

## **St Paul's Church, Jarrow**

St Paul's Church, Jarrow, one of the best-known Saxon churches in the North of England, stands on a low ridge between the River Tyne and its minor tributary the Don, some distance to the east of the modern centre of Jarrow. Its present environs are a small oasis of parkland amongst modern industry, with the Georgian Jarrow Hall and its attached 'Bede's World' centre standing on rising ground to the north.

### **Description**

The main body of the church consists of a mid-19th century five-bay nave with a broad north aisle, with west and north porches, with to the east the ancient tower and chancel; the remains of the medieval monastic buildings, overlying their Saxon predecessors, lie to the south. Arguably more has been written on this church, or rather its Saxon parts, than any other in the county; the following report will concentrate on a factual description of the standing building, and avoid diversions into either the form and significance of the early nave demolished in 1783, or the monastic buildings.

The Victorian parts of the church, built in a free 13th-century style, are built of snecked and squared roughly-tooled stone, with diagonally-tooled ashlar sandstone dressings, and roofs of graduated Lakeland slates; their walls have a steep chamfered plinth, and an oversailing chamfered course just below the eaves. The nave and north aisle are of virtually equal width, and have parallel gabled roofs. There are large clasping buttresses at the outer angles, and a pilaster-like buttress at the west end between the nave and aisle. The gables have a coping of interlocked slabs, chamfered on their projecting lower angle; the west end of the nave has a ring cross finial. The openings have that typical Victorian feature of an outer order of roughly-cut outside their hoodmoulds.

The west end of the nave, above the west porch, has a pair of lancet windows and a hoodmould, and a big oculus above; the west end of the aisle has a similar arrangement on a rather smaller scale, with the elements being combined as a single window under one hoodmould. The south side of the nave has a single lancet towards the west end, and three paired lancets, whilst the north side of the aisle has one lancet west of the porch and two paired ones to the east. The east end of the aisle has a pair of shorter lancets above the vestry roof. All the windows have moulded imposts and hoodmoulds; there is some variation in the treatment of their surrounds, with both straight, hollow and stopped chamfers being used.

The West Porch has short paired and stepped buttresses at its outer angles, and a richly-moulded arch of three orders, the outer two on jamb shafts, with the imposts being continued as a string coursed the full width of the wall; an upper string forms a triangular panel at the apex of the gable, which has a moulded coping carried on shaped kneelers, and a damaged moulded finial.

The North Porch is rather plainer, and of lighter-coloured stone; it has clasping buttresses and a moulded outer arch of two orders, the outer on jamb shafts.

The Vestry has a pent roof, set against the east end of the aisle; it does not extend the full width of the aisle, but has a narrower link block on the south connecting it to the north side of the tower. The vestry has a simple double lancet on the south, and there are shoulder-arched doorways on the east of the link and the south of the projecting section of the vestry.

The west wall of the tower and the pair of large stepped buttresses at the west end of its side

walls extend to form the full width of the east end of the nave; the southern buttress in fact projects well beyond the nave wall. Externally, the straight joint between the northern buttress and the east end of the north aisle can be seen above the vestry roof.

The **Tower** is of most unusual and distinctive form. At ground level it is of quite elongate plan, with its long axis set north-south; it is built of coursed squared stone, with some courses of 'upright' blocks. Externally it divides into three stages, the first (which actually contains two floors) rising from ground level to around the level of the chancel eaves, and the second up to the belfry. Just below the belfry there are three big chamfered step-backs on north and south, although the belfry itself remains quite elongate in plan. At each end of the north and south walls are large stepped buttresses, each with several chamfered set-backs. The western buttresses are the larger, and rise to midway up the second stage, whilst the south-eastern rises to the top of the lower stage. These three buttresses are clearly pre-Victorian but probably post-medieval, although the largest, to the south-west, may have been partly re-faced in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The north-eastern buttress, which is much lower, looks wholly Victorian in its present form.

On the south of the lower stage, between the southern buttresses is a blocked doorway; some of its features - its tall and narrow shape, and its plain tympanum, look either Saxon or the earliest Norman, but its head (perhaps altered) is of roughly two-centred form and some of its vousoirs are chamfered; some also have sockets cut into them, presumably relating to some former adjacent structure. Set within the blocking of the doorway is a small window, itself now blocked, that has been of two lights; one appears to have had a trefoiled head and the other a cinquefoiled, but the mullion and centre of the head are missing so its overall form is not really clear. Higher up the wall, above a small wooden gallery, is a round-arched window of the double-splayed type (ie its narrowest opening is midway through the wall), with its head made up of four blocks; this now serves as the only access into the upper parts of the tower. Above that, at the top of the first stage, are the remains of a projecting string course carried by four corbels.

On the north the lower part of the wall of the lower stage is covered by the link to the vestry, which partly wraps around the north-eastern buttress. Directly above this buttress is the apex of the roof-line of a former adjacent building, which has overlapped both tower and chancel. Above this is a double-splayed window, opposite that on the south, and of similar dimensions, although considerably more elaborate. Its round-headed opening has a roll-moulded surround and a 'checky' pattern to its head, with a broad hoodmould that is also cut into an ornamental form similar to the commoner billet moulding, and returned as a short horizontal length at each side. Above are the same corbels and string as on the south, but even less well preserved.

The second stage has on both north and south a double window of two round-arched lights, divided by a mid-wall shaft carrying a through-stone slab, shaped to a corbel-like form inside and out<sup>1</sup>. On the east, the apex of the chancel roof rises to half way up this second stage; around 0.50 m above it the roof-line of an older roof, of the same pitch, is very clear. On the west of the tower, the ridge of the present nave roof abuts against the blocking of an opening, now visible as a shallow recess, that has a shallow gabled head. A little lower down, just above the southern slope of the nave roof, is a large corbel.

Above the set-backs there is a string course at the base of the belfry, badly worn in places but well-preserved on the north, where its section - a pair of hollow chamfers cut on the lower

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1 The Taylors (1965, 345) state that the northern window has two shafts supporting the through-stone slab; this seems to be an error.

angle - is still clear. The belfry has a single opening on north and south, and a pair to east and west. All are of the same form, round-arched openings containing two recessed round-arched lights again separated by a shaft with a heavy capital, in this case set flush with the internal face of the wall. All these openings except that on the north are set within a square-headed recess with a chamfered lintel. Above these the parapet, made up of large blocks, has a chamfered oversailing course at its base, interrupted by stone spouts on the north and east, and a partly-renewed moulded coping.

The **Chancel** is built of coursed and squared stone, with many of the blocks almost square. There is no plinth. At all four angles are substantial side-alternate quoins, showing that it was originally a free-standing structure. On the north the uppermost metre or so of the wall looks like a later rebuild; on both north and south there is a course of neatly-cut sandstone blocks directly below the eaves that is clearly of 19<sup>th</sup> century or more recent date.

At the very west end of the south wall of the chancel is a 14<sup>th</sup>-century three-light window, with trefoiled heads to its principal lights and cusped mouchettes above, under a two-centred arch, without any hoodmould; it appears to survive in a relatively unrestored condition. Four original angle quoins remain below the window, but above these its west jamb is set hard up against the tower; above the window there is a continuing straight joint, but here there are no quoins, only irregular walling (contemporary with the window) butting against the well-cut blocks of the tower to the left. Below and to the east of the window is the western jamb of a blocked doorway, which includes two upright blocks, and may well be Saxon; what at first sight looks like its east jamb<sup>2</sup> is in fact the west jamb of a blocked post-medieval doorway further east. The outline of this doorway, c 1.5 m wide, is really quite clear, especially the two courses of much lighter tone that replace its lintel; this doorway was only blocked in 1866, and is clearly shown on Billings' drawing (1846, plate 41) as a plain square-headed opening. Above the surviving jamb of the earlier doorway are remains of a high-level opening, seen as a doorway rather than a window by the Taylors; two large blocks of its east jamb and part of its arched head are visible externally. Further to the east are three original windows, all at the same level, at a little above mid-height in the wall. Each has its round-arched head cut into a single large block, and jambs composed of a horizontal block at the top and a vertical one below; the sill is set between, rather than below, these two vertical blocks. The eastern two windows have stone slabs or *transennae set* within them, that of the central window pierced by a circular opening and that of the eastern with a round-headed light; the accepted wisdom seems to be that these reduced the opening to a size that could be glazed with the precious stained glass of the period; the transenna of the western window was removed by Scott in 1866.

The north wall of the chancel is of similar fabric to the south. At its west end is a medieval low-side window, a small light with a two-centred arch with slight trefoil cusping<sup>3</sup>; above it can be seen three blocks of the west jamb of a high-level opening. Further east is a large square-headed window of three lancet-arched lights with three trefoiled roundels above, with small pierced quatrefoils in the spandrels between; there are signs internally that cusping at the heads of the main lights might have been cut away. Then comes a blocked Saxon door with one large upright block in each jamb, and an arch of five trapezoidal voussoirs; although of 'early' character, its relationship to the adjacent fabric suggests that it may be an insertion.,.

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2 Taylor & Taylor (1965, I, 342 & 344) are deceived by this, and give quite erroneous drawings of the chancel wall and blocked doorways

3 Grimm's late-18th century drawing seems to show a blocked doorway here, but this is probable a (rare) error as the dressings of the window look medieval and the walling below undisturbed.

Directly above the blocked door is a single-light round-headed window, usually seen as a Norman insertion, with some small stones in the jambs and a head made up of three blocks; it has no chamfer or rebate. Midway between this and the big three-light window at the east end of the wall is a socket, presumably relating to some sort of outbuilding built against the chancel. The large window has three lights and simple intersecting tracery, which stylistically would date it to c1300, although, as with the square-headed window further west, cusping may have been cut away.

The east end has a window of three lights with intersecting tracery, within a double-chamfered surround; only the tops of the sub-lights in the tracery have cusping, but virtually all its stonework is restoration, the moulded hood with its head stops seems entirely Victorian. Beneath the window are three buttresses, two broad ones with chamfered plinths, and a third and smaller one between them. Immediately adjacent to the external faces of the outer buttresses are upright blocks in the wall, c 1.0 m high; at first sight these look as if they could represent the bases of the jambs of a former opening, and they have long puzzled antiquarian opinion. Oddly, there seems to be a second upright block adjacent to the southern one, actually behind the added buttress. The upper parts of the wall, above the level of the blocks, may well be a medieval rebuild; the gable itself, above the window, is obviously of 19<sup>th</sup>-century date, and has a wheel window with radial tracery, with smaller oculi to either side and above; the gable has a coping of interlocking slabs, topped by a ring-cross finial.

## **The Interior**

The west door, inside the **West Porch**, has a pointed arch of three moulded orders, the outer two on jamb shafts. The porch itself has stone benches and a trussed rafter roof with ashlaring

The inner doorway of the **North Porch** has a simpler archway of two orders, the inner with a continuous chamfer and the moulded outer one on shafts; above the door an older head corbel has been re-set, topped by a piece of a moulded cornice. The side walls of the porch have ashlar benches, and an oversailing chamfered course below the eaves bearing the incised inscription

‘ANCIENT STONES DISCOVERED AT THE RESTORATION  
OF JARROW CHURCH AD MDCCCLVI (1866)’

The stone display is now inside the building, in the north aisle; all that remains in the porch (apart from the stones over the door) are a medieval coffin and, built into the east wall, a stone tablet with a Latin inscription relating to the 1783 Restoration of the church.

The internal walls of the **Nave** and **North Aisle** are now plastered and whitewashed, except for exposed ashlar dressings. The five-bay arcade between nave and aisle has two-centred arches, each of two square orders, carried on circular piers with moulded bases above square plinths.

The capitals are carved with crocketed foliage, below cruciform-plan abaci; those of the responds (the western of which is carried on a big scalloped corbel) are roughly-tooled blocks, and look as if they were never properly finished. The west doorway of the nave has a moulded segmental rear arch, with above it a string course, chamfered on its lower angle; the windows above that have chamfered rear arches and jamb shafts with moulded capitals. The west window of the aisle is similar, but has a steeply-sloping ashlar internal sill. The north door has a chamfered segmental rear arch. The lancet windows in both nave and aisle have moulded rear arches, springing from foliage-carved corbels and, in the case of the paired windows, shafts with moulded caps, bases and mid-height rings; all have level sills chamfered on their inner angle.

Nave and aisle have identical five-bay roofs with crown-post trusses and scissor braces.

The **Tower** opens to the nave by means of a simple round-headed arch, springing from imposts chamfered on their lower angle; a second very similar arch opens to the chancel beyond, whilst in the shorter north and south walls are round-arched doorways, the northern now opening into the Victorian vestry, the southern now blocked. The interior of the tower is now covered by an inserted later medieval quadripartite vault, the ribs chamfered on their lower angles. Some additional detail needs to be added to this simple description because, as with the chancel, the church has attracted so much antiquarian attention and debate based on seemingly minor details.

To return to the western face of the tower, facing the nave. Here the arch is flanked by two big stepped buttress-like projections of Victorian ashlar. The imposts of the arch itself have been cut back flush with the face of the wall (but are returned towards the interior of the tower) and the arch itself has plain square-edged voussoirs (not through stones), quite a number of which have clearly been replaced. The plain square-section jambs include some massive gritstone blocks; the impost course is part restoration, as is all of the chamfered plinth at the foot of each jamb. Directly above the arch is the well-known 685 dedication stone; this is not in situ, as the 1769 drawing shows it set in the north wall of the old nave<sup>4</sup>. The wall above it shows one or two irregular breaks, but noticeably absent are the straight joints one might expect between the tower and its western buttresses, and any sign of the large arched opening visible from the first-floor chamber in the tower. There is some sort of feature, possibly a blocked slit window, directly above the dedication stone, and higher up a large block with incised initials of post-medieval character, apparently 'I H'.

Beneath the tower, the doorway to north and south have plain round-arched heads. The external face of the southern doorway has already been described; that of the northern now opens onto a 19<sup>th</sup>-century passage giving access to the vestry; it has a semicircular arch with a plain tympanum, above a plain lintel; jambs and lintel looks like 19<sup>th</sup>-century restoration but the arched head seems ancient; above are two sockets, probably relating to the roof or ceiling of some previous structure. It is very clear that the vault is an insertion, as sections of the arches have been cut away to enable it to have a firm footing resting on the impost course.

The eastern arch, opening to the chancel, is more problematic. Its jambs have no chamfered plinth<sup>5</sup>; the impost course, as with the western arch, is returned towards the interior of the tower but cut back on the outer face. Like its western counterpart the arch is of plain square section, but this time includes some through stones (some cut into by the inserted vault). On its east face the central section of the arch has more worn and irregular voussoirs, which have been claimed as the in-situ survival of part of the head of an earlier arch (Savage 1900, Taylor & Taylor 1965, 347); however it would seem a very strange procedure to leave such a section of crude rubble masonry (not even spanning the full width of the arch). A more reasonable interpretation would be that this rubble is a secondary patch, intended to be concealed by plaster; in addition it seems to coincide with a patched area of wall face directly above.

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4 In what was actually the north wall of the chancel of the original Western Church.

5 A recent archaeological watching brief (Ryder 2002) showed that the north jamb has a projecting footing a little below the present floor level, which extends some distance to the east of the arch, implying that the arch was constructed after the removal of the west wall of what is now the chancel.

This whole wall is difficult to interpret in detail, as there has been much repair and re-facing, some perhaps medieval and some Victorian. On the south there is a straight joint low down, only a few cm from the jamb of the arch; it is not clear whether this relates to the large blocks of the jamb of the arch being inserted, or to some later opening or recess cut into the jamb. Higher in the wall are two blocked openings (more clearly seen from the first floor of the tower<sup>6</sup>); on this face of the wall there is a large column of secondary masonry (with a distinctive pecked tooling) running up the south side of the wall, which infills and in part obliterates the southern opening, although parts of its north jamb are recognisable. The round-arched head of the north opening, set a little beyond the centre of the wall, is clear, although its lower parts are less distinct.

On the south side of the chancel, the large window at the west end of the wall has a chamfered rear arch; immediately to the east of this the western half of the blocked doorway seen externally is visible; half its head survives, cut from a single stone, showing that it was of two-centred form, with a continuous chamfer to head and jamb - surely medieval (14<sup>th</sup> century?) rather than Saxon. High above it the remains of the high level doorway - the eastern jamb and half of the round-arched head - are very similar to those visible on the external face of the wall. To the east of this there is quite an extensive disturbed area, the lower part of which seems to relate to the doorway blocked in 1866; above its eastern jamb is a large square block, and higher up a break in the coursing (not evident in the external face of the wall) between the central and western of the three Saxon windows. It is not clear whether this break is itself an early feature; frustratingly, the corresponding area of the opposite wall has been removed by one of the large medieval windows. The three Saxon windows are of very similar form inside to out, with monolithic rear arches and each jamb formed by horizontal block above a vertical one, yet all seems to have had their internal sills altered in one way or another. A socket, perhaps for one of the timbers of the front of a former gallery, has been cut into the upright block of the western internal jamb of the westernmost of the three, and there is a second possible socket a little below and to the right. The monolithic rear arch of the window is cut from a large block with a roll-moulding on its western edge, perhaps a re-used Roman piece. Below the central window, which has a later steeply-sloping sill, is a larger but shallow socket cut into a wall stone, opposite to one in the top of the blocked door in the north wall. Near the east end of the wall is a recess that seems to have been a piscina; two 19<sup>th</sup>-century blocks in its sill look as if they replace the remains of a projecting bowl. It has a monolithic round arch and a chamfer, and a stone shelf (later?) at mid-height. The upper part of the east end of the wall has clearly been rebuilt, and, as externally, there is a 19<sup>th</sup>-century course of cut blocks immediately below the roof.

On the north of the chancel, the low-side window has a renewed timber lintel, and above it both jambs of the blocked high-level opening also seen externally are visible<sup>7</sup>. The three-light window near the centre of the wall has a chamfered segmental rear arch that is clearly mid-19th century in its present form; then comes the blocked Saxon door with a narrow round-arched window above it; internally the jambs of this window are all 19<sup>th</sup>-century restoration, but its rear arch, of odd three-sided form, cut from three stones, seems ancient. East again,

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6 Gilbert (1956, 330) is incorrect in stating the different features are visible internally and externally; the openings visible from the chancel are definitely those visible inside the tower.

7 Gilbert (1956, 324) suggests that this was the westernmost of three original square-headed windows, set high in the wall (cf Escombe); he sees slight traces of the central one over the 12<sup>th</sup>-century (?) window above the blocked north door, with the large medieval window beyond having erased all sign of the easternmost.

just above the altar rails is an upright block that has formed the west side of a blocked recess, perhaps an aumbry; the head of this has been destroyed by the insertion of the big c1300 window, which has a chamfer to its rear arch; above the rear arch are a line of 'external' voussoirs, indication of Victorian alterations in this area.

The east wall has a 19<sup>th</sup>-century moulded string course below the sill of the east window, which has a chamfer to its head only. Below the string course are two straight joints, towards the end of the wall, corresponding to the vertical blocks visible externally; all the walling between them is clearly secondary, and possibly as late as the 18th/19th century.

The chancel has an 1866 roof of four bays, with crown-post trusses and arched braces.

The interior of the upper parts of the **Tower** is of considerable interest, but is only accessible by means of putting a ladder up to the small external gallery on the south, and then entering the rather restricted opening provided by the southern of the single-light double-splayed windows, now fitted with a door. This enters a narrow chamber, with a 20<sup>th</sup>-century concrete floor sloping quite steeply to a drain at the north end. On the west of this chamber and set centrally in the wall is a blocked arch 2.57 m wide and c 2.4 m high, with imposts chamfered on their lower angles and well-cut diagonally-tooled voussoirs; set left-of-centre within the blocking is a later opening, also now blocked, with a narrow doorway or window; the form of its head is uncertain. The central the voussoirs of the arch head have dropped slightly, and there seems to be a column of rebuilt masonry above, with one long 'stitching stone', evidence of the structural movements that have plagued the tower. Some writers dismiss this arch as a relieving arch (and others, such as Taylor and Taylor, inexplicably omit all mention of it) but there seems little doubt that it was once open through the full thickness of the wall, although massive refacing of the external face (ie towards the nave) has now concealed all sign of it. The 1769 'British Museum' drawing shows the tower in section, with this arch clearly indicated as open in exactly the same manner as the one below.

The north wall of the chamber has the internal recess of the northern double-splayed window, very similar to that on the south; to the east of the window, at the level of the springing of its head, a small rectangular corbel projects from the wall.

The east wall of the chamber has two blocked openings. The southern, close to the south end of the wall, is walled up flush with the face of the wall, and has a slightly segmental-headed arch 0.99 m wide, with some large upright blocks in its jambs and long curved blocks in its head, both jambs and head construction contrasting with the northern arch, 1.28 m wide and 1.85 m high, which now forms a recess 0.60 m deep. This is of similar form to the wider arch in the west wall, with imposts chamfered on their lower angles, and conventional wedge-shaped voussoirs; directly above its head is a little disturbed masonry and smaller rubble, which could be interpreted as infilling the head of an earlier and narrower arched opening.

A modern ladder at the north-eastern corner of the chamber gives access to the one above, which has a set-back of 15-20 cm on all four walls c 0.85 m above the floor. This has double-light windows in north and south walls, each beneath a round-headed arch carrying the wall face as it steps in, as the upper section of the tower tapers to a more square plan. These arches are of very similar construction - well squared voussoirs and a rubble intrados - to the northern of the two in the east wall of the chamber below. The east wall shows a central column of patching, with two or three long 'stitching stones', and there is also evidence of repair in the centre of the west wall (above the blocked arch in the chamber below); above this patch is a recess formed in the blocking of the gable-headed opening visible externally above the nave roof; the internal recess seems to have been extended downwards by the

crude cutting away of the original sill.

A further ladder leads to the belfry, and a final one to the top of the tower. The belfry roof structure may be of late medieval date, and is a shallow-pitched one set north-south, with cambered tie-beams against both end walls, carrying a ridge and a single pair of purlins

### **Fittings and Furnishings**

Many of the fittings and furnishings of the church (and in particular of the nave) are of 20<sup>th</sup>-century date, and outside the scope of this report. The front bench and bench ends of the **Choir Stalls** on the north of the chancel are an exception, being of late 15<sup>th</sup> or early 16<sup>th</sup> century date, with four very fine carved bench ends, one with arms of Prior Castell of Durham (1494-1519); those on the south are late-19th century copies.. A much mutilated high-backed medieval **Chair** is traditionally linked to the Venerable Bede but probably of 14<sup>th</sup> century date.

The **Font** stands in the nave, close to the south wall; it is a simple octagonal form, with a concave-sided bowl and shaft, of smooth grey sandstone, and generally of 15th-century character.

The **Stained Glass** is of some interest, indeed, the small coloured quarries assembled in the central of the three Saxon windows on the south of the chancel make up what is probably the earliest example in the country, having been found during the 1970s excavations. The figures of St George in the eastern window and St Paul in the western are probably of late 19<sup>th</sup> century date. And the east window of 1950, by L.C.Evetts. In the north aisle is a window with SS Aidan and Cuthbert, in memory of Mary Ann Walker d.1907, and another (Blessed Virgin Mary) in memory of Lucy Emma Lawless Boxley d.1904.

On the south wall of the nave hangs a large **Painting** of the Crucifixion, brought in 1846 from Hylton Castle, Sunderland.

Two **Bells** now hang from a 20<sup>th</sup>-century girder frame in the belfry; timbers from the previous frames are stacked in the first-floor chamber below (see 'recommendations'). One bell is medieval, and bears the inscription:

SANCTE PALYS ORA PROP NOBIE

The letters are somewhat jumbled, the 'A' of 'ORA'. 'R' of 'PRO' and 'E' of 'NOBIE' being inverted.

### **Sepulchral Monuments**

In addition to the Pre-Conquest carved stones, one medieval **Cross Slab** grave cover is known. It bears a foliate cross of late 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> century character and a key (Ryder 1985, 100 & pl.40); for many years it was part of a lapidary display in the north porch, but is now in the north aisle, and currently tucked away behind the display of Pre-Conquest stones.

In the sanctuary are three post-medieval **Ledger Stones**, with carved heraldry; all are rather badly worn, and no inscriptions are now visible. A better-preserved double ledger slab which was once in the chancel is now set north-south at the south-east corner of the nave, with inscriptions to

Robert Hodshon of Heburne, d 1624 and Anne his wife d 1617, the arms of Hodshon impaling Langley, a verse and a line at the base stating that the stone was placed in the church in 1627 by Robert Hodshon, the son of the couple.

There are a number of more recent **Wall Monuments**. On the south of the chancel is a tablet to the Ellison family of Hebburn, and on the south wall of the nave memorials to Jane Brunton and Ann Wright (d.1836) (with a coat of arms) and Ann and Phoebe Brunton (d.1834 and 1825), and brass plates to Mary Kirsopp d.1857 and Henry Wakefield d.1889. On a window sill at the west end of the wall is a marble bust of the Rev Joseph Hodgson, d.1845, Northumberland historian and joint developer of the Davy Lamp. On the north wall of the north aisle is a good marble tablet with a draped urn, signed by T.King of Bath, now divorced from whatever form the remainder of its monument took, and a tablet to the Rev. J.N.O'Bryan Hall d.1836 by C.Green of Newcastle.

### **Carved Stones**

The Dedication Slab, now set in the east wall of the nave above the tower arch, is the oldest such inscription in the country, bearing the date 23 April 685 (DEDICATIO BASILICAE SCI PAVLI VIII KL MAI ANNO XV ECFRIDI REF CEOLFRIDI ABB EIVSDEM Q ECCLSDO AVCTORE CONDITORIS ANNO IIII).

The following list of Pre-Conquest carved stones is summarised from Cramp (1984, 106-122,154-156), with their present locations. The stones in the church are now all in the north aisle, a number forming a display, and others stacked behind it.

- 1 Incomplete cross shaft, found before 1899. Second half of 8<sup>th</sup> century. (Monk's Dormitory, Durham Cathedral)
- 2 Upper fragment of cross shaft, found in 1936 300 yds south of church. First half of 8<sup>th</sup> century (in church)
- (3) Incomplete cross shaft, found 1866. First half of 10<sup>th</sup> century (in church)

- 4 Incomplete cross shaft, found 1969. Last quarter of 9<sup>th</sup> or first quarter of 10<sup>th</sup> century (in church)
- (5) Part of cross shaft, reported as built into north side of tower, now lost. Date uncertain
- 6 Incomplete cross shaft, reported as built into north face of tower, now lost. Date uncertain.
- (7) Fragment of cross shaft, found in 1973. 8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> century. (Bede's World)
- (8) Fragment of cross head, found 1971. First half of 8<sup>th</sup> century. ( in church)
- (9) Fragment of same crosshead, found 1971. First half of 8<sup>th</sup> century. (Bede's World).
- 10 Gravemarker or architectural feature, found 1865. Late 7<sup>th</sup> or early 8<sup>th</sup> century. (Museum of Antiquities, Newcastle).
- (11) Fragment of grave marker, found 1969, 7<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> century. (Bede's World)
- (12) Lower part of grave marker, found 1970. Late 7<sup>th</sup> to early 8<sup>th</sup> century. (Bede's World)
- (13) Fragment of upright slab, found 1971, late 7<sup>th</sup> or early 8<sup>th</sup> century (Bede's World)
- 14 Fragment of upright slab, found 1782. Late 7<sup>th</sup> or early 8<sup>th</sup> century (Museum of Antiquities, Newcastle)
- 15 Architectural fragment? Late 7<sup>th</sup> or early 8<sup>th</sup> century (in church)
- (16a) Part of cross slab first mentioned 1789, late 7<sup>th</sup> or early 8<sup>th</sup> century (in church)
- (16b) Part of same cross slab, found 1782, late 7<sup>th</sup> or early 8<sup>th</sup> century (Museum of Antiquities, Newcastle)
- (17) Dedication slab, 685 (east wall of nave) (see above)
- (18) Inscribed stone, found 1973, 8<sup>th</sup> century (Bede's World)
- 19 Incomplete architectural sculpture, found when school on south of church was being built, early 8<sup>th</sup> century (in church)
- (20) Incomplete architectural sculpture, early 8<sup>th</sup> century, found 1865 (in church)
- (21a) Fragment, possibly of architectural panel, found 1965 late 7<sup>th</sup> to early 8<sup>th</sup> century (in church)
- (21b) Fragment, possibly of architectural panel, found 1965, late 7<sup>th</sup> to early 8<sup>th</sup> century (Bede's World)
- 22 Reconstructed portion of architectural feature or furniture; an important piece, possibly a reading desk, found 1965. Late 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> century (Bede's World)
- (23) Fragment of decorative architectural strip, found 1965. 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> century (Bede's World)
- (24a-h) Eight fragments of ornamental panel found 1965, late 7<sup>th</sup> to early 8<sup>th</sup> century (Bede's World)
- (25a-c) Three pieces of baluster frieze, first mentioned 1885. Last quarter of 7<sup>th</sup> century to first quarter of 8<sup>th</sup> century (in church)
- (26) Part of baluster frieze, first mentioned 1885. Late 7<sup>th</sup> to mid 8<sup>th</sup> century (in church)
- (27) Part of baluster frieze found 1969, last quarter of 7<sup>th</sup> to first quarter of 8<sup>th</sup> century (Bede's World)
- (28) Part of baluster frieze re-used as grave stone, found 1975, late 7<sup>th</sup> to early 8<sup>th</sup> century (Bede's World)
- (29) Part of impost or slab found 1976. Late 7<sup>th</sup> to early 8<sup>th</sup> century (Bede's World)
- (30a-y) Twenty-five baluster shafts, mostly found in 1866 but y found 1976 at Jarrow Slake, 7<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> century. (a-t in church, u-y Bede's World).
- 31 Part of socket or church furnishing, first noted 1972. Date uncertain (in church)
- 32 Impost, or perhaps part of furnishing, found 1966. Late 7<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> century (in church).
- 33 Fragment, possibly a corner of a grave slab, found 1971. Uncertain date (Bede's World)
- 34 Damaged Roman fragment showing archer shooting stag (lost)
- 35 Medieval slab with plant scroll
- 36 (Fragments referred to by Brand (1789, II, 64), now lost)

## Historical Notes

The early history of Jarrow Church and Monastery is too well known to need anything other than a brief summary:

682           The foundation by Benedict Biscop of the monastery of St Peter, as part of a joint establishment with St Paul, Monkwearmouth and Jarrow, previously founded by him in 674.

735           The death, at Jarrow, of the Venerable Bede, author of the 'Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation'

793-5         Church and monastery sacked by the Vikings

c1020         Bede's bones were taken to Durham; there are now buried in the Galilee Chapel of the Cathedral.

1074         Church repaired and monastery re-founded by Aldwine, as a cell of the Benedictine house of Durham

1540         The antiquary Leland visited Jarrow shortly before the Dissolution of the Monasteries, and reported there were only three monks, who showed him a small oratory on the north of the church and an altar which they described as that of the Venerable Bede.. At the Dissolution the domestic buildings of the monastery would appear to have become a private house.

1587         There is a reference (Surtees 1820, 67) to 'an Abbeie, now a Gentleman's place'

1783         The nave was rebuilt at a cost of £624. Fortunately it had been comparatively well documented; the description of the church by the Durham historian William Hutchinson (1787, 475-6) is worth reproducing in full:

'The entrance into the church was by a low porch with a circular arch, on the north jamb of which was the figure of a crosier staff, stripped from some of the ancient tombs: The descent into the nave was by three deep steps, on the side walls of which were two pointed arches, that to the north built up, the other opening into a porch used as a vestry room; the groins were spring from brackets, and the span was about twenty feet: The nave was twenty-eight paces in length, and only six in width; so that, from the height of the side walls, which were nearly thirty feet, and the small irregular windows scattered on each side, the edifice had a very singular appearance: Some of the windows were under circular arches, others pointed, and all the walling so patched and irregular, that it was not to be distinguished to what age any particular part of it belonged: The congregation had deserted the nave for some years, perhaps from dread of being buried in its ruins, and the chancel alone was used for divine service. Fixed in the south-east corner of the nave was a mount, whereon a stone pulpit formerly stood. The roof-loft remained, being a gallery of wood-work across the church, above the entrance into the chancel, on which were the remains of gaudy painting..... In the north wall, cut on a stone

which passed quite through it, was that curious inscription mentioned by many writers.... (describes dedication stone) Some of the religious had figured the plastering of the north wall, to make the sun-beams from one of the windows serve as a dial to point out the hour of the day. You advance to the chancel under the archings of the tower; the pillars very low, ill-proportioned, and square, with capitals remarkably heavy and plain; the arches circular, and without ornament; the dome vaulted with stone and rib'd, the groins rising from the corners, and the ribs uniting in the center: the circumstance of the pillars not standing square, but forming an oblong north and south, was remarkable; the width of this part was only five paces. The tower standing in the centre induces us to conclude that formerly this church was in the form of a cross, and it is probable, from outward appearances, that the nave had side aisles.... The length of the chancel from the tower to the altar rails is ten paces, and the width only about five paces, stalled on each side with old carved oak work: The east window consisted of three lights under a pointed arch. On the north side there were two windows, one under a circular arch, and the other a pointed arch, one window to the south close by the tower, having also a pointed arch...'

1866            The nave was rebuilt again, and the older parts of the church restored, by Sir Gilbert Scott.

1954            The archaeologist Raleigh Radford carried out a small excavation at the north-east corner of the churchyard, in advance of the building of a new verger's cottage; a pitched stone foundation 9 inches deep and 'about 13 ft wide' was interpreted as the base of a monastic vallum. A similar feature at Whitby is now interpreted as a road.

1963-78        Major excavations were carried out, directed by Professor Rosemary Cramp of Durham University, at both Monkwearmouth and Jarrow. At both sites the plans of both Pre-Conquest and medieval monasteries were traced in some detail.

### **Faculties and Other Records of Structural Work**

Date	Faculty No.	Works
23.1.1888	3/233	Erection of west porch
11.7.1899 for clergy	4/405/26	Divide choir stalls, turn organ, and place stalls
24.9.1941 side aisle	3/2809a	For the removal of seats in the centre and south
15.3.1951	3/3393	General improvements in closed churchyard
1.6.1957	3/3943	Restoration of tower
27.6.1975	3/5562	Authorising archaeological excavations
19.1.1987	3/6462	Replacement of boiler house door and re-facing in stone of the interior walls of the north porch

25.1.1990	3/7019	Laying cable and trench through churchyard
17.8.1992	3/7568	Display of Anglo-Saxon sculptures

### **Structural Interpretation**

Probably more has been written on the interpretation of the earlier structural phases here than at any other church in the county; to do justice to all this debate, and to cover the views of all its antiquarian participants, would make this report unduly long-winded. The following notes on the Pre-Conquest development of the church are based on a report by Professor Rosemary Cramp currently being prepared for publication:

The chancel of the present church is seen as a free-standing church of the original late 7<sup>th</sup>-century monastery; it remains open to question as to whether there was a separate sanctuary or further structure at its east end. It may have been built before a separate and larger western church, known both from pre-1782 drawings and from the recent excavations, and then retained some separate function such as a funerary chapel. The western church, which is presumed to have been the 'basilica' consecrated in 685 had a nave with a two-storeyed western porch; old illustrations show evidence of ranges of porticus on either side, although this was at variance with the excavated evidence which instead indicated a narrow aisle or passage on the north of the nave which returned across the west front, which may possibly have been superceded by a range of deeper porticus. There was evidence that the original chancel had been reconstructed when the two churches were later joined.

The tower that linked the two early churches has aroused considerable antiquarian controversy; there are features (notably the blocked doorway at first-floor level at the south end of the east wall) that look to be of Anglo-Saxon character but the majority of its openings seem more likely to be of early post-Conquest date. It is possible that it was built as a two-storeyed structure, perhaps carrying a higher wooden turret or bell-cote, perhaps at around the time of the recorded Viking raids of 793-5.

The remodelling of the lower parts of the tower, and the addition of the upper, are seen as associated with the refoundation of the monastery by Aldwine in 1074; the actual belfry might be an addition of the early 12<sup>th</sup> century.

The four and a half centuries of monastic use through the medieval; period are reflected in a series of relatively minor alterations to the fabric. There are four large windows in the chancel, which can be approximately dated, although restoration and re-tooling may have robbed them of something of their original character. The two windows with simple intersecting tracery - that at the east end of the north wall of the chancel, and the much-restored east window, have been dated to 1300-1330, whilst the three-light window in the south wall with simple Flamboyant tracery has been linked to the record of an insertion of a new window in 1350-1351 (Durham Account Rolls). The rather odd square-headed window on the north does not fit happily into stylistic categories; it has been seen either as early 14<sup>th</sup> century or even post-medieval. The insertion of the groined vault in the tower is clearly medieval, although its actual date remains open to question.

The more recent phases of the history of the church are well documented. In brief, the ancient nave, a medieval re-working of the Saxon Western Church, was demolished in 1782-3 and replaced by a structure that was in turn rebuilt and enlarged in 1866 by Sir Gilbert Scott, when

the tower and chancel were restored as well.

A copy of Scott's 1866 plan of the church ([www.churchplansonline.org](http://www.churchplansonline.org)) shows the new nave with its northern porch, and only the narrower southern portion of the vestry built, adjacent to the tower. The west porch was added in 1885; the date of the main part of the vestry is uncertain,

## **The Churchyard**

The church stands on the south side of an extensive and roughly-rectangular churchyard, bounded by walls to the north and west which have at least the superficial appearance of considerable age, due to the old weathered stone re-used in them; the arched cement coping is much more recent, and the two gateways, that on the west with gable-headed piers and that on the north with pyramid-topped ones, late 19<sup>th</sup> century in character. The west wall and west end of the north wall are of conventional form, but the greater part of the north wall, commencing at c 22 m from the north-west corner, is of a most peculiar battered section, and follows a slightly sinuous course, gradually increasing in height from c 1.3 m to c 1.8 m at the west end where it abuts on the north-south wall on the east side of the 1974 verger's cottage. This length of wall has at times been claimed as ancient and as a Saxon or at any rate medieval monastic boundary; it has not been investigated archaeologically, so this possibility cannot be excluded<sup>8</sup>.

The section of wall running north-south on the east side of the verger's cottage, which has two small recesses infilled in brick was investigated by Hart (2002); it was interpreted as the west wall of a 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> century building, perhaps of some agricultural function. The wall on the south side of the cottage was seen as largely of 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century gate, except for a short north-south stretch forming a dogleg in the centre of it, which is a remnant of something earlier. There is also old walling, perhaps reduced in height, on the north and east of the cottage; the north-east angle has a large quoin-like block. The wall on the east of the churchyard also reuses old stone, but looks as if it has been at least partly rebuilt in the 20<sup>th</sup> century..

The churchyard has been largely cleared of its memorials, leaving a scatter of headstones, virtually all of 19<sup>th</sup> century date, now laid flat.

Lying outside the north wall of the chancel is a large piece of a window head, apparently of two arched lights within a square frame; its tooling looks of 18<sup>th</sup>-century character, and it may well originate in the 1783-1866 nave<sup>9</sup>; if so, this is perhaps the only architectural fragment from significant phase in the history of the church, and should be cared for.

## **Archaeological Assessment**

It would be difficult to over-state the importance of this site from an archaeological and historical point of view. The excavations of the 1960s and 1970s have shed a great deal of

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8 Grimm's late-18th century drawing only shows the wall on the east of the churchyard; although a comparatively 'wide-angle' view, it was probably taken from just within the line of the northern wall.

9 Old illustrations show a two-light window of exactly this type in the south part of the west end of this nave.

light on the Saxon and medieval monasteries, but one key area that has never been investigated is the interior of the chancel; as re-flooring works are planned, this opportunity may soon arise. The question of a Saxon crypt or burial vaults has often been discussed; whilst there are no visible physical evidences of subterranean structures, the possibility cannot be entirely dismissed. Any works here must be accompanied by a proper archaeological intervention and detailed recording; in view of the extreme sensitivity of the site, and the possibly ephemeral nature of the sub-surface evidence, a conventional 'watching brief' would not be adequate.

The above-ground structure at Jarrow has obviously been studied in more detail than most; however, whilst stone-for-stone drawings of the exterior of the chancel have been prepared for the forthcoming publication, no such record of the internal elevations has been made; one is certainly called for. The tower as well would merit a survey of this type, both inside and out.

The timbers from the old bell frame, of medieval or sub-medieval date, are currently stacked in the first-floor chamber of the tower (making a proper inspection of its walls difficult); this is not a satisfactory situation. The bell-frame would seem to have been dismantled perhaps twenty or thirty years ago. Any record of this structure, either photographic or drawn, should be sought, and the timbers properly recorded; it may be possible to reconstruct the frames on paper, and there is also the possibility of dendrochronological dating.

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(This is by no means an exhaustive list, but covers most of the most significant sources)

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