

Archaeological Observation at St Mary's Church, Tysoe, Warwickshire



Report 0637

July 2006

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Summary

Archaeological observation was carried out at St Mary's Church, Tysoe, during construction of a toilet and utility area at the west end of the nave and the excavation of the associated service trenches. The work showed that important archaeological remains survive just below the present floor. A previously unsuspected foundation was found, interpreted as an early west tower replaced when the nave was extended in the mid to late 12th century. The evidence also suggests that, contrary to the hypothesis in the Victoria County History, the original north wall of the church was on the line of the present north wall of the nave rather than to the south of it.

1. Introduction

1.1 A Faculty has been granted by the Diocese of Coventry for the removal of the westernmost two rows of pews in the nave to form a circulating area, and the installation of a kitchen/utility room and toilet facilities with an associated service trench, at St Mary's Church, Middle Tysoe, Warwickshire. The Faculty was subject to a condition requiring the petitioner to secure the implementation of a programme of archaeological works to be undertaken in accordance with a written scheme of investigation to be approved by the Diocesan Archaeological Advisor (DAA).

1.2 A programme of fieldwork, consisting of archaeological observation and recording of all below-floor works and external groundworks, in accordance with a brief prepared by the DAA and a Proposal for Fieldwork prepared by Peter Thompson of Warwickshire Museum, was commissioned from the Warwickshire Museum Field Archaeology Projects Group and carried out between 15th February and 1st March 2006. This report presents the results of that work. The project archive will be deposited with Warwickshire Museum under site code TC06.

2. Location

2.1 The Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (St Mary's Church) is located in Main Street, Middle Tysoe, at national grid reference SP 3408 4463 in the parish of Tysoe (Fig. 1). The new toilet and kitchen/utility room are respectively on the north and south sides of the entrance to the tower, between the tower and the existing timber screen (which remained in situ throughout) at the west end of the nave. The circulating area replaces the last two rows of pews in the nave immediately to the east of the screen. The service trench from the toilet and kitchen passes through the west end of the north arcade wall, crosses the north aisle, passes through the north wall and traverses the churchyard to the north and east of the church.

2.2 The underlying geology of the site is Lower Lias clay (British Geological Survey 1963).

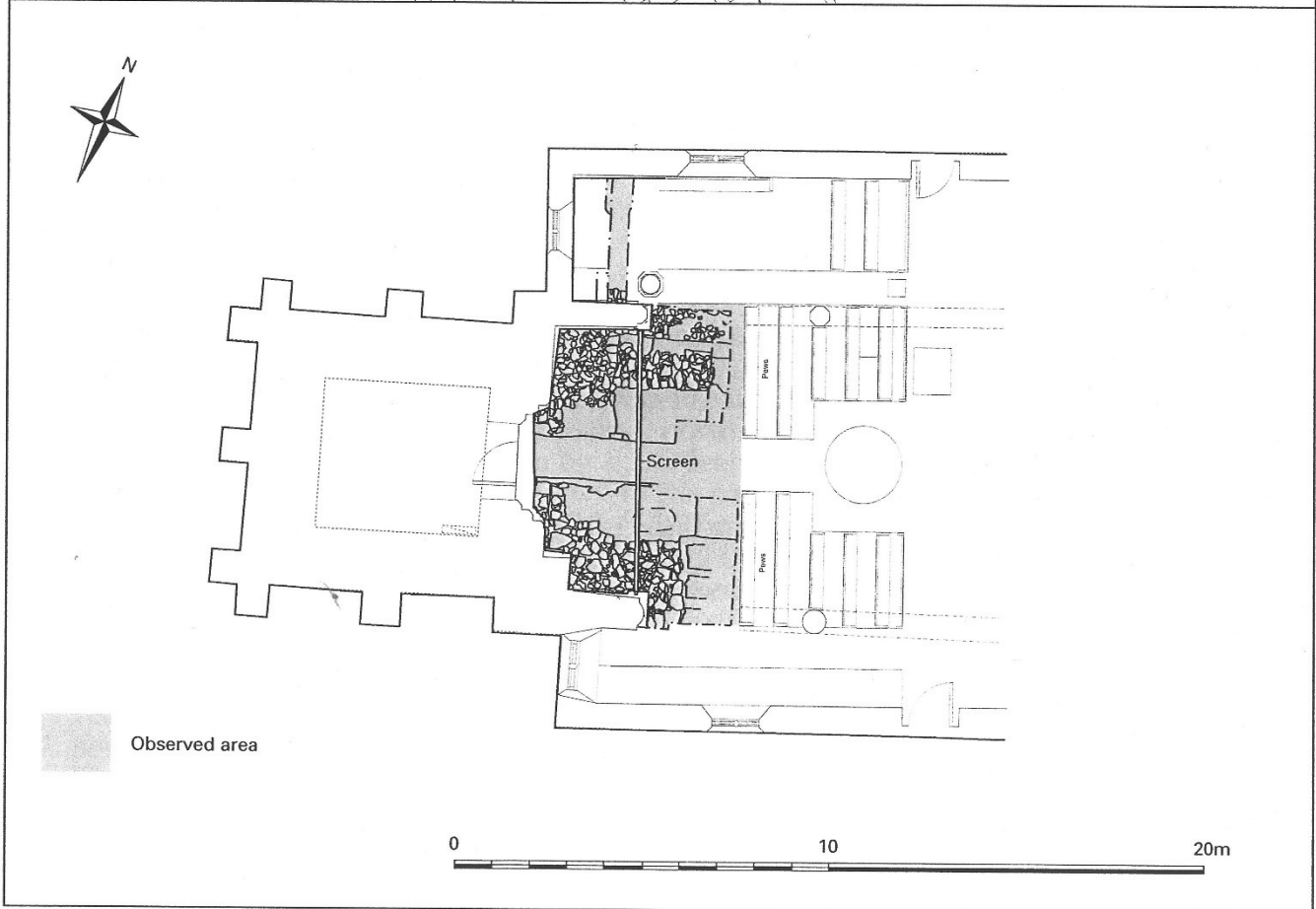
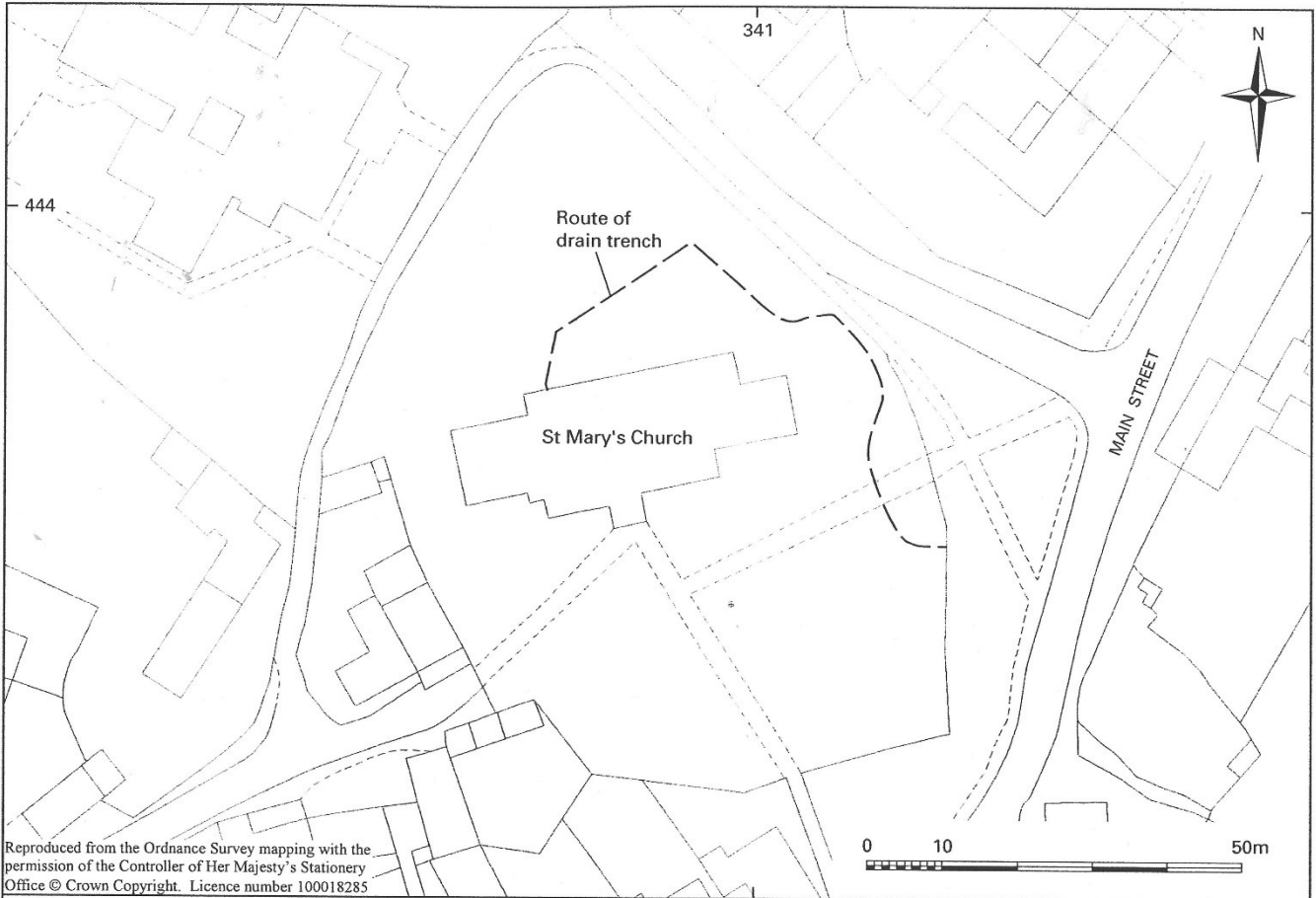


Fig. 1: Site location and areas observed

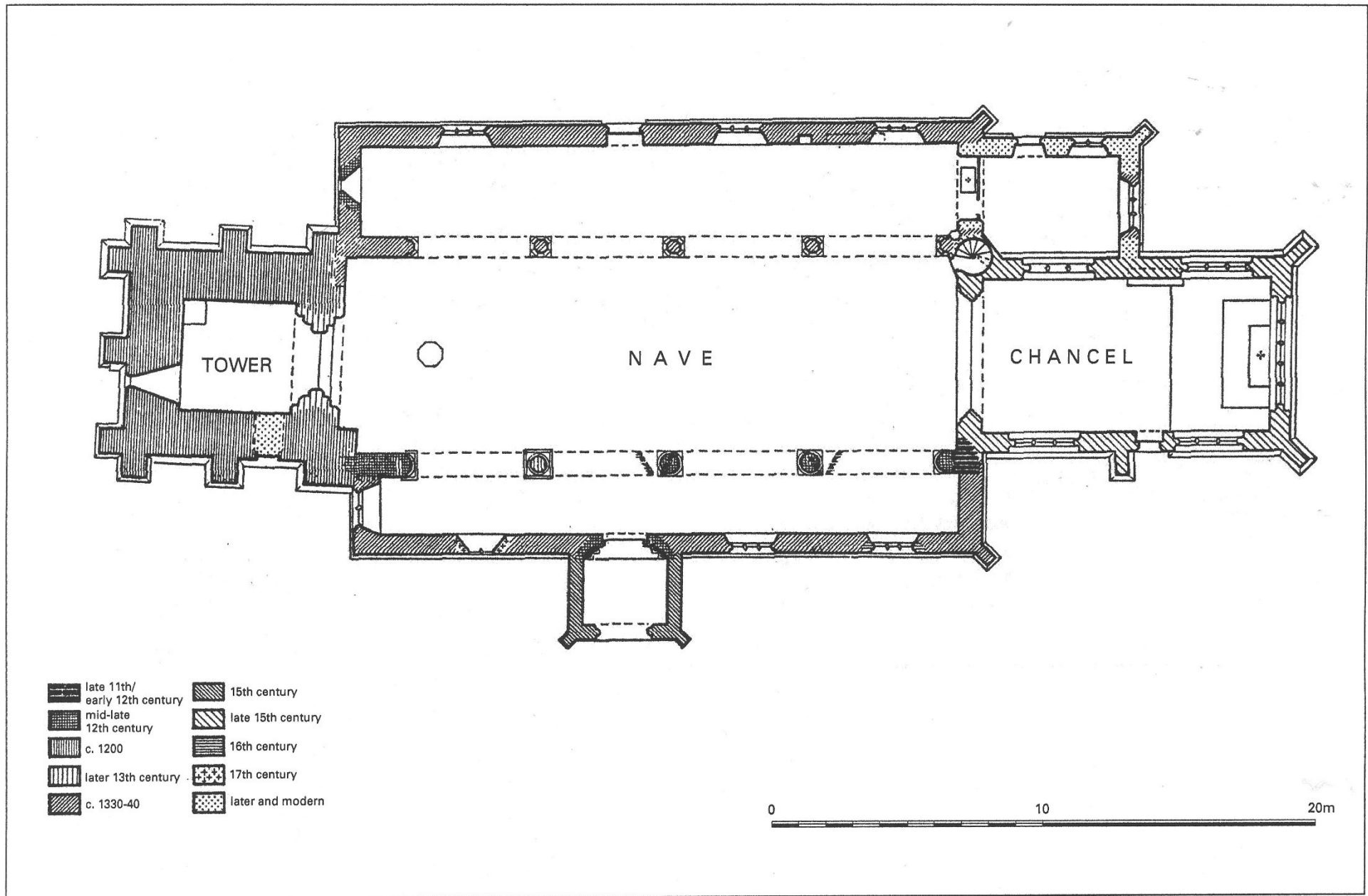


Fig. 2: Plan of church (after VCH 1949, 178)

3. Archaeological and Historical Background

3.1 The name Tysoe is derived from the Anglo-Saxon god Tiw. The Domesday Book (1086) records that the manor of Tysoe was rated at 23 hides, and prior to the Norman Conquest belonged to the thegn Waga, passing to Robert de Stafford after the Conquest. There were 53 villeins, 9 serfs and a priest (VCH 1904, 328), suggesting a relatively large total population of around 315. It remained in the possession of Stafford's descendants until 1520, since when it has been held by the Compton family. A weekly market was granted in 1341, along with a four-day fair at Lammas and other manorial rights (VCH 1949, 176-7). At one time there was a figure of a horse (the Red Horse) cut into a nearby hillside at Edge Hill. Legend has it that this commemorated the killing by the Earl of Warwick of his own horse at the battle of Towton in 1461, as a sign that he would not abandon the field, but the figure may actually have been considerably older (VCH 1949, 175). The village contains a number of listed buildings, several of which date from the 17th century.

3.2 The Domesday Book reference to a priest at Tysoe in 1086 suggests that there may also have been an Anglo-Saxon church, possibly on the same site as, or close to, the present church. The church guide book and website suggest that the church may stand on the site of a Romano-Celtic temple (Tysoe Church nd; Tysoe Church 2006). The evidence cited is firstly that the church is due east of the site of the former horse figure, and secondly that on the vernal equinox the rising sun bisects the site of the horse and strikes the centre of the east window of the church. In the absence of any corroborating physical evidence this can probably be discounted as speculative.

3.3 The earliest elements of the existing church nave date from the very late 11th or early 12th century. The subsequent sequence of alterations and repairs described in VCH (1949, 177-181; Fig. 2) is summarised below.

3.4 The south aisle was added in the mid-late 12th century, followed by the addition of the tower and the lengthening of the nave c.1200. At the same time or shortly afterwards the aisle may have been lengthened, the original respond being moved westwards and a new pillar and arch inserted. (It is possible that the new arch represents an extension merely of the arcade, the aisle itself having already been extended at the same time as the nave, although this suggestion is not put forward in VCH.) The arched entrance between the nave and tower is a later 13th-century insertion, and probably replaced an earlier entrance.

3.5 The north aisle dates from c.1330-40, and VCH suggests that the aisle and arcade were built outside the existing north wall of the nave which was then removed, thus widening the nave by a few feet. This seems to be based on the offset position of the tower entrance relative to the nave walls and the presence in the east wall of the tower "*about 1-1½ yards [0.91-1.37m] north of the archway to the nave [of a] broken vertical seam...north of which the masonry is smaller and more regular, like that of the north wall of the arcade*". (Note that the present 15th-century chancel and nave are symmetrical on a common east-west axis in the centre of the chancel arch. If the original chancel was on the same axis, the widening described by VCH implies that the nave and chancel were previously asymmetrical.) The south aisle was largely rebuilt at the same time, retaining the 12th-century doorway. In the 15th century the south porch was added, the chancel rebuilt, and another stage added to the tower. The 16th and 17th centuries saw alterations to the windows of the south aisle.

3.6 Various repairs were carried out in the 18th century, including (probably) the underpinning of the tower and rebuilding some of its buttresses. The church was refurbished by Sir Gilbert Scott in the mid 1850s, and the vestry and organ chamber added in 1872. Further repair and restoration was carried out in 1912, when most of the internal plaster was removed.

4. Observation

4.1 The internal observed area was c.5.2m x 8.5m in extent at the western end of the nave plus a trench across the north aisle (Figs. 1, 3). Observation commenced after removal by contractors of the pews and the suspended timber floor on which they were supported, and the flagstone floor in the remainder of the working area.

4.2 The original plans called for the re-use of the flagstones in their original position, mostly within the new utility and toilet areas, for which purpose they were numbered and their position recorded by the contractors prior to lifting. New paving was to be used in circulating area. Both were to be laid on a sub-base incorporating breathable insulating material. The new flags were c.50mm thick, requiring a formation depth of c.0.35m below floor level, but the original ones were irregular and significantly thicker, up to 150mm, requiring a greater formation depth of c.0.45m.

4.3 Initial observation in the toilet and utility areas west of the screen revealed archaeological remains significantly above the proposed formation depth, and much of the subsequent ground reduction was therefore carried out by archaeological staff after archaeological recording. Excavation to formation depth in the circulating area east of the screen exposed only 19th-century levelling material with occasional exposures of the upper surface of larger stones of uncertain origin which would not, however, have been affected by the works.

4.4 At this point it was decided (with the approval of the DAA at a site meeting) to use the new paving in the utility area and toilet, and the old flagstones in the circulating area where they would be more visible and in keeping with the rest of the stone flooring in the nave. In the former this had the advantage of reducing the formation depth, and thus the disturbance to the exposed archaeological remains, but meant deeper excavation in the latter, revealing further archaeological remains above the new formation depth.

4.5 After confirmation of the extent and significance of the newly exposed remains in the circulating area, and excavation of the less sensitive deposits to full formation depth of c.0.45m, a further change was made. It was agreed that the need for insulation below the floor of the circulating area (which forms only a small part of the nave) was of lesser importance than the desirability of preserving the remaining archaeological features (principally wall foundations) *in situ*, and that a reduction in the sub-base over them was acceptable. After archaeological recording the *in situ* remains were covered with a Terram membrane before construction of the new floor (Fig. 4). In the relatively confined toilet and utility rooms it was necessary to maintain the insulating properties of the floor, and in these areas archaeological remains were removed as necessary, mostly by archaeological staff, after recording. The minimum level was generally c.0.35m below floor level, but due to the uneven nature of the rubble of which the archaeological features were formed it was often necessary to exceed this to achieve the required minimum.

4.6 As most deposits were not fully excavated it was not possible to establish stratigraphic relationships between all contexts. In the case of the stone rubble foundations, which formed a substantial proportion of the archaeological deposits, separate context numbers were occasionally used to identify different areas of foundation although there was not necessarily a clear distinction between them. Existing floor level was at c.107.26m AOD.



Fig. 3: Overall view of observed area



Fig. 4: Preservation measures below floor of new circulating area

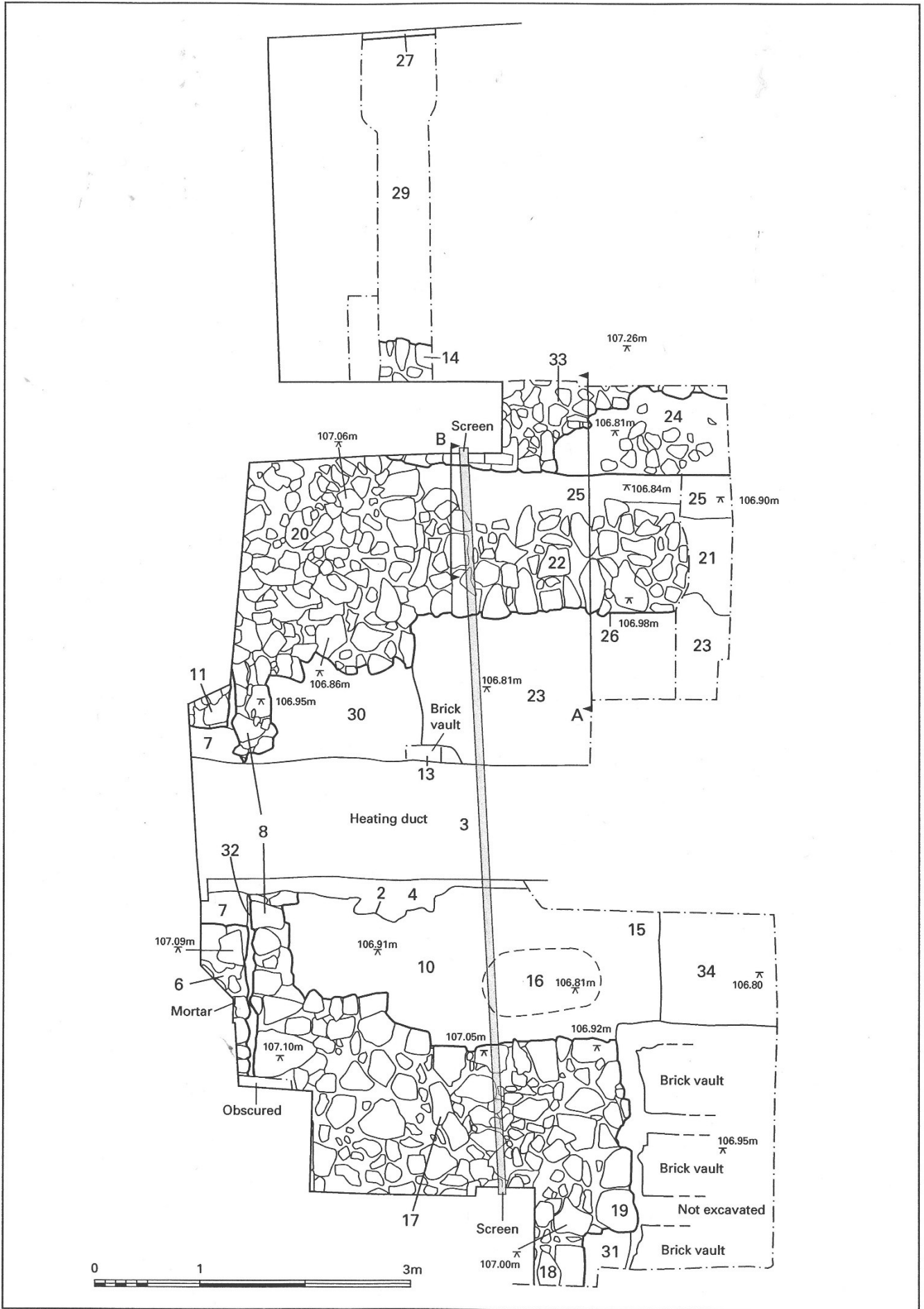


Fig. 5: Internal areas observed

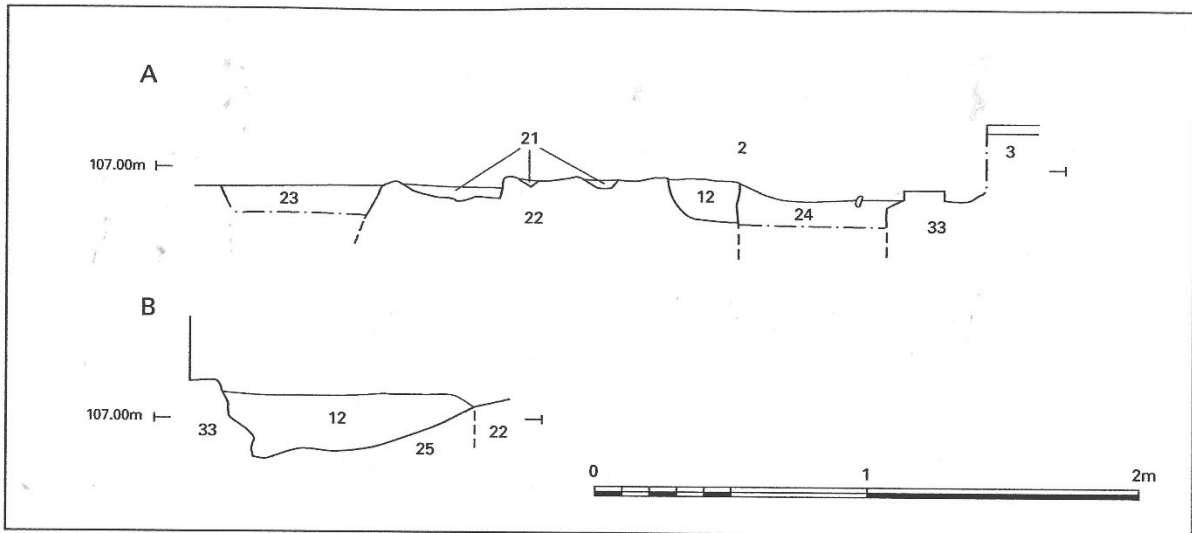


Fig. 6: Sections

Early foundations and deposits

4.7 The earliest structural elements (Fig. 5) were wide east-west running rubble foundations 17 and 22/25, and sections of a north-south foundation 8 which was cut by a substantial Victorian heating duct (3). The rubble foundation in the northwest corner was numbered 20 but this is now considered simply to be the junction between 8 and 22, which are contemporary.

4.8 Foundation 17 consisted of unmortared Hornton stone (ironstone) rubble in a greyish brown sandy silt clay matrix, with a roughly coursed north face which survived to a maximum height of 107.10m AOD and width of *c.*1.4m. East of the west respond of the south arcade wall it merged with similar Hornton stone rubble foundations (18) and (19) from which it was indistinguishable.

4.9 Foundation 22 stood to a level of 106.98m AOD and width of *c.*1.4m. It was of unmortared random Hornton stone rubble in a brown silty clay matrix except for its north side where there was a deposit of sandy mortar (25) which abutted the foundation of the existing north arcade respond and continued east with a very straight north edge. The mortar was underlain by masonry, although this was below formation depth and its nature could not be confirmed. It suggests that the wall originally had dressed facing stones on the north side, which had been removed for re-use elsewhere. A single sherd of ?12th-century pottery was recovered from this area (context 20, the junction of 8 and 22). Ratkai (Appendix C) comments that the sherd could also conceivably be early to middle Anglo-Saxon in date, although given that the assemblage overall appears to be from the 12th to 13th centuries this is not likely. Even if it were to be of that period it would undoubtedly be a residual find in a later foundation; it can be confidently assumed that Tysoe would not have possessed a substantial stone church at such an early date.

4.10 Both 17 and 22/25 merged with foundation 8 at the western end, and it was not possible to define a distinct junction, suggesting they were contemporary. At the eastern end 17 was cut by post-medieval brick vaults. A sherd of ?13th-century pottery was recorded within the matrix of foundation 22.

4.11 Foundation 8 was formed of Hornton stone rubble. Its surviving width was generally only *c.*0.4m wide, although the extent of the masonry at the junctions with 17 and 22/25 indicates an original width of between 1.6m and 1.7m. The highest



Fig. 7: Wall foundation 17, layer 15 and brick vaults



Fig. 8: Wall foundation 17 and south-west corner of nave



Fig. 9: Wall foundation 22/25



Fig. 10: Foundation 20 (N.B. arrow pointing East)



Fig. 11: Wall foundations 8, 11



Fig. 12: Wall foundations 6, 8

point of its upper surface was at 107.10m AOD. It had a distinct roughly coursed western edge, clearly separate from the foundations of the existing east wall of the tower to the south of the doorway (6), but converging with the tower foundation (11) to the north of the door. The precise relationship was obscured by the facing masonry of the standing wall, but it appeared to be earlier. Its eastern edge was much less regular, and is likely to have suffered later disturbance or robbing. To the south of the heating duct this is suggested by the appearance of loose material and small voids during the excavation of the adjacent deposit (10 - see 4.14 and 4.15 below), probably indicating that the eastern part of 8 had been robbed out at some time and the resultant void not properly consolidated. To the north of the duct the eastern edge of 8 was of similar appearance, but the deposit immediately to the east (30) appeared to be similar to the 18/19th-century levelling below the recently removed floor; it may represent later robbing of foundation 8 and if so would confirm the suggested original width of 1.6-1.7m

4.12 Between the heating duct and foundation 22 to the north was a layer of compact grey silty clay of very uniform appearance (23; Fig. 6A) containing occasional disarticulated bone fragments, mortar flecks and patches of brown sandy silt. Its upper surface was at c.106.92m AOD. No datable material was recovered from it. The section shows 23 to overlie the edge of foundation 22, and it was probably a floor levelling layer contemporary with the wall of which 22 was the foundation.

4.13 Two small areas of possible construction trench were visible, one adjacent to foundation 8 (32) and one adjacent to foundation 22 (26). These became visible when layers 7 and 23 respectively were partially removed down to the required depth, and showed as patches of material similar to that found between the stones of the foundations, but on the outer edge of the foundation. They could not be investigated further, and this interpretation is at best uncertain.

Present nave and tower - foundations and deposits

4.14 The foundations of the east wall of the present tower, which also forms the west wall of the nave, were partially exposed and recorded to the north (11) and south (6) of the doorway. These were of Hornton stone rubble, and in the case of the former appeared to be later than the early north-south foundation 8. Apart from exposure they were unaffected by the present works.

4.15 The foundations of the western end of the north arcade wall were noted in the service trench across the north aisle (14; Fig. 13), and were of rubble similar to that recorded elsewhere. At the northern edge of the area observed, continuing the alignment of 14 eastwards, were an apparent southwards continuation of the rubble foundation (33) and a deposit of fill (24). Neither of these could be investigated adequately.

4.16 Foundation 33 was again of random rubble. It was mostly below the undisturbed flagstones of the aisle and could not be removed without risk to the paving. No interface between it and the foundation of the west end of the arcade wall could be identified in the limited investigation possible; it either merged indistinguishably or was continuous.

4.17 Fill 24 was a brown sandy clay silt, very friable and loose in texture, containing stone rubble fragments and small mortar fragments. It extended below formation depth; probing and a very small sondage gave no indication of finding the limits of the deposit within a reasonable distance of the required depth, and no further excavation could therefore be attempted. The interface between it and medieval floor layer 12 was practically vertical (Fig. 6A), and the stratigraphic relationship could not be confirmed. A single 12th- to mid 13th-century sherd was recovered from it. It had

the appearance of a robber backfill, although it had clearly not been compacted or consolidated which suggests it was relatively recent.

4.18 If the interpretation of 24 as wall robbing backfill is correct this would suggest that there was formerly a continuous foundation along the line of the south arcade wall, of which 33 is the surviving remnant. This is likely to relate to the extension of the nave c.1200.



Fig. 13: Service trench, north aisle - foundation 14 (north arcade wall) from north-east

4.19 In a similar position relative to the south arcade wall were areas of rubble 18 and 19. These merged into foundation 17 with no clear distinction. Because only a little of these could be examined due to the limits of the observed area and truncation by later brick vaults, their nature and relationship to surrounding features could not be confirmed.

4.20 Overlying mortar 25 and the edge of foundation 22 was a deposit of grey silty clay (12; Fig. 6B, not on plan), slightly darker than 23 to the south. It decreased in thickness to the east, where 25 sloped upwards to emerge at the level exposed by the removal of the Victorian deposits. It contained a single sherd of late 12th- to early 13th-century pottery. Small areas of grey silty clay of similar character to 12 were also found to the west of foundation 8 (7, divided into two by the heating duct). Seven sherds of pottery were recovered from 7, one 12th-century, one 12th- to early 13th-century and five 12th to 13th-century.

4.21 Layer 12 may be a floor make-up layer in the extended nave following the demolition of the wall and the removal of the facing stones above mortar 25. Layer 7 is thought to be fragmentary remains of similar floor make-up in the doorway to the tower, or possibly a single extensive layer with 12.

4.22 Between the heating duct and early foundation 17 to the south was a layer of greyish brown sandy silt clay, containing a small proportion of stone fragments and mortar fragments, with occasional charcoal flecks and patches of grey clay (10/15). Its upper surface was approximately at the required formation depth, and it was not possible to investigate it in detail. Very limited excavation, little more than heavy cleaning, together with removal of part of foundation 8 resulted in small voids appearing in looser material at the western end. A patch of similar but looser material (16) may simply be a variation in the deposit or possibly the fill of an unrecognised cut.

4.23 The nature of this deposit is not clear. All the pottery dated from the 12th to mid 13th centuries: two sherds from each of 10 and 16, and a single sherd from 15. It abutted foundation 17, and must post-date the suggested robbing of the eastern edge of 8 although no other stratigraphic relationships could be established (and indeed the relationship with 8 could not be confirmed by full excavation although there is little doubt). Although it is very different in character to suggested floor make-up 12, it is therefore most likely to be part of the extension of the nave. It could, however, conceivably belong to a later phase.

North aisle

4.24 The foundations of the north wall of the north aisle (the external wall of the church) were noted in the service trench across the north aisle (27). These were well-constructed coursed masonry only slightly wider than the wall above (Fig. 14). A grey silty clay (29) make-up layer was found immediately below the present floor of the north aisle; one sherd of 12th- to 13th-century pottery was recovered from it.



Fig. 14: Service trench, north aisle - foundation 27 (north wall) from south-west

18th century and later

4.25 A row of three post-medieval, probably 18th-or early 19th-century, brick burial vaults were found in the south east corner of the observed area (Fig. 7). Their extent was established and they were partially exposed, but it was not considered necessary to record them fully as they were preserved in situ below the new floor. The north-west corner of a further brick vault (13) was found immediately to the north of the heating duct. It was slightly below the intended formation depth and could not be investigated, but its presence was confirmed by a small exploratory excavation. It appeared that the top had been removed by the Victorian heating duct, and it is assumed it was emptied and backfilled when the duct was installed.

4.26 To the north of the row of three brick vaults was an area of looser mixed material (34). It appeared to be relatively recent, probably 18th- or 19th-century, and as it was identified at the required formation depth it was not investigated further. It may be backfill over another, slightly deeper, vault.

4.27 Overlying the above deposits and features was a compact layer (9, not on plan) of brown sandy clay silt with up to 5% stone and mortar fragments and occasional brick fragments. Above this was a similar but lighter and more mixed layer (5, not on plan) which, where not compacted below the removed pews and timber floor, became more like a layer of loose hardcore. Finds included Victorian pottery, but also 14th- to 15th-century floor tile, including one complete example. The layers were not initially recognised as separate and were largely removed as one. Foundation 22 was overlain by with a compact brown sandy clay silt containing up to c.15% stone fragments and c.10% mortar fragments (21; Fig. 6A, not on plan). It was similar to 9, although stonier, and is likely to be the same as 9. Layer 5 is undoubtedly a Victorian floor make up and 9/21 may be part of the same phase of work, although it is possible that it is from an earlier, probably post-medieval, floor.

4.28 Set on levelling layer 5 within the nave, except where occupied by pews, was a flagstone floor (1) incorporating one re-used 18th-century memorial stone laid face down at the west end between the screen and the tower (Fig.15). The flags were set on a bed of light brown mortar. Similar flags set on light brown mortar also formed the floor of the north aisle, although there they were set directly on a clay make-up layer (29). The floor was probably contemporary with a substantial heating duct running east-west along the centre line of the floor (3). This had a brick base and sides, partially capped with stone but mostly with a cast iron grille set in the floor. It was set in a trench (2) cut slightly into the underlying layers and features, the backfill on the south side of which included numerous stone fragments (4). The western (stone capped) end of the duct contained substantial quantities of soot, and further east it had been re-used to take electricity cables. The floor and heating appear Victorian, possibly from Scott's refurbishment although the heating could be a later insertion.

Service trench in graveyard

4.29 Outside the church the new service trench was excavated using a tracked mini-excavator to a width of c.0.3m and up to c.0.75m deep, exiting the north-west corner of the north aisle and heading north, turning east towards the curving churchyard wall, then following an irregular course along the inside of the wall, avoiding trees as necessary, before turning east to pass through the foundation of the wall into the street (Fig. 1). Almost all of the trench was observed either during excavation or after excavation but prior to backfilling. No features were noted, and the only deposit recorded was a brown silty loam graveyard soil (35) containing occasional disarticulated human bones and bone fragments which were left for reburial on site.



Fig. 15: Re-used memorial stone recovered from floor

5. The Medieval Pottery by *Stephanie Rátkai*

5.1 The small group of medieval pottery was compared to the Warwickshire Medieval Pottery Type Series (Soden and Rátkai 1998) and quantified by sherd count and sherd weight (Appendix C). The date range for each fabric identified has been given in Appendix C. Despite the small sherd size the Tysoe pottery could be matched to existing fabrics in the type series. Most of these fabrics had been previously found in south-eastern Warwickshire, and with one possible exception appeared to be local to the area.

5.2 Under the circumstances, exact dating of the pottery and associated layers was not very feasible. However, it is unlikely that any of the pottery post-dates 1250. A sherd from a Banbury-type ware splash-glazed pitcher in (7) is unlikely to be later than c.1225, and a calcareous gravel tempered ware bowl from (12) could be dated to the late 12th- to early 13th-century and paralleled in Mellor (1994, Fig. 12.1). All the contexts seem to contain broadly equivalent or contemporary pottery with the exception of (5) which contained 18th/19th-century material but was immediately below the existing stone flagged floor. The overall impression is that the pottery dates from the 12th to early 13th centuries and is considerably earlier than the date of the construction of the north aisle c.1330-40.

6. Conclusions

6.1 Despite the limited nature of the investigations some conclusions can be drawn. The total absence of any Romano-British material confirms that it is virtually certain that the church is not on the site of a Romano-Celtic temple. The following sequence, which varies from that in VCH (1949, 177-181) in certain respects, can be postulated. Figs. 16-20 show the suggested plan of the church at each stage of development (dark tone) superimposed on the existing plan (from Fig. 2) and the archaeological evidence observed.

Phase 1: late 11th or early 12th century (Fig. 16)

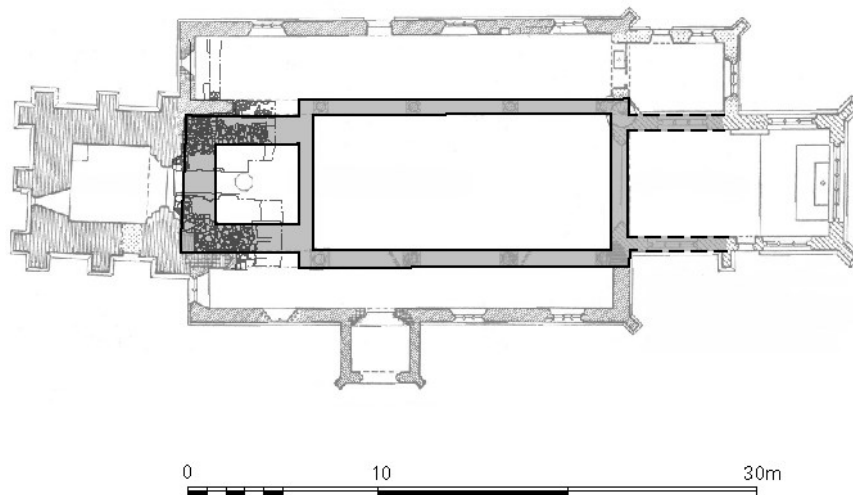


Fig. 16: Phase 1

6.2 VCH assumes that the original church was a simple two-celled structure with nave and chancel. The remains of two early windows above the arches of the south arcade indicate this is the original south wall of the church. Assuming these were placed symmetrically in the wall, and there were no others, the west end of the original nave would have been approximately in the position of, or slightly to the west of, the westernmost column of the present south arcade. This corresponds to a change in masonry noted by VCH and interpreted as indicating the original length of the nave. This is east of the present observations and there was therefore no possibility of locating the original west end of the nave but it is likely to have been approximately as shown on Fig. 16. There is no evidence to confirm the dimensions of the original chancel, the conjectural north and south walls of which are shown dashed on Figs. 16-20.

6.3 The earliest structural element observed is represented by wall foundations 17, 8 and 22/25. Clay layer 23 is likely to have been a contemporary floor layer. No equivalent layer survived south of the Victorian heating duct.

6.4 The position of 22/25 relative to the existing 14th-century north arcade is in accordance with the hypothesis in VCH that the arcade wall was built against the outer face of the original nave wall, which was then demolished thus widening the nave slightly. However, no walls in a position corresponding to foundation 17 can be inferred from the sequence in VCH. If 17 was also part of the nave its position would suggest that not only was the nave narrower on the north side, but it was narrower on the south side as well, with foundation 17 occupying a similar position relative to the south arcade wall as 22 does to the north arcade. This cannot however be the case because the current south arcade wall is the original nave wall, and is slightly to the south of 17.

6.5 There are therefore several possible interpretations for these foundations, none of which can be proved on the basis of the present evidence. The most likely is that they represent an early tower, narrower than the original nave by the thickness of the nave walls. Such a tower could have been part of the original church or a later addition, and would have had a relatively short life before being replaced by the extended nave and the present tower. This also suggests that the original north wall was actually on the same alignment as the present arcade wall (as shown on Figs. 16-19), rather than just inside it as postulated by VCH; the tower and nave would then be symmetrical along the same east-west axis.

6.6 Other interpretations are possible, but less likely:

- Foundations 17, 8 and 22/25 could belong to a previous church, completely or largely replaced by the present building. Such a church could be of Anglo-Saxon date, although the foundations were over 1.4m wide which suggests a wall wider than normal for this period. There is no finds evidence for such a date, other than the single sherd from context 20 which Rátkai (Appendix C) notes could conceivably be early to middle Anglo-Saxon but is far more likely to be 12th-century.
- The church could have originally been a three-celled structure, with foundations 17, 8 and 22/25 forming a westernmost cell (rather than a tower), slightly narrower than the central cell. This would be rare, certainly for Warwickshire where there do not appear to be any published examples of this type (eg Salter 1992).
- The lengthening of the nave *c.*1200, if represented by foundations 17, 8 and 22/25, could have been to a slightly narrower width than the original nave. However, a slight change in width would be strange for a simple extension to the nave, although not for a tower.

Phase 2: mid-late 12th century (Fig. 17)

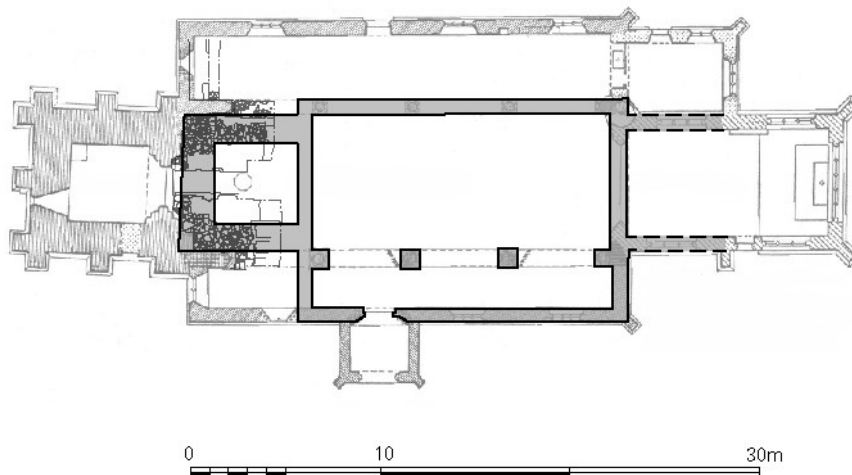


Fig. 17: Phase 2

6.7 VCH states that the south aisle was added some time after the middle of the 12th century (VCH 1949, 177-178). The present doorway is 12th-century, but its position would be asymmetrical in the new aisle. It is possible that the original entrance was approximately in the position of the present central window, evidence for which was lost when the south aisle was rebuilt in the 14th century. The doorway could have been repositioned when the aisle was subsequently extended in the late 12th century, or date from the extension rather than the original aisle construction; both are compatible with the its dating.

Phase 3: mid to late 12th century / c.1200 (Fig. 18)

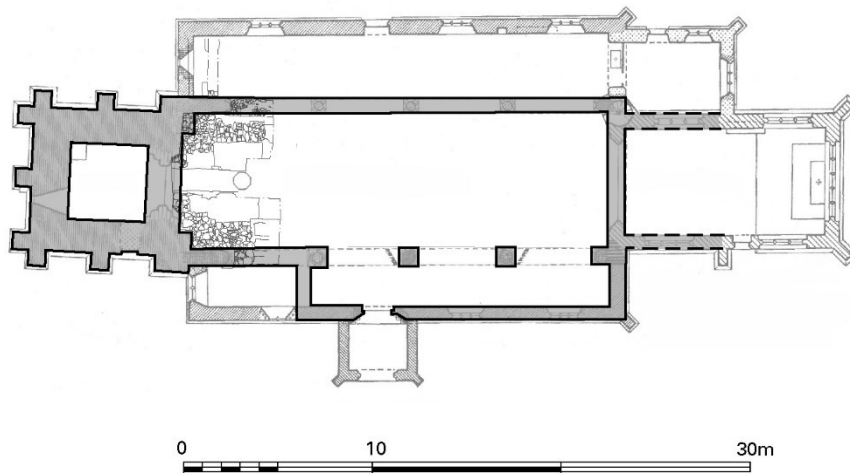


Fig. 18: Phase 3

6.8 The extension of the nave westwards is thought by VCH to be later than the south aisle, but it is not clear from the text whether it is suggesting that the extension and the construction of the present tower were contemporary, or separate but closely spaced events: "*Next came the lengthening of the nave and the addition of the west tower at the end of the [12th] century*". However, the accompanying plan (on which Fig. 2 above is based) separates them, dating the former to the mid to late 12th century and the latter to c.1200 (VCH 1949, 178). It is therefore possible that Fig. 18 actually combines two separate phases of construction, but as the extension of the nave involved demolishing the original tower it was probably intended to build a replacement tower as part of the same programme, even if they were not, in practice, built simultaneously. VCH is uncertain whether the south aisle was also extended at this time; for purpose of this discussion it is assumed that the aisle extension was later (6.12-14 below; Fig. 19).

6.9 The clear gap between foundations 8 and the foundations of the present tower (6 and 11) may suggest the desire to avoid disturbance to an adjacent standing structure, although this is not certain because the tower is skewed relative to the nave and the present wall does overlap foundation 8 towards the north. However the overlap may be the result of re-facing during the 14th-century rebuilding when the north aisle was added; the precise relationship between tower foundation 11 and the early west wall foundation was obscured by the present standing masonry and could not be established.

6.10 Whilst wider than the structure it replaced (the early tower), the extended nave is likely to have continued the walls of the original nave on the alignment of the present north and south arcade walls, which themselves would have remained substantially unaltered. There is evidence that the facing stones from the old tower were removed for re-use (context 25), and that a clay levelling deposit or floor (12) was laid down in the extended nave. The pottery from this floor layer was 12th- to early 13th-century in date. This is compatible with the suggestion that the demolition and reconstruction was earlier than 1330 (i.e. not connected with the construction of the north aisle) but, as there was only one sherd, is not conclusive; indeed the only pottery found below the floor of the 14th-century aisle itself was a single residual sherd also of 12th- to early 13th-century date.

6.11 The tower has pairs of original buttresses at the corners, including an internal buttress in the south-west corner of the nave. It is likely that there was also a buttress at the north-west corner. The suggestion in VCH that the existing 14th-century north arcade wall was built outside the previous (lengthened) nave wall, which was then demolished thus widening the nave slightly, seems to be partly based on the presence of a vertical break in the masonry of the west wall of the nave "about 1-1½ yards" (0.914-1.37m) north of the entrance to the tower. As suggested above, this widening is now thought not to have taken place, but it is possible that the scar in the masonry was actually caused by the removal of the buttress from the north-west corner when the north aisle was built. It was not possible to establish whether the buttresses within the nave were provided with totally new foundations or whether they re-used foundations 17/8/22. No clear differences in the rubble could be identified, which suggests the latter.

Phase 4: c.1200 to early 13th century (Fig. 19)

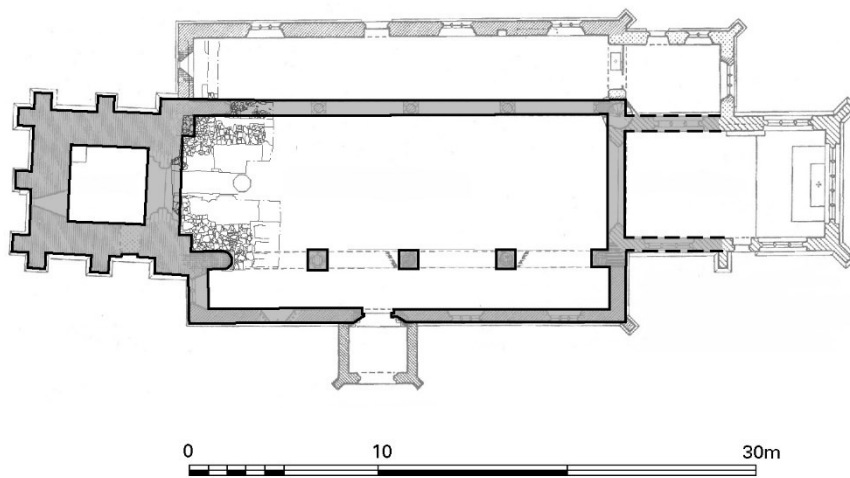


Fig. 19: Phase 4

6.12 VCH dates the westernmost arch of the south arcade to the 13th century compared with the other three of 12th-century date. It states that the south aisle was extended at the same time as, or shortly after, the extension of the nave and construction of the tower, although dating these no later than *c.1200* rather than the 13th century to which it dates the arch. Presumably it is this dating which suggests the possibility that they may not be contemporary, although it is possible that the repositioning of the respond and insertion of the western arch took place slightly later than the extension of the aisle. Fig. 19 shows the final layout of the aisle (the outer wall being subsequently rebuilt in the same position in 1330-1340).

6.13 If the nave extension had been earlier than the aisle extension it can be assumed it would have had a solid wall, and a wall footing or robbed-out wall should be present on the line of the arcade wall within the present arch. If they were contemporary it is more likely that the arch would have been built at the same time, and either the foundation would not be continuous or, possibly, there would be a sleeper wall between the columns of the arch. Only a small part of the relevant area was available for inspection, and most of that had been disturbed by an 18th-century brick vault. It is possible that foundations (18) and (19), which could not be distinguished from (17), could represent such remains but it was not possible to confirm this, or whether they represent a substantial wall or a sleeper wall. Clay floor layer 31 could be overlying a robbed-out foundation or wall, but again this could not be confirmed within the depth available for investigation.

Phase 5: 1330-1340 (Fig. 20)

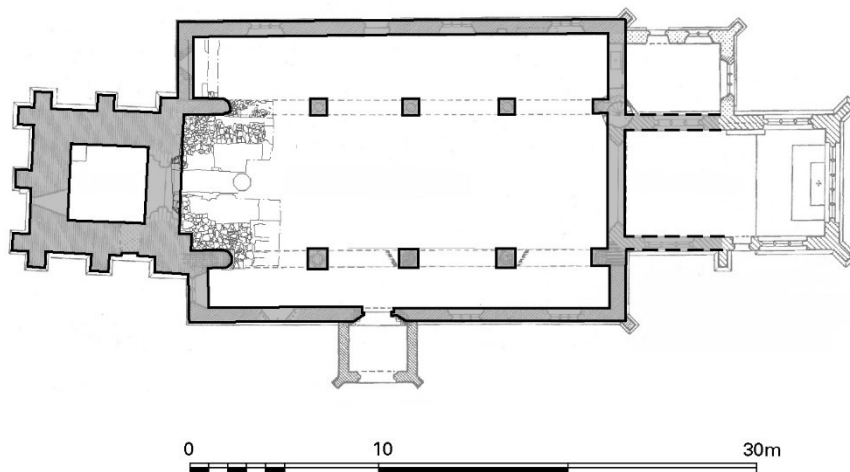


Fig. 20: Phase 5

6.14 The masonry of the north arcade is noted by VCH to be similar to that of the new outer wall of the aisle, indicating that the addition of the north aisle, which it dates to 1330-1340, involved the complete replacement of the north wall of the nave rather than simply the insertion of arches into the existing wall. It postulates that this new wall was built outside the existing wall which was then demolished thus widening the nave. However, as described above it is now thought that this widening did not take place. The new arcade wall probably also involved the removal of the tower buttress from the north-west corner of the nave. The 12th-century window in the west wall of the aisle is assumed to be re-used.

6.15 If the arcade wall replaced an earlier external wall as suggested, wall footings and/or evidence of wall robbing should be present below the floor, between the columns of the arches. There is evidence for this in the form of the possible rubble foundation 33 and robbing backfill 24.

6.16 All the medieval floor tile recovered was of 14th/15th-century date. Although no tiles were found *in situ* it would be reasonable to suggest that the construction of the north aisle in 1330-40 was accompanied by a complete, or at least extensive, re-flooring of the church with a tile surface. The 12th- to 13th-century sherd found in the floor make-up below the aisle floor (29) must be residual.

Future work

6.17 The church has a complex history and much can be deduced from the standing structure. However, the present observations have shown the existence of lost building elements that have left no evidence above ground, and also that the structural evidence alone can occasionally be misleading. It has also confirmed that complex and important remains are present at a high level below the present floor layers. In order to preserve such remains *in situ*, and minimise the need for archaeological work, it is recommended that any future alterations are, where possible, designed to avoid lowering the floor level, if necessary by slightly raising it.

6.18 Where disturbance is unavoidable it is important that all appropriate opportunities to investigate the sub-floor make-up of the church are taken. In particular, investigation of the line of the arcade walls around, and to the east of, the westernmost pair of arcade columns should confirm the position of the original nave walls. There is little doubt that the south arcade wall is the original south wall, but the

evidence for the north wall offered here contradicts the hypothesis in the Victoria County History and confirmation is required.

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Appendix A: List of contexts

<i>Context No.</i>	<i>Description</i>
1	Existing flagstone floor
2	Cut for Victorian heating duct
3	Victorian heating duct
4	Backfill of heating duct trench
5	Levelling below Victorian floor (1)
6	Wall foundation - south side of entrance to tower
7	Layer - medieval floor levelling?
8	Wall foundation
9	Post-medieval floor levelling
10	Layer; ?med. floor make-up
11	As 6, but on north side of entrance
12	Medieval levelling over removed wall 22/25
13	Brick burial vault
14	Foundation of west end of north arcade wall
15	As 10, but to east of screen
16	Layer/fill. Unexcavated. ?part of 15 or possibly fill of unrecognised cut
17	Wall foundation
18	Foundation of west end of south arcade
19	Wall foundation; ?same as/associated with 17
20	Foundation of NE corner of tower, pre-construction of north aisle
21	Backfill over robbed out wall 22
22	Wall foundation (original N wall of nave)
23	?Medieval levelling/floor layer
24	?Backfill of robber cut (unexcavated)
25	Mortar left after robbing of facing stones of wall 22
26	?Possible construction cut for wall 22
27	Foundation of existing north wall of church
28	Bedding layer for flagstone floor in north aisle
29	Medieval floor make-up layer, north aisle
30	Victorian fill - ?associated with brick vault 13
31	?Medieval floor make-up
32	Possible construction cut for foundation 8
33	Foundation
34	?18th/19th-century deposit (not excavated)
35	Graveyard soil

Appendix B: List of finds

<i>Context</i>	<i>Material</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Date/Comments</i>
5	Pottery	1	See Appendix C
5	Pottery	1	See Appendix C. 19th-century zoomorphic (?lion) glazed ?handle
5	Floor tile	5	14th/15th-century 108mm x 108mm brown/green; also monochrome green. 145mm x ?mm monochrome green
5	Lead object	2	
5	Clay pipe	1	Stem
5	Glass	4	1 painted
7	Pottery	7	See Appendix C
10	Pottery	2	See Appendix C
12	Pottery	1	See Appendix C
15	Pottery	1	See Appendix C
16	Pottery	2	See Appendix C
20	Pottery	1	See Appendix C
22	Pottery	1	See Appendix C
24	Pottery	1	See Appendix C
29	Pottery	1	See Appendix C
unstratified	Floor tile	2	14th/15th-century monochrome green

Appendix C: Pottery data (by Stephanie Rátkai)

<i>Ctxt</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>Common name</i>	<i>Previously found at</i>	<i>Qty</i>	<i>Wght</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Comment</i>
5	MGW	19th c glazed ware		1	24	19th c	
5	slipco	Slip-coated ware		1	2	18th c?	
7	SV011?	Banbury-type ware	Park House, Warwick	1	54	12th-e13th c	Tan splash-glaze pitcher, flint in fabric
7	CO01	Calcareous gravel-tempered ware	Burton Dassett, Warwick etc	1	7	12th-13th c	
7	CO01	Calcareous gravel-tempered ware	Burton Dassett, Warwick etc	1	3	12th c	
7	Sq05.1	Sandy cooking pot	Burton Dassett	1	7	12th-13th c	
7	SV01	Banbury-type ware	Burton Dassett, Ratley	2	11	12th-13th c	
7	SQ20.2/ SQ27	Sandy cooking pot	central-southern Warwickshire?	1	6	12th-13th c	Red-brown incs cf cov SQ20.2 but could be SQ27*
10	SQ05.1	Sandy cooking pot	Burton Dassett	2	8	12th-13th c	
12	CO01	Calcareous gravel-tempered ware	Burton Dassett, Warwick etc	1	34	late 12th -early 13th c	Curving-sided bowl, oxac type Mellor 1994 Fig 12.1
15	SV01	Banbury-type ware	Burton Dassett, Ratley	1	7	12th-m13th c	Thumbed rim cooking pot
16	SV01	Banbury-type ware	Burton Dassett, Ratley	1	3	12th-m13th c	
16	SV03?	Banbury-type ware	Burton Dassett, Ratley	1	3	12th-m13th c	
20	RS21	Sandy black cooking pot	Burton Dassett	1	4	12th c?	Could conceivably be early-mid Saxon?
22	CL01?	Limestone tempered ware	Burton Dassett	1	28	13th c?	Oxidised and very hard fired
24	SV03?	Banbury-type ware	Burton Dassett, Ratley	1	7	12th-m13th c	
29	CS02	Shelly ware	Burton Dassett	1	1	12th-13th c	

* There may also be a similar Northamptonshire fabric

