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QUINQUENNIAL REPORT

INSPECTION OF CHURCHES MEASURE 1955

CARE OF CHURCHES AND ECCLESIASTICAL JURISDICTION MEASURE 1991

CONTENTS:

PREAMBLE	to the Quinquennial Report on the Church: Introduction; Terms of Appointment; Scope of the Report; Form of the Report.	
THE REPORT	Brief Description of the Church.	Page 1
	Previous Inspections and recent repairs.	Page 2
	Limitations of the Survey.	Page 2
	Appraisal and Recommendations.	Page 3
	Summary and Priorities :-	Page 9
	i. Of Utmost Urgency.	
	ii. Essential within the next Six Months.	
	iii. Essential within the next Year.	
	iv. Necessary within the next Two Years.	
	v. Necessary within the Quinquennium.	
	vi. Future, i.e. desirable repairs or improvements.	
APPENDIX	Architect's Inspection Notes.	
APPENDIX 'B'	General and Technical Notes.	

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 2010 QUINQUENNIAL INSPECTION
of the Parish Church of
SAINT MARY THE VIRGIN, SHINCLIFFE

Diocese of Durham
Archdeaconry of Durham
Deanery of Durham
Historic Buildings Listing: Grade II
Conservation Area: Shincliffe
Civil County and District: Durham County
Ordnance Survey Map Reference: NZ 291 408

Date of Inspection: 30th July 2010

Date of Report: 30th December 2010

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

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

The main body of the church was erected in 1851 to designs by local architect George Pickering, in a straightforward and rather charming nineteenth-century re-interpretation of the medieval Early English style, and the matching broach-spire was added by architects Walter and Robson in 1870, apparently following Pickering's intentions.

The building has been little altered since the last century and consists of Nave with North Aisle and South Porch, Chancel with Vestry and Organ Chamber abutting its north side, and the prominent square west Tower.

Walls are of sandstone, plastered internally, and the open timber roof structures are covered with Welsh slates.

Copies of Pickering's original 1849 design drawings (slightly amended to show alterations in the course of construction), lodged in the Durham County Records Office, are included on the buff-coloured sheets following the 'Summary and Priorities' section of this report.

PREVIOUS INSPECTIONS AND RECENT REPAIRS

This is the third time the present writer has reported on this church. In addition to those issued in 1998 and 2004 a copy of the 1992 report by C.E. Dowse of Shincliffe was available on the architect's file for reference in compiling the present one. No other previous reports have been consulted but, where they survive, they should form a valuable record of the condition of the building and of the work carried out over the past fifty years and should be kept.

Repairs and works since the last inspection have included:

Minor roof repairs (various times).

Repair of eastern boundary wall of churchyard (2004).

Installation of sound reinforcement and induction loop system (2004).

Removal of Privet hedge bounding path to church entrance (2004).

Stabilisation of unsafe headstones in churchyard (2004).

Painting of gutters, downpipes and gates (2004).

Repair of oak panelling affected by rot (2005).

Removal of asbestos from organ blower box (2006).

Re-pointing of walls in Belfry (2007).

Path raised to eliminate step and puddle at church entrance (2009).

Re-painting of bell frame fittings, etc. (2009).

Re-painting of noticeboards (2010).

Sink unit and water heater in Choir Vestry replaced (2010).

Testing of portable electrical appliances (2009) and fire extinguishers (annually).

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) Interior of the Spire.
 - iii) Any concealed roof voids.
 - iv) Interior of the Organ.
 - v) Roofs were examined internally from floor levels and 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 good condition overall, with a great deal of excellent work having been done over recent years. 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:

As commented in previous reports, the building has evidently suffered minor settlement in the past, leaving a hint of cracking through the apex joint of the easternmost arch of the arcade, a crack through the lintel of the door at the base of the south side of the Tower and one through the sill of the westernmost lancet on the south side of the Nave; easings rising from the tops of the windows in the south walls of the Nave and Chancel and cracking around the southern footstone of the east gable of the Chancel. As noted in 2004, none of these appear to be active and they should merely be reviewed again in future inspections.

The iron tie-bar underneath the uppermost floor in the Tower could do with painting to inhibit rust.

B) WALLS AND MASONRY:

The yellow-buff sandstone of the external walls is, typically of the local stones, fairly prone to erosion where saturated or unduly exposed. As recorded in previous reports, on the whole it is weathering well on this particular building. The masonry work carried out in 1996 coupled with the re-pointing of the spire in 2002 completed a general campaign of repair and re-pointing carried out over a period of some twenty five years. Some limited re-pointing may become necessary in the foreseeable future on the ground floor stage of the south face of the Tower, and a void under the apex of the west gable of the North Aisle needs filling.

As noted in the last two reports, a few stones are weathering more rapidly and, though none have reached the stage where any action need be taken for at least the next five years, they should continue to be reviewed in future inspections. They include:

Head of north and sill of south window in ground floor stage of the Tower internally.

Head of external door within Vestry.

Jambs, nookshafts and eastern sweep of the arch of the external door of the Porch.

Arch to Belfry opening in north face of the Tower, in arcaded cornice at the base of the spire all round, and in walling of Ringing Chamber stage of south face.

A stone in the east gable of the Nave behind the southern footstone.

A couple of stones at the apex of the east gable of the Chancel.

Quite deep erosion of the masonry of the eastern internal wall face of the Belfry caused some of the pointing to loosen so, as recommended in the last report, the affected areas have been re-pointed with a soft lime-based mortar which will act sacrificially to slow down the rate of deterioration.

The gable peakstone of the South Porch, which carries the base of the gable cross, is cracked through on its east and west sides - probably by rusting of an iron dowel built into the stonework to secure the cross itself. As reported in 2004, this has been checked for security and the crack filled; all seems to remain sound for the present.

Dampness has caused quite noticeable erosion of the stone rere-arch to the window in the west wall of the Porch and it would be worth bringing down the resulting loose flakes of stone for safety.

The upper part of the brickwork forming the west side of the former fuel store in the Heating Chamber is rather open-jointed and could do with some re-pointing within the next five years, as recommended in the last two reports.

C) ROOF COVERINGS AND RAINWATER DISPOSAL:

All the roofs of the church are covered with Welsh slating, which appears to remain in serviceable condition overall, having been attended to from time to time over the last five years. At the time of the inspection further routine repairs were needed, comprising replacement of isolated slipped, missing or broken slates - virtually all slopes need some attention but particularly the south slope of the Nave roof and both slopes of the Porch.

The pointing to the stone ridging needs patching in a few limited places but appears to remain sound for the most part. Some of the abutments of the roof slopes with the gable upstands, etc., are weatherproofed with mortar fillets; others with leadwork. There seem to be continuing problems with the abutments of both slopes of the Nave roof with its east gable, causing dampness in the walling above the Chancel arch, and with the abutments of the Chancel roof slopes with its east gable - causing damage internally above the east window. The mortar fillets in all these locations are cracking away and it would be sensible to remove them altogether, check and if necessary renew or install lead soakers laced in with the slating turned up against the watertablings and then re-form mortar fillets over the top of these - on expanded metal lathing if necessary. The lower part of the fillet where the north slope of the Nave roof meets the west gable upstand also appears to be cracking away and needs sealing or renewing (as recommended in 2004) - it is just possible that slight water seepage here is encouraging the condensation and mould growth visible internally. Other abutments where the mortar fillets simply need patching, sealing or renewal include those where the Porch roof meets its south gable.

Some of the triangular lead flashings, together with the soakers, have been stolen from the lower part of the abutment of the west slope of the Porch roof with the Nave wall. These should be reinstated (if not already dealt with) and then perhaps all the leadwork at this abutment painted over with anti-climb paint to prevent further attempts. Similarly, the leadwork at the abutment of the Vestry roof with the east wall of the Organ Chamber appears to have been disturbed by would-be thieves at its bottom end and needs re-fixing and re-dressing. It would be worth painting this with anti-climb paint too.

The cast iron eaves guttering and downpipes appear to be in serviceable condition for the most part, and have been repainted since the last inspection. However, a few minor defects remain to be attended to and some elements will need repainting again in the next couple of years:

Bottom section of downpipe immediately west of the Porch cracked but probably repairable by bandaging. Its lower parts need repainting.

Guttering on north side of Chancel, running above Vestry roof, needs repainting.

Guttering on north side of Vestry needs repainting and detailed investigation of cause of rainwater spillage down the wall below - possibly missing undercloak slates or a poor relationship between the guttering and the tails of the eaves course of slates.

North side of Organ Chamber: Shoe of downpipe needs repainting.

North side of North Aisle: Gutter outlets have no drop pipes into the hopper heads which are some distance below, so water could be blown back onto the walling, thus causing the green staining which is evident. Water staining at west end possibly due to missing undercloak slates or poor relationship between gutter and eaves slating - needing investigation as this has been mentioned in two previous reports.

At the time of the inspection weeds were seen growing in some of the gutters. All guttering, downpipes and gullies should be checked and cleared twice a year - particularly important given the proximity of so many trees.

D) WINDOWS AND DOORS:

As noted in previous reports, the church contains a number of attractive stained glass windows ranging in date from the mid-nineteenth century (the firm of Millican, Baguley and Atkinson of Newcastle being well represented) up to our own time. Some of the earlier examples appear to be in a curiously amateur style which seems to be the result of thorough but inept restoration. Most remain in a satisfactory state but, as commented in the last two reports, the nineteenth-century glass in the east window of the Chancel is in quite poor condition so could do with restoration in the foreseeable future - preferably within the next five years - despite the relief afforded by the polycarbonate overglazing. The clear glazing forming the background in the double-lancet window at the east end of the south wall of the

Nave is quite badly buckled but appears much the same now as seen in 2003 so no action is needed for the time being other than replacement of the single broken quarry.

The windows in the various stages of the Tower have zinc glazing bars in a diamond lattice pattern. Those in the Ringing Chamber having been restored since the last inspection, all are now in satisfactory condition although those at ground floor level could do with cleaning. The uncoloured leaded glazing in the Vestry window is in relatively poor condition and could do with cleaning and overhaul, as suggested in 2004.

The external doors to the Porch, Vestry and Tower could do with repainting within the next few months and the unsightly torn strip of hazard warning tape showing under the latter should be removed. The louvre vent to the fuel store should be painted at the same time.

E) FLOORS AND INTERNAL FITTINGS AND FINISHES:

The flooring in the main body of the church is of suspended timber construction to the present and former pew areas, and carpeting on a solid base to the passageways. Fungal decay nurtured by moisture build-up following laying of carpet tiles with an impervious backing caused a section of the floor in the south-west corner of the Nave to collapse in 1996. The affected area was renewed and adjacent areas treated with fungicide and there are no signs of any further trouble - the main area of carpet tiles having been removed permanently. The floor sealer may need renewal where it is wearing off the timber boarding.

The oak dado panelling on the south wall of the Nave to the west of the door has been re-fixed since 2004. However, in the course of this inspection what may be frass from woodworm activity was seen on the floor beneath the panelling in the south-west corner. Nothing is apparent on the visible face but an attack may be taking place up the back and this should be kept under observation - if more such dust appears some investigation and treatment may be needed.

The suspended timber floor of the Vestry appears to be at risk of decay, being covered with impervious carpet tiles and lacking any visible form of ventilation, but there is no sign of trouble so it should merely be kept under observation.

The Chancel flooring, of mosaic and marble finishes on a solid base, seems to be in good order generally but there is just a hint of break-up along the edges where the mosaic meets the choir stalls. Similar mosaic around the Font at the west end of the Nave has been repaired along its eastern edge since the last inspection.

The stone paved flooring in the Tower (Choir Vestry) has been exposed by removal of the overall carpeting and at the time of the inspection was being left to dry out. Some filling is needed to even out the worst of the irregularities and erosion hollows, for safety.

The South Porch also has stone paving, in fair condition and the doormat has been replaced with a wheelchair-friendly alternative as recommended in the last report. This complements the raising of the external path to overcome the step at the entrance doorway (incidentally eliminating the long-standing puddle at this point at the same time).

The decoration throughout the building appears to be that seen in 2004. It remains satisfactory for the most part except where affected by past or current dampness, notably at high level on the east and west walls of the Nave and east wall of the Chancel. Making-good is desirable once the causes of the dampness have been eliminated and the walling given time to dry out.

Furnishings and fittings appear to remain in excellent condition generally.

In the course of the inspection one of the pull handles at the top of the access ladder to the Belfry, fixed to the Belfry floor timberwork, came away. Others of these handles are loose. As an insecure handle is probably more dangerous than none at all these should be re-fixed securely. Those at the top of the ladder up from the lower stage seem much better.

F) INSTALLATIONS:

The **electrical** installation (renewed following the 1980 fire) appears to be wired in M.I.C.C. cable throughout, and on visual inspection seems to be in fair condition overall. At the time of this fabric inspection it was booked in for re-testing but the results have not been passed to the writer. Any safety recommendations should be implemented promptly.

Lighting in the main body of the church comprises a 'mixed' system of attractive Victorian Gothic style suspension ring fittings supplemented by high-level indoor floodlights.

As noted in the last report, lighting in the ground floor stage of the Tower is by a single powerful tungsten-halogen floodlight mounted above the apex of the archway through into the Nave, in a very awkward place for lamp-changing which probably contravenes health & safety rules. Consideration should be given to replacing this with two or more fittings at a lower level, where they would be safer to maintain and probably more effective. In the same area, the light switches are mounted at high level above a cupboard and it would be sensible to have these re-positioned so that they can be reached without standing on a chair.

The fluorescent light fittings in the Ringing Chamber have no diffusers, so the tubes are exposed. Consideration should be given to adding diffusers or changing these fittings for safety.

As suggested in the last two reports, the rather obtrusive galvanized steel trunking carrying cables up and across the east wall of the ground floor stage of the Tower could do with painting out with the wall in the next redecoration of this area.

The portable electric appliances in the building were tested in March 2009.

The **lightning conductor** installation was checked in 2007. The (very neat) protective cappings to the downtapes should be painted to help prevent rust and improve appearance.

The **heating system** (renewed following the 1980 fire) comprises modern hot water pipework and radiators served by a gas-fired boiler in the Heating chamber, all as recorded in previous reports. It is reported to be adequate, and serviced regularly. At the time of the inspection leaves and leaf mould needed clearing from the Heating Chamber floor and steps.

The **organ**, by Harrison & Harrison of Durham, remains in regular use and is reported to be in good order.

The Belfry contains a ring of six **bells**, all cast or re-cast by the Whitechapel Bell Foundry in 1969 and mounted in a modern steel frame. On superficial inspection all appears

to remain in good order, with the metal fittings well painted and all evidently well maintained by the ringing team.

The church is well provided with **fire extinguishers**, serviced annually.

G) CHURCHYARD:

The burial ground immediately surrounding the church is closed and maintained by the Local Authority - now Durham County Council. Before its demise in 2009 Durham City Council took action on the remaining unstable headstones noted previously.

The churchyard contains numerous mature trees and these should be checked over at least once every five years (particularly those along the road frontage) - or such other interval as the Council's own specialists advise.

Path surfaces remain in fair condition overall, the work of raising the path approaching the entrance porch having been done well.

Boundary definition ranges from nothing along the north (main road) frontage, through timber and wire fencings and hedging to brick and stone walling. As commented in 2004, the brick wall along the eastern boundary is leaning quite badly but the presence of buttresses built to restrain it suggests that the problem is of long standing. Some repair work has been carried out in recent years but there is evidence of further movement and cracking now in the two sections at its south end and further action is needed to prevent some form of collapse.

The stone wall forming the east end of the southern boundary has been consolidated in part but remains open-jointed and almost in a state of collapse elsewhere, particularly in its upper courses where partly obscured by vegetation. Again some action is needed within the next couple of years.

The wrought iron churchyard gates needed repainting if they are to be retained.

SUMMARY AND PRIORITIES

The church is basically sound and clearly very well looked after. A lot of good work has been done since the last inspection, implementing most of the recommendations of the last report and continuing the excellent long-term effort of maintaining this attractive building.

The main areas for concern now are the dampness caused by leakages at roof/gable abutments and the need for repeated repairs to the roof coverings. The other major item of expenditure is likely to be the repair of the stained glass in the east window of the Chancel.

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; it is likely to be incurred on all repair work but may be reclaimable from the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme. 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) Routine repairs to roof slating; renewal of mortar fillets (together with underlying soakers if necessary) at roof/gable abutments; patch pointing of ridges; reinstatement and over-painting of disturbed/stolen lead flashings.
- b) Clearing and checking of gutters, downpipes and gullies (repeat every six months).
- c) Bringing down loose flakes of stone from rere-arch of west window in Porch.
- d) Securing of loose grab handles at top of ladder in Ringing Chamber.
- e) Implementation of any safety recommendations arising from testing of electrical installation.
- f) Filling of erosion hollows and irregularities in Tower (Choir Vestry) floor paving.
- g) Sweeping-out of Heating Chamber and its steps.

(Range of likely cost: £2,000 - £4,000)

III. ESSENTIAL within the next YEAR:

- h) Repair and/or repainting of specified elements of guttering and downpipes.
- i) Cleaning of window glazing (but not stained glass).
- j) Repainting of external doors, of louvre vent to Fuel Store and of lightning conductor downtape cappings.

(Range of likely cost: £500 - £750)

IV. NECESSARY within the next TWO YEARS:

- k) Consider renewal of floor sealer where wearing off.
- l) Improvement of lighting and switch positions in ground floor stage of Tower.

(Range of likely cost: £1,000 - £2,000)

V. NECESSARY within the next FIVE YEARS:

- m) Painting of iron tie-bar under upper floor in Tower.
- n) Filling of void under apex of west gable of North Aisle.
- o) Re-pointing of brickwork within former fuel store (now housing gas meter).
- p) Repair/re-leading of stained glass in east window of Chancel and replacement of broken quarry in easternmost window on south side of Nave.
- q) Keep vulnerable timber floors under observation for signs of decay.
- r) Keep panelling in south-west corner of Nave under observation for signs of woodworm activity behind.
- s) Making good decoration where affected by damp.
- t) Checking of churchyard trees.
- u) Repairs to churchyard walls and repainting of gates.

(Range of likely cost: £4,000 - £6,000 excluding work in churchyard)

VI. FUTURE Repairs:

- v) Review old easings, areas of stonework erosion and loosening pointing.
- w) Review buckled window glazing.

CHRISTOPHER DOWNS, B.Arch., R.I.B.A.
CHARTERED ARCHITECT

QUINQUENNIAL REPORT

on the Parish Church of

SAINT MARY THE VIRGIN, SHINCLIFFE

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

DATE OF REPORT	30TH DECEMBER 2010
DIOCESE	DURHAM
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