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RESEARCHES AND DISCOVERIES IN KENT

BROOMHILL CHURCH PROJECT: 1988 SEASON

The fourth season of excavation by the Field Archaeology Unit (Institute of Archaeology) in and around the site of the parish church of Broomhill on Romney Marsh continued the study of the building and allowed further work to be done on the plan and to refine the structural sequence. Nothing now remains above ground of the former church, which ceased to be used in the early sixteenth century and was flooded by incursions from the sea around 1570. Only a grass-covered mound in an arable field indicates its position. The church served a parish which straddles the East Sussex/Kent county boundary.

The excavation in 1988 re-opened an area at the north-west corner of the nave dug two years previously.¹ The area examined was extended to include the whole of the north aisle, part of the body of the nave and a small area of the chancel. On the north side of the church a chapel was located within the aisle, which matched that excavated in 1987 in the south aisle. Both the chapels were very narrow and were separated from the rest of the nave by low stone partitions on which stood wooden screens, the 'ghosts' of which were found in the marine sediment. The width of the aisle chapels was further reduced by a stone bench to provide seating around the walls of the church. In both chapels the bases of altars have now been found. These were lit by stained glass windows. A portion of the window, which had blown out from the south wall, was found in 1987 where it had fallen in the soft mud, while the present excavations uncovered pieces of painted stained glass from the window in the north aisle, on either side of the altar.

Though the chancel butts on to the nave, clear evidence was found

¹ M.F. Gardiner, 'Medieval Settlement and Society in the Broomhill Area and Excavations at Broomhill Church', in (Eds.) J. Eddison and C. Green, *Romney Marsh: Evolution, Occupation, Reclamation* (OUCA Monograph 24) (1988), Fig. 10.4, trench D.

that it in fact precedes that construction of the third-phase nave. This confirms observations made in 1987. The nave, at the time of its desertion, was roofed with peg-tiles. The concentration of slate in the area of the chancel suggests a different roof covering there. An indication of an earlier roof for the nave was found in the disturbed soil of the churchyard. Quantities of slates, which had been used since they bore traces of mortar, and glazed ridge tiles were recorded.

In the chancel traces of red pigment were discovered in the sediment overlying the floor of the church. This appears to be paint, possibly from a collapsed rood screen or rood loft. Also within the sediment above the chancel floor were found a number of mortared narrow, yellow bricks. Since there was little other fallen masonry, these had probably come from a position under the eaves or wall-plate, and may have been brought down as the roof collapsed. The church went out of use in the early sixteenth century, and the bricks, therefore, are probably to be dated to the fifteenth century and reflect the early use of brick in a number of buildings on Romney Marsh.

Outside and beneath the floor of the third-phase church the footings of the two earlier phases were followed. Due to the limited period of the excavation these were traced by cutting a series of sections across the church down through the underlying sediments as far as the shingle ridge beneath. The footings of the second-phase church were made from alternate bands of silt and shingle. These ran under the floor of the later church. Compact shingle foundations of the first phase were located to the north, outside the walls of the final-phase church. The lines of the walls of the two earlier phases of church were on a slightly different axis to the walls of the third phase.

It is necessary to modify the structural sequence outlined in an earlier interim report.² The suggestion that the first phase of building on the church did not proceed beyond the construction of the footings seems less probable.

Outside the church, on the north side a heavily disturbed layer was found. This was produced by grave digging in this area and part of one grave was excavated. There was no trace of a coffin and the body had almost certainly been inhumed simply in a shroud for a piece of tile had been placed under one foot and a piece of slate under the other. A fragment of skull was found in the church, apparently in an area disturbed during construction works.

The excavations in 1988 produced further evidence of occupation preceding the earliest church building. Beyond the west end of the

² *Ibid.*, 119-25.

church, below a layer presumed to be of sediment, a burnt surface was found with considerable quantities of pottery. Underneath the chancel a thin band of carbonized grain and chaff was recorded and samples were taken for identification. The previous year's work had found a midden with shell, fish bones and other carbonized material beneath the churchyard wall.

As in earlier seasons, the project sought to relate work on the church to the marsh landscape in the vicinity. It was intended to continue a programme of extensive resistivity survey to seek other buildings and landscape features in the area and map the buried shingle ridges. The exceptional dryness of the soil in 1988 led to poor results.

The sea wall adjacent to the church has been removed, but a section was excavated to the south-west where a length remained. This showed that the wall was of dump construction. No evidence was found for a brushwood core suggested in some medieval accounts.³ The wall stood on, and had been built from, coarsely laminated sediments. These sediments were not horizontally bedded, but dipped to the south-east and a provisional interpretation is that the wall had been built on top of the levée of a former marshland creek. Beneath the coarsely laminated sediments were finer laminated deposits, which in turn overlay a narrow buried channel containing peaty clay.

MARK GARDINER

SEVENOAKS DISTRICT ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY GROUP

The past year has seen modest progress in the production of additions to the series of detailed studies of individual buildings recorded by the Group, one being completed and a second expected to be available shortly. Copies of the following were distributed to the normal range of recipients, including the K.A.S. Library.

Borough Green Study No. 1: Anthony D. Stoyel, The Barn of Borough Green House, No. 1 Rock Road, Borough Green.

This was a single-aisled timber threshing barn of minimal size, 23 ft. wide and 29 ft. 3 in. long, excluding its two terminal outshots,

³ R.A.L. Smith, 'Marsh Embankment and Sea Defence in Medieval Kent', *Econ. Hist. Rev.*, 1st ser., 10 (1939), 29-37.

constructed probably in the first half of the seventeenth century. It stood on the southern edge of a farmyard with, to east and west, high boundary walls of random Kentish ragstone, some of it in massive blocks, attributed to the same period. Evidence suggests that during the 1700s the timber walls of the south (aisled) side of the barn and its west outshot end were replaced by walls of stone, likewise from the nearby ragstone quarries. Around the middle of the nineteenth century, however, the barn and outshots were completely rebuilt, thrown into one and much enlarged by a brick northward extension and another eastwards, the latter utilizing the old farmyard boundary wall for its south and east sides. In the rebuilding, many timbers of the original structure were re-used and the great majority still occupy their former positions.

Survivals from the three-bay seventeenth-century barn include three wall-posts of its north side, one of them with iron hinge-hooks for a leaf of the double doors and grooved for housing lift boards, two arcade-posts, the full scarfed lengths of wall-plate and arcade-plate, three tie-beams, eight of the curved braces from posts up to plates and ties, and in the aisle a post-plate and aisle-tie.

A noteworthy external feature is the manner in which exposed corners of the nineteenth-century northern part of the barn were constructed, clearly with the object of avoiding sharp edges that might cause injury to livestock in the farmyard. The corners are of finely-rounded bricks almost up to eaves level, where they are corbelled out in stages to become square.

Many other matters have occupied the Group's attention during the year and the following is a selection of some of the more interesting.

St. Thomas à Becket's Well, Otford

The substantially-medieval stone structure was fully described in *Arch. Cant.*, lxx (1956), 172-7. It is a privately-owned scheduled ancient monument which was built as the principal source of water-supply to the nearby former palace of the Archbishops of Canterbury. The north wall of the well chamber, 35 ft. long, has been progressively collapsing since the 1950s and the east wall is now bulging. The Group is seriously concerned that no repairs have been carried out and that the owner, several years ago, installed water-pumping machinery for his trout farm, thereby almost certainly damaging the fourteenth-century stone floor and possibly also the earlier one underlying it. Following representations to English Heritage, an Inspector of Ancient Monuments has visited the site and is

conducting discussions with the owner concerning the monument's present condition and the alterations it has undergone.

Nos. 99 and 101, High Street, Sevenoaks

These timber-framed buildings of c. 1575–1600 were described in *Arch. Cant.*, cii (1985), 263. They were built as two small detached shops without living-accommodation and became linked together in the nineteenth century. A destructive restoration was halted as a result of the Group's intervention in 1982, since when matters have been virtually at a standstill and the condition of the buildings has deteriorated. A much more satisfactory scheme of repairs has been drawn up and work was resumed early in 1989.

Walnut Tree Cottage, no. 124 Kippington Road, Sevenoaks

This house was inspected by the Group at the request of the owner. The earliest indications are of an L-plan dwelling built about 1675–1700, the south wing of which has been lost and the remainder encased in Victorian walls and flanking enlargements. It stands within the original curtilage of Kippington House (rebuilt c. 1780) and is believed to have been provided as living-accommodation for an employee of the household and his family. The three-bay main stem retains a fair amount of its primary timber framing, including chamfered beams with cyma stops. Its high-pitched roof, hipped at both ends, is of simple rafted construction strengthened by heavy butt-purlins in line.

Rose Cottage, Twitton, Shoreham

Another dwelling inspected by invitation of the owner.

Disregarding its modern rear extension, the cottage is only one room deep and of two bays, each with timber framing of quite different character. The west bay, with cyma chamfer-stops, chiselled carpenters' marks and unjowled storey-posts, must date from around 1700. The east bay, displaying little of significance except stepped hollow chamfer-stops, is of earlier appearance and may perhaps be ascribed to the first half of the seventeenth century. The roof is inaccessible, but the ends of side-purlins project through the gabled west wall.

It is considered probable that the east bay originated as part of a house extending further eastwards, where a nineteenth-century cottage now adjoins. If the Victorian stack between the two perpetuates the site of the original, the house was almost certainly of lobby-entry type with a central chimney block. The ground-storey

ceiling beam at the bay-division is mortised for closed framing, doubtless pierced or removed when the enlargement to the west was built.

ANTHONY D. STOYEL

NOTES ON THE BRASSES IN EAST WICKHAM CHURCH

The little St. Michael's Church at East Wickham served the needs of the local community from the thirteenth century to the period between the two World Wars when the enormous development of residential estates and the increased population necessitated the replacement of the church by a larger building.¹ In 1932, the existing church of the same dedication was built a short distance to the south-east and the ownership of the old building was in 1969 transferred to the Greek Orthodox Church. At that time the movable fittings of historic interest were transferred to the modern church, including the brasses, the removal of which was entrusted to the first-named writer. In the process, certain observations and discoveries were made which are considered worthy of permanent record.

JOHN DE BLADIGDONE AND HIS WIFE MAUD (Fig. 1)

This important early brass has had a chequered history. A drawing made in 1809 by Thomas Fisher (Fig. 2) shows the lower part of the gravestone missing, with the inscription on the shaft of the cross broken off after the letter S of SA. The three foliated terminals were by then lost but the drawing shows the indents formerly containing them, and this, together with recent observation of the very eroded Purbeck gravestone still surviving in the middle of the church, shows the restoration of the brass in 1887 to have been somewhat defective in replacing the terminals on too small a scale. Probably the restorer was guided by Haines' drawing of 1861 (Fig. 3) when much of the brass was detached from the gravestone,² and the conjectural outline

¹ An account of the old church by T.F. Ford, A.R.I.B.A., was published in *Arch. Cant.*, xli (1929), 207-16.

² Herbert Haines, *An Introduction to the Study of Monumental Brasses*, Part I, (1861), cxxxv.

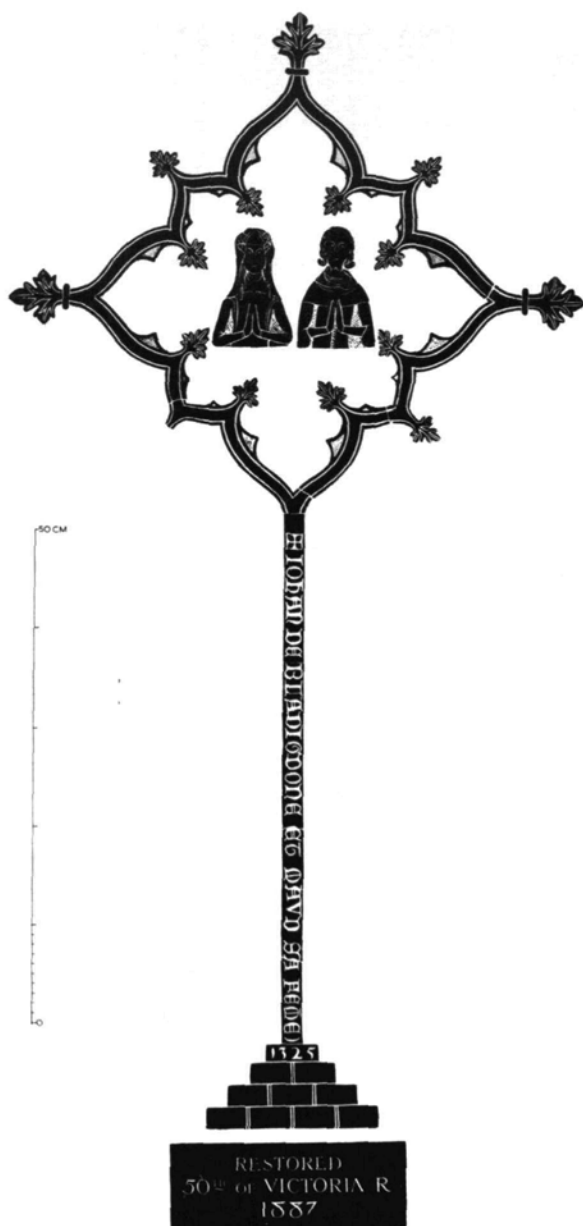


Fig. 1. Brass to John and Maud de Bladigdone, as restored in the nineteenth century.
(*Rubbing by P.J.T., 1956*).

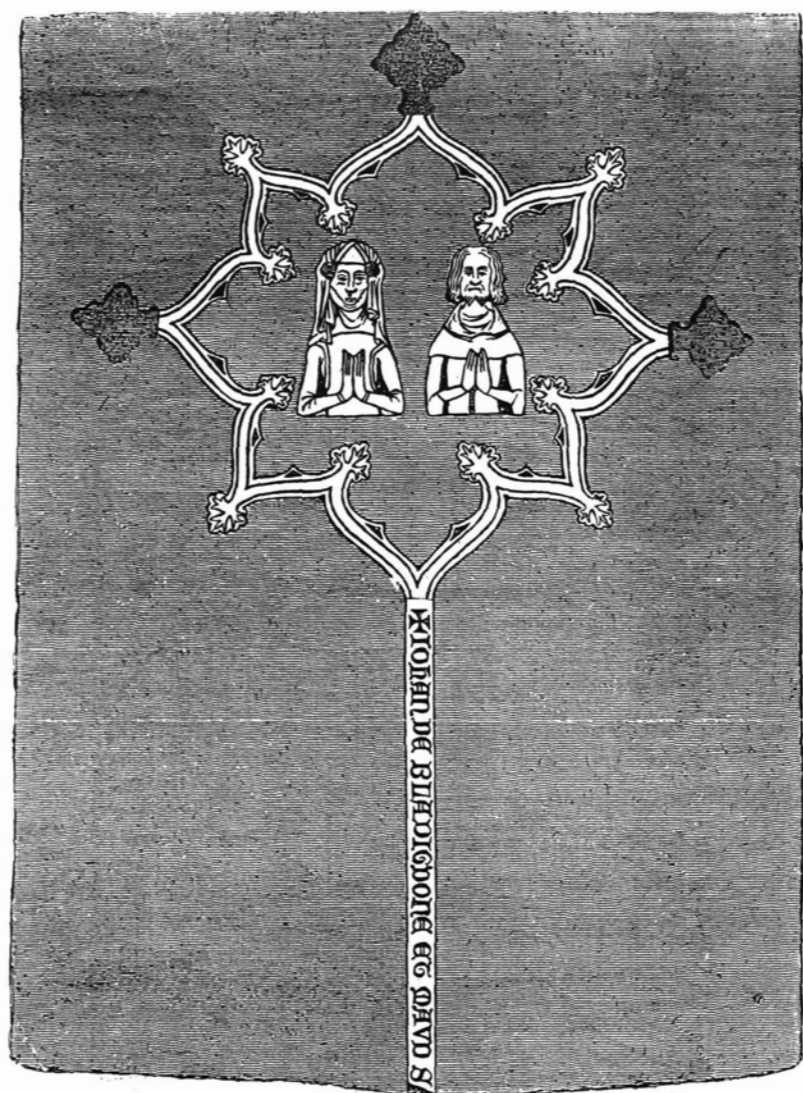


Fig. 2. Etching by Thomas Fisher, 1809, showing parts missing by that year.

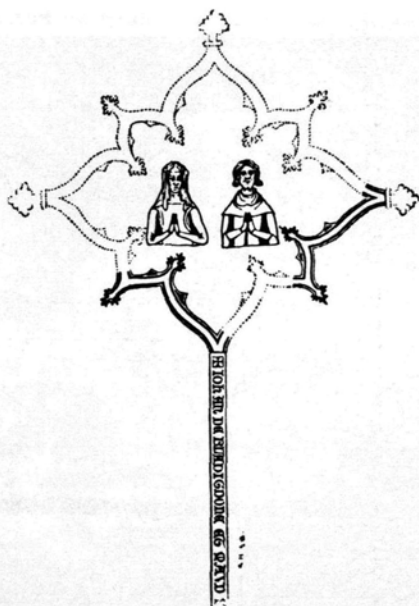


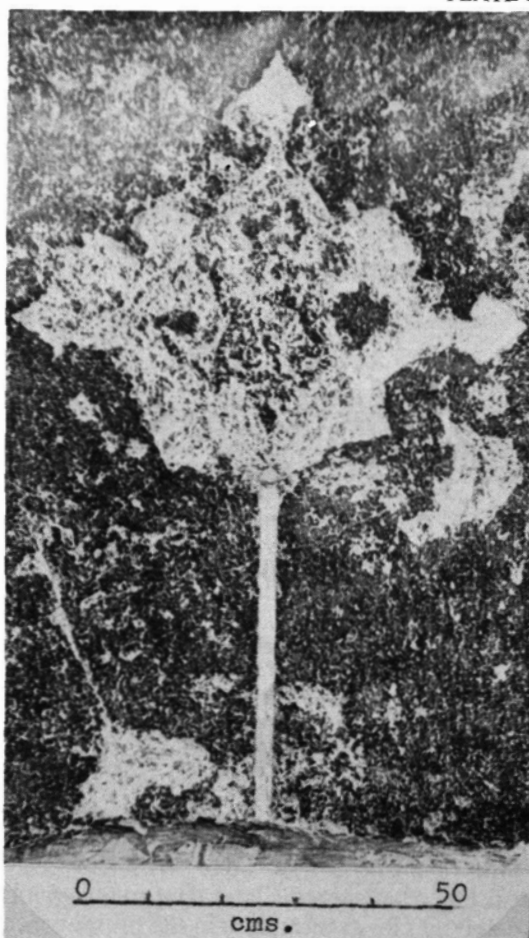
Fig. 3. Illustration in Herbert Haines' *Manual of Monumental Brasses*, 1861. Much of the open cross-head had apparently been detached from the gravestone by that date and the missing parts are shown conjecturally in dotted outline. This, and the date given (c. 1325), probably influenced the restorer in 1887.

was represented by dotted lines. It is known that at one time parts of the brass were loose and kept in a drawer in the vestry.³ Reference by the restorer to the indent could have avoided the error, but the brass was at that time re-set on a new stone. It is now recognised that originally the distance between the lateral terminals of the cross-head was approximately 11 cm. greater than in the present reconstruction, and their form was more angular.

In 1969, the brass was removed from its later stone and mounted on a board for permanent display in the modern church. A rubbing of part of the original gravestone bearing the eroded indent is shown here as Plate I.

The date 1325 in Arabic numerals was inserted in the Victorian restoration and is of doubtful accuracy. For lack of documentary evidence concerning John de Bladigdone's death, the costume of the

³ W.T. Vincent, *Woolwich Records*, vol. 2 (1890), footnote p. 624.



Rubbing of part of the original gravestone showing the indent of the brass in its original form. (*Rubbing by P.J.T., 1956*).

demi-figures provides the main clue to dating the brass. The Department of Textiles and Dress of the Victoria and Albert Museum has kindly examined a rubbing of the figures and stated that the costumes are of the period 1330 to 1380. John is described as wearing a cote-hardie over a gipon, the former being identified by the hanging sleeves at the elbows. Indications of drapery at the neck probably represent a hood, and the hair style is suitable for the period stated.

Maud wears a wimple round her neck and her hair is covered by a braid. Tightness of fit for the garments and the use of buttons down the front are also typical of the period.

In his contribution to *The Earliest English Brasses* Dr John Blair has observed that such brasses of open-cross type containing small figures are generally not earlier than 1340,⁴ and in recent correspondence with the writers concerning the date of the East Wickham brass he has further stated that these brasses are essentially a feature of the 1340s. The figures, he notes, show very distinctively the swaying posture characteristic of the second half of the century, but he adds, 'I would have thought that a date c. 1340 is fair enough, but I would not be unhappy with a date in the 1330s, or rather later in the 1340s'.

Bladindon (as the place-name was more usually spelt) was an estate in the manor and parish of Bexley and was later known as Blendon.⁵ The boundary between East Wickham and Bexley was formed by the Dover Road (A207), and Blendon lay in Bexley about a mile south of the division. Assuming that John and Maud were resident at Blendon, it is curious that they should have been buried at East Wickham and not in their own parish church of St. Mary's, Bexley, only a mile and a half from their home.

WILLIAM PAYN, YEOMAN OF THE GUARD, AND HIS THREE WIVES, 1568 (Fig. 4)

It was also found necessary to lift this brass and transfer it to the modern church, and in doing so an interesting discovery was made. The inscription plate is palimpsest and also the figures of the three sons (Fig. 5). The underside of the plate bears a Latin inscription to John Auncell, 'a monk of this place', who died in 1511. Obviously the plate came from a religious house suppressed in the reign of Henry VIII, but there is no known record to show to which monastery John Auncell was attached. In Mill Stephenson's *List* the name Auncell is recorded on a brass of c. 1500 at West Lavington, Wiltshire.⁶

The Payn plate was broken, probably when removed from its original stone in the sixteenth century, and on the reverse are file marks at the break, apparently related to an attempt to join the two pieces.

⁴ (Ed.) John Coales, *The Earliest English Brasses* (1987), 149.

⁵ A *Jordan de Bladindone* is listed in the Lay Subsidy of 1334-5. *Kent Records*, xv (1964), 133.

⁶ Mill Stephenson, *A List of Monumental Brasses in the British Isles* (1926), 532.



Fig. 4. Brass to William Payn and his three wives, 1568. Rubbing made in 1956 (P.J.T.) before the brass was removed from its slab in 1969.

Mr J.C. Page-Phillips, F.S.A., has examined the palimpsest plates of the three sons and stated that they are apparently parts of the gown of a male effigy of c. 1440.

Documentary evidence indicates that the Payn (or Payne) family owned property in and around East Wickham and Welling in the sixteenth century and later. Their family tomb is in the churchyard of St. Mary's, Bexley, and bears the name of Edward Payne of Welling

hic iacet dominus Johannes Bruce quondam
 monachus huius loci qui obiit x die Aprilis
 Anno dñi m^o cc^o lxi cū sūe pūci tūc decessit

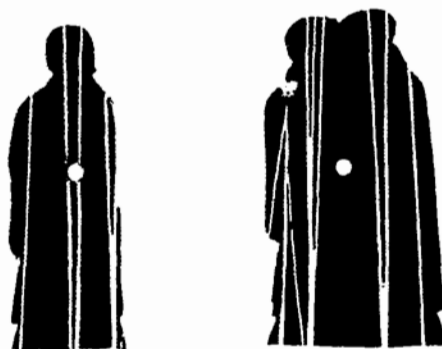


Fig. 5. Underside of the Payn inscription plate with epitaph to John Auncell, described as 'a monk of this place', who died in 1511. Also the reverse sides of the three children, the plates having been cut from the figure of a male civilian, c. 1440. (*Rubbing by H.A.J., 1969*).

who died in 1603, and his wife, Elizabeth, who died at the same time. The Registers show that he died of the plague. Later members of the family are recorded on the same stone. Welling was at that time a hamlet straddling the boundary between East Wickham and Bexley. John Payne, described as a yeoman of East Wickham, founded in 1589 a charity for the relief of the local poor, details of which were shown on a large board formerly in the old St. Michael's Church and now removed to Hall Place, Bexley.

H.A. JAMES and P.J. TESTER

OBSERVATIONS MADE IN THE SACRIST'S CHECKER AREA BESIDE
'GUNDULF'S' TOWER AT ROCHESTER CATHEDRAL - JULY 1989

During the latter part of July 1989, two toilets in the north-east corner of the Sacrist's checker area (east of 'Gundulf's' tower) were demolished, as was a modern east-west brick wall to the south. The concrete surface beneath them was removed and a rough hole was dug by workmen (about 2 m. deep) under the demolished toilets in which to lay new sewage pipes. From this hole a gap was made for the new pipes under the wall of the Sacrist's checker (which surrounded the area on the north-east, joining 'Gundulf's' tower to the cathedral). This gap connected up with an existing sewer man-hole beyond the wall. Outside the wall, present-day ground level is nearly 2 m. below the concrete floor level in the Sacrist's checker area, and it was always clear that the level inside the Sacrist's checker area had been built up in relatively recent times. The many levels in this area of the cathedral are exceptionally complicated, and this is not the place to go into any detail, except in as far as they relate to the Sacrist's Checker lower levels.¹

The hole made by the workmen was examined by the writer of this note, and a rough plan was made on 28th July. On the following day (a Saturday when no workmen were present), he managed to draw the main section in the hole (Fig. 1); the main feature revealed was a brick and rough stone-lined cess-pit. This had been cut through and destroyed by the workmen on the south-west and north-east (and its contents were completely removed). It must, however, have been a nineteenth-century cess-pit for the forerunner to the recently demo-

¹ A re-assessment of the dating of all phases of work in Rochester Cathedral is long overdue.

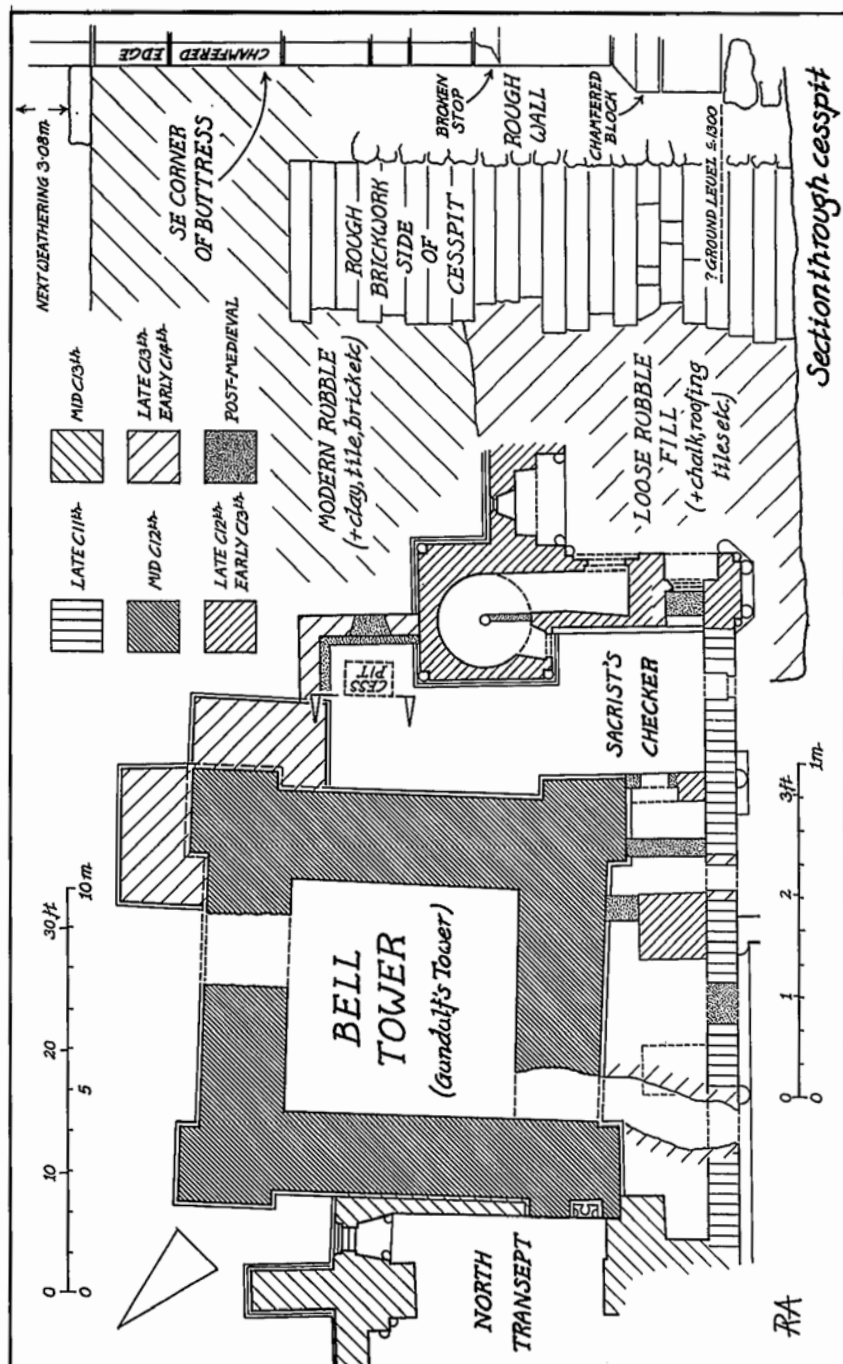


Fig. 1.

lished toilets. At the base of the brickwork (the level to which the workmen had dug) was a harder, more consolidated and leached layer. This contained mortar and Reigate stone fragments and may well be the building level for the eastern arm of the cathedral where much Reigate stone is used.² The eastern arm was probably constructed in the last two decades of the twelfth century, soon after the fire of 1179 (though dated by W.H. St. John Hope to c. 1200–1215.)³ Overlying this harder layer at the bottom of the hole, and behind (and cut through by) the brick lining to the cess-pit was a layer of up to 1 m. in thickness of large, loose broken chalk fragments and tiles. Some of these tiles were apparently pantiles, and the layer perhaps dates to the eighteenth century and may relate to the time when the top half of 'Gundulf's' tower was destroyed.⁴ This act of vandalism seems to have taken place soon after 1781 so that the materials could be used for 'the repair of the church'.⁵ Above the layer of loose chalk and tiles was a more compact layer containing loam and clay as well as smaller fragments of brick, tile, etc. Overlaying this was the bedding level for the concrete.

In the north-west corner of the hole dug by the workmen was the corner of the eastern of the two large buttresses added to the north-east corner of 'Gundulf's' tower. Only the very corner of the buttress had been exposed, but it was possible to trace this right down to its foundation. The south face of this buttress was masked by the angle of the cess-pit wall, while the southern side of the east face of the buttress was covered by the foundations of the brick north wall of the recently demolished toilets. The south-east angle of the buttress to 'Gundulf's' tower was made of large ashlar blocks of a yellow fine-grained sandstone (probably from the Hastings Beds of the lower Cretaceous).⁶ These had a 7 cm. wide vertical chamfer on the angle, and this ended at a rather damaged plain stop half-way down the

² The building level of the eastern arm can still be gauged from the level of the base of the plinth of the eastern arm.

³ The standard work on Rochester Cathedral is of course W.H. St. John Hope, 'The architectural History of the Cathedral Church and Monastery of St. Andrew at Rochester', *Arch. Cant.* xxiii (1898), 194–328.

⁴ It was not possible to examine the contents of this rubble layer because of the danger of the sides of the hole collapsing.

⁵ F.F. Smith, *A History of Rochester* (1928), 281.

⁶ The bringing of freestone from 'Farlegh' (Fairlight in East Sussex) to Rochester Castle is documented in 1367–68 (see *Arch. Cant.*, ii (1859), 112 and 121). This stone was shipped by sea from Winchelsea. The most likely source is Cliff End Sandstone from the base of the Wadhurst clay, which was quarried around Fairlight and at Winchelsea; see R.D. Lake and E.R. Shephard-Thorn, *Geology of the Country around Hastings and Dungeness* (1987), 27–30.

section. Below the block with a stop on it was a chamfered block (apparently made of Purbeck marble)⁷ and then one more course of fine masonry before the foundation of rough stones was reached. The foundation level was at least 20 cm. above the hard surface at the base of the hole (mentioned above as being possibly the c. late twelfth-century construction level). It must, therefore, be later than this.

The two large buttresses on the north-east side of 'Gundulf's' tower perhaps date from the later thirteenth or early fourteenth century when the upper machicolated level of the tower was built. Unfortunately, this upper stage was destroyed soon after it was recorded for us in 1781 by Francis Grose in his *Supplement to the Antiquities of England and Wales*, and we only have Grose's drawing as a reasonably clear record of what the tower looked like before its upper half was removed.⁸ Above the machicolated top stage there was probably an octagonal lead-covered broach spire, and this seems to have disappeared by the seventeenth century at the latest.

'Gundulf's' tower has been given this name for many years now,⁹ and it has always been assumed that the tower was built during Gundulf's episcopate (1077-1108). In fact, since St. John Hope's time it has been assumed that the tower was built by Gundulf 'soon after his consecration',¹⁰ and before he rebuilt the cathedral, and that it was 'raised for defensive purposes'. In this he goes one stage further than Hasted who conjectured 'that it was first intended as a place of strength and security, either as a treasury or a repository of records'.¹¹ Hasted, however, also suggests that 'there is a tradition of its having been called the bell tower, and of its having five bells hanging in it'. This surely is the correct solution. As St. John Hope himself pointed out, 'there is documentary proof that it was at an early date used as a campanile', and the tower is first recorded in Prior Reginald's time when he is said to have 'made two bells, and placed them in the greater tower'.¹² Reginald, whose exact dates are unknown, was documented as prior in 1155 and 1160.¹³ Soon

⁷ The chamfered course can be seen just above ground level on the north side of the large north buttress. It, too, appears to be of Purbeck marble.

⁸ The drawing is reproduced in Hope, *op. cit.*, n. 3, 202.

⁹ E. Hasted, *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent*, iv (1798), 101.

¹⁰ Hope, *op. cit.*, n. 3, 201.

¹¹ Hasted, *op. cit.*, n. 7, 101-2.

¹² B.L. Cotton Vespasian A 22, f 85 and J. Thorpe, *Registrum Roffense* (1769), 118.

¹³ J. Le Neve, *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae, 1066-1300, II Monastic Cathedrals* (1971), 79.

afterwards, further bells were hung in the tower, and in the later Middle Ages it was known as '3 bell steeple.'

Today the tower is only about half its original height (c. 40 ft. high) and its interior has been much mutilated. It is, however, possible to see that the original corner clasp buttresses never contained staircases and that in the original ground-floor level it contained a slit window in the middle of each of its four sides. At first floor level there were originally four larger windows splayed back to semicircular rere-arches in each of the four sides. This all suggests a straight-forward bell-tower, and not a keep, and it seems more likely that it was built in the decade or so before it is first documented in the middle years of the century. As a bell-tower only it is most unlikely to have been built before the cathedral was rebuilt by Gundulf, and nothing in the surviving fabric suggests an early Norman date.¹⁴ Most of the rubble walling is of broken fragments of Kentish ragstone, but significantly there are also a few pieces of re-used architectural fragments, at least, one of which appears to be of twelfth-century date.¹⁵ The larger blocks, particularly those in the original pilaster quoins, are of tufa and ragstone.

In summary, therefore, I would suggest that 'Gundulf's' tower was always only a bell-tower, and that it was built in the second quarter of the twelfth century. At this time detached free-standing bell-towers were common; they were built in the twelfth century at St. Augustine's Abbey and Christ Church Priory in Canterbury, for example. Today they survive only rarely (at Chichester Cathedral for instance), and it is nice, therefore, to be able to add the Rochester tower to the list. It is unusual only as a survival (albeit a partial one), and in its close proximity to the cathedral (necessitated by cramped conditions within the Roman city walls).

TIM TATTON-BROWN

¹⁴ *pace* Hope, *op. cit.*, n. 3, 201.

¹⁵ These can best be seen on the south side of the tower, on the fire escape ladder from the roof down to the north choir aisle.