
BOLTON CHAPEL
BOLTON, Nr. GLANTON
NORTHUMBERLAND

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

MAY-JUNE 2013



Prepared for: <i>Whittingham PCC</i>	By: <i>The Archaeological Practice Ltd.</i>
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<i>Project code:</i> AP 12/82	<i>Stage:</i> Final	<i>Compiled by:</i> MJ/RJC	<i>Control:</i> AR	<i>Completion date:</i> 28/08/13
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BOLTON, Nr. GLANTON
NORTHUMBERLAND

REPORT ON AN
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

Prepared by:

The Archaeological Practice Ltd.



Frontispiece: *View of southwest Tower Foundations at Bolton Chapel.*

Grid Reference: NU 10630 13674
Date of fieldwork: May/June 2013
Oasis Number: thearcha2-157971

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SUMMARY

This document reports on archaeological monitoring conducted in May and June 2013 to mitigate the impact of groundworks associated with the excavation of trenches for new services at Bolton Chapel (centred on Grid Reference NU 10630 13674) near Glanton in Northumberland.

Bolton Chapel, a Grade II Listed Building, is a chapel-of-ease situated in the Parish of Edlingham, Northumberland. The building, which dates to at least the 12th century, sits upon a raised mound and enclosure of probable prehistoric origin, and is of significant historical interest.

The aims of the watching brief were to identify and determine the character of any remains uncovered during groundworks on the site, and to make an appropriate record of such finds by photographic and other means. Accordingly, attendance by an archaeologist was required during the excavations.

The principal findings of the present series of excavations are that significant structural remains of the medieval period surviving in the area between the south wall of the nave and the west wall of the porch. The excavated remains in this area are interpreted as those of a 13th century tower, perhaps a later addition to the Norman church. Subsequently, the plinth of the small south-west tower appears to have been destroyed down to ground level before the west wall of the nave was rebuilt at some time in the later medieval period.

Other structural remains uncovered during these works, including those of a 19th century boiler room on the north side of the nave, are of minor significance, although the investigation of the latter did uncover a re-used carved stone, probably a small grave slab dating to the late 13th or 14th centuries.

Elsewhere, the excavations revealed a number of burials, some at shallow depths and very close to the chapel structure, suggesting that the site has been used as a burial ground since the medieval period and graves are likely to occur anywhere within the bounds of the chapel and attached burial ground.

The excavations at Bolton Chapel have increased the structural and historical complexity and enhanced the status of the site, already known as that of an 'early', probably pre-Christian religious site.

No further archaeological monitoring is required during this phase of groundworks. However, considering the high potential for significant archaeological deposits to exist in the area, it is recommended that any future work should be considered on its own merits with respect to the need for archaeological intervention. In particular, articulated human remains, as witnessed close to the south wall of the nave and chancel, should be expected at very shallow depths.

1. PURPOSE OF THE WATCHING BRIEF

This document reports on archaeological monitoring conducted in May and June 2013 to mitigate the impact of groundworks associated with the excavation of trenches for new services at Bolton Chapel (centred on Grid Reference NU 10630 13674) near Glanton in Northumberland (*Illus. 01-03*). The recent groundworks included replacement of and additions to external soakaway drains surrounding the building (*see Illus. 08*).

Bolton Chapel, a Grade II Listed Building, is a chapel-of-ease situated in the Parish of Edlingham, Northumberland. The building, which dates to at least the 12th century, sits upon a raised mound and enclosure of probable prehistoric origin, and is of significant historical interest.

The Diocesan Archaeologist has accordingly stipulated that an archaeological watching brief should be maintained during the excavation works associated with the new services at Bolton Chapel, to ensure that any archaeological remains found to exist on the site are appropriately recorded to determine their character and state of survival.

2. CULTURAL HERITAGE BACKGROUND

2.1 Previous Work

A desk-based assessment of Bolton Chapel and its immediate environs was carried out by Peter Ryder at a contemporaneous time to the watching brief fieldwork. The assessment includes a detailed structural study of the building, relevant entries from the Heritage Environment Record and examines Historic Maps of the area, concluding with a brief interpretation of the chronological development of the site and environs.

2.2 Historical Summary

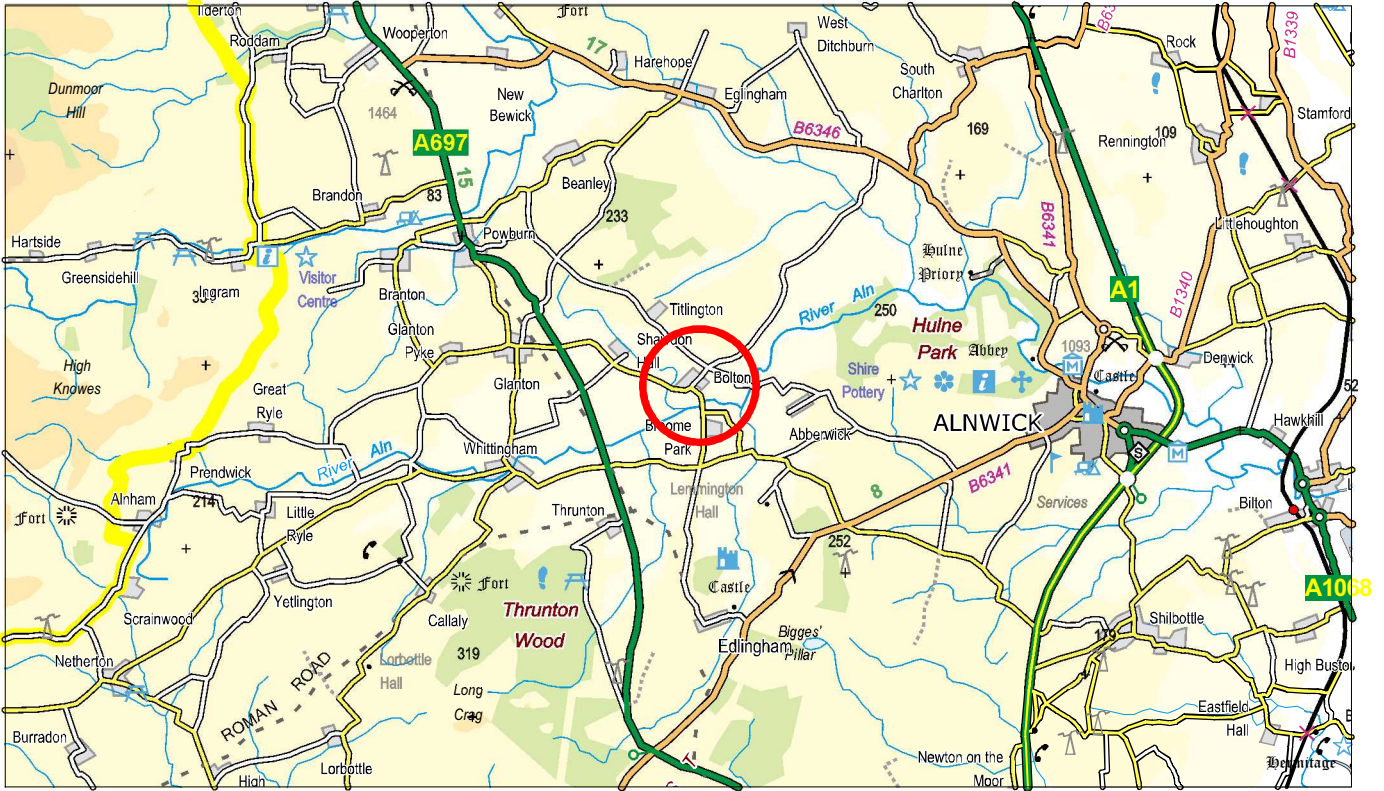
Prehistory:

The area surrounding Bolton Chapel is relatively well represented by prehistoric archaeological remains. The hill behind Bolton Chapel, a distance of around 1km to the south west, known as Jenny's Lantern, contains two prehistoric or Romano-British enclosures with hut circles, to the west of which is a marked horizontal slab named after a now-destroyed house called Midstead. The slab contains five known panels of attractive Neolithic Rock-Art, mainly in the cup-and-ring style typical of Northumberland.

The position and topography of the Bolton Chapel site is consistent with various kinds of past settlement and intensive land-use; the chapel sits upon a raised mound overlooking a stream and within a circular enclosure of probable prehistoric origin, most likely belonging to the Bronze Age (2600-700 BC). In 1855 whilst digging graves around the north side of the churchyard, an ancient cist burial was discovered, containing an urn – a typical Bronze Age burial. If we take the current circular enclosure to be contemporary with this, it is possible the cist could represent just one of many Bronze Age graves destroyed by at least 800 years of later Christian burial.

The Romano-British Period:

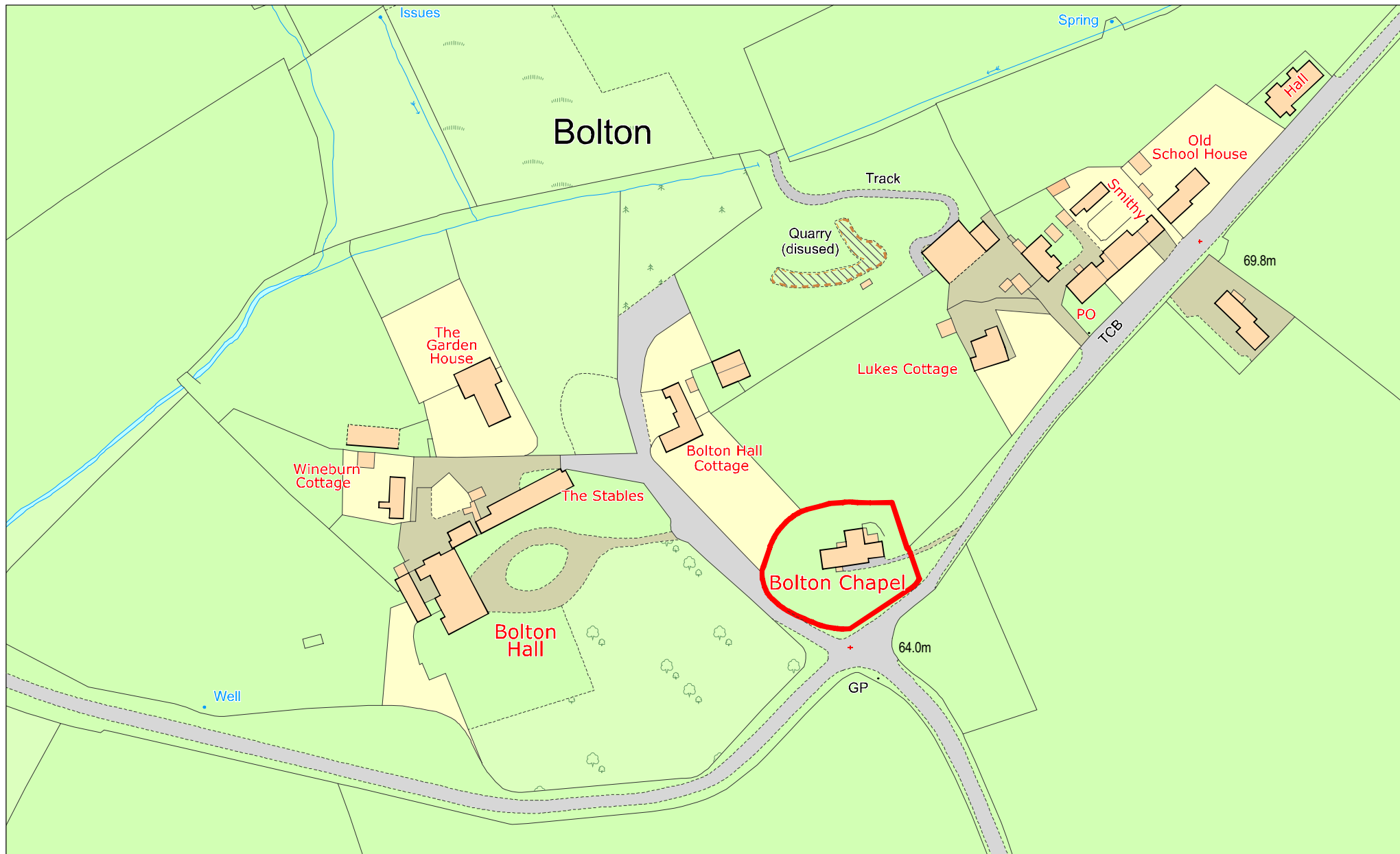
Although little is known of the Roman period in the Bolton area, an emerging pattern of Romano-British enclosed settlement and farmsteads are slowly being identified in this landscape. There are two such sites about 1km in distance away from Bolton Chapel,



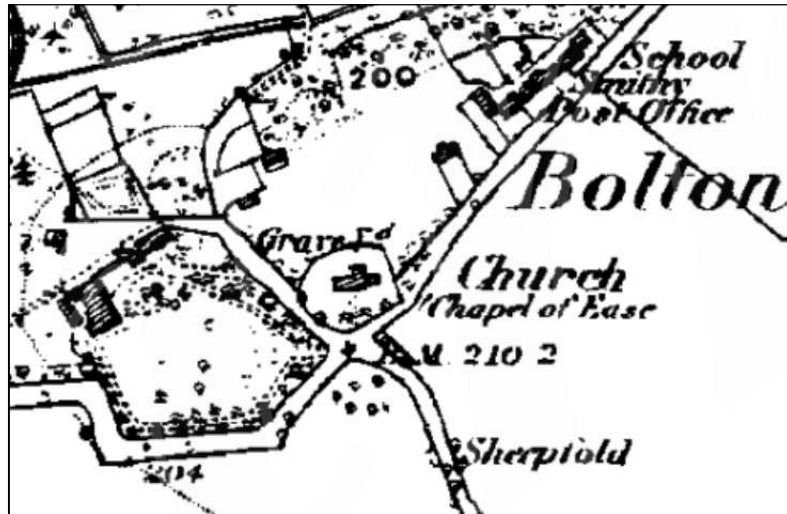
Illus. 01: The location of Bolton (circled in red), 5.5 miles west of Alnwick in Northumberland.



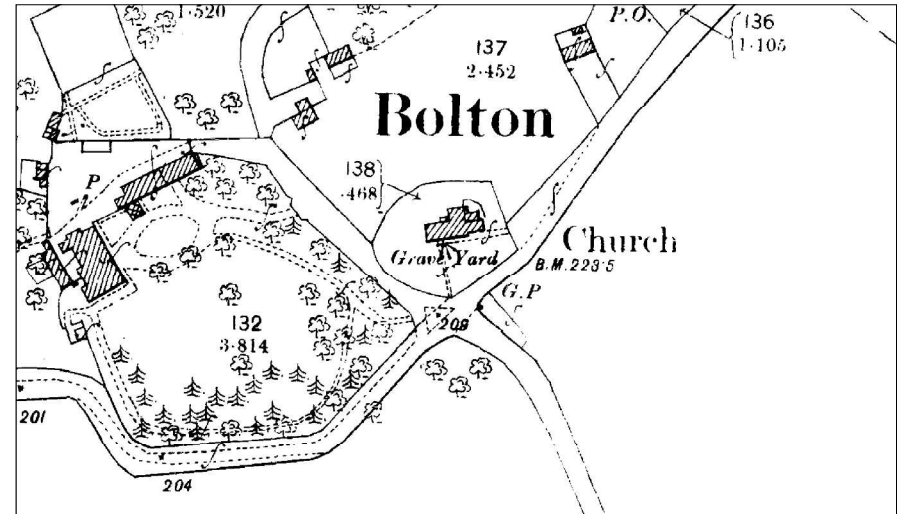
Illus. 02: The location of Bolton (circled in red), just to the north of the River Aln.



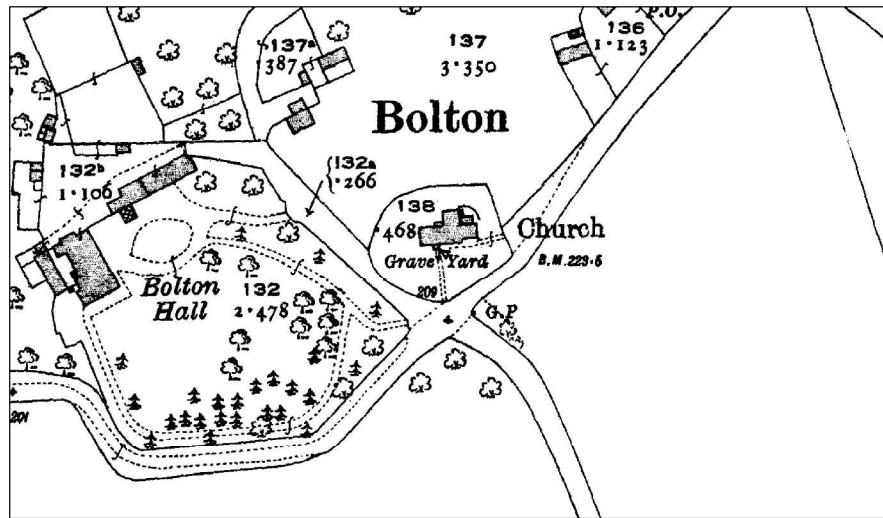
Illus. 03: The location of the Watching Brief Site (outlined in red) at Bolton Chapel.



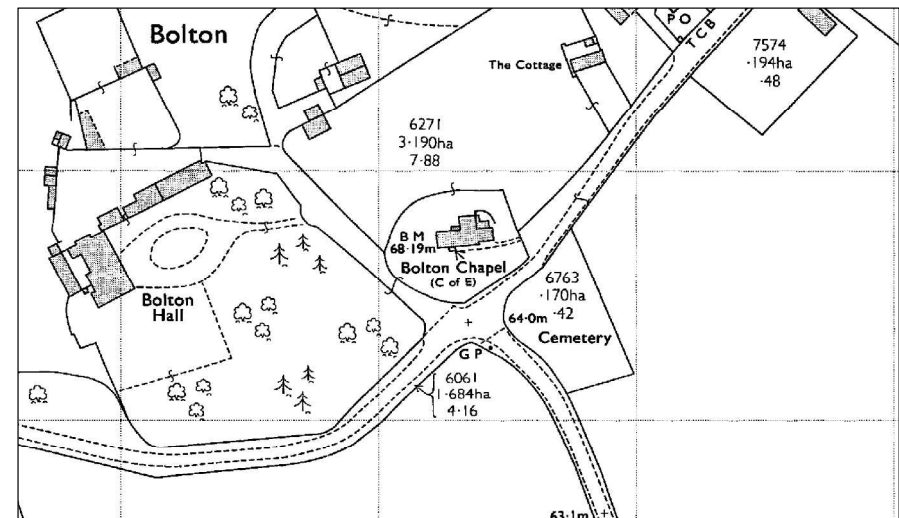
Illus. 04: Extract of the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey Plan (6" per mile) 1867.



Illus. 05: Extract of the 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey Plan (1:2500) 1897.



Illus. 06: Extract of the 3rd Edition Ordnance Survey Plan (1:2500) 1923.



Illus. 07: Extract of the 1974 Edition Ordnance Survey Plan (1:2500).

to the northwest and southwest (HER No. NSMR03-4377 and HER No. NSMR03-4378). A site to the north of Bolton Chapel, known locally as the Guards field, has produced Roman artefacts including the base of a small bronze dish.

Early Medieval Period:

Despite the lack of physical remains belonging to the early medieval period, there is little doubt when examining place name evidence that a settlement at Bolton existed at this time. The Anglo-Saxon word 'tun' meaning homestead was combined with 'bol' meaning a high swell of land – almost certainly the mound on which the chapel stands, which became known as the village of 'boltun' or Bolton.

Given the Anglo-Saxon place name evidence, it is likely that a small timber church/chapel serviced this community, possibly by the 10th century when the parish of Edlingham, which includes Bolton Chapel, was established.

Medieval Period:

The earliest portion of the present structure at Bolton Chapel dates to the mid-12th century which can be seen in the chancel arch and possibly in the lower chancel walls. The earliest historical references to the chapel are in the later 13th century; in 1291 the 'capella de Boulton' was annexed to the vicarage of Edlingham (*Hodgson, J.C 1904*). The village chapel was quite distinct from a second chapel to the Hospital of Bolton, which stood a few hundred meters to the north, the masters and brethren of which held the lordship and manor of Bolton between 1225 and the Dissolution (*Ibid.201*); the site of the hospital, evidenced by earthworks, is now a scheduled ancient monument.

It is likely that the chapel suffered considerably, both structurally and in terms of its congregation, during the unsettled period of Border conflict between the early 14th and later 16th centuries. Certainly, the chapel was remodeled by the addition of a 13th century south-west tower, subsequently removed when the west wall of the nave was rebuilt (shortened?) in the later medieval period. At the end of the medieval period, however, it was standing and in use when visited prior to the Battle of Flodden (1513) by Henry VIII's representative Sir Thomas Howard, Earl of Surrey, who used the site as the muster point for the English army (*Mackenzie 1825*). Surrey and his senior commanders are believed to have prayed here before marching on to Wooler Haugh Head, before eventually heading to Flodden, which cost of the lives of James IV and more than 10,000 men (the site has now joined the expanding Flodden 1513 Ecomuseum).

2.3 SITES INCLUDED IN THE HERITAGE ENVIRONMENT RECORD

2.3.1 Bolton Chapel; NGR NU1063513675; HER Number N21717; Listed Building (Grade II) ref. 1055775.

Chapel-of-ease, Anglican. Chancel arch C12, chancel walls probably medieval, nave and north transept early C19", south porch and vestry c.1868. Chancel coursed rubble with later ashlar dressings; C19 parts tooled stone with ashlar dressings, except for rock-faced porch; Welsh slate roofs, with 3 bands of green fishscale slates on South slope of chancel. Aisleless 4-bay nave with south porch and north transept, small chancel with north vestry. Romanesque style.

Nave has 4 round-arched single-light windows in double-chamfered surrounds on south, 2 similar windows on-north, and a wider round-arched west window; small arched bellcote on west gable. South porch has studded double doors under trefoil arch, and cross finial; inside porch panelled double doors with metal-latticed fanlight, under double-chamfered arch on moulded imposts. North transept has triplet of round-

headed lights to north. Similar stepped triplet with circular light above in east end of chancel; single-light window on south to east of earlier blocked window. Ring cross finial on east gable.

Interior: Plastered. Semicircular chancel arch, stepped towards nave, on worn imposts carried back as band along east wall of nave. Early C19 3-bay screen of moulded arches on slender round piers with scalloped caps, to north transept. Collar-beam roof trusses with upper king posts, those to transept and chancel with arch braces on moulded corbels, the latter with pierced infill and wallplate. Boarding between rafters painted blue spangled with gold stars.

Small font with round shaft and moulded bowl dated '1732' in north transept; elaborate C19 Romanesque font in nave. Wrought-iron altar rails and Minton tiles in sanctuary. Coat of arms of Martha Burrill, d.1700, on south of chancel; similar painted coat of arms on north of nave. Several C18 and C19 wall tablets, including monument to Forster family (1790-1809), with draped urn, signed by R. Blore, and 1864 tablet to Lewis de Crespigny Buckle, who perished at sea on the S.S. Nemesis.

2.3.2 Hall Headstone 7 metres south of the Chancel of Bolton Chapel; NGR NU1064513664; HER Number N21718; Listed Building (Grade II) ref. 1041956

Headstone, 1732. Cut sandstone. Fluted pilasters support swan-necked pediment with cherub in tympanum. Inscription to Edward Hall of Glanton. Similar reverse, without cherub, has inscription to Elizabeth Wake, d.1738.

2.3.3 Cist Burial; NGR NU 410600 613600; HER Number NSMR03-4467

In opening a grave on the north side of Bolton Chapel the grave digger came upon a recess closed by a flagstone (cist) and, in searching it with a hoe, broke the urn or urns into such small pieces that it was impossible to reconstruct. The churchyard at Bolton is situated on high ground overlooking a stream, a site typical of Bronze Age cist burials.

REF.: Hist Berwickshire Natur Club 11 part 1 1885 308-9 (J Hardy)

2.3.4 Bolton Leper Hospital; NGR NU 410600, 613900; HER Number NSMR03-4466; Scheduled Monument.

Earthwork remains of a medieval leper hospital at Bolton, largely overlain by later medieval ridge and furrow. Founded as a leper hospital in 1225. Successive raids by the Scots forced the prior to apply for a licence to crenellate the master's house in 1336, after which time no lepers are recorded. A barmkin was added for further defence. Dissolved in 1547. Dependent upon Kirkham. A Roman bronze skillet was also found.

REFS.: Knowles, D and Hadcock, R N, 1953. *Medieval Religious Houses of England and Wales* (London).

Hist Berwickshire Natur Club 11 part 1 1885 130 (T Stephens).

Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle 5 ser 1 1951 78-9 (E Miller).

MacLauchlan, H, 1864. Memoir written during a survey of the eastern branch of the Watling street, Sheet 3 plan 1:6336.

Hodgson, J C, 1904. *A History of Northumberland*, vol 7 (Newcastle upon Tyne) (202-17,227n)

2.3.5 Cup and ring marked rock, 1km south-west of East Bolton; NGR 412400 615400; HER Number NSMR03-4375; Scheduled Monument.

Cup and ring marked stone near Jenny's Lantern. 'Inscribed rock at Jenny's Lantern Hill discovered 1948 by Mr Ed Millar, East Bolton, Alnwick. The rock is quite near the East Bolton - Bolton road; on the south side of the road is a cottage, named Midstead, and directly opposite the east fence of this holding and in a line with it, 50-60 yards on the near side, this stone is at the base of the rocks'. A rock measuring 1m x 1.2m lying on the side of a hill has inscribed upon its upper face four cup and rings markings with channels, and four cups. The rock is 'in situ'. Inscribed rock at foot of outcrop of sandstone. The rock has fresh pick marks and a serpentine groove. The house called Midstead has now gone. Cup and ring marked rock, 1km south-west of East Bolton. Scheduling revised on 12th January 1994, new national monument number 21033. The monument includes a cup and ring marked rock situated at the foot of a south facing slope in an area of outcropping rock. The flat rock is a natural outcrop measuring 1m by 1.2m. The rock is inscribed with four cup marks or shallow circular depressions pecked out of the natural surface; they range in size from 40mm to 80mm in diameter. A further four cups are surrounded by concentric rings or circular grooves pecked out of the rock, the largest of which has a diameter of 0.2m. Two of the cup and ring marks are connected by a curvilinear channel while one of the largest cup and ring marks has a deep wavy channel, known as a serpentine groove, emanating from the central cup and cutting through the surrounding grooves. The cup and ring marked rock near East Bolton is well preserved and displays a wide selection of the range of symbols normally found in Northumberland. It will contribute to our understanding of prehistoric rock art in England.

REFs.: Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle 5 ser 1 1951 80 (E Miller).

Hist Berwickshire Natur Club 31 Pt 2 1948 130 photo opp p 142 (pl VIII) H H Cowan Beckensall, S, 1983. Northumberland's Prehistoric Rock Carvings. Rothbury: Pendulum Publications (51,185) Beckensall, S, 1974. The Prehistoric Carved Rocks of Northumberland. Newcastle upon Tyne: Frank Graham (58).
Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle 4 ser 11 1947-50 281.

2.3.6 Romano-British enclosed settlement, 800m north-west of East Bolton; HER Number NSMR03-4377; Scheduled Monument ; NGR NU 412400, 616600

The monument includes an enclosed settlement of Romano-British date situated on a sloping site with an easterly aspect. It comprises the foundations of at least three stone houses; the most conspicuous pair, situated at the northern end of the settlement, are 9m in diameter within walls of stone 0.8m high and 2m wide. These are faced with large stones, the core being infilled with smaller stones. The second hut-circle opens off the first through an entrance 2m wide. 10m to the south-west there is a third and possibly a fourth hut-circle 6m in diameter situated against the crag edge. Abutting the linked pair of hut-circles at their southern ends is an earth and stone wall on average 1.5m wide and standing to a height of 0.8m; the wall continues for some 65m in a curving arc to the south and is thought to form the eastern side of an irregular shaped enclosure with a centrally placed entrance through it. An apparently more angular and less well defined return wall is visible on the western side. Earlier accounts of this settlement describe a further two hut-circles beyond the enclosure to the south. These are included in the scheduling as they survive beneath the present dense vegetation cover. The stone field wall which crosses the monument is excluded from the

scheduling but the ground beneath it is included.

REFS.: *Archaeologia Aeliana* 4 ser 42 1964 63 no 79 (G Jobey).
Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle 5 ser - 1951 82-3 (E Miller)

2.3.7 Romano-British farmstead 1km south-west of East Bolton; NGR NU 412300 615400; HER Number NSMR03-4378; Scheduled Monument.

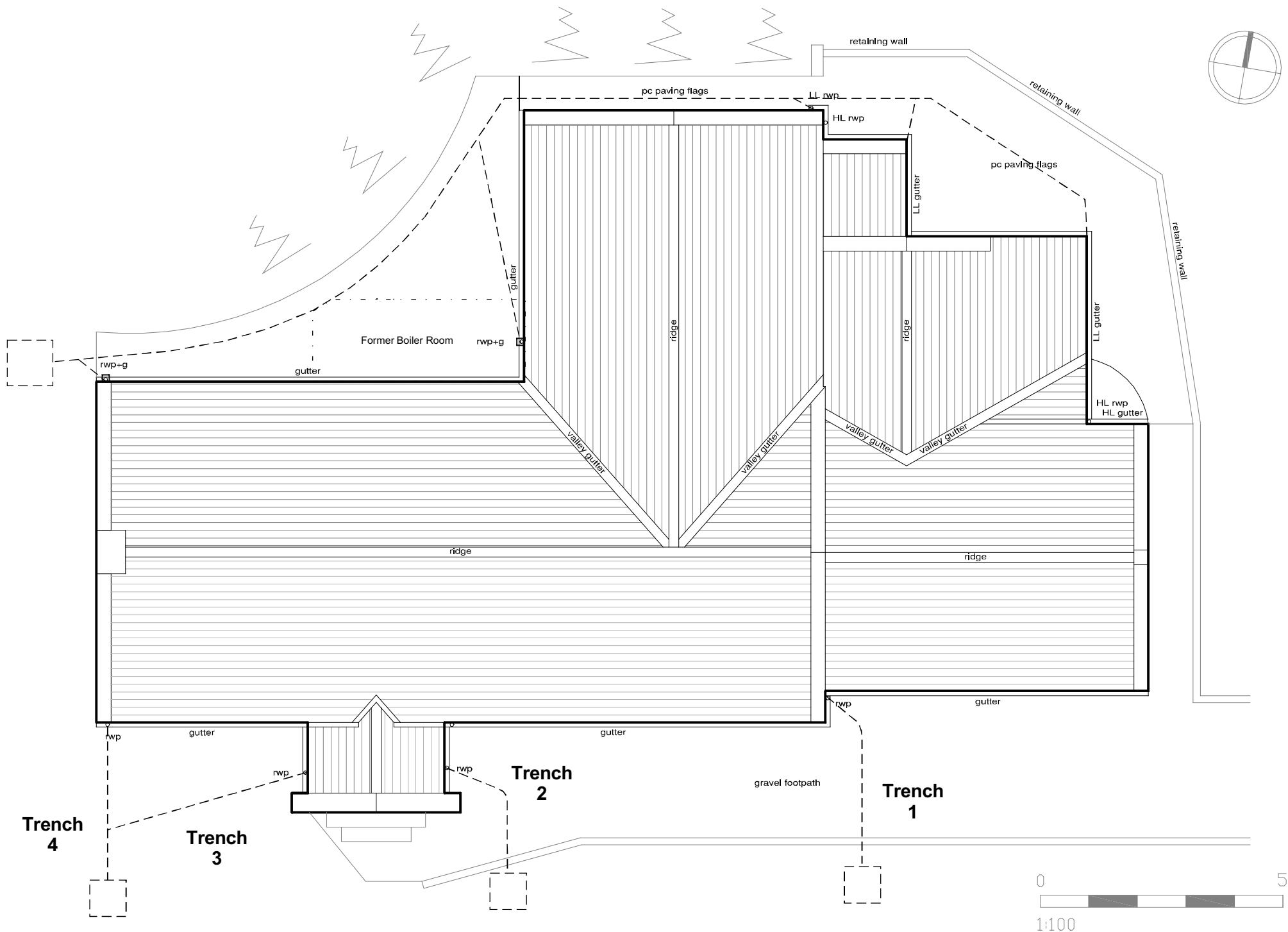
A primitive enclosure (foundations only) of sub-rectangular shape with what looks like the remains of a hut-circle in its higher side. It is now (1952) one of several outcrop 'islands' in a new field (NU 12421543). An enclosure of roughly oval shape situated just below the brow of a hill facing south east, measuring c.34m by 25m. The enclosure wall of stone and earth is c.3m average width and 1m in height with entrance 4m wide on south east side. In the interior is a hut circle 10m wide with wall 2m wide and from ground level to 1m in height - there are traces of double walling on the north west side and a possible entrance on east. Superficially the enclosure appears to be the much denuded remains of an old sheep stall and small lambing pen. The latter, however, is probably better construed as a stone-founded hut circle, which would place the whole in the category of a native homestead. Surveyed at 1/2500. Romano-British farmstead 1km south-west of East Bolton. Scheduled on 3rd December 1993, national monument number 21034. The monument includes the remains of a stone built farmstead of Romano-British date, situated immediately below the brow of a hill with a southerly aspect. The farmstead, roughly oval in shape, measures 30m east to west by 24m north to south within a stone wall 3m wide and standing to a maximum of 1m high. There is an entrance 4m wide in the south-east side. Within the enclosure there are the centrally placed foundations of a single prehistoric house 8.5m in diameter with walls 2m wide and 1m high. The house has an entrance in the eastern side. The farmstead is well preserved and retains significant archaeological deposits. It is one of a group of similar settlements in the area and will contribute to any study of the settlement pattern at this time.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

The aims of the watching brief were to identify and determine the character of any remains uncovered during groundworks on the site, and to make an appropriate record of such finds by photographic and other means. Accordingly, attendance by an archaeologist was required during the excavations.

The groundworks at Bolton Chapel included the excavation of a service trench along the entire north side of the Chapel, connecting to a soak-away pit positioned in the northwest corner of the site (*see Illus. 08*). A further four short service trenches were excavated on the southern side of the Chapel with provision for three additional soak-away pits.

The service trenches and soak-away pits were excavated by mechanical excavator using a toothless ditching bucket. All excavations were closely monitored by a suitably trained and experienced archaeologist from The Archaeological Practice Ltd.



Illus. 08: Edited plan of groundworks at Bolton Chapel, original supplied by Belvedere Architecture Ltd.

4. RESULTS

4.1 North Side of Chapel

4.1.1 Location and dimensions

The developments along the north side of Bolton Chapel, involved the excavation of a drainage-pipe trench, aligned east-west for the most part and parallel with the north walls of the church for its entire length (see *Illus. 08, 17-21*). The trench cut slightly into the churchyard bank on its northern aspect.

The dimensions of the trench were as follows: 30m (roughly the total length) x 0.40m (width) x 0.50m (depth on southern section) and 0.70m (depth on northern section).

4.1.2 Stratigraphy and interpretation

The topsoil comprised of a dark grey-brown fairly firm silt-loam, observed to a depth of 0.20m below ground level. Beneath the topsoil, a well-drained, mid red-brown, friable sandy-gravel with occasional inclusions of small riverine pebbles was observed to a depth of 0.45m below ground level. Within this layer an earlier ceramic horseshoe drain was exposed near the north transept of the chapel and a C19th cylindrical ceramic drain further to the west on the same alignment. Several large sherds of C19th salt-glazed drainage pipe were also seen west of the north transept. All of these earlier drainage pipes were removed during the works to allow for modern replacements. Towards the maximum depth of the trench, an orange-brown firm boulder clay was observed throughout.

The only archaeological remains observed during the excavations on the north side of the chapel, were structural foundations belonging to a former (probably 19th century) boiler room (see *Illus. 9, 22-44*). This was located at the corner junction between the north wall of the nave and the west wall of the north transept and was aligned east-west. The former roof-line of the boiler room is still visible marked along the north wall of the nave. The interior of the boiler room was simply filled with demolition material, including brick and sandstone rubble. The foundations of the room were predominantly of roughly hewn and reused sandstones of differing sizes and with some modern brick patching on its east end. The dimensions of the boiler-room were as follows: 4.40m (length) x 1.73m (width).

Although this crudely built structure offers little interest in itself, it contained within its foundation a reused grave slab of probable 13th or 14th century date (see *Illus. 25-26*). A short description of the grave slab has been produced by Peter Ryder in his separate desk-based assessment of Bolton Chapel.

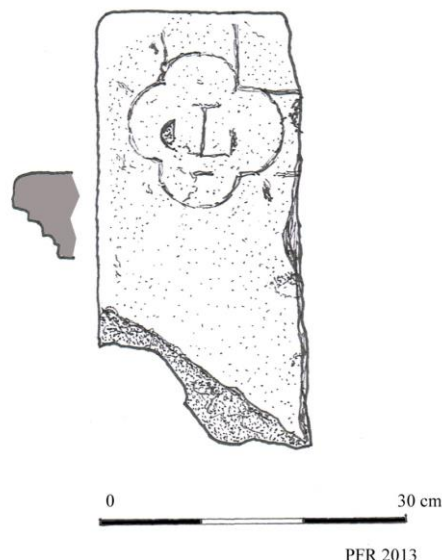
Carved Stone from Bolton Chapel, June 2013

This stone was found re-used in the walls of a small boiler room set in the angle between the nave and north transept of the chapel. It is a slab of buff sandstone, overall 420 by 220mm and c 90mm thick. Its two worked edges, here taken as the top and l. side, are set at approximately right angles, and are slightly rounded; the other two sides are fractures. The incised design consists of a quatrefoil, perhaps set at the centre of a straight-armed cross, although only the r. and upper arms are shown; in the centre of the quatrefoil is an incised motif rather like a capital 'L', with other sinkings below and to the l.

The stone is probably a small grave slab, possibly unfinished, although it is difficult to find any real parallels. Taken on its own, the design looks like one corner of a larger slab that had a border (perhaps with an inscription and a quatrefoil panel at the corner, but it is difficult to relate such a scheme to the shape of the stone, with the 'lower' half of its face devoid of any carving; just possibly it might be a small portion of a much larger monument. It is difficult to suggest a date, other than to say that quatrefoils were a popular motif, ie in window tracery, in the late 13th and 14th centuries.

Peter F Ryder July 2013

Stone from Bolton Chapel June 2013



Aside from removing some brick patching to access the existing drain and downpipe next to the north transept, the excavation trenches for the new services were able to bypass the aforementioned structural remains, which were left *in situ*.

The excavation of a soak-away pit located 3.65m west of the northwest corner of the nave, revealed little archaeology except for several disarticulated human bones, evidently disturbed by the earlier pipe trench which had truncated this area. With the Vicar's permission, these bones were reburied at the base of the pit after it had been excavated. The soak-away pit measured 2m (length) x 1.70m (width) x 1.20m (depth).

4.2 South Side of the Chapel

4.2.1 Location and dimensions

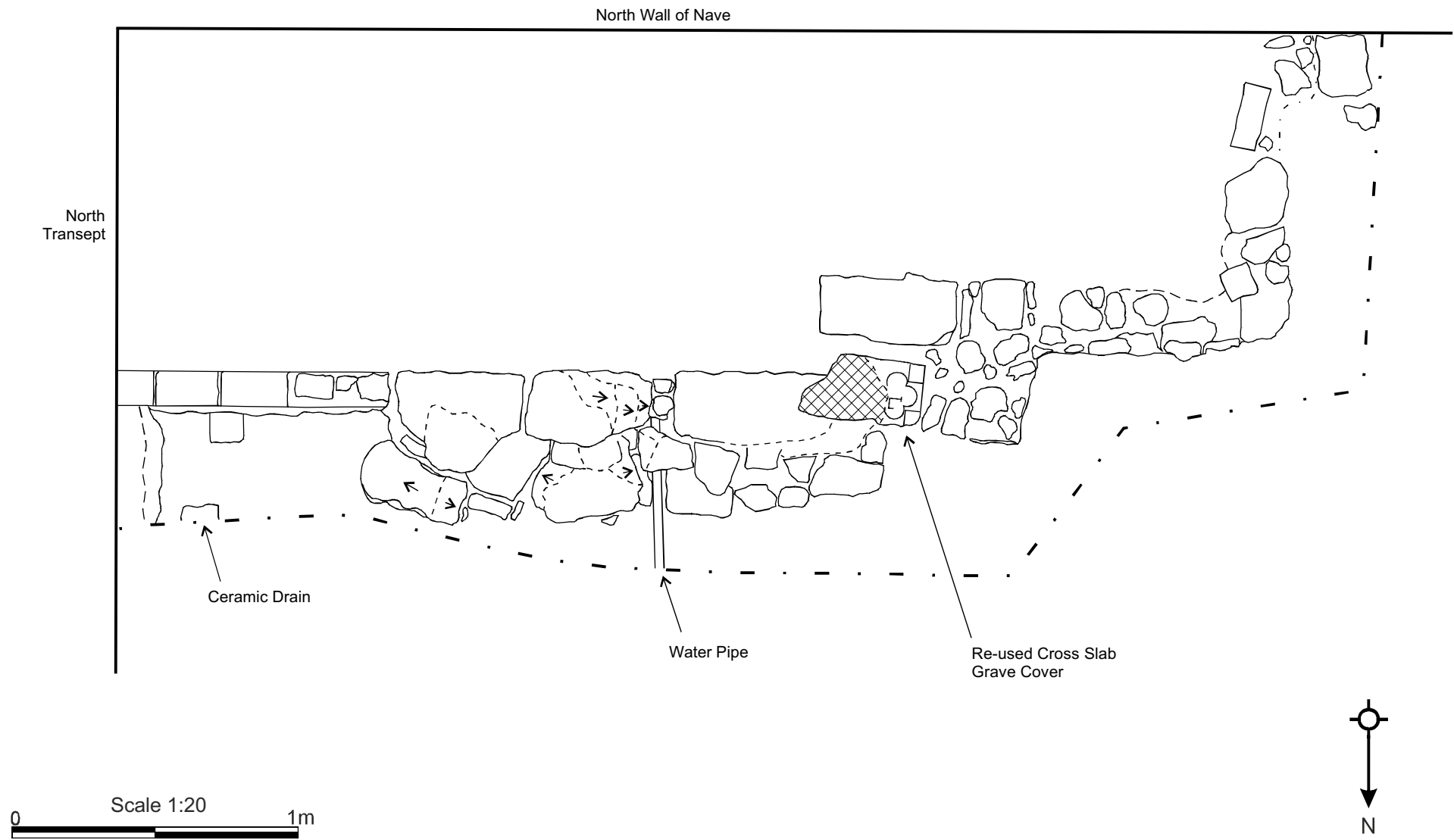
The developments along the south side of Bolton Chapel, involved the excavation of four short drainage trenches extending roughly southwards across the churchyard pavement and connecting to three additional soak-away pits (see *Illus. 08*).

The trenches all measured 0.40m in width, with varying lengths of up to 4.30m. [NOTE: The trenches have been labelled 1-4, running east to west, with the first trench being furthest to the east.

4.2.2 Stratigraphy and interpretation

4.2.2.1

Trench 1 (see *Illus. 08*) was located at the intersection between the south chancel and nave walls. Unfortunately the trench was abandoned upon encountering *insitu* articulated human remains at particularly shallow depths (under 0.30m). An alternative trench route was attempted adjacent to the first (immediately to the west) and whilst it managed to avoid the previous skeletons, additional articulated human remains were discovered at roughly equivalent depths. The excavation of services trenches in this area was duly abandoned.



Illus. 09: Plan of structural remains at intersection of North Nave Wall and North Transept, Bolton Chapel.

4.2.2.2

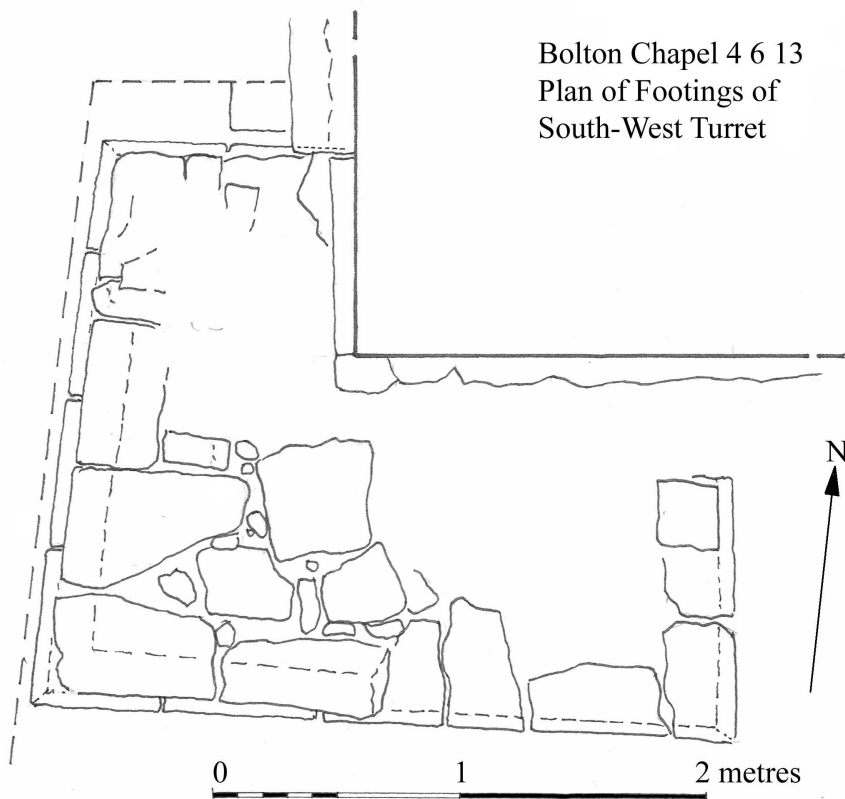
Trench 2 (see *Illus. 8, 30-32*) measured 3.30m in length and was located at the midpoint of the eastern porch wall, where it extended in a south-easterly direction for 1.50m before moving in a southwards direction for a further 1.80m. It soon became apparent that an earlier soak-away pit had been attempted in this area; a good deal of void-filled rubble was discovered in the middle of the trench, the new soak-away pit having to be excavated immediately behind it. No archaeological or skeletal remains were observed.

4.2.2.3

Trenches 3 and 4 (see *Illus. 8, 33-46*) were excavated between the south wall of the nave and the west wall of the porch. They intersected at 2.4m south of the southwest corner of the nave, extending a further 1 meter southwards before connecting to a small soak-away pit which measured roughly 1m².

Whilst excavating these trenches, significant archaeological remains of a hitherto unknown 13th century church corner-tower or turret, were discovered at the southwest corner of the nave (see *Illus. 10-14, 33-46*). The large sandstone footings of this tower were observed at 0.20m below the turf and were in excellent physical condition.

The structure had a two part plinth, a small chamfered step with a taller one above, which was interpreted as of general 13th century character; it measured 2.78m east-west x 2.23m north-south and projected 1.46m beyond the south and 1m beyond the west walls of the present nave. The plinth on its northern return in fact continues beneath the plinth of the west end of the later medieval nave, whilst that on its eastern return is cut short 0.50m from the 19th century south wall. The lower member of the plinth remained intact except where cut away on the east; the upper member only remained around the south-west corner. On the south on the large blocks of the upper member appeared to have been prised out of position, so that it overhung the lower. At the north-west corner, and in the centre of the east return, were blocks with faces that rose vertically above the lower chamber, interpreted as remains of later buttresses coeval with the rebuilding of the nave.



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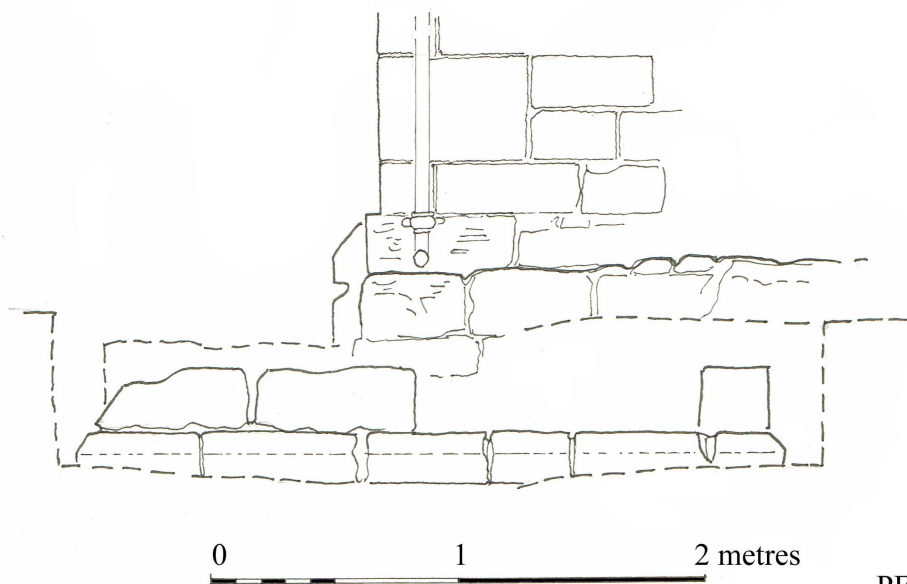
Illus. 10: Plan of footings of southwest Turret, Bolton Chapel, Northumberland.



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Illus. 11: Interpretation plan of footings of southwest Turret, Bolton Chapel, Northumberland.

Bolton Chapel 4 6 13. Base of SW turret, S elevation



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Illus. 12: South facing elevation of Turret footings, Bolton Chapel, Northumberland.

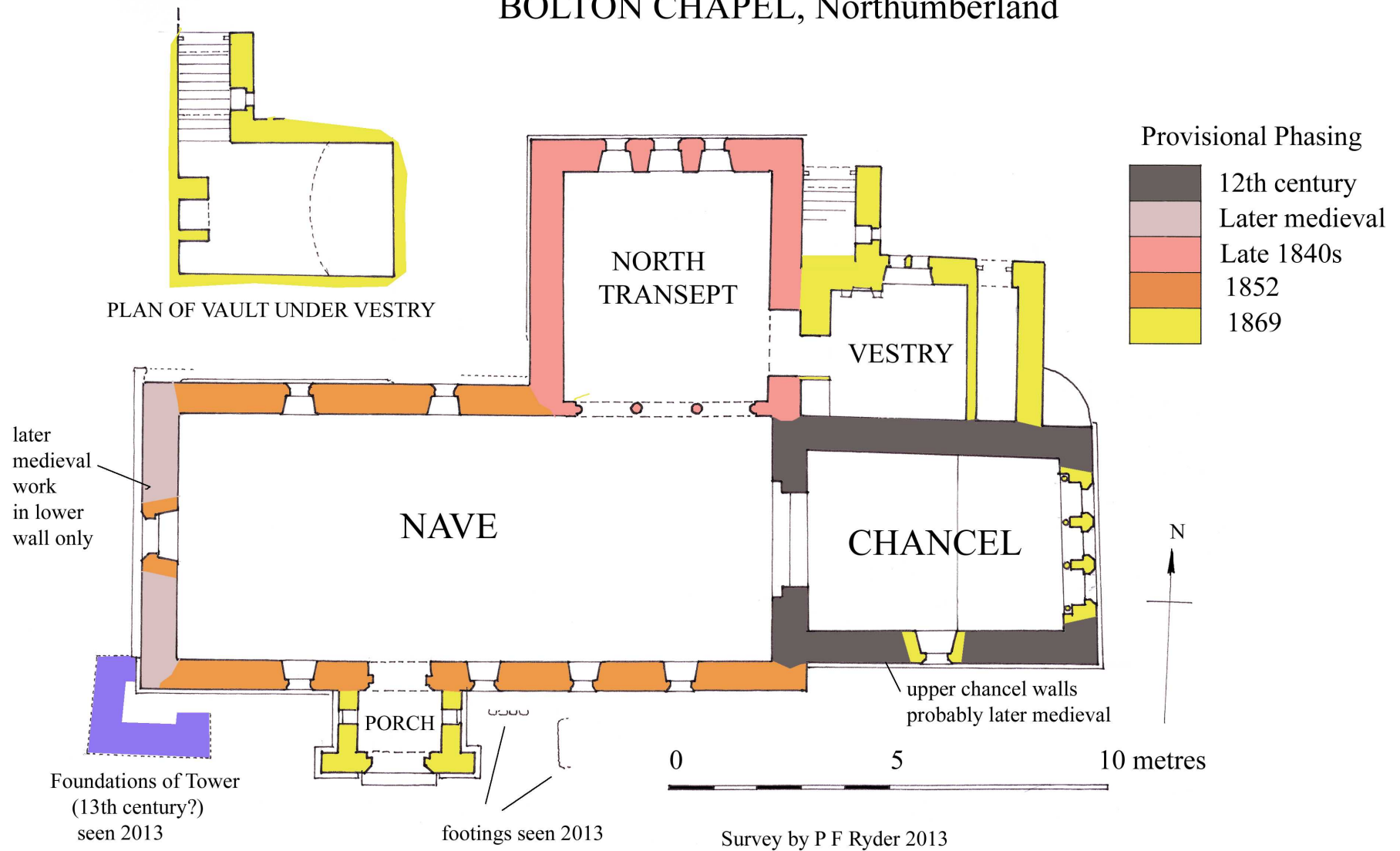
Bolton Chapel 4 6 13 SW turret, W elevation



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Illus. 13: West facing elevation of Turret footings, Bolton Chapel, Northumberland.

BOLTON CHAPEL, Northumberland



Illus. 14: Interpretational Plan of Bolton Chapel, Northumberland.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The principal findings of the present series of excavations are that significant structural remains of the medieval period surviving in the area between the south wall of the nave and the west wall of the porch. The excavated remains in this area are interpreted as those of a 13th century tower, perhaps a later addition to the Norman church. Subsequently, the plinth of the small south-west tower appears to have been destroyed down to ground level before the west wall of the nave was rebuilt at some time in the later medieval period. It is unlikely to have been visible, therefore, when the church was visited by the Earl of Surrey on the eve of the Battle of Flodden in 1513.

Other structural remains uncovered during these works, including those of a 19th century boiler room on the north side of the nave, are of minor significance, although the investigation of the latter did uncover a re-used carved stone, probably a small grave slab dating to the late 13th or 14th centuries.

Elsewhere, the excavations revealed a number of burials, some at shallow depths and very close to the chapel structure, suggesting that the site has been used as a burial ground since the medieval period and graves are likely to occur anywhere within the bounds of the chapel and attached burial ground.

The excavations at Bolton Chapel have increased the structural and historical complexity and enhanced the status of the site, already known as that of an 'early', probably pre-Christian religious site.

No further archaeological monitoring is required as a consequence of the groundworks reported here. However, considering the high potential for significant archaeological deposits to exist in the area, it is recommended that any future work should be considered on its own merits with respect to the need for archaeological intervention. In particular, articulated human remains, as witnessed close to the south wall of the nave and chancel, should be expected at very shallow depths. In addition, historically significant structural foundations of a medieval corner-tower exist adjacent to the southwest corner of the nave at 0.20m below ground level and should be avoided in any future works. It is considered likely that further structural remains may survive close to the chapel walls and in particular close to the south nave walls, where earlier footings can still be seen at paving-gravel level, projecting southwards and running parallel to the nave.



Illus. 15: Broad view of Bolton Chapel and graveyard, looking north.



Illus. 16: View of Bolton Chapel, looking south at the start of works.



Illus. 17: View looking east along the north side of the chapel during initial clearance of vegetation and turf for services trench.



Illus. 18: View looking east along the north side of Bolton Chapel during excavation of services trench.



Illus. 19: View looking southeast along the services trench on the north side of Bolton Chapel.



Illus. 20: View looking east along the services trench on the north side of Bolton Chapel.



Illus. 21: View looking south along services trench between north transept and north nave wall.



Illus. 22: View looking southeast at structural remains at intersection of the north transept and north nave wall.



Illus. 23: View looking south at structural remains at intersection of the north transept and north nave wall.



Illus. 24: View looking east at structural remains at intersection of the north transept and north nave wall.



Illus. 25: Cross-slab grave cover, re-used in foundations of former structure at intersection of north transept and north nave wall.



Illus. 26: Detailed view of cross-slab grave cover, re-used in foundations of former structure at intersection of north transept and north nave wall.



Illus. 27: View looking southwest at excavation of services trench and soak-away pit, adjacent to the northwest corner of the nave.



Illus. 28: View looking south at excavated soak-away pit, adjacent to the northwest corner of the nave.



Illus. 29: View looking east at excavated soak-away pit, adjacent to the northwest corner of the nave.



Illus. 30: View looking east during excavation of services trench and soak-away pit, running from the northeast corner of the porch turning southwards and bisecting the footpath.



Illus. 31: View looking northwest at services trench, running from the northeast corner of the porch across the footpath.



Illus. 32: View looking south at services trench, running from the northeast corner of the porch across the footpath.



Illus. 33: View looking northeast during excavation of services trench from the west wall of the porch.



Illus. 34: View looking east at detail of services trench running from the west wall of the porch.



Illus. 35: View looking west of initial discovery of Tower foundations in services trench running from the west wall of the porch.



Illus. 36: View looking west along Tower foundations adjacent to the southwest corner of the Nave.



Illus. 37: Detailed view looking west along Tower foundations adjacent to the southwest corner of the Nave.



Illus. 38: View looking east along Tower foundations adjacent to the southwest corner of the Nave.



Illus. 39: View looking north across Tower foundations adjacent to the southwest corner of the Nave.



Illus. 40: View looking north across completed excavation of Tower foundations adjacent to the southwest corner of the Nave.



Illus. 41: View looking northwest across completed excavation of Tower foundations adjacent to the southwest corner of the Nave.



Illus. 42: View looking west across completed excavation of Tower foundations adjacent to the southwest corner of the Nave.



Illus. 43: View looking west at detail of Tower foundations adjacent to the southwest corner of the Nave.



Illus. 44: View looking southeast across completed excavation of Tower foundations adjacent to the southwest corner of the Nave.



Illus. 45: View looking east across completed excavation of Tower foundations adjacent to the southwest corner of the Nave.



Illus. 46: View looking south across completed excavation of Tower foundations adjacent to the southwest corner of the Nave.



Illus. 47: View of enclosure surrounding Bolton Chapel, looking west.

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Appendix 1:

A Cross Slab from Bolton Chapel

This stone is a slab of fine-grained buff sandstone, overall 410 by 190 mm and 80mm thick, with two cut edges set at right angles and two broken. Towards one end it bears an incised cross with a quatrefoil at its centre enclosing a motif that looks a little like an anchor. The cross is incomplete – there is only a trace of the l. arm and no sign whatever of any shaft.

The stone may not have been a conventional cross slab; it does not appear to taper (as most cross slabs did) and whilst the cross is set central to the long axis of the stone in its present form, the r. edge is a fracture. So what was its original form? The most likely possibility is that it was a grave marker of some form, possibly cut square so as to fit into a pavement, or perhaps more likely set upright in the ground as a headstone or footstone, although the whole of its face is well tooled (rather than having the lower portion, which would have been underground only roughly finished). Another possibility is that it is part of a double stone, which would have borne two crosses side by side (usually commemorating man and wife), but these are relatively rare.

There is no clearly datable motif, although the use of a quatrefoil seems more typical of the later medieval period (the 14th century onwards) by which time it would have been a familiar motif in window tracery. The motif within the quatrefoil is hard to interpret, and lacks any real parallel. The collection of cross Slabs at Old Bewick (Ryder 2003, 107-8, 134) includes three that show emblems identified as buckles or dress fasteners (presumably indicative of a female burial) and it is possible that there was an intention to depict something of the same sort here. Alternatively, it could be intended to represent a capital letter 'E', an initial of the deceased; if this is the case, this would be another pointer to a late medieval (even 15th or 16th century) date.

Peter Ryder May 2013

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