

St Andrew's Church, Sadberge

Sadberge parish church crowns the hilltop in the centre of its village, now by-passed by the main Darlington to Teeside road; the Roman road running north from Pounteys Bridge. The church consists of a broad unaisled nave with an original western porch, now a vestry, and a later south porch; there is a smaller chancel with a vestry on the north.

Description

The building is constructed of roughly-squared blocks of roughly-tooled sandstone, with tooled-and-margined sandstone dressings.

The Exterior

The **Nave** has a chamfered plinth; substantial pilaster buttresses, linked at their heads by a deep oversailing eaves course, divide each side wall effectively into three bays, although those at the ends are set in a little distance from the angles of the structure. Between each pair of buttresses the eaves cornice is carried on five large shaped corbels, with a further two beyond the buttresses at each end.

At the west end, above the central projecting porch is quite a large round-arched window, now blocked, with a double-chamfered surround and a moulded hood with much-eroded carved terminals of a distinctive pendant-like form. The gable itself has kneelers and a quite elaborate moulded coping, and is topped by a substantial bellcote with a projecting square-section string at its base and a large semicircular double-chamfered arch with a plain pillar, probably later, built in its centre, and a bell hung on either side, beneath a stepped gabled cap. The porch (now the Choir Vestry) has a round-arched doorway under a moulded hood with carved stops of the same type as the blocked window above, infilled with coursed grey sandstone blocks that have a distinctive tooling; the blocking contains a circular window with a chamfered surround. Built into the angle between the north side of the porch and the west wall of the nave is a small boiler house, of brick (rendered and lined in an unconvincing simulation of ashlar), with square-headed doorway on north and west, and the north-west angle canted.

On the south of the nave the western bay is occupied by the south porch; in the walling above its roof the curve of the head of an earlier blocked window is visible. The other two bays each have a pair of lancet windows with chamfered surrounds, and linked moulded hoods with carved stops of the usual type. The jambs (and hoodmould stops) are those of the original 1831 'Norman' windows, but the heads, mullions, and central section of the sills are of 1874. Beyond the easternmost buttress and set quite high in the wall is a small round-arched light with a double-chamfered surround; its head is cut into a single block, grooved to simulate five voussoirs. Its dressings are of a different and darker stone to those of the paired lancets.

On the north of the nave the ground is at a lower level, so that that plinth is c 0.8 m above ground level; each bay has a paired lancet, all detail being as on the south.

The east gable of the nave has a moulded coping similar to that of the west end, without any finial..

The **South Porch** is built of the same grey parallel-tooled stone as the blocking of the old west doorway, with quoins and dressings of lightly-tooled ashlar. It has a two-centred double-chamfered archway under a moulded hood with turned-back ends, and a shallow-pitched gable with an oversailing coping on moulded kneelers, carrying a cross finial. The side walls each have a small lancet with a chamfered surround and a moulded hood, again with turned-back ends.

The **Chancel** is considerably lower and narrower than the nave; in materials and detail it is similar to the nave, having a chamfered plinth and an oversailing eaves course on large corbels. On the south are a pair of lancets of 1890, although their dressings are of a quite different and more purplish stone to those of the nave windows; their hoodmoulds end in large uncut blocks. The east window is in the style of c 1300, with three lancets within a single arch, the spandrels being pierced; there is a casement-moulded hood, again with unfinished block stops. The window is clearly an insertion; the sill of its predecessor remains visible below. The gable has a moulded coping and is topped by a rather damaged six-pointed cross fleury finial.

The **Vestry** has a shallow-pitched gable, again with a moulded coping, facing north. On the north are a pair of lancets with linked hoods, with similar stops to those of the nave windows; the original jambs have a double chamfer but the later-19th century head only a single one. On the east side there are steps up to a round-arched doorway with a double-chamfered surround. There is a large square-edged eaves cornice, but here without any corbels.

The Interior

The interior of the church is entirely plastered and yellow-washed. At the west end the **Nave** the central section of wall is set forward, like a broad internal buttress, to carry the bellcote. The doorway into the Choir Vestry (the original west porch has a semicircular chamfered rear arch; towards the porch it has a semicircular arch with a double-chamfered surround. The outer doorway, now blocked, has a semicircular rear arch.

The inner doorway of the south porch, in lightly-tooled ashlar of a buff sandstone, has a three-centred arch with a sunk quadrant moulding; its rear arch is of the same form. The two-light windows all have simple roughly two-centred rear arches, enclosing both lights; the slight irregularities in form betray their re-cutting from the original semicircular rear arches of the original 'Norman' windows, like that of the sole survivor above the pulpit.

The **Chancel** arch is semicircular and of a single order, with a broad chamfer. In the chancel the south window has a simple pointed rear arch, and the east window a segmental-pointed rear arch with a chamfer to its head only. The door into the vestry has a square head.

The nave has an eight bay roof with king-post trusses, boarded over at the level at which the raking struts springing from the broader base of the king-post meet the principals. The tie-beam of each truss is supported by moulded timber corbels on the side walls.

Fittings and Furnishings

The **Font** stands at the south-west corner of the nave; it is octagonal and of ashlar, with a

moulded base and the sacred Monogram on the east face of the bowl

All the benches are of simple late-19th century type.

The **Organ** stands in the north-east corner of the nave; it is by Forster and Andrew of Hull, 1872, and was restored by Prested in 1993.

The **Stained Glass** is all by Hemmings, of London. The east window is in memory of members of the Garmondsway family; the south window of the chancel (SS John the Evangelist and John the Baptist) has similar glass, erected by the Rev W Taylor, 1890. Other windows of the same period are the easternmost on each side of the nave (on the north SS Hilda and Bede, on the south SS Aidan and Cuthbert), the small window over the pulpit (Dorcas).

Hemmings' former mural decorations are now plastered over.

Sadberge church retains two medieval **Bells**: the details are taken from Lancaster Taylor (op.cit.190-191)

- 1 Hanging in the bellcote, inscribed 'IES Campana Sancta Leonardi'. Taylor linked St Leonard, as patron saint of prisoners and captives, to Sadberge being a former Assize Town.
- 1 The 'Virgin Bell', reputed to have been brought from Neasham Priory. It bears the inscription 'Sancta Maria or' with an initial cross and a shield charged with three bells (seen again at Pitlington). This bell is cracked; it was removed from the bellcote in the 19th century and is now fixed at the west end of the nave above the archway into the Choir Vestry.

The second bell in the bellcote is of 19th-century date.

on the west wall a brass plate listing the various surviving relics from former churches, recovered by the Rev Taylor, 1887-1911. On the east all are brass plates giving lists of priests, chapelwardens and churchwardens.

Panelled timber reredos. Late C19 e C29

Carved Stones

Various relics of the medieval church were mostly retrieved by the Rev Taylor and re-set in the present building. Stones (1) and (2) had been found built into the wall of the kitchen of the Glittering Star Inn in Darlington, which had been built out of the materials of the old church demolished in 1831. These comprise

- 1 Built into the north wall of the south porch, above and to the west of the door, a worn block of buff gritstone with a relief carving generally identified as Adam and Eve in the Garden; there are two figures (who appear to be wearing head-dresses of some type) with a third smaller figure apparently in a tree to the right. This was dated by Canon Greenwell to c1080-1100, or possibly earlier (Taylor 180)

- 1 Built into the north wall of the south porch above and to the east of the door, a block of brown sandstone with a relief carving that Taylor identified as Christ on horseback, trampling on Satan, and of Norman date. It is very heavily worn.

- 1 Set in the north wall of the south porch immediately to the east of the doorway; the semicircular moulded bowl, somewhat damaged, of a small stoup.

- 1 Set on the gable of the old west porch, a medieval finial base, with a trefoiled triangular panel, with a 19th-century cross now mounted above it.

- 1 An enigmatic block of red sandstone c 0.20 m square now set high in the internal face of the south wall of the chancel. It bears a series of incised figures 'MCCLXII' (the final part could alternatively be 'XVI', with below the initials 'T H'. This has apparently been set in the wall since 1831; Taylor thought the date to be '1266' and relate to the building of what he termed the 'Norman' church, and the initials to be 'G B', and to relate to the Geoffrey Bulmer who built the 1831 church, although Mr Hemmings, the stained glass artist, saw them as 'T H'.

It is difficult to determine exactly what this stone is; if the date is 1266, then it is too late for a 'Norman' building, and in any case date stones on medieval churches and chapels are very rare. The lettering and numerals do look genuinely medieval; the stone is probably a fragment of a grave slab.

Sepulchral Monuments

The church has no sepulchral monuments of any importance. A page of notes and sketches on the old church (Society of Antiquaries' Library at Newcastle ,' Durham and YorkshireMS' Ref AK259, p.151)s accompanied by sketches of three medieval monuments, one a cross slab and the others apparently semi-effigial slabs, or perhaps cross-slabs that had been reworked at some time.

Lancaster Taylor (184) refers to a grave being dug on the site of the old chapel in 1894 and 'about one foot down, fragments of effigies were found, split by some sharp instrument, the fragment of a gargoyle blocking a drain'. He records that these remains were removed to the Rectory rockery.¹

Historical Notes

- 1189 Bishop Le Puiset purchased the Wapentake of Sadberge from Richard I, and annexed it to the See of Durham, which previously had been reckoned as part of Northumberland. Sadberge for many years had its own sheriffs, coroners and courts of assize; the earldom of Sadberge remains one of the royal titles.

- c1786 The earliest description of the church is from Hutchinson's History of Durham (III, 1823 reprint, 210): 'The ground on which the present chapel stands is

¹ They cannot now be traced. The Rectory was rebuilt in the earlier 20th century.

most elevated, and appears to have been forced, and is trenched round; from whence it may be presumed there stood the castle, gaol and court-house in ancient times. The stones of which the chapel is built appear to have been taken from ancient structures..’

1823 Surtees (II, 268) notes that ‘The chapel consists of a low nave and chancel; it has evidently been in great measure built out of the old squared stones of the gaol or manor-house..’

1834 Mackenzie & Ross (II,118) copy Surtees’ description, but add that the chapel is dedicated to St Andrew and ‘there are monumental inscriptions in the burying-ground belonging to the families of Pemberton and Garmonsway.

Faculties and Other Records of Structural Work

Date	Faculty No.	Works
1831		The present church is built, a Geoffrey Bulmer being the builder and William Ramshaw the designer and clerk of works. The old chapel, a few metres to the south, was allowed to remain standing, but demolished in the following year, when Geoffrey Bulmer was given £10 to remove its materials.
1859		Sadberge Chapel became a Parish Church. Prior to this its status was uncertain; Lancaster Taylkor argues that it was in the private possession of the Bishop of Durham, rather than simply a chapel within the parish of Haughton-le-Skerne.
1890		A programme of works carried out in 1890 is recorded in <u>The North Star</u> for 16th January 1894 (microfilm copy, Darlington Library Local Studies Room): The church had been re-seated, and a new window on the south side of the chancel ‘thrown out’. Stained glass was by Mr Hemmings of Cavendish Square, London, who was also responsible for the chancel decorations ‘both the east and south walls...have been painted with a rich dado in Indian red, and above a warm cream colour, which is heated with borders and diapers of various colours. On each side of the east window are two life-size figures of Moses and St Paul, to represent the law and the Gospel, and above them, round the head of the window, a delicate scroll work in green, surmounted on top by a crown’.



Church interior (from Lancaster Taylor, 1919) showing 1890 scheme of decoration

2 April 1992	7500	Stonework replacement, window repair, extra lighting.
5 Jan 1993	7697	Removal of back of clergy stall
15 July 1993	7754	Overhaul of pipe organ

29 September 1998	8548	Repair of roof including water tables, ridge tiles and support quoins.
2 February 2000	8842	Works including alterations to floor around organ and chancel step, and removal and disposal of clergy stall on north of chancel and front pew in nave.

Structural History

The only sources of information relating to the pre-1831 chapel are the sketches already referred to in the Society of Antiquaries' Library, Newcastle, and two ground plans, both dated 1828, one by a Mr Scotson of Haughton, reproduced by Lancaster Taylor (f.p./185) and the other in Archdeacon Thorp's Plan Book (Chapter Library, Durham) ; Lancaster Taylor's long-winded description seem to be entirely based on the Scotson ground plan, as he does not seem to have been aware of the existence of other material.

The illustrations shows a low building with a round-arched doorway to the south porch and five windows in the south wall to the east of the porch, all square-headed except for the second from the porch that looks to have had two lancet-arched lights, with the mullion later removed. The east window was also a plain square opening. The ground plan adds little to our knowledge, except to indicate that there as a large window in the west end and another (originally a doorway?) opposite the south door.

Taylor's assertion that this building as a 'Norman' church seems only to be based on the evidence of the supposed '1266' date stone, which in any case is at least fifty years too late for a building that could, architecturally speaking, be described as 'Norman'. All one can say is that the old chapel appears to have been of Pre-Reformation date; the rood loft, illustrated in a frustratingly small sketch, would hardly have survived any major post-medieval reconstruction. However, the fenestration at least of the building looks to have been considerably altered in the 17th or 18th century.

Turning to the present building, its structural history is well documented. Lancaster Taylor (193) describes it as 'erected in the Victorian period, when architecture was almost extinct'. Built in 1831 (actually six years before Victoria took the throne), to the design of William Ramshaw, it was initially a building in the Romanesque or Norman style (Pevsner & Williamson 1983, 395 are in error in terming it 'E.E', ie Early English). In 1838-9 the bell cote fell in a storm, and in 1839 a flat ceiling was constructed . Following further storm damage in 1874 the large Romanesque windows of the nave were converted into paired lancets in an approximation to an 'Early English' style. In 1884 the ceiling was replaced, to be removed six years later. In 1890 a new windows was inserted on the south side of the chancel, and the church re-decorated with wall paintings and stained glass both by Hemmings. At around the same time, or perhaps a little earlier, a new three-light east window was provided, and the north window of the vestry altered. In 1904 the present south porch and doorway were constructed, the old west porch being converted into a Choir vestry.

The Churchyard

Sadberge is a case where the archaeology and features of the churchyard are potentially more interesting than those of the present building.

The present churchyard is roughly rectangular, c 80 m north-south by 50- m east-west, with the church approximately at its centre. The 1856 Ordnance Survey 25":1 mile map shows the churchyard as somewhat smaller; what is now its northernmost third was partitioned off, the approach to the church from the main road being alongside the east wall. There were also a series of small enclosures on the west, which was assimilated into the churchyard in the later 19th century. The northern extension had been made by 1898, the date of the present lych gate.

Several old accounts refer to the churchyard as being ditched or moated around., and several editions of the larger-scale O S maps show the broad ditch on the east of the yard as a 'Moat'. This ditch is c 20 m wide; the steep scarp of its western side lies within the churchyard, and has a low retaining wall at its base; built into the external face of this, c 20 m from the south-east corner, is a stone with possible remains of some carved design. Until recently the flat bottom of the ditch contained an area of standing water, 'Hampers' Pond', now filled in.

A line of scarp can be traced across the northern part of the churchyard, approximately on the line of the churchyard boundary shown on the 1856 map; the scarp turns south within the line of the west wall of the churchyard, and continues south, its line stepping a little eastwards roughly in line with the south wall of the present church. The scarp dies out before reaching the south side of the churchyard; here the churchyard wall is in effect a retaining wall, the ground within the yard being c 1 m above the level of the pavement outside, which in turn is raised c 1 m above the roadway.

Within the churchyard, the highest point in the churchyard lies a few metres to the south of the church, and is capped by an old box tomb to the Garmondsway family; immediately to the north of this is a small east-west earthwork feature, dropping north to an area of level that marks the site of the pre-1831 chapel²

The 1856 map also shows the village school, founded in 1799, as standing just within the south-east corner of the churchyard; the building was demolished in 1868..

Archaeological Assessment

Historical evidence points to Sadberge being an administrative centre of considerable importance before the Norman Conquest, and there are antiquarian allusions to castles, manor houses and court houses, but to date remarkably little archaeological evidence has come to light.

The earthworks evident in and around the churchyard, in particular the massive ditch on the east, would seem to imply that the site was intended to be defensible. The hilltop situation, and the Roman road, might suggest a Roman signal station or fortlet, although no proven

2 Lancaster Taylor (201) recalls a parishoner telling him that he used to stand on this tomb to look into the nave of the 'Norman church'.

remains of this period have been found³ There is similarly nothing tangible of pre-Conquest date; the 'Adam and Eve' stone which Lancaster Taylor saw as of Saxon date is more likely to be a 12th-century piece.

Priorities

Peter F Ryder January 2001

Bibliography

³ Although the 1831 sketches include two of shaped stones in the churchyard which might conceivably have been Roman altars. A small stone of this type has recently come to light in the rectory garden, and is currently being examined.

St Andrew's Church, Sadberge

An Archaeological Assessment

March 2001

**Reconstruction of the church as it appeared before the 1846-7 remodelling
(Christian Inheritance Guide)**

**Peter F Ryder
Historic Buildings Consultant**

St Peter's Church, Bishopston

An Archaeological Assessment

January 2001

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1825 Ground Plan /Phased Ground Plan	at end

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St Peter, Bishopton
Photographs to accompany Archaeological Assessment
January 2001, Peter F Ryder

1. General north-west view
2. West end of nave
3. The south side of the nave (and tower. West part
4. The south side of the nave (east part)
5. General south-east view
6. Interior looking east
7. Supposedly medieval window on north of chancel arch.
8. Nave looking west.
9. The reredos.
10. Boxing of weight shaft in Ringing Chamber.
11. Boxing of weight shaft in Clock Chamber
12. The Clock.
13. Old cupboard in entrance lobby.

Note: no photographs were taken at this time of the north side of the church (all of 1846-7) , as it was shrouded in scaffolding.

The floors. Tiled central aisle and areas in chancel patterned tiling in sanctuary boarded areas under choir stalls boarded areas under benches.

Monuments. S wall chancel marble tablet to Rev David Piper, for 32 years curate of Sadberge, d1861 at Boulogne. N chancel wall brass plate 'the choir and nave of this church restored and fully repaired in the year 1890'. Special gifts at this time were the choir benches from T.D.Eden, pulpit from H.A.Wooler, stained glass windows etc.

Pair of elaborate brass light fittings with paraffin lamps at the west end of each wall of the chancel.

S of chancel and east of door is stone with 1266 date...

On S nave marble tablet to World War I dead, a smaller one opposite to those who died in World war II.

Brass plate over south door 'the adjoining porch was erected in 1904 (various donors)

Recess S of bellcote boarded in to hold clock mechanism; clock has plate by W.Potts & Sons, Leed, 1924.

Churchyard

As already mentioned, the churchyard crowns a hill. There are roadways on north, west and south, and on the east a broad ditch termed 'moat' on some Ordnance Survey maps; until recent years it held water, and was locally known as 'Hampers Pond'. The northern third of the churchyard is an extension, probably of the later 19th century; the 1856 25" @:1 mile map shows it as walled off, with the approach to the church being at its east end.