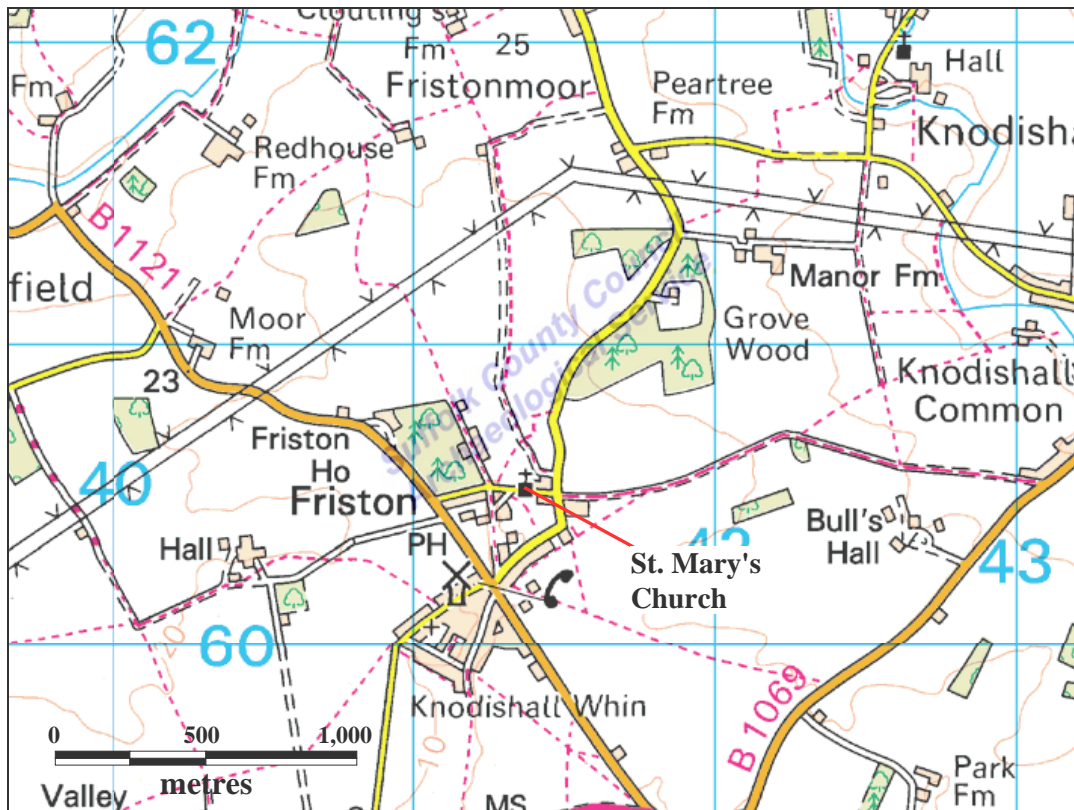


**The Church of St. Mary, Friston (FRS 007),
Report of Archaeological Recording.
SCCAS Rpt No. 2005/141, Oasis No.Suffolkc1-10256**

Introduction

The church of St. Mary, Friston is located at TM 4135 6049 (Fig. 1) at approximately 15 metres OD on the north-east side of the present village.

A program of works aimed at alleviating the problems with damp and salt crystallisation on the internal walls of the nave and, particularly, the chancel involved the removal of the bottom two metres of external render on the chancel east wall and c.1.1 metre on the nave north wall. A condition of the faculty grant required that archaeological recording of the exposed wall fabric be undertaken.



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Fig. 1 1:25,000 scale OS map extract showing the location of the site

Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service Field Projects Team was commissioned by the project architect (David Lemon) and the fieldwork was carried out on September the 13th 2005.

Methodology

A site visit was made after the contractors had removed the render from the nave and chancel walls.

The exposed wall fabric and architectural features were examined and detailed notes regarding their character and composition were made.

A photographic record (both monochrome prints & digital shots) were taken which will be added to the Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service Photographic Archive held at Shire Hall, Bury St. Edmunds.

Selected digital photographs were chosen to produce the panoramic shots included in this report as Plates 1, 2 and 3.

Fabric Descriptions

Fabric 1

Hard cement render covering wall faces of both the nave and chancel (Plates 1, 2 & 3). Removed to a height of c.1.1 metre on the north walls of nave and chancel and to c.2 metres on the east chancel wall.

Fabric 2

Red-brick used to construct diagonal buttresses at eastern corners of the chancel and on those of the north nave and chancel walls. In addition, strips at the north-east end of the eastern chancel wall, the north-east end of the north-chancel wall and north-west end of the north nave wall were also constructed in this fabric which could be seen to be continuous with the buttresses (Plates 1, 2 & 3). Similar bricks were also recorded in the packing around the inserted windows in both the east chancel and north nave walls.

The bricks measured 23 x 10.5 x 7 centimetres (9 x 4¹/₄ x 2¹/₂ inches) and were bonded with a relatively hard lime mortar.

Fabric 3

Located in a narrow, 0.75 metres, wide strip at the southern end of the east chancel wall bounded by ***Fabric 4*** to the north and ***Fabric 2*** to the south and included a small area of ***Fabric 2*** brick work (Plate 1).

Comprised predominantly of roughly lain flints and included a moderate number of irregular limestone fragments. The lime mortar matrix was relatively unconsolidated and had been extensively pulled away when the render was removed.

Fabric 4

Recorded as two c.1.25 metre strips in the eastern wall of the chancel (Plate 1).

Comprising randomly lain cobbles, predominantly of unknapped flint with some ferruginous sandstone, set in a buff coloured lime mortar with frequent chalk lumps. One constructional lift-line was visible at the same level on either side of the window and is shown as a black dotted line on Plate 1.

Fabric 5

Located in a c.2.25 metre wide vertical strip below the east window of the chancel (Plate 1).

This fabric comprised poorly coursed, predominantly unknapped flints with approximately 20% fragments of Chillisford crag. The lime mortar bonding was of a lighter colour than that in the adjacent ***Fabric 4***.

Fabric 6

Recorded at the western end of the chancel north wall (Plate 2).

Comprised relatively randomly lain unknapped flint cobbles, with just a hint of coursing, set in a cream/buff coloured lime mortar with common chalk inclusions.

Fabric 7

This fabric represented the majority of the nave north wall fabric from the eastern side of the doorway to the buttress at the junction with the chancel (Plate 3).

Consisting of well coursed, unknapped flint cobbles set in a course brown lime mortar. Any constructional lift-lines that were present had been obscured by later repointing or surface treatment.

Fabric 8

Recorded as two separate areas to the west of the north nave doorway (Plate 3), this fabric was initially thought to be different to ***Fabric 7*** to the east. However, on closer examination it became clear that similar horizontally coursed flint cobbles were present but had been partially obscured by later surface treatment.

Fabric 9

This fabric effectively represented the insertion packing around the windows in the north nave wall (Plate 3). In the case of the west window this fabric may have been contemporary with ***Fabric 10*** below.

Roof slate and fragments of red brick similar to those of ***Fabric 2*** had been used and were set in a hard lime mortar.

Fabric 10

Located below the westernmost of the two windows in the north wall of the nave (Plate 3), this patch of fabric may have been contemporary with ***Fabric 9*** surrounding the inserted window.

The fabric comprised randomly lain flints with fragments of red brick and roof-tile set in a hard lime mortar.

Fabric 11

This fabric represented a small area of wall adjacent to the eastern jamb of the north nave doorway and was clearly associated with the repair and possibly resetting of the doorway itself. In addition, a thin strip of repaired render (***Fabric 1***) running around the door arch to the top of the wall may also be associated and represent the line of a significant crack and movement within the wall fabric at this juncture.

Fabric 12

Recorded filling the nave north doorway (Plate 3), this fabric comprised fragments of red brick, similar to those of ***Fabric 2***, set in a hard lime mortar.

Archaeological Interpretation

The church has four major structural components; a south porch, west tower, nave and chancel. While the visible architectural features gave clues to the dating of individual phases of alteration and addition, the hard cement render obscured the wall fabric itself.

The earliest evidence was provided by the round-headed doorway, composed mainly of French Caen-type limestone but also incorporating some Barnack stone, in the nave north wall and the accompanying well coursed wall fabric (*Fabric 7*) is indicative of Norman workmanship (11th/12th century). While only represented now in the nave there may well have originally been a contemporary accompanying chancel, possibly apsidal in form.

During the later 12th century the south nave doorway was replaced in the Transitional Style (Mortlock, 1992, p.79).

It has also been suggested (Mortlock, 1992, p.79) that the present chancel dates to the 13th century on the basis of the lancet in its south wall. However, this is quite wide and short for a lancet and it could actually be contemporary with the Y-traceried window in the nave south wall and be representative of alteration and construction during the early 14th century that included the building/rebuild of the chancel and the construction of the original tower. In addition, Mortlock suggests that the chancel has been shortened. This was confirmed by the observations made on site with the unconsolidated character of *Fabric 3* representing the rubble core of the chancel south wall where it had been truncated. The dating of this shortening is unclear although it must have predated the 19th century buttresses. Evidence for this was provided by the *Fabric 2* buttress and associated wall fabric on the north-east corner of the chancel, which clearly abutted *Fabric 4*, the latter forming the shortened east wall. However, if Mortlock's dating of the chancel to the 13th century is correct, then the chancel shortening could have occurred as part of the building programme and alterations that occurred during the 14th century when the original tower was added.

The red brick south porch appears to be of 18th century date.

Major works were undertaken during the late 19th century and early 20th century. These included the addition of the *Fabric 2* red brick buttresses and associated replacement of some nave and chancel wall fabric, the rebuilding of the tower under the direction of Edward Bisshopp (Mortlock, 1992, p.79), the insertion of the chancel east window and the square-headed windows of the nave and associated patching (*Fabric 10*). In addition, the chancel was refurbished at about the turn of the century with a decorated wall painting scheme that survives until present day. Indeed it is problems with damp and salts damaging this decoration which has led to the present scheme of works.

The hard cement render was probably of mid to later 20th century date and the repairs around the north doorway of late 20th century date.

Undated phases of alteration include *Fabric 5* below the east chancel window. This could be considered unusual in that it includes fragments of Chillisford crag; a local building stone used only on the Orford Peninsula, notably in the church towers at both

Wantisden and Chillisford. This material does not appear in any other visible fabric of the church. It is also unclear exactly what this area of wall fabric represents. On the basis that *Fabric 4* represents the original wall inserted when the chancel was shortened, *Fabric 5* must be a later insertion or at the very least a refacing. However, it clearly predates the insertion of the c.19th century east window and does not include any late material (bricks etc.) within it.

Bibliography

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September 2005



0 1 metre

Plate 1 Chancel East Wall



1

2

6

0 1 metre

Plate 2 Chancel North Wall

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0 1 metre

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Detail of Fabric 7



Detail of Fabric 8



Detail of Fabric 10



Detail of Fabric 2

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Plate 3 Nave North Wall