

St. Kenelm's Church, Church Enstone, Oxon

NGR SP 370 241

Archaeological Watching Brief Report



Oxford Archaeological Unit

July 1996

ST KENELM'S CHURCH, CHURCH ENSTONE, OXON
SP 370241
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

Summary

A watching brief carried out at this church during restoration work examined a number of redeposited 18th and 19th century memorial slabs

Introduction

A programme of restoration and repair work at St Kenelm's church, Church Enstone carried out in 1996 involved *inter alia* the replacement of parts of the 19th century floor of the church. In the course of this work a number of memorial slabs were revealed. After discussion between the architect (Raymond Hey of Headington, Oxford) and the Diocesan Advisor on archaeology it was agreed that a rapid watching brief would be conducted by the Oxford Archaeological Unit. The church was visited on July 3rd 1996, the exposed stones recorded and details of their context noted. The cooperation of the builders, J P Charles and Son of Middleton Cheney, Banbury, during the visit is acknowledged.

The Church

St Kenelm's church has a Saxon dedication, but the earliest surviving elements are of 12th century date. Thereafter the church has a fairly complex architectural history, resulting in the present structure. This has a west tower, nave, choir and chancel and north and south aisles. At the east end of the narrow north aisle is an organ chamber, and at the east end of the broader south aisle is a Lady Chapel. There is a south porch continuous with the west end of the south aisle. Restoration of the church was carried out by Street in 1856 (Sherwood and Pevsner 1974, 593), and the recently-removed floors presumably date to that time.

The Floor Voids

The floors to be replaced were of wooden boards resting on joists placed north-south across a series of east-west aligned voids in the nave and both aisles. The lettering of the voids follows that used on the architect's plan - areas A and F were not open at the time of the visit and were not examined (see Fig 1). At the time of the visit voids B-E and H and J had been cleared of rubbish, voids K and L still contained loose debris but it was possible to inspect both.

The voids were evidently constructed in the Victorian period. Each was lined with fairly rough mortared limestone masonry generally c 0.30-0.40 m in height, at the top of which is a smooth offset, usually of mortar, varying between 0.10 and 0.30 m in width and from 0.17-0.22 m below the present floors on all sides of the voids. These floors are of ceramic tiles. The offsets carried the ends of wooden joists, a partial central support for which was provided by an east-west row of piers, usually of bricks set in pairs so that the piers were c 0.23 m square in plan. In the south aisle, in void B, the piers were of identical stonework to that of the void walls. At the east end of void C, repaired fairly recently, breeze blocks had been used. These also occurred in void J. There were no piers evident in voids H, K and L.

The piers and the base of the offset void walls appeared to rest directly upon a layer of yellowish brown loamy sand incorporating limestone chippings and fragments and occasional larger pieces. This layer varied considerably in hardness. Locally it was very compacted, elsewhere it was quite loose. It was generally quite dry. The date of this deposit is unknown, though it may have been broadly contemporary with the construction of the voids. The layer occurred fairly consistently across all the voids, forming their bottom, usually c 0.50-0.60 m below the present tiled floor level.

The relationship of the void walls to the column bases of the north and south arcades (13th and 12th century respectively) was examined, since this could have shed light on the height of medieval floor levels, but the evidence was inconclusive. The walls should have butted up to and around the bases, but without removal of the walls it was impossible to determine if this was the case or if the columns were in fact underpinned with masonry similar to that of the void walls. If the latter was the case it would imply that medieval (and later) floor levels had been completely removed during the 19th century work. This is likely in any case since it is most improbable that such floor levels would have been lower than the bases of the present voids. The position of the column bases for the arcades suggest that surfaces contemporary with the construction of the arcades would have been at a level similar to that of the present floor.

The Memorial Slabs - location

Where present the memorial slabs were laid on the layer forming the base of the voids. The slabs occurred in clusters, at the east end of void C, in the eastern half of void D, at the extreme east end of void E and across voids J and K. They were laid face up. It was clear that the stones had been redeposited, around the brick piers of void E, for example (where at one point they were in two layers), and their deposition was thus contemporary with the construction of the flooring across the voids, presumably in the mid 19th century. The position of the stones was not recorded in detail as they were not *in situ*. It is possible, however, that their locations reflected their general position in the church before the 19th century work.

The Memorial Slabs

The great majority of the slabs were of late 18th and early 19th century date. All but one were of lozenge form, and were generally of a fine grained limestone. The thickness of the slabs was variable. It is not clear if these were floor slabs or wall tablets. Except in one case there were no decorative features in addition to the inscriptions, which were mostly simple in character. Not all the stones were complete. In some cases the surfaces had flaked and parts of the inscriptions were illegible. There was a single rectangular brass inscribed plate in void B.

In the following catalogue, stones are listed from west to east within each void. Dimensions (approximate) are in mm and the inscriptions are set horizontally across the lozenge form unless otherwise stated. Where possible the exact spelling is followed, but variations in the script have not all been reproduced here. Characters whose reading is uncertain are underlined>.

Void C

1. 485 x 485 mm.

Frances So.....
Widow of
REVD WILLIAM SOMERSC..
of Evenlode
DIED JULY ye 5th 1799
AGED 38

2. Rectangular brass plate 233 x 172 mm.

TO THE MEMORY
OF ABIGAIL LATE WIFE OF THE REV
M WILCOCKSON WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE
MAY THE 19TH AD 1734 AND IN
THE 20TH YEAR OF HER AGE

BENEATH THIS STONE THERE LIES A FAITHFUL WIFE
CALLD HENCE BY DEATH WHILE IN THE SPRING OF LIFE
BEAUTY AND INNOCENCE IN HER COMBIND
AS THAT THE BODY THIS ADORN THE MIND
THOSE LOVELY VIRTUES THAT ENRICH THE SOUL
TRUTH HONESTY AND CANDOUR CROWND YE WHOLE

Void D

3. Rectangular slab 1130 x 620 mm, normal inscription.

BENJAMIN
MARTEN
1716

4. Two separate fragments, lying either side of No 5 below, a (top) 580+ x 365+ mm and b (bottom right) 675 x 340+ mm.

In
Memory of
JOHN PHILLIPS Gent
Departed this Life
September 1782
Aged 71
Years

5. 625 x 640 mm.

In
Memory of
MARY wife of
JOHN PHILLIPS Gent
Who Departed this Life
ye 5th day of July 1771
Aged 50
Years

Void E

6. Fragment 415+ x 140+ mm.

.....U
Who die[d
1807 Ag[ed
Years

7. Fragment 465+ x 260+ mm.

the 6 of Se[ptember
Age [
Ye[ars

8. Fragment 790 x 430+ mm.

..
]kish Devon
... of
]OR MARSHALL
Depart]ed this Life
]0th AD 1808
Aged 27 Years

9. Beneath 6, 7 and 8. 742 x 742 mm.

In
Memory of
PRISCILL.I. Wife of
The Revd
EDWARD MARSHALL
who departed this life
The 15th day of August
1801
Aged 29 Years

10. 688 x 690 mm.

Here lieth
the Body of the
Rev EDWARD MARSHALL
Who departed this Life
September the 18th 1798
Aged 39 Years

11. In two pieces. 622 x 625 mm.

Here
Lyeth the Body of
Mary the Wife of
STEPHEN MARSHALL GENT
She Departed this Life February
the 21st AD. 1744/5
Aged 80
Years

Void J

12. 486 x 482 mm.

In Memory of
RICHARD WARD
Who died Aprl ye 20
1798 Aged 70
Years

13. 460 x 460 mm.

In
Memory of
MARY Wife of
RICHARD WARD
Who died Feb y 8 1820
Aged 79
Years

Void K

14. Large fragment. 792 x 510+ mm.

In
Memory of
MARY LOGGIN
Wife of the Re[v
Wm LOGGIN of Bu[
(fragments of 5 lines)
Who depar[ted this life
Oct [
A[ged

15. Two fragments. 445 x 320+ mm.

IN
Memory of
] Son of
] JANE MACOCK
died 2nd Decr
Aged 6

16. Surface badly eroded. 452 x 462 mm.

In
Memory of
MARY Wife of
..EYCOCK
.. May 23 1820
(2 lines completely lost)

17. Two fragments, worn, the very top is missing. 458 x 458 mm.

(3 lines illegible)
Daughter of the
REV WILLIAM LOGGIN
Who died .. Feb 1814
Aged
..
Years

18. In two pieces, worn and flaked. 965 x 965 mm.

Revd HENRY CARVER
M.D.
Rector of Bredicote Worcefterfhire
Vicar of Farnham Surry ..
Prebendary of Lichfield
died May 20th 1799
Aged 31

19. Two fragments with some chips missing at the the break. ?Alabaster. 405 x 405 mm.

In
Memory of
ANN ye Daughter of
M. RICHd & MARY WARD
who died Mar ye 12 1764
Aged 5 Months

(stylised cupid face and wings below)

Paul Booth
Oxford Archaeological Unit
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Reference

Pevsner, N, and Sherwood, J, 1974, *Oxfordshire, The Buildings of England*, London

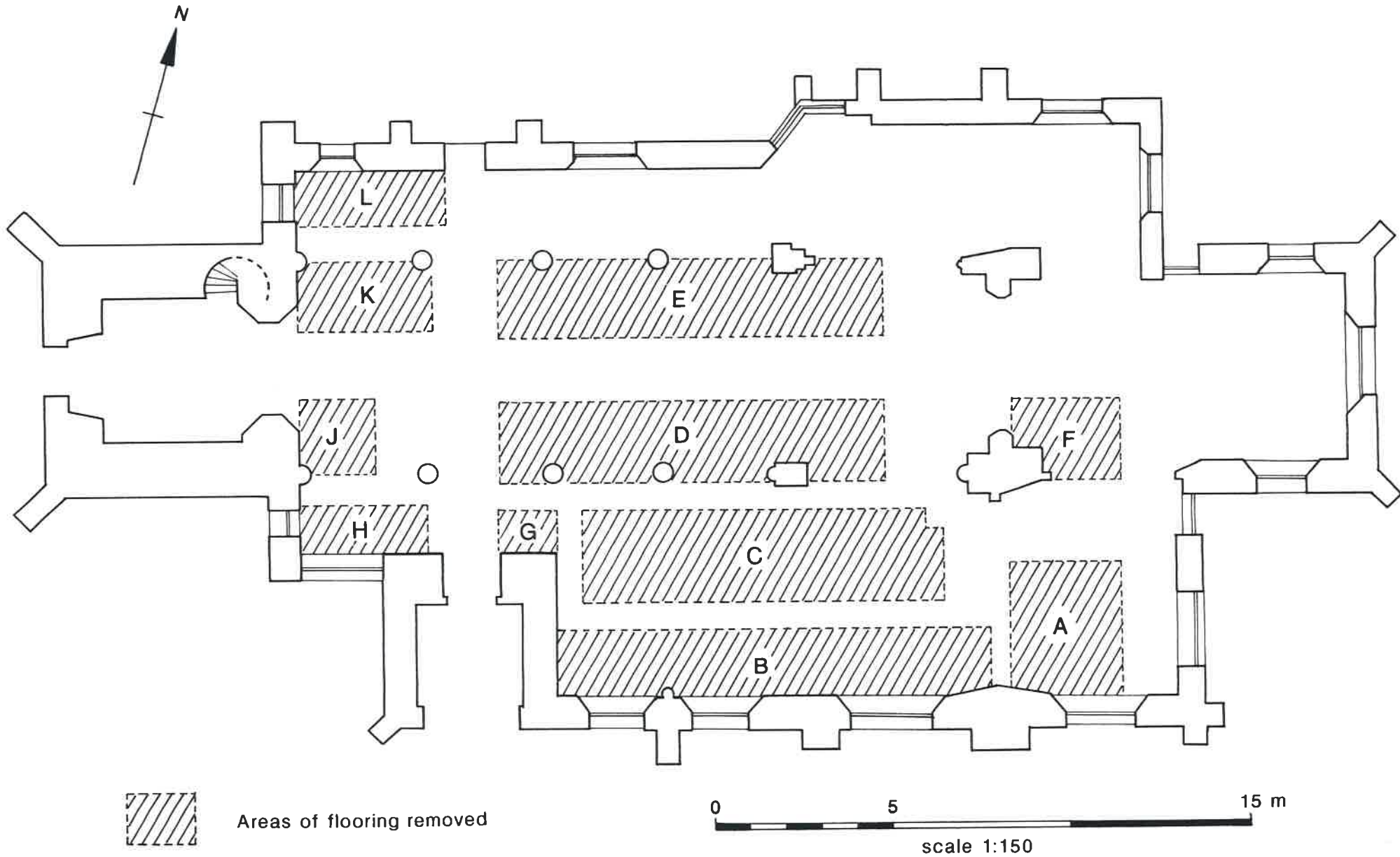


Figure 1



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