistance, find the problem insuperable. This depends upon a desire not only to serve their own interests but also to accept their position as custodians of an important part of our national heritage. It remains to be seen whether any of the denominations concerned will view its responsibilities in such a light. Until this happens, no Nonconformist chapel or meeting-house can be regarded as safe which is looked upon by its owners as nothing beyond a 'place of worship'.

For statistics quoted above see:

Howard Evans 'The Progress and Present Position of the Free Churches',
Congregational Year Book (1898), 537-542

H S Skeats and C S Miall, History of the Free Churches of England (1891)
521ff

Literature currently available includes:

G W Dolbey and P A Kerridge, Listed Church Buildings (Published 1976 by the
Division of Property of the Methodist Church, Central Buildings,
Oldham Street, Manchester M1 1JQ, price 30p, plus postage).

D A Barton, Discovering Chapels and Meeting Houses (Shire Publications Ltd, Princes Risborough, 1975, price 50p).

NONCONFORMIST CHAPELS IN BRISTOL

David Dawson

This short paper is based on a survey of the religious sites conducted 1974-76. Nonconformist chapels and missions were included because it was felt that, over the last three hundred years, they have formed an integral part of the urban (and rural) landscape in much the same way as their Church of England counterparts and as such are worthy of the attention of the archaeologist. The area covered by the survey comprises the City of Bristol, including those parts of Whitchurch and Frenchay parishes outside the city.

Background

Bristol will be well known as two of its products, sherry and tobacco, have sustained countless generations of archaeologists. Although no city is typical of anything except itself, Bristol does share many of the characteristics and problems of other British cities. Its population is declining as its citizens are forced out of the central area to live in the suburbs and dormitory villages beyond the city boundary. Its industries have changed in character and location, and the commercial pressures of acting as regional capital of the South West have transformed its original centre. All these factors are affecting the distribution and use of its chapels.

In bald statistical terms, the City of Bristol covers some 42 acres of land on either side of the River Avon and, with a population (1972) of 421,000, ranks as eighth in size of provincial cities. Within its boundaries 322 religious sites (i.e. sites where places of worship once existed or still survive) are of Nonconformist origin, that is 64% of a total of 505.

Survival of Nonconformist Chapels and Meeting Houses

What has happened to these 322 Nonconformist sites? Approximately 49% (actual number 158) are still used for worship, 7% (22) are at the moment disused, 6% (29) have been converted to secular use, and 38% (122) have been demolished.

From the 49% still in use it should be possible to examine the relationship between the building, the internal accommodation of the congregation, the arrangement of liturgical centres (e.g. pulpit, baptistery, communion table), and the form of worship. As with any parish church, these relationships may have been changed quite drastically in the time that the site has been used. Although no such development can yet be cited from the buildings studied in Bristol, a good example is the early 18th century Unitarian Chapel at Shepton Mallet in Somerset, which was built on a T-plan but altered in the mid-19th century to the more conventional (by that date) rectangular hall involving the movement of the pulpit to one end instead of at the re-entrant angle.

Regrettably one must conclude that within a city it is unlikely that any arrangement earlier than 1750 will survive intact. Only one 17th century meeting house has not been rebuilt, the Unitarian Chapel (1691) in what was then the rural fastness of Frenchay, and still outside the city boundary. The survival of John Wesley's New Room in Broadmead in its rebuilt state

of 1748 with most of its original internal fittings, preacher's lodgings, and stables is an exception in that its special place in the history of the Methodist movement has been a major factor in preserving it in its present state and preventing it from following the fate of most of the other chapels around it when they were swept away in the 1950s redevelopment scheme.

Virtually all the other buildings of this date have had alterations made to them in the 19th century ranging from refurnishing to complete rebuilding. Twelve out of 53 buildings erected pre-1850 survive in use, six are disused, and four have been converted.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the bulk of the Chapels still in use (73) date from the period 1850-1920. The internal arrangement of those investigated so far seems to conform to a fairly uniform pattern, although the buildings themselves display a remarkable variety of architectural styles.

Redundancy

Redundancy appears to be just as much a problem to Nonconformist churches as it is to the Established Church, and for many of the same social reasons. The drift of congregations away from the city centre began about 1850. In 1868, for example, the Bridge Street Congregational Chapel founded in 1786 was replaced by a church at Clifton Down, and Castle Green Church, founded by 1670, made a similar move to Greenbank in 1901. Inner urban renewal this century has accelerated this trend. As most Nonconformist churches are autonomous, they have been able to respond to the advantages of rising land prices and move out to the suburbs.

Wholesale redevelopment schemes including new roads have further encouraged such moves. In St Philip's for example, over 13 chapels and missions have disappeared since 1930 in the housing renewal programme and Outer Circuit Road scheme.

The process has not always been as random as this. After the unification in Conference in 1932 of the United Methodist Churches, the Wesleyan Methodists and the Primitive Methodists, the opportunity to rationalize the number of premises was taken as the seventeen local circuits were gradually amalgamated and reorganized into the present nine. The little community of Crew's Hole was once served by two chapels, one Wesleyan Methodist and the other United Methodist Free. The former has been closed and converted to a workshop. At Kingswood, the stronghold of Methodism, each of the three branches of the movement built a huge chapel, two of them set in their own graveyards. Wesley (not included in the figures as it is just outside the area of the survey) and Zion (ex-UMF) chapels are still in use, but Bourne Chapel (ex-Primitive Methodist) has been converted to commercial use by Fantasie Foundations (Unity Corset Factories Ltd). Such instances of duplication are common in each of the old village and new 19th century suburban centres.

Some free churches have joined together to use one building rather than maintain separate chapels. Christ Church, Redland Road (ex-Wesleyan Methodist), is now, for example, a joint Baptist, United Reformed, and Methodist church, having replaced Christ Church Congregational and Cotham Baptist Churches, both since demolished. However, the number of redundancies resulting from such ecumenical schemes is still very small.

Re-use

Of the total 322, 176 have been at some stage closed. Twelve of these have been taken over by another denomination: Arley Chapel (Congregational) built 1845, is now the Polish Catholic Church of Our Lady of Ostrobrama; Hebron (United Methodist Free) Chapel, built 1853, is the Bedminster Spiritualist Church; the Highbury Chapel, built 1842-3, has just been converted to Cotham Parish Church (Church of England). Such conversions have often required changes in the internal layout to suit the liturgical requirements of the new owners.

Another twenty chapels are used for secular purposes which have invariably involved gutting the interior, eight are now warehouses, and the rest have been modified to use as houses (2), workshops, including garages, (4) and offices. Quakers Friar's, rebuilt 1747-9, (a Friends Meeting House), for example, is now the Bristol Central Registry Office, whilst Pembroke Congregational Chapel, built 1866, has been subdivided into the offices known as Colkin House.

A further 22 are at present disused, although four of these (Mount Tabor (1881), Bethesda, Bedminster (1871), Brunswick Chapel (1834), and Kingsland Chapel (1836)) have been converted into warehouses and the last two are being relet. One, Montpelier City Mission, is in ruins. The rest are standing boarded up. Although a few may be converted to other use, like Hope Chapel (1786) which is to be turned into a community centre, the future of the rest remains in doubt. It is quite possible that they will be demolished like the other 122 redundant Nonconformist chapels.

The Role of Archaeology

Work to date has been very limited. One chapel has been excavated (in 1972 and 1976 by Dr R Price, M W Ponsford and Dr A Parker)*, that was built by the Moravians in Upper Maudlin Street, as the site lay in part of the area occupied by the Greyfriars. This project provided very little new information about the chapel, which happened to be sited on a Roman building, but it does not mean to say that excavation elsewhere would be unsuccessful.

Survey work has been carried out by a local amateur group on the memorials and graveyard of Hope Chapel, and a similar project is planned for Redfield Methodist Church and graveyard. One tends to forget that many Nonconformist chapels have graveyards, some like Zion Chapel, Two Mile Hill, as extensive as any parish church. Of the 11 that are extant, only one has been cleared of its memorials (excepting the two Friends Burial Grounds whose memorials were removed in 1670).

The future

The policy of examining chapels due for demolition or conversion and recording detail where no other record exists will continue. This work, which is carried out by members of the Action Group for Bristol Archaeology and the Development Observation Group under the auspices of the City Museum, is done within the general framework set up to monitor redevelopment throughout the City. In other words, chapels are looked at as part of the general archaeological picture. There is, however, scope for setting up a small group composed of archaeologists and local and social historians to choose a district of the city, such as Bedminster, a 'minster' settlement which expanded rapidly throughout the 19th century, and study it in depth, chapels and all.

* Excavations at the Greyfriars, Bristol, Bristol City Museum Monograph (forthcoming)

A NOTE ON THE PROPOSED SURVEY OF URBAN CHURCHES

Derek Keene

The notes below have been prepared by the CBA Urban Research Committee's Working Party on Urban Churches.

I

Churches are among the most numerous of our surviving monuments and even where the structure above ground has long since disappeared, its archaeological remains are often readily identifiable and will provide a full account of its history. More than any other type of building a church reflects the fortunes and aspirations of the community as a whole. Nowhere is this more so than in towns, where the variety, intensity, and self-consciousness of urban life is reflected in an equally diverse pattern of churches. The study of town churches is a fundamental aspect of the study of town life, and will illuminate both its origins and its distinguishing characteristics.

This diversity and the rapid changes in the fortunes of urban communities intensify the problems of studying churches in towns, particularly those which served a parish or similarly restricted area or social group. It is probable that a higher proportion of medieval urban than of rural churches has disappeared, leaving no more than minimal traces on the documentary or archaeological record. To an even greater degree than with rural churches the written evidence for the early years, or even centuries of the life of a town church is entirely lacking, and this history will have to be written solely from the archaeological or structural evidence. Where an urban church survives the concentration of wealth in the town has often resulted in a sequence of enlargements and rebuildings which have obliterated the architectural evidence for the early stages of its development much more thoroughly than for its rural counterpart. In dealing with urban churches it is therefore particularly necessary to combine the approaches of the archaeologist with those of the documentary and architectural historians.

The first requirement of this study is to identify the body of material on which it is to be based, that is the individual churches themselves. Given the state of the surviving evidence this is no easy task, and beyond this there are many important questions concerning pre-Reformation churches, and in particular parish churches, which remain unanswered. When, why, and by whom were the churches founded? When did they prosper, and when decay? Did a church have a special significance for its particular neighbourhood or community within the town? How did the parochial system in towns evolve, and how was it regulated? What were the reasons for the major differences in parochial provision between one town and another? How were these developments reflected in the structural evolution of the church and the architectural setting for worship? Archaeological and architectural evidence is capable of providing answers even to questions such as these which have been posed as a result of documentary researches. Above all we lack the detailed organization of evidence without which adequate comparisons between individual churches and towns will be impossible. Only when such comparisons have been made will there emerge any generally applicable answers to these questions.

The working party has devised a form of record which is intended to provide a structure for information on pre-Reformation urban churches in Great Britain, and to stimulate and co-ordinate lines of enquiry. Many of the formal headings in the record relate only to parish churches, the most numerous group, but it is proposed that the survey should cover all

churches in towns in this period and should attempt to evaluate the part which each type of church played in urban life. At present questions relating to the church in medieval towns seem most urgently in need of concerted effort, but it is hoped that eventually the survey will be extended to cover all places of worship in towns down to modern times.

A survey of this type has a particular value at present when, as a result of redundancy and urban redevelopment, an unusually large number of church structures are threatened with destruction or extensive remodelling. The final section of the survey is therefore devoted to an assessment of the foreseeable opportunities for investigating the physical remains of the church, both above and below ground, and of the potential value of such investigation for understanding the history of the church and its site.

II The records of the survey

In almost every case an enquiry into the history of an individual church will require detailed investigation of original source material, written and otherwise. Full accounts of these investigations will be bulky and so it is proposed that the record of the survey be maintained at two levels: (1) a detailed file of information with full references to sources, discussion of alternative interpretations where necessary, and a bibliography; (2) a record form which will present this information in as clear and condensed a manner as possible under a consistent series of headings. These record forms will be widely consulted, and will be the basis on which comparisons between individual churches and towns will be made.

Obviously not everyone will always be able to deal with all aspects of the enquiry: church historians may be unwilling to contribute an architectural analysis, and archaeologists may be diffident in offering an interpretation of parochial rights. Nevertheless, every attempt should be made to view the history and development of the church as a coherent whole. The record form should be seen not as a check-list or questionnaire, but as a reasoned summary of all aspects of the church's development.

The information on the record form will include the simple facts required for the proposed national register of archaeological sites and monuments.

(Further information on the organization of the survey and the use of the record form may be obtained from Mr R K Morris, Department of Archaeology, The University, Leeds LS2 9JT)

Dr White's criticisms of Jeremy Jones' booklet How to record graveyards (CBA and Rescue 1976) in Bulletin No.5 raise some interesting points of principle. They centre of three main aspects:

A. Total graveyard recording is not desirable, since what is important is the epigraphic evidence of the inscriptions

Here I think there is a real area of divergence between the aims of the historian (using that word in its widest sense to include the archaeologist) and those of the genealogist, the art-historian, or other groups interested in specific aspects of the stones or graveyard. To the historian all the data concerning the stone and its precise location are relevant to the understanding of man's past and present. Fundamentally then, nothing short of total recording, including an accurate plan, will meet the needs of history, whereas copying of the inscriptions by the genealogist, or photographing the iconography by the art-historian, will suffice for their limited interests.

One of the points which surprises me, however, in Dr White's comments is the emphasis he would place on recording rather than subsequent analysis. What is the point of recording data if they are not to be analysed? There must be some end-product of a genealogy, such as the reconstruction of family trees, limited though such an aim might seem to the historian or anthropologist.

Total recording will, of course, satisfy the needs of genealogists, art-historians, sociologists, economic historians, and any other interested researchers. Once this has been achieved for a graveyard, the data may be used by each according to his needs. Copying of inscriptions alone will not, however, be any good to the art-historian, and photographing cherubs and death's heads will not be any use to the demographer. It seems more satisfactory then, as an ideal, to aim at total recording, and the methods recommended by Jeremy Jones go a long way towards achieving this, if systematically carried out.

I think part of the problem here is that Dr White believes that if proper recording is widely adopted many amateur recorders may be put off by the difficulties of total study rather than the mere copying of inscriptions. The net result will therefore be not more recording, but less, at any rate, of what to the genealogist is the crucial evidence. This view is not held only by genealogists. Dr Howard Colvin also spoke to me recently of his concern lest the attempt to record everything led to the loss of epigraphic evidence, because Jones's booklet was setting an impossible ideal, beyond the amateur recorder's purse and competence.

The answer, I believe, lies in education. Students brought up to use cameras, statistics, and computers will not balk at the elementary techniques involved in gravestone recording, and one can only hope that in their generation there will be enough interest in gravestones to carry the subject forward. If the future of graveyard recording is really in the hands of amateurs, in the worst sense of that word, incapable of using more than a pencil and notebook, it is a grim outlook indeed, and certainly not of any promise academically.

The situation may be compared with that in more conventional archaeology. In the 20 years during which the subject became more and more scientific there was groaning and moaning at the bar that everyone would be put off.

No-one would want to do archaeology any more, especially the humanists who were the exponents of the study of man. Fortunately, a new generation has grown up who not only tolerate the scientific involvement in archaeology, but prefer it that way, since science has vastly enlarged the understanding of man. So, too, I think will be the case with gravestones, in the acceptance by the rising generation of proper recording and analysis.

B. The recording form is not the best way of recording gravestone data

Several objections have been put forward here: that the form is a strait-jacket to the recorder; that unnecessary information is recorded; that it is so mechanical and dull in operation that it will stifle the interest even of the keenest necropetrophile; and that it is in any case impossible to design a form that will record all the subtle variety of evidence to be found on gravestones.

The purpose of the recording form is, of course, to ensure the standardization of approach, without which the information from one gravestone or graveyard cannot be compared with that from another. In this as in other branches of archaeology, the form is a checklist to ensure that all the information is recorded, and not just that which appeals to the taste or catches the eye of the individual recorder. In my experience students actually enjoy filling in recording forms. The work gives a sense of purpose and direction to their recording of a graveyard, and a community of interest in working as one of a team, and emphasizes its being an academic and worthwhile study rather than parish-pump antiquarianism. Not only is the actual recording one of the most successful university activities I have promoted, but students enjoy the recording precisely because they can see immediately all the interesting information that is going to accrue from systematic recording and analysis, on such absorbing topics as expectation of life, attitudes to death and the afterlife, and the techniques of the monumental mason.

It is true that no form can adequately record all information on stones and that is why there is a space for the vitally important photograph and another space for 'remarks', which enables the intelligent recorder to supplement the routine information with other observations.

Not all the data recorded on the form can be computerized, but the form has been designed for maximum use of the computer which can help with a lot of the basic statistical analysis. Other kinds of data need more than a computer to turn them into history, such as those so brilliantly used by Deetz and Ludwig in America (see bibliography in Jones).

C. Even if the recording form were a good idea, THIS recording form is inadequate and time-wasting

Here Dr White's remarks are more constructive. Any recording form goes through a series of versions or editions. The present one was designed on the basis of our own experience in recent years, and mainly on the one originally designed by Jones for his fine dissertation on Deerhurst gravestones. Discussion with many people led to improvements in content and design, the final one of which was its adaptation to the potentialities of computer. The final version reproduced in Jones and now made available on cards by the CBA was the best that could be produced at that time, within a reasonably sized format in accordance with all the questions currently being asked of gravestones. It provides a simple basic record which in our experience is adequate for 95% of gravestones. It could be a great deal more elaborate. Serious workers studying multiple attributes of gravestones, as Dr White emphasizes, may well need a much more

sophisticated form. But we felt that in the current pioneer stage of this study, the form should represent a basic minimum requirement rather than cater for the 1001 features of each and every stone in Britain.

Inevitably, experience will show the need for improvement of the present form, and we are grateful to Dr White and anyone else who can pinpoint weaknesses and show the way to an improved second edition. The only way to find out improvements is to use the form. The Model T Ford evolved into the Capri by people driving it, not by grumbling at it.

Two final points may be made. We would all like full publication of our research, but this has become financially impossible. The recommendations of the Frere Report were not against publication as such, but only full publication in multiple copies. Emphasis was on different levels of publication, while still retaining the availability to the serious researcher of basic data by xerox, microfiche, or other means. Dr White, in believing that we suggest that 'original monumental data....are below publication and of interest only as a basis for subsequent analysis', is distorting the Frere Committee's views. Archaeologists believe in a total record and access to it by all those interested in analysis. Record cards in Record Offices are likely to be more efficiently indexed, copied, and available for research than dog-eared idiosyncratic note-books.

On the question of cost, is £114 (to use Dr White's own figure) for a 380-stone churchyard really a high sum for the recording of such a massive body of historical data? And is it really beyond the purse of any worker or group interested enough in the subject to spend a great deal of leisure in pursuing it? £114 is no more than the average person spends on a week's holiday abroad, or on drink or smoking in the course of a year, and about one sixth of the cost of running a car. I do not believe that any worthwhile work will remain undone because of a financial burden on this scale.

The CBA Churches Committee will welcome further comments on this or other topics, and especially suggestions concerning the improvement of Jeremy Jones's book or the recording form for its second edition, which should not be long delayed, as the first edition is selling rapidly.

A MEDIEVAL BELL PIT AT NORTON PRIORY, CHESHIRE

J Patrick Greene

The discovery of a bell-founding pit at the site of a medieval priory may at first glance appear to have little to do with the more usual pre-occupations of a DAC member. However, this season's discovery at Norton does emphasize in a dramatic way the archaeological potential of the monastic outer courtyard and its surroundings. The need for safeguarding the potential of the courtyard is a point to which I will return.

Norton Priory was founded in 1134 as a house of Augustinian canons. Excavations since 1971 have been directed by the writer for Runcorn Development Corporation. In 1975 the site was opened to the public for the first time, and has now become an established open-air museum.

The 1976 season of excavation at Norton was designed to identify a safe area upon which a proposed museum building could stand without causing damage to archaeological remains. This was satisfactorily achieved, for mid-19th century terracing had rendered a substantial area sterile. Beyond the limits of Victorian earthmoving, however, archaeological features survived. A causewayed entrance track, retailed several times, was found. It crossed a number of drains, which added further information about the impressive system of water management that had once operated at Norton. A 16th century sawpit was discovered, containing off-cuts of wood and a thick bed of sawdust. Beneath the sawdust were large pieces of well preserved timber. They had all been used as duck-boards in the bottom of the pit, but had once been structural, with peg holes, mortices and tenons surviving.

The other feature was the bell-pit. At first only the very end of the pit occurred within the area of the excavation. It contained layers of clay and rubble, and occasional pieces of metallic slag. Its function only became apparent near its base, when pieces of a black clayey organic material with curved surfaces appeared. These were fragments of a bell-mould, made from the traditional ingredients of clay, sand, horse dung, and horse hair. The excavation was extended, and only then did the massive size of the bell pit become apparent - almost 2m wide, 1m deep, and at least 9m long (the limit was not reached). Scattered along the base of the pit were more pieces of mould. After recording, the mould fragments were removed. About 200 pieces were found, some of them quite large and identifiable immediately, for example, as pieces of the cope (outer portion of the mould) shaped to form the shoulder of the bell and its sound bow.

The sides of the pit were reddened where they had been burnt by the heat from the cooling bell. The base had a number of channels cut into it. One of these served as a drain, carrying away water seeping into the pit from sand wedges in the boulder clay. The others were more problematical - two sets of equal-armed T shapes, the top of the T's adjacent and parallel. Small wooden wedges were present at the ends of all these channels. Of the many suggestions as to their use, the most likely is that they accommodated a wooden framework which would be used when hoisting the completed bell out of the pit. This would be much safer than trusting to the strength of the canons (the loops at the top of the bell) which were not designed for direct suspension. A crucial piece of evidence for the size of the bell was found in the bottom of the pit. One half of the rim had slightly pressed into the clay, by only a few millimetres, but the crescent mark was quite clear.

The next stage was the conservation of the mould fragments. Although they were very soft when found, the project's conservator, Barry Johnson, discovered that the best way to preserve them was simply by heating them

at 300°C. By this time it had become clear that we were dealing with the cope of just one very large bell. Then came the problem of re-assembly, and to our astonishment we found that we had about 90% of the cope that could be fitted together (the technique will be the subject of a paper elsewhere). The result was a mould that represented the complete outer surface of a medieval bell that stood 1m high and 0.8m in diameter at the lip. At this stage information to the local press resulted in an approach from Mr R Platt, a director of Thomas Platt's of Widnes and a member of the Historical Metallurgy Society, who offered the facilities of his firm in casting a bell which would be entirely faithful to the medieval bell cast from our mould. This will be the next stage in the project.

As yet we have no firm date for the bell pit, though a radiocarbon test on charcoal from the bell pit has been arranged. The most likely context for bell-founding is the mid-13th century. In 1236 the church was destroyed by fire, and it is likely that a bell in the tower (vital for regulating the monastic day) would have been lost on that occasion.

A moral remains to be drawn from the foregoing account. If it were not for the proposed museum development, it is extremely unlikely that the area excavated in 1976 would have been chosen for excavation, as it would have been situated outside the outer courtyard. Yet in retrospect this is precisely where we ought to expect some of the most interesting activities associated with works at the priory to have taken place, especially if they involved a fire danger. In 1972, in the same general area at Norton, a tile kiln was found, in 1973 evidence of iron working.

The outer courtyard itself could be of exceptional interest, with possible remains of brewhouse, bakehouse, smithy, gatehouse, guesthouse, stables, barns, mill, etc. At Norton in 1975 within the outer courtyard, timber buildings of considerable archaeological importance were found. Two aisled halls, one replacing the other, were discovered, with massive post pits and post sockets. They were very probably temporary accommodation for the canons during the long wait for their masonry quarters to be completed. This sort of building has been assumed to be present on most monastic sites but has rarely been found, partly because most monastic sites have been 'cleared' rather than excavated, and partly because people have expected them to have been situated round the cloister, and simply replaced in stone. Again, in retrospect, one can see the fault in this thinking, for the siting of temporary quarters where building operations were due to take place would greatly complicate the construction work.

Other sites than Norton have also shown the wealth of information that can be gained from the excavation of areas away from the main monastic buildings (examples are Bordesley, Elstow, Thornholme, and Waltham). The worrying aspect is that it is these areas which are most at risk, often excluded from scheduling or guardianship even where substantial earthworks exist. I suspect that the situation is at its most serious in the case of those monastic sites that had their church, or occasionally other monastic buildings, converted to parochial use at the Suppression. In other cases the medieval buildings have vanished, and a later church occupies the site. There can be few dioceses without any examples of churches occupying former monastic sites, except for some of the more recent urban dioceses. The problem is a double one - activities within the church and churchyard causing damage, and those parts of the monastic establishment beyond being affected by disturbances resulting from building and other works in the adjacent community.

There are two points that those concerned with the archaeology of churches should consider when they are dealing with the ex-monastic churches of their dioceses. Firstly, the extent of the monastic buildings, including those of the outer courtyard, will extend over a considerable area. Secondly, the area beyond the claustral buildings and outer courtyard also has a high potential, though of a different nature, due to subsidiary activities that may have been carried on there.

(Mr Greene is the Archaeology and Museum Officer, Runcorn Development Corporation and a member of Chester Diocesan Advisory Committee)

THE ROMANO-BRITISH CHRISTIAN SITE AT ICKLINGHAM, SUFFOLK Stanley E West

Icklingham is a well known Romano-British settlement of considerable size on the southern edge of the Breckland bordering the River Lark. Among the many discoveries of the period that have been made in the past are three lead tanks, of which the two that are still in existence bear Chi-Rho symbols and in one case Alpha and Omega as well. The earliest, found c. 1726 is lost.

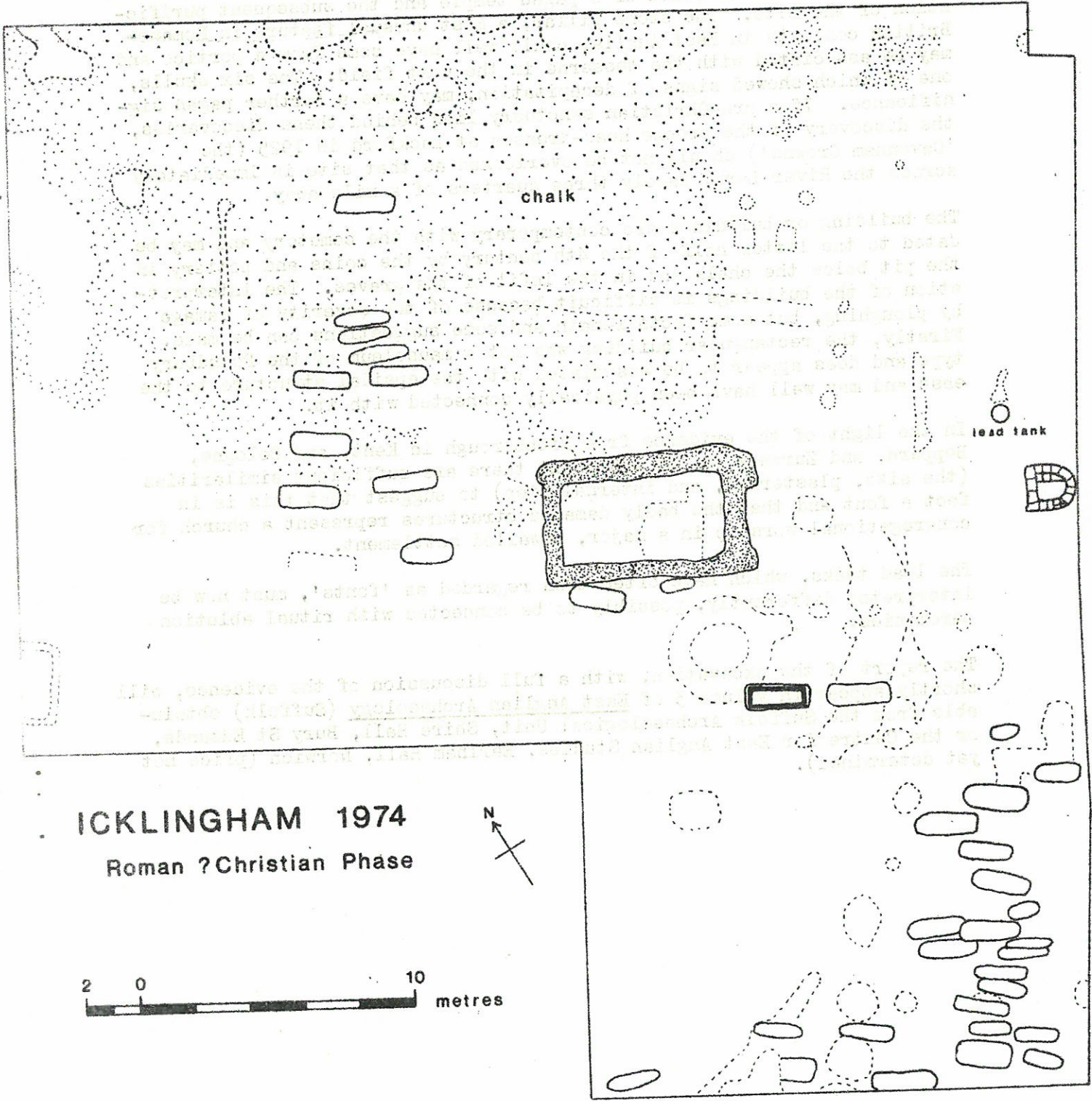
The site of the discovery of the third tank, in 1971, was excavated by the Suffolk Archaeological Unit in 1974 with results of considerable significance for the history of Christianity in late Roman Britain. Two main phases of activity were found, separated by a thick layer of chalk:

Phase 1: A small number of pits and a scatter of occupation debris indicated that this was a peripheral area to the main site. One pit, however, 3.8m in diameter and 2.45m deep, with a squared extension on the east side, had been back-filled in one operation with a considerable quantity of building debris. Among the rubbish were a number of remarkably ornate building tiles, a complete turned limestone pillar 1.17m long and six human skulls. The backfilling of the pit was followed immediately by the deposition of the chalk layer over the site, both events clearly being part of the same operation.

Phase 2: Forty-one inhumations were found in two groups, to the west and south of the remains of mortared foundations of buildings. Those to the west cut through the chalk layer which apparently had been denuded from the southern area, as it had survived in the slumped filling of the large pit, so that it is likely that all the graves post-date the chalk layer. The graves were orientated with the heads to the west, all in a supine position, and, with the possible exception of one, all without grave goods. Seventeen graves had evidence of wooden coffins and one was contained in a well cut stone coffin. The traces of buildings in the centre of the excavated area consisted of a rectangular foundation, 7.4m long by 4.6m wide, and a small apsidal structure, built of coursed tiles and lined with plaster, 1.7m long and 1.6m wide, incorporating a small internal 'step' on the north side. The lead tank found in 1971 was in the immediate vicinity of this structure. Traces of other walls were found in the same area but were too badly damaged to ascertain any relationship. Both structures shared the same east-west axis, the small apse being 10m to the east of Building 2.

In the field immediately to the east of the excavated area tesserae have been recovered from a modern pipe-line, and two stone coffins and one lead coffin were excavated in 1871, all within a few yards of the 1974 excavation.

The nature of the layer, it cannot be determined but it would appear that it was an artificial layer. The following is a list of the buildings which were built on this layer, presumably close by, and the location of the chalk layer and the position of the buildings which were built on the chalk layer and the position of the buildings which were built on the chalk layer.



ICKLINGHAM 1974
Roman ? Christian Phase

2 0 10 metres

Interpretation

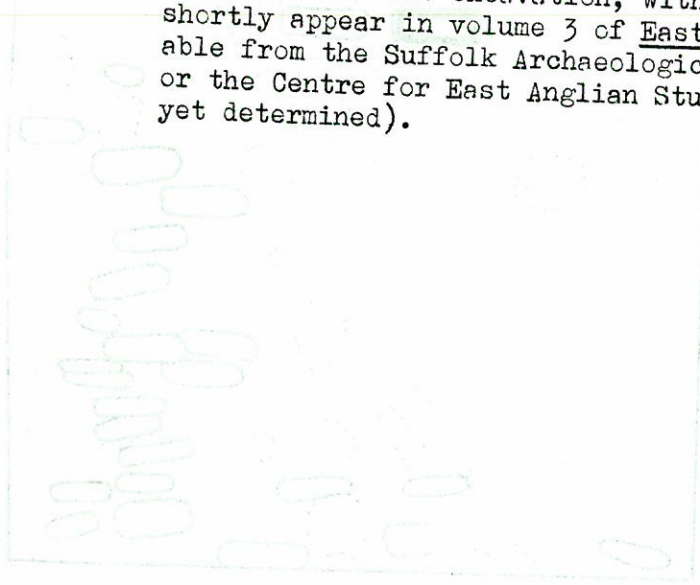
The purpose of the large pit cannot be determined but it would appear that it was an isolated feature. The deliberate infilling of that pit with building rubble from a building of clear importance, presumably close by, with six human skulls, and the deposition of the chalk layer may indicate the deliberate destruction of a pagan temple and the subsequent purification of the site. The stone pillar, a most unusual feature in Romano-British contexts in East Anglia, could well have come from a portico and may be associated with the tesserae in the next field. The six skulls, one of which showed signs of decapitation, may have a further pagan significance. If a pre-Christian sanctuary lies behind these discoveries, the discovery of the bronze head-dresses at Lackford in 1925 (the 'Cavenham Crowns') should not be overlooked as that site is immediately across the River Lark, barely three quarters of a mile away.

The building or buildings are contemporary with the cemetery and may be dated to the latter half of the 4th century by the coins and pottery in the pit below the chalk and in the infill of the graves. The interpretation of the buildings is difficult because of the severity of damage by ploughing, but some facts remain and some suggestions can be made. Firstly, the rectangular building was not a mausoleum of the Poundbury type and does appear to be associated with the apsidal structure to the east and may well have been physically connected with it.

In the light of the evidence from Richborough in Kent, and Cologne, Boppard, and Zurzack on the continent there are sufficient similarities (the size, plastering, and internal step) to suggest that this is in fact a font and that the badly damaged structures represent a church for congregational worship in a major, unwalled settlement.

The lead tanks, which have often been regarded as 'fonts', must now be interpreted differently, possibly to be connected with ritual ablution ceremonies.

The report of the excavation, with a full discussion of the evidence, will shortly appear in volume 3 of East Anglian Archaeology (Suffolk) obtainable from the Suffolk Archaeological Unit, Shire Hall, Bury St Edmunds, or the Centre for East Anglian Studies, Earlham Hall, Norwich (price not yet determined).



1974
MORNINGHAM
Roman Christian Phase
10 metres

SYMPOSIUM: THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF ANGLO-SAXON CHURCHES

Lorna Watts

An Anglo-Saxon Symposium has now been held for several years by the Oxford University Department for External Studies and is establishing itself as a convenient forum for reviewing aspects of recent research, fieldwork and excavations, not as ephemera or as isolated case studies, but within an up to date scholarly framework, which is itself extended by the conference. The subject of the 1976 Symposium was 'The Archaeology of Anglo-Saxon Churches'.

The doyen of their study, Dr H M Taylor, opened the conference with a reminder of the 'Logical Foundations of Anglo-Saxon Architectural History', based on structural analysis, which can also lead to the establishment of a dated sequence of buildings. Dr Taylor has long recognized the breadth of approach necessary to master the study of Anglo-Saxon churches and has himself actively promoted the combined use of structural analysis, excavation data, and documentary sources, which he expounded at Oxford by the particular example of Repton.

The need for this approach is both widely recognized and practised, as the variety of the succeeding papers made clear. Professor Charles Thomas bridged the gap between the Anglo-Saxon and Celtic churches by considering 'How Celtic was the Northumbrian church?'. This led him to consider both the sub-Roman (where incidentally the 'eccles' placenames are lacking archaeological confirmation) and Celtic backgrounds of the classic Anglo-Saxon area of Bede. He asked the thorny question of how the Celtic church could be recognized physically. He considered some archaeological evidence to be pre-Saxon: e.g. certain grave cross markers, some eremitic sites, and cemetery sequences, but whether sub-Roman, Celtic, insular, or Irish cannot at this stage be defined. The position is even more intractable in the case of timber buildings, as the long debate about Yeavinger has demonstrated.

To continue in Northumbria, Dr R Bailey reconsidered the documentary and incomplete excavation material for Hexham. He brought out the need to understand Anglo-Saxon attitudes and not to be unnecessarily insular in our study by comparing the form of the Hexham crypt with the catacombs of Rome. Professor Rosemary Cramp discussed the proportions and layout, the fabric and interior decoration of the Northumbrian churches, drawing in the main on excavation material, but placed in the context of Continental and documentary parallels. She stressed how most of the interior of these churches, from the walls to the moveable furniture, was painted and that by the 8th-9th centuries they were fairly 'cluttered'.

Fresh evidence about Anglo-Saxon churches, both in detail and general character, is continually being amassed from excavations. The conference was presented with the results from a wide variety of contexts. These included the long-term research programme at Deerhurst, where selective excavation mainly outside the present building, is complemented by detailed studies of many other aspects of the parish. There were also the unexpected results of a rescue excavation by Miss Carolyn Heighway around standing masonry at Gloucester, together with a structural examination, and of Mr Martin Biddle's research project at Repton, where the Danish fort defences may have been established in such close proximity to the church that it was in fact incorporated into their circuit. The total excavation of the interior of Hadstock is still a very unusual event in Britain. The important work at St Augustine's, Canterbury, was presented publicly for the first time by Mr Andrew Saunders (Chief Inspector of Ancient Monuments), where the sequence includes early burials as well as structural

features. The sheer volume of urban churches, even by the Conquest, was referred to in the context of York by Mr Peter Addyman and the possible way of tackling the background to these by means of the CBA Urban Survey was outlined by Dr Derek Keene.

The continuing study of other non-archaeological bodies of evidence is also producing results. Dr Lawrence Butler suggested how the examination of dedications might provide clues about structures earlier than the buildings now standing and how place-names, especially those with -stow and -kirk elements, might be relevant. Dr Richard Gem re-examined Clapham and Brown's interpretation of the textual evidence for the church at Athelney and commented more generally on timber churches of the 9th-10th centuries. He suggested that Athelney had four central posts and four apsidal chapels, a style new at least in England, but reflecting in less durable materials a Continental stone tradition derived from antique and Byzantine prototypes, the context here being Alfred's revival.

Much new evidence about the Anglo-Saxon church, from archaeological and other sources, was thus presented to the 1976 Symposium. There was little support for the establishment of an orderly chronological succession of architectural features. Instead, regional studies appear more fruitful. The conference also confirmed how much work in allied fields still remains to be done: e.g. how archaeological priorities are to be established, which churches are worth studying and why, and should every fresh grave be observed. What is clear, however, is that even in the crisis of rescue aspects of church archaeology, its academic foundation is being soundly developed.

BOOK REVIEW

Rev Henry Stapleton and Peter Burman (eds), The Churchyards Handbook (2nd ed), 13 x 21 cm, vii, 136pp, 22 figs. 10 appendices. Church Information Office (for Council for Places of Worship) 1976. Price £2.40 Obtainable from Church House, Dean's Yard, London SW1P 3NZ.

Between the robust covers of The Churchyards Handbook is a wealth of information concerning the use, history, ecology, lore, and law of churchyards. Recording, maintenance, archaeology, the features of the churchyard, and legal matters are all discussed. The book includes a directory of relevant organizations, and the bibliography is organized into subject categories. The CBA/Rescue record form is published as a model. From the excellent photographs to the section entitled 'How to destroy ivy, valerian, bramble and other harmful plants' this book is thorough, engagingly written, and useful.

RKM

H Leslie White, Monuments and their Inscriptions: A Practical Guide
21 x 15 cm, 60pp, 6 figs. Society of Genealogists 1977. Obtainable
from Society of Genealogists, 37 Harrington Gardens, London SW7 4JX.
No price stated.

Two rival booklets dealing with churchyards and monuments have appeared
within one year (Jeremy Jones' How to Record Graveyards, CBA/RESCUE (1976)
has already achieved considerable popularity). If the talents of the two
authors could have been combined an outstandingly useful handbook might
have emerged. As it is, the respective titles give away a division of
approach. Jones talks about recording graveyards; White is discussing
monuments and particularly inscriptions.

In many respects White's booklet has the edge on the CBA/Rescue tract.
White deals more fully with the nature of inscriptions, the components of
memorials, the use of parish records and the pitfalls of recording. There
are brief sorties into the territories of art history and heraldry, and
there is a lively discourse on the defects of legislation. But these
qualities are undermined by sloppy scholarship. The less that is said
about the historical introduction the better: for example, the Bakewell
group (mostly graveslabs but described by White as 'headstones') does not
date to the 13th century but spans a period from the 10th century to 1256.
Such errors are disconcerting in a work which enjoins accurate recording.

Likewise, White's generally sound and experienced approach to the process
of recording is sometimes distorted when his prejudices against archaeo-
logical methods get the better of him. White ignores Jones' booklet,
although he obviously questions the methods it propounds and cites it
once (incorrectly) as a reference. White's views on the planning of
churchyards assume that there is no need for a monument to be accurately
located, and his dislike of recording forms leads him to muddle genuine
drawbacks with what can only be described as fatuous objections (e.g. 'A
single gust of wind can scatter loose forms far and wide') in order to
discourage others from using them. It is clear from much of White's
advice (cf. pp. 38-9) that he is accustomed to working alone; his methods
stem from this, for he ignores the fact that the use of recording forms
can enable a large group of recorders (e.g. a sixth-form history class,
a WEA group or a party of WI members) to work simultaneously. White also
has a capacity for stating the obvious ('The further away from a stone
the camera is placed the less likely it is to pick up clearly the lettering
.....').

This booklet is a valuable introduction to the subject, but its terms of
reference are limited by the restricted audience it is aimed at.

RKM

CBA Publications on the Archaeology of Churches

Research Report 13

The Archaeological Study of Churches edited by Peter Addyman and Richard Morris

viii + 80 pages, 13 plates: A4 size: published October 1976. Contributors include Harold Taylor, Lawrence Butler, Rosemary Cramp, Philip Rahtz, Warwick and Kirsty Rodwell, Derek Phillips, and Martin Biddle.

£4.50 post free

Research Report 15

Excavations at St Mary's Church, Deerhurst, 1971-73 by Philip Rahtz

iv + 59 pages, 16 plates: A4 size: published October 1976. This report describes the results of the meticulous excavations around the ruined east end of the historic church at Deerhurst, as part of the Society of Antiquaries/CBA Churches Project. It is the first detailed account of a church excavation carried out using modern archaeological techniques.

£4.00 post free

Research Report 19

Historic churches - a wasting asset by Warwick Rodwell with Kirsty Rodwell

viii + 130 pages: A4 size: to be published May 1977. This report is a survey of the churches in the Archdeaconry of Colchester (Diocese of Chelmsford), carried out by the Rodwells under the sponsorship of the Department of the Environment. Its sections cover the present state of churches in the Diocese, the history of church archaeology in the Diocese, case studies of churches in an historic town, a rural parish church, an Anglo-Saxon minster, church conversions, and threats to church archaeology in the Diocese. The authors make some strong recommendations for short- and long-term action. There is a full gazetteer covering 217 churches.

£5.00 post free (subscription price: £6.00 after 1 July 1977)

How to record graveyards by Jeremy Jones (vi + 40 pages: A5 size)

A CBA best-seller: the first systematic approach to churchyard recording written for archaeologists.

£0.75 post free

(A grave recording form, designed by the author and approved by the CBA Churches Committee, is also available, price £2.00 per hundred plus postage)

All the above are available on application (cash with order) from the CBA, 7 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5HA.