

## WEB PAGES

### *Church archaeology Internet pages*

*Christopher J Brooke*

One of the most exciting developments in church history and archaeology databases went online on 18 February 2000. The Diocese of Southwell's Church History Project was the brainchild of local architect John Severn, who sadly died in 1998 just as the project was getting underway. It was John's idea to compile a definitive database of every Nottinghamshire church – extant, ruined, and vanished – which would be well researched and which would correct the countless errors and misconceptions of past church guidebooks and leaflets. After his untimely death, a small group convened to determine how best to continue this work and it was decided that, in addition to a standard paper record, the information should be made available as widely as possible as an aid to researchers worldwide. The result is an internet site which lists every Anglican church in the Southwell Diocese (all of Nottinghamshire and a bit of South Yorkshire) that will eventually contain standard descriptive entries for each building and site. The main features are a comprehensive history, location map, ample photographs and plans, details of fixtures and fittings, and a section detailing the archaeology of the building including reports on excavations and watching briefs; it also features a statement of potential based upon fieldwork and previous evaluation.

At present only a few churches have been completed to the exacting standard required, but over 50 more are currently being researched. Details of the project, an index to all sites and descriptive entries may be found at <http://southwellchurches.nottingham.ac.uk>. The site will be updated regularly as archaeological work takes place and as further research adds more information.

- Publication of church archaeology elsewhere on the web continues to be sporadic. There are some useful short reports on recent work, for example AOC Archaeology's description of the Cille Bhrea Chapel project at Lemplair in the Highland Region, which may be seen at <http://www.aocarchaeology.com/cbhrea.html>, and the short description by GUARD of excavations at Govan parish church at <http://www.gla.ac.uk/archaeology/guard/projects/govan/govan1.html>. Short reports also appear on the pages of the North Hertfordshire Museums Service, see <http://www.fleck.freeserve.co.uk/nhms/let/arch12.html>

and .../arch37.htm for reports of evaluation and watching briefs at Old Letchworth and Ashwell.

- English Heritage publishes previous Archaeology Reviews, which include some work on churches, for example [http://www.eng-h.gov.uk/ArchRev/rev96\\_7/chs.htm](http://www.eng-h.gov.uk/ArchRev/rev96_7/chs.htm) which carries a very brief discussion of a consultation on the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Cambridge. It is a great pity that, having discussed the problems of the removal of Anthony Salvin's interior furnishings, there is no link to a follow-up of the outcome. This highlights the great strength and weakness of the internet; publication is easy and forming links to later articles is equally simple, but keeping items up-to-date seems to be a challenge that few are prepared to accept.

- A much more comprehensive report, on an archaeological watching brief at the church of All Saints, Nunney, Somerset, may be found at <http://www.archaeology.demon.co.uk/3125.html>. This is a very detailed description of the church and the results of the watching brief, and it even includes a detailed bibliography. It is, however, sadly light on illustrations and photographs.

- There are a few useful local authority websites, for example Chester City Council which publishes details of excavations at St John the Baptist, Chester, at [http://www.chestercc.gov.uk/heritage/archaeology/StJohn\\_the\\_Baptist.html](http://www.chestercc.gov.uk/heritage/archaeology/StJohn_the_Baptist.html). Hampshire County Council also has a number of accounts taken from past annual reports, mainly concerned with watching briefs and evaluations which can be found at: <http://www.hants.gov.uk/arch/>

- For those concerned with mural painting, there is an excellent resource at <http://www.paintedchurch.org/conpage.htm> that provides detailed information on wall painting subjects and their location in Britain. Although not yet complete, it is a good starting point for examples of specific themes and iconography.

- Looking beyond the UK there is a wide range of sites with information on church archaeology and specific projects, though they vary considerably in quality and content. One of the most detailed American sites describes the history and archaeology of St Peter's Church, Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. This is a model page; it is meticulously researched and has plenty of photographs and links to other sites and is well worth a visit: <http://www.people.virginia.edu/~ccf4/Loudoun/StPeterhistory1.html>. Another US site, which details the history of Christ Church, Alexandria, Virginia, is to be found at [http://ci.alexandria.va.us/oha/archaeology-sites/pia\\_ch\\_church\\_cemetery.html](http://ci.alexandria.va.us/oha/archaeology-sites/pia_ch_church_cemetery.html).

• European church archaeology reports are, on the whole, sparse. However, there are well-constructed pages, with ample illustrations, of the conservation of Probota Monastery, Romania, including details of archaeological work, at <http://www.probotamonastery.ro/> There is useful information on the recovery of stolen medieval frescos and mosaics from churches in Cyprus at <http://www.archaeology.org/9807/etc/special.html>, and a brief, but interesting, review of excavations at Kazan Cathedral in Red Square, Moscow, which includes a reasonable plan, at <http://www.athenapub.com/rusarch1.htm>. However, to glean more information you will have to subscribe to the Journal of Russian Archaeology. A short description of the

history and some archaeology of the church of the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem, appears at <http://www.us-israel.org/jsource/Archaeology/church.html>.

*Dr Christopher J Brooke lectures at the University of Nottingham and leads research in archaeological ground-based remote sensing. He is also head of Heritage with Leicestershire County Council and is a member of Southwell and Leicester Diocesan Advisory Committees.*