

England

Compiled by Charlotte Foster

CHESHIRE

Chester, St John the Baptist

Simon Ward, Chester Archaeology

This large parish church is reputedly the oldest in Chester and served as a cathedral for a short period in the late 11th century. Now only the nave and central tower of a large, fine, Norman church survive. The choir and transepts were pulled down in 1581 when the church was bought by the parish and the great western tower collapsed in 1881.

The ruins of the choir and eastern chapels are a scheduled ancient monument in the ownership of Chester City Council. During recent conservation and display work, the removal of a raised Victorian flowerbed revealed a massive rectangular foundation on the line of the choir south arcade, with a lighter foundation running northwards from it, across the choir. The remains of an engaged pier base had presumably once been rectangular but were remodelled to form half of a four-lobed compound pier.

The massive foundation possibly helps to explain an apparent inconsistency in the spacing of the piers of the demolished choir and can be interpreted as the inner corner of the southern of a pair of eastern towers. The easternmost bay of the choir over which these towers would have stood could then have formed a square-ended ambulatory round the back of the altar, giving access to the eastern chapels. These were rebuilt in the 14th century and the choir aisle was vaulted in stone. Perhaps, therefore, this was the occasion when the easternmost pier (forming the respond of the tower arch) was remodelled and the towers removed.

The conservation and survey work was carried out by Chester City Council, supported by grants from English Heritage, European Regional Development Fund and Cheshire County Council.

Chester Cathedral

Simon Ward, Chester Archaeology

Recent survey and trial excavation in the nave of Chester Cathedral has been prompted by the need to restore the ancient sandstone floor and a scheme to install underfloor heating.

Extensive remains of the Norman abbey church, founded in 1092, lie just below the floor and are characterised by the use of a distinctive light grey mortar. The Norman church may have been slightly narrower than the present one and the nave arcade arches were smaller. In two places, walling that appeared earlier than the Norman work was

discovered, potentially Saxon in date. A church certainly stood on this site from at least the late 9th century, but nothing is known of its plan or structural history.

The present church is the product of a long building campaign, starting at the east end in the mid 13th century and reaching the west front by the 16th. This drawn out process is reflected in the archaeological record which seems to confirm that the piers on the south side were built some time before those on the north: an interpretation never tested before. Postholes and light foundations, which could be from screens or partitions and scaffolding erected during building work, were also discovered. The extended building process and breaks in the work must have made a whole series of such arrangements necessary.

A survey of the floor combined extensive historical research with creation of a detailed plan. The floor was shown to be largely that laid by Thomas Eaton in 1777. Since then various repairs and grave slabs have been inserted, particularly in the aisles, and this 19th-century disturbance for the provision of services affects the survival of below-floor deposits.

A major programme of archaeological work in advance of heating installation, funded by the Dean and Chapter of Chester Cathedral, is scheduled for 1997.

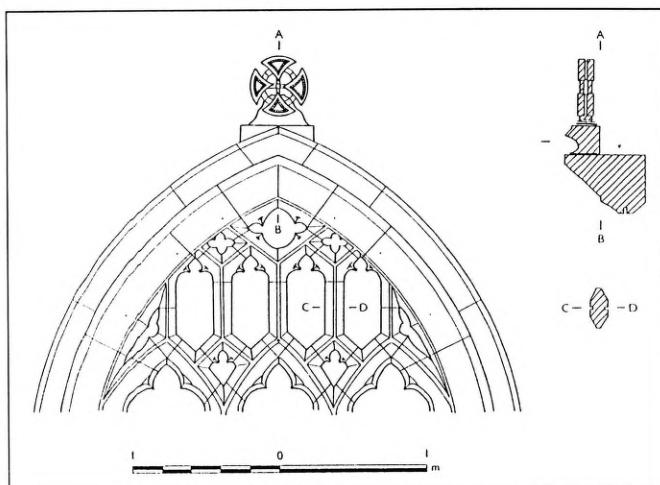
DURHAM

Durham, St Giles

Oliver Jessop, University of Durham

In 1828, the architect Thomas Henry Wyatt (1807–80), was commissioned to replace the 18th-century sash windows in the parish church of St Giles in Durham. In their place, he inserted four sandstone windows, each identically carved in an early decorated style. Unfortunately, only two survive and neither is in its original position. The reason for this loss is further renovation in the 1870s which involved removal of the southern wall of the nave. One of Wyatt's windows has been reset in the south-west wall of the church. The other sits in the garden of a nearby house and, having suffered from extensive weathering, only the tracery remains. This surviving tracery has been examined and recorded.

The window is carved from a medium grained yellow sandstone. It consists of three main lights with trefoil heads, above which is Perpendicular-style tracery. Surrounding the window head is a projecting drip mould and rising above the keystone are the weathered traces of a decorative carving, kept in place by mortared slates. This would have taken the form of St Cuthbert's cross (see figure for reconstruction). Each segment contained a narrow border, with a square beaded pattern. Behind the drip mould the stone is roughly hewn, forming the interface with the church wall. The upper face of each stone contains a hole



Geometrical correction of Wyatt's 1828 window tracery from the church of St Giles, Durham (Drawing: O Jessop)

for an iron cramp which was encased in lead. Located inside each window light is a concentric groove for the fixing of glazing. Finally, positioned across the outer face of the tracery, is a series of iron pins secured with lead, presumably for a protective grill.

The window in the south west wall of the church is narrower than the garden window and it is likely that it was intended for the main east window, also replaced in 1828. The design of Wyatt's windows was not unique – he used the same pattern throughout the country. Others occur in the parish churches of Coombe Bissett and Colderton in Wiltshire.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Gloucester Cathedral

Carolyn Heighway, Past Historic

Work at Gloucester Cathedral associated with conservation has led to the preparation of a plan of the Lady Chapel floor by Gloucester Excavation Unit. A copy of the tile design catalogue and plan has been deposited in the Cathedral Library.

In addition, the south elevation of the nave, which includes architectural elements of all dates from the 12th century onwards, has been assessed and the last remaining medieval statue (on buttress 5 counting from the east) drawn and photographed before temporary removal. Two other statues are thought to be late-medieval.

A watching brief accompanied the redesigning of the cloister garth, which included excavation of new paths and digging for a new fountain at its centre. The cobbled working surface found at a depth of 600m from ground level may date from the reconstruction of the cloister in the late 13th–14th century. A sample of mostly unstratified pottery (of Roman and post-medieval date) was retained and finds included a Roman melon bead, and a stone

14th-century knight's head with traces of paint. Several 18th-century monuments buried in the 19th century were uncovered, photographed and reburied. The medieval water tank, which has been open since the late 19th century, has been backfilled following a full survey.

Oldbury on the Hill, St Arild

Carolyn Heighway, Past Historic

During a watching brief, carried out by Carolyn Heighway of Past Historic and Nick Turner of CAT for the Churches Conservation Trust, rafters and purlins of reused braces and collars from an older roof, possibly a barn, were noted in the north porch. Evidence from the foundations suggested that the 18th century rebuilding of the chancel was on the old plan and that the north porch was an addition to the nave. The chancel roof was reassembled, presumably in the 18th century, from parts of a 14th-century 'wagon roof'.

Winchcombe, St Peter

Carolyn Heighway, Past Historic

In 1996 a watching brief on routine paving work for a Garden of Remembrance at the east end of St Peter's church was carried out for St Peter's PCC. The historical significance of the church and its eastern annexe is indicated by Bassett (1985, 86–7). The excavation encountered burial soil which contained pottery of medieval and post-medieval date and much human bone. Various *in situ* but truncated gravestones were uncovered including one dated 1698. This confirms that the area east of the eastern annexe had been used for burial since well before the late 17th century.

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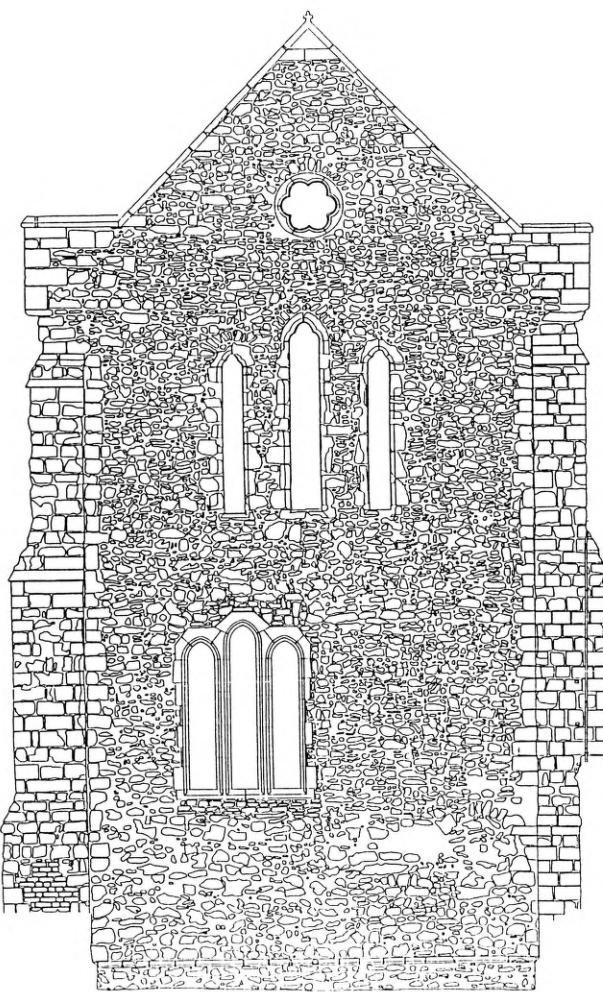
HAMPSHIRE

Portsmouth Cathedral

Wessex Archaeology

In May and June 1995 Wessex Archaeology undertook a standing building survey, before and during restoration work, on the external elevations of the Lady Chapel and the northern walls of the Chapel of St Thomas at Portsmouth Cathedral. Restoration work involved repointing of exposed mortar and limited stone replacement.

Photogrammetric survey and identification of stone types showed the elevations to be largely of one build dating to the late 12th century. This is confirmed by examination of the interior. The walls incorporate a wide range of building



Elevation of north wall of north-east transept, Portsmouth Cathedral
(Drawing: Wessex Archaeology)

materials (some likely to have been brought in as ballast on ships). With the exception of the Caen stone and perhaps some of the coarse oolitic limestone, it is unlikely that much of the stone was quarried specifically for construction of the cathedral and identification of particular quarries as sources has not been attempted. Subsequent building work on this part of the cathedral was largely confined to the probable raising of the roofline of the transepts (in the ?late 17th century), the blocking of a door in the nave, renewal/replacement of several windows, the majority of the corbels and parts of the buttresses, and the building of a parapet.

NORFOLK

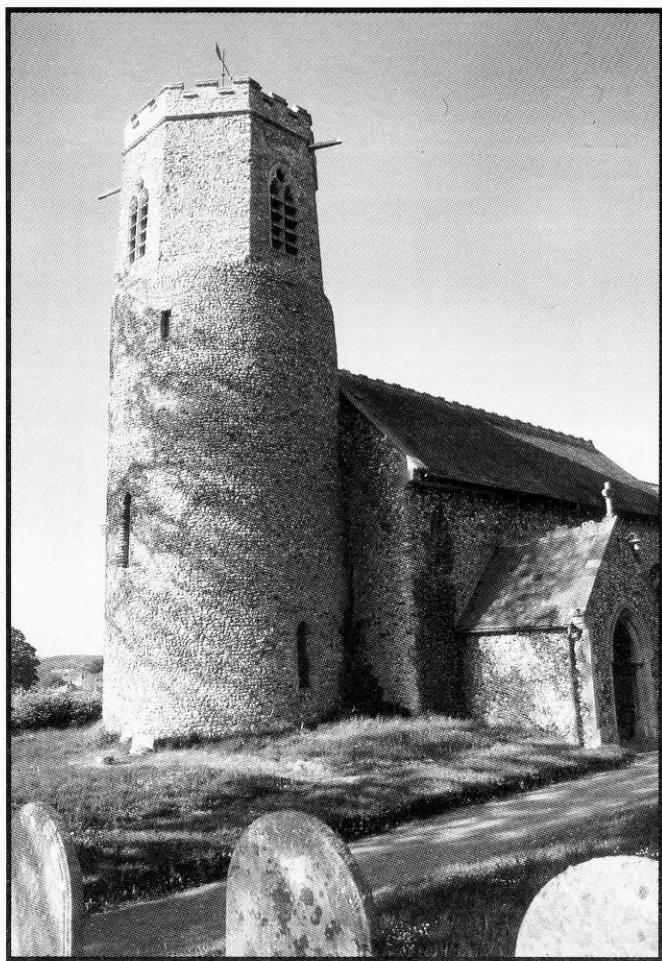
Wramplingham, SS Peter & Paul Tim Pestell

The parish church of SS Peter & Paul, Wramplingham, stands seven miles south-west of Norwich, on a hill overlooking the Tiffey river valley. The parish is small and

adjacent to the larger parish of Wymondham which, with its high 'contact score' of 19 bordering parishes, may be the remains of a minster *parouchia* (Penn 1996, 42). In fact, this whole area seems originally to have been part of an even larger estate based on Costessey, south of Norwich (Williamson 1993, 96–9). Set within its small churchyard, SS Peter & Paul appears to be a typical proprietary chapel which gained parochial independence around the 11th or 12th century. Survey of this understudied church by undergraduates in Landscape Archaeology at the University of East Anglia has demonstrated the many phases of building and alteration that the church has undergone.

The circular tower has been variously dated, ranging from the enthusiastic 'Middle Saxon' [sic] of Goode (1994, 152–53) to late Norman (Messent 1936, 282). Examination shows that it is in fact later still. The walling contains a complete and readily-visible set of putlog holes. All but a few are framed in brick, full lengths forming the sills and lintels, half-bricks framing the sides. From inside the tower at first and second floor level, several of the holes are empty and show whole bricks have been used as lintels through the full wall thickness. Brick is also used for the jambs and arch of a 1.5m tall lancet window at first floor level and in the three window slits at the top of the tower. These are contemporary with construction of the main walling. Finally, the doorway into the tower from the nave uses brick, arranged 'Tredington fashion' (Taylor & Taylor 1965, 11), in its arch. The use of brick solely in architectural features rather than *ad hoc* within the tower walling suggests that its use was still at a premium; it was perhaps considered prestigious enough to replace freestone, but still too expensive for walling in general. Brick is known to have arrived in East Anglia from the Low Countries by the mid 13th century and this would accord with the tall lancet used in the tower. The construction therefore demonstrates the continued popularity of the round tower in East Anglia well into the Early English period, using such traditional construction techniques as non-radial voussoirs in new materials, long after this technique's orthodox Anglo-Saxon date.

The nave appears to be medieval, with two Decorated-style windows in its south wall, and a Gothic arcade in the north wall. In fact, the arcade and north aisle date to 1872 and the windows in the south wall are also Victorian replacements. Robert Ladbrooke's 1823 engraving of the church shows three south windows, the easternmost of which seems to have been inserted following a bequest in the will of Avice Stone in 1470 (Cattermole & Cotton 1983, 275). No scar marks of this are evident in the external walling, but internally, unevenness in the plaster west of the eastern surviving window shows the former presence of a window similar in size to the current ones. The external face therefore appears to have been completely 'reskinned' rather than repointed; this



Wramplingham Church from the south-west (Photo T Pestell)

phenomenon is known from several other flint churches in Norfolk. There are two clues to the nave's date. The first is a small Norman doorway built into the east end of the Victorian north aisle. An architect's plan of the proposed aisle in the Norfolk Record Office shows it was once located opposite the nave south door, a common arrangement in such small parish churches. Secondly, the south-west and north-west quoins are of whole flints, the south wall face visibly battering back. Being *ex situ* and renewed in parts, the door cannot now be shown to be original to the nave walling, and all-flint quoins cannot in themselves be dated. Together though, they indicate a late 11th- or early 12th-century date for the nave. Although the nave and chancel are today of the same width and are not divided by a tower arch, a scar line indicates the original extent of the nave walling and shows the nave to have been some 7m x 14m, laid out as a simple double-square rectangle.

Survey of the surrounding churchyard clearly showed the Victorian extension, marked by a dramatic drop of up to 0.6m in ground level from the built-up medieval portion, where the former boundary had been removed. Discounting this extension reduces the size of the medieval churchyard

from the current 0.9 acres (0.364 ha) to a modest two thirds of an acre (0.263 ha), concomitant with the size of a small proprietary foundation.

The survey at Wramplingham has provided a detailed plan and more thorough analysis of one of the hundreds of overlooked minor Norfolk parish churches. It has demonstrated how long some building techniques and architectural fashions could survive, and how even poor, small churches could be considerably altered whilst still preserving elements of their original structure.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the Landscape Archaeology undergraduates for their enthusiasm and attention to detail.

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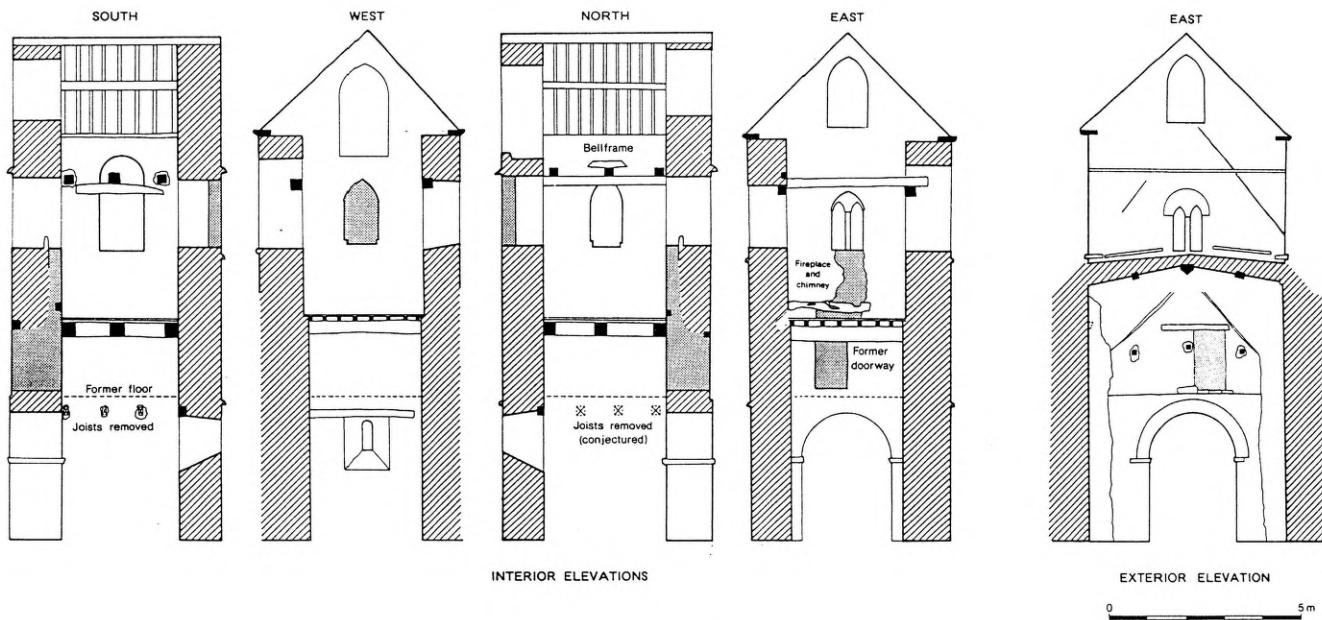
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Radstone, St Lawrence Northamptonshire Archaeology

Recent recording accompanying repairs to the tower of St Lawrence's Church, and a related watching brief during the digging of new rainwater drains and soakaways was funded by Northamptonshire County Council and carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology.

Described as possessing a Norman west tower, with possible 11th-century origins (RCHME 1982), the church has been identified as an Anglo-Saxon minster within the late Saxon royal estate centred on King's Sutton (Franklin 1985, 81–3). The RCHME report identifies the tower arch imposts and the first two stages of the tower as being of mid 11th-century form and of a single build, together with a blocked doorway above the arch which formerly connected the tower and nave. The surviving early belfry is considered to date from c1200, and the tower was subsequently heightened to accommodate a new belfry in the 14th century. Three successive nave roof lines have been postulated, prior to the present roof.

A complete run of churchwardens' accounts survives for the period 1676–1850 (Northamptonshire Record Office [NRO] X 8429: 1676–1771, 2770/7; 1771–1850, 2770/8). In combination with other sources (particularly the Archdeacons' Visitation books 1682–91, NRO: X 3594;



St Lawrence's Church, Radstone: tower elevations (Northamptonshire Archaeology)

74), they are invaluable in tracing post-medieval works to the church.

Excavation exposed a 1m-wide robber trench, 3.2m from the northern wall of the nave, which marked the northern edge of a rubble layer and probably indicates the site of a former north aisle.

Following recent work it appears that the church dates to the 11th century, when the ground and first floor stages of the tower were constructed. The tower arch, ground floor west window, and first floor doorway connecting the chapel with the nave, possibly via a gallery, relate to this phase. A former first floor level is indicated by blocked joist sockets. The next phase, beginning c1200, involved raising the early first floor to encompass new bell-openings, while the chapel at first floor level doubled as the ringing floor.

In the 14th/15th – 16th/17th centuries the roof of the nave was rebuilt to a steep pitch, encompassing the old bell-opening at the east. A new opening in the south wall was fashioned from a reused window, while the old bell-opening in the west wall was blocked up. New belfry gables and bell-openings were created from reused and cut-down windows. These were louvred at least from 1682 and a new first floor was inserted as the ringing floor. The present bells were hung before 1552. The nave roof was subsequently dropped to its present position. A fireplace and chimney were later inserted in the east wall, with a smoke vent through the former eastern bell-opening, and a fire which smoke-blackened the walls may have necessitated a second new bell frame in 1733 (the existing example is unsooted). Both bellframe and belfry were regularly repaired in 1676–1850 and the tower was re-roofed in 1807.

A full report is held by the Northamptonshire Sites and Monuments Record.

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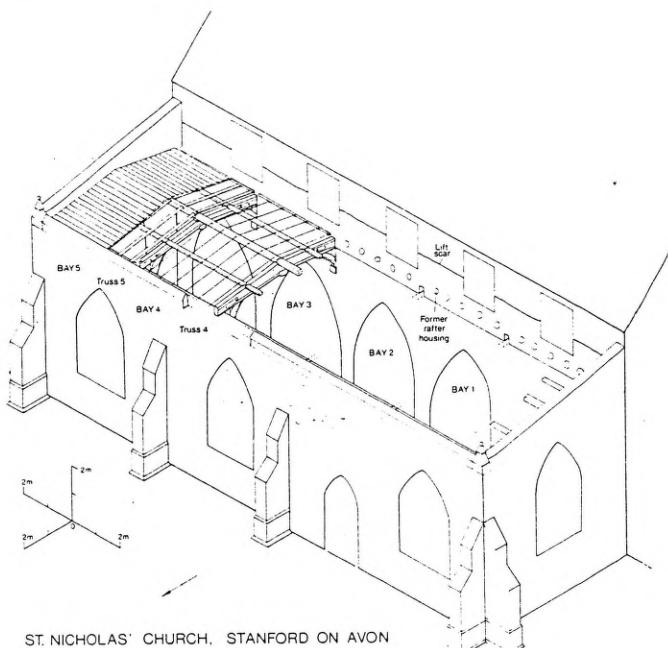
Stanford-on Avon, St Nicholas Northamptonshire Archaeology

Extensive repair of the north aisle roof of St Nicholas' Church, Stanford-on-Avon, necessitated dismantling and an associated programme of archaeological recording, funded by English Heritage, was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology.

The most recent summary of the church's architectural history is by the RCHME (1986), whose suggested dating was adopted as the basis of the present work. Their analysis describes a chancel and aisles of c1325, with additions and changes made throughout the 14th century; the clerestory was probably added c1500 when the nave and aisle roofs were framed and the church was extensively refurbished in the 17th and 18th centuries.

The eastern half of the roof was recorded *in situ* and component parts of the western half recorded *ex situ*, while repair was under way.

The north aisle roof lies above a rectangular aisle, 17.06m long x 4.68m wide (60ft x 15ft 4in), which is entered on the inside through the five-bay nave arcade. Commentators have long agreed that the church was originally covered by a single roof, spanning both nave and



St Nicholas' Church, Stanford-on-Avon: isometric view of the north aisle and its roof from the north-west (Northamptonshire Archaeology)

aisles (*c*1325–*c*1500). When this was replaced by the present roofs, the clerestory was introduced. Evidence of this is a horizontal lift-scar on the exterior of the nave north wall, marking the highest point of the old fabric and the lowest point of the new, which is broken only by the introduction of the five square-headed two-light windows of the clerestory.

The roof is of five bays, each between 3.18m and 3.55m wide (10ft 5in – 11ft 7in). The bays are formed by six wall-fast trusses comprising moulded, cambered tie-beams resting partly upon corbel-mounted wall-posts and upward braces, with each assembly joined by a moulded ridge-beam and moulded purlins. Two downward-sloping stumps of decayed timbers protrude from the nave wall immediately on top of the decayed aisle wall-plate. These are possibly the sole vestiges of the earliest aisle roof of *c*1325–*c*1500 and subsequently became the anchorage points for a cornice of *c*1500.

The tie-beams are extensively decorated with continuous mouldings at either side of a central boss, in each case integral to the beam and deeply carved in relief depicting a flower or foliage. The tie-beams at either end of the roof are only moulded on the inner, visible sides and the bosses are left as rough, unfinished lumps where they fit against the masonry of the gables. Major stylistic differences between the tie beams, ridge beams and purlins of each half suggest that the roof frame was prefabricated by two different carpenters.

There are signs of two decorative schemes on the underside of the roof. The earlier comprises foliate decoration picked out in a black-outlined white paint against a red background. It was subsequently overpainted

when both the aisle roofs and that of the nave were (re-)decorated. In the new scheme the trusses, ridge, purlins and rafters were painted with yellow ochre, streaked brown in naive imitation of graining. Similarly the soffit of boards between the rafters was painted in red ochre with repeating ovals in dark brown, presumably to imitate the growth-rings around knots. Spandrels were blocked up at this time and decorative corbels inserted below the wall-posts. Documentary sources suggest that the redecoration probably took place between 1686 and 1703.

Dendrochronological analysis confirms the felling date range of the roof timbers as a whole to be between 1488 and 1513, with the actual felling date estimated as *c*1498 (Howard *et al* 1996). The study has also pointed to the possibility that the timber of the two halves of the roof derived from separate sources, lending weight to the suggestion that two different carpenters worked on the roof, probably concurrently.

A full report his held by the Northamptonshire Sites and Monuments Record.

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NORTHUMBERLAND

Alnmouth Old Church A Aspinall, F Bettess & R Connell

The search is on to re-establish the position of the Old Church at Alnmouth, a village lying on the Northumberland coast about 35 miles north of Newcastle upon Tyne. The 1865 edition of the 1:2500 scale Ordnance Survey map does not give a precise location for the church, unlike the 1895, 1921 and 1959 editions which show the conventional sign of a cross, but each in a significantly different position. Wise and Ross (1954, 25) stressed the importance of the site and suggested a location, but the position they favoured does not fit well with other evidence.

Alnmouth has been associated with 'Twyford', which Bede described as the venue for the Synod at which Cuthbert was elected bishop. Eustace Fitz-John, in a confirmation of a gift he had made earlier in 1147, described a plot of ground as being 'in Alnmue, where the chief house of the canons is situated'. A survey of Alnmouth compiled in 1567 states that the chapel was once served by three priests and a clerk. It is clear that this was an ecclesiastical establishment of some importance and it has been argued that it might have been a minster church (Bettess G 1994, 178). Significantly two pieces of a

Alnmouth Old Church from south-east in 1783 (from Grose's Antiquities)

10th-century Saxon cross were found in 1789 'near the ruins of St Waleric's Chapel', an old name for the church.

When first built, the church occupied a promontory site on a low hill at the end of a southward pointing peninsula overlooking the estuary of the River Aln. Evidence for the appearance of the church shortly before its final destruction comes from two prints of 1771, another of 1783 (see figure) and a sketch of 1804. These show the church was a cruciform structure, with a chancel two bays long and a two aisled nave with a length of at least three bays and probably more (*ibid*, 153). The transept had a clerestory, and both it and the nave appear to have been of considerable height. When Thomas Wilkin surveyed Alnmouth in 1791, the village was still connected to Church Hill and some of the remains of the church were still standing. These, as shown on the map, consisted of the two transepts and the stub of the chancel. This fits well with the later illustrations. The prints also show how rapid the rate of erosion was at this time. In 1806, during a fierce gale, the river broke through the isthmus which joined the hill to the village, leaving the latter on a truncated peninsula and the hill isolated on the south side of the river. The remains of the church are said to have fallen down during the gale, and since then the site has deteriorated and the exact position of the church has been lost.

Evidence on the ground consists of a short length of wall running almost due north, and two grave stones. The wall is almost invisible and covered with grass, but it can be detected over a length of about 2 metres. Of the two grave stones, one lies face down and the other, while badly eroded, records a burial in 1741. They both lie well to the south of the wall. Preliminary geophysical prospection has been carried out in the vicinity of these remains with the aim of accurately defining the location of the church and work is progressing on analysis of the data. A reconstruction is being prepared from pictorial evidence and one of the main aims is to reconstruct the ground plan,

for which some measure of confirmation is provided by the 1791 map.

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SUFFOLK

Barsham, Church of the most Holy Trinity
Stuart Boulter, Archaeology Division, Suffolk County Council

Scaffolding erected to facilitate repairs to the wall of the largely Norman round tower provided an opportunity for archaeologists from Suffolk County Council to carry out a programme of recording. The archaeological works were concentrated on the internal elevation of the second (14th-century) stage of the tower's three-part construction and its interfaces with the preceding (Norman) and later (Tudor) stages. Funding was provided by English Heritage in the form of a grant made to the Barsham Parochial Church Council.

St John the Baptist, Onehouse, Stowmarket
Stuart Boulter, Archaeology Division, Suffolk County Council

Round towers are a common feature of churches in East Anglia, particularly Norfolk (119) and Suffolk (41), and have often been attributed to the pre-Conquest period. There is no doubt that the tradition originated in the Saxon period, but evidence suggests that the majority are probably Norman with other later examples dating to at least the

St John the Baptist, Onehouse. Taken after rebuilding of upper portions of the tower (Photo: D Baxter)

14th century. Many which have traditionally been given Saxon construction dates do not exhibit any architectural evidence to support this. One such tower is that of St John the Baptist, Onehouse, where recent recording work carried out by archaeologists from Suffolk County Council, on behalf of English Heritage and Onehouse PCC, proved that the tower had been constructed no earlier than the 14th century.

Collapse of the tower was imminent and it was leaning to the west, away from the nave gable wall. Central portions were exhibiting the 'chinese lantern' effect with large vertical cracks opening up. Grouting and repointing works carried out in 1980 may have been responsible for an acceleration in the deterioration resulting from the use of hard cement mortar. By 1983 a supporting scaffold had to be erected while the possibilities for stabilisation were considered.

The experimental method finally agreed involved the injection of a resin grout into the tower walls. By 1989 the bottom third of the tower had been consolidated, but costs had been higher than anticipated and continuing deterioration led to a change in plan. English Heritage agreed to grant aid a programme of works which would include the partial demolition, underpinning and subsequent rebuilding of the tower.

Associated archaeological recording proved that the tower was of one build up to a point level with the top of the belfry windows, with evidence in the wall core suggesting that rebuilding had occurred from this point up. The change in wall core fabric coincided with changes in the external facing and four phases were recognised above the level of the rebuild, with bricks commonly used as a facing material. The external wall facing up to the level of the rebuild was mainly roughly split flint cobbles with no obvious coursing, set in mortar which was continuous with that of the wall core.

The internal fabric of the wall in a 1m wide vertical strip, where the facing had been removed by the contractors, was examined. The rebuilt portion of the tower was noticeably different from the lower section in that the mortar was darker in colour with the flint courses more widely spaced (10–15cm) and less distinct.

Below the level of the rebuild, the wall core fabric consisted of flint courses at 5–10cm intervals, with faint partings visible in the mortar running between the individual flints within a course. In addition, air gaps existed immediately below the flints but not above. This suggests that the flints and mortar were introduced separately and not pre-mixed. Breaks in the constructional sequence were recognised as double layers of mortar occurring at intervals of between 55cm and 1m.

Whether these constructional phases represent daily breaks or greater periods of time is difficult to say, but it is clear that the double mortar layers represented the

resumption of work after a length of time which had allowed the top layer of the preceding constructional phase to set. To restart the sequence after the break a layer of fresh mortar was introduced within which the subsequent flint course could be laid. This would be followed immediately by another layer of mortar which was then tamped down. With the sequence now resumed, alternate layers of flint and mortar would be introduced and tamped down.

No evidence for any form of shuttering was recorded and the only structural features recognised were putlog holes, a number of which were covered by roof tiles. The putlog holes continued right through the walls suggesting that the scaffolding had been of cantilever type without the need for vertical supports.

When the level of the tower wall had been reduced below the present ridge of the nave roof it became clear that the earlier nave roof and indeed the nave walls, had originally been approximately 1.4m lower. The cast of an earlier gable end had been preserved in the fabric of the present nave gable wall, itself a rebuild of relatively recent date.

Examination of the face of the tower wall, where it abutted the nave, suggested that it had been built against an existing structure up to the level of the original nave walls. The two putlog holes recorded in the tower wall fabric, above the level of the original gable end wall, would only have been serviceable if the heightening of the nave walls occurred contemporaneously with, or post-dated, construction of the tower.

The masonry of the simple, pointed, two-centred arched belfry window openings was cut from at least two tomb lids of Barnack limestone. Decoration on the lids had survived and reconstruction suggested they were of 12th- or 13th-century date. The belfry window masonry appeared to have been reset and so could not be used as dating evidence for the tower, but the masonry from a lower window on the west side of the tower, also formed from 12th- or 13th-century tomb lid fragments, showed no indication of being inserted at a later date. Further dating evidence was recorded in the splays of the tower window openings which had been constructed entirely from roof tiles set on edge, in mortar which appeared continuous with the wall core fabric. Although no absolute date could be attributed to the roof tiles they suggest a post-Norman date for the construction of the window splays and hence the tower.

Further evidence for a construction date of the tower was provided by the excavations associated with underpinning. The tower footing was only broken by recently excavated test-holes and had not been encroached upon by burials. A number of pottery sherds were recovered from the footing trench and from graves truncated by it. Spot-dating for the pottery suggested that the burials were of 13th- or

14th-century date which alone appears to justify a construction date for the tower of no earlier than the 14th century.

Although the direct stratigraphic relationship between the nave and the tower has been lost due to the later rebuilding of the west nave wall, it was evident that the techniques used in their construction were different, with obvious flint courses in the facing of the nave and a more random arrangement in the tower. Additional circumstantial evidence for different construction dates was provided by a limestone plinth running round the base of the tower. No similar feature was apparent at the base of the nave walls. Further evidence for the discontinuity between the nave and the tower, and indeed for the nave predating the tower, was provided by burials which respected the nave wall footings but were cut by those of the tower.

Detailed examination of the nave walls provided structural evidence which suggested Norman workmanship. Original diagnostic architectural features were limited to a single internal window jamb and a small adjoining section of the window splay. The nave wall fabric consisted of prominent horizontal courses of unknapped flints with accompanying lift-lines which are typical features of a building technique prevalent in the Norman period, although earlier and later examples cannot be discounted.

These results clearly show that, in the case of St John the Baptist, Onehouse, the date for construction of the round tower was significantly later than had previously been accepted and certainly no earlier than the 14th century. In light of this a reappraisal of other round towers is necessary.

Wantisden, St John the Baptist

Stuart Boulter, Archaeology Division, Suffolk County Council

Recording carried out during repairs to the facing of the Norman nave and chancel walls, in the summer of 1994, confirmed that the chancel had been extended in the first half of the 14th century. In addition, an unusual feature in the lift lines around the south doorway of the nave proved that the wall had been raised to a level above that of the top of the door arch prior to the construction of the arch itself.

Westhall, St Andrew

Stuart Boulter, Archaeology Division, Suffolk County Council

Observations during recording in advance of repair confirmed that the Norman church comprised nave, central tower and chancel. However, a previous suggestion that the Norman nave walls were raised to accommodate the insertion of perpendicular windows was disproved, as the truncated masonry stubs of the Norman corbel table were

recorded, *in situ*, along the top of the wall below the eaves of the present thatched roof.

WILTSHIRE

Draycot Cerne

Carolyn Heighway, Past Historic

Draycot Cerne is a small 13th-century church without a village, adjacent to a manor house (now demolished). A photographic record was made of the nave west wall after plaster stripping and an evaluation of under-pew levels carried out for the Churches Conservation Trust. This discovered the debris of medieval plaster removed in the 19th century: some identified by Ann Ballantine as being of 12th–13th century type. The wooden floor was set on wooden sill beams which, in turn, rested on the original medieval plaster floors containing post-holes. These floor levels remain undisturbed.

WORCESTERSHIRE

Pershore Abbey

Kevin Blockley, Cambrian Archaeological Projects

Excavations in the monastic choir, crossing and south transept of Pershore Abbey were undertaken in the summer of 1996 in advance of internal re-ordering and insertion of an underfloor heating system.

The standing remains of the abbey comprise the original Norman fabric of the crossing and south transept, built around 1100; the choir and lower section of the tower rebuilt during the first half of the 13th century; and stone vaulting erected shortly after a fire in 1288. After the dissolution of the abbey in 1539, the crossing and choir were purchased by the parish and the remainder of the building, including the sacristy off the south transept, the nave, Lady Chapel and entire claustral complex were demolished.

The earliest foundations, constructed of rammed gravel in trenches around 1.7m wide, appeared in all the test holes on the north and south sides and the west end of the choir, and terminated in an east apse whose foundations spread further west than the curving inner wall-face. This inner face was polygonal and the foundations appear to represent part of an Anglo-Saxon phase of the abbey.

Although on plan, the foundations seem to represent a compact structure measuring c17m by 11.5m externally, such a small percentage was uncovered and Victorian disturbances were so extensive that the fragments located may simply represent the choir of the church, perhaps with the nave extending to the west below the crossing of the Romanesque abbey, and porticus (or perhaps aisles) to the north and south. The size of foundations and width of the church compare well with other examples such as the

9th-century church located beneath Canterbury Cathedral or that at All Saints, Brixworth, dating perhaps (although controversially) to the mid to late 8th century.

Rebuilding of the abbey after the Conquest commenced towards the end of the 11th century and apparently involved the total demolition of the Anglo-Saxon church. It had been hoped that excavation would indicate the form of the Romanesque choir, in particular, whether it had an ambulatory, but much of the eastern end had been destroyed by the insertion of 18th- and 19th-century brick-lined burial vaults. Short stretches of the south arcade foundation were located and the plan appears to show that there would have been insufficient space for an ambulatory.

Two phases of rebuilding of the choir took place in the 13th century. The first, probably starting in the 1220s, is more elaborate than the second (dating to the 1230s) and uses freestanding Purbeck shafts. The first phase of work on the eastern chapels may have been conducted whilst the majority of the Romanesque choir was still standing, but the rebuilding of the area between the eastern chapels and the crossing necessitated the wholesale demolition of the choir. It is this second phase for which most evidence survived, allowing reconstruction of an almost complete plan of the pier foundations.

The next major phase of activity was the insertion of 18th- and 19th-century brick-lined vaults of which 18 were located. A number had been breached during the 1860s renovation of the church and large quantities of human bones had been deposited in them. Five of the coffins were in a good state of preservation and all of these appear to have had three layers – an internal wooden coffin, a lead coffin (one painted with white rectilinear designs), and an outer wooden coffin, often with a covering of cloth and brass studs.

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YORKSHIRE

Dewsbury, All Saints

Stuart Wrathmell, West Yorkshire Archaeology Service

As part of a major redevelopment programme at All Saints' Parish Church, Dewsbury, the West Yorkshire Archaeology Service was commissioned to design and prepare a permanent exhibition to illustrate the history of Christianity

in the north, and of All Saints' Church in particular.

Leaving aside its traditional but unsubstantiated association with St Paulinus and his mission to this region in AD 627, the church was evidently an important ecclesiastical centre in Anglo-Saxon times. It is thought to have been a minster church, with a large *parochia* extending over about half the modern county of West Yorkshire. It contains an outstanding collection of Anglo-Saxon sculptural fragments and part of the nave has recently been identified as surviving Anglo-Saxon masonry.

The displays are located in three areas of the church. The north transept contains graphic panels devoted to the conversion of England to Christianity, the northern saints and the development of Christian faith. The south transept houses the Anglo-Saxon sculptural fragments, exhibited against a curving timber wall. Above it, a large banner displays W G Collingwood's reconstruction drawing of the 'Paulinus' cross, now thought to be a composite of several crosses. Nearby, part of a hogback monument and a fine late 12th-century grave slab are displayed. Associated panels illustrate the history of the church at Dewsbury from the Anglo-Saxon minster to the medieval parish church and the rebuilding work of the past three centuries.

'All Saints' is open every day of the year, and in addition to worship and exhibition areas it has a small cafeteria, and facilities for meetings and conferences.

Kirkdale, St Gregory's Minster

Philip Rahtz & Lorna Watts

Work has been in progress since 1994 on St Gregory's Minster, Kirkdale and the surrounding area (Watts *et al* 1996). New observations have been made on the location and character of a church earlier than that recorded in the well-known sundial inscription of the 1060s and excavations have provided details of the foundations of the western end and nearby graves.

The field to the north of the church, separated from the churchyard by a medieval and later wall, is now ridge and furrow. Excavations here have defined a former ground level, believed to be that of a postulated pre-Conquest monastery. Geophysical survey suggests that this may extend over c5000 sq m. Separated from its church in the 11th or 12th century, the area was converted to arable use.

The earliest features here are graves. These are succeeded by a posthole structure associated with metal-working debris and late Saxon pottery. An outstanding find in these contexts is a piece of scrap lead sheet, inscribed with c20 characters in Anglo-Saxon insular majuscule of the 8th or 9th century. The text appears to refer to a 'bone container' – a reliquary or ossuary, to which the plate was attached. Four new pieces of Anglo-Saxon sculpture have also been found to add to Professor Lang's *Corpus* (Lang 1991).

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Scotland

Compiled by Morag Cross

ABERDEENSHIRE

Bourtie Kirk

Friends of Grampian Stones

Discovery of a unique painted ceiling/frieze under a coat of 1930s paint in historic Bourtie Kirk surprised conservators and art historians from RCAHMS, Historic Scotland and Aberdeen's branch of the Scottish Architectural Heritage Society. Local historian and CSA Churches Inventory researcher Marian Youngblood alerted HS to its existence. Continuing restoration has revealed apostles, a vernacular heraldic device, vineleaves and a geometric lattice framing a heavenly blue sky decorated with gold-leaf stars.

Fetternear, Bishops' summer palace
N Q Bogdan, Scottish Castle Survey

The second season of excavation at the pre-Reformation summer palace of the Bishops of Aberdeen at Fetternear took place during July 1996. A re-excavation of an unpublished late 19th-century excavation, it also forms part of a large-scale research programme – the Scottish Episcopal Palaces Project, the purpose of which is to examine the relationship between ecclesiastical and castellar architecture in medieval Scotland.

FIFE

Balmerino Abbey

John Lewis, Scotia Archaeology Ltd

The excavation of service trenches to the north of the abbey in July 1996 indicated that the east range may have extended beyond the reredorter. The great drain was uncovered nearby. Further north was a wide, cobbled road, probably of monastic origin.

MORAY

Elgin Cathedral

John Lewis, Scotia Archaeology Ltd

During an excavation in September 1996 between the chapter house and the Brodie Aisle to its east the remains of two walls, 8.5m apart and both truncated by the foundations of the chapter house, were uncovered.

STIRLINGSHIRE

Stirling, Blackfriars Church

R & C Page

Following King Alexander II's (1214–49) invitation of the Blackfriars (Dominicans, Friars Preachers) to Scotland, a friary was founded in Stirling c1233. Numerous references to the friary and church occur in histories of the town but, in riots associated with the Reformation in June 1559, the friary and church were destroyed and records of their exact location lost.

Solely on the basis of oral tradition, the 1858 edition of the Ordnance Survey map recorded the supposed site of the 'Dominican monastery' on the east side of Murray Place and Maxwell Place, near the foot of Friars Street. Then, in 1903, a substantial wall with buttresses was found during demolition of houses in Murray Place. This was interpreted by Ronald (1904) as the south wall of the Dominican church. Careful study of documentary sources, in particular tracing land ownership through the Stirling archive collection of sasines (Scottish legal records of tenure) showed that Ronald was correct and the precise location of the church is now certain (Page & Page 1997a forthcoming).

During recent excavations the projecting part of Ronald's wall was discovered and robbed out lengths were indicated by old lime and fist-sized stones with attached mortar. This adds 13.5m to the length of the church reported in 1904. It now appears that the church was 27.5m long and 6.5m wide (internally), with 1.5m thick walls. The wall at the eastern end was flimsier than that found in 1904 and lacked buttresses, indicating two phases of building. At the eastern end was a semicircular apse. Such apses went out of fashion c1180, over 50 years before the Blackfriars arrived in Stirling. It has been suggested that an existing church was taken over by the Blackfriars (Randla 1996) and this may be the best explanation of the field evidence.

Over 200 fragments of human bone were recovered during excavation, in addition to an undisturbed female skeleton which had been damaged on the left side, presumably during robbing of the wall. This shows the burial was aligned east–west close to the outside of the south wall of the church, precisely where a buttress might have been expected had the wall found in 1904 continued

eastward. The head, neck, upper vertebrae, right shoulder and top of the arm were missing, evidently at the time of burial. Instead of the head, a large mass of clay was found (slightly larger than a football). Removal of the skeleton showed that the clay extended in a continuous sheet about 3cm thick beneath the body. There were no indications of a coffin or other grave furnishings and slight traces of staining on the upper surface of the level clay sheet may result from body fluids released during decay.

Close to the left hand of the skeleton were the remains of a child of less than one year old. Unusually, the skull bones were fitted inside each other, suggesting deposition some time after decomposition of the body.

We would be interested to know of any other such clay beds in contemporary cemeteries¹ and full details can be

found in the excavation report (Page & Page 1997b forthcoming).

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Notes

1. Either contact the authors at 'Kingarth', Airthrey Road, Stirling, FK9 5PH or write to the editor of *Church Archaeology*.