Building stones of St Mary's Church at Colston Bassett, Nottinghamshire

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The ruins of St Mary's Church stand on a low rise nearly a kilometre northwest of the village of Colston Bassett (at SK695338). They provide an opportunity to study 1000 years of change in architectural style, including construction, extension, modification and repair. The church a also offers an opportunity for geological study of the lithology of rocks that are now poorly exposed.

The early history of the church was investigated by Mr John Severn and colleague villagers as part of a campaign to preserve the ruin. The village is not recorded on the Domesday Book, of 1086, but the church was definitely in existence by 1135; King Henry 1 (1100-1135) acknowledged the gift of Richard Bassett (Chief Justice of England) of several lands and many churches, among which is the church of Coleston, *to the church of Lourd, in Leicestershire, which has been founded for the son of King William, his father*. This is confirmed by evidence of a Norman church, while the discovery of a Saxon carved stone during recent conservation work would indicate the existence of an even earlier building, either here or nearby.

Records show that in 1284 Ralph Bassett was granted a charter by King Edward 1 to hold a market and fair in the town. The large size of the church and the preservation of traces of medieval architecture (in Norman, Early English, Decorated and Perpendicular styles) suggest a long period of occupation and a significant number of parishioners. No evidence has been found of a village close to the church (the present village, southeast of The Hall, later became the main centre). If it existed, it must have been abandoned before 1600. Village depopulation is commonly attributed to the initial Black Death plague (1349-50) and subsequent outbreaks. This could have been compounded by people dying of starvation, due to a series of harvest failures recorded during the early years of the 14th century. A further factor could have been the change from mixed arable farming to sheep grazing with the consequent reduction in the need for labour; several villages in the Wolds were abandoned. St Mary's church, like many local churches, was most affluent during the 14th and 15th centuries, at the peak of the wool trade with Europe. This period was characterised by the Perpendicular style of architecture.

By 1744, the local population had declined, the buildings were in disrepair and permission was granted to demolish the North Arcade and Transept. The arches of the North Arcade were infilled, and windows in the Classical style were inserted. The South Porch was removed and a window in the South Aisle was replaced by a door. Major structural problems led to a partial rebuild of the Nave in the 19th century. Stabilisation work to preserve the remaining structure, and make it safe for public access, have recently been carried out by English Heritage. The church was built on weak mudstones of the Cotham Member of the Lilstock Formation, in the Triassic Penarth Group that was formerly known as Rhaetic.

Figure 1. *The surviving remnants of the walls and stonework at St Mary's Church, seen from the west, on its low hill northwest of the village of Colston Bassett.*

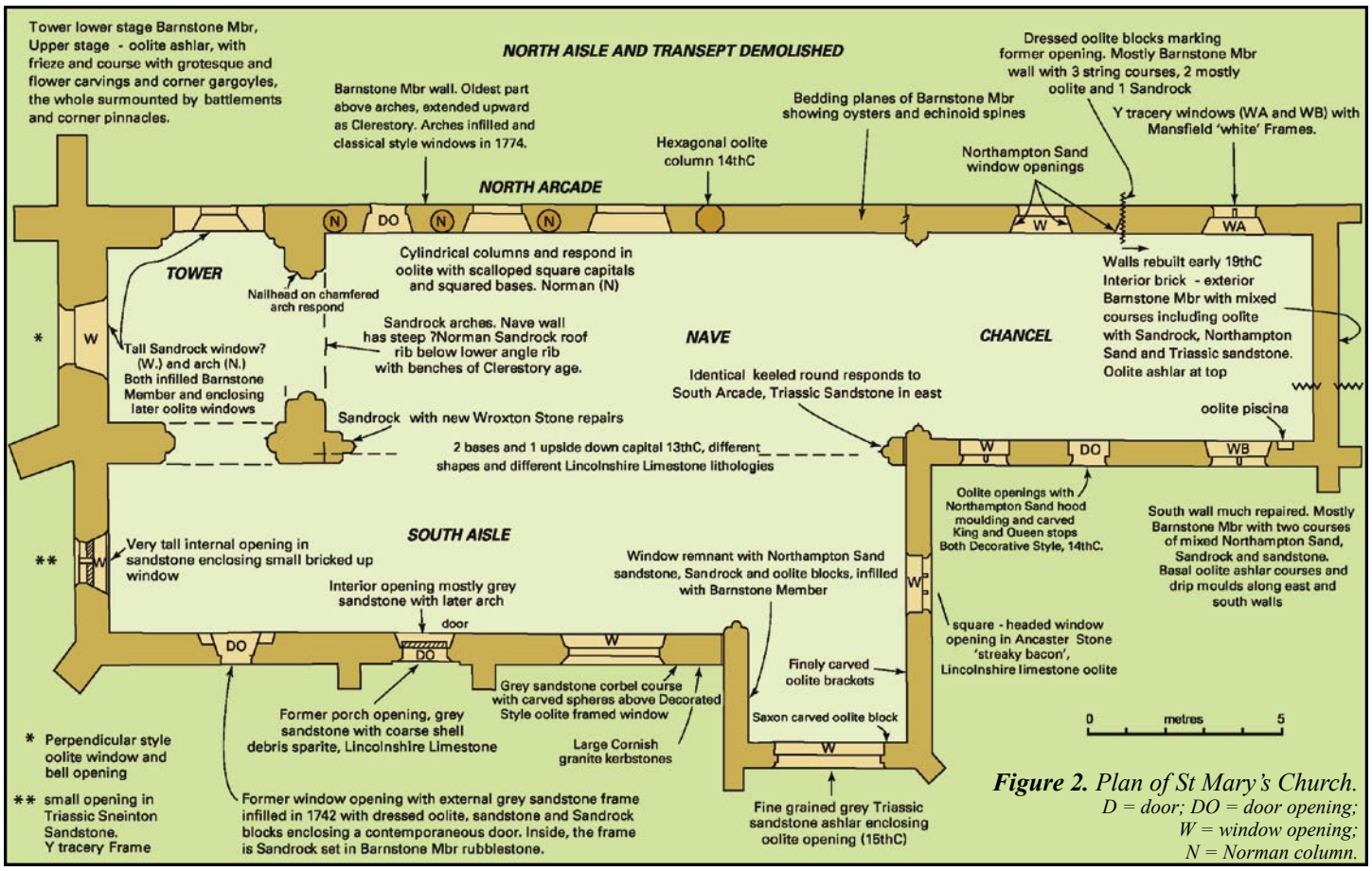


Figure 2. *Plan of St Mary's Church.*
D = door; DO = door opening;
W = window opening;
N = Norman column.

Building stone lithologies

Colston Bassett lies within a region of gently dipping sedimentary rocks ranging in age from Permian to Jurassic. Building stone acquired locally was the cheapest, as transport was difficult and hence expensive. Medieval churches tend to be built of one or two local stones, and the distribution of such churches is closely related to the outcrop of the dominant source rock. However the 15th century was an affluent period, and Perpendicular buildings of this time show a massive increase in the use of freestone brought in from non-local sites.

Building stones can be divided into freestones and rubblestones. Freestone is a rock that can be freely worked with a chisel; it can be cut in all directions, but is best laid with the original bedding horizontal. When precisely cut with squared faces it can be laid in regular courses; this style, known as ashlar, reached its peak in the Classical period and used minimal amounts of mortar. In earlier times, using stone of poorer quality, the blocks may have been only face-dressed and had varying vertical dimensions. Rubblestone comprises roughly cut stones with even faces, the thickness of the finished stone often reflecting the original bed thickness of the sedimentary rock.

All the building stones in St Mary's Church are of sedimentary origin. They occur at ten different stratigraphical horizons (see table on right), and are described in order of decreasing geological age.

	GROUP	Formation	Member	nearest source
JURASSIC	INFERIOR OOLITE GROUP	Lincolnshire Limestone		Lincoln, Ancaster, Stamford, Waltham on the Wold, Ketton
		Grantham		-
		Northampton Sand		Oakham - Corby
	LIAS GROUP	Whitby Mudstone		-
		Marlstone		-
		Dyrham Silt	Sandrock	Local; Ab Kettleby, Holwell, Branston, etc.
		Charmouth Mudstone		-
		Scunthorpe Mudstone	Barnstone	Local; Cropwell Bishop Langar; Barnstone, etc.
TRIASSIC	PENARTH GROUP	Lilstock	Langport Cotham	-
		Westbury		-
	MERCIA MUDSTONE GROUP	Blue Anchor		-
		Cropwell Bishop		-
		Edwalton		-
		Gunthorpe		-
		Ratcliffe		-
		Sneinton		Sneinton, Gedling, Lowdham, etc.
	SHERWOOD SANDSTONE GROUP	Bromsgrove Sandstone		Castle Donnington, Repton Kingsmill, etc.
		Nottingham Castle Sandstone		-
-?-		Lenton Sandstone		-
PERMIAN		Brotherton		-
		Edwalton		-
		Cadeby		Bulwell, Linby, Mansfield area
		Permian Basal Breccia		-

Millstone Grit

Course-grained, medium to pale grey sandstone. The nearest quarries are Melbourne and north of Derby, and only small quantities were used in the church.

Cadeby Formation

Formerly known as the Lower Magnesium Limestone, of Permian Age. Two distinct types are recognised, Bulwell Stone and Mansfield Stone. The former is represented by a single stone in the southwest diagonal buttress of the South Aisle; it can more easily be examined as the large gravestone against the wall beside the nearby South Doorway. This buff coloured dolomite has a saccharoidal texture with small rhombic dolomite crystals. The rock was originally deposited as limestone at the hot arid margin of the Permian sea. Subsequently, magnesium-rich groundwaters replaced the calcite ($CaCO_3$) with dolomite ($CaMg(CO_3)_2$); the latter has a smaller volume, and so developed idiomorphic rhombic crystals, faces of which reflect the light and so can be seen easily with a hand lens.

Another broken gravestone occurs on the floor of the South Transept. The pale brown, fine, micaceous dolomitic sandstone used in the Y tracery windows in the Chancel is thought to be Mansfield Stone. The characteristic thin green clay wisps can be traced in the vertical mullions. These surfaces were probably bedding plane partings, but their present slightly uneven character may result from stylolitic recrystallisation. The windows although characteristic of the start of the Decorative Period (c1300) are thought to have been inserted during the early 19th century rebuilding.

Triassic sandstones

Two freestones are present. One is slightly harder, pale grey with a darker surface weathering; this occurs as hood moulds and scattered blocks. Its source is uncertain, but it may have been obtained from the Bromsgrove Sandstone Formation in the Castle Donnington area. The second lithology is a slightly greenish-tinted grey sandstone, some with pink patches and in one case a pale red clay parting. This is derived from the Sneinton Formation, at the base of the Mercia Mudstone Group. It resembles the building stone of churches north of the Trent, such as Lowdham and Lambley, but lacks the reddish tinge and deformation structures typical of that area. Some specimens show the characteristic small spherical concretions ('pimples') and others small surface depressions.

Barnstone Member

This is the basal member of the Scunthorpe Formation at the base of the Lias Group. The traditional name Blue Lias (blue layers) aptly describes its characteristic alternation of limestone and mudstone, and is retained here to describe the building stone. In boreholes some limestones have clearly defined boundaries, but others pass into calcareous mudstones. The limestones yield rubblestone, which is the dominant building stone of the church. Bed thickness varies, mostly under 10 cm.

Figure 3. *Southeast corner of the Chancel with Blue Lias rubblestone enclosing a piscina carved from a block of oolite adjacent to a C19th window.*

The colour of exposed surfaces varies from pale grey to dark grey, depending on the lime content; these are surfaces created by wedge and hammer fracturing of larger slabs. Natural joint surfaces are often tinted pale brown by weathering, with oxidation of the finely disseminated pyrite that gives the original grey colour. Rarely, blocks have been fractured along ultra-thin calcite-pyrite veins and produce darker brown colours. The structureless dark stones have a high clay content and are more susceptible to weathering by surface exfoliation, thereby revealing fresh rock.

In contrast, the harder limestones contain an abundance of calcareous laminae; these weather to shallow ridge and extremely shallow wedge structures with rare erosional surfaces. The laminae are generally only millimetres in thickness. They probably represented current-sorted isolated ripple and sheet accumulations of microscopic shell detritus and possibly immature shells. The bedding planes sometimes contain *Liostrea* valves and very thin echinoid spines (<0.5 mm in diameter and up to 12 mm long) with lengthwise ridge ornamentations. Other bivalve shells can be seen in cross-section.

The Barnstone Member rests concordantly on the Triassic sediments. It was probably deposited at shallow depths in an anoxic marine environment. The early Jurrasic sea transgressed across a featureless coastal plain that provided only fine-grained detrital sediments. The laterally persistent alternation of calcareous mudstone and laminated limestones suggests a moderately shallow environment alternating from quiet water to periods of winnowing current activity. The Barnstone Member crops out within several hundred metres of the church. Differences in stone thickness and colour allow one to distinguish the different stages of building.

Figure 4. *Southwest door of the South Aisle, with its contrasting exterior and interior designs.*

Sandrock

Along with the overlying ironstone, the Sandrock was formerly included in the Marlstone Rock Bed (now Marlstone Formation), but is now included as a bed at the top of the Dyrham Silt Formation. It is an ochreous, limonitic, fine-grained sandstone freestone. Unoxidised, it is a slightly greenish grey sandy limestone with siderite (iron carbonate) and berthierine (chamosite, iron silicate), but surface weathering oxidises the iron minerals to limonite and goethite (hydrated ferric oxides) and leaches the calcite. Thick shelled brachiopods (terebratulids and rhynchonellids), belemnites and bivalves are scattered throughout. Small burrows are marked by paler cylindrical tubes 2.5 mm in diameter, and bioturbation has generally destroyed original bedding structures. The base of the Sandrock is commonly marked by an erosion surface, which is locally overlain by a pebbly sandstone. The Sandrock accumulated in a shallow marine environment under reducing conditions. It forms the distant escarpment, that limits the Vale of Belvoir to the southeast, where there are numerous quarries around Holwell and Ab Kettleby, but it has not been worked for at least a century.

Northampton Sand

This freestone is a dull purplish brown, leached and oxidised, calcareous and ferruginous sandstone. Reddish brown specimens with dark berthierine (chamosite) grains, are more fossiliferous with coarser shell debris than in the Sandrock. The lack of bedding may indicate intense bioturbation, and reddish brown cylinders up to 9 mm in diameter, are probably parts of U-shaped burrows. The fauna includes bivalves with corrugated shells, oysters and rhynchonellids. Thick fawn calcareous tubes with upstanding longitudinal ridges and growth crenulations are serpulid worms; these may be confused with large pentacrinoid ossicles. Small round crinoid ossicles are more common; these calcite plates show a distinct pentagonal symmetry marked by small voids. Small dumbbell-like features are infilled with coarse clear calcite; one specimen, with an ovoid micrite-filled trace enclosing one end of the dumbbell could be an ammonite.

The Northampton Sand accumulated in a shallow marine environment similar to that of the Sandrock. This freestone is far travelled, as the nearest outcrop and quarries are in the Rockingham and Corby area, and east and south of Oakham.

Lincolnshire Limestone

This Middle Jurassic Formation comprises a variety of pale cream to buff, oolitic, pelletal and shell-debris limestones. It can be difficult to distinguish between concentric oolith grains and structureless micrite pellets. The bed yields a variety of excellent freestones, all of which have a sparry calcite cement. These are usually well-sorted with rounded shell debris and are often cross-bedded. They accumulated in a relatively warm, high-energy, shallow-water marine environment. The formation also contains matrix-supported grainstones, but these are unsuitable for building stone, as the calcareous mud (micrite) matrix readily absorbs moisture causing the rock to fracture under frost action.

The nearest source is the outlier at Waltham on the Wolds. Major quarries lie along the main outcrop from Lincoln to east of Grantham and Oakham and thence south of Rockingham. The stone has been used in the

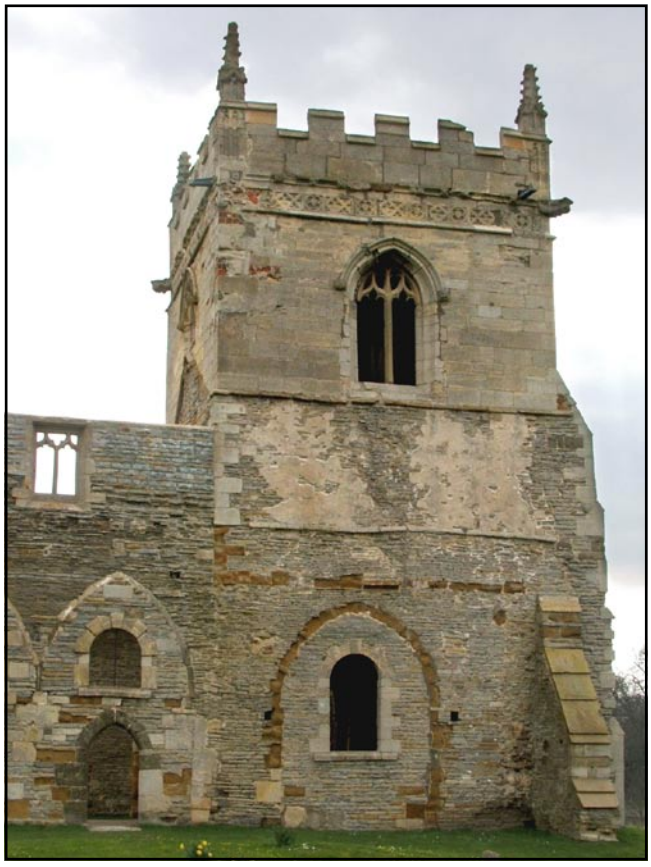


Figure 5. *The Northern Aspect of the Nave and Tower.*

church possibly since Saxon times. It is impossible to match these ancient building stones to specific quarries that have been long abandoned. They form excellent freestones and have been used as columns, capitals, dressed stone, monuments, statuary, carved features, gargoyles and window frames. A characteristic type, seen in the post-17th century structures, comprises alternations of pale cream, well-cemented oolite, and slightly darker, less well-cemented, more porous oolite. This 'streaky-bacon' texture is thought to be typical of Ancaster Stone. Limestones rich in shell debris are harder and more resistant to weathering, and were used for dripstone courses, hood moulds and sills. Despite its high cost, the quality and durability of this stone has led to its extensive use throughout the history of the church.

Tour of the Church

North Elevation

This comprises the Chancel (left), Nave and Tower. The dominant stone is Blue Lias. Variations in thickness of the rubblestone, the colour and rock types help distinguish stages of construction and repair. The remaining Nave wall contains traces of three pointed arches; the eastern arch is taller and may be slightly later in age. This was the North Arcade until the associated North Aisle and North Transept were removed in 1774. The arches were infilled with Blue Lias, which enclosed Classical (Georgian) style windows with alternating long and short blocks of Lincolnshire Limestone. These show bands of well-cemented and darker poorly cemented oolite, a texture typical of Ancaster Stone. The present North Door opening is framed with grey Triassic sandstone and oolite. It is much older (C 14th) than the wall and was probably transferred from the North Aisle in 1744.

This aspect shows that the Tower was built in two stages; the lower part was constructed about 1350 using Blue Lias, but was heightened in the early 1400s. There was an almost round-headed Sandrock arch in the north wall. Originally the North Aisle continued in front of the Tower, and this arch was also infilled in 1744. A string of Sandrock lies above the inserted window and there is an oolite rib higher up; both may relate to ancient roof lines visible on the east wall of the Tower. The Sandrock and oolite quoin above the lower string belongs to the oldest part of the Tower. The higher rib is related to the raising of the North Arcade wall, to create a Clerestory, with its Perpendicular style window.

Before entering the Nave through the North Door, note the misalignment of the Nave and Chancel wall. The slight northward inclination of the Chancel is thought by some to reflect the tilt of Christ's head on the Cross, as depicted in many paintings.

The Nave

Internally, the north wall reveals three round columns that rest on square bases and support square capitals with deeply carved flutes (Figs. 7 and 8). These are typical

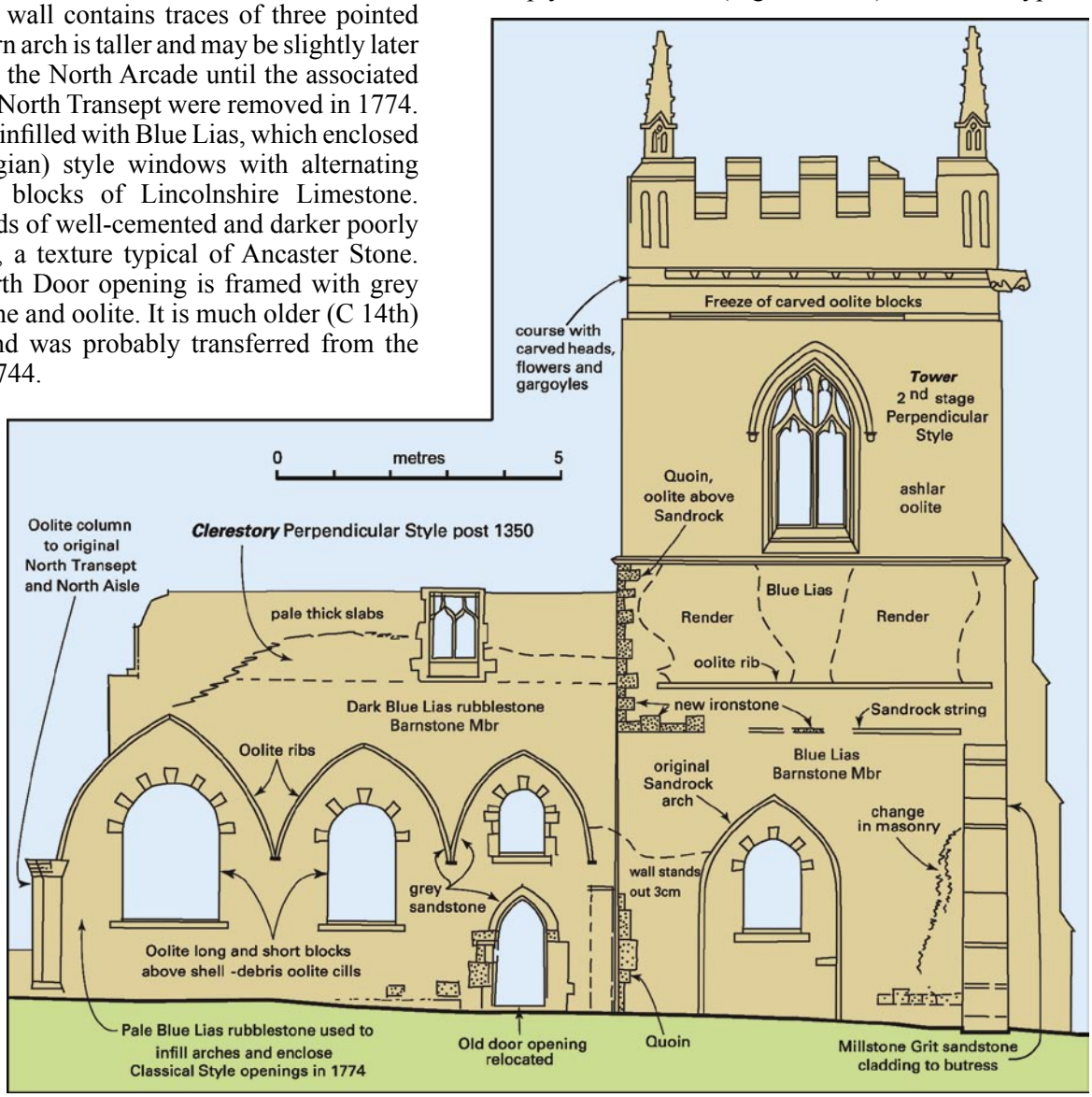


***Figure 6**. North aspect of Tower and infilled North Arcade, now the wall of the Nave. The apex of the arch within the Tower is more rounded than on those of the younger arcade.*

***Figure 7**. North Arcade Nave Wall. The two and a half rounded columns with scalloped capitals, all Lincolnshire Limestone, are typically Norman. Subsequently the North Isle was raised with the insertion of ribbed pointed arches mostly oolite with some sandstone. The first two are set below the ironstone roof rib of the tower, but the third is taller and wider. Georgian style windows were inserted when the arcade became the Nave Wall.*

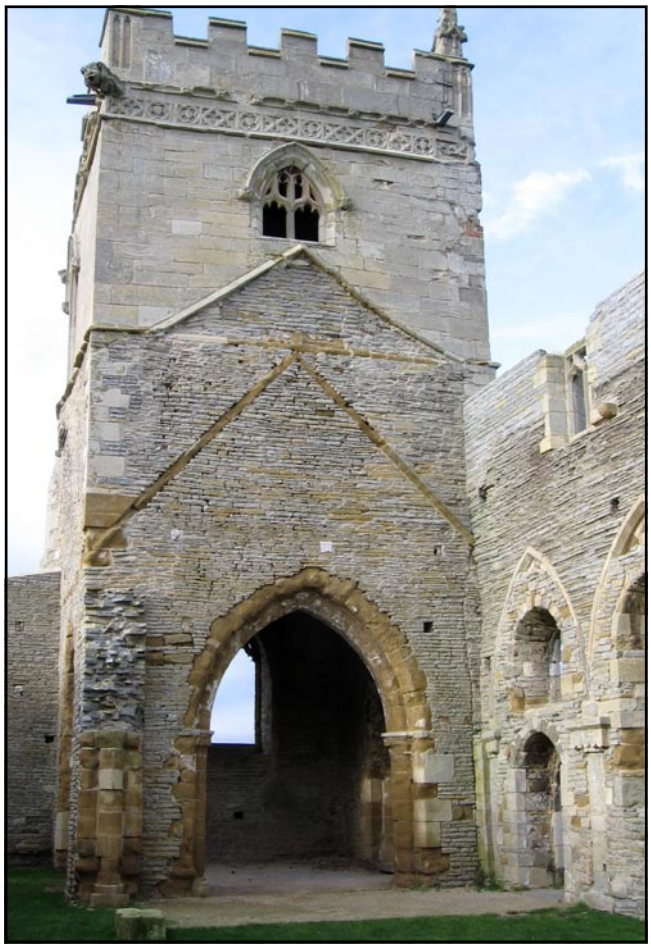
***Figure 9**. East Face of Tower with five faceted arch built of Sandrock (Early English style, C 13). The two ribs relate to original roof lines. The lower Sandrock rib ends just above the North Aisle Arches. The higher hipped rib consists of Lincolnshire Limestone and marks the building of the Clerestory and reconstruction of the Tower in the Perpendicular style (C 14).*

of Norman style (c1130), and are made of Lincolnshire Limestone oolite. The fourth, most easterly, column is octagonal (C 13th-14th), also of oolite, as are the pointed and chamfered arches above. The east face of the tower shows evidence of two roof structures (Fig. 9). The lower, Sandrock roof rib is steeply inclined suggesting an older reed or thatched roof; it intersects the Nave wall just above the points of the first and second arches but below the taller third arch. One can conjecture that the round pillars once carried typical semicircular Norman arches, which were subsequently replaced by the present arches. The higher oolite roof rib is less steeply inclined, with shoulders, and is clearly related to construction of the Clerestory.

The Tower

The lower part of the tower's inner walls are built of Blue Lias. Originally there were three arches and associated responds (half column supports), all chamfered (five-sided) and built of Sandrock. The capital above the northeast respond has a band of nailhead (small pyramid) decoration (Fig. 10) that is typical of Early English style (mid C 13th). The others are similar in shape, but

***Figure 8**. Scalloped Norman capital and rounded column.*



undecorated. The capital of the southeast arch respond has a slightly different moulding and a thin oolite plate at the top. The north arch was infilled with Blue Lias, with a Classical style window inserted in 1774. Internally, the original opening on the west wall is very high, almost round-headed and built of Sandrock. This was probably a window, but the insertion of a smaller early Perpendicular window with oolite frame enclosed in Blue Lias destroyed the evidence.

***Figure 10**. Nailhead decoration on the capitals of a column supporting the Tower's arches, with traces of old whitewash.*

Externally the two-stage construction is clearly visible (Figs. 6 and 11). The Blue Lias of the lower stage shows outward bulging; there are remaining traces of render applied to improve the appearance. The upper stage is built with Lincolnshire Limestone ashlar blocks, with bell openings in Perpendicular style (Fig. 12). There is a frieze course of decoratively carved compound blocks, each with a central shield enclosed within four intersecting circles and diagonal crosses with ogee protrusions, the whole enclosed in an upstanding rim. It is succeeded by a course of ashlar and then a corbel table, a protrusion with superbly carved heads and flowers, and monster-headed gargoyles at the corners (Fig. 13). This is succeeded by an embattled parapet with twin tall niches (with ogee mouldings at the top) at the corners of the tower. The final embellishment

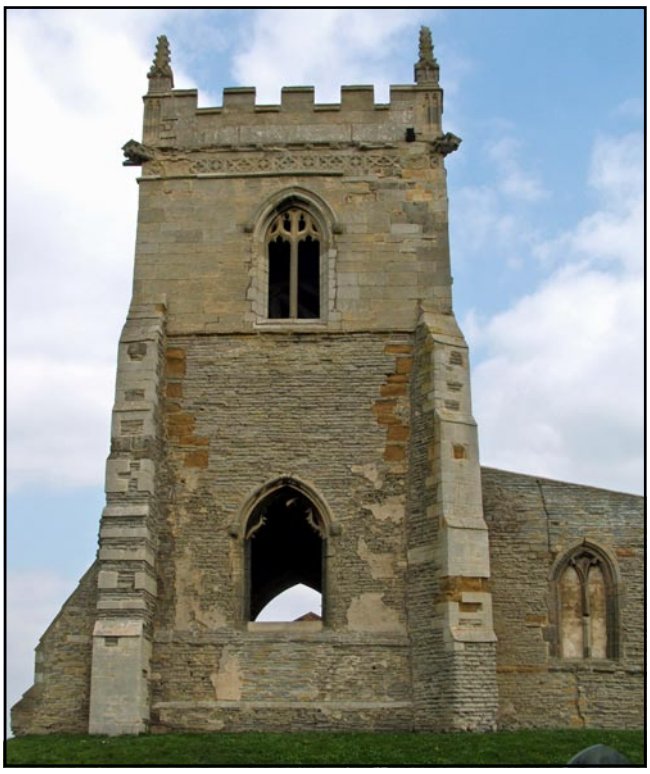


***Figure 12.** West aspect of the Tower. The Blue Lias rubblestone contrasts with the oolite ashlar of the upper stage of the Tower. The windows illustrate three architectural styles: the oldest, in the South Aisle, is Early English; the preserved Tracery of the lower window of the Tower suggests Decorative style (both windows are enclosed internally within older larger Sandrock frames); the flamboyant architecture of the upper stage is typically Perpendicular.*

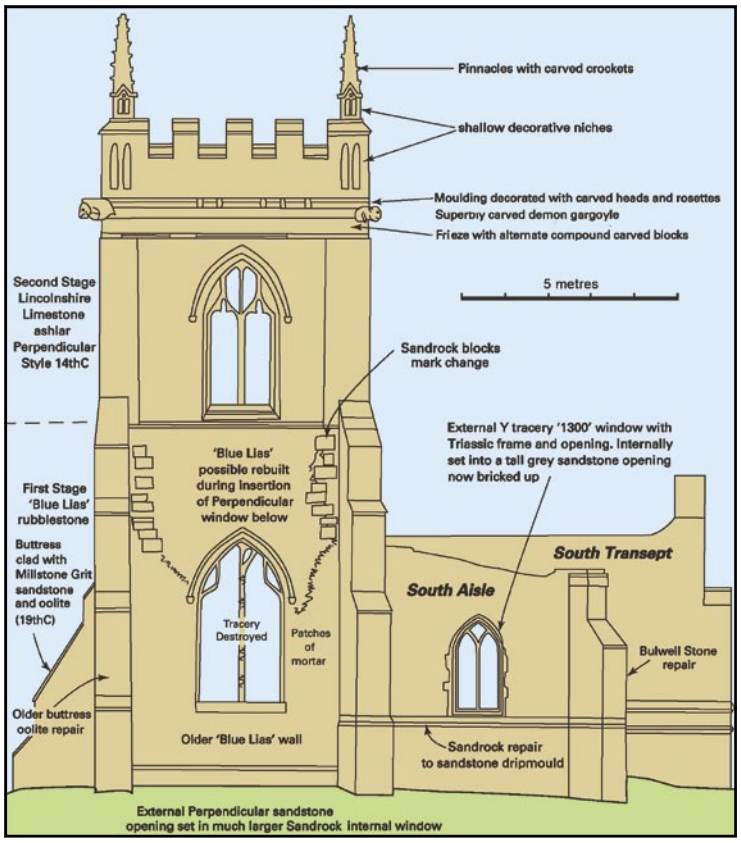


***Figure 11.** The Western Aspect.*

comprises four crocketed (leaf knob decoration) pinnacles each with a basal square column and additional twin niches. This extravaganza bears witness to the superb quality of Lincolnshire Limestone freestones, the ability of the Medieval masons, the affluence of the parish in the late 14th and early 15th centuries, and the durability of this freestone.

***Figure 13.** Gargoyle at SW corner of Tower, set above a carved frieze, both in Lincolnshire Limestone.*

Three buttresses support the west end of the tower. The two angle (perpendicular) buttresses at the north end are probably 14th century, and the lower buttress has a later cladding of Millstone Grit sandstone. At the other end, the 15th century buttress and the proximal buttress of the south aisle have been extensively repaired with oolite, sandstone and Sandrock.

South Aisle

This extends across the south face of the tower and consists of Blue Lias rubblestone. The west window has the Y tracery typical of the early Decorative Style (c1300). It is built of Sneinton sandstone that is grey with pale red patches; this rock is fine-grained, has small weathering pits, is cross-bedded and shows compactional distortion. Although the head of the window is pointed, the matching internal opening is larger and more round-headed and comprises chamfered grey sandstone blocks, with two Sandrock ends and one oolite replacement. It is infilled with mixed stones above an arch of bricks similar to those used in the Chancel (early C 19).

A similar tall opening occurs opposite the tower on the internal south wall (Fig. 4). It has a grey sandstone arch above a Sandrock frame, including two oolite and one sandstone replacement blocks. Externally it has a pointed arch which almost reaches to the top of the wall. The frame is grey Triassic sandstone. Possibly originally a window, it was replaced by a small door of Classical style, the infill comprising salvaged blocks of oolite, Triassic sandstone and Sandrock.

The original South Door to the east was enclosed by a porch, the remnants of which have been used as buttresses (Fig. 14). Externally it has a pointed arch with a hoodmould and chamfered frame, composed mostly of Triassic sandstone at the top and oolite below. On the right side, there is a block of coarse shell-debris-pellet spar-cemented limestone. Internally the door has an almost rounded arch (now fractured) composed of grey Triassic sandstone blocks with oolite and Sandrock below. This encloses a smaller pointed arch set above a wooden beam with a door below.

To the east there is a large square-headed window with an original sandstone frame, replaced at the top by oolite, and remnants of Decorated style tracery. Above the window, a corbel of mostly red-tinted grey Triassic sandstone, has badly weathered carved 'spheres' (ballflowers) overlain by a sandstone plinth. A similar sandstone dripstone lies in the lower part of the wall.

South Arcade

Return inside the church where traces of the South Arcade remain. Only the responds, the half columns that supported the outermost arches, remain intact. The west respond against the Tower is cylindrical with a narrow keel (protrusion) and is mostly made of Sandrock. This has weathered badly in the 112 years since the roof was removed, and the conservators replaced several blocks with Marlstone Formation ferruginous limestone from the Banbury district. The respond against the Chancel and South Transept wall is identical in shape, but has a Triassic Sneinton sandstone column with oolite capital and base. All that remains of the arcade are two column pedestals and an inverted capital, all lying on the ground; they comprise three different Lincolnshire Limestone lithologies. Their complex shapes suggest Decorative Style and confirm the 14th century age of the South Aisle. Carved slots on the Chancel respond and the nearest plinth indicate the former existence of a wooden screen.

South Transept

The internal walls are of Blue Lias. The southern end of the west wall contains the trace of a window infilled with Blue Lias rubblestone. The window has a pointed arch consisting of two thin slabs of Triassic sandstone. Only the right upright remains and comprises Northampton Sand, Sandrock and oolite blocks above a Sandrock sill. This must have been sealed off prior to the insertion of the adjacent south window (Perpendicular style, c1370-1530). The small piscina beneath the infilled window has been reconstructed to include an oolite block with Saxon carved-knot tracery, which was discovered in a wall during the conservation (Figure 15). This is the oldest stone in the church. In contrast the back of the

Figure 14. *Part of the South Aisle with original porch door.*

piscina comprises a slab of grey sandstone beneath a piece of Swithland Slate, possibly a fragment of an abandoned gravestone.

The east wall has two delicately carved pale grey oolite brackets; sadly they have been defaced, possibly during the Reformation. It also contains a square headed window with oolite frame, probably early Perpendicular Style (c1360-80).

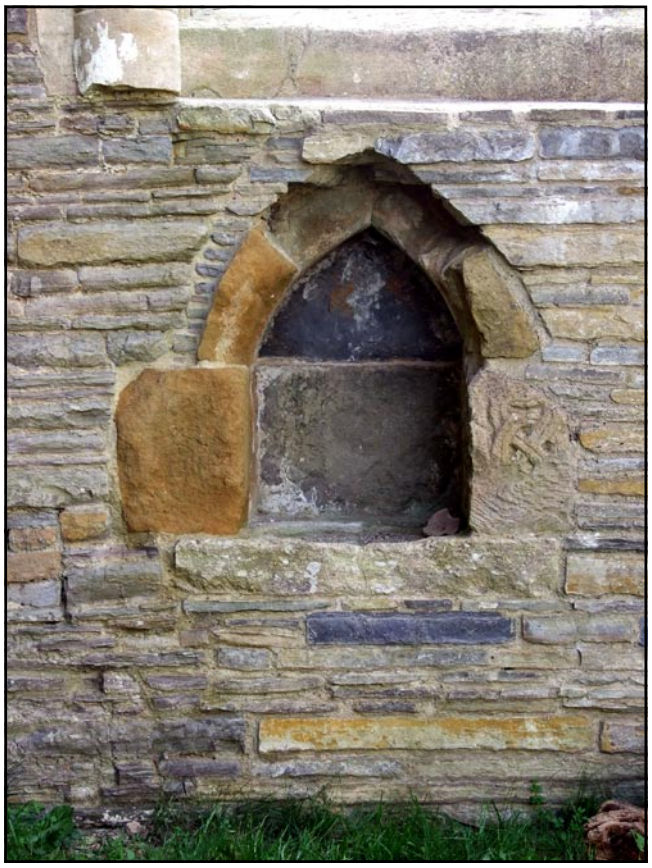


Figure 15. *Reconstructed piscina with Saxon carving.*

Externally the walls are almost entirely of Blue Lias. The east wall has a high level string course of Triassic sandstone with two isolated blocks of Northampton Sand. A drip course of grey sandstone extends around the transept, except at the northern end of the west wall where it is replaced by oolite. The huge south window has an oolite frame and is set in a mixed ashlar wall, mostly oolite with some blocks of sandstone, Sandrock and Blue Lias. The insertion of the window destabilised the adjacent walls, which now lean outwards. The diagonal southeast buttress is built of Blue Lias below the drip course and then ashlar oolite and Sneinton sandstone above. The adjacent east wall for 50 cm comprises mixed stones suggesting rebuilding. In contrast, the south western buttress is perpendicular to the wall; it consists of Blue Lias below the drip course, a course of shell-debris oolite with coarse crystalline cement, then oolite succeeded upward by Triassic sandstone, then an oolite quoin. The masonry is contiguous with the adjacent wall suggesting that it was contemporaneous with the insertion of the window.

The Chancel

This was the most unstable part of the church, so two steel tie bars restrain the north and south walls. Externally the south wall is mostly Blue Lias but contains two string courses with diverse blocks (Fig. 16). The lower string is Northampton Sand sandstone with several Sandrock and two grey sandstone blocks. The upper also starts at the eastern window but dies out at a possible repair joint before the west window; it includes Sandrock and a new block of Banbury Marlstone Formation. The western window is unweathered oolite in the Decorative style, with a hood mould terminating in uncarved cubic blocks. It is enclosed in Blue Lias except for the blocks of Northampton Sand. The south

Figure 16. *The south wall of Chancel with its repeated repairs.*

Figure 17. *The east wall, rebuilt without a window.*

(priest's) door is typical Decorative style, with multiple roll mouldings built with shell debris oolite except for the stops; these are extremely weathered Northampton Sand, but the original king and queen heads can still be recognised. There is a roughly vertical join in the wall masonry between the door and eastern window on this south wall. The area enclosing this window appears to be an original wall of Blue Lias. Repaired areas with dressed stone courses occur above the window and also west of the vertical join. The second window has early Decorated Y tracery, and the mullions are fine-grained, thinly bedded dolomitic sandstone, Mansfield Stone. Although the style dates from c1300, this and the identical window on the north wall are early 19th century. The wall has two drip courses separated by two ashlar courses, the upper of oolite and Sandrock.

The two drip courses continue on the external east wall, but the intermediate ashlar courses are oolite (Fig. 17). Surprisingly, the church lacks an east window. The southern masonry is almost entirely of Blue Lias. North of an irregular join, the wall above the drip course is Blue Lias, with three decorative strings made in a random selection of dressed oolite, Northampton Sand, Sandrock and Triassic sandstone. Three courses of mostly oolite occur above the buttresses. The triangular gable is of oolite with a few Sandrock blocks, and its basal course contains a rounded columnar block of oolite. The greater part of this wall has been rebuilt.

Externally the north wall is mostly Blue Lias. It can be divided into two parts by a line of vertical blocks, which may be the trace of a window opening; this coincides with the blocked off window seen on the internal wall. To the east, the wall contains three courses, the lower mostly of oolitic, with Sandrock dominant above; it was rebuilt in the 19th century. It includes a second contemporary Y tracery window. The westerly window has been partly destroyed; its opening is defined by shaped blocks of purplish Northampton Sand, shelly calcareous ferruginous bioturbated sandstone. Internally, only the left side and part of the arch of the blocked off window survive; the blocks are five of Northampton Sand, two of Sandrock, two of oolite and one of grey sandstone. An early 19th century brick wall extends from this window frame to the recently infilled, 10 cm gap in the east wall (Fig. 3). And from there, the internal wall is built of Blue Lias.

Acknowledgements

Credit is primarily due to the parishioners of Colston Bassett who set up a committee to raise funds to preserve the ruin. The late John Severn FRIBA, Emma and John Alcock and many others raised £32,000. The remaining £393,000 represented grants from English Heritage, Heritage Lottery Fund, The Pigrims Trust, WREN, The Jonathan Vickers Trust, The Chetwode Foundation, The Frognall Trust and both the Nottingham County Council and Rushcliffe Borough Council. The local committee prepared an undated pamphlet, and there is an excellent unpublished report 'Structural Interpretation and Archaeological Assessment, St Mary's Church, Colston Bassett', dated 1995 by Peter F Ryder of Broomhaugh, Northumberland. I thank the architects, The Howitt Partnership, Nottingham, for permission to use their drawings, and Jane Smalley for preparing the diagrams. Photographs are by John Barnett and the author.

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