

ST JAMES CHURCH NETHER WORTON**WATCHING BRIEF - MAY, JUNE 1993****NGR SP 42683011****INTRODUCTION**

A watching brief was undertaken by the Oxford Archaeological Unit during the underpinning work along the south aisle wall and along the east chancel wall of St James Church.

BACKGROUND

The earliest evidence for the church is 12th-century; which comprised at least a nave and aisle of three bays.

The church was reconsecrated in 1630. In 1630 a small tower was built into the W bay of the S aisle. From 1632 onwards Nether Worton was used regularly as a burial place.

Reference:- V.C.H. *Oxon.* Vol. XI, (1983) p. 292.

RESULTS

The trenches excavated for the underpinning were 1.60m in depth and were 0.80m in width. The trenches along the E chancel wall were slightly greater in depth. The material was then dug away from under the bottom course wall in order to insert the concrete underpinning.

Along most of the 19m length of the underpinning the bottom course of the walls cut into the natural geological deposits. The bottom of the S aisle wall consisted of two courses below the present ground surface (0.40m). The bottom of the E chancel wall was 1.00m below the present ground surface.

Only in the SE corner of the S aisle could a deposit be identified which extended under the wall. The exact nature of the two deposits extending under the aisle wall was unclear within the narrow confines of the trench, but both produced 11th - 12th century pottery. The earliest deposit produced a horizontal flat topped rim sherd from a cooking pot or bowl and a base sherd with a sooted exterior.

An unstratified cooking pot rim recovered by the builders dated from late 12th - early 13th century.

The trench dug along the E chancel wall contained no indication of the original extent of the supposed shortened chancel. No graves appeared to be disturbed by the trenches.

OAU
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