

## THE CHURCH OF ST MICHAEL, BISHOP MIDDLEHAM

The parish church of St Michael stands on a hilltop at the south end of the village of Bishop Middleham, looking out southwards over low-lying marshy ground; to the south-west of the church is the spur-end site of an early medieval manor house of the Bishops of Durham. The church consists of a four-bay aisled nave with a north porch, and an aisleless chancel with a north vestry.

### ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

#### The Exterior

The walls of the nave and aisles are constructed of roughly-coursed rubble, largely limestone (in a variety of colours from creamy-yellow to brown), badly eroded in places, and much obscured by heavy pointing. The cut dressings are partly of grey sandstone.

The west end of the **Nave** is flanked by a pair of stepped buttresses; the stepping-back of their outer angles suggests that they were formerly angle buttresses before the addition of the aisles; this is confirmed by the manner in which the chamfered plinth of the nave disappears beneath the rubble footings of the west wall of the north aisle. Between the buttresses is a third much shorter one, with above it a patch of squared tooled stone, probably the blocking of a window. At mid-height in the wall is a chamfered set-back; above this, set centrally, is a tall lancet window, having a hoodmould with bar stops; all the stonework of the window is of 19th century date, as are the two stones of the set-back immediately beneath. Above the window head is a circular stone set in the wall bearing, cut in relief on a dished field, the cross moline of Bishop Anthony Bek (1284-1310). The moulded kneelers and gable coping are clearly of 19th-century date; the gabled bell-cote, with twin pointed arches, also appears relatively recent in its present form.

The side walls of the nave, above the aisle roofs, each have a hollow-chamfered oversailing course, badly worn and of some antiquity, immediately below the eaves. There is only a clerestory on the south; this consists of three square-headed windows, each of two lights, with chamfered surrounds. The lintel of each one is clearly a 19th century replacement, although the jamb stones are obviously older. The east gable, above the chancel roof, has a 19th-century coping and the stub of a finial cross; the wall below shows traces of an earlier steep roof-line, continuous with the original roof-line of the aisles; this is best seen on the north side. The quoining of the north-eastern angle of the nave is largely concealed by heavy mortaring; some large stones are visible, but not enough to give any real indication of the character of the quoin; heavy mortaring and a 19th-century buttress completely conceal any evidence of the quoining at the south-eastern angle.

The **North Aisle** is of four bays, with the north porch in the second. At each end of the north wall is a stepped buttress, of grey sandstone; the lower 0.5 m of the eastern buttress is of smaller stonework, indicating either a repair, or that this section was intended to be below ground level. There is no plinth, although exposed rubble footings project beneath the west wall. In the north wall each bay has a window of two lancet lights, with plain chamfered surrounds; these have ashlar dressings with a light diagonal tooling, and alternating-block jambs, and are entirely of the 1843-6 restoration. There are slight indications of earlier openings, apparently a little wider than the present windows; traces of their jambs can be seen in both end bays. In the west wall is a single lancet, with a hoodmould; its dressings are badly eroded, but in other respects it is precisely similar to the corresponding window in the south aisle, and it must be of 19th century date. Above the lancet is a course of larger blocks of sandstone, at least one of which shows traces of an incised design. The east window of the aisle is a broader (0.60 m) single lancet, with a monolithic head. Both end walls of the aisle show evidence of two heightenings, with the original steep roof-line dropping to less than 2m above ground level, and a later roof-line only a little below the present one. The coped end walls, and the eaves course carried on moulded corbels, are of 19th-century date.

The south wall of the **South Aisle** has stepped buttresses between the bays, and a chamfered plinth. The buttress at the west end is clearly of 19th-century date, as is that between the first two bays, beyond which the plinth steps down, only to reappear on the east side of the next buttress, which appears to be largely medieval. The buttress between the eastern two bays is completely 19th-century (and has no plinth), whilst the easternmost buttress is medieval; the plinth does not return along the east side of the buttress, or the aisle wall beyond. There is a 19th-century stepped buttress in the angle of the east end of the aisle and the south wall of the chancel, concealing the south-east corner of the original nave.

The south wall of the aisle has the south doorway in the second bay, and in the other three bays two-light windows of the same character as those in the north wall. Traces of earlier, and apparently narrower openings are visible below the sills of the present windows; part of the sill of the earlier window survives in the east bay, and is very similar in character to the sill of the medieval lancet in the east wall of the aisle.

The south door, in the second bay, has a two-centred arch of two orders. The inner bears a chamfer which is continued unbroken down the jambs; the outer, moulded with a filleted roll, is carried on detached jamb shafts with moulded capitals (the eastern with nail-head ornament), and there is a chamfered hoodmould with head stops. The bases of the jamb shafts are concealed by the present ground level. Much of the stonework is 19th-century restoration; parts of the hoodmould look old, as does the western terminal (a bishop) and possibly also the

eastern (a bearded man). Above the doorway, and set at a slight angle to the wall, is a large square sundial; although quite badly worn, the figures, the text 'Memento Mori' and the date '1741' are still visible. There is a 19th-century eaves course, on moulded corbels, as on the north aisle.

The west wall of the aisle contains a 19th-century lancet window, and the east wall a medieval lancet, with a chamfered surround but no hoodmould. Both end walls of the aisle show the same earlier roof-lines as seen on the north aisle.

The **North Porch** has an outer archway very similar to that of the south door, with a chamfered inner order and a moulded outer order on jamb shaft; the hoodmould has head stops, the eastern a bishop. The capital of the western jamb-shaft has nail-head ornament. As with the south door, virtually all the dressings of the doorway are 19th-century restoration, although some are now badly eroded. The moulded bases of the jamb shafts look old; they are now 0.35 m above the external ground level. The gable of the porch (into which the heads of three medieval cross slabs have been set), with its moulded coping and fleur-de-lys finial, is all 19th century work. In each side wall of the porch is a rather strange window, a short and broad lancet with a continuous roll-moulding externally. At the foot of the west wall are projecting rubbly footings.

The **Chancel** is divided into two bays externally but broad two-stepped buttresses midway along each wall. The masonry of both bays is basically rubble, but that of the western is largely of rounded blocks like large cobbles, whilst that of the eastern has a much higher proportion of more elongate stones (especially in the upper parts of the wall), and many more that are orange in colour; the walls of the western bay have clearly been heightened by a metre or so at some time, possibly when the eastern bay was added. Both walls are topped by a 19th-century eaves course carried on moulded corbels. On the south, the western bay has a chamfered plinth except for its western third; on the north an apparent plinth 0.15 m below the present ground level is exposed adjacent to the boiler-room stair, but close inspection shows it to be largely of cement, over a rough footing.

The western bay of the south wall of the chancel contains two windows, a round-headed light with its sill set some distance higher than those of the windows in the eastern bay of the chancel, and to its east, a tall lancet with its sill set lower than the other chancel windows. The round-headed window appears to be largely ancient, except for the restoration of some of the blocks of its jambs; a square cut-out (partly hidden by cement) in the lower edge of its sill presumably relates to a second window, presumably a 'low side', set directly beneath; its other dressings have been removed, and its position only shows as a patch of rough and heavily-mortared stonework. The jambs of the lancet incorporate some tall 'upright' blocks which are out-of-character with the other medieval work in the church, and may be

a post-medieval modification. The two lancets on the eastern bay are both quite genuine, with roughly alternating jamb stones, and monolithic heads. The central buttress is of some interest, in that there appears to be a marked discrepancy in stone size in the dressings of its external angles; in its lower part the eastern angle has more massive dressings, but in its upper part, in contrast, the western angle has the larger stones.

The central buttress on the north of the chancel is partly hidden by the vestry; its visible parts show no such discrepancy in masonry type. In this wall each bay has a single lancet, both original, and of precisely the same type as those in the eastern bay of the south wall. Set low at the west end of the wall is a blocked opening of indeterminate form, which appears to be a second 'low-side' window.

The east end of the chancel has a pair of stepped clasping buttresses at the angles, differing in detail, but basically medieval. The wall between is of small roughly-coursed rubble, quite different to the fabric of the side walls, and may all be 19th-century reconstruction. The triplet of lancet windows (with a linked hoodmould), and the chamfered set-back below their strings, are entirely 19th-century, as is the coped gable and finial cross with two cross-arms (a patriarchal cross).

The small **Vestry** on the north of the chancel is built of coursed roughly-squared stone, with diagonally-tooled ashlar quoins and dressings. It has a chamfered plinth; the north wall has a small lancet window, with hoodmould, under a gable with shaped kneelers, topped by a chimney stack with stop-chamfered angles.

#### The Interior

The interior of the church is plastered and whitewashed, except for the exposed dressings of the arcades and chancel arch.

The **Nave** has arcades are each of four arches, of two-centred form, although the curvature is so slight that at first glance they look almost triangular. Each arch is of two chamfered orders to the nave, while the outer order is left square towards the aisle. Towards the nave there is a hoodmould, chamfered below, with head stops at both ends and above the piers; these take the form either of petalled rosettes or grotesque heads, some appearing in such good condition that one suspects they have been re-cut or at least tooled over. The piers are all circular, as are the moulded capitals and bases (again these look to have been re-cut); the responds have keel-shaped shafts. The capitals of the western respond and central pier of the north arcade have lines of nail-head ornament. The base of the western respond of the north arcade rests on a roughly-shaped plinth of masonry rising 0.50 m above the floor, whilst the bases of the western and central piers have square plinths, decreasing in height eastward; the base of the eastern pier is hidden by wooden flooring, but at the eastern respond the base

mouldings are only 0.11 m above the floor.

The responds and piers of the south arcade have no such raised bases or plinths; the shaft and base of the eastern respond are all of recent stonework. Both arcades are cut through walls c 0.92 m in thickness.

The clerestory windows, above the south arcade, have rear arches rather more elaborate than their simple external openings; each has a chamfered arch of shallow pointed form (possibly a plastered-over timber?) springing from shaped corbels.

In the **North Aisle** the north doorway, opening into the porch, is of segmental-pointed form, but is simply rebated, rather than chamfered or moulded; the exposed stonework of the rebate shows parallel tooling of late 18th/early 19th century character. The door, rather puzzlingly, opens outwards into the porch. Internally the rear-arch is concealed by a wooden moulded surround. The three two-light windows in the north wall of the aisle have shallow elliptical rear arches; the lancets in the end walls have trefoiled or shouldered rear arches.

In the **South Aisle** the south doorway has a similar internal timber surround to the north door. The south windows have rear arches like those of the contemporary windows in the north aisle. The western lancet has a slightly irregular shouldered rear arch (perhaps suggesting that this is genuinely medieval), whilst the eastern lancet has a plain pointed rear arch. At the east end of the south wall is a square-headed aumbry, with just west of it a smaller recess with a trefoiled head (the remains of a piscina?); both openings are whitewashed over.

The **North Porch** has a bench on each side, completely concealed by cement render. The windows in the side walls have their internal jambs cut straight through the wall; the eastern has its internal opening 0.08 m narrower than its outer; both have chamfered rear arches, smothered in whitewash.

The **Chancel** opens to the nave under an arch of segmental-pointed form, spanning its full width. The arch has two chamfered orders to the nave, the inner carried on moulded semi-octagonal corbels (very worn, and seemingly un-retooled) whilst the outer terminates in broach stops; there is a chamfered hood, with head stops (again badly worn). Towards the chancel the outer order is left square, and there is no hoodmould.

The windows in the side walls of the chancel have trefoiled rear arches, except for the western of the two in the eastern bay of the south wall, and the western lancet in the north wall, which have plain pointed rear arches. At the west end of the north wall is a low recess of irregular plan, which corresponds with the blocked opening of the 'low-side' window visible externally. The vestry door has a shoulder-headed arch, chamfered all round; the rear arch, towards the vestry, is square, but again chamfered all round. The east wall has a projecting string,

chamfered beneath, marking a set-back at the level of the sills of the three lancets. The stonework of the string looks as if it may be genuine medieval work.

There is no evidence of medieval ritual arrangements.

The **Roofs** of the church appear to be entirely of 19th-century date. The nave has a seven-bay roof structure with king-post trusses on stone corbels, with raking struts springing from the jewelled base of the king-post, and subsidiary vertical struts to either side; the six-bay chancel roof has arch-braced collar-beam trusses, on moulded corbels.

### **FITTINGS AND FURNISHINGS**

The **Font** stands at the west end of the north aisle, and is of Frosterley marble. Bowl, shaft and base are all circular; the bowl has a simply-moulded rim, the shaft two broad convex mouldings with a ring at mid-height, and the base a concave chamfer; it is probably of early 13th century date. The bowl of a second font now lies at the foot of the eastern respond of the north arcade; it is also of Frosterley marble, but is rather more elaborately moulded, and is bound by an iron strap.

The **Altar** incorporates a medieval altar slab, which prior to 1971 had been set into the chancel floor; one corner, with its consecration cross, has been cut away; Dr Gibby of Durham has suggested that this damage may result from practices related to Black Magic (Parish Magazine September 1972)

The **Choir Stalls, Pulpit** and **Pews** are of 1906-1910; at this time the panelling of the older box pews was used to provide wainscotting round the aisle walls. The partition shutting off the choir vestry at the west end of the north aisle may be of the same period.

Above the vestry door is a small shield (probably of plaster) bearing what appears to be a single sheaf; there has been an achievement above of which only a human skull remains. Above the piers of the nave arcades are painted shields, relating to several local families.

The **Organ** is a two-keyboard model by Harrison of Durham, installed in 1891.

**Stained Glass:** Mid-19th century patterned glazing remains in the eastern lancets, and the end lancets of the south aisle; the central lancet in the west end (St Michael), and the cross of Bishop Bek in the west lancet of the north aisle are mid-20th century work by L.C.Evetts.

The **Parish Chest**, a plain oak box with the date '1843' painted on its lid, stands at the east end of the nave.

There are two **Bells** in the bellcote, the first 14th century.

They are inscribed:

(i)+Ave Maria Gra Plena Dns Tecu H.F.

(ii)Voco Veni Precare 1723 (founder Samuel Smith of York)

### SEPULCHRAL MONUMENTS

Bishop Middleham has a good collection of medieval **Cross Slabs**; ten slabs or portions of slabs are built into the south porch, seven in the internal walls and three in the exterior of the gable. They would appear to have been placed in these positions during the 1843-6 restoration, apart from one, placed above the outer arch but on the internal face of the wall, said to have been found in the village in 1913 (Hodgkin 1913, 64). The designs on the two slabs on the east wall of the porch have been completely destroyed by weathering; fortunately they were recorded last century (Hodges 1888, pl.16, nos 42 & 43). There is also one slab, of blue limestone, in the chancel floor, now largely concealed by the wooden altar step. These slabs, of 12th to 14th century date, are all described and illustrated by Ryder (1985, 60-61, plate 8).

There are few post-medieval **Ledger Stones** in the church. In the sanctuary floor south of the altar is a slab to Ian Hutton d.1660; partly hidden by the stalls on the south side of the chancel is another ledger dated 1735.

The most significant **Wall Monuments** are a group to the Surtees family, on the north side of the chancel. The central is to Robert Surtees, the historian, d.1835, flanked by Colonel Charles Surtees d.1906 and Brigadier General Sir Herbert Conyers Surtees d.1933; beneath the monument to Robert is a brass plaque to his widow Anne, recording that "amongst many acts of judicious piety, generosity and benevolence, in 1843-6 she restored this church". At the west end of the same wall is a tablet to Rev. John Smeddle d.1843. On the south side of the chancel is a decayed slab of 17th or early 18th century date, with a Latin inscription, to Edward Hutton. In the north aisle is a wall tablet to Charles Garthorne d.1821, and in the south aisle similar monuments to Rev. W.A.Strange d.1877 and Lance Corporal John Sidney Lee d.1917.

Above the two doors into the nave are a pair of late 17th century **Hatchments**. That over the north door is to a former vicar Thomas Bedford, d.1660 and his wife Anne d.1660, mother, grandmother and great grandmother to 74 children "besides embryos" (the last two words almost erased). Over the south door is a hatchment to Ralph Hutton of Mainsforth.

### HISTORICAL NOTES

1128 On death of Bishop Flambard, the rectorial rights of the church were bequeathed to Osbert the sacrist.

1146 Osbert, now sheriff, gave the church to the Prior and Convent of Durham. There followed several incidents in which the Bishop attempted, apparently unsuccessfully, to exert his authority and take control of the church

1278 Bishop Robert appropriated the rectory to Finchale Priory

1794 The Durham historian Hutchinson (1792, 77) simply states that 'the church stands on elevated ground; a mean edifice'.

1823 Surtees (1823, 5) is the only one of the Durham historians to give a reasonably detailed description of the church; after describing the form of the building, and its arcades, he goes on to state that 'the original lights have been of lancet form; three are closed up in the Southern wall of the chancel, and one in the North wall. One small lancet-light still remains at the east end of the South aisle, and two are half closed at the West end of the nave. The pointed windows in the aisles were exchanged for wooden sashes a few years ago; and at a subsequent period the three lancet-lights of the East window were replaced by one large pointed light....The whole building has had buttresses, which are still perfect, except those of the North aisle, where the wall was taken down in 1802'.

#### **FACULTIES AND OTHER RECORDS OF STRUCTURAL WORK**

Faculty no. and date Works

1747 Vestry Book refers to parish collection for 'the extraordinary repair of the North Isle' (Haile, 14); this presumably relates to the rebuilding of the north wall of the aisle, which Surtees dates to 1802 .

1801/2 Repairs and renovations include replacement of earlier windows by sashes (Haile, 14)

1827 John Garry the village mason takes down and rebuilds part of the west gable, and the bell cote, at a cost of £11.00 (Haile, 15)

1842-6 Restoration, at the expense of Mrs Surtees of Mainsforth, in memory of her husband Robert, the historian, at a cost of over £800.00. (Haile, 15-16)

1908 Completion of works by Rev Parker including removal of old box pews, moving organ from chancel to present position in north aisle, and

- installation of central heating  
(Haile, 16)
- 811 (31.1.1919)New reredos and tablets
- 1039 (6.10.1921)Cross in churchyard
- 3141 (12.11.1948)Repairs and alterations (largely reslating roof)
- 3825 (15.12.1955)Archdeacon's Certificate. General repairs and decorations.
- 4700 (17.7.1964)Replacement of central heating boiler
- 5251 (18.5.1971)Oil-fired central heating system and tank
- 5469 (18.9.1973)Alterations and repairs, including removal of wall panelling, platform and two pews from east end of S aisle. New altar and altar rails.
- 5604 (22.4.1976)Archdeacon's Certificate. Limewashing etc. (carried out in 1977, see 1978 Quinquennial Report)
- 5683 (28.6.1977)Installation of new lighting.
- 6077 B (21.2.1983)Installation of floodlighting.

### **THE STRUCTURAL HISTORY OF THE CHURCH**

It is fairly clear that the basic structure of the church is the product of two separate phases of work. Although all the older architectural accounts refer to the building as being of one build, it is now clear that the nave and western part of the chancel represent a two-cell Norman church, perhaps of mid-12th century date, of quite generous proportions. The nave walls are of a typically 'Norman' thickness (0.92 m), whilst the former clasping buttresses at the west end, and the stub of a central buttress (which was probably carried up the centre of the gable at one time) are all characteristic of this period, as is the one surviving round-headed window in the south wall of the chancel.

A major enlargement took place in the early years of the 13th century, when aisles were added to the nave, and the chancel doubled in length. One steeply-pitched roof covered both nave and aisles; the side walls of the aisles were very low, and the lancet windows in them may have been set in small gablets, breaking the eaves line (as at Ryton).

The south porch is generally thought of as contemporary with the church. The outer archway and side windows would stylistically tally with an early-13th century date, but there are one or two

puzzling features which might imply that they have been re-set in a later structure. The height of the bases of the jamb shafts of the doorway above the present ground level suggests either that the ground level has been dropped, or that the doorway does not 'fit' its present location; the windows in the side walls are rather strange, and look almost as if they might have been built into the wall 'inside out'. It is tempting to see the porch as part of the 1747 works, with the original north doorway being re-used as its outer archway.

There are no later medieval alterations that can be closely dated. The heightening of the nave walls and insertion of clerestory windows on the south, probably took place in the late 15th or 16th century. The aisle walls may have been heightened at the same time.

There is the usual lack of surviving information, both documentary and structural, as regards the two centuries subsequent to the Reformation. Few major changes to the fabric would appear to have taken place until 1747, when the north wall of the north aisle was rebuilt. Further works were carried out in 1802, including the insertion of sash windows in the aisles, and the three lancets in the east end being replaced by 'a large pointed light'. Several of the medieval windows had been blocked up (see Surtees' description under 'Historical Notes')

As often, there was a Victorian restoration which sought to return the church to a more 'medieval' form, carried out at the expense of Mrs Surtees, widow of Robert, the county historian. This took place in 1843-6, when the sashes in the aisles were replaced by the present paired lancets, and a triplet of lancets re-introduced to the east end. The vestry was added at this date, utilising the old priest's door. The present roofs would appear to date from this period.

There has been little change to the fabric since Mrs Surtees' restoration, although there was a major remodelling of the internal fittings and furniture in 1906-10; Hodgson Fowler's detailed drawings give a good picture of the church prior to these changes, with the font at the west end of the nave, a 'new vestry' (choir vestry) partitioned off at the west end of the north aisle, two family pews on the north side of the chancel, the organ on the south side of the chancel, and box pews throughout the nave and aisles. The drawings also show that it was intended to rebuild and enlarge the 1843-6 vestry at this time, but this was never carried out.

#### THE CHURCHYARD

The church is set towards the north end of a sub-rectangular churchyard; the southern boundary, running north-east to south-west, is formed by the head of a steep wooded scarp slope. On the north is Church Street, on the east (and at a lower level) the Old Hall, and on the west an open green. The monuments

within the churchyard would appear to have been considerably 'thinned' at some time; the area north-west of the church is now clear, and there are only a handful of 19th century headstones to the north-east. To the south of the church are one or two 18th-century stones, but the majority are 19th century. The Surtees family graves lie close to the south edge of the yard, more or less in line with the west end of the nave; their iron grave covers were removed for scrap during World War II, and the present headstone to Robert Surtees is of more recent date, erected by the Surtees Society.

The only building within the churchyard is a pent-roofed outbuilding against the west wall. At the north end of the east wall a pair of slender piers, with moulded caps and attached jambs, flank a gateway at the head of a flight of steps dropping into the Old Hall grounds; gateway and steps, and the larger gateway from Church Street into the Old Hall, are probably of mid-18th century date.

There is an extension to the churchyard at its south-west corner, the south end of the western boundary wall having been cut away to give access to a rectangular plot of a further half acre; this was consecrated in 1909, and extends the churchyard along the escarpment top towards the site of the Bishop's Manor House.

#### ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

Bishop Middleham was quite an important church at a relatively early date, its status confirmed both by its being rectorial in the 12th and 13th centuries, and by the quite generous dimensions of the mid-12th century building. Although there is no documentary or archaeological evidence of a pre-Norman church, the existence of a Saxon building cannot be ruled out. The fortunes of the church would seem to have been linked with those of the Bishop's castle or manor house on the headland to the south; after the 14th century this seems to have been progressively abandoned in favour of the palace at Bishop Auckland.

The exterior of the church is surrounded by a pathway, largely made up of ash and cinders; this may be of relatively recent creation, and in places is clearly at a lower level than the original ground surface (ie on the west side of the north porch, where a recent drainpipe was been exposed on the surface). In addition to this path a concrete plinth or platform surrounds the chancel. The construction of this path and platform suggests that any archaeological deposits adjacent to the external perimeter of the building have been disturbed or destroyed.

Internally, the paving which extends over much of the floor of the church appears of no great age; shaped slabs indicate the positions of the ducts of a former (presumably 19th century) underfloor heating system, although the present heating pipes are above the floor; there is a boiler room beneath the vestry.

There is concrete flooring at the west end of the south aisle, and across part of the east end of the nave, and boarding beneath the choir vestry. A boarded step below the altar rails is relatively recent; in 1971 the sanctuary paving was altered, with a step in front of the altar being removed.

Summing up, in assessing the concealed archaeological potential of the church, one is in the same situation as with many village churches in the area. Sub-floor deposits within the building have been disturbed by the insertion of a heating system; it is not possible to easily assess the extent and depth of this disturbance. Similarly, drainage and structural works outside the church have disturbed deposits adjacent to the structure. Above floor levels, it is possible that the present plaster conceals feature of archaeological interest; early plaster (and wall paintings?) might conceivably survive, although at the 1843-6 restoration, walls may have been scraped down to the bare stone. No faculty survives for this work.

Structurally, Bishop Middleham church is apparently (a dangerous thing to say!) a relatively straightforward building, of two principal phases. It is of some architectural importance, and of considerable value both in its historical importance and in its 'landscape' value; its associations with adjacent buildings and sites (the Old Hall, and the site of the episcopal manor house) are also important.

Any works which involve disturbance of floor levels, or of the plaster on the walls, will require archaeological monitoring.

#### Priorities

Erosion of stonework is a major problem at Bishop Middleham. Some of the medieval cross slabs in the north porch have suffered badly, two are now illegible, and others (notably one of the two on the west wall) are in poor condition; some suitable treatment should be sought to attempt to stabilise these.

Peter Ryder  
July 1993

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# **THE CHURCH OF ST MICHAEL**

## **BISHOP MIDDLEHAM**

**An Archaeological Assessment**

**Contents**

Architectural Description  
Exterior1-4  
Interior4-6

Fittings & Furnishings 6

Sepulchral Monuments6-7

Historical Notes7-8

Faculties & Other Records8-9  
of Structural Work

Structural History9-10

The Churchyard10-11

Archaeological Assessment11-12

Priorities12

Sources12

At End:

Plan of church by Hodgson Fowler

Sketch Plan showing Provisional Phasing

Cross Slab Grave Covers (after Ryder 1985)

Bishop Middleham from 1st edition Ordnance  
Survey 25":1 mile map (1854-7)

Peter F Ryder  
1 Ford Terrace  
Broomhaugh  
RIDING MILL  
Northumberland  
NE44 6EJ