

ST. LAURENCE'S CHURCH,  
WINSLOW: DATING AND THE  
STRUCTURAL SEQUENCE

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2006

Incorporating addendum dated July 2013

## 1. Introduction

This church is generally regarded as a building of the Decorated period, with a number of Perpendicular additions. Thus the RCHM says, "The present *Chancel, Nave, North and South Aisles*, and the *West Tower*, were built in the 14th century ... In the second half of the 15th century the *South Porch* was added, the third stage of the tower was built, the walls of the aisles were raised, and many of the windows were altered ..." <sup>1</sup> Pevsner and Williamson describe the church as "Mostly Decorated" and refer to Perpendicular and 19th century additions.

There are however some anomalies in the structure, which suggest that the history of the building is more complex than has been suspected.

## 2. The Shell of the Nave

The first of these anomalies occurs where the fabric of the clearstory abuts the tower. There is at this point a vertical break in the fabric on both sides of the church, not just between the tower and the two rows of ashlar that make up the top of the clearstory, but between the tower and the rubble walling of the clearstory below the ashlar. On both sides of the clearstory there are in the rubble walling several good ashlar at this point whose western faces lie on the line of the vertical break. On the south side, there are two stones placed vertically immediately on the tower side of the break, as would happen if the builder of the tower had a deep but narrow hole to block between his work so far on the tower and the existing clearstory. On the north side, it must be said, there is one rough block which extends across the break, but this is best explained as an attempt by the builder of the later fabric to bond it in to the earlier fabric. The tower, in short, appears to butt up onto and to be later than the clearstory.

A difference in date between the two fabrics is also suggested by the fact that the tower is slightly wider than the nave, if the outer edges of the pier plinths of the nave arcades are taken as the edge of the nave. This can be seen at floor level by comparing the north and south edges of the tower with the pattern of the nineteenth century floor tiling, which is aligned on the nave pier bases.

Further confirmation is provided by a second anomaly: the positions of the north and south doors. These appear at first glance to be in the centre of their respective walls, but are in fact slightly off centre. The north door is some 0.25 m. west of the centre of the north wall; the south door is some 0.5 m. west of the centre of the south wall. The result is that they are positioned three quarters of the way down the nave, measuring from the east surface of the nave east wall to the point at which the tower and clearstory join.

The position of doors on an east-west line tends to remain constant over time, even when the addition of aisles causes the doors to move further out from the centre-line of the church. Thus at St. Peter's, Barton on Humber, excavation has revealed that the existing south door, close to the west end of the south aisle, is aligned on the centre of the south wall of the eleventh century nave. <sup>2</sup>

These two anomalies suggest that prior to the construction of the tower the nave extended only so far west as the present tower, and that it had doors to north and south three quarters of the way along its length. This nave will then have measured 14.5 m. by 7.15 m, excluding possible ground courses. Its walling, interrupted of course by later arcades and windows, extends upwards to

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<sup>1</sup>RCHM (1912-13), vol. II pp. 339

<sup>2</sup>Rodwell (1989), pp. 28-9

a height of some 7.3 m., at which point the fabric of the present clearstory changes to the two courses of ashlar mentioned above. There is therefore a possibility that this nave was constructed to form a double cube. This nave was perhaps intended to measure 48' x 24' (with a foot of between 297 and 302 mm.), but another possibility is that it was intended to measure 50' x 25' (with a foot of between 286 and 290 mm.). It appears that at the tower's construction the majority of the old west wall was demolished leaving the ends of the side walls, now butting onto the tower.

It will be suggested below that this nave was accompanied by an apsidal chancel. There are however no windows or mouldings surviving from this period. The proportions of this nave, and the need to allow time for other building operations detailed below, suggest as a possible date the period 1100-1200.

### **3. The Lower Stages of the Tower**

The tower is then a later addition. Its north and south sides rise vertically until they reach a height approximately level with the nave eaves. At this point there are two courses of receding weatherings in each tower side, and from then upwards the tower sides are very slightly battered. This suggests that the mason responsible wanted a square tower with sides rather smaller than the width of the nave, but was constrained below eaves level to provide a tower as wide as the nave in order to make provision for aisles flanking the tower. The height of the weatherings is likely to correspond to the height of the nave eaves at the time.

The RCHM and Pevsner correctly call attention to the fact that the present belfry is a Perpendicular addition to the tower. The point at which the Perpendicular fabric begins can be seen very clearly one course below the string course marking the bottom of the belfry. Additional information about the original form of the tower is provided by Buckler's drawings of 1838, and other illustrations of the church before the restoration of 1883, which show an additional string course running round the tower at a height of about 10.2 m. This course must have been cut back flush in the 1880s, but its line can still be traced as a thin course of ashlar immediately below the single-light tower windows which light the ringing chamber. It would appear that this ringing chamber was the original belfry, and that the builders of the Perpendicular belfry simply superimposed their own work, perhaps just removing the original coping courses.

The only original features of the tower appear to be its two western buttresses. These buttresses are broader than they are deep. They rest on a low plinth; at the top of the first stage is a weathering running round all three sides of the buttress; from then on the sides continue vertical but the outer face continues to recede somewhat, finally becoming vertical to form the second stage. At the top of the second stage the outer face recedes until it dies into the tower wall.

The tower measures 7.13 x 6.45 m. in plan: the larger dimension was determined by the width of the existing nave, but the smaller must have been chosen by the builder of the tower himself. It is possible that the builder was working with a foot of 280 mm., and intended the tower to be 6.44 m. deep (23' with a 280 mm. foot), with a west wall 1.96 m. thick (7' with a 280 mm. foot), north and south walls 1.4 m. thick (5' with a 280 mm. foot), and an east wall 1.12 m. thick (4' with a 280 mm. foot). The odd figure of 23' would then have been chosen in order to give an internal depth of 3.36 m. (12' with a 280 mm. foot). Difficulty of access has prevented measurement of the tower at a higher level: however, J. Oldrid Scott's measured drawings of 1883 suggest that at the level of the old string course the tower measures 6.8 x 6.3 m.

The measurements of the buttresses appear to be based on the same foot, which tends to confirm that they are contemporary with the tower. Thus in plan the lower stage measures 700 mm. x 375 mm. (2' 6" x 1' 8" with a 280 mm. foot), and the height of the lower stage (measured from the top of the plinth to the bottom of the weathering) varies from 230 mm. to 235 mm. (8' 4" with a 280 mm. foot = 233 mm.).

It may be noted that the lowest stage of the tower, with its receding weatherings, implies either that the nave had already acquired aisles before the construction of the tower, and that the builder of the tower intended to extend these aisles so as to flank the tower, or that he intended to construct on both sides of the nave aisles that would when finished flank the newly constructed tower. In either case it is likely that the lowest stage of the tower was pierced by lateral arches giving onto the aisles as well as by an eastern arch giving onto the nave.

It will be suggested below that the tower buttresses indicate that the tower was constructed at some point in the period 1200-1250, and also that at about this date the apsidal chancel was replaced by a square-ended chancel.

#### **4. The Present Aisles**

A third anomaly appears when the present aisles are investigated. Allowance has to be made, of course, for the later heightening of the aisle walls: the line of the original top of the walls can be seen quite clearly along the longitudinal walls of the aisles. The line is more difficult to follow on the end walls, but it can just be traced and suggests that the height at which the aisle roofs met the nave walls did not change, i.e. that the pitch of the roof was lowered. Both aisles are surrounded, internally and externally, by a string course at shoulder height, and both had an identical set of buttresses, comprising an angle buttress at each angle and four other buttresses set at equal intervals between the angle buttresses. The string course appears from investigation of the courses above and below it not to be a later insertion but to be original fabric. However, it ends when it reaches the tower buttresses, and the aisle buttresses show significant differences from the tower buttresses. These facts suggest strongly that the present aisles are not of one build with the tower, but are a later addition, presumably replacing the first aisles mentioned above.

The buttresses on the south aisle are identical to those on the north aisle, though the western angle buttresses on both aisles differ from the rest of the aisle buttresses in that they are slightly larger and omit the small roll at the top of the central weathering. Either one aisle is a copy of the other, or, what is perhaps more likely, both aisles were constructed together, and the different style of the western angle buttresses is indicative of a change of plan during construction. It is noteworthy that on the south aisle wall, where one of the buttresses has been removed, perhaps in order to facilitate the construction of the porch, the stonework behind it is quite undisturbed, suggesting that these buttresses are not bonded in at all but simply mortared to the wall.

The dating of both the tower and the aisles depends on stylistic analysis of the buttresses, since there are no other stylistic features linked with their construction. The buttresses are part of a much wider group (examples listed below) which have not yet reached the Decorated norm of a buttress deeper than it is wide and prominently broken up into two or more stages. In addition the builders of many of these buttresses were still trying to work out how to deal with the clash occurring when a weathering or string course and a set of receding courses have to be combined half way up a buttress.

Although the date of most of these buttresses is very uncertain, they belong generally to the thirteenth century. In particular the Winslow buttresses display two primitive features: the lowest stage of the Winslow tower buttresses is wider than it is deep, and in none of the Winslow buttresses has the sharp arris of a receding stage been undercut to avoid frost damage. To allow sufficient time for the Winslow aisles to be added to the tower, it seems best to assign the Winslow tower buttresses to the period 1200-1250, and the aisle buttresses to the period 1250-1300. No parallel has yet been found for two features of the Winslow aisle buttresses: the position of the roll, and the 110 mm. gap between the string course and the point at which the outer face starts to recede.

Location	Width of lowest stage greater than depth	Weathering or string course at mid-point	Gable at top or further receding courses	Gap between weathering and first receding course	Roll above receding courses	Arrises of receding courses undercut	Positioned at angle of building	Date
Haddenham W front. <sup>3</sup>	Y	W	R	N	N	N	Y	c. 1215
Bledlow chancel. <sup>4</sup>	?	N	N	N	N	N	Y	c. 1260
<b>Winslow tower</b>	Y	W	R	N	N	N	Y	?
<b>Winslow aisles</b>	N	SC	R	Y	Y/N	N	N	?
Aylesbury W front	N	W	R	N	N	Y	Y	1200-1300
Little Wenham Suffolk <sup>5</sup>	N	SC	G	N	N	Y	?	1200-1250
Selby Yorks. <sup>6</sup>	N	W	G	N	N	Y	Y	1280-1300
Pucklechurch Gloucs. <sup>7</sup>	N	W	G	N	N	Y	?	?
Wells, Bishop's Palace Chapel <sup>8</sup>	?	W	R	N	N	Y	Y	-1292

There are too many variations in size between the aisle buttresses for it to be profitable to discuss their base unit of measurement.

<sup>3</sup>RCHM (1912-13), vol. I p. 176

<sup>4</sup>RCHM (1912-13), vol. I pp. 52-3

<sup>5</sup>Bond (1906), pp. 352, 358

<sup>6</sup>Bond (1906), p. 86

<sup>7</sup>Bond (1906), pp. 355

<sup>8</sup>Bony (1979), p. 12, pl. 71

## 5. The Laying Out of the Nave Arcades

A fourth anomaly appears when the two eastern piers supporting the tower are scrutinised. These piers, like the piers of the nave arcades, appear to stand on substantial unmoulded stone plinths, which stand up squarely from the ground. The plinth however only extends round three sides of the piers: on the outer side (that is, on the north side of the north pier and on the south side of the south pier) it gives way to a groundcourse topped with a single chamfer. The stonework of the chamfer is crude by comparison with that of the plinth, and investigation of the point where they join, particularly on the northern pier, suggests that the plinth has been let into the pier after the pier's construction.

The similarity between these plinths and the plinths supporting the piers of the nave arcades suggest that they are contemporary, and that the present arches were pierced in the tower at the same time as the present arcades were laid out. Some confirmation that the tower arches were let into the tower after its construction is provided by the many small stones packed above the voussoirs of the arch in the north tower wall, as if the mason had been trying to fill up a gap between the new voussoirs and the top of the hole pierced in the old wall to receive them.

The plinths of the arcades repay study. Each measures 0.8 m. square, and the length of each of the three eastern bays is 3.60 m.  $\pm$  0.03 m. The length of each of these bays is therefore exactly half the width of the nave. The fourth bay is shorter by some 0.7 m. and the distances between the plinths of the tower also fail to fit the standard nave bay pattern. However, the whole set of measurements is explicable on the assumption that the builder regarded 1:2 as the proper proportion for a bay, and managed to fit in three bays of this size. West of these bays, however, he was having to fit the bays around the existing tower piers and simply had to improvise.

We may suppose that the stonework of the tower arches is contemporary with these plinths. These tower arches have a chamfered edge and a chamfered inner order. The inner orders have bases consisting of a chamfer with a roll above and capitals consisting of a roll beneath an ogee moulding, with a curved top.

No mention has been made of the piers of the nave arcades that rest on these plinths. These belong to a later period. However, some of the nave piers show tooling marks crossing over mortar lines, and it may be that the piers erected on the plinths were later recut rather than replaced and survive unrecognised in their later guise.

Several of the dimensions used in laying out the plinths suggest the use of a foot of 285-91 mm. Thus the distance between the plinths of the eastern tower piers is 3.47 m (12' with a 289 mm. foot); the distance between the plinths of the western and eastern piers is 1.92 m. (6' 8" with a 288 mm foot); the distance between the plinths of the western tower piers is 4.17 m. (14' 6" with a 288 mm. foot); the vertical distance from the top of the plinth to the bottom of the capitals of the eastern tower arch is 3.48 m. (12' with a 290 mm. foot); the vertical distance from the top of the plinth to the bottom of the capitals of the lateral arches is 2.67 m. (9' 3" with a 289 mm. foot); the nave plinths measure 800 mm square (2' 9" with a 291 mm. foot), and the widths of the main faces and chamfers on the responds of the tower arches are 190 mm. (8" with a 285 mm. foot)

The only elements, therefore, that are original and allow us to posit a date are the capitals of the tower arches. They answer well to Bond's description of the typical fourteenth century capital:

"the abacus nearly always has a scroll moulding whose inner surface is an oblique ogee curve, and beneath this a small roll." They suggest as a possible date for the layout of the arcades the early fourteenth century.

## 6. The Chancel

Both the RCHM and Pevsner treat the chancel as a single unit of the Decorated period. This takes no account of two important pieces of evidence. The first is that during the construction of the vestry in 1889 workmen reported that the chancel wall around the hagioscope then discovered was "formed of rubble-work of a different description to that of any other part of the Church, and which appeared to have formed part of an earlier Chancel than the present one."<sup>9</sup> It is not clear whether the "portions of chiseled and carved stones ... found embedded in the walls" to which Clear also refers were found in the chancel wall or elsewhere, and the portion of the chancel wall referred to appears to be the eastern end of the north chancel wall. Nevertheless it is an important indication that the chancel is a composite construction.

The second is the buttress in the centre of the south chancel wall. This is a nineteenth century buttress whose design has been copied from the chancel angle buttresses. It replaced a low buttress quite unlike the angle buttresses. This low buttress and its successor were not in fact placed in the centre of the wall, but some 7.25 m. west of the centre of the wall. There is no internal requirement for a buttress here, such as might be occasioned by a roof support, and there must therefore have been some other reason for the construction of the buttress. Scrutiny of the stone either side reveals that it masks several discontinuities between courses of stone, although above the level of the modern buttress the courses run without interruption. The most likely explanation therefore of the buttress is that the south wall is of two builds and that the buttress masks the join.<sup>10</sup>

The eastern 7.25 m. of the chancel are then the latest part of its fabric. This section contains an original window on the south side: the way in which the courses of ashlar mount up each side of the window getting steadily more out of line with each other, and then have hurriedly to get back in line at the apex of the window, guarantees that the window is contemporary with the wall. The tracery of this window has all been renewed, but a comparison with drawings of the old church suggests that it is a faithful copy. The window is divided into two engaged sub-arches, with each sub-arch having two cusps on each side and an ogive cusp in its apex. Into the space between the lights and the outer arch has been inserted a trefoiled oculus. Bond gives 1315-60 as the period during which this sort of tracery flourished.

The width of the chancel is also 7.25 m., indicating that the addition was square in plan. To judge from the ashlar courses visible on the south side, its builders may have heightened the walling of the old chancel at the same time. The previous chancel, therefore, was 7.25 m. wide and some 4.9 m. long. It appears to have been built of ashlar rather than of rubble, to have butted up onto the nave east wall, and to have been of the same width as the nave. The fact that it was built of ashlar and butted onto the nave wall shows that it is later in date than the nave, and is not the original chancel. The present chancel is on a slightly different alignment from the nave: it may have inherited this alignment from its predecessor. With the little evidence we have available it is not possible to say with any certainty why the first chancel was replaced, but one possibility clearly is that the first chancel was apsidal, with north and south walls set back from the nave walls, and that it was replaced with a square ended chancel of the same length but slightly wider. If we assign the first

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<sup>9</sup>Clear (1894), p. 50

<sup>10</sup>Cf. Rodwell (1989), p. 68

chancel to the twelfth century, the replacement chancel to the thirteenth, and the present chancel to the fourteenth, as suggested above, we may not be far wrong.

There was a window in the north wall of the chancel.<sup>11</sup> Nothing is known about the window, though it may have been the model either for the window planned for the north wall of the vestry in 1883, which was a three light version of the western of the two windows currently in the chancel south wall, or for the window eventually installed in the north wall of the vestry in 1889, which is a two-light version of the window in the north aisle north wall, west of the door. Scott also reported that there was a door in the north wall of the chancel, and that this led to a sacristy that had disappeared by his day.<sup>12</sup> It is not known whether Scott had any other evidence for the sacristy than the door.

## 7. The Alignment of the Nave and Chancel

James Muirden of Exeter University<sup>13</sup> has suggested that churches were aligned on the point of the horizon where the sun rose on the patronal festival. At Winslow the nave alignment (as at nearby Addington) is  $91^\circ$  T, the chancel  $94^\circ$  T.

If both parts of the church were aligned on the same day then we are looking, given the nature of the increasing inaccuracy of the mediaeval Julian calendar, at an autumn date rather than a spring one. Moreover, the difference of  $3^\circ$  suggests that the calendar got out of line by about 5 days between the two building dates. The building history might suggest a difference of 200 years between the two building operations, which would yield an alteration of about  $2^\circ$ , which is not greatly different.

A particular uncertainty is the height of the eastern horizon when viewed from the site of the church in the mediaeval period. The church is on a very slight rise, and this part of Bucks mostly consists of low hills about 110 m above sea level with a church on top of each; but the High Street was laid out running NS just E of the church in the 13th century, and there might have been cottages along it by 1300. It is possible too that someone might sunrise-spot from the top of the tower rather than from ground level.

Given the alignments above, the assumption of a height of  $1^\circ$  deg for the horizon gives sunrise on the nave alignment on 19 Mar & 25 Sept in 2004 [13 Mar and 19 Sept in 1080], and on the chancel alignment 13 Mar and 30 Sept in 2004 [5 Mar and 22 Sept in 1330]. If we concentrate on the autumn dates for the reason given above there is nothing very obvious in the calendar. However, if we allow a  $2.5^\circ$  horizon for 1080 we get to the Exaltation of the Cross on 14 Sept. To get the chancel to align on that date in 1330 we would need to allow a higher horizon, say  $3.5$  deg.

There is no known connection between the church and any feast of the Holy Cross, though it is striking that in Benson's survey of Oxfordshire churches Holy Cross was the 2nd most popular alignment of Oxfordshire churches, with 34 examples out of about 220. One would not expect the Oxfordshire pattern to differ greatly from the Bucks one.

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<sup>11</sup>Sheahan (1862), p. 795

<sup>12</sup>Clear (1894), p. 47

<sup>13</sup>Muirden (2005)

## **8. Reroofing of the Aisles**

The top section of the aisle walls shows traces of having been raised. The additional courses are rubble, and are distinguished by the straight mortar joint between it and the old walling.

## **9. Alterations to the Nave Arcades**

It was suggested above that the plinths support work of two different periods: the tower arches, which are contemporary with the plinths, and the nave arcades, which are later. The differences between the work of these two periods need to be made clear.

There is a difference in the treatment of bases and capitals. The bases of the tower arch responds are chamfered but not ornamented in any other way; whereas the bases of the piers and responds of the arcades and the chancel arch have an elaborate moulding. The capitals of the tower arch responds have already been described; the capitals of the piers and responds of the arcades and of the chancel arch have a much more elaborate moulding. There is finally a difference in dimensions: the three principal faces of the tower arch responds, as indicated above, all measure 190 mm. across, whereas the equivalent faces of the responds of the arcades and of the chancel arch responds all measure 105 mm. across. This latter measurement is clearly intended to produce half-size versions of the octagonal piers of the nave arcades, whose faces measure 210 mm. across. The bases (excluding the plinth) are 420 mm. high.

It appears therefore that the nave arcades and chancel arch were replaced in one operation. For a date we are dependent on the moulded bases and capitals: these suggest the late fourteenth century. It is likely that the new arcades are subsequent in date to the heightening of the aisle walls, since the tops of the arcades are so high that it is difficult to conceive how the aisles in their lower form could have been satisfactorily roofed if the present arcades were already in place.

## **10. New Windows and Doors - Decorated Period**

Seven windows and two doors survive which were inserted into earlier walls during this period.

They include the two circular windows in the clearstory. These display the signs attributed by Bond to late thirteenth or early fourteenth century work: they are moulded, and they are chamfer-cusps rather than soffit-cusps. Originally, of course, there were probably six of these windows. Careful scrutiny of the windows reveals that each is set in a larger area of disturbance in the rubble walling, and that the area of disturbance is filled up with a muddle of small stones often not set in any course at all: a sure sign that the windows are a later insertion. The two surviving windows are set halfway between the east end of the nave and the west wall of the tower for obvious visual reasons.

## **11. Reroofing of the Nave**

The top two courses of the clearstory are formed of ashlar of soft limestone, quite different to the rubble walling underneath. A plain parapet runs above them. They are evidence for a raising of the nave walls, doubtless as part of a reroofing. We know from the drawings of 1838 that the nave had a low-pitch roof prior to the restoration of 1883, and these courses may date from the construction of that late mediaeval roof.

## 12. New Windows - Perpendicular Period

Eight to ten windows were inserted into existing walls during this period.

The first is the western window in the south wall of the chancel. This is a four-light window with a supertransom running across the apices of the lights. The mullions run up through the supertransom to the outer arch. The triangular spaces either side of the mullions below the supertransom are not pierced right the way through. Above the supertransom each light is divided into two half-lights, but only the four centre half-lights have their own archlets and cusps. Similar three- and four-light windows can be found in the nave of Swanbourne.

The east window of the chancel is the most prominent of this series. It is a four-centred window, with the inner two curves so flattened as to be straight. It has five lights, the centre light being wider than the others. The mullions run all the way up to the top of the window. Each light terminates in an archlet at springing level: the four side lights are then divided into two single small lights, while the centre light is divided into two small lights with a second pair above them, giving a total of four small lights. In design the window is very similar to a Haddenham window, except that the angle of the straight sections of the four-centred arch is closer to the horizontal at Winslow.

The east window is closely related to the middle window in the north wall of the north aisle, which is a square-headed three light window. In this window the mullions rise all the way up to the lintel. Each light has an ogival archlet. Halfway up each ogee an arm springs off the ogee, and in a mirror image of the remaining curve of the ogee makes its way to the outer corner of the light, thus forming a shield shaped space to one side of the archlet. The same technique is used to form the bottoms of the small lights in the east window, and the effect in the side window is as if the east window had been cut off horizontally at the apices of the main lights. Each light in this side window is 450 mm. wide.

The east window of the south aisle is a four light window, very similar to the last, except that the shield shaped lights have been omitted, leaving a clear uncusped space. Each light is 380 mm. wide.

The three-light window at the west end of the north wall of the north aisle, and the two four-light windows in the south wall of the south aisle either side of the porch all present the same design. The lights have semi-circular archlets, from the apices of which a short mullion rises all the way to the top of the window. The main mullions also rise all the way to the top of the window. The lights vary in width from 450 mm. to 465 mm. The east window of the north aisle was apparently also of this design, since Oldrid Scott intended to transfer it to the north wall of the vestry in 1883. The actual window in the north wall of the vestry, which copies the design of this type of window, is of wholly nineteenth century stonework, suggesting that after the old window was dismantled it was found to be too decayed for reassembly, and was copied instead.

Four three-light windows were inserted into the clearstory. In these the archlets are again semi-circular. It is clear from the west window on the north side that the clearstory had already been heightened when these windows were inserted.

The ninth window is the window in the north wall of the chancel, which is no longer extant, but whose design may be preserved in some nineteenth century windows (see below).

### **13. The Porch and the Belfry**

The porch appears to be later than the square-headed window immediately to its west, since it overlies one of the window's jambs. Since this window appears to be among the latest in the church, the porch may have been one of the final additions to the pre-Reformation church. Moreover, the design of the porch battlements is echoed in those of the belfry. There is nothing to suggest that the same master-mason was involved: indeed the belfry has none of the idiosyncrasies of the porch. However, it may be that the builder of the belfry consciously emulated the builder of the porch in this respect in order to maintain a stylistic unity. This would of course imply a late date for the belfry too.

### **14. Modifications of the Late Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century**

On 30 May 1694 the archdeacon ordered the churchwardens "to buy or cause to be bought a fitt and sufficient quantity of Paveing Stone and therewith to pave the ... porch, howsoever the same doth contain in Length and Breadth, or cause the said Porch to be paved and amended accordingly." The churchwardens certified on 20 October 1695 that they had complied with the order.<sup>14</sup> This stone paving of 1695 may have lasted until 1883-5, when it was replaced with the paving of 1700 from the sanctuary.

At his visitation on 9 August 1757 Archdeacon Ibbetson "ordered that the Pavement at the West end of the Church be mended and that the Pavement in Several other Places and Several Pews in the North and South Isles be Repaired," also that "a New West Door be provided."<sup>15</sup>

Details of the seating as it existed in 1838 are preserved in the files of the Incorporated Church Building Society. These show that the pulpit, complete with curate's and clerk's desks, was against the northern pier of the chancel arch; that there was a gallery occupying the western bay of the nave, and presumably extending back into the tower, at which point it connected with stairs up from the north aisle; and that there was a gallery at the eastern end of the north aisle, represented by three vertical supports down the centre of the aisle.

### **15. The Refitting of 1839**

According to Sheehan "the church was repaired and the seats re-arranged in 1839, by which means 155 additional sittings were obtained." It was presumably the results of this re-arrangement that he was describing when he wrote of the nave, "the pews are of deal and high-backed, and galleries extend along the sides and west end," and of the chancel that it was "disfigured with ugly high-backed pews." The refitting was assisted financially by the Incorporated Church Building Society, and two plans of the new arrangements, survive in the Society's archive in Lambeth Palace Library.

There are several depictions of the church from the period 1838-83. J. C. Buckler drew external views from the SW and the SE, and the font, on 9th August 1838. The drawings are in the British Library,<sup>16</sup> and more finished versions are in the Bodleian Library. There is an engraving in Lipscomb (1847), taken from the SW.<sup>17</sup> There is a print, also taken from the SW, inscribed "Sketched by a Lady" and "In Aid of the Winslow Auxiliary of the British and Foreign Bible

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<sup>14</sup>*BB&OAJ* XVI (1910-11), pp. 41-2

<sup>15</sup>*BB&OAJ* XVI (1910-11), p. 43

<sup>16</sup>Add. Ms. 36359, ff. 105-7

<sup>17</sup>Lipscomb (1847), p. 000

Society" and "Leighton Bros. Lith. 4 Red Lion Square".<sup>18</sup> There is a pen drawing from the SE, not dated or signed.<sup>19</sup> There is a photograph of the interior looking E,<sup>20</sup> published in Wigley (1981), which is the only known record of the chancel panelling that was removed in 1883.

## 16. J. Oldrid Scott's Restoration of 1883 and 1889

Archival and printed material related to this restoration survives as follows: *Report of the Committee* of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, 1884 (lamenting the proposed destruction of the chancel panelling, which was attributed to Sir Christopher Wren); Diocesan Faculty for the Restoration, Oxfordshire Archives, Ms. Oxf. dioc. papers c. 750 pp. 620-2; J. Oldrid Scott's own material, comprising 14 drawings and entries in two Ledgers, is in the RIBA as 85 1-14; Copies of some of the foregoing drawings, with the stamp of the Incorporated Church Building Society, are in the NMR; *The Builder*, XLVIII, 1885, p. 85; *The Bucks Herald*, 3 January 1885 (this contains an account of the rededication of the church, with some information on the various craftsmen involved in the restoration).

## 17. The Stained Glass

Nothing is known of the fate of the panel of mediaeval glass incorporated into the East Window by Robert Lowndes in 1700. It is not mentioned by either Sheahan (1862) or Clear (1894), and had presumably disappeared by 1862.

## 18. The Churchyard

On 20 October 1695 the archdeacon ordered the vicar and churchwardens "to make a gate in South East corner where the steps now are next to Steven Briggs Junr., situated in New Street and opposite over against the Royal Oak."<sup>21</sup>

The RCHM recorded a "Fragment of top of square shaft of a churchyard cross with trefoiled panels and crocketed finial; also moulded base of shaft, 15th century."<sup>22</sup> It is difficult to be entirely sure, but this sounds more like a subsidiary shaft than the main shaft, in which case the cross may have been more elaborate than one might imagine, with several subsidiary shafts surrounding the central shaft, perhaps providing a sheltered area at ground level.

All trace of these items has been lost.

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<sup>18</sup>There is a copy in the church vestry.

<sup>19</sup>There is a copy in the church vestry.

<sup>20</sup>There are copies in the church vestry and in the County Museum.

<sup>21</sup>*BB&OAJ* XVI (1910-11), p. 42

<sup>22</sup>RCHM (1912-13), vol. II pp. 341

## **Addendum dated July 2013**

Since the writing of the above paper, the Winslow History Group has performed an important service by transcribing and translating the 15th and 16th century Winslow wills and making them available over the internet on [www.winslow-history.org.uk](http://www.winslow-history.org.uk). David Noy has gone further and drawn attention to the significance of the wills for an understanding of St Laurence's in the 16th century. He noted a reference to a window in the will of John Couper, references to projected and other repairs to the porch, and references to the bells.<sup>23</sup>

This addendum links this new material with the earlier archaeological and architectural discussion.

### **12. New Windows –Perpendicular Period**

John Couper of Shipton bequeathed 6s 8d “to the great work of the window” (will dated 6th January 1453/4).<sup>24</sup> This is the only one of the approximately 140 Winslow wills dated before 1547 to include a bequest for a window, and the wording suggests a significant project that depended on contributions from many sources. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that he is referring to the largest window in the church, the chancel east window. This would give us a date of c. 1454 for this window.

It is just possible that the stonework had been completed some years before and that this date relates to the glazing of the window with coloured glass rather than to the original construction of the tracery. The tracery design is a slightly simplified form of that of the great window of Thame north transept, constructed in the 1440s by John Beckeley, probably to a design of Richard Winchcombe.<sup>25</sup>

### **13. The Porch and the Belfry**

Nine of the wills predating 1547 mention the church porch. William Baker bequeathed 20d “to the porch” (will dated 21st December 1456).<sup>26</sup> Thomas Perys of Shipton bequeathed 6s 8d “for the repair of the porch when the parishioners wish to do the porch” (will dated 24th January 1463/4).<sup>27</sup> John Davy bequeathed 6s 8d “to the maintenance of the porch” (will dated 8th September 1464).<sup>28</sup> William Tomlyns bequeathed 6s 8d “to the repair of the porch” (will dated 12th September 1464).<sup>29</sup> John Alben bequeathed 6s 8d “for the maintenance of the porch” (will dated 20th February 1463/4).<sup>30</sup> William Nasshe bequeathed 12d “to the repair of the porch” (will dated 21st March 1467).<sup>31</sup> John Coke of Shipton bequeathed 12d “for the maintenance of the porch” (will dated 4th April 1467).<sup>32</sup> John Laurence bequeathed 6s 8d “to the repair of the porch” (will dated 12th

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<sup>23</sup> Noy (2013), pp. 51-3

<sup>24</sup> Hertfordshire Record Office 1AR69

<sup>25</sup> Harvey (1978), pl. 120

<sup>26</sup> Hertfordshire Record Office 1AR87

<sup>27</sup> Hertfordshire Record Office 1AR108

<sup>28</sup> Hertfordshire Record Office 1AR111

<sup>29</sup> Hertfordshire Record Office 1AR112

<sup>30</sup> Hertfordshire Record Office 1AR109

<sup>31</sup> Hertfordshire Record Office 1AR120

<sup>32</sup> Hertfordshire Record Office 1AR121

September 1467).<sup>33</sup> Thomas Jenken of Shipton bequeathed two bushels of malt to the “repair of the porch” (will dated 12th November 1470).<sup>34</sup>

There is a striking concentration of bequests in the years 1463-71. There is a reference dated January 1463/4 to projected repairs, and the pecuniary bequests amount to the substantial sum of £1 15s 4d. There must be a strong probability that we are here dealing not with routine maintenance but with the complete rebuilding of the porch. This would give us a date of 1464-71 for the porch, which would be entirely suitable architecturally.

Three substantial bequests stand out among the numerous bequests to the bells, the rest of which are usually of a few pence or of a bushel or two of grain,. William Parkin bequeathed the substantial sum of 20s to the *campanul’* and to the *campana* (will dated 14th August 1471).<sup>35</sup> Donatus Alen bequeathed 6s 8d “for the repair in general of the bells” (will dated 24th November 1471).<sup>36</sup> Stephen Albyn bequeathed 6s 8d “to the maintenance of the bells” (will dated 12th August 1477).<sup>37</sup> Bequests to the bells in the 1470s totalling £1 13s 4d are not in themselves proof of substantial work on the tower, but a date in the 1470s for the belfry and battlements stage would be entirely suitable architecturally.

## 18. The Churchyard

Noy notes the evidence for a cross in the Market Place: thus John Borne, vicar of Winslow, bequeathed 40d “to the Crosse in the Market Place” (will dated January 1493).<sup>38</sup> The two fragments of a cross recorded in the churchyard in 1911 may not have been in situ, and the most economical explanation is that these were fragments of the original Market Cross, perhaps removed from the Market Place as part of a clearance programme.

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<sup>33</sup> Hertfordshire Record Office 1AR120

<sup>34</sup> Hertfordshire Record Office 2AR1

<sup>35</sup> Hertfordshire Record Office 2AR4

<sup>36</sup> Hertfordshire Record Office 2AR6

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<sup>38</sup> Noy (2013), p. 44; Hertfordshire Record Office 2AR71v-72

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