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QUINQUENNIAL REPORT

INSPECTION OF CHURCHES MEASURE 1955

CARE OF CHURCHES AND ECCLESIASTICAL JURISDICTION MEASURE 1991

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NOTE: This report can be read at three levels of detail:

The SUMMARY AND PRIORITIES give a brief overview and checklist.

The APPRAISAL AND RECOMMENDATIONS give a fully reasoned report sufficient for most purposes.

The ARCHITECT'S INSPECTION NOTES give a finely detailed record of the inspection observations on which the report is based, for future reference.

PREAMBLE TO THE QUINQUENNIAL REPORT ON THE CHURCH

INTRODUCTION

The Inspection of Churches Measure 1955 and the Care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure 1991, both of which have statutory force, require each Diocese to establish a scheme for the inspection of every church at least once every five years. Over the years Commissions of General Synod and Working Parties of the Council for the Care of Churches have made recommendations on the establishment of Diocesan Schemes, the selection and terms of appointment of the inspectors, and the scope, form and content of the reports. The current recommendations are contained in 'A GUIDE TO CHURCH INSPECTION AND REPAIR', Second Edition, 1995, published for the Council for the Care of Churches by Church House Publishing, Church House, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3NZ. The following is intended to conform with those recommendations.

TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

Attention is drawn to the Terms of Appointment of the professional adviser included in Appendix B.

SCOPE OF THE REPORT

A thorough inspection of the structural condition and state of repair of the Church has been made, covering all parts visible from ground and floor levels, readily accessible roofs, galleries or stagings, and where applicable from ladders provided by the PCC. Inaccessible and hidden roofs and valleys are excluded, and ceilings have been examined from floor level only unless otherwise stated.

IT IS EMPHASISED THAT THE INSPECTION HAS BEEN PURELY VISUAL, and parts of the structure which are inaccessible, enclosed or covered such as boarded floors, roof spaces or hidden timbers at the wall heads have not been opened up for inspection (unless otherwise stated in the report). Such woodwork or other parts of the structure which are covered unexposed or inaccessible have not been inspected and therefore it cannot be reported that any such part of the building is free from defect. It is possible that any concrete used in the construction, alteration or repair of the church between 1923 and 1975 contains High Alumina Cement and/or Calcium Chloride additives. No investigation has been carried out to determine whether these substances are actually present and therefore it cannot be reported that such parts of the building are entirely free of risk in this respect. Where concrete of that period is persistently damp the risk of failure becomes significant and the appropriate investigations should be carried out.

Chimney flues were not inspected, nor were inaccessible flat roofs. Manhole covers were not lifted and none of the services, including the drainage, were tested. Damp meters were not used. Unless otherwise stated the inspection was carried out in dry weather, when it was not possible to ascertain whether the rainwater goods or gullies or surface water drains were watertight.

Recommendations for further investigation are included where suspicions have been aroused during the inspection but problems of access or the need for special equipment or opening-up have prevented full exploration. Where it is suggested that some part of the building be kept under observation this is for the attention of a future professional adviser as well as of the Church Council.

FORM OF THE REPORT

This is a general report only, as required by the Inspection of Churches Measure 1955, the Care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure 1991 and the Diocesan Scheme. It follows, in broad terms, the form recommended in 'A GUIDE TO CHURCH INSPECTION AND REPAIR' 1995 (mentioned above) and the requirements of the current Diocesan Scheme.

This report is the COPYRIGHT OF THE PROFESSIONAL ADVISER and is provided to satisfy the statutory requirement for a quinquennial report ONLY. It is confidential to the Church Council, the Diocesan Authorities and their respective professional advisers. It describes defects observed, is NOT A SPECIFICATION for execution of any work and MUST NOT BE USED FOR OBTAINING BUILDERS' ESTIMATES. An indication of likely repairs costs is included, but it must be understood that the scope of repair work is undefined and no measurements have been taken, so the figures are no more than 'educated guesses' and should not be relied upon beyond the purpose of indicating the likely spending commitment to maintain the property to a high standard.

THE CHURCH COUNCIL IS REMINDED THAT IT MUST NOTIFY THE DIOCESAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND/OR OBTAIN A FACULTY BEFORE PUTTING ANY REPAIR WORK IN HAND. In most cases specifications, schedules and descriptions of the proposed repairs will be required. This report is not a substitute for such documents but it may be cited in support as identifying the need for repairs.

One copy of this Report should be kept with the Church Log Book and Records, for future reference. The Architect will send the requisite number of copies direct to the Diocesan Office.

REPORT ON THE 2008 QUINQUENNIAL INSPECTION
of the Parish Church of
S A I N T M I C H A E L A N D A L L A N G E L S
E S H

Diocese of Durham
Archdeaconry of Durham
Deanery of Durham
Historic Buildings Listing: Grade II
Conservation Area: Esh
Civil County: Durham
Ordnance Survey Map Reference: NZ 196 440

Date of Inspection: 8th October 2008

Date of Report: 19th September 2009

Report by CHRISTOPHER DOWNS, B.Arch. R.I.B.A.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Though the church is of medieval origin, and a tablet in the Nave records that it was 'rebuilt' in 1770, it now appears to date almost totally from the 19th/20th centuries. This is the result of major restorations in 1850 (George Pickering - including addition of the Porch, Vestry and bell-cote) and 1906 (Charles Hodgson Fowler) together with alterations to the windows in 1890. Apart from indeterminate areas of general walling (the external plinth seems original) a medieval piscina survives in the south wall of the Chancel and other fragments that may be medieval include the inner jambstones of the south and west windows of the Nave. Monuments within and outside the church confirm antiquity, of the site at least.

The church now consists of Nave and Chancel all under the one roof, South Transept and South Porch adjoining the Nave, and Vestry on the north side of the Chancel. A small stone bell-cote surmounts the west gable. The prevalent style is fairly nondescript Gothic revival but one of the restoration architects enjoyed something of a flourish when it came to the chimney stacks.

Roofs are covered with green Lake District slating, with the exception of the sandstone slates on the Porch, and the walls are of local yellow-buff sandstone. Internally, the walls are plastered and the faceted ceilings are timber boarded with moulded or chamfered ribs.

A phased plan of the church prepared by Peter Ryder for his archaeological assessment in 2004 (copyright: Durham Diocesan Board of Finance) is reproduced on the buff-coloured sheet following the 'Summary and Priorities' section of this report.

PREVIOUS INSPECTIONS AND RECENT REPAIRS

This is the fourth time the present writer has reported on this church. As well as those written in 1989, 1994 and 2002, previous reports dated 1957 (Eltringham & Lowes), 1962 (G.E. Charlewood), 1968, 1978 and 1984 (all Ian Curry) were available on the architect's file for reference in compiling the present one. These previous reports form a valuable record of the condition of the building and of the work carried out over the past fifty years and all surviving copies should be kept. The 2004 archaeological assessment by Peter Ryder has also been studied, and the foregoing brief description of the building revised in accordance with his findings.

Repairs and works carried out since the last inspection have included:

Re-slating of Porch roof (2005) and treatment of its timbers for woodworm.

Various minor repairs to roof coverings, gutters and downpipes.

Checking and making safe of headstones in churchyard (by Local Authority).

Checking and safety work on churchyard trees (by Local Authority).

Repairs to boundary walls (by Local Authority).

Testing of electrical installation (2007).

Patching of internal decoration.

At the time of the inspection urgent consideration was being given to replacement of the failing electrical night storage heating system, and concerns over the organ and its blower were also being followed up.

LIMITATIONS OF THE SURVEY

a) Attention is drawn to the recommendations of the **Preamble** to this report, and to the **General and Technical notes** given in **Appendix `B'**.

b) The following inaccessible parts were not included in the inspection:-

i) Voids below the suspended timber floors and pew platforms.

ii) Roof voids above Nave, Chancel and Transept ceilings.

iii) Interior of the Organ.

iv) Ceilings were examined internally from floor levels and roofs externally from ground levels.

c) The Architect's detailed inspection notes are given in the following appendix, with descriptions of various parts of the building where appropriate, and comments on the condition of the fabric. These notes are an important part of the report, and should be read by the Parish (PCC officers, etc.), for the appraisal, recommendations and priorities in this report have been prepared from them. They are not a specification for repairs, and are unsuitable for obtaining builders' estimates. When the PCC is ready to proceed with any part of the recommended repairs, it is

advised to contact the professional adviser for recommendations as to the appropriate course of action and ask him to prepare any necessary specifications and schedules.

APPRAISAL AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following remarks inevitably concentrate on the defects noted during the inspection but it must be emphasised at the outset that the church is in reasonable condition generally, and this report is intended to help direct the efforts of those responsible towards an orderly programme for the work needed in the foreseeable future.

A) STRUCTURAL CONDITION OF THE FABRIC:

Some slight movement has continued in one or two of the structural crackings noted in previous inspections, but nothing of significance so they should simply be reviewed in future inspections (detailed observations are included in the appended inspection notes to assist in this). This includes the distortions in the east gable of the Chancel and the roof of the bell-cote. The crackings most likely to prove active appear to be those where the projecting buttresses abut the north-east corner of the Chancel, including that at the junction of the east wall of the Vestry with the Chancel above the north buttress.

Relatively minor crackings of little structural significance include those rising beside the southern jamb of the west window of the Nave, above the buttress at the west end of the south wall of the Nave, beside and above the buttress at the south end of the west wall of the Transept, in and around the window in the east wall of the Transept, in the head of the door in the west wall of the Vestry and beside the westernmost buttress on the north side of the Nave. These should merely be reviewed in future inspections.

As recorded in 2002, the crackings around the northern footstone of the west gable of the Nave are associated with signs of slippage of the lower two stones of the watertabling and these could do with re-bedding before long, possibly with some stainless steel ties or dowels to restrain the tendency to slide. The stability of the cross on the apex of the east gable of the Chancel should also be checked, if not done since the last inspection.

The walls of the former Heating Chamber under the west end of the Nave are still in a state of gradual collapse due to loss of the bedding mortar, and compression of the masonry under the bearings of the steel beams supporting the Nave floor is likely to be the cause of the unevenness of the paving, along with expansion of the beams themselves as they rust. As recommended in the last report, these walls need general filling and pointing of the joints, and some limited sections will probably need rebuilding. The steel beams should be painted to inhibit the rust. Similarly, the brick vault to the underground fuel store outside the west gable needs filling of open joints and replacement of a couple of missing bricks as a precaution against eventual collapse, and the cast iron manhole cover over the hatch in this vault also needs painting.

The woodworm attack on the boarding of the Porch roof is understood to have been treated when this roof was re-slatted in 2005. As suggested in 2002, it would be worth having the main roof voids inspected for signs of woodworm activity whenever access is next gained for other purposes.

B) WALLS AND MASONRY:

The walls are of sandstone rubble, with ashlar dressings to window surrounds, etc., and are plastered internally. Externally, the general walling remains in fair condition overall, showing widespread but merely superficial erosion coupled with deep hollowing-out of a few stones in isolated exposed areas and in low-level walling affected by rising damp. Even in these areas there seems no need for any renewals in the foreseeable future. Also, as noted in previous inspections, rising damp is affecting the dressed stone surrounds of several architectural elements, notably the bottom jambstones of the Vestry door and of the doorway from the Porch into the Church. Nothing can be done to preserve them now that they are so far gone but though renewal will become necessary eventually there is no need for action in the next five years. The cement facing-up that was applied to parts of the jambs of the internal and external archways of the Porch between 1994 and the year 2000 is not only visually disfiguring but also technically dubious, in that it will serve simply to drive the dampness further up the masonry, exacerbate deterioration of the stones themselves and in due course loosen and fall off. The erosion of the cap and lower part of the eastern nookshaft of the external archway of the Porch is also too far advanced to warrant any attempt to save the stones, and renewal is likely to prove necessary in the future. As commented in the last report, the delamination of the large face-bedded stones forming the arch of this outer doorway is not structurally serious but the loose plates of stone should be carefully removed to avert the possibility of injury to persons or pride. The same applies to some of the stonework of the roll moulding and the hoodmould to the outer order of this archway and to the western footstone of the Porch gable. Internally, the walling above this entrance door shows quite pronounced surface erosion, which should slow down if not cease altogether now that the roof has been re-slatted. In the meantime, the powdering surfaces should be brushed down to remove any loose fragments of stone.

The pointing, though of variable age and quality, remains sound for the most part. The re-pointing carried out under a Manpower Services Commission scheme in 1987, notably on the Vestry, has toned down well. The same cannot be said of the more recent re-pointing to the upper part of the west wall of the Vestry, which has been applied messily and not brushed off on completion - an example of how to re-point badly. The bell-cote was re-pointed at the time the bell was re-hung, in 1997/8. However, none of the areas identified for re-pointing in the last report appear to have been tackled, so the list remains much as it was in 2002: The apex of the east gable of the Chancel, joints between and underneath the watertablings of the west gable of the Nave, the south gable of the Porch, east gable of the Vestry and possibly the east gable of the Chancel, joints in the buttresses on the Porch, a patch just north of the top of the rainwater pipe on the east wall of the Transept, and joints in the plinths of this wall,

the south wall of the Chancel and west walls of the Vestry and Porch. Some of the joints in the tracery of the east window of the Chancel also need filling where structural movement has caused them to ease open - these could sensibly be attended to when the wire guard to the glazing is dealt with. In addition, a few isolated honeycombed or hollowed-out stones on the south wall of the Nave need some careful mortar filling to try and preserve them for as long as possible.

As noted in previous reports, several of the window surrounds show erosion internally, as is not uncommon, and in some cases the lower parts of the mullions are particularly badly affected. In addition, that to the west window of the Nave is splitting at its base. However, though the need for eventual repair or renewal should be borne in mind, no action need be taken on this for the time being other than possibly easing off the loose laminations of stone from the mullions of the worst affected windows in the north wall of the Nave. Loose fragments also need easing off from some of the stones forming the arch into the Transept. More urgent, perhaps, is the need to bring down safely what appear to be substantial loose fragments from the delaminating springer stone on the south side of the inner arch of the east window in the Chancel. The outer surround of this window appears to have been painted or slurried over at some time in the past and this coating is now peeling off, giving a most unfortunate appearance. If and when funds permit it would be worth having this stonework cleaned down properly.

The rising and penetrating damp in the South Transept noted in the last four reports continues to spoil the plaster and decoration in this area, as well as causing wasting of the stone pillars supporting the medieval effigy of a lady. It appears that some of the alleviating measures suggested in the last two reports have yet to be adopted, so these recommendations still stand: The relative levels of internal floor and external ground should be checked and the latter reduced if necessary; ventilation to the void under the pew platform in the South Transept should be generously improved; drainage from the gully beside the east wall should be checked, as also should the capping to the disused chimney at the south-east corner of the Transept. In addition, the back-gutter behind this stack should be checked and the rainwater pipe on the external face of this wall should be repaired or replaced where it is leaking and its shoe or the gully should be adjusted to ensure that all the water from the pipe is collected. If all else fails, some form of barrier or 'air drain' could perhaps be formed against the outside face of the walls. The affected plaster and decoration will have to be renewed in due course and it is important that lime plaster and a porous paint - such as limewash - should be used. This plaster will allow the wall to breathe and, ultimately, will act sacrificially by absorbing the soluble salts that are causing the damage and then dropping off, taking the salts with it.

Rising damp is also affecting the lower parts of the walls at the west end of the Nave, and whilst similar alleviating measures should be considered here, again the damage is perhaps best managed by re-plastering with lime-based materials to act sacrificially.

C) ROOF COVERINGS AND RAINWATER DISPOSAL:

The Porch roof, covered with sandstone 'slates', was stripped and re-covered in 2005 following the recommendation of the last quinquennial report. At the time of this inspection it was in good order except that the mortar fillets at the abutment with the south gable were cracking away. Leakage here is likely to cause the accelerated erosion of the stonework internally to continue so action is needed but rather than renewing the fillets it would be worth trying simply sealing the cracks.

All the other roofs of the church are covered with green Lake District slates laid in diminishing courses. Their general condition appears to remain satisfactory despite minor surface delamination showing on some of them. Routine repairs have been carried out since the last inspection and at the time of this one the only problem noted was slippage of a slate alongside the raking valley on the east slope of the Transept roof.

The stone ridging on the Nave roof is delaminating in several places and at the time of the inspection one substantial section had slipped out and lodged in the gutter on the south side of the Nave. This should be removed, if not done already, and the ridge should be patched with mortar to keep it going for the time being. In due course, when the roof comes to be re-slatted, the ridging may have to be renewed entirely.

The lead lining to the raking valley where the west slope of the Transept roof meets that of the Nave was renewed prior to the last inspection, and that where the eastern slope runs in was patched with new lead. Both seem to be satisfactory. However, the back-gutter behind the chimney stack on the east side of the Transept should be cleared and checked as soon as possible, as it is likely to be contributing to the dampness evident internally. Both this and that behind the Vestry stack, neither of which can be seen from ground level, should be checked regularly, at the same time as the eaves gutters.

The lead flashings where the Nave roof meets the west gable upstand and bell-cote, where the Transept roof meets its south gable upstand and where the Chancel roof meets its east gable appear to be in satisfactory condition for the most part although, as commented in the last report, all seem to give very little cover and may admit water from time to time. The soakers between the slates cannot be seen so their condition cannot be confirmed. One of the triangular lengths of flashing on the bell-cote where the south slope of the Nave roof runs in appears to have fallen out due to erosion of the stonework behind and this should be re-fixed. At the same time the loose pointing to the leadwork at the east gable upstand of the Vestry roof should be raked out and renewed.

Water running off the flat stone watertabling of the east gable of the Vestry is causing saturation of the wall beneath, towards the north end, and as recommended in previous reports consideration should be given to cutting grooves diagonally across the watertabling at

a couple of points in the traditional way to direct water across onto the roof side of the gable upstand.

Those on the Porch were attended to when the roof was re-slatted, but all the rest of the cast iron guttering and downpipes on the church need overhaul and repainting within the next year - apart from the guttering on the north side of the Vestry which appears too far gone and will have to be replaced. Although it appears serviceable seen from ground level, closer inspection may reveal that the guttering to the north side of the main Nave/Chancel roof is also too badly corroded to be worth overhauling. As part of the overhaul the gutter joints should be cleaned out and re-sealed, and in preparation for it any minor repairs or renewals should be carried out. In particular, the cracked upper length of the easternmost downpipe on the north side of the Nave needs bandaging and the downpipe on the east side of the Transept needs re-checking as there are still signs that it is spilling water down the wall. When the associated guttering is renewed the back of the downpipe on the north side of the Vestry should be checked at plinth level where it runs too close to the wall to be painted.

The gully at the foot of the downpipe on the south side of the Chancel is shattered and needs replacement.

All the gutters, downpipes and gullies around the church should be checked and cleared out regularly - twice a year is the usual recommendation. Weeds growing in the gutters at the time of the inspection suggest that this routine task has been neglected.

D) WINDOWS AND DOORS:

Most of the windows in the main body of the church are filled with stained glass, dating from the 19th or 20th centuries - that in the south window of the Chancel being a particularly fine example. Most appears to remain in reasonable condition for its age. The south window of the Nave, which shows bowing in its lower panels, does not seem appreciably worse now than in the last two inspections and the same goes for the south window of the Transept, where daylight shows in places between the glass and leading. It is likely that the external overglazing on these windows is helping to preserve them.

The west window of the Nave still has the perished galvanized wire guard mentioned in the last two reports. This is now so far gone that it affords no protection to the glass, which has unfortunately been damaged since the last inspection. The stained glass should be repaired by a specialist and the guard should be replaced as a matter of high priority, either with polycarbonate sheeting or (preferably) a new black coated stainless steel grille.

The east window of the Chancel has sheet glass protection close in to the stained glass, and then a wire guard which has been set on the outer wall face, obscuring the form of the window. The overglazing is cracked in places, its iron saddlebars and the outer wire guard are

rusting badly - now rather worse than reported in 2002 - and the fixings down the south side of the guard are loose. This disfiguring form of protection should be replaced with stainless steel wire grilles or polycarbonate overglazing.

The uncoloured diamond-leded glazing in the easternmost window on the north side of the Nave and east window of the Transept remains in fair condition. As mentioned in the last two reports, the iron ring linking the cusps in the glazing of the small quatrefoil window in the west face of the Porch is rusting badly and needs treating and painting to inhibit this. The plain glazing in the Vestry windows is in satisfactory condition but the putty to the north-facing one is beginning to fail.

The ironwork on the outer entrance door of the Porch has clearly been repainted since the last inspection, but the split weathermould on the external door to the Vestry still needs renewal.

The outer gate to the Vestry door could do with some means to secure it shut, though for safety's sake both the door and the gate should be openable from inside when the building is occupied in case of emergency. This gate needs painting to inhibit the rust that is taking hold, as also does the iron gate leaning against the adjacent wall which appears to be from the main entrance portal, all as recommended in the last report.

E) FLOORS AND INTERNAL FITTINGS AND FINISHES:

Seen from above the suspended timber floors to the Chancel and Vestry and pew platforms in the Nave and Transept appear to remain in good order. The underfloor voids in general have not been re-examined on this occasion, but seen from the duct running east from the former Heating Chamber the old decay in the joists of the southern pew platform in the Nave appears to remain dormant. The timbers seem dry and stable at present and apparently retain sufficient strength for their purpose. However, the possibility of failure due to excessive loading or a renewal of the attack should be borne in mind. As commented in the last report, there is a clear risk of decay in all the timber flooring, due to inadequate ventilation of the sub-floor voids, with that in the Transept particularly vulnerable on account of the dampness in the surrounding walls. Rentokil Ltd. reported on the floors of the church in 1967, the 1978 quinquennial report made further recommendations for their repair, and the 1984 report mentions that repairs and woodworm treatment had been carried out. This points to a history of trouble and the floors should continue to be kept under observation. Any opportunity which arises in the course of work on the installations should be taken to check on the condition of the timbers in the underfloor voids.

Unevenness of the woodblock flooring at the east and west ends of the Nave has been mentioned in previous reports, and the structural defects in the Heating Chamber mentioned above account for that at the west end. There may be old underfloor ducts at the east end also.

Virtually all the wooden lumber previously stored in the damp subterranean Heating Chamber has been cleared out but a couple of remaining items should also be removed. The access hatch to this chamber, in the floor at the west end of the Nave, needs easing and repair.

The last comprehensive redecoration of the interior of the church was that carried out under the Manpower Services Commission scheme in 1987, although much patching and touching-up has been carried out since then, including the south and east walls of the Chancel and east wall of the Transept. Apart from these, several areas show the effects of dampness or await re-decoration following plaster repairs, and the remaining older decoration now needs renewal - including the ceilings. As well as the obvious patches of damp penetration, mould spotting due to condensation shows on the walls and ceiling panels in several areas, indicating a general problem arising from the inadequacies of the heating system. The mould can be controlled to some extent by washing the affected areas down with a mild solution of bleach, but is unlikely to be cured altogether without resolution of the heating issue. Once this and the other causes of excessive dampness have been dealt with and the walls given time to dry out it would be worth considering general re-decoration. Some further plaster renewal will be needed in preparation for this, particularly around the bases of the walls where affected by rising damp, as mentioned under 'Walls and Masonry' above. The minor crackings caused by the slight structural movements in the building should simply be filled with decorators' cellulose filler prior to painting.

The various furnishings and fittings throughout the church appear to be in good order, but as mentioned in previous reports the dado panelling is at risk of decay where the walling behind is damp, particularly in the Transept. The area of panelling showing worrying discolouration in the year 2000 could not be re-examined on this present occasion, having been buried under stored carpet rolls which will increase the risk considerably. This area should be re-exposed and checked as soon as possible.

F) INSTALLATIONS:

The **electrical** installation is reported to have been tested and checked in 2007/8 and minor repairs were carried out afterwards. No adverse comment has been passed to the writer, with the exception of the problems identified with heating units and the organ blower. The incoming supply is believed to have been renewed prior to the 1994 inspection, probably at the time that the Redring 'Sunstore' night storage electrical heating units were installed in 1993. As noted in the last report, these heaters are not only visually obtrusive but also inadequate to heat the building - even when they were all working. All but one of the units have now failed, and at the time of this inspection urgent consideration was being given to renewing the heating in some alternative form.

Previous reports record that the lighting circuits (serving simple attractive brass chandeliers) were rewired between 1978 and 1984, and it is believed that Northern Electric renewed the power circuits in the course of replacing the heating system.

The **lightning conductor** installation is due for re-testing around now, and this is perhaps best done by a steeplejack who could check the bell-cote, bell, etc., at the same time.

The **organ**, by Nelson & Company of Durham, remains in intermittent use and is believed to be in reasonable condition. However, at the time of the inspection it was awaiting a visit from the organ tuners, Harrison & Harrison of Durham, to attend to various problems that have become apparent and report on its general condition.

The organ blower motor is understood to be a fire risk and at the time of the inspection consideration was being given to having it replaced.

The single **bell** is of historic interest, having been cast by C. Hodgson in 1695. It bears the inscription 'Maria Gratias'. It was re-hung with new bearings and fittings in 1997/8 so should be in good order but it would be worth having it checked over by the steeplejack when the lightning conductor system is tested.

The church is equipped with an adequate number of **fire extinguishers**, which are serviced annually by Chubb's. Their contract in proving somewhat expensive and consideration is being given to changing to another firm.

G) MONUMENTS:

A sandstone effigy of a lady, dating from around 1300, is mounted on a later sandstone table against the south wall of the Transept. Though the pillars supporting her table are suffering severe erosion the lady herself seems to be out of harm's way, though she has been very crudely 'restored' with mortar patchings at some time in the past. The rate of erosion of the pillars could not be re-assessed on the present occasion due to the pews stored in front. On the sill of the east window in the Transept rests the headless sandstone effigy of a chrisom child. This too seems to be in sound condition. There are a few wall-mounted tablets in the church, all apparently satisfactory. All this is as reported in 2002.

The ancient sundial on the south wall of the Transept has lost both its iron nomen and the incised carving of the dial itself, leaving it totally illegible and effectively beyond restoration.

H) CHURCHYARD:

This contains a large number of headstones, some dating from the 18th century. As reported in previous inspections some of these are leaning quite alarmingly but all have been checked for stability by the Local Authority and any found to be unsafe have been dealt with - apparently by laying them down flat.

There are several mature trees within the churchyard, and these should be checked over by a specialist at least once every five years - particularly those on road frontages. Any pruning would have to be approved by the Local Authority as the churchyard lies within a Conservation Area. Some pruning has been carried out since the last inspection to keep tree branches clear of the overhead electrical supply cables.

The north-east entrance gate was renewed prior to the last inspection and the approach path from it to the Porch was re-surfaced with tarmac. The remaining paths are of loose gravel, generally satisfactory although not wheelchair-friendly.

As commented in 2002, one of the iron gates at the main vehicular entrance scrapes on the ground when opened, due to leaning of its supporting post. In view of the size of this stone gatepost it is difficult to see how this might be corrected without disproportionate expense, although it might be possible to re-hang the gate with some form of cranked hinge or pivot. This pair of gates needs repainting to inhibit the rust that is taking hold. Shifting of the gateposts is also the underlying cause of the difficulty in closing the southern entrance gate.

As mentioned in the last two reports, loose and bulging sections of the dry-stone and mortar-pointed walls marking all the boundaries need attention, particularly along the northern boundary which retains the churchyard soil some height above the adjacent roadway. Here there are at least two sections, disrupted by adjacent trees, which need rebuilding. Sections of the western and eastern boundary walls could also do with consolidation.

The derelict - apparently relatively modern - artificial stone walled and concrete-roofed shed in the south-eastern corner of the churchyard should be barricaded off or demolished to prevent it become a haunt - and hazard - for children.

SUMMARY AND PRIORITIES

The church is basically sound and well looked after, with some good work having been done since the last inspection despite limited resources.

The main areas for concern now are the failure of the heating system and the persistent dampness from various sources.

Most of the other recommendations of this report comprise little more than routine maintenance. The following order of priorities sets out, in broad terms, the relative urgency of foreseeable repairs over the next five years. However, it is not a definitive programme of work and items further down the list could be brought forward if desired.

An indication of the range of likely cost, at present-day prices, is shown for each priority category. However, in many cases the scope of repair work is undefined and no measurements have been taken. The figures are no more than 'educated guesses' and should not be relied upon beyond the purpose of indicating the likely spending commitment to maintain the property to a high standard. V.A.T. is not included but is likely to be incurred on all repair work. No allowance has been made for inflation or for any professional fees.

I. OF UTMOST URGENCY:

None required.

II. ESSENTIAL within the next SIX MONTHS:

- a) Minor repairs to roof slating, mortar fillets, ridge pointing, flashings, etc; checking stability of east gable cross.
- b) Clearing and checking of gutters, downpipes and gullies (repeat every six months).
- c) Implementation of measures to alleviate damp in Transept and west end of the Nave.
- d) Removal of loose plates of stone from entrance archway, window surrounds, etc.
- e) Renewal of heating system.
- f) Consideration of replacement of organ blower motor; consideration of any recommendations arising from the organ builder's report.
- g) Checking of dado panelling and of pillars supporting effigy in Transept, where stored lumber prevented examination during the general inspection.

(Range of likely cost: £12,500 - £20,000)

III. ESSENTIAL within the next YEAR:

- h) Repair, overhaul and repainting of rainwater gutters and downpipes; renewal of guttering on north side of Vestry and of shattered gully on south side of Chancel.

- i) Painting, possible reinstatement and securing of gates to Vestry and Porch external doorways; repainting of north-west churchyard entrance gates; renewal of weathermould on Vestry door.
- j) Repair of damaged stained glass (by specialist); replacement of perished or unsatisfactory window guards; painting of ironwork of Porch window.
- k) Easing and repair of access hatch to Heating Chamber, in floor at west end of the Nave.
- l) Testing and checking of lightning conductor and bell installations.

(Range of likely cost: £5,000 - £7,500)

IV. NECESSARY within the next TWO YEARS:

- m) Consolidation of brickwork of underground Heating Chamber and Fuel Store; painting of rusting iron joists supporting Nave floor over Heating Chamber and of manhole cover over Fuel Store.
- n) Cutting of grooves in watertabling of east gable of Vestry.
- o) Renewal of damp-damaged plaster, using lime-based plaster materials.
- p) Repairs to churchyard boundary walls; barricading or demolition of redundant shed.

(Range of likely cost: £1,000 - £1,500 (excluding work in churchyard))

V. NECESSARY within the next FIVE YEARS:

- q) Re-pointing of specified areas of external masonry; re-bedding of watertabling stones at northern foot of west gable of Nave.
- r) Inspection of roof voids if access is provided for other purposes; keeping timber floors under observation.
- s) Internal redecoration.
- t) Checking of churchyard trees by specialist.

(Range of likely cost: £2,500 - £4,000 excluding work in churchyard)

VI. FUTURE Repairs:

- u) Review of structural crackings and distortions.
- v) Review of eroding stonework; replacement of severely eroded or delaminated elements.
- w) Review of bowed, buckled or separating glazing.

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CHARTERED ARCHITECT

QUINQUENNIAL REPORT

on the Parish Church of

SAINT MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS

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UNDER THE INSPECTION OF CHURCHES MEASURE 1955 AND
THE CARE OF CHURCHES AND ECCLESIASTICAL JURISDICTION MEASURE 1991

DATE OF REPORT	19TH SEPTEMBER 2009
DIOCESE	DURHAM
ARCHDEACONRY	DURHAM
DEANERY	DURHAM

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