

# **St Gregory's Minster, Kirkdale, North Yorkshire**

Archaeological Investigations and  
Historical Context

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ARCHAEOPRESS PUBLISHING LTD

Summertown Pavilion

18-24 Middle Way

Summertown

Oxford OX2 7LG

[www.archaeopress.com](http://www.archaeopress.com)

ISBN 978-1-78969-482-6

ISBN 978-1-78969-483-3 (e-Pdf)

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*To the many people, past and present, who have  
contributed towards our knowledge of Kirkdale*



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## Preface

There have been three earlier interim reports on this work (Watts *et al* 1996-7, Rahtz and Watts 1998-9, Rahtz and Watts 2002-4, as well as a report on the inscriptions (Watts *et al* 1997) and a summary paper on conversion at Kirkdale (Rahtz and Watts 2003). This report incorporates much of those publications. Further work was delayed by ill-health, death and its aftermath. It is nonetheless hoped that the present report will have benefited from this time-lag by incorporating a wider background than would have been possible if earlier publication had been achieved.

## Acknowledgement

We would like to thank the clergy, the church wardens and parishioners of Kirkdale for their support and the Diocesan Advisory Council for a work faculty; and the Shaw family (and their tenants, E Wood and M Brown) for their permission to excavate in land beyond the church. We are grateful for financial support from the Dept of Archaeology, University of York, under Professor M Carver, who has also encouraged this report; to the Helmsley Archaeological Society, The North Yorkshire National Park, The Research Laboratory for Archaeology and the History of Art, University of Oxford, the Royal Commission of Historical Monuments (England), the Society for Medieval Archaeology and the late Mrs Anne Taylor. We would also like to thank many other individuals, colleagues, friends and helpers in excavation and writing-up: Dr P Addyman and York Archaeological Trust, M Allison, A Aspinall, Professor G Astill, the late Professor M Aston, C Barclay, Rev S Binks, Professor J Blair, S Bowman, Professor S Bradley, C Briden, the late Professor D Brothwell, Dr M Brown, Dr P Buckland, Professor J Burton, the late Dr L Butler, Dr E Cambridge, the late L Capstick, R Chappel, A Charles, Claridges of Helmsley, T Clark, A Copp, P Craddock, Professor R Cramp, Professor P Dixon, the late Professor R Fletcher, J Garnier-Lahire, the late Dr G Gaunt, Dr H Geake, the late Mrs M Gelling, Dr J Grenville, Professor J Hawkes, Ben Heaney of Archaeopress, the late Dr J Higgitt, Professor T Higham, A Jackson, A James, the late S Jennings, Dr A Jones, the late Professor W Kennedy, the late Dr J Lang, M Long of Press Green Press Ltd, G Lee, the late I McClean, Dr A Mainman, Professor R Morris, Professor E Okasha, the late T Pacitto, the late Professor R Page, S Paynter, Dr T Pickles, Professor D Powlesland (particularly for his photographic support since 2011), the late Professor J Price, Professor D Rollason and Dr L Rollason who have been particularly supportive, P Ryder, J Szymanski, R Thorley, D van den Toorn, the late Dr A Vince, P Walton Rogers, Dr B Wharton, Dr J Wright, Mrs G Wood, and the members of the 2014 Kirkdale seminar, M Hare, Dr R Gem, Professor D Stocker, Dr A Woodward, the late P Woodward.

The excavation team included J Allison, M Atkinson, M Boyton, C Colbourne, J Farquer, T Fawcett, D Haycock, L Henderson, A Hirst, C and J Melton, A Munnery, P Thomas, C West and D Wilcox. Matthew Rahtz helped in excavation and has been the indefatigable computer problem-solver without whose support this report could not have been produced.

# Chapter 1

## The Site of Kirkdale

### 1.1 Introduction

The partly Anglo-Saxon church of St Gregory's Minster, Kirkdale, a still-functioning although not a village church, is situated in an uninhabited valley, often experienced as a place of notable beauty and tranquillity, in the heart of rural Ryedale, North Yorkshire. Archaeological work here began in 1994, when advice was sought on the instability of the C19 west tower (note 1). An existing inspection-hole of its foundations was re-examined; and archaeological excavations and watching briefs began from there, the last being in 2014. These initially focused on the west and north exteriors of the church. A preliminary evaluation and then a research design for Kirkdale and its environs were gradually formulated, with the basic objective of using topographical survey, excavation and structural analysis of the fabric to provide the archaeological characterisation of a largely-undocumented pre-Conquest church and its setting in terms of the building(s) represented on its site, the quality of deposits in various locations, and the definition of phases of activity in its immediate vicinity where there are open fields. The cut-off point for the main research was the mid-C11, the date of a dedication above the south doorway. It was hoped that this work in turn would contribute towards such questions as whether Kirkdale had been monastic with a landed estate or whether it is better understood as a church. As a non-funded project, this work was always intended to be a small-scale evaluation; c124 sq m have been excavated, c0.36% of the area between the south bank of the Hodge Beck in the North Field and the south edge of the South Field where it abuts the road.

### 1.2 Location, topography and environs (figs 1.1-5, pl 1.1-2)

Kirkdale is a name variously applied to the church of St Gregory's Minster, to the lower part of the valley in which it is located and to a parish. The church lies in one of numerous approximately north-south such dales on the southern edge of the North Yorkshire Moors, just before it opens out into the rich agricultural land of the Vale of Pickering and where the neighbouring Hodge Beck joins the R Rye (note 2). In the C19, Kirkdale was a perpetual curacy with 25 acres of glebe land (Parker 1858, 7) and before 1831, it headed a parish of dispersed settlement that extended from moorland to the north to the low-lying carr to

the south, comprising eight townships (including Welburn, the township in which the church was then listed, and Beadlam (Page ed 1914, 517) ), mostly north of the R Rye and all west of the settlement of Kirkbymoorside; its present southern point is approximately at the confluence of the R Rye, the Hodge Beck and the R Dove (note 3). The parish was described in 1866 as being 'extensive and unwieldy', 'so very extensive, being 60 miles in circumference and 17 in length' that the then vicar had 'been compelled to keep a horse and groom' (letter of Chas Tudor, Oxford University Archives, UC/FF/143/2/1).

The dale is the result of river-wear, which in former millennia will have cut down roughly to the level of the present flood-plain, doubtless with braided channels moving from side to side. There was some interruption to this process between c18,000 – 13,000 BC, at the end of the last glaciation, when drainage from the whole of the Vale of Pickering was impeded by glacial build-up near the coast. This is thought to have resulted in the creation of 'Lake Pickering', with surface level at c70m AOD and water extending into tributary valleys such as Kirkdale, probably reaching as far up as Sleightholmedale (info B Wharton). An alternative view is that, instead of a lake, there was a mass of stagnant ice, with melting edges (pers comm R Cooke). Accumulated water finally drained through a cut developed near Kirkham Abbey, now the southward course of the R Derwent. This episode is relevant to understanding the substrata and topography of Kirkdale.

The church itself occupies a sheltered position at c47m AOD, in the narrower and more steeply sloping lower reaches of the valley of the Hodge Beck with access to stone, mineral and wood resources as well as hunting (cf Page ed 1914, 511). It is optimally-positioned to avoid extreme flood damage, but this means that it does not have access to year-long water (cf Ch 10). In dry weather the Hodge Beck sinks underground. It is one of several streams in the area, where over geological time, water sunk through superficial deposits of gravel and clay before encountering more resistant rock to produce channels, some now underground and others, such as Kirkdale Cave just to the south of the church, left stranded above-ground as the river cut deeper.

The geological make-up of this fault-controlled area is complex, with the major locally-available stone being

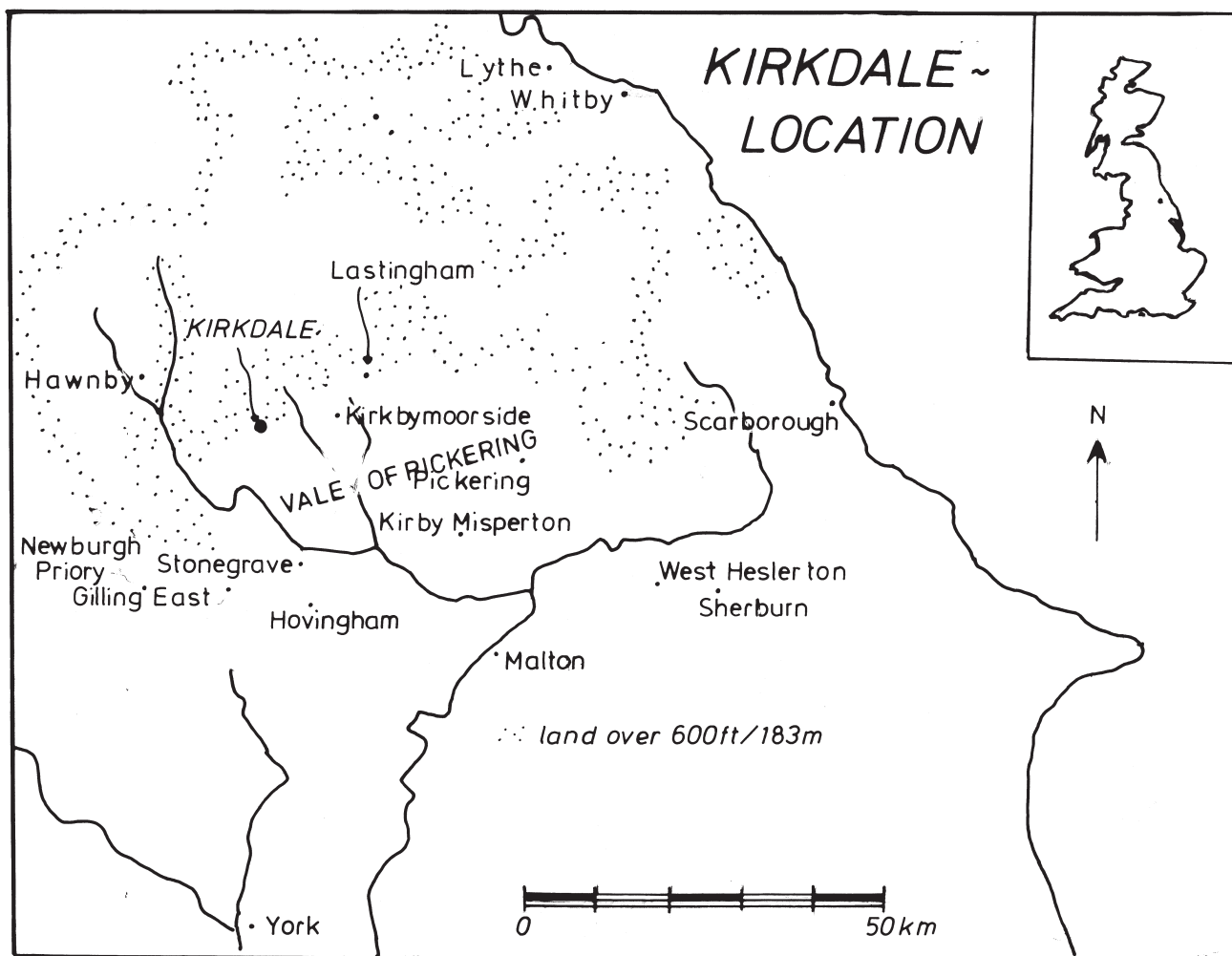


Figure 1.1 Location

limestone (including Middle and Upper Jurassic), but with smaller quantities of sandstones, gritstones, coal, jet and shale, and even some ice-transported lava boulders (Kendall and Wrott 1924, 6, 446, 522; Senior in Lang 1991, 11-3). Limestone and sandstone have been used for structures in the area since at least the Roman period (cf at the nearby Beadlam Roman villa, Neal 1996 eg 14, 35). Quarrying in the immediate area, both to the north and south of the church, probably contributed to the church fabric. Further afield are the rich quarry sources of the Middle Jurassic deltaic sandstone of Aislaby near Whitby, which were still functioning in the C19; and near Malton, the Upper Jurassic Hildenley quarries that include a fine-grained limestone, which also functioned until recently (Senior in Lang 1991, 14-5). 'Freestones' were seasonally removed from the moors between March and May in the C18 (Hayes 1988a, 59). Iron and other materials suitable for manufacturing are also available from the moors (Harrison 1989, 164-83).

In the immediate vicinity of Kirkdale, to the west of the church, bedrock is reached at about a metre below the

surface; closer to the church, the subsoil encountered comprises sand, sandy clay and clay (hence the instability of the tower).

Kirkdale is thus in the flood-plain of the Hodge Beck, with a long history of down-cutting, braiding and terracing. At the north of the North Field, the river crosses the valley from west to east, deflected by a low subsidiary cliff, so that it flows past the east side of the church and churchyard. This sub-cliff can be traced as a terrace along the west side of the North Field, through the churchyard and, more positively, through the South Field. The North Field and probably the South Field have been subject to ploughing (note 4).

There are indications of probably post-medieval habitation in the valley above the church. Three caves are mentioned in the early C18 as having been inhabited (Parker 1980, 25) (note 5). Earthworks and wall foundations can be seen in Fields D and E (note 6). To the south of the church, a circular earthwork on the hill NW of Field F is a former lime kiln (inf the late Major JHR Shaw).



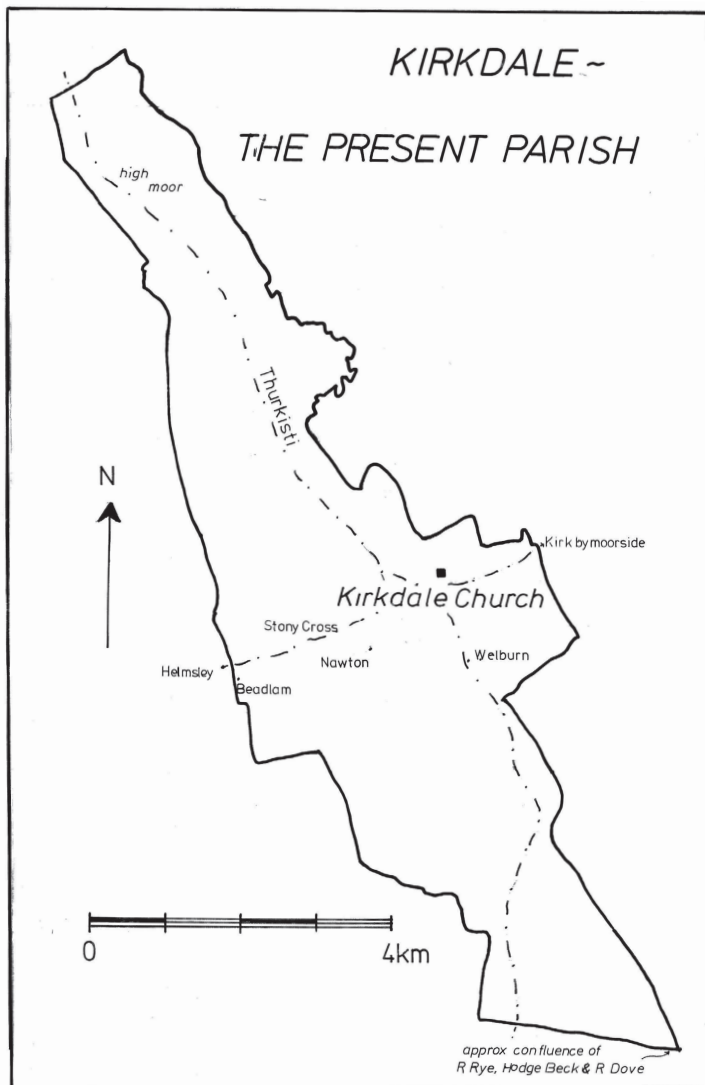


Figure 1.2 The present parish

The present by-road which runs east-west close to the church was formerly the main turnpike road from Helmsley to Kirkbymoorside, replaced in the C19 by a route further into the vale. The old road drops sharply down to cross the Hodge Beck by a ford which is impassable in times of flood, where the narrowness of the dale results in deep, fast-flowing water; this crossing-point may nonetheless be related to the location of the church.

Apart from the church and burial ground around it, there are post-medieval buildings along the lane leading from the former turnpike road to the church. The present churchyard immediately around the church has various well-defined burial areas of different recent dates, with the oldest part being around the church and the most recent to the south of the church (note 7). The extent to which these may have encroached on former buildings is unknown. A few items have been recorded from grave digging (note 8). There is also a modern

extension to the graveyard to the north of the lane leading to the church.

### 1.3 Summary of historical background

Although the full details cannot yet be assembled, it is clear that within a radius of some 15-20 kms of Kirkdale, there is complex archaeologically-derived evidence for all areas of life, secular and religious, from at least the pre-Roman period onwards (cf Ottaway 2013; Rahtz and Watts 2003, 291-7). In this essentially rural area, during the prehistoric and Roman periods much of the occupation was, like now, in non-nucleated settlements (Harrison and Roberts 1989, 94; Neal 1996, 40; Wilson 1995, fig 6.2), where longevity has probably contributed to their archaeological non-visibility. Contact between them was facilitated by a variety of north-south routes through the valleys on the south side of the Moors; and east-west along both the north and south sides of the Vale of Pickering, eastwards to the coast and the North Sea. York was increasingly accessible to the south during the Roman period, when new roads were probably implemented as well as many of the earlier routeways apparently continued, with upgrading of major routes, such as that between Malton and Hovingham. In the area around Kirkdale, existing access appears to have continued (cf McDonnell ed 1963, 272-5; Neal and Wilson in Neal 1996, 40; Ottaway *et al* 2003, 2-3; Pickles 2009, 6). *Thurkilsti*, a route with a probably pre-Roman origin, can be traced from the North Yorkshire Moors, passing close to the

west side of Kirkdale and then onto Welburn to cross the R Rye further south near East Ness and to continue to Stonegrave and Hovingham where it joined known Roman roads (note 9).

During the Roman period, Kirkdale was in the rural hinterland to the north of York and NW of Malton. By the late Roman period, Kirkdale is likely to have been part of a stable, well-regulated area, where dispersed settlement was probably largely dependent on major villa-based estates, such as those of Beadlam and Hovingham. The late C4-early C5 transition from what is conventionally referred to as the late Roman to the post-Roman in the North Yorkshire area is however still unclear (Wilson 2003a, 55). Any such processes may have been localised rather than all-enveloping and change can be expected to have progressed at different rates in different areas.

By the late C6-early C7, it is currently-accepted that groups now known as the Anglo-Saxons were gaining

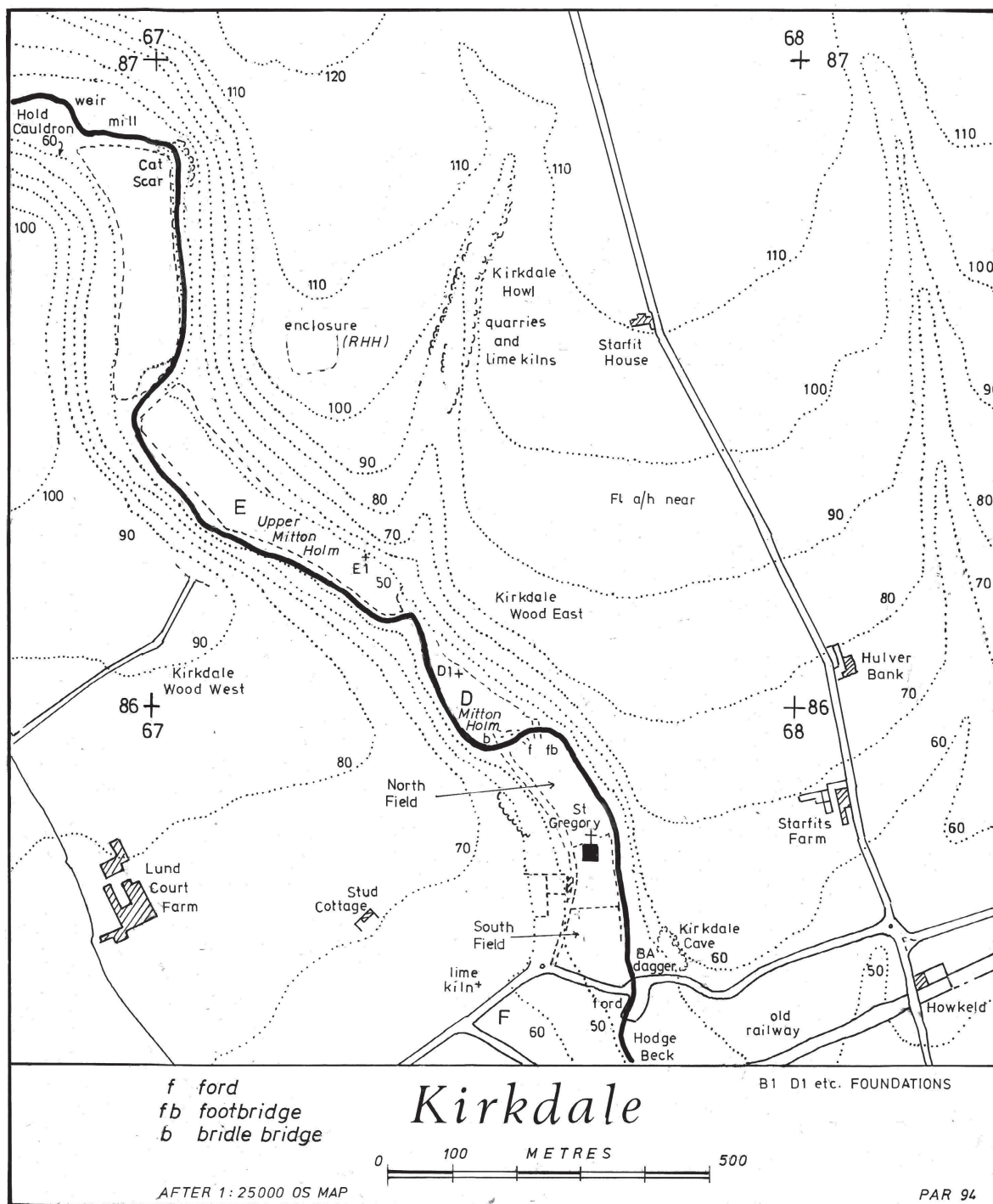


Figure 1.3 Kirkdale valley

territories; they included the *Laestingas*, who came to be associated with Lastingham, a monastery known from Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica* (note 10), c6.25km to the NE of Kirkdale. Kirkbymoorside, c2.5km to the NE, was another place relevant to the history of Kirkdale, which is known by the C9 to have become important. In the later pre-Conquest period, Anglo-Scandinavian influence in this area was significant, marked by the name of Kirkdale itself and in the Anglo-Scandinavian name of Orm Gamalson on the sundial inscription over the south doorway, by which time the church appears to

have been within the estate of Kirkbymoorside. By the C12, the sub-property of the Kirkbymoorside estate to which Kirkdale was attached was clearly Welburn, when the church and its 'vale' formed an island surrounded by the property of Rievaulx Abbey (cf McDonnell ed 1963, 111; Watts *et al* 1996-7, 2). The former extensive land-base of Orm Gamalson's family was reflected in subsequent administrative divisions, with the northern part of it subsumed in the Domesday wapentake of Maneshou (Wrathmell 2012, 186); its successor, the wapentake of Ryedale, was a crown property (Page ed 1914, 460).



Figure 1.4 Kirkdale cavern, by Rev W Conybeare (Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society, 1822, part 1)



Plate 1.1 Aerial photograph of the valley (Crown copyright)



Plate 1.2 The church and north churchyard wall, with the Hodge Beck in the background

#### 1.4 The church of St Gregory

The earliest manifestation of the church before this project began was represented by two *ex situ* late C8-C9 elaborate grave-covers, ST 7 and 8 (Lang 1991, 161-3). The earliest visible fabric was thought to be the west wall of the nave and the crossing between the nave and chancel, which had been associated with the implicit date contained within the sundial inscription of 1055-65. The latter provides the earliest known reference to the dedication of the church, its designation as a minster and the name of the person who had recently purchased a 'ruined and collapsed' church which he had rebuilt (*cf* Taylor and Taylor 1965, 357-61). The rest of the fabric was assumed to be of a later date, the north arcade and aisle of c1200, with subsequent adjustments throughout the medieval period including a 'north chapel' adjacent to the nave/chancel junction. Alterations continued, so that by the early C19, it was observed that 'the... church has been repaired and altered on all sides again and again' (Young 1817, 742); the following century was marked by three major restorations, as well as by the construction of the tower.

The church was a possession of Newburgh Priory from the mid-C12 until the Reformation (Fletcher 1990, 12; Burton 2010, 12); this can be expected to have influenced development at Kirkdale. In the early C17, the living of this church was placed under the patronage of the University of Oxford (Fletcher 1990,

12), which is pertinent here as this resulted in a large volume of documentation, but it also diverted revenues that might otherwise have been spent on the church.

#### 1.5 The placename

Kirkdale's placename is of relevance in defining St Gregory's Minster's place within pre-Conquest society. 'Kirk' is usually accepted as an Anglo-Scandinavian placename form referring to a pre-existing church (*ie* a church of the pre-C9), possibly of elevated status (Gelling 1981, 4; V Watts 2000-1, 12; Wrathmell 2012, 190). In the case of Kirkdale and Kirkbymoorside, these have been interpreted as places with churches that had formerly belonged to the ecclesiastical estate of Lastingham (Pickles 2009, 31). Alternative derivations have also been suggested. One would associate the name with a specialist function, that of burial, which could have taken place either in association with a church (inside or outside) or without such a building (Hayes in Parker 1980, 7). Other influences could have included sanctuaries and enclosures (*cf* Morris 1989, 63-81) or an earlier name that had something in common with the meaning of the 'eccles' names found elsewhere in the country, signifying earlier Christian locations (see also note 10.58).

#### 1.6 Recent historiography of the church

How the church was described and interpreted in the recent past is important to attitudes towards the

church when excavation began, especially in relation to whether it had been a monastery and where that might have been located; and in relation to what aspects of the archaeology had already been recognised (note 11).

Kirkdale had appeared in a number of late C18-early C19 publications, the first known of which was a presentation of the newly-discovered sundial inscription (revealed after a plaster coating was removed, Young 1817, 742), together with documentary and genealogical details that were to form the basis of subsequent expositions (Brooke 1779), many written by locally-based, antiquarian-inclined clergymen, that dwelt on what were seen as the romantic aspects of its location (note 12). The church, along with many others at that time (note 13), was also subject to a major building programme early in the C19, when a western tower was constructed, the south wall of the nave rebuilt and internal changes were implemented that included extending the seating capacity for the swelling local population. Kirkdale also featured in a fresh definition of architectural classification (Rickman 1825, 351) (note 14).

The delineation of the Anglo-Saxon origins of Christianity in this country, particularly as described by Bede in the *EH*, was another of the wide-spread interests of the C19 (cf Bradley 2006; Bradley 2008, 361-2). At Kirkdale, the recognition of the sundial inscription provided the impetus for enquiry into its Anglo-Saxon background (Watts *et al* 1997, 76), and, by the middle of the C19, it had been assigned the status of a monastery (Tudor 1876, 5). This was the result of a long chain of inference, developed in association with the Rev D H Haigh (note 15): recognition of pre-C11 sculpture in the exterior west wall of the church (Lang 1991's ST 7 and 8) included a proposed runic inscription, interpreted as providing a named gravestone to Oethilwald; this was linked with the early C19 discovery of a cave (fig 1.4; now realised to belong to a pre-human period - Boylan 1972; Boylan 1981; Boylan 1997; George 1998), near the crossing of the Hodge Beck below the church (note 16). Both elements were conflated so that a potent synthesis resulted in the hypothesis that Bede's description in *HE* iii.23 of the foundation of a monastery at *Laestingaeu* should be transposed to Kirkdale. By the mid 1870s, physical evidence of such a suggested monastery had been equated with earthworks to the south of the then-churchyard (eg Frank 1875, 39; Tudor 1876, 7) (note 17). Such a monastic identification of Kirkdale, imagined in conventional post-Conquest terms, remained current, especially in the church guide, until the 1980s and still casts a shadow (note 18).

In contrast, current understanding of the term 'minster', as used in the sundial inscription, probably the English equivalent of *monasterium*, associates it not with the regularised monasticism of the post-Conquest

period but instead with the much more varied religious establishments that are now envisaged to have been current at an earlier date (Blair 2005, 3), so much so that every minster merits individual characterisation.

Other significant developments at Kirkdale during the C19, overlapping with the above hypothesis, involved the remarkably early application of archaeological thought processes to the building (cf Gerrard 2003). Realisation that Kirkdale was an early church, signalled by its dedicatory association with Pope Gregory (Brooke 1779, 191), was followed by the recognition that the existing church included *in situ* Anglo-Saxon fabric (Young 1817, 742). Sculpture of an earlier date than the sundial was recognised in the 'ancient monument slabs [ST 7 and ST 8] built into the west wall' (Rickman 1825, 351). Their vulnerability to the weather in that location and thus the need to relocate them was voiced (Haigh 1879, 150); and, when they were finally moved in the early C20, it was realised that they had been built into the west wall as it was built (Watts 1997) (note 19). Recognition that the sundial was not *in situ*, certainly not after the early C19 (Rickman 1825, 351), led to doubts that the sundial dated the (pre-early C19) south wall (Morris and Cambridge 1989, 19). At a remarkably early stage in the development of archaeological thinking, it was suggested that the earthworks of the putative monastery might be 'determined' archaeologically (Tudor 1876, 7) and that objects such as stone coffins should be regarded as of archaeological importance (Tudor 1876, 9) (note 20).

Many of these ideas appear to have been available locally by the 1850s when Thomas Parker was writing his first unpublished manuscript (Parker 1858) (note 21). They were also later summarised in a work of critical importance for Kirkdale archaeologically, CLR Tudor's *A Brief Description of Kirkdale Church* (1876) (note 22). As the London-based architect-son of a Kirkdale vicar, he exemplified the early Anglo-Saxon Christian interest shown in Kirkdale and summarised the current discussion about it; he extended ideas on its origins by suggesting a pre-Anglo-Saxon beginning (Tudor 1876, 4), as well as providing a commentary on the church in 1821, prior to the first known extensive restoration; he sporadically referred to the 1827 restoration of the nave and to other internal repairs and alterations (note 23). The advantages of having apparently grown-up at Kirkdale enabled him to provide unusual local information, including 'a strange custom' that at one time prevailed at Kirkdale, 'that of collecting any bones or other remains which might be found in digging fresh graves and piling them in a heap against the wall'. His greatest individual contribution as a professional architect was the measured plan and elevations of the church, inside and out (an early date for this to be achieved), before the later restorations. Without these, much less could be argued about both the above and

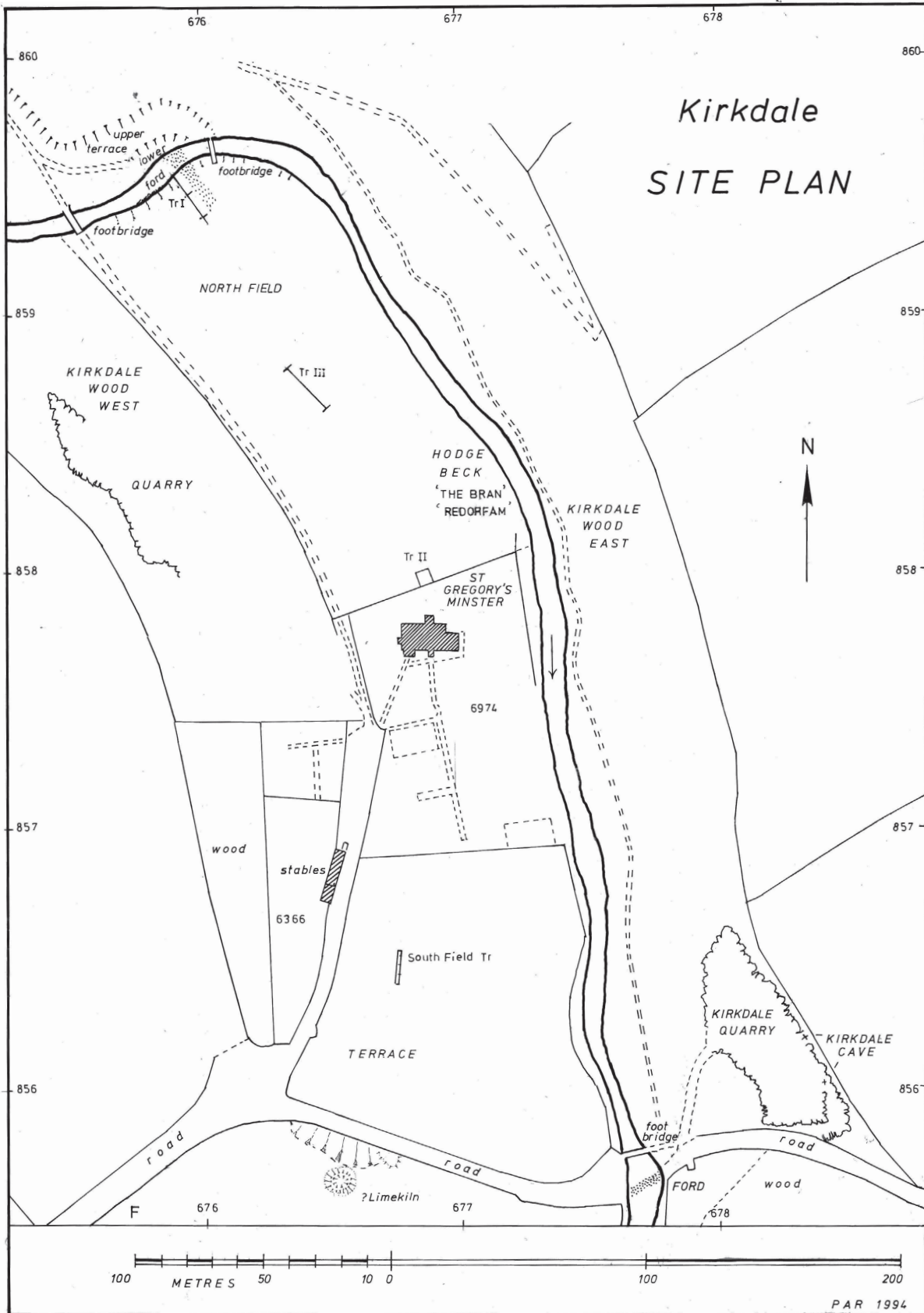


Figure 1.5 Site plan

below the ground archaeology of Kirkdale: Tudor's drawings are of fundamental importance to this report.

Other notable events at Kirkdale in the C19-early C20 were three restorations. That of 1827 concentrated on the nave (note 24). In 1881, the chancel was rebuilt; and the association of famous named Anglo-Saxons was continued (note 25). Later ideas circulating about the sculptures at Kirkdale included the proposition that they had only being placed there at a time after their date of manufacture (note 26). In the early C20, restoration of the nave was implemented by Rev FW Powell, vicar of Kirkdale between 1905-30, the person fundamentally responsible for preserving Kirkdale from the fate of redundancy in the wake of the creation in 1882-3 of an accessible new church in Nawton in a population-centre (Powell 1909, 28) (note 27). Powell's sister, a regular visitor to Kirkdale and supporter of the fund-raising needed for restoration, first recognised in print the potential importance of the 'NE Compartment' (the present vestry) (IDA, [Mrs Ada Day] *Worcester Herald*, 27.5.1905; cf Powell 1909, 35). From his three editions of a guide to Kirkdale (Powell 1907, ?1908, 1909) and from his correspondence with the University

of Oxford, it can be seen that he worked unceasingly to raise the necessary funding for this restoration; and that this continued long after this work was officially completed. In the restoration, Powell was concerned with preserving the archaeological character of what he considered to be this 'nationally-important church' of 'early historic origin' (cf letter of 20.2.1906, Oxford University Archives, UC/FF/143/4/1; *Kirkdale Magazine*, Nov 1906; Powell 1909, 39), removing in particular the later internal west gallery that obscured the Anglo-Saxon west opening and physically highlighting various aspects of the fabric that he considered significant (note 28).

### 1.7 A guide to the archaeological investigations of the church and its immediate surroundings (figs 1.3, 1.5-6)

The archaeological investigation of Kirkdale comprised the church building itself, above and below ground, and the fields to north and south along the river. Preparation for this work prompted the realisation that the lower plinth visible at the west end of the north exterior might be Anglo-Saxon (Watts *et al* 1996-7, 11-2). Excavation started in late 1994 with Trench I in the

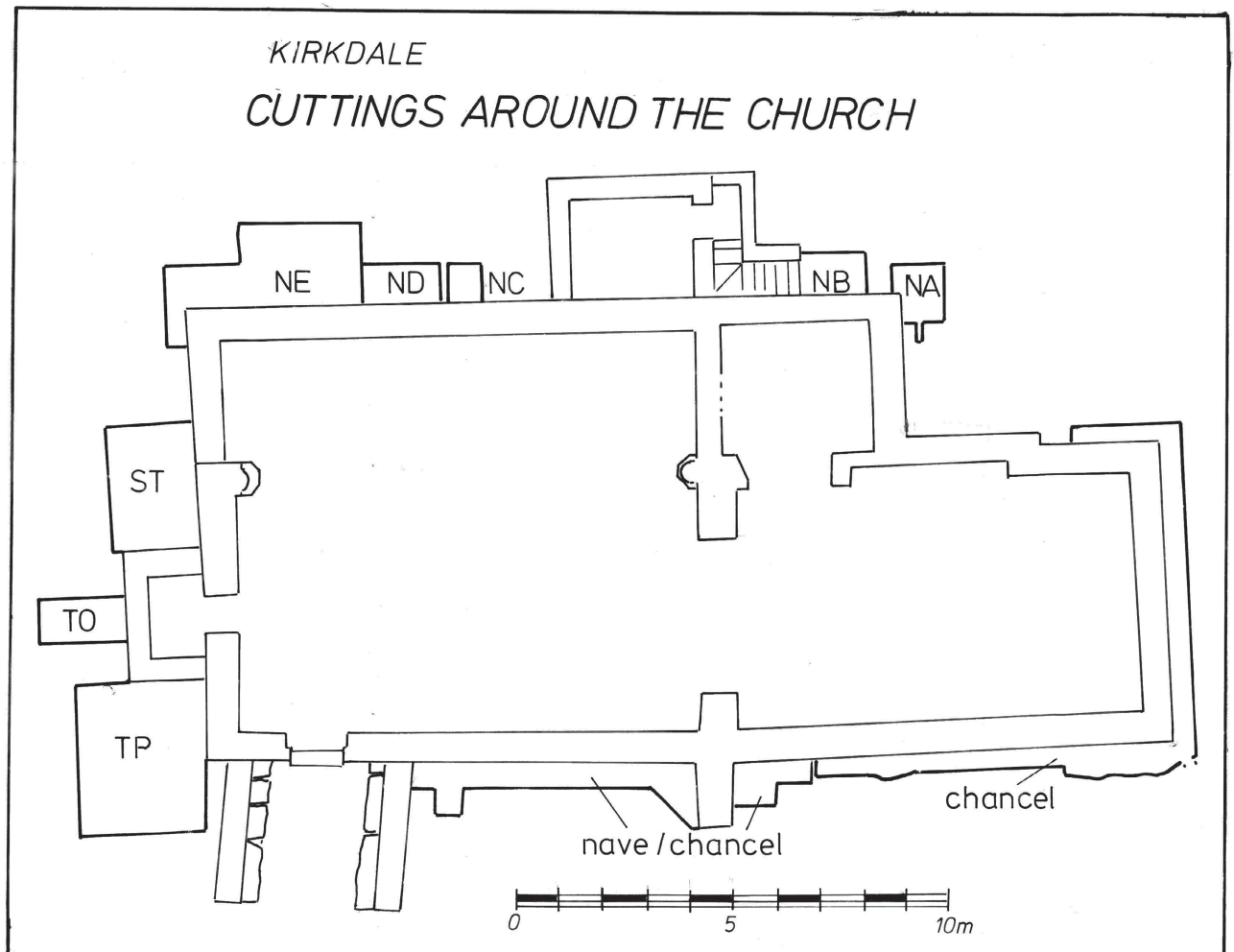


Figure 1.6 Locations of cuttings around the church

North Field, completed in 1995; other work in 1995 comprised Trench TO which extended the intervention of the church's structural engineer, and Trench ST to the north of the tower (both on the nave west exterior); and extensive fieldwork, complementary geophysical surveys under T Pacitto and J Garnier-Lahire, stone-by-stone recording and structural analysis of the west exterior face of the nave under Dr J Grenville (the last two of the Dept of Archaeology, University of York), and documentary research. Trench II, in the North Field, was excavated between 1995-7. In 1996, a small intervention was also opened on the north exterior of the church, but not fully excavated until 1998, when extensive work was done in this area. Trench TP, to the south of the tower, was dug between 1996-7 and Trench ST completed at the same time. Trench CW, on the south interior of the north churchyard wall opposite Trench II, was dug in 1997; test-holes in the South Field in 1998; Trench III in the North Field in 1999; the exterior of the south nave wall and nave/chancel junction in 2000; and the chancel exterior in 2014 (all excavations except Trench CW are located on figs 1.5-6; Trench CW is marked on fig 7.1).

All excavations were done by hand, except for Trench III, which was machine-dug; and the chancel trenches, which were dug by contractors. Heavy soils were removed principally by mattocks, forks, spades and shovels, with trowels used for individual features, graves and other sensitive areas. Black-and-white photographs and colour slides complimented the written and drawn records. All finds were recorded, but not all were kept. The north used is a notional one, based on an assumed east-west orientation of the church. Skeletal details are provided by Dr E Craig-Atkins. The size of the figures facilitates their easy comparability.

Chs 2-5 describe investigations of the church exterior (in the order west, north and south nave exteriors and nave/chancel junction; chancel exteriors); Ch 6 comprises the church interior; Ch 7 is concerned with the North Field, the north churchyard and the South Field. The phasing in Chs 2-7 relates only to the excavation in question. Ch 8 contains the analysis of human remains, Ch 9 the artefacts and Ch 10 the overview, where the individual area composite phasing is coordinated into master periods.



Plate 1.3 The sundial above the south door



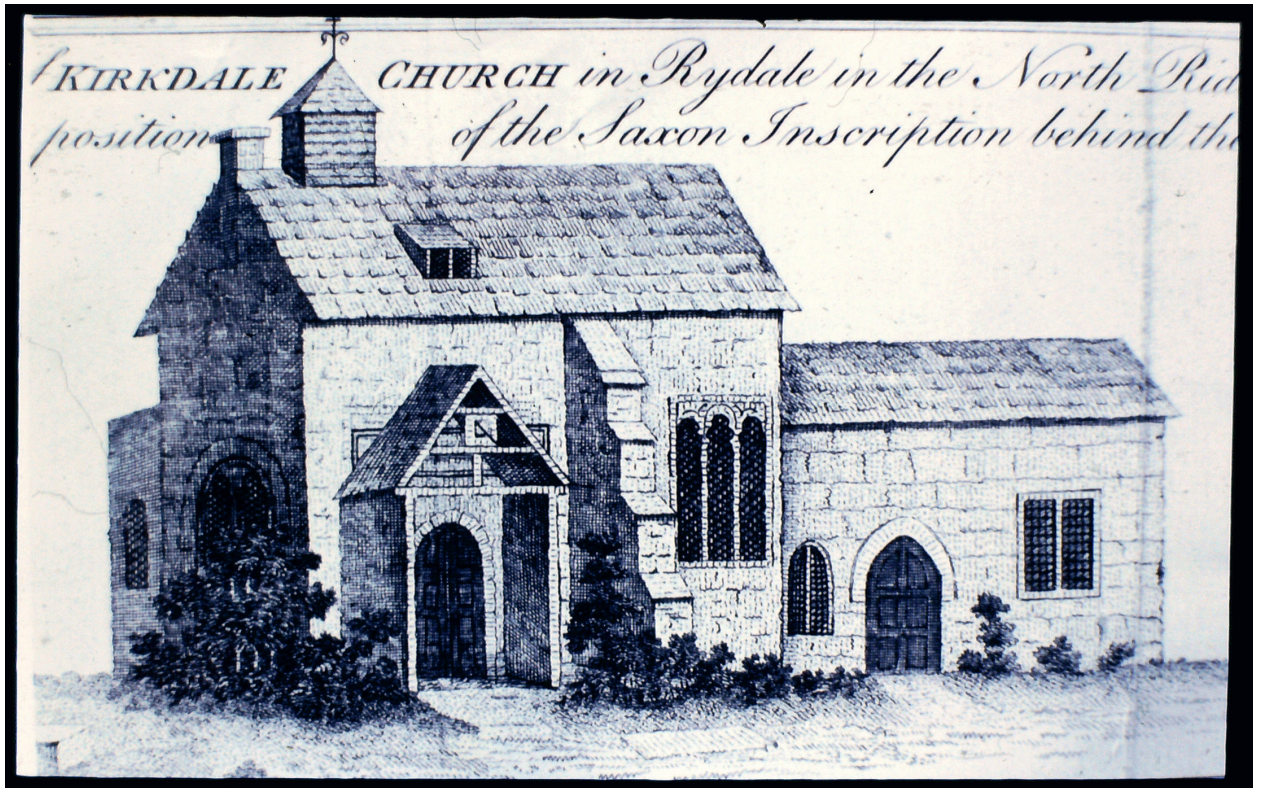


Plate 1.4 The south side of the church as depicted by Brooke 1779



Plate 1.5 Recording the tower



Plate 1.6 School party inspecting sarcophagus

## Notes

1. Advice was sought by Professor R Fletcher, a member of the Kirkdale congregation, from Professor M Carver, who in turn passed it on to Emeritus Professor P Rahtz who lived nearby; all three were members of the History and Archaeology Departments of the University of York. Philip Rahtz first became actively involved with Kirkdale when Richard Fletcher sought his comments on a metal bucket, then held by the church. Rahtz wrote a short paper on this that included information from Raymond Hayes (Rahtz 1990). This object, of uncertain date (it had been identified as either Roman or Byzantine) had been purchased abroad (info J Shaw, 2018).

The tower had long been a cause of trouble (see letter from W Weir to The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, May 18, 1907, Kirkdale Vicarage Archive).

The background to the project was informed by the decades-long project of the Council for British Archaeology and the Society for Antiquaries of London on the English Church (one of its earlier results was Rahtz and Watts 1997a), together with the recent publication of Morris 1990.

Kirkdale is a Grade 1 listed building.

2. The Hodge Beck in recent times has been referred to by various names, including 'Hodbeck fl' (on M Drayton's 1622 map of Yorkshire, Moreland and Bannister ed 1989/2010, 152) and The Bran (Phillips 1853, 87), presumably from its source in Bransdale. Earlier, it has been identified with the *Redofra* or *Redover* of the Rievaulx Charter (*Cartularium Rievallense*

1889, note 1). M Gelling suggested it probably had a Celtic root (pers comm 4.2000); more recently, V Watts suggested it was possibly a Primitive Welsh form meaning 'stream ford' (Watts 2000-1, 12; cf Ekwall 1936/1974, 338; Allison 2011-1, 35), thereby implying an ancient ford of the river.

3. Welburn is c1km below Kirkdale on the Hodge Beck, where water re-emerges after drought, its name meaning something like 'welling spring' (Ekwall 1936/1974, 504). Roman finds have been found in this area (Hayes 1998b, 47; also cf Ch 10). Welburn is recorded in Domesday Book in the second group of berewicks belonging to Kirkbymoorside (Faull and Stinson 1986, 23N 19-21). *Waltune* is a lost Domesday placename in the neighbourhood of present-day Welburn (Fletcher 1998, 2), considered by V Watts to refer to pre-Anglo-Saxon inhabitants (Watts 2000-1, 13).

4. The North and South Fields were named Fields C and B in Watts *et al* 1996-7.

5. The probable site of these caves has been located, but they are no longer visible, presumably having been filled-in. They may have been natural or man-made and suitable for eremitical retreat.

6. Building E1 may be the 'hospital' (in the 'Widows Closes') referred to in the C19 (Parker 1980, 24) and building D1 may also be a former dwelling.

People described as 'de Kirkdale' or as living in the vicinity of Kirkdale, at for example Mitton Holme occur in the Parish Registers from the late C16ff (transcripts seen at Kirkdale Vicarage Archive, 1995).

7. The oldest known post-medieval gravestone is of 1699 (Parker 1980, 22).

8. See ST 22, ST 27 (also ST 40) and a lost stone coffin (Parker 1980, 19); also see Tudor quoted below.

9. *Thurkilsti* or *Thurkilesti* is a Scandinavian name, meaning Thorkell's Track (pers comm S Bradley) – see Ch 10, note 49.

10. Henceforth abbreviated to *HE*.

11. Pictorial representations of the church between the late C18 and the present can be found in Watts *et al* 1996-7, figs 5, 6, 7, 8 and 11.

12. Such descriptions are exemplified by that of Brooke: 'The situation of *Kirkdale* church ... is extremely beautiful, though the building itself makes but a mean appearance... , having little that is worth observation, except the inscription, either externally or within. It is situated in a fruitful vale, surrounded with hanging woods, and watered by a brook; the whole secluded from the world being far removed from any inhabitants, and well adapted to give us an idea of the wisdom and piety of our Saxon ancestors in chusing for such a purpose, a situation so well calculated to inspire with devotion' (Brooke 1779, 200).

Eastmead extended such views to Kirkdale's churchyard, which he considered 'favourable' 'for the exercise of the pious mind'. 'What reflective person can stand, in this lonely situation, and roam amongst the green hillocks which cover the ashes of the dead, without having impressed on his mind the softest and most sympathetic feeling ... The good man directs his views from this repository of the dead to that time when re-animation will actuate every particle of dust of those who slumber' etc (Eastmead 1824, 157-8).

A more pragmatic assessment was that of a late C18 land agent who described the church as standing 'in a Dreary tho' not unpleasant narrow Valley, not a House within half a Mile of it' (1790 *Survey of Kirkdale* by Mr. Jackson, University of Oxford Archive SEP/36/16).

13. Other C19 local restoration included the nave and chancel of Hovingham church, which were rebuilt in 1860 (Pevsner 1966/1973, 193; Worsley 1967, 3); Kirkbymoorside church tower was rebuilt in 1802 and the church as a whole was restored in between 1873-5 under Sir Giles Gilbert Scott (Page ed 1914, 515); Lastingham chancel was altered in 1824 and restored in 1879 (Weston 1914, 67-68; Pevsner 1966/1973, 225). Such restoration was itself part of the retrenchment of the Church of England against the increased pressure from other sects (*cf* Sheils 2014). Local population was at its peak in the early C19 (Page ed 1914, 521).

14. Kirkdale did not appear in the first two editions of Rickman's *Attempt To Discriminate The Styles of Architecture In England*. 'The third edition was greatly extended, particularly with regard to the northern counties of England' (pers comm Adrian James, assistant librarian, Society of Antiquaries of London, 2. 2014). Rickman is one of the architectural authorities cited in Tudor 1876 (eg 7 note).

15. The Catholic Rev Daniel Henry Haigh published copiously during the 1840s-70s, although not directly on Kirkdale (which itself may be significant). He was a pursuer of the contemporary interest in northern runic impressions; at the time he had a very mixed press (contrast Frank 1888, 115 and Anon 1894, 230). Haigh is known to have visited Kirkdale in

1846, 1856 (when he made guttapercha impressions of the supposed runes, Parker 1858, 7) and in 1870, when more casts were made and a drawing of them, then given to Frank (Frank 1888, 115, and located on the stone, at its head and on the extremities of the cross-arms in figure p136; *cf* fig 9.5b; also Tudor 1876, 8-9). The runes were apparently only recognised from the rubbings (Tudor 1876, 8).

Although Kirkdale was identified as a monastery in print by him by 1857 (Haigh 1857, 173; Tudor 1876, 4-6), Haigh himself appears to have been reluctant to voice further assertions himself in print and instead left it to others. Thus Tudor quoted verbatim from Haigh. The runes, he said, '... were not all distinct, but some were so, and there were traces of others. Thus he had the name of Oethilwald preceded by his title, and apparently the beginning of the word gebiddath, 'pray'; so that he fancied the script must have been on the line at the head of the stone, and ended at the foot now hidden by the tower [this was 'read' when the stone was still in the west exterior face of the church]. Mr. Haigh only read the name CYNING OETHILWALD. The B before, and the <sup>x</sup>/<sub>g</sub> after, he thought were parts of an inscription began above, finished below. The beginning might contain the name of anybody who carved it. The end word 'gebiddath theore soule', pray for the soul.' (Tudor 1876, 8-9).

From Tudor's report of another strand of Haigh's reasoning, it might be surmised that he had in fact 'recognised' the runes in 1846, as he reported: 'When Mr. Haigh first visited Kirkdale in the summer of 1846, he says he found 'these sepulchral monuments [ST 7 and 8].....which, to his mind, gave decisive evidence that the monastery to which they belonged had existed in the seventh century; and when he considered the loneliness of the site, and, above all, the *Hyena's Cave* in the opposite cliff, he saw that it was exactly what Ven. Boeda described - the site of the monastery of Laestingaen..' (Tudor 1876, 6) (Oethilwald or Oethelwald was the sub-king Bede associated with the founding of this monastery (*HE* iii.23)).

Professor R Page comments on Haigh's runes included 'are all genuine rune forms except for his letter for initial c/k..'; the formula starting cyning is in reverse order to usual presentation. He cited examples where the runes are confined to a small space, as was supposed to be the case with ST 7' (letter, 18.9.1996, in excavation archive).

No photograph has been found of Haigh, but the 'Anglo-Saxon Messenger' called 'Haigha' who struck 'Anglo-Saxon attitudes', in the chapter on The Lion and The Unicorn in Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass* is thought to be a caricature of Haigh – Carroll had northern connections – and provides a vivid idea of Haigh physically: walking 'very slowly', going into 'curious attitudes' 'skipping up and down, and wriggling like an eel... with great hands spread out like fans on either side' (Carroll nd, 198). Tenniel's illustration shows a hare with large ears and hands and spindly legs (the late J Lang, Helmsley Archaeological Society Lecture, 1996).

The whereabouts of guttapercha impressions, rubbings and 'casts' taken of the suspected inscription on ST 7 are unknown. For further details of Haigh, see Watts 1997, Watts 1998-9.

16. Kirkdale Cave, on the east side of the Hodge Beck, c.0.25km south of the church, was famous from the time of its discovery in 1821, revealed when workmen were removing stone to reduce to road gravel. It is a now-dry cave in the Corallian Oolite from when the river flowed at a higher level (*cf* fissures

below the present bed of the Hodge Beck). It was a much-celebrated site in the C19, involving the participation of, for example, the Rev G Young of Whitby and the Rev W Eastmead of Kirkbymoorside; through the offices of his friend, Vernon Harcourt, the then Archbishop of York, William Buckland of Oxford University was invited to the site (Boylan 1972, 38). A later expedition to the site involved Kirkdale's Rev C Tudor as well as Rev Canon Greenwell of Durham and other unnamed Yorkshire archaeologists (undated newspaper, Swales Newspaper Collection).

Buckland's interpretation of the pre-human cave fauna is regarded as 'revolutionary' (Boylan 1981, 254), not only for geological studies (it became the type-site for fossil hyena dens, ensuring the importance of this cave in the history of geology and palaeoecology (Boylan 1972, 39-40; Brooke 1993), but also for how biblical interpretations were viewed, fuelling doubts about the age of the earth (his 1820 inaugural lecture was published as *Vindicae Geologicae*; or *The Connection of Geology with Religion Explained*, Brooke 1993, 150).

Buckland was a prominent C19 figure, both as a geologist and a clergyman; his geniality led to various jokes about him and his discoveries being circulated. These included a cartoon (fig 1.4) of him entering a cave of living hyenas, which was issued privately by a colleague and friend, the Rev W Conybeare, together with a long skit, replete with learned allusions to Virgil and the underworld, the concept of the biblical deluge, Buckland's enduring interest in fossil coprolites, and '... no dainty to me is so rare / As "Hyenas' bones potted in mud" (this is from an anonymous broadsheet published in 1822 (*Transactions Royal Philosophical Society* (for 1822), part 1). A further verse by another Oxford friend, PB Duncan, on *The Last British Hyena*, had the great flood pawing 'its fatal wave, / Thro' the deep windings of Kirkdale Cave'. 'The Hyena's Den at Kirkdale near Kirby Moorside in Yorkshire, discovered A.D. 1821 is another of the resulting poem:

'Troponius 'tis said had a den  
Into which whoso once dared to enter  
Returned to the day light again  
With his wits jostled off their right centre.

But of all the miraculous caves  
And of all the miraculous stories  
Kirby hole all its brethern outbraves  
With Buckland to tell of its glories

Bucklandus ipse loquitur

Ages long ere our planet was formed  
(I beg pardon) before it was drown'd,  
Fierce and fell were the Monsters that swarmed  
Roared and rolled in these hollows profound  
Their teeth had the temper of steel,  
Skulls & dry bones they swallowed with Zest, or  
Mammoth tusks they dispatch'd at meal  
And their Guts were like Pappin's digester  
And they munch'd 'em just like Byron's dog  
Tartars' skulls that so daintily mumbled  
Horns & hoofs were to them glorious prog  
Ecce signa - see how they're all jumbled.'

This discovery also received national publication, including in the popular *Gentleman's Magazine* (Feb 1822).

Because this discovery took place when museums and local societies were becoming active, the fauna from Kirkdale cave

was well-distributed across English museums, including that of The Yorkshire Philosophical Society (in which Harcourt was active) and to others in Whitby, Oxford and London.

This assemblage is currently thought to have accumulated during a single interglacial episode during the Upper Pleistocene (Boylan 1981, 275). The cave is regarded as inaccessible during human history before 1821.

(with thanks to Professor W Kennedy, Professor of Natural History, Oxford Museum of Natural History, 8.2007, for geological information on the cave).

17. The buildings to the south of the present church are now thought to be those of a late- or post-medieval building.

18. References to the tradition of runes and a monastery at Kirkdale continued via Powell 1909 to the Taylors in the 1960s (Taylor and Taylor 1965, 357); it can be found in Penn's church guide of 1957, reissued as late as 1984 (Penn 1957, reprinted 1983). It was however omitted from the first Kirkdale guide written by a professional historian (Fletcher 1990); but as late as that year it appears in the work of another professional, both archaeologist and historian, to be the source of a 'tradition' 'of late and doubtful authenticity' that 'is nevertheless plausible' in relation to St Gregory's as 'a burying place for Anglian royalty' (Morris 1990, 5).

19. This is known from a manuscript written by Mr J Weatherill, one of the stonemasons who removed the stones from the west wall (Weatherill 1958; our thanks to Dr and Mrs B Wharton for bringing this to our attention).

20. Tudor was more emphatic about the need to clarify the status of Kirkdale in a later letter (written after the restoration of the chancel in 1881), in which he drew 'attention to some inaccuracies' about Kirkdale: 'As to the monastery: Nothing really satisfactory can be determined with regard to this point, unless thorough excavations can be made in the immediate vicinity of the church, as no archaeologist of ordinary caution would accept the scanty evidence afforded by the ruins of the building or buildings which may be seen in the adjoining fields, but which, in their present uncovered state cannot be said to afford any certain clues as to the purpose for which they were originally intended. Although we have little reason to doubt that once a monastery was attached to the church, yet, at the same time, it must be distinctly borne in mind that the chief evidence in support of this theory is based upon the word "minster" ... The term minster, or monasterium, was frequently applied, "in the tenth century, and long afterwards," to a church with only three or four priests attached to it' (*Malton Gazette*, undated, Swales Newspaper Collection).

21. Thomas Parker was a local Catholic antiquarian, two of whose unpublished MSS are now housed in the Ryedale Folk Museum (Parker 1858, Parker c1882; also see Parker 1980). His unique information about the early C19 restoration of Kirkdale includes the detail that the sundial inscription was then taken out of the wall, when he must have been very young (he was born in 1812, Blizzard *et al* 2000, 22). His work also included poems on local themes, including Kirkdale; also on an Ethiopian kept in a cave higher up the valley (Watts *et al* 1996-7, 6; *cf* note 5). A copy of a photograph of him is in Blizzard *et al* 2000, 22 [slide H2050]. Whether he was related to the approximately contemporary architectural historian, JH Parker (quoted by Tudor 1876, 7 note) has not been ascertained.

22. Little biographical material has been found on Tudor, other than that he was son of the Rev C Tudor who was vicar of Kirkdale in 1863 (*Kirkdale Magazine* Aug 1927) (also see note 20) and that his university education was at Jesus College, Cambridge (Woolfe 2013). His London base is derived from Tudor 1876, 3 (and *cf* his publisher) and he later lived at 123 Blenheim Crescent, Notting Hill (the address of the letter referred to in note 20 above); he appears to have been part of a London architectural practice and was helped with drawing Kirkdale by his colleagues from there (Tudor 1876, 3). His Kirkdale publication was dedicated to the Hon Cecil Duncombe (Tudor 1876, 3), who represented the highest level of local patronage. The drawings in this are signed by him (C.L.R.T. Del), suggesting that he had drawn them himself with the assistance of names assistants (Tudor 1876, 31). The work is folio-size (37 x 27.5cms).

It is from his own publication that it is known that 'a good deal of information with respect to the condition of the Church before it was altered in 1827' was obtained from 'Mr. Parker, of Wombledon'. His knowledge of Rickman's publications is also clear, as is his dependence on apparently-unpublished material from Haigh (Tudor 1876, 3; 4; 4-6).

The last known reference to him is in Canterbury in 1927, by which time his 1876 book had 'long been out of print' although it had been utilised in the 1907-9 restoration (*Kirkdale Magazine*, Aug 1927).

23. This may have been because Tudor was more interested in the earliest history of the church; in comparison, the relatively recent work may have been taken for granted.

24. The 1827 restoration was by a local firm of builders, Thomas Rickaby of Kirkbymoorside (letter, 24.3.1827, Kirkdale Vicarage Archive).

25. The architect for the 1881 restoration was S Crowther and the builder, Mark Foggatt of Manchester (undated newspaper report, Swales Collection). Bishop Brown, for example, a well-

known Anglo-Saxonist, attributed ST 7 and ST 8 to Ethelwald and Cedd (Brown 1886, 15-16; *cf* Powell 1909 preface).

26. Ideas about stone movements, from eg Lastingham, have been current since the late C19 (Hodges 1894, 198; King 1965, 44; *cf* D Stocker, 2015 Kirkdale Seminar).

27. The Rev Powell, vicar of Kirkdale 1905-30, is the first vicar of Kirkdale who can be documented in any extent, especially via the *Kirkdale Magazine*. His family was from Worcester, where he played the flute in a trio with Elgar. After spending time in business, like most Church of England clergy then, he was Oxford-educated (in Classics at Lincoln College) before serving curacies in Leeds and Helmsley. He was aware immediately of the need for work on the building at Kirkdale, as is evident in the *Kirkdale Magazine*, which survives intact from this time, complete with its Powell-inspired sundial logo (it was also used as the church letterhead). As well as being archaeologically-aware, he was attuned to his parishioners. The church magazine, under him, was the equivalent of a local newspaper, commenting on current issues and ideas; he had a dry humour (for example, 'The late Church Mouse, whom we thought was a bachelor, has left a young family' etc, *Kirkdale Magazine*, Feb 1929); and he paid his respects to dead parishioners with great humanity. Although he had retired before his death in 1941, his attachment to the place is marked by his resting-place in the chancel (his personal details are derived from a family memoir, supplied by Mrs L Capstick).

The 1907-9 restoration was supervised a well-known London architect, Temple Moore, and carried out by RP Brotton of Bilsdale (undated newspaper report, Kirkdale Vicarage Archive).

28. The Powell-inspired restoration thus drew attention to the former height of the junction of nave and chancel on the north exterior of the church; it left free of plaster areas like that around the chancel arch; and left exposed earlier details in the present vestry.