

The Parish Church of St Cuthbert, Redmarshall

St Cuthbert's Parish Church stands on the north side of the small village of Redmarshall, with the lane from Bishopston to Carlton forming the northern boundary of the churchyard. The church stands on a slight eminence and its tower commands extensive views across the low-lying land around the mouth of the Tees.

In plan the church consists of an aisleless nave, more a parallelogram than a rectangle in plan, with a western tower, an aisleless chancel, and a south-east transeptal chapel. The plan is laid out in a very irregular manner; the tower deviates to the north of the axis of the nave, the chancel to the south, and the south chapel to the east. There is a south porch built in the angle between chapel and nave, and a very small south porch-cum-vestry in the centre of the south side of the chancel.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The Exterior

The **Tower**, built square-on to the west end of the nave, is noticeably out-of-alignment with the axis of the church. It is constructed of roughly-coursed and roughly-shaped limestone blocks, in courses that often deviate from the horizontal. There is no plinth, but there are chamfered setbacks above the lower stage and below the crenellated parapet, which is constructed of coursed rubble.

The lower stage of the tower is lit by a single window on the west, of two trefoil-headed lights with a quatrefoil over; its general form and hoodmould are of the same type as those of the windows in the chancel side walls and the western window in the north wall of the nave.

The first floor of the tower is lit on north, south and west by small rectangular windows; the southern is slightly wider, and has a stop-chamfered lintel; apart from these they lack cut dressings. Below and to the west of the southern window is a small and rough opening with a projecting slab above and below, of uncertain function.

The belfry openings are of rather unusual form. Each is of two lights, each light having a quadrant-shaped head, with the mullion between them rising to a capital-like block with a triangular extrados. The overall form is as if a single opening with a shallow segmental or elliptical head was later divided in a rather awkward manner, although apart from the form there is no clear sign of such a development.

The simple embattled parapet is of smaller rubble than the walls below; the embrasures have flat sills, but the merlons have a chamfered coping (both very worn, and probably medieval); at each corner is the base of a small pinnacle, shown on old illustrations (eg the drawing in the VCH) but now removed.

The walls of the **Nave** are very much patched, and show a variety of fabric types, and a mixture of sandstone and Magnesian Limestone as the materials used. The lower part of the eastern third of the north wall has regular almost square blocks of 12th-century character; the masonry around the lower part of the north-west corner of the nave is broadly similar. The quoins that seem to be

associated with this 'Norman' walling are of no great size; some are only the height of a single course, but a few of two courses. Above the 'early' masonry towards the east end of the north wall is an area of neatly-coursed fabric with more elongate blocks, which might be of the 18th century. The central section of wall, and masonry around all these windows, is of yellower stone, and clearly of 19th century date (probably 1893); the upper third of the wall, although of different character (more olive-coloured stone) is of probably contemporary. On the south the south-west angle is all a recent rebuild or re-facing; older masonry to the east, above and around the porch, is heavily mortared and is character difficult to determine; as on the north, the upper third of the wall is late-19th century work.

The exposed walls of the nave generally have a small chamfered plinth, obviously renewed over the central section of the north wall. West of this an upper plinth of plain square section gradually emerges from the wall, and, in the short length of the west wall exposed north of the tower, a second square-section plinth develops above this. Theplinths on the west wall (exposed on either side of the tower) are of especial interest. The chamfered plinth dies out a short distance east of the north-west corner of the nave, and above it a massive block (0.90 by 0.76 by 0.32 m) forms the basal quoin, and its upper edge the first square-section plinth. This continues south, to apparently disappear behind the tower wall, but at the south end of the massive block is a small upright block only 0.08 m long. South of the tower there is only the 'standard' chamfered plinth, but this, 0.68 m from the corner, ends in another small upright-block; beyond, this, as far as the tower wall, is some much rougher projecting stonework that could be the weathered remains of a plinth or may simply be an exposed footing. An attempted interpretation of these details is given in the 'Structural History' section.

At the wall head of the side walls of the nave is a projecting ashlar eaves course of the late-19th century; the shallow-pitched gables have moulded kneelers and a flat coping.

The short length of the east wall of the nave exposed to the south of the chancel shows some interesting structural features. The adjacent east wall of the south chapel has been bonded in by the removal of the original nave quoins; the resultant irregular joint could be read as indicating that some of these removed quoins were thin 'upright' blocks, spanning two or three courses. There is a rough set-back at the level of the chapel eaves; above this the corner is entirely of 19th-century date.

The only architectural features visible in the external wall faces of the nave are of 19th-century date. Close to the west end of the south wall, and set at some height above the ground (so as to light the former western gallery) is a trefoil-headed lancet under a hoodmould with head stops. Towards the west end of the north wall is a window of two trefoil-headed lights with a trefoil in the head, under a moulded hood with carved stops of the same form as those to the windows in the side walls of the chancel. Further east are a two three-light windows with four-centred arches carrying a broad sunk chamfer, each with panel tracery (differing in detail) above three cinquefoil-headed lights.

The **South Chapel** is built of coursed square stone (including quite an amount of elongate stones), and has a chamfered plinth and a low-pitched gable to the south. The character of the stonework of the south wall, along with its gable coping and quite elongate moulded kneelers, look as if they could be of 18th-century date. At the foot of the wall the plinth course projects

clear of the wall face by c. 0.10 m, suggesting that the wall above has been rebuilt or refaced a little inside its original line. The quoins of the south-east angle do not course in with the adjacent masonry of the east wall; midway along this is another irregular discontinuity.

In the south wall of the chapel is a window of four-cinquefoil-headed lights, with simple panel tracery over, under a four-centred arch. The arch is chamfered, and the inner frame and mullions hollow-chamfered; there is a moulded hood with tuned-back ends. Despite some worn stone in the eastern jamb, all the dressings of this window look to be of 19th-century date.

The roofline of the **South Porch** is a continuation of the western roof-slope of the adjacent chapel. Its walls are of coursed roughly-squared stone, above a chamfered plinth. The re-set south doorway is quite a striking Norman piece. It has a semicircular arch of two orders, the inner square and the outer with a double-grooved moulding, and a hoodmould of similar profile. The arch encloses a tympanum ornamented with a horizontal band of incised chevrons. The inner order and tympanum are carried on chamfered jambs and shaped 19th-century corbels; the outer order is carried on jamb shafts (renewed) with simple cushion capitals (the western very weathered), supporting impost blocks, chamfered below, with a grooved moulding.

The **Chancel** is largely constructed of roughly-coursed rubble, except for more regularly squared and coursed stone seen in the east end (probably rebuilt in the 19th century; some of the large squared blocks are probably re-used material) and the western part of the north wall, which also has a large patch of smaller yellowish stone towards the foot. The plinth is generally of the same type as that in the nave, although the junction between the two (only seen on the north) is irregular, with the nave plinth apparently being overbuilt by the chancel. As with the nave, the upper third of the walls is clearly a late-19th century rebuild, in more olive-coloured stone.

At the west end of the south wall is a window of two trefoil-headed lights with a quatrefoil over, under a moulded hood with carved stops; all its stonework is of 19th-century date. Below and a little to the west is a blocked low-side window, a small square-headed opening with a broad chamfer all round; there are sockets for bars (one vertical and two horizontal) and a groove for glass or some form of frame. To the east of the little porch/vestry there is a disturbed area low in the wall (where part of the plinth has been cut away), and above that a large blocked square-headed window, with a chamfered surround and traces of a hacked-back hoodmould.

The rebuilt or refaced east wall has a five-light window of the late 19th-century, with panel tracery above cinquefoil-headed lights; the arch is four-centred, but the moulded hood is carried up in an ogival form to an elaborate foliate finial that rises to the apex of the gable.

The north wall of the chancel has a two-light window, opposite that on the south, and similar to it except that the two lights are uncusped, and the opening in the head is an uncusped circle. Above the head of the window a break in the masonry appears to define the head of a slightly-taller earlier window of similar form, and above this, and slightly to the west, are traces of another blocked opening.

The **Porch/Vestry** is built of roughly-squared and roughly-coursed stone; at the time of survey it is badly cracked and appears close to collapse. In the south wall is a priest's doorway, re-set from the south wall of the chancel. This has a slightly-depressed arched head, with a moulding of a wave between two hollows that dies into a simple chamfer that is continued uninterrupted down

the jambs; there is a moulded hood with carved stops and a larger block with a human head at its centre. In the east wall is a small square window with a surround formed by four blocks, left square except for the sill; this carries a chamfer that extends beyond the jambs, and must be a re-used piece.

The Interior

The internal walls of the church are plastered and whitewashed, except for some exposed dressings.

The **Tower** opens to the nave by a tall round-headed arch of a single square order, springing from impost blocks, chamfered below but cut back flush with the face of the east wall of the nave; there is a chamfered plinth at the base of the northern jamb, and one may have been cut away opposite. The soffit of the arch is left clear of plaster, showing that none of the voussoirs are actually through stones. On the east face of the wall, to either side of the imposts, and just below them, two areas of old plaster have been retained, with indistinct traces of painted black-letter inscriptions (more clearly visible twenty years ago) Above and to the north of the arch is a small square-headed opening, formerly communicating with the first floor of the tower but now blocked. Immediately above this is a slight set-back which runs most of the width of the wall, and above this (visible with a good side light from the window on the south) that appears to be an earlier roof-line, of slightly-steeper pitch than the present shallow one, with its ridge at approximately the same point but its eaves a metre or so lower. Beneath the apex of this line, and above the set-back, a series of blocks, visible only as irregularities in the plaster, seem to outline a rectangular opening.

Within the tower, the west window has a flattened four-centred rear arch with a chamfer to its head; slight irregularities beneath the plaster hint that this may retain its medieval form. At the level of the springing of this rear arch there are two sockets in each side wall, the western flush with the west wall.

An iron ladder-cum-stair rises to the floor of the first stage; the beams and flooring, like those of the belfry floor and the tower roof, are all of late-19th or 20th-century date. At this level there are very small unsplayed openings, no more than vents, on north and west, and a rather larger window, similarly unsplayed, on the south; this has a timber inner lintel with three diamond-shaped mortices, probably a re-used window head from a timber-framed building. In the north-east corner is a roughly-cut recess from which the small square-headed loop, visible on the opposite face of the wall, formerly opened into the nave; this recess appears to have been widened on the north (by cutting into the north wall) but narrowed on the south. The east wall is heavily pointed and whitewashed, but some large blocks towards the centre may be of structural significance.

A ladder rises to the belfry, which internally has a set-back just above the floor, above which the four belfry openings now have concrete internal lintels (with infilled segmental arches faintly traceable in the rubble above). The three bells are suspended from a modern iron girder; a ladder gives access to the low-pitched leaded roof.

Inside the **Nave** the south doorway has a plain lintel internally, whilst that of the small window to the west is a simple lancet; of the northern windows, the western has a three-centred rear arch and the eastern two segmental rear arches, all beneath plaster. The south chapel opens under a

broad segmental-pointed arch of two chamfered orders, the outer plastered. The inner order is carried on semi-octagonal moulded corbels, the eastern springing from a male head and the western supported by the head and arms of a female. The outer order is continued down to pyramidal stops above a chamfered plinth; in the lower jambs are several cuts and sockets for a former screen.

The only feature of structural interest remaining within the **South Chapel** is a cut-back corbel at the south end of the east wall, 1.5 m above floor level. The south window has a four-centred rear arch with a chamfered surround, beneath plaster.

The internal walls of the **South Porch** are plastered and whitewashed; the south doorway, inside the porch, has a elliptical-arched head and a continuous hollow chamfer; its dressings are whitewashed over, but look irregular and weathered.

The **Chancel** opens under a round-headed arch of wider and lower proportions than the tower arch; in this case the voussoirs are exposed, but not the soffit. The imposts, chamfered beneath, are late 19th-century replacements; there are various cuts and sockets in the jambs, and the remains of a chamfered plinth on the south.

The windows in the side walls of the chancel have plain segmental rear arches, and the late-19th century east window a four-centred rear arch with a broad casement moulding. On the south of the sanctuary are three sedilia, close up against the east wall. These have flattened ogee-headed arches within a square frame, and are divided by chamfered mullion-like shafts that stand clear of the rear wall. There are sunk trefoiled panels in the end spandrels, and similarly cusped but open panels between. There is a hoodmould with head stops; the vertical return on the east jamb is of quite a different section (chamfered instead of moulded) to the remainder.

Opposite the sedilia on the north of the sanctuary is a tomb recess or perhaps an East Sepulchre, with an almost semicircular arch; this has a continuous moulding of a filleted roll between two hollows, under a simple moulded hood; ragged stonework suggests that finials at the apex, and perhaps also at the ends, have been cut away. The east end of the recess is uncomfortably close to the east wall, perhaps pointing to the latter having been rebuilt.

The doorway into the small **Vestry** has a 19th-century wooden doorcase towards the chancel, but behind this is a simple splayed opening cut through the wall and plastered over.

The **Roofs** of the church are all boarded, and appear to be of later-19th century date throughout. That of the nave is of five bays, with moulded tie-beams, whilst that of the chancel is of three with short king-posts carrying the ridge.

FITTINGS AND FURNISHINGS

The **Font**, at the west end of the nave, is thought to be of late 12th-century date, and is of Frosterley 'marble'. It has a circular slightly-tapered bowl and a moulded base, and stands on a more recent square stone step. The cover is modern; an earlier cover described by as 17th century, and by Fordyce (1857, 230), has been removed.

The **Pews** in the nave are probably of later 17th-century date; they have plain fleur-de-lys

poppyheads, and open panels with small balusters in their backs and doors. The VCH account (320) refers to contemporary seating in the south chapel, including three canopied churchwardens' seats lettered 'Redmarshall', 'Carlton' and 'Stillington', but these have gone. The other fittings all appear to be of later 19th or 20th-century date; the **Altar Rails** have heavy turned balusters, and have been described as contemporary with the pews (Pevsner & Williamson 1983, 391) but look as if they may be relatively recent.

There are three **Bells**. One bell bears the inscription 'cristoferus' in well-spaced Gothic lettering; it has been ascribed a 14th- or 15th century date (Proceedings Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle IV, 22); the other two bells are plain but may also be medieval.

SEPULCHRAL MONUMENTS

Set against the east wall of the south chapel are the **Effigies** of Thomas de Langton (d.1440) and his wife Sybil, carved in alabaster and resting on a plain box tomb which is probably recent. They are described in detail by Hunter Blair (1929, 32-33 & 44-45). The man is attired in chain mail with a collar of SS, with head resting on a helm and feet on a lion. The head of the lady rests on a cushion, and her hair is dressed in horn-like fashion, and head-dress partly covered by a veil; she is clad in an under-garment and a long loose kirtle with a jewelled belt. Both figures are somewhat damaged, the face of the man being broken away.

Forming the sill of the recess on the north of the sanctuary is a medieval **Cross Slab** (Ryder 1985, 110 & plate 47), much worn but showing remains of a slender straight-armed cross decorated with oak leaves, with a chalice on the stem. This is of 14th-century date, and a member of a small group characterised by naturalistic oak foliage; others are at Aycliffe, Durham and Sedgfield.

An 1889 sketch by Robert Blair (Ryder 1994) shows part of a 12th or 13th-century cross slab re-used as a kneeler on the south porch; this stone has since been replaced.

There are no post-medieval monuments of any note.

HISTORICAL NOTES

- 995 The dedication of the church has led several writers to surmise that the church marks the site of one of the resting places of the body of St Cuthbert; Boyle (1892, 637) suggests that this may have been when the body was being carried either from Chester-le-Street to Ripon, or from Ripon to Durham, in 995.
- 1311 Alan de Langton, lord of the manor, presented a priest for a chantry at the altar of St Mary, in the parish church.
- 1794 The earliest account of the church traced is that by the historian Hutchinson (1794, 161-162): 'The church of Redmarshall is an inferior structure: The chancel is four paces in length and seven in width, lighted to the east by a window of three parts under a circular arch, and one window to the south; it is separated from the nave by a heavy circular arch. In the south wall near the altar is an arched recess, but no effigy or inscription. The nave is fifteen paces in length, and six in width. There is a porch to the south called Claxton's Porch, containing a large window

that gives light to the whole nave..... The tower of the church is so much disproportioned to the size of the edifice, and so dissimilar in its construction, that it carries evidence of its being originally built as a place of defence: Yet in 1462, Adam Morland, then rector, fortified the rectory-house; the tower of which, with embrasures, remains to this time'

- 1823 Surtees (1823, III, 71) follows Hutchinson's description (including his error in placing the tomb recess on the south of the chancel), summing up the church as having 'scattered features of high antiquity' 'amidst much of modern repair'.
- 1857 Fordyce (1857, 230-231) describes the church in some detail, and refutes Hutchinson's view of the defensible nature of the tower.

FACULTIES AND OTHER RECORDS OF STRUCTURAL WORK

| Faculty No./Date | Works |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1700 | Allocation of pews |
| 113 (1806) | The lead of the roofs was to be replaced by Westmorland slate; other works included that 'the open arch under the belfry be enclosed leaving an entrance through the same' and 'the large window in the North wall of the church should be lowered and a new window to correspond therewith be made in the same wall towards the west, and to rebuild or repair the walls of the said church where necessary' |
| 1845-6 | Major alterations at the expense of the rector, the Rev T. Austin, the architect being his son, also T. AUSTIN; 'the unsightly sash windows were at once removed, and appropriate ones of stone introduced'; former north doorway removed to south porch, vestry added, and new font cover provided (Fordyce 1857, 230-231) |
| 360 (1893) | Repairs. Works included the reroofing of the whole church, repair of the seating, removal of the 'modern' gallery at the west end, the re-opening of the tower arch, and the replacement of the three-light 1845 east window by a five-light one. The floor was to be relaid 9" lower, and new imposts made for the chancel arch (the old ones having been hacked away). The architect was C.C.Hodges. |
| 3071 (27 January 1948) | Construction of new organ. |
| 4354 (20 April 1961) | General repairs. |
| 4684 (13 June 1964) | Repairs and redecoration. |
| 4788 (4 May 1965) | Removal and replacement of holy table. |

- 5739 (10 August 1978) New organ.
- 6645 (5 January 1988) Rewiring etc, together with conservation, impregnation with consolidants and re-setting of Langton Chapel effigies, by Harrison Hill of Northampton
- 1995 (1995 Quinquennial Report). Bells 'hung dead' for chiming.

THE STRUCTURAL HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

The degree of alteration which the fabric of Redmarshall church has undergone makes it difficult to reconstruct its structural development and history in detail. The earliest parts of the fabric have generally been ascribed a 12th-century date; certainly, both chancel and tower arches, and the small chamfered plinths of nave and chancel, as well as the re-set south door, would all tally with this period.

It might be possible to argue an earlier date for the nave walls, although the evidence is very tentative. One point might be the very irregular setting out of the nave, which, in this area, would seem more characteristic of Pre-Conquest work rather than Norman; a second could be the 'ghost' of Saxon-style quoining at the south-east corner, and a third might be the megalithic basal quoin at the north-west corner of the nave, again more typical of Pre-Conquest than Norman building.

However, the nave walls are generally around 0.80 m thick, and the remainder of the present angle quoins (if any have survived the rebuilding and patching) look of 'early' form. The neatly squared stone of parts of the north wall of the nave certainly looks of 12th-century character.

Hodges' phased plan, which accompanies the 1893 faculty, indicates the chancel (except for the east wall) as 12th century work along with the tower and nave, but the VCH plan shows it as 13th-century work. The latter is perhaps the more likely, on the evidence of the junction of nave and chancel plinths, and the mouldings of the recess on the north of the sanctuary and re-set priest's door. It is not clear how much credence to give to the reports that the tracery of the windows in the side walls 'is believed to faithfully represent the ancient work of which it takes the place' (Boyle 1893, 638).

The south chapel is a later medieval addition. Pevsner & Williamson (1983, 391) ascribed its arch to c.1300 (there was already a chantry in the church by 1311 - see 'Historical Notes') but other workers see it as of 15th century date. The break in coursing in the east wall hints that a narrower chapel (perhaps pent-roofed) may have been extended and remodelled.

The sedilia also look to be of late medieval date, and may be contemporary with the extension of the chapel. The large blocked window on the south of the chancel, from the evidence of the remains of its hoodmould, was probably of 15th or 16th century date, as may have been the window on the north of the chancel, of which only indistinct traces are visible.

As often, little clear evidence of work of the three post-medieval centuries (16th, 17th and 18th)

centuries survives in the church. The structural curiosities of the tower (notably the breaks in the west end plinth on either side of it, and the peculiar positioning of the small first-stage window opening into the nave) have already been outlined, and are best explained by its being a late medieval or post-medieval rebuild, re-using older stonework (which would account for its curious belfry openings), of a larger structure. The date of the rebuilding is hard to ascertain; its fabric and features certainly look 'old' (ie 16th or 17th century?) but the strange reference in Hutchinson to a tower of 'disproportionate' size raises the possibility that the rebuilding may have taken place as late as c.1800

One possibility that has not been suggested, but would link this evidence of a larger tower to Hutchinson's rather strange statement about its 'disproportionate' size, would be to interpret the present tower as a very late rebuild (late 18th century?) re-using older features.

The church appears in the background of a 1788 painting of the old 'Parsonage House' (reproduced in Bell & Bell 1994). It is partly concealed by trees, but appears to have a Venetian window in the south gable of the Claxton Chapel, and certainly has a porch in the present position to the west of the Chapel.

This brings us to the recorded alterations and restorations of the 19th century. Major works in 1806 seem to have included some rebuilding of walls; a first 'restoration' in 1845-1846 saw the sash windows returned to more suitably Gothic forms, and the 12th-century north door re-used in the south porch, which may have been rebuilt; this removal of the doorway is recorded by Fordyce, and ignored by subsequent writers who usually see it as having been the south door. The priest's door in the chancel was similarly re-located in the tiny vestry-cum-porch added at the time.

The small window high in the south wall of the nave is clearly positioned to light the former western gallery, which may have been introduced in 1845-6.

As often with Durham churches, there was a second later Victorian restoration, this time in 1893, under the architect-cum-antiquary Charles Clement Hodges, when three new windows in a free Perpendicular style were introduced. Two of these are on the north of the nave, where his pre-restoration plan shows a pair of two-light windows; he does not show the two-light window (presumably of 1845-1846) towards the west end of the wall. Is this an error, or did he remove that from one of the other openings to its present location?

THE CHURCHYARD

The churchyard is quite elongate on a north-south axis, with the church set towards the centre; the section to the north is rectangular in plan, but the section to the south an irregular triangle, narrowing to the south gate at its apex. To the north and west are roads, and to the east the grounds of the Vicarage and Old Vicarage. In level the central and southern section of the yard are raised up to 2 m above the adjacent roads and vicarage grounds; there is a prominent mound, of uncertain origin, to the east of the path just inside the south gate, rising c 1.5 m above the adjacent churchyard and perhaps 4 m above the gardens to the east.

The boundary walls to the north and west of the northern section are all of 20th-century brick; there is an older wall on the south/south-west of the southern section, which has a central section of cobbles, raised in brick, flanked by lengths of old (18th century?) brickwork. The section

adjacent to the south gate has been rebuilt relatively recently.

There are few monuments of any interest; the majority are of 20th century date, with a few 19th century and one or two small 18th century headstones, much weathered. To the south-east of the church, and backing onto the churchyard boundary, is a railed enclosure with a cross, the memorial of Rev George Brown d.1870.

A slight east-west bank a short distance north of the church may indicate a former churchyard boundary.

The churchyard was closed for burial in 1992.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

Any church of 12th century or earlier origin is obviously of some archaeological importance. Whilst it is clear that Redmarshall preserves substantial amounts of medieval fabric above ground, albeit with considerable alterations, it is less clear how underfloor deposits have fared. They may be relatively undisturbed, as the church, unusually, has no obvious evidence of an underfloor heating system. The present floor is of stone slabs, and appears to be of late 19th century date; Hodges' 1893 plan shows two free-standing stoves but no heating system, and none of the faculties make any mention of one. Any works involving disturbance of floor levels will certainly require archaeological monitoring.

The internal faces of the above-ground fabric are almost entirely concealed by plaster, which may possibly hide earlier plaster with wall paintings (cf the fragmentary remains at the west end) and certainly conceals structural features, ie fabric changes and evidences of earlier openings. Any removal of plaster will require monitoring, and possibly a recording programme.

Outside the church deposits adjacent to the wall faces will have been damaged, but perhaps not destroyed, by the perimeter drain, which presumably dates to the 1893 works. In view of the possibility raised above of a larger west tower, the area around the present tower is obviously of especial interest.

SUMMARY AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL PRIORITIES

Despite alterations, Redmarshall remains a small church of some interest. There remains a possibility that the nave walls may incorporate fabric earlier than the visible Norman features; more intriguing are the puzzles centred on the tower, the date of which remains unknown.

The making of a detailed ground plan (perhaps using an E.D.M. or similar device) might assist in further interpretation of the fabric. The plan reproduced here is based on that by C.C.Hodges which accompanies the 1893 faculty, with some minor corrections; the more recent VCH plan assumes the building to be very much more regular in layout than it actually is.

As outlined above, the sub-floor deposits may be better-preserved than most, and any works involving their disturbance will require an archaeological presence, as will any removal of plaster from the internal wall faces. Externally, the area around the tower is of special interest.

The small vestry on the south of the chancel is currently in very poor structural condition; if it is demolished (or falls down) the outer archway must be preserved; it could be re-set in the opening between chancel and vestry, its original location. If demolition is decided upon, the structure ought to be recorded first by means of rectified photographs, and the stone from its walls ought to be carefully checked for re-used architectural fragments etc.

On a more minor note, the medieval cross slab forming the sill of the recess on the north of the sanctuary is in poor condition, and 'fragile'; items of furniture should not be stood directly upon its surface.

Peter F Ryder March 1996

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