

**Tombs of the Living Dead: a critical analysis of the social
construction of gender and space in relation to ascetic anchorite
cells of medieval England and Wales c. 1000 – 1500 CE**

By

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ABSTRACT

Flinders University

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES, ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Discipline of Archaeology

The Tombs of the Living Dead:

A critical analysis of the social construction of gender and space in relation to ascetic anchorite cells in medieval England and Wales c. 1000 – 1500 CE

By Bernadine De Beaux

This research thesis provides a multi-layered investigation, comparison and analysis of the medieval anchorite cell, and its social construction of gender and space. It examines how the placement, location, size, style and form of anchorite cells were influenced by the sex and social status of their inhabitants and, in turn, how the form and fabric of these cells constructed and reinforced particular ideologies of gender, hierarchy, class and religious behaviour. The medieval anchorite's religious fervour, rules and regulations have been well documented by primary sources, and modern scholars have offered varying accounts of everyday life for the anchorite, as well as basic descriptions of their enclosures. Most of this research, however, focuses on particular anchorites or on general literature surveys of known enclosures. The material form of cells is less well studied.

This research first synthesises combined data from all of the known historical surveys of enclosures in England and Wales, completed variously between 1903 and 2005. While disparate, and in some ways incomparable, combining these datasets makes it possible to present the first overview of the popularity of enclosure across space and time and to situate this against wider social, political and

religious circumstances. The thesis then presents and compares the physical survey of eight anchorite cells in England and Wales, in the form of case studies. Seven of these cells were complete, and one only partially extant. These cells had a sex split of seven males, two females, and three whose sex remain undetermined. It is likely that additional anchorites were also enclosed in these cells in the years they were extant, though the sex of these cannot be determined. Each of these anchorites were enclosed at different times, and none were enclosed together. Of the male cells, two (Abergavenny, Wales, and Tintagel, Cornwall) were found to have altars and one (Compton, Surrey) an attached oratory which overlooked the nave. In Lewes, Surrey, there was one female cell with a burial, which had been previously examined and reinterred in the early twentieth century. Of the eight cells surveyed, the male extant cells were larger with more space and comforts, including a well, fireplaces and altars. The cells identified as female were smaller, more confined and with less access to the community. The Catholic Church's relationship to women, including women religious, was complex and layered, but such differences are interpreted as both shielding the anchoress from external temptation and containing what was regarded as the 'Legacy of Eve': women as morally weaker, sinful beings who needed to be controlled in all aspects of their lives.

DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis:

1. does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university
2. and the research within will not be submitted for any other future degree or diploma without the permission of Flinders University; and
3. to the best of my knowledge and belief, does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Signed:

Bernadine De Beaux

Date: 23 May 2024

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated in memory of my eldest brother BARRY GLENCORSE, whom we lost suddenly in October 2018, also, for my Mother REMAH GLENCORSE, and in memory of the holy men and women who lived their lives in solitude with God, the anchorites.

PUBLICATIONS ARISING FROM THE RESEARCH

- De Beaux, Bernadine 2020 “From Within the Walls: The Anchorites of Westminster Abbey”,
in *Writing from Below* Vol.5, No. 1 Dr Michael Noble Special Edition,
<https://writingfrombelow.org/dr-michael-noble/from-within-the-walls/>

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DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Ascetic: A recluse, usually following an extreme form of seclusion, in basic living conditions.

Asceticism: A life of extreme solitude, self-discipline and self-denial.

Anchorhold: A place of abode for the enclosed anchorite, a room, or set of rooms, usually attached (or anchored) to a church. Also referred to as an anchorite cell, or house.

Anchorite: A recluse or solitary, who, by their own free will was enclosed in an anchorhold, in order to better commune and to be closer, to God.

Anchorite Cell: A room, usually attached to a church, or located in or near a churchyard, in which an anchorite would be physically or symbolically enclosed. Also referred to as an anchorhold.

Anchorite House: A set of rooms, usually attached to a church, or located in or near a churchyard, in which an anchorite would be physically or symbolically enclosed. Also referred to as an anchorhold.

Cenobitic: A communal life for those who are termed cenobites who eat, sleep, work, and pray together.

Eremitism: The practice of being a hermit.

Hermit: A male who lives in solitude apart from society but has the freedom of movement.

Hermitess: A female who lives in solitude apart from society but has the freedom of movement.

Monasticism: A religious practice governed by a rule.

Monastery: A building or group of buildings where male religious (monk and brothers) reside, pray and work.

Nunnery: A building or group of buildings where female religious (nuns) reside, pray and work.

Prophetic: One who receives messages or insights directly from a divine source. In the Catholic tradition, this may be from Mary or Jesus.

Recluse: A person, male or female, who lives in solitude.

Reclusion: The act of being shut away from society.

Solitary: One who practices solitude, such as an anchorite, recluse or hermit.

Visionary: One who experiences profound spiritual or 'mystical' experiences that may lead to revelations or insights.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This thesis concerns the archaeological investigation of medieval anchorite cells in England and Wales c. 1000 – 1500 CE. Anchorites followed an extreme form of asceticism which saw them sealed into small rooms attached to, in the main, parish churches and cathedrals, sometimes remaining within their enclosures (also known as anchorholds) until death. An anchorite's cell could be either physically sealed or symbolically sealed: if physical then the door was removed and the doorway walled up (Clay 1914:138), but if symbolic, then the door was locked and sealed, usually by the bishop who performed the enclosure, with wax and ring. In either case, the anchorite was to be isolated from the outside world, apart from regular confession and the services of a trusted servant (Winstead 2018:52).

It has been 109 years since the English historian, Rotha Mary Clay (b.1878 – d.1961), completed her renowned research and accompanying database of hermits and anchorites in England, in 1914 (Clay 1914). Clay used archaeological remains, land titles, wills, legal records and anchorite guides, including the main 'go to' source for anchoritic scholars, the thirteenth century guide, the *Ancrene Wisse*, to create a record of ascetics in England from the sixth through to the sixteenth century. Clay recorded 400 anchorite cells, 304 of which could be dated, and, although not the first to study anchorites, she provided a comprehensive reference work which continues to be cited by modern scholars today.

Although there has been much subsequent historical research, it has tended to consistently cite Clay's work, (for example, Gunn 2008, 2012; Jones 1998, 2010, 2019; Licence 2011;

McAvoy 2012, 2013, 2017 and Sauer 2014, 2015 and 2016). There have been few up-to-date historical studies of anchorholds in this century, or specific archaeological investigations into their range, form, nature, or material signatures. The exceptions are Victoria Yuskaitis (2021), who investigated an anchorite cell at Ruyton, Shropshire, further to her 2020 thesis on anchorites in Shropshire (embargoed until 2024), and Carsen Riggs (2023), who has presented research on identifying individuality in London's anchorites.

In discussing the lack of academic comparisons between past and modern scholarly work or the archaeological investigation of anchorite cells, Bob Hasenfratz in 2005 noted that:

No one, for example, has yet published a systematic comparison of Clay's massive table of documented anchor cells with the results of more modern archaeological excavations or systematically examined the surviving churches and other sites for architectural clues (Hasenfratz 2005:6).

Roberta Gilchrist (1994), too, has stated that:

Anchorage have not been subject to modern archaeological excavation: as a result, the standards maintained for anchorages are not yet clear, in particular whether servant's accommodation was expected, and whether cooking and privy facilities were usual (Gilchrist 1994:178).

Archaeological research on the anchorite cell is essential to understanding the enclosure itself, how and when it was built, its internal construction, and how it may have been used daily. It is also essential to understanding how the form and fabric of individual anchorholds may have been used to create and reinforce certain forms of behaviour among those enclosed, as well as among the parishioners, patrons, and pilgrims who visited the anchorite

to seek guidance or prayer. Archaeological research, as the investigation of material form and its consequences, may also be used to show how much solitude the anchorite would have had and how their relationship with their servants and the outside world may have been structured. Additionally, this type of research gives particular insights into spatial and chronological patterns of anchorite enclosures.

This thesis compares the form and fabric, space, and location of anchorite cells across England and Wales. It evaluates how these factors reinforced the ideologies of the medieval Church, and constrained and shaped the lives of the anchorites contained within them. It advances modern scholarship by focusing on the archaeology of anchorite cells rather than exclusively on the rudimentary historical facts of anchorites' lives or a particular sex.

Mari Hughes-Edwards included in her research "every extant guide originally intended for female English recluses" (Hughes-Edwards 2012:1). Hughes-Edwards' focus on solely female guides is typical of much (though not all) recent, mid twentieth century anchorite research, which has tended to concentrate work on female anchoritism, rather than a comparison of both sexes. The late nineteenth-century to early twentieth-century research and male-dominated gender preferences may be one of the reasons behind this modern intensity of female research. Early inquiry into anchoritism tended to centre around influential male members of the Church, male achievements and historical and political figures, and has been written and read by male scholars. Modern historical scholarship is leaning towards more feminist views of the past, with a heightened focus on gender, sexuality, and the woman's role in history. However, McAvoy (2011) explores the fundamental distinctions between representations of both male and female anchoritism as depicted in texts authored by, for,

and concerning them. Specifically, McAvoy (2011:43) refers to the *Rule of St. Benedict*, as it provided male anchorites with an 'ideal' framework for living the enclosed life. This included a stipulation that candidates for anchoritism must undergo a period of testing to assess their suitability for enclosure before receiving final approval. This rigorous process emphasises the structured approach to male religious seclusion, highlighting a contrast with the potentially different criteria or expectations set for female anchorites. For the male religious, the life of a recluse/anchorite represented an esteemed goal, one that required extensive and continuous training (McAvoy 2011:44). Furthering her exploration of texts related to male anchorites, McAvoy references a letter titled "Reply of a Fourteenth-century Abbot of Bury St. Edmunds to a Man's Petition to be a Recluse". In his response, the Abbot advises the petitioner by utilising the *Rule of St. Benedict*, and in doing so, suggests that adherence to the *Rule* is crucial in self-regulation and the fulfilment of duties as an anchorite. However, in addition to his reference to the *Rule*, the Abbot also refers to a twelfth century guide the *De Institutione Inclusarum*, written by Aelred of Rievaulx. This work, specifically written for a female anchorite, his sister, provides a tailored perspective on the spiritual and practical life of women in religious seclusion. The inclusion of this reference reveals several intriguing aspects about the adaptability and application of spiritual guidance for anchorites. Firstly, it demonstrates the flexibility of spiritual texts – the application of a guide originally intended for women to advise a man highlights that despite gender-specific teachings, there was a degree of fluidity in how spiritual texts were applied. This suggests that the essential or core spiritual advice within these guides was considered universally valuable and applicable. It could transcend the gender boundaries initially intended by the authors. Furthermore, despite the gender-specific instructions, the practical and theological foundations of living a secluded life might remain consistent across texts. On the other hand, it could also indicate a

shortage of available audiences, specific audiences or a particular esteem held for the author or the text itself.

1.1 The Historical Background of Solitaries

A multitude of religious groups and individuals have used seclusion and self-denial as tools to enhance spirituality and bring acolytes closer to God. For example, the Hindu male Sadhu and female Sadhvi renounce worldly life for a life of isolation and ascetism to achieve spiritual freedom, embracing practices that help them reach a state of 'liberation' known as Moksha (Clementin-Ojha 1988:34; Hausner 2007:35). Benedictine monks and nuns live lives of poverty in monastic silence and meditation, which they believe brings them closer to God (Doyle 1950). Buddhist monks and nuns follow a path of renunciation and meditation, focusing on achieving enlightenment through a disciplined life of simplicity and mindfulness (Ganguly 1989), and the Muslim Fakir and Fakirni take vows of poverty, relying on alms - begging for food and donations. They often lead a nomadic life, traveling to spread their spiritual teachings and live according to their commitment to spiritual asceticism (Nishikawa 1992:385).

Asceticism, a life of isolation and self-discipline, has been a means not only to be closer to God but also to achieve self-transformation (Dunn 2003:59). In Christian theology, fasting, prayer, and internal battles with Satan were thought to enable the ascetic to achieve spiritual perfection (Gilchrist 1995:157; Licence 2011:13). This is demonstrated in the story of Christ fasting in the desert and being tempted by Satan:

Then Jesus was led by the spirit into the desert, to be tempted by the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterwards he was hungry. And the tempter coming said to him: If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made of bread. Who answered and said: It is written, not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedth from the mouth of God ... Then the devil left him; and behold angels came and ministered to him.

(Matthew 4:1-11 The Holy Bible – Douai Rheims translation 1582)

The narrative of Christ fasting in the desert and being tempted by Satan, not only provides a direct scriptural foundation for certain ascetic practices, but also embodies the broader Christian ethos regarding the path to spiritual perfection: a journey marked by self-denial, moral integrity, and divine interaction.

In Egypt, Palestine, Syria, and Arabia, from as early as the third century CE, several Christian sects lived in austere conditions and separated themselves from society. Roberta Gilchrist argues that these hermits of the desert, or eremites, were inspired by biblical hermits such as John the Baptist and Elijah to practise penitential seclusion (Gilchrist 1995:157). The word *eremites/έρημίτης* came to be used as a group term that includes recluses, ascetics, and solitaires. The term anchorite originates from the Greek word *ἀναχωρεῖν*, which means ‘to withdraw’. This word is interchangeable in many early sources with the Greek word *έρήμος*, a masculine noun meaning solitary or alone, and which can also be used to describe a desert or desert lands. The word hermit, *έρημίτης* is a derivative of this base word (McAvoy 2010:10). From early Christianity, the term hermit was used for all eremites. Recluses were also known by other Latin-based names, including *ancre*, *anker*, *ancresse*, *inclusus*, *inclusa*, *reclusus* and *reclusa* (Clay 1914:109).

By atoning for a previous sinful life, the eremite transformed him/herself and hence became morally united with God (Dunn 2003:59). However, the ascetic life may not have always begun as a religious life. Marilyn Dunn (2003:2) notes some debate among scholars over whether a considerable number of people in Egypt in the third and fourth centuries CE became early tax evaders, by running away into the deserts and joining the more authentic devout hermits. Asceticism was the inception of monasticism, however: a communal ascetic life in which the occupants lived away from ordinary society (Wimbush and Valantasis 2002:50). In Christianity, asceticism commenced with the early Christian reclusive sects, in particular, the Desert Mothers and Fathers in the early third century CE.

1.2 Early Christian Reclusive Sects and Solitaries

The most well-known reclusive early Christian group, the Desert Mothers and Fathers, withdrew to the deserts in the years after the death of Christ to live in isolation in order to be spiritually closer to God. They lived in seclusion in the shelter of caves and survived by limiting their physical requirements to the basics and relying on the charity of those who came to seek their spiritual guidance (Valters Painter 2012:ix).

The founder of this movement, and historically the most recognised, was an Egyptian, St. Antony (251 – 365 CE), who was the disciple of St. Paul of Thebes (c. 230 CE - c. 341 CE). Antony is considered the first Christian hermit. In approximately 305 CE, Antony sold his inheritance, gave the money to the poor, and went to live as a solitary in the deserts of Karanis, Egypt (Dunn 2003:2). St. Antony the Great, as he was later called, was a healer and spiritual counsellor who attracted many disciples, so many in fact that he founded two monasteries in Egypt: one in Pispis, modern Der-el-Memum, and one in Arisone, in modern

Faiyum (CatholicSaints Info 2016). However, desert life was not all that isolated. In fact, Peter France (1997:21) remarks that, in less than four decades after the death of St. Antony, the population of the deserts “almost equalled that of the towns”. Other noteworthy members of this movement included Melania the Elder (d. 410 CE) and St. Syncletica (d. 460 CE), both Desert Mothers who withdrew to the deserts of Egypt in the fourth and fifth centuries CE respectively.

In regard to the Christian-based hermit phenomenon, from the time of St. Paul of Thebes (third century CE), life as a hermit continued to be a widespread vocation until the mid-sixteenth century (Jones 2019), not only in the Middle East but also England, Scotland, Wales, and Europe (Kingsley 1891; Lawrence 2015; Webster 1999). Although the occupation itself had its nuances, it was also highly individualistic. Generally, a hermit could be lay or religious, male or female (hermitess). Isolation and solitude were particularly important for male hermits, as this took them away from women and hence temptation, given women were perceived as “sexual temptresses” (Wimbush and Valantasis 2002:37). In England and Wales, although some hermits were to be found near cities, primarily, they lived away from populated areas and to support themselves took on odd jobs to acquire necessary items to sustain themselves. They would live in enclosures which included caves (see Figure 1), woodland huts, and makeshift dwellings in forests, along the coastline, on cliffs, fens, and underneath bridges (Gilchrist 1995:157). According to Nicholas Watson (2006:44), while hermits were not strictly confined to their enclosures and could leave at any time without the need for ‘official’ permission, they were expected to return to their designated place of solitude. If they failed to return, they risked being labelled a ‘false’ hermit. Being branded as such was significant as it undermined the individual’s spiritual credibility. This need for

permission served as a safeguard against those who sought the solitary life for reasons other than a spiritual one, such as, to escape legal issues or social duties.

From the seventh century CE, communal hermitages started to form, constituting a sort of monasticism in poverty and arduous conditions. A hermitage was an establishment that housed either a single or a group of hermits and was not governed by any monastic rule. Typically, a hermitage had “an oratory or chapel, and one or more cells” (Wilson 2018:4). Both solitary and communal hermits practiced self-sufficiency, growing their food where possible, though they were also given alms to supplement their meagre existence. Some were the beneficiaries of individual wealthy patrons, such as Robert of Knaresborough, a twelfth-century hermit who was under the patronage of “Helena, a *matrona nobilis*” (Duff 2011:119). Because of their solitary and somewhat visionary existence, the hermit was considered a healer, a wise man or woman who could predict the future (Gilchrist 1995:157-163). They were sought for spiritual guidance, cursing, prophesying, interpreting visions, and healing through prayer (Duff 2011:111). From the twelfth century onwards, a shift in the function of hermitages started to occur, resulting in greater diversity in their uses. Some acted as retreat houses for monasteries, while others “served as hospices, or were linked to hospitals or leper houses” (Wilson 2018:1).

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Figure 1: The twelfth-century hermitage built in the Hermits Woods, near the village of Dale Abbey in Derbyshire (Historic England 2019). Image credit: Cheshire Now 2006.

1.3 Anchorites

The fascination with, and attraction to, the Desert Mothers and Fathers and the solitary life they led in the deserts of the Middle East was thriving in Europe by the tenth century CE and the anchorite phenomenon had proliferated in Europe since the c. fourth century CE (McAvoy 2010). In around the tenth century, this fascination awakened a similar enchantment in England and Wales, and the anchorite phenomenon began to flourish (Gilchrist 1995:157-158).

The anchorite was an extreme eremitic, a solitary ascetic who was symbolically, and in some cases physically, sealed in a room, or set of rooms, referred to as a cell, anker house, anchorhold or reclusorium, which was usually attached to a church. However, several cells, or anchorite 'houses,' have been recorded among the hustle and bustle of town centres, churchyards, cemeteries, and also in the countryside away from the more populated areas (Clay 1914; Dale and McNabb 1903). Clay (2014) noted that anchorites existed in cells attached to hospitals, castles, churches, and cathedrals, and in stand-alone buildings in churchyards, on monastery and abbey land, and in the countryside.

For most anchorites, their cell would also be their tomb, for their enclosure was irreversible and it was expected that they would die and be interred where they lived (Jones 2013:xii). Indeed, in the Part 2 of the thirteenth-century anchorite guide, *Ancrene Wisse*, the author urges the sisters to "...each day scrape up the earth of their graves, in which they will rot" (as translated in Millett 2009:46), as a *memento mori*, a reminder of the inevitability of death. In another practice, described in the enclosure rite in the *Reclusio Anachoritarum*, or Exeter Pontifical (see Appendix III), a grave was dug in the cell before the enclosure of the anchorite

and remained open throughout the anchorite's tenure until their death (Gilchrist 1995:190). After the death of the anchorite, the cell would then be entered, the grave covered and mass said over the interred, and then the cell either permanently closed or made available to another inhabitant. Nothing is said of where the subsequent inhabitants would be buried, particularly if the cell was too small to hold two or more graves. There is the likelihood of the bodies of the deceased being interred in graves on top of each other, but there has been no recorded physical evidence of this within the cells, nor has there been mention of this in existing literature. However, there is the possibility that some anchorites may have been buried within the church to which their cell was attached; this is explored further in Chapter Six.

Anne Warren (1985:14) argued that the anchorite cell was a representation of the desert environment in which the early Christian solitaires lived, an escape from the world into the "desert ideal of early Christianity" that "the primary symbol of the cell ... was that of the desert". The anchorite's cell symbolised the desert cave. This argument is supported by Roberta Gilchrist, who contends that the "anchorite's cell was a metaphor for the desert caves of the early ascetics and represented the passage to a mental desert" (Gilchrist 1995:160). In effect, the Desert Mothers and Fathers were the spiritual role models of the medieval anchorites. They were pious symbols of ascetic existence whom medieval anchorites tried to emulate by living a devout life within their simple cells.

Greater distinction between hermits and anchorites became apparent by the eleventh to twelfth centuries in England although not in Scotland or Wales. In England, there was an obvious division between the two forms of recluse. In Scotland and Wales, though, the

recorded term for hermit was used persistently for both forms, with only the occasional use of specific terms for anchorites (McHugh 2010:178-180). Indeed, it may be because of this that the locations and identities of enclosed recluses are scarce in these areas.

The main difference between anchorites and other ascetic groups was their absolute physical seclusion within a cell. The leading difference between a hermit and an anchorite was the freedom of the hermit to leave their confinement and by their own resolve. Permission was required for anchorites to leave their cells, and although this was sometimes given for various purposes, justification differed greatly between sexes. Although many male anchorites were sealed in their cells, they could also be periodically called upon by the Church to accept pastoral duties, which may have included leaving their cell to take a position within the Church elsewhere (Jones 2013:xxvii). The Church was also more inclined to grant permission to male anchorites to move cells for various reasons, or to visit other anchorites or religious figures; an example of this was John Bourne, an early fifteenth-century member of the Friar Preachers of Arundel, who, after being enclosed as an anchorite, found that his cell was very 'inconvenient' and that living in poverty was "... so trying that he obtained papal licence to move to some more suitable place, taking with him his clothes, books and other belongings" (British History Online, Sussex 1973:93-94).

In contrast, female anchorites were given much less freedom, with their requests for permission to move to a different cell or area required to be solely for religious purposes, for more solitude to further their commune with God, or due to sickness or life-threatening scenarios (Clay 1914:196-200). It is understood that a female anchorite, or anchoress, "...who left their enclosure (without permission), could be forcibly returned by the authorities and

faced damnation in the hereafter" (City Desert 2014). Clay (2014:197) suggests that it was a civil law that a recluse "is so mured or shut up that he is always alone and remains in his enclosure". However, despite the use of the word "he" in this quote, as the female anchorites were not called upon by the Church to accept pastoral duties like their male counterparts, it was they who were expected to fulfil their vows as an anchorite until death, usually in the same cell in which they were originally enclosed. Indeed, the anchoress's life seems to have been one of the most extreme of religious lives in the Middle Ages (City Desert 2014). An example of the acceptance by a female anchorite of her fate to stay in her abode, under any circumstances, is seen in record of an eleventh century anchoress, who, in not willing to forgo her vow to abandon her dwelling in St. Mary's Church, was burnt to death in the 1087 sacking of Mantes in France:

An auncre godes spouse

That nolde vor no thing fle out of hire house

(Clay 2014:196).

This is not to say, however, that there were no cases where the female anchorite was given the authority to move cells, or to visit other anchorites or spiritual leaders. For example, Margaret de Kirkby was given permission to move cells "from Layton" to Aynderby after she requested better facilities for worship (Clay 1914:198), and in another instance, a woman of privilege, Emma Scherman of York, requested to be able to leave her cell on an annual basis to visit "other pious places" because of the noise which surrounded her current cell and garden (Clay 1914:199). These moves happened, but they were rare occurrences compared to the permission and opportunities given to male anchorites.

In discussing the distinctions between eremitic (solitary) and cenobitic (communal) forms of asceticism and the ascetical self, Victor Buchli (2015) suggests that there were two competing forms of asceticism: one was “individualistic and in the desert, and a second was “communal and in the monastic community” (Buchli 2015:42). This does not take into account, however, the anchoritic existence within their own desert-like cell, which was, at least from the later eleventh century, partially an individual existence, with more freedom to experience individual worship that either in nunnery or monastery, and partly institutionalised, with specific procedures and processes for enclosure, enclosure ceremony and permission for enclosure from the bishop.

The Work of the Anchorite

A part of the expected ‘work’ of the anchorite was to pray for the souls entering purgatory. Clarck Drieshen (2017:85) suggests that the prayers or intercessions of anchorites were thought to significantly decrease the time the soul was in purgatory compared to the prayers of the laity.

Even though purgatory existed in early Christian thought (Moreira 2010:4), the clearer definition and doctrinal formalization of Purgatory during the thirteenth century significantly influenced medieval religious practices. This period saw major theological developments with the establishment of Purgatory as a distinct realm in the afterlife, as articulated at the Second Council of Lyon in 1274. This doctrine theorised that those souls not damned, but still impure, could be purified in Purgatory, and thus, the living could aid their passage through prayer, masses, and personnel penance (Moreira 2010:5).

This development encouraged a greater emphasis on the practice of penance and solitary contemplation among the devout. The idea that one could influence the purification process in the afterlife led to an increased engagement with practices that demonstrated piety and sacrifice (Sinclair 1961, Tingle 2020). Certainly, this is no more apparent in Dante's fourteenth century work *Purgatorio*, which explores the themes of repentance and change and offers an insight into the medieval thought around this concept (de Andrade & Costa 2011, Torres 2011). As a result, many individuals may have been drawn to the anchoritic life, viewing it as a potent means of spiritual purification, not just for themselves, but also for the souls in Purgatory. Anchorites, by living ascetic lives of isolation, prayer, and penance, embodied an extreme form of piety that was believed to have powerful intercessory capabilities for the souls of the deceased.

A fifteenth century text *A Revelation of Purgatory* (1422), was claimed to have been written by a female anchoress, though no name was given. It was written as a letter and reveals the contents of visions or dreams in which a deceased friend provides the anchoress with an understanding of the suffering in purgatory and how the anchoress could alleviate this suffering by her prayers. This text tells us about "Late Middle English purgatorial piety" and the role that the anchorite played in this area (McAvoy 2017:1).

The anchoritic life, characterized by voluntary seclusion and rigorous ascetic practices, was thus seen as a profound commitment to achieving personal sanctity and aiding the souls in Purgatory. This role resonated strongly with the medieval faithful who saw in their sacrifices a valuable intermediary for divine intercession (Drieshen 2017:85). These theological and social changes may have therefore, reinforced the appeal of the anchoritic vocation, linking the

solitary contemplative life directly with the broader ecclesiastical focus on the afterlife and the salvation of souls.

Although living an ascetic life of contemplation and prayer dedicated to God was the main purpose of enclosure, it was suggested in at least two anchorite guides that they must also busy themselves with manual work:

Manual work, for its part, can keep idleness and sloth at bay, and profit your neighbours in charity. And in particular, the writing of material that is holy and edifying to read seems commendable (*Speculum Inclusorum* – English Translation. Jones 2013:93).

... shape, and sew, and mend church vestments, and poor people's clothes ... Be never idle ... From idleness ariseth much temptation of the flesh ... (*Ancrene Wisse*, Book 8:232 – English Translation. Hasenfratz 2000).

Whereas work for the anchoress may have included lace-making and embroidery, and sewing clothes for the poor, work for male anchorites may have included copying of manuscripts, tallying accounts for the church, and even metal work, as the Life of St. Dunstan suggests. The author, Osbern, an eleventh-century English monk of Canterbury, indicated that St. Dunstan worked gold from inside his cell (Wellesley 2018). There are no records of an anchorite being paid for working from their cells. This does not mean that this did not happen, although it can be assumed that the work was usually for the Church, specifically the embroidery and lace would have been for the altar cloths and priests' vestments, similar to needlework executed by nuns (Cartwright 2018).

The Priest Anchorite

Male anchorites who were also members of the Church included those from all levels, including priests, monks, canons and even Bishops. Examples include 'dominus L', an elderly monk who petitioned the Abbot of Bury to become an anchorite in the fifteenth century (Grans 1960:464), Ernicus the priest/chaplain to Queen Maud of Wales, who was enclosed in 1103 CE in Llanthony, 'Saint' Wulfric, d. 1154 CE, a priest, who was enclosed at Haselbury and was renowned for his "powerful influence", prophecies and for being a "wonder worker" (Clay 1914:73), and William Bolle, the rector of Aldrington, Sussex, who was enclosed in Chichester Cathedral in 1402 CE (Clay 1953:74).

Although no longer a part of the clergy per se, priest anchorites were usually sanctioned to perform the Sacraments, or at least those which could be executed from the anchorite's cell. Additionally, the priest could perform the Order of Mass if access to the church from the anchorhold permitted it. Moreover, they could be called upon to do various other works for the Church when required. For example, William Alnwyk, a priest enclosed in Westminster Abbey in c. 1415 CE, was assigned to a religious appointment by Henry V which required him to leave his cell for a period of time (Clay 1914:154). Additionally, there are many examples of the anchorite priest being a spiritual counsellor, especially to royalty. For example, Henry I visited the anchorite Wulfric, King John visited Robert of Knaresborough, and Henry III sought counsel from "Nicholas, monk of Westminster" (Clay 1914:153).

It is possible that the enclosed priest was held in higher esteem than the parish priest. As an anchorite the priest was seen to be even closer to God, and therefore had the ability to

intercede on behalf of the people (Clay 1914:153). Anneke Mulder-Bakker (2005:176-177) suggests that the anchorites were “themselves incarnations of salvation in the sacred space of the anchorhold”, being “ideally suited to interpreting and providing a living example of salvation to the community”.

1.4 Hierarchy of the Medieval Church

The hierarchy of the medieval Church was a chain of command headed by the Pope, who ruled directly from Rome and was considered to be the representative of God on Earth. The hierarchical order was based on two classifications: the secular and the regular (see Figure 2). The secular operated on a parish level and included the bishops and the clergy, who interacted with the general population. The regular operated on a monastic level and included the abbots and abbesses, monasteries, and nunneries.

Although the ‘head’ of the Church, the Pope relied upon his bishops in other countries to rule on his behalf (Lynch 1992:122). As part of the secular hierarchy, the bishops ruled the everyday operations of the Church. The bishop’s duties included the ordaining of clergy, consecration ceremonies, anchorite enclosure ceremonies, and general supervision of the diocese. In England, the bishops’ close relationship with the king, with whom they would meet regularly, was that of an advisor (Lynch 1992:125-126). After the bishop, the next in the hierarchical chain was the clergy, who oversaw delivering the Mass, sermons, hearing confessions, and giving general spiritual guidance to the community at a parish level. As the incumbents of the Church, their approval was also required for an anchorite to be enclosed in a cell attached to a physical church building. The next hierarchical classification of the Church was the regular, the highest ranking of which were the abbots and abbesses. The

abbots and abbesses oversaw the monasteries and nunneries and their communities. At the bottom of the hierarchy came the laity.

Anchorites and hermits did not fit precisely into either the regular or secular category and existed on both levels. Anchorites were at the parish level, and hence secular, due to being attached, in the main, to parish churches and available to the general population to visit to request prayers and spiritual guidance. Many hermits would undertake menial jobs in the communities on an 'ad-hoc' basis, such as the hermit of Rye, who was paid for "making clean the shitting house" (Jones 2019:129). However, anchorites and hermits were also at the monastic or regular level because anchorites were enclosed and may have followed the sixth century Rule of Saint Benedict's eight prayer periods: Matins or Vigils, Lauds, Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers and Compline, also referred to as the Benedictine Order of the Day, which was stipulated in the *Ancrene Wisse* (Part I). Additionally, both anchorite and hermit lived an equally ascetic life, which could be compared to those in monasteries and nunneries during this period.

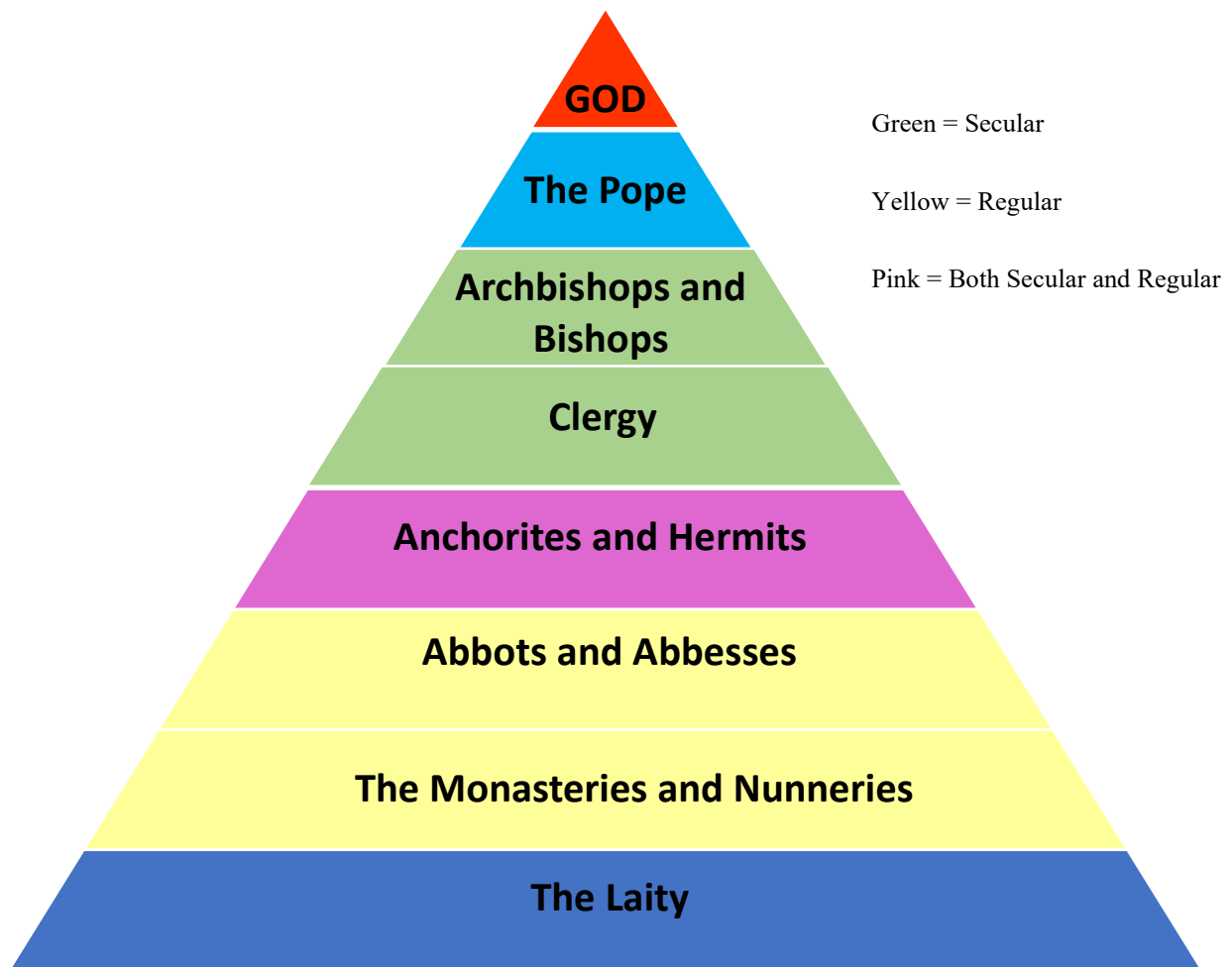


Figure 2: Plan of hierarchical chain of the Church in the Middle Ages.

Gendered roles within the Church tended to follow this hierarchical pattern. Although during the medieval period there were rare instances of women being of high value to the Church as abbesses and highly renowned visionaries, such as Hilda (d. 680 CE), Abbess of Whitby who was of royal background, Emma Rawgton (d. 1436 CE), an anchoress of All Saint's Church, York who was considered a visionary and prophetic (Clay 2014:215), and Julian of Norwich (d. c. 1416 CE), an anchoress who was considered a visionary, overall, religious women were not thought of favourably (Gilchrist 1995:106). This, of course, was not always the case, but the principal belief. Ruth Karras (2017) argues that it was thought that, in general, the woman who led men astray, but, "effeminate men were considered a temptation just as women

were". Clericals who had lustful sex or lay who had sex other than for reproductive purposes, turned the man "away from higher things ... to become, like a woman, bound to the body" (Karras 2017:36-37). Because of these beliefs, the gendered space of the Church was used differently, with access to some of the areas entirely restricted to males.

1.5 The Alternative to Enclosure for Men and Women in England and Wales

Anchoritism was not the only form of religious life open to men and women, and the lives of the anchorites must be understood within the larger context of choices that made their lives different, and in many ways unique. The forms of religious life available as an alternative to enclosure in England and Wales from the medieval period until the sixteenth century Reformation were both formal and non-formal choices. Formal religious lived under strict rules, whereas non-formal alternatives, such as hermits, were not required to follow any formal religious rule.

Formal Religious

James Clark (2002:7), has estimated that by 1500 CE, there were at least "900 religious communities in England and Wales, including 28 that had been established since 1350". However, David Knowles and Richard Hadcock (1953) created a dataset that recorded more than 1400 (see Appendix VI). Formal religious communities included those living in monasteries, nunneries and friaries, and those in an "institutionally sanctioned life" (Roman 2016:82), meaning authorised by the Holy See; this included the military orders/Knighthoods or Orders of Chivalry (Clark 2002:8).

The great Houses or monasteries of England and Wales provided a life for males who wished to join a community whose purpose was to devote their lives to God's service. Their focus was solely on God, the scriptures and prayer. The orders included (but not exclusively): Benedictines, Cluniac, Cistercians (White Monks), Canons, Augustinian Canons, and Premonstratensians (Le Strange 1973:7-13).

In general, monasteries were quite wealthy. Clark (2002:9) states "The income of six Benedictine abbeys – Bury, Christ Church, Canterbury, Glastonbury, St. Albans, Westminster, St. Mary's, York – was greater than that of all the female houses taken together". Monks went through various stages of initiation, and many joined the monastery first as oblates – called so because they were an offering to the Church and God by their parents. Initially, there was no hard and fast rule on how old the child needed to be, this depended on the individual monastery. It was the Cistercians who were the first to decree that the children would have to be at least 15 years of age before they would accept them as a novice, and "that no boys were to be taught at the monastery except novice". This was in open defiance of their Rule (Greg 2003:285).

In comparison, even though "nunneries were recruited almost entirely from the upper classes" (Power 1922:5), they were under constant financial stress, leading Power (1922:3) to suggest that "the majority of English nunneries were small and poor". Indeed, nunneries were often 'disadvantaged cousins' compared to the wealthy male monasteries attached to Abbeys, such as Durham, Fountains, Glastonbury, and Westminster in England or Llanthony Priory and Tintern Abbey in Wales. The literature is replete with instances of nunnery buildings in significant disrepair so that in the winter months rain, and snow would enter

(Power 1922:162,167-168). The lack of food, clothing, and warmth and the disrepair of the buildings were not entirely the fault of the mismanagement of funds or the incompetence of the abbesses in charge. Other financial requirements pushed the nunneries into poverty, such as Papal extractions, taxes from the Crown and the Church, the requirement to pay a pension to royal clerks on request, or to receive nuns nominated by the King or bishop, which could lead to overcrowding (Power 1922:184,194-195). There were even occurrences of nuns having to beg for alms to feed and clothe themselves, regardless of their previous status, for example, at the convents of Chestnut, Whitehall, Ilchester, Rothwell and St. Mary's, Winchester (Power 1922:173).

Janet Burton (2005) clearly outlines why nunneries could move from being prominent and financially sound to experiencing financial hardship and disruption. She suggests that the nunneries would often experience sudden financial difficulties if they had to house one or more nuns sent by the archbishop from other houses to do penance, lasting at times for a year or more. This is something they were obliged to take on, even if it meant struggling financially, which was particularly relevant for the smaller, poorer houses (Burton 2005:163). Burton (2005:155-156) suggests that nunneries had male authority figures to serve as guardians and custodians, chaplains and lay brothers, presumably because the male authority figures of the Church did not think that the females could act responsibly and carry out duties as required. She also points to several instances of mismanagement of funds and provisions by the nunneries' prioress and power struggles within the convents, ultimately leading to the archbishop's interventions and disciplinary action, dismissal, or resignations (Burton 2005:158). Jennifer Ward (2016) argues that men often "saw women's houses as a financial drain", because the nunneries were dependent on men for labour, such as the repairs and

construction of buildings, religious roles such as confessors and priests, and at times even help with the running of the houses. The fear of the woman as a sexual temptress and the lack of importance men placed on women's religious institutions often meant that many nunneries were left to fend for themselves (Ward 2016:179).

Before the tenth century, there was a tradition of "double houses" containing both sexes. Double monasteries were principally nunneries with communities of male religious attached to them. They were typically governed by an abbess, rather than an abbot, and examples include Ely Monastery, founded by St. Etheldreda (d. c.680 CE) on her own land, which she had come by endowment after the death of her husband, and Coldingham Monastery, which was governed by "Aebbe of Coldingham" (d. 863 CE), the sister of King Oswiu (King of Northumbria 654-670 CE) and aunt to St. Etheldreda (d. c. 680 CE), (Lawrence 2015:52). There were also double houses of Gilbertines and Bridgettines (Gilyard-Beer 1958:45), and twelve double houses of the Gilbertine Nuns and Canons (Le Strange 1973:13-14).

Double houses may have eased some financial problems for the nuns, but may also have subsequently added financial burdens to the monasteries. In the period after the tenth century, there were still instances of women being housed in male monasteries, such as at St. Albans and Evesham, but this was swiftly stopped, and a strict segregation of sexes was established (Gilchrist 1995:107-108). Sex-specific nunneries housed only female religious 'Brides of Christ', who made formal vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. As such, nuns gave up their control over their personal wealth and all of their valuables and assets were usually given as a 'dowry' to the Church on entry (Warren 2001:5). The nuns, like monks,

underwent various stages of initiation and many also joined as oblates (Yardley 2006:159-160).

Friaries were different again. Whereas the monk was cloistered and therefore focused on his devotion to God through prayer and devout acts, the vocation of a friar was to serve society and God by going out amongst the people to preach and beg for alms. Gilyard-Beer (1958:7) asserts that it was not the purpose of the friars to be cloistered as the monks were, but to venture out into the world and influence the community through their beliefs, teachings, and example. Le Strange (1973:15) states they took the “triple vow of poverty, chastity and obedience”. Various mendicant friar orders included the Trinitarians (Red Friars) – founded in 1198 CE Franciscans (Grey Friars/Friars Minor) – founded in 1209 CE, Dominicans (Black Friars) – founded in 1215 CE, Carmelites (White Friars) – founded c. 1190 CE, Austin Friars - founded c. 1260 CE and Minor Orders (Le Strange 1973:14-18).

The final form of formal religious life was the Military Orders, also known as Knighthoods or Orders of Chivalry, which were Knights recognised by the Church and ruling monarchs. These military orders were “Knighthood and religious life ... conjoined, they expressed in their actions love of God and of their neighbour ... as professed Knights of Christ, [were] prayerful, dedicated, disciplined, ascetic, and ready to see martyrdom in imitation of their Saviour ...” (Riley-Smit 2010:11-12). Religious military orders were founded to “care for and protect western pilgrims in the Holy Land” (Burgtorf and Morton 2020:3) and during the Crusades included the Teutonic Order - founded c. 1199 CE, Knights Hospitallars of St Thomas of Canterbury - founded c. 1189 CE and the Knights Templar - founded 1115 CE. Other orders

included the Knights of the Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem (Le Strange 1973:18-19), also known as the Hospitallers – founded 1113 CE.

Non-Formal Religious

Non-formal religious alternatives were more ascetic in certain ways, yet freer in others. There were no formal rules or compulsory guidelines to conform to, yet the way of living would include fending for oneself for sustenance and shelter, and in times of illness.

The hermit was the most commonplace of such alternatives, although also constituting a persistent issue for the medieval Church and its hierarchy since they did not have complete control over them (Roman 2016:80). Even though hermits and hermitage communities were free from formal rules and guidelines many hermitages (along with their brethren) were given over to monasteries on the death of their founder, such as “Simon the hermit of Wellbury” (d. unknown date), who arranged for “his hermitage, its endowments and the community of brethren which had gathered about him [to] be conveyed to the Augustinian priory of Newnham” in Bedfordshire after his death (Jones 2005:236). How this act affected the life of the hermits themselves is unknown: they may have continued their own lives as a hermit, being free to come and go as they pleased, with the only change being where they resided, or they may have been expected to take vows into the life of a monk.

Although mainly a male-dominated life, there were also females living the austere life of a hermitess. A well-known example is Theodora, who subsequently took the name Christina of Markyate (d. c. 1160 CE). Christina ran away from her parents and their marriage promise for her, first to the recluse Edwine of Higney, who sent her to the anchoress Alfwina in Flamsteed

(d. unknown date), who in turn sent her to Roger in Dunstable for protection. This shows that there was indeed a well-established communication network between recluses. Christina was hidden in a small, enclosed room attached to Roger's oratory, and it was only upon the death of Roger that Christina left the protection of the small hermitage after being sent for by Archbishop Thurstan (d. 1140 CE), who was a close friend of Roger's (Clay 1914:20-24).

Non-formal religious lives offered varying degrees of personal freedom, different forms of daily life, and the opportunity to seek inner enlightenment. They also differed greatly from the phenomenon of the anchorite. Whereas other religious institutions were either a community unto themselves or, as hermits, able to go out into the community if and when they needed to, the anchorite was held apart from society, yet sought after by the wider community. The anchoritic life was therefore a specific choice made for a range of reasons, giving rise to a peculiar phenomenon that lasted for over 1000 years in England, as well as Scotland, Wales, and Europe, with their far less formal ascetic beginnings having begun in the Middle East in the fourth and fifth centuries CE (Elm 2014:304-305). The end of the anchorite was heralded by the same rapid and profound social changes that ended other forms of religious life: the Reformation in English religious structure that began in 1534 CE under King Henry VIII (d. 1574 CE), and Thomas Cromwell (d. 1540 CE), with the Act of Supremacy (Cummings 2016). It was during this time that many monasteries and churches were destroyed, and their communities dispersed (Bernard 2011:390-391), thus eliminating these religious alternatives available to both men and women.

1.6 Research Questions and Aim

The aim of this thesis is to analyse anchorite cells and their use in relation to sex, gender and ideology in medieval England and Wales. The research will focus on the following two-part primary question:

- How were gender, hierarchy, and status constructed through the size, style, form, space, and location of anchorite cells in medieval England and Wales, and, in turn, how did the form and fabric of these cells construct and reinforce ideologies and religious behaviours?

The following secondary questions will further develop the fundamental core of the project:

- What are the differences and similarities between anchorite cells over time?
- How do the dimensions, construction and design of cells compare?
- Is there evidence of differing gender in cell design? and to what extent did sex mediate the anchorite's underlying religious and/or secular routines?
- Is there any evidence of differing status or hierarchy in cell design? and to what extent did social status mediate the anchorite's underlying religious and or secular routines?
- What archaeological evidence can indicate daily routines, e.g., cooking, personal hygiene (toilet/bathing) and prayer?
- Is there any evidence of human remains within cells?

- Were cells concentrated in certain areas? If so, where, and why?
- What do these comparisons reveal about the nature of the medieval Church, its construction of gendered behaviours, and appropriate forms of sacredness?

1.7 Significance of the Research

This research is significant in three main areas of scholarship: to redress the current emphasis on outdated research by modern anchoritic scholars, to contribute new data and interpretations to the currently limited archaeological investigations of anchorite cells, and finally, to present research on the social construction and the use of space by anchorites. The significance of this research is that it is the first archaeological analysis of anchorite cells from a gendered perspective, it increases the number of recorded cells from the period, augments existing catalogues, and considers the contribution of materiality to the spiritual experience of enclosure, extending extensive work by Michelle Sauer (2004, 2008, 2013, 2015, 2021), Liz McAvoy (2005, 2011) and Mari Hughes-Edwards (2005).

Although some amateur archaeologists have conducted investigations into particular cells, along with the church to which they were attached (for example, Andre 1895; Johnston 1901, 1906; Godfrey 1927; Gibson 1950), and several scholars have investigated elements of anchorite life (for example, Brewer 2017; McAvoy 2005, 2011), there is a critical need for modern and informed archaeological investigation of anchorite cells in the United Kingdom. Early 'archaeological' investigations were completed in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and not in accord with contemporary professional archaeological practice, debates or research questions. Despite this, modern scholars continue to use this antiquated

information in current research, perhaps because of a lack of current interest in this field by contemporary archaeologists. There has been very little research into comparing anchoritic cells, exploring the extent to which social factors, such as status, age, or sex, influenced the nature of the experience through the materiality of the cells, investigating the social construction of space within cells, or the material culture of anchorites and their lives, as only archaeological investigations can provide. Scholars are yet to address the existing gaps in the archaeology of the known cell sites, the knowledge of the social construction of space and gender, and the use of space by and among anchorites, both inside and outside their cells, much less what these reveal about the way the medieval Church constructed female versus male asceticism.

More surprisingly, up to now, no one has attempted to summarise the current state of play across all the known anchorite cells in England and Wales, perhaps because these data have been recorded so variably. As a result, this study is the first to attempt to summarise and synthesise such elements and use these data to generate broader insights into the changing nature of anchorite life across space and time.

The need for in-depth studies of individual anchorites is also a concern. Very little is known of the named individuals who inhabited the identified cells in England and Wales, (see Appendix IV). Only the more famous personalities such as Julian of Norwich, Christina Carpenter and Katherine de Audeley are studied in-depth through modern scholarship (Alvarado 2022; McAvoy 2005, 2013, 2014; Norton 2023 and Novotny 2019). The current research begins to cover the substantial gap in archaeological investigations and analysis and provides much-needed research into individual anchorites that has been previously omitted.

This thesis first collates and synthesises data collected by previous scholars, then expands this through in-depth archaeological surveys of a sample of extant cells. Although four previous datasets of anchorite cells exist (Dale 1903; Clay 1914; Warren 1985; Jones 1998 and 2005), these record data in various ways to different levels of specificity and relevance for archaeological purposes. Combining all archaeologically relevant information (spatial locations, form, and dimensions of cells where known) from these four datasets allow the information to be centralised and then synthesised. From this, the first detailed summary statistics of cell type, form, location, and inhabitants has been extracted. Subsequent fieldwork has enabled a more fine-grained collection of physical data, including photographs, measurements and the analysis of different building materials used within a sample of cells.

The aims and objectives of this thesis hold significant relevance and contribute to the broader field of knowledge concerning medieval history, religious studies, gender studies and architectural history. By focusing on the analysis of anchorite cells within the context of sex, gender and ideology in medieval England and Wales, this research addresses several important gaps and raises critical questions that have yet to be comprehensively explored.

Firstly, the investigation into how gender, hierarchy, and status were constructed through the physical attributes and spatial arrangement of anchorite cells provides valuable insights into the religious and socio-cultural dynamics of medieval society. Understanding how these elements were demonstrated in the built environment has the potential to deepen our understanding of the power structures, social aspects and religious practices during this period. Archaeology relies on evidence quite different to that preserved in written records,

making the examination of archaeological evidence within anchorite cells a unique opportunity to reconstruct the daily lives and ritual of those contained within these spaces. By uncovering traces of everyday life within the cells, such as fireplaces for warmth and cooking, servant areas and parlor areas for visitors, this research contributes to a more general understanding of the medieval ascetic life of an anchorite beyond the textual sources.

Furthermore, by examining the differences and similarities between anchorite cells over time and across different geographical locations through a small selection of sample cells spread over several counties, the research contributes to our understanding of the evolution and regional variations in religious architecture and practices. Prior research in this respect has hitherto been limited to historical work documenting, on a very coarse level, the distribution of anchorite cells across counties from historical sources. By placing the spread of anchorite cells within wider networks of religious influence, this thesis makes it possible to analyse how wider cultural, religious and use of anchorite cells can shape and influence societal norms and practices. The exploration of the gendered aspects of cell design and investigations into the role of social status in shaping religious routines, provide insights into gender, class and religious identity in medieval England and Wales. It highlights the complex relationship between the anchorite and the expectations of society and the religious hierarchy.

It demonstrates an analysis of how cultural, religious and economic factors influenced the design and use of anchorite cells. The exploration of the gendered aspects in cell design and the investigations into the role of social status in shaping religious routines, provide insights into gender, class and religious identity in medieval England and Wales. It highlights the

complex relationship between the anchorite and the expectations of society and religious hierarchy.

Moreover, the examination of archaeological evidence within anchorite cells offers a unique opportunity to reconstruct their daily lives and rituals. By uncovering traces of everyday life within the cells, such as fireplaces for warmth and cooking, servant areas and parlor areas for visitors, this research contributes to a more general understanding of the medieval ascetic life of an anchorite beyond the textual sources.

Finally, the broader implications of this study extend to an understanding of the medieval Church and its role in shaping gendered behaviors and concepts of sacredness. By placing anchorite cells within the broader religious landscape, this research illustrates the ways in which religious institutions constructed, reflected, and preserved societal norms and ideologies.

In summary, this thesis aims to make a substantial contribution to the wider field of knowledge by offering a multidisciplinary analysis of anchorite cells in medieval England and Wales. Through its innovative and comprehensive investigations, and by incorporating previously unused scholarly investigations, this study seeks to enhance the understanding of medieval society, religious practices and architectural history, while addressing broader questions about gender, power and identity not only within the medieval religious community, but in society in general.

1.8 Scope and Parameters

This thesis considers the social constructs of form and fabric in relation to anchorite enclosures in medieval England and Wales. It does not include Scotland because the evidence for anchorites, or 'solitaries' in Scotland, is extremely rare, and, indeed, the bulk of evidence available for ascetics in Scotland applies to hermits (McAvoy 2010:21). Monsignor David McRoberts' article, *Hermits in Medieval Scotland* (1965), which included some discussion on hermits and anchorites, is the only known work completed on solitaries in this region to date. In discussing this work, Anna McHugh states that, apart from McRoberts' published research, there is virtually no other scholarship on the subject, and little primary evidence (McHugh 2010:178). McHugh also highlights that McRoberts only lists one anchorite, a woman called 'Helena Grant' (d. unknown date), compared to over 30 hermits (McHugh 2010:180).

1.9 Thesis Structure

This thesis is composed of eight chapters.

Chapter Two defines the absolute power and influence of the Church on medieval society. In discussing gendered roles in the Church, and the teachings of the Church regarding the Legacy of Eve, this chapter highlights important components of the Church's authority, morals, and principles. Moreover, it is argued that, through the belief in the Legacy of Eve, women were seen as morally weaker, sinful beings who needed to be controlled in all aspects of their life. It is vital to understand both the influence of the medieval Church on society and the attitudes towards men and women within that society to assist in interpreting how the different sexes were controlled in their roles as anchorites within the Church. Chapter Two also analyses how space was used within a gendered religious context for control and to create specific

behaviours. As a final point, I examine the requirements of anchorite enclosure through the analysis of the anchorite guides, rules, and regulations for the cell and the enclosed recluse.

Chapter Three provides a literature review of the most significant anchoritic scholarship from historical and archaeological viewpoints. The literature reviewed combines modern (mid-twentieth century to twenty-first century) and early scholarship (nineteenth and early twentieth century). The key themes of this literature relate to the sex of the anchorites, enclosures, location, and specifically late nineteenth and early twentieth century material investigations of anchorite cells in England.

Chapter Four describes the methods used for this study, including fieldwork and research, a clarification of the sample size used for the case studies, and the locations of the samples of anchorite cells and techniques employed in the survey of these cells. This chapter also examines the limitations and restrictions of the study. Furthermore, the procedures, tools, and resources are reviewed, and the comparison and analysis processes and procedures are documented.

Chapter Five analyses the data collected by previous scholars. It discusses the chronological pattern of anchorite enclosure, the spatial and gendered distribution of cells, the sites of clusters of cells in relation to religious Houses over the period examined in this thesis, and the possible reasons for these clusters.

Chapter Six provides the details of the eight case study cells that were investigated during the course of this research, including aspects of the churches they are attached to. Specifics of

each enclosure's location and any significant landscape features or buildings in the local area that may have been important to the cell and church are discussed.

Chapter Seven analyses the results from chapters five and six and evaluates them against the thesis aim and questions. The research questions are examined and resolved using the fieldwork, survey findings and historical research completed during this thesis. Lastly, the aim of the thesis is examined and qualified against the outcomes of the research and fieldwork.

Chapter Eight delivers the conclusion and provides an exposition of the significance of the results. It also explores the potential of further progress in archaeological investigation of medieval anchorite cells in England and Wales and discusses the implication of the results for future researchers of this topic. Finally, it demonstrates how the results of this thesis are distinct from other research in this field, how it advances modern scholarship, and how it contributes original knowledge to academia.

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CHAPTER TWO

FORM AND FABRIC CONSTRUCTING BEHAVIOR

This chapter considers the authority of the Church over society and individuals in the medieval period. In particular, it considers the teachings of the Church concerning men and women, which had far-reaching implications, particularly for women. It also defines the archaeology of space within a religious context and considers the ways in which the Church used form and fabric to influence the behaviour of those who belonged to, and served it. In relation to anchorites, it discusses the form and fabric of cells and how this may have influenced and/or created and reinforced the behaviours of enclosure. Finally, this chapter reviews examples of solitary confinement in other settings and research into its effects on the individual.

2.1 The Authority and Influence of the Church in the Medieval Period

The Church was the centre of medieval faith: the House of God, the intermediary between Heaven and Earth. Every aspect of medieval life in England and Wales was either subject to the laws of the Catholic Church (Bovey 2015) or the king, as one whom God appointed to rule (Lynch 1992:118-119). Dorothy Meade notes that:

As all persons were born subjects of the king so also were they born subjects of the Church. Throughout life, they were made aware of its concern for and control over them. The priest informed them of the allegiance they owed, the actions that they must perform and the punishments that awaited them in this life and the next should they in any way fail (Meade 1988:18).

The Church had a vast complex system of governance, laws, taxes, and education. The Pope was the representative of Christ on Earth, and therefore the laws and directions given by him

were to be followed precisely. The power of the Church was all-encompassing, particularly during the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries, when Papal power grew in strength (Classen 2015:1457-1458). Christianity, and thereby Baptism and entry into the Church, was not optional but obligatory, as were obedience and submission to the Church and all its laws (Classen 2015:179-180; Lynch 1992:126). Those who did not conform felt the Church's wrath. Heresy was punishable by burning, and the heretic's possessions and those of their family were taken by the local Sheriffs, leaving families impoverished (Meade 1988:185-189). It was by all these measures that the Church could influence actions and beliefs.

The teachings of the Church were a considerable part of this influence, through which it controlled parishioners' lives.

2.2 Teachings of the Church – Women and Men

As regards the individual nature, woman is defective and misgotten ... For good order would have been wanting in the human family if some were not governed by others wiser than themselves. So by such a kind of subjection woman is naturally subject to man because in man the discretion of reason predominates.

(St Thomas Aquinas *Summa Theologica* Ia q.92, a.1, Obj. 1, and q.92, a.1, Obj. 2, 2012:1245-1246).

The fact is, the nature of the man is most rounded off and complete, and consequently in man the qualities or capacities, [less mischievous, more spirited, less impulsive, and less cunning than the female], are found in their perfection. (Aristotle *History of Animals* Book IX:230, Creswell trans. 1902).

Through the teachings of the Church, the belief that women's bodies were unruly and therefore needed to be controlled was commonly held in the Middle Ages. Henrietta Leyser (2002) argues that it was upon the moral fibre and personality of Mary, the mother of Christ, that the ideal woman's character was built. Women, therefore, should be chaste, humble, compliant, silent, and passive, and so imitate Mary. However, Leyser also argues that, although this was the definitive version of women, it was far from unanimously accepted. Other versions of the Virgin's character were also celebrated during the Middle Ages, such as level-headedness and taking control in the face of adversity (Leyser 2002:62-63). Marina Warner (2013) highlights the importance of Mary being a virgin to the early Church. She argues that "sexuality represented to them the gravest danger and the fatal flaw; they viewed virginity as its opposite and its conqueror ..." (Warner 2013:51). Mary, as a virginal mother, therefore, represented the perfect woman.

Similar views on women, including the Greek philosopher Aristotle (d. 322 BCE), for example, who considered women the inferior sex for multiple reasons, had a long history within secular philosophy and continued to influence opinion in the Middle Ages:

Hence woman is more compassionate than man, more easily moved to tears, at the same time is more jealous, more querulous, more apt to scold and to strike. She is, furthermore, prone to despondency and less hopeful than the man, more void of shame or self-respect, more false of speech, more deceptive, and of more retentive memory. She is also more wakeful, more shrinking, more difficult to rouse to action, and requires a smaller quantity of nutriment. (Aristotle *History of Animals* Book IX:231, Creswell trans. 1902).

These views were duplicated by medieval religious scholars who adopted teachings from Aristotle regarding morals and the sexes, for example, the philosopher, theologian and

Dominican monk, St. Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274 CE), (*Summa Theologica* 2-2,163.4), who defined women as the “imperfect” and “defective” versions of man, as inferior. He believed that women were created to be subordinate to men and that they were not as fully formed or as rational as men. He also believed that women were more prone to sin and temptation than men (Second Part of the Second Part II-II, Question 148, Article 9).

The belief that women needed to be controlled because they were sinful or that women were, or at the very least could be, an instrument of evil originated from the ‘Legacy of Eve’. It was Eve, not the serpent, who tempted Adam to commit the original sin (*Summa Theologica* 2-2.163.4) and therefore Eve/woman who was the source of sinfulness in its many forms: “Of the woman came the beginning of sin, and through her we all die” (King James Bible 2016 Ecclesiasticus / Sirach Chapter 25:24). Through Eve’s actions came the Fall, and the expulsion of both Adam and Eve from Paradise, condemned to perform hard labour for food, and ultimately lose their immortality. Eve was condemned further to suffer pain in childbirth. Consequently, it was because of Eve that throughout religious history, and indeed in social reactions to women in general, the woman has been treated as the temptress, morally inferior to the man, untrustworthy, and the one who was more pre-disposed to sin.

This portrayal of Eve as the instigator of sin and disobedience contributed to the development of misogynistic attitudes towards women in medieval and later society (Stefanacci 2020:220-221). The Legacy of Eve therefore became deeply intertwined with the religious beliefs, societal norms, and gender roles which were prevalent in the Middle Ages. Women were often viewed with suspicion and mistrust and seen as more susceptible to temptation and moral corruption due to Eve’s supposed transgressions. This perception of women as morally

inferior and inherently sinful had profound implications for their social status, legal rights and everyday rights in the Middle Ages. The fifteenth-century treatise on witchcraft, the *Malleus Maleficarum* or The Hammer of Witches, written by Heinrich Kramer (d. 1505 CE) and James Sprenger (d. 1495 CE), Inquisitors of the Catholic Church, for example, attributed the evilness of women to “the first temptress, Eve, and her imitators” (Summers, trans. 1928:44).

The association of Eve with sexual temptation and the Fall contributed to the policing of women’s bodies and behaviours, with strict expectations regarding chastity, modesty, and obedience. Women were often subjected to patriarchal control and scrutiny, with their sexuality regulated and constrained to uphold purity and family honour (Stefanacci 2020:221). Gwen Seabourne (2021:15-16) states that the medieval English jurist and writer Henry de Bracton, clarified that “women differ from men in many respects, for their position is inferior to that of men”, confirming that in law, women were looked upon entirely differently than men. Seabourne suggests that in medieval law, women were portrayed as fragile, uncomplicated, and susceptible to predators. These predators highlight women’s moral, physical and intellectual deficiencies, such as a lack of wisdom in comparison to men, and that the traditional expectations placed on women were of domesticity, obedience and silence. Seabourne’s research into medieval common law, found many misogynistic comments directed specifically at, and about, women, demonstrating how women were regarded by those who held the law in their hands. For example, common lawyers made remarks that portray women as deserving of blame, lacking willpower, sexually deviants and nags (or ‘shews’). They even at times likened women to animals and gave them the same consideration in law as “minors, monks, villeins and those labelled idiots” (Seabourne 2001:19-20).

Furthermore, Eve's other role as the mother of the human race was also significant in shaping perceptions of women's reproductive functions and maternal duties, albeit within the wider framework of a sinful legacy. Women were idealised as nurturers and caretakers, expected to fulfill their roles as wives and mothers while bearing the burden of Eve's supposed original sin, so, although essential as the means of furthering male lineages, they also needed to be controlled by men in order to perform this task in ways that were considered suitable. Overall, the Legacy of Eve in the Middle Ages perpetuated patriarchal structures and gender inequalities, reinforcing societal norms that subordinated women and restricted their positions, activities and powers within the medieval social order (Martos and Hegy 1998:13).

The examination of the Legacy of Eve in reinforcing patriarchal structures in the Middle Ages leads to a deeper exploration of contrasting attitudes towards lust, the body and women as expressed in the twelfth century between the highly educated Heloise (d. c. 1164) and Peter Abelard (d. 1142 CE). Heloise was first a student, lover, then wife of the monk, philosopher, and theologian Peter Abelard, who hastily sent her off, after giving birth to his child, to a nunnery in Argenteuil, France. She subsequently became a nun, on the command of Abelard, then went on to become the abbess of the Paraclete Abbey, while Abelard was castrated for his 'crimes' by her uncle and guardian, Fulbert (Nye 1992:2-3). Abelard, in answering Heloise's letters of complaint to him about his autobiography *Historia calamitatum*, uses Heloise's sex against her, stating that as a female, she is unable to "discipline her mind" (Nye 1992: 3) and that she should keep quiet and never try to instruct a man:

The more subtle [the tongue] is in you (vobis), and the more flexible because of the softness of your body, the more mobile and prone to words it is, and exhibits itself as the seedbed of all evil. This defect in you is noted by the Apostle when he forbids

women to speak unless they question their husbands at home. In discoursing of such things or whatever things are to be done, he particularly subjects them to silence, writing on this to Timothy: A woman must learn in silence and with complete submission. I do not permit a woman to teach, nor to rule over a man, but to be silent. (MS XVI, 245-46; 188-89 in Nye 1992:3-4)

Religious writers and monastic movements emphasised the inadequacies and weaknesses of the men (and women) who did not fit their ideal of sexual identity (Thibodeaux 2015:2-3). The man was to be the exact opposite of every depravity of the female. Whereas the woman was seen to be a sexual temptress, the man needed to be in control of his sexual nature; since the woman was seen as impure and uncontainable, the man should portray himself as, and be seen to be, pure, holy, and restrained. Men in both the Church and society were assumed to make logical, clear, and fair judgements using intelligent reasoning. They could show strength and discipline (Wiethaus 1991:35), restraint, rationality and sense. Women could do none of these things. Within the Church the Legacy of Eve resulted in the shaping of attitudes towards female religious figures and the broader perception of women within the community. The Church's interpretation of the Legacy of Eve, in particular, spiritual susceptibility and moral weakness, had a lasting impact on the treatment of women, and the roles of women, including those in religious life. Despite these restrictions, the Legacy of Eve also played a part in the veneration of female saints and visionaries. Women who were seen as overcoming their natural predisposition to sin through exceptional piety and devotion were often revered, for example, Julian of Norwich, Catherine of Siena (d. 1380 CE) and Hildegard of Bingen (d. 1179 CE).

Woman's only hope, only achievable through intense personal effort and contact watchfulness, was the slim possibility that they could shed the more appalling of their sins and become 'man-like'. In the twelfth century, for example, it appears that assuming more of the character of a man and shedding what were regarded as weaker woman's qualities was frequently discussed by male writers, who urged religious women to do just that. An example was Osbert of Clare (d. c. 1158), who, in a letter to Ida of Barking (d. unknown date), urged her to "conquer the woman, conquer the flesh and conquer lust", that she should deny the "wanton delight" that "would lead her ultimately back to her sex" (Ferrante and Imus 2014: online). In doing so, a woman could reveal extraordinary power and be considered superior to be a 'simple' woman (Murray 2008:43).

2.3 The Use of Space in a Religious Context

Tamara Metz (2022:33) asserts that "architecture is meant to be lived in", meaning that the form and fabric is defined and created for people to dwell in and use in various of aspects of their daily lives, including cultural and religious. The building also relates to the physical environment which surrounds it, whether this be urban or country, as well as the history, traditions, and social characteristics of its population (Metz 2022:5). A building is not just a physical form with no meaning, it relates to its surroundings and the culture and needs of its designer and those who utilise its space. It is a space for the individual as well as a communal space, and if it is part of an institution like the Church, it is representative of that institution (Metz 2022:41).

Metz (2022:43) suggests that, in the medieval period, God was held to have determined specific rules for the geometry of nature and its symmetry, with an "emphasis on the human

form as the supreme embodiment of these systems". This "represented a new focus on the importance of the human body, and by extension, human scale and experience" (Metz 2022:43), and hence the same rules were also used in the form and fabric, providing a "proportional relationship between the individual and the architecture" (Metz 2022:43). The relation of the space to the human could also be manipulated to elicit "feelings of intimacy or overwhelming power" (Metz 2022:48) and, thus, the church building itself became a "symbol of the Kingdom of God". This can be seen in many Gothic artistic representations of heaven (Bandmann et al. 2005:61-62). Bandmann et al. (2005:48) have commented that building a church was a "religious act" in itself. The patron of the building was therefore making this religious act possible by his/her contribution and thus the structure was a public reflection of their commitment to the Church and God.

The architecture and use of space in the medieval Church was thus a cultural product of the Middle Ages and the religious fervour of the period. English society at the time was based on a feudal system and was an agrarian society. Being a wealthy institution and owning much land and property made it possible for the Church to control its relationships with the tenants on their lands. The church building, as God's House on Earth "gave the church a certain social importance in the landscape" (Hansson 2009:437-438). This importance not only transferred to the religious who inhabited the church and its associated buildings, such as monasteries and nunneries, but also to anchorites who inhabited a cell attached to the church. As in any society, space and its meanings and uses, including what were deemed to be appropriate activities for different types of spaces and status, defined the social roles of the different sexes in society, particularly in a religious framework, and was therefore used to regulate and control social behaviour (Schulenburg 2005:185). Just as different uses of space and gender

and hierarchical divisions existed within society, this was also the case within the Church (Hansson 2009:438).

The architecture, or form and fabric of the medieval abbey, or principal churches of the Collegiate Ministers (a monastery church served by a college of clergy), and cathedrals, was awe inspiring and intended to send a message of permanency, power, and wealth to the populace (Mayr-Harting 2011:131-182). Even at a parish church level, where the architecture was less elaborate, and the church itself was usually much smaller, there was a symbolic mixture of the mysterious and the divine. It purposely displayed the inspirational supremacy of the Church, where God resided on Earth. Frequently, it was the symbolic representation or iconography of the form and fabric of the church that took precedence rather than the functionality of the building itself (Stalley 1999:59-77).

Key to the architectural layout of church buildings was the separation of the sexes, providing preferential space for males and sacred barriers to restrict women's involvement, demonstrating continued ecclesiastical control over the then perceived "lesser sex". Although these exclusions were rarely mediated by actual, physical barriers, except perhaps the rood to protect the sacred space of the altar, women, even during a regular service, would be seated furthest from the holy areas of the church, such as the altar and choir (Aston 1990). Segregation of the sexes in church was widely practiced across Europe in the Middle Ages (den Hartog 2021). Indeed, some religious centres forbade entry by women altogether, such as Durham Cathedral, where women were forbidden to visit the shrine of St. Cuthbert (d. 687 CE) and were only permitted to enter as far as the 'women's line' – a black marble line inlaid into the floor (Bailey 2013:498-9; den Hartog 2021), (see Figure 3). This type of segregation

also extended to seating arrangements: the north part of the church was reserved for the females and the south part for males, sometimes divided by a wall or similar, such as in St Brigit's Church in Kildare, Ireland (Gilchrist 1994:133-134).

Roberta Gilchrist has suggested that segregational architecture may have been used to "reinforce the alienation of women", to keep religious women confined and controlled, to control their economy, and to make sure that their social interactions were restricted and aligned with the Church's and monastic institution's preferences for the separate sexes (Gilchrist 1994:167). For example, the Christian symbolism of the orientation of the cloisters was different between sexes. In nunneries the cloister was oriented to the north, symbolising the Old Testament and representing the characteristics of night and day (Gilchrist 1992:). In monasteries the cloister was oriented south, symbolising the New Testament and representing the characteristics of warmth and light.



Figure 3: An inlaid black marble line demarcating the point where beyond which women could not go - Durham Cathedral. Photo: Dave Wood. Reproduced by kind permission of the Chapter of Durham Cathedral.

Restricting women from entering certain buildings, or spaces was the case even for the female aristocracy and meant that women could not visit burial places of family members entombed within the church or cemetery. To facilitate the enforcement of these rules, women were forewarned that to spurn these directions would result in punishment from Heaven, and ultimately such transgressions could mean excommunication from the Church. Women who did not adhere were treated with contempt. This is seen in the life of Margery Kempe, whose behaviour caused religious and lay to not only treat her with contempt, but to also accused her of being a heretic and Lollard (Lucas 1987:301-302)

Segregating women from sacred space had far reaching repercussions. On a social level, to the medieval Church this was a necessary step in the protection of sacred spaces from defilement but was also an example of the authority men held over women and the obvious privileged treatment of men in the religious context (Schulenburg 2005:186-199). It also had economic outcomes, however, most obviously in preventing women from visiting saints' relics, an important and growing cult movement in the Middle Ages. Relics were a major source of income for many churches and religious houses, which could not survive financially without them (Frassetto et al. 2014:155), thus restricting women's ability to visit them posed a serious problem. Julia Smith (2002:178-179) has suggested that there were, in fact, some attempts by religious communities to provide women with temporary access to relics through exclusive female-only areas located outside of the church or monastery.

An alternative to visiting male-dominated institutions was to collect and venerate them in a female-only environment (although male pilgrims often visited these relics also – see Schulenburg 2014:159-160). There were many female religious, female religious communities

and wealthy noble women who held private collections of saints' relics in the medieval period. Indeed, some of the most famous "prolific collectors and stockpilers" of such things were women (Schulenburg 2014:154-155). Examples include St. Radegund (d. 587 CE), a princess of the Thuringia court and a Frankish queen who founded a monastery in France after fleeing from the Frankish Court and her husband in c. 550 CE. She is famous for her collection of relics, which included "a fragment of the True Cross" (Jesus College Cambridge 2023: online). St. Edith of Wilton (d. 984 CE), the abbess of Wilton Abbey and daughter of Edgar, King of England, acquired a "small particle of the sacred nail" from the Passion of Christ, among other things (Schulenberg 2014:157).

2.4 The Feminisation of Spirituality and Devotion During the Later Middle Ages The Rise of Maternal Affective Devotional Practices

Deus Optimus Maximus, cunctorum genitor, Pater ac bonorum, *utriusque sexus foecunditate plenissimus*, hominem sibi similem creavit, masculum et foeminam creavit illos.

God the Best and Greatest, source of all things and Father of the good, *abundantly full of the fertility of both sexes*, created humankind in his likeness; male and female he created them.

Genesis 1:27 (from Newman 1997:229)

Traditionally, women were marginalised in religious roles (Newman 1997:20) but gained more visibility when a significant shift occurred in the later Middle Ages in the realm of spirituality and devotion, as a growing emphasis was placed on the feminisation of religious practices. This transformation, the rise of maternal affective devotional practices, saw a surge in the importance of nurturing and in emotional, personal connections with the Divine. Women played a central role in this movement as they sought to cultivate a more intimate and heartfelt relationship with God (Bynum 1982:115-119). A number of areas demonstrate this:

- visual culture – the representation of women in religious art, sculpture and illuminated manuscripts,
- devotional treatises and visionary writings – those which highlight the experiences and perspectives of women in their spiritual journeys,
- monasticism – the role of women in monastic communities during the later Middle Ages, and
- Broader social and cultural factors - including the rise of vernacular literature and the increasing literacy among women which allowed for greater participation in religious discourse.

Visual Culture

The representation of women in religious art and iconography reflected the changing attitudes towards women and their spiritual significance. Female saints, biblical figures, and royalty, along with everyday women, were often depicted in paintings, sculptures and illuminated manuscripts, showing their devotion, piety, and virtuous qualities. The images also included women in various religious roles, such as nuns, visionaries, and martyrs, highlighting their dedication to their faith and their willingness to sacrifice for their beliefs. Symbolism used in images became extremely important in the later Middle Ages. Christa

Grossinger (1997:22) suggests that curiosity about all of God's creation and its meaning was at its height during this period. The visual culture of the time started to include more clues about the meaning of the art, for example, the artist Jan Van Eyck (d. 1441 CE), in the painting *The Madonna by the Fountain* (c. AD 1430), (see Figure 4) used the flowers closely associated with the Virgin to portray her qualities: lilies (representing purity and holiness), roses (symbolising her burning love of God and her incarnation), and strawberry (for her fruitful virginity), (Grossinger 1997:22; Stokes: n.d:5), the fountain reinforces Mary as the fountain in the "Song of Solomon 4:15" and the blue colour of the cloak which symbolised "the Virgin's purity, and her label as an empress" (Fuchs:2015). Indeed, the Cult of the Virgin Mary was taught widely, in particular by Bernard of Clairvaux (c. AD 1090 – 1153) in the twelfth century, and positioned her as the "ideal woman and mother", qualities to which other women were persuaded to aspire to (Grossinger 1997:20).



Figure 4: Madonna by the Fountain c. AD 1439 by Jan Van Eyck. Dominique Provost, Collection KMSKS – Flemish Community (public domain). Reproduced by kind permission of the Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp.

Other examples include the painting of Lady Margaret Beaufort, Countess of Richmond and Derby (d. 1509 CE), and the mother of King Henry VII (d. 1509 CE), by an unknown artist (1509), (see Figure 5). Lady Beaufort was a patron of learning and founding Christi's and St John's Colleges in Cambridge. She was also well known for her "religious humility" and her devotion to her son (Hepburn 2011:118-119). In this portrait, Lady Beaufort is depicted in modest piety, with hands clasped together in prayer, in front of an open illuminated text (presumably a bible or prayer book). Her elegant white hands and long dainty fingers emphasise not only her femininity, but also her sincerity, submission, repentance, and veneration of the Divine. The ring on her index finger signifies authority and power. The coat of arms in the background is that of her son, Henry Tudor, when he was Earl of Richmond and before he became King Henry VII. This image therefore shows Margaret's loyalty and devotion to both her husband and son (Murdock 2020), as well as to God.



Figure 5: Lady Margaret Beaufort by unknown artist, 1509. Brasenose College, University of Oxford (Art UK: online n.d.). Reproduced by kind permission of Brasenose College, University of Oxford.

Another powerful depiction is the illumination of St. Catherine of Alexandria (c. AD 287 – 305), who is seen looking towards the heavens, using her left hand to show the path towards God, with two people (possibly St Catherine's tormentors) kneeling, repenting their sins (see Figure 6). The torture implement of a wheel with spikes is seen broken by the intervention of God. The palm which St Catherine carries is the symbolism for martyrdom (The National Gallery Victoria: Online nd.). The illumination is from a manuscript belonging to a Dominican convent in France (c. 1300).

Image removed due to copyright restriction

Figure 6: St Catherine of Alexandria (na. Carmichael Digital Projects: Online n.d.)

The twelfth century illumination shows the hand of God reaching down towards St. Catherine with the gesture of benediction - "thumb, index finger and middle figure extended, while ring and little finger are bent backwards" (Kollmorgen 2010). This image demonstrates the blessing on her by God, and as such, emphasises the "sending of the spirit" of God (the Holy Spirit) to St Catherine (Kapic 2005:255). This is important because the Holy Spirit brings "the energy of life in God" into the person to whom the blessing is being directed. When individuals receive this 'energy' they have the ability to exhibit "unusual powers: the faint are raised into action; exceptional human abilities are demonstrated; ecstasy may be experienced", it is by this 'exchange' of power that God is able to accomplish His purposes through that person (Ferguson 2020:3). For a woman (whether saint or not) to be shown to receive such a blessing, therefore confirmed that women were held in high esteem by God, when they showed piety, repentance, spiritual strength and submission to the Divine.

These visual representations served as powerful symbols of inspiration and imitation for women seeking to cultivate a more intimate and heartfelt relationship with God. The increase of visual culture in the later Middle Ages (Denery II 2005) also emphasised the emotional, affective aspects of spirituality. Spirituality often had a profound impact on a person's emotional well-being and the visual culture of the time may have offered a range of emotions, including, peace and calmness, happiness and joy, gratitude and appreciation and love and compassion. The paintings and sculptures often portrayed women in moments of intense prayer, contemplation, and ecstasy, conveying their deep connection with the Divine. These images aimed to evoke a sense of empathy and identification among viewers, encouraging them to engage in their own personal and emotional spiritual journey.

Furthermore, the rise of illuminated manuscripts allowed for the dissemination of religious texts and images to a wider audience, including women. This increased accessibility to visual representations of female spirituality further contributed to the feminisation of spirituality by providing women with the role models and inspiration for their own religious practices.

Feminine images of Jesus also became more prevalent in the later Middle Ages (see Figure 7). This may have represented the change in ideals and the "socially accepted roles of women in the Church and the public" (Bledsoe 2011:34). During the rise and use of affective devotion, or the use of visual emotion to show religious piety and repentance, the use of feminine metaphors and an increased devotion to female religious figures was common in writing as well as in images (Bynum 1982:5, Bledsoe 2011:37). Hence, images of Jesus evolved to be softer, and more womanlike, displaying the three distinct and most positive attributes of the medieval woman as defined by religious writers: generative, loving and tender, and nurturing.

The Feminised images of Jesus Christ display these attributes, displaying his humanity as a being of “flesh and blood” and associating this “imperfect half of his nature” with the woman in the medical theories of the Middle Ages (Bledsoe 2011:39-40, 45).

Image removed due to copyright restriction

Figure 7: Quirizio da Murano, The Savior C. 1460-1478, Venice. (Jenny Bledsoe 2011:40).

Devotional Treaties and Visionary Writings

lesu, swete lesu –

Mi druth, mi derling, mi drihtin,

Mi healend, mi huniter, mi haliwei;

Swetter is munegunge of the

Then mildeu o muthe ...

[Jesus, sweet Jesus –

My dear, my darling, my Lord

My Saviour, my honey-drop, my balm;

Sweeter is the memory of you

Than honey in the mouth ...]

Wooing (McNamer 2009:26)

Rebecca McNamer (2009) uses this quotation from the group of prayers, *The Wooing*, written specifically for women, to demonstrate the emotional familiarity with which the reader views

Jesus. Even though the work does not completely align with devotional treatises “formally, stylistically, (or) generically” (2009:27), it uses powerful emotive language to draw women, as towards affective meditation (McNamer 2009:27).

Devotional treatises, such as “The Imitation of Christ”, probably by Thomas a Kempis (d. 1471 CE), emphasised the importance of personal piety, prayer, and self-reflection. This fifteenth-century manuscript, originally written in Latin and translated by William Benham in c. 1886, consists of four books which discuss in turn spiritual life, inner life, inward consolidation, and the Sacrament of the altar. Another is the *vitae* of Douce 114, within which the benefit of prayer and contemplation is explained explicitly to female recluses (Zimbalist 2022:220-222). These types of devotional texts encouraged women to engage in practices such as meditation, contemplation, and the recitation of prayers, allowing them to deepen their spiritual experiences and develop a more profound relationship with God. They provided women with not only inspiration, but guidance and a framework for cultivating a more intimate and emotional connection with the Divine. The feminized versions of Christianity encouraged much more inward reflection and internal works of divinity, for example, the *Ancrene Wisse*, rather than external.

Spiritual and visionary writings, on the other hand, offered a more practical but also, at times, ecstatic approach to spirituality. The works of holy women like, Hildegard of Bingen, Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe (d. 1439 CE), provided women with accounts of their spiritual experiences and encounters with the Divine. The writings often described intense emotional and physical experiences, such as visions, revelations, and union with God. For example, the

visionary letters of Hildegard of Bingen portray a reassuring, nurturing and encouraging, yet authoritarian hand:

O daughter of God, you are surrounded by Christ's love. Still, the bitterness of the flesh inhibits your spirit, and so you rebel by lashing out at the devil. Hildegard to the Abbess – 94r (before 1173).

(Baird and Radd 1998:9-10)

In a true vision I heard and saw these words: Sometimes the first light of day shines brightly, but, later, dawn is stripped away because the sky becomes over-shadowed with great storm clouds... Therefore, O man, you who have knowledge of good and evil consider what kind of person you are ...Take heed to such things, lest the zeal of the Lord strike you ... Hildegard to the Provost 98r (before 1173).

(Baird and Radd 1998:13)

Julian of Norwich used visually emotional language to describe the visions of Christ's passion:

I saw a part of His Passion in Christ's face on the cross – which was in front of me, and on which I looked continually. I saw how he was scorned, and spat on, and sullied and beaten – and many long-drawn agonies (more than I can tell you) and how the colour of his face often changed. And once I saw how half his face, beginning at the ear, was covered over with dried blood until it reached the centre. Julian of Norwich – *Revelations* - Chapter 10.

(Upjohn 1996:12)

Margery Kempe, who verbally, loudly and at times violently portrayed her emotions in public, behaviour likened to a possible paranoid schizophrenia by Monica Furlong (1996:168), is said

to have had a 'healing' vision of Christ that had ignited further her "passion for her faith" and restored her sanity, though she continued to cry and sob in public. Her visions of the future earned her some respect, and although illiterate, she dictated her life and her visions to a priest scribe. Her visions include a detailed visitation of St Anne's pregnancy (Mary's mother):

And then at once she St Anne, great with child, and then she prayed Saint Anne to let her be her maid and her servant. And presently our Lady was born, and then she busied herself to take the child to herself and look after her until she was twelve years of age, with good food and drink, with fair white clothing and white kerchiefs. Margery Kempe.

(Furlong 1996:178)

By sharing these personal experiences, and demonstrating their visionary capability, these visionaries inspired women to seek their own personal transformative experiences. Both devotional treatises and visionary writings emphasised the importance of the inner spiritual life and the cultivation of virtues such as humility, love, and compassion. They encouraged women to embrace their emotions, desires, and personal experiences and to think of them as valid and valuable aspects of their spiritual journey. Indeed, these texts were "devotional instruction in the vernacular" because they directed the reader to take part, to use the written word and their emotions (Zimbalist 2022:137-138). Through these texts, women found validation for their own spiritual aspirations and a language to express their deep longing for God.

Monasticism

Women sought refuge in convents and monasteries, where they could dedicate themselves to a life of prayer, contemplation, and religious devotion. These religious communities provided women with a supportive and structured environment to deepen their spiritual practices and in this way pursue a more intimate relationship with God. Within the strict monastic setting, women had the opportunity to engage in communal worship, participate in the liturgy, and receive spiritual guidance from experienced mentors. Monasticism offered women a space to cultivate virtues such as humility, obedience, and self-discipline, while also encouraging them to develop their intellectual and artistic talents. Heike Uffmann (2001:85) suggests that the monastic architecture of “reformed nunneries”, “moulded images of female spirituality”. The monastic life allowed women to find self-empowerment and fulfillment through their religious vocation. Women, such as Hildegard of Bingen, who held leadership roles within the Church, and who composed numerous works of theology, sermons and music, demonstrated that this was possible, for those with the education and wealth necessary for these roles (Meconi 2019:53).

It was in the later Middle Ages, from inside the religious houses, that the feminisation of spirituality and devotion took hold. The influence of monasticism on the feminisation of spirituality cannot be overstated, as it provided not only women, but also men, with a platform to explore their faith in a meaningful and newly transformative way. The leaders of these institutions were encouraged to be a mother to their religious and lay families, particularly by Bernard of Clairvaux (c. AD 1090-1153), a twelfth century abbot, co-founder of the Knights Templar and later saint. Bledsoe (2011:48-50) suggests that the feminisation of the images of Jesus Christ were initially commissioned “within a cloistered setting”, that is

within monasteries and nunneries. She also discusses Bernard of Clairvaux's portrayal of abbots and prelates, as a nurturing Mother Mary and his encouragement of them to be gentler, like Jesus.

Social and Cultural Context

The feminisation of spirituality during the later Middle Ages was also influenced by the broader social and cultural context of the time. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, women were limited to the extent of travel they could undertake, and most were confined to their homes and personal or domestic duties, which may have included travelling to and from church (McSheffrey 1992:29).

In conclusion, exploration of the significant shift in spirituality and devotion during the later Middle Ages, focusing on the feminisation of religious practices, has found that, despite being traditionally marginalised in religious roles, women gained visibility as maternal affective devotional practices emerged from the eleventh century onwards, emphasising emotional connections with the Divine. The various aspects of this transformation have been examined and include shifts in visual culture, the dissemination of devotional texts, the role of monasticism and the broader social and cultural context. Visual culture played a crucial role, as depictions of women in religious art reflected changing attitudes, emphasising their devotion and spiritual significance. Illuminated manuscripts further broadened access to visual representations, providing inspiration and role models for women's religious practices. Devotional treatises and visionary writings, such as *The Imitation of Christ* and works by visionaries like Hildegard of Bingen and Julian of Norwich, encouraged personal piety and contemplation, fostering emotional engagement with spirituality. Monasticism offered

women a supportive environment in which to deepen their spiritual practices, empowering them to go beyond society's expectations and find fulfillment in their religious calling. Lastly, the broader social and cultural factors, including limited mobility for women outside of the domestic and the impact of events like the Black Death, influenced, in some, the rise of personal piety and the desire for salvation. Increasing literacy among women and the rise of vernacular literature aided greater participation in religious discussion, contributing to the feminization of spirituality during this period.

2.5 Anchorites and the Form and Fabric of Cells

From as early as the sixth century, anchorite cells began to be attached to churches, adding to the mysterious elements of a church. Examples include, several anchoresses enclosed in St. Radigonde's Abbey in Kent (Dale 1903:238), also mentioned by the Benedictine monk and scholar Mabillion (d.1707), and St. Frideswitha, anchoress and Abbess, who was enclosed in the eighth century in Thornbury in Oxon (Dale 1903:242).

The anchorite, enclosed in their cell for eternity, represented the embodiment of devotion, purity, sacredness, and spirituality that the community which surrounded the cell could embrace. Just by the act of enclosure, all could see this indisputable dedication to God. The non-exclusionary nature of visitation meant that no-one, regardless of sex or status, was prevented from being able to visit an anchorite. Internally, the concentrated area in which the anchorite was to live, work and pray reinforced the dedicated, pure, and pious behaviours required by the Church, by creating a centre of concentration on God and his work to the exclusion of all else. This is in direct opposition to the ongoing issues monks apparently had with distraction. A famous example is of Gregory the Great (d. 604 CE), Bishop of Rome in

590, who apparently had a multitude of distractions, from which he would try and steal a moment alone. On one such occasion, his Deacon found him hiding, to which Gregory responded, “the ship of my mind is being battered by cyclones” (as quoted in Kreiner 2023:5).

However, behaviours such as dedication and concentration on prayer and ritual were paramount to the Church, as they reinforced the commitment and devotion of the anchorite, as well as that of the community and nobles who supported them. This meant that the community could be controlled and governed by the Church, and the aristocracy influenced and exploited into supporting both the Church and the anchorite. The presence of an anchorite in a parish church was thus a powerful symbolic and religious statement in its own right. This was achieved through a combination of strict adherence to religious practices, the anchorite’s seclusion from the world, and the mysterious aura that surrounded their ascetic lifestyle. The anchorite’s unwavering commitment to prayer and ritual may have also served as a constant reminder of the spiritual dedication required by all members of the community during the Middle Ages. Certainly, there were consequences if an individual did not comply with the Church authority. The Middle Ages saw excommunication from the Church as a tool to compel the individual and community at large to comply with the Church’s rules and regulations (Hill 2022:2). And, although there were also instances of widespread corruption within the Church, with archdeacons and deans extorting the public and their own clergy for financial gain via bribery (Crouch 2017:146), nevertheless, the Church continued to leverage the influence of the overall power of the Church and its teachings to maintain control over the populace. Along with the enclosed anchorite as the reminder of sacred commitment to the Divine, the presence of an anchorite in the community signified a tangible connection to

the divine and served as a beacon of piety and devotion for the community to witness and emulate.

McAvoy (2005) and Robertson (2006) have suggested that the gendered use of space within a church is also evident in the placement of anchorite cells. Male cells were, in the main, orientated to the south of the church chancel, as this was the more favourable side, having the advantage of the most sun during the day. In contrast, female cells tended to be located either on the north or west side of the chancel, the northern side of a building being the most inhospitable side, with less sunlight and warmth during the day (McAvoy 2005:71; Robertson 2006:137). Generally, anchorites inside these cells lived their lives in solitude, apart perhaps from a pious servant (usually of the same sex), who would have duties outside the enclosure, such as going to the market to fetch food or undertaking other errands as required (Thornton 2011:56). The servant would either live in their own home and attend the anchorite daily, or would have a separate room attached to the cell from where they would attend the anchorite (Dale and McNabb 1903:26; Licence 2011:107-108).

The various unofficial rules and guidelines written for anchorites provide further insight into the expectations of anchorites and thus of the uses, layout or elements of their cells. The thirteenth-century guide the *Ancrene Wisse* is the most well-known of these (Baker 1973; Bernau 2002; Constable 1995; Dobson 1976; Gilchrist 1994; Georgianna 1981; Gunn 2017; Riches and Salih 2002; White 1994), possibly because it provides considerable information on the rules and requirements for an anchoress. It was written for three sisters, residing together in Dorset. There is no evidence to confirm who wrote this guide, who the sister were, or where the sisters may have had their cell/s. Research undertaken suggested that these sisters may

have been affiliated with a Church in Tarrant Hinton, Tarrant Crawford or “Tarrant Kaines” (Clay 1914: Appendix X) in Dorset. The argument for a connection to these churches rests on very slim evidence, however: numerous wall paintings in St. Mary’s Church at Tarrant Crawford, depicting the life of St. Margaret of Antioch (d. c. 275 CE), who was an “important figure and model for anchorites” (Johnson 2023:180). There is no evidence, architectural, archaeological or otherwise, to suggest that there ever was a cell, attached to any of the period churches located in these areas largely discrediting this former theory (Bledsoe 2013:174).

It is important to emphasise that the *Ancrene Wisse*, and other texts of its kind, were only guidelines. The anchorites were not subject to any rules, and none were enforced on them, as, unlike nuns, they were not a part of any formal or specific order (Sauer 2014:151). There was thus no uniformity in how anchorites could or should perform their task, other than via the more general society-wide expectations placed on women that were animated by belief in the Legacy of Eve.

Nonetheless, the design of an anchorite cell and its uses was directed, to a degree, by the contents of these guides. Table 1 details the guidance around the spatial layout of the cell and the use of space, found in two of the guides, the *Ancrene Wisse* and the *Rule for Solitaries*. Other guides did not provide this level of details.

Anchorite Guide	Passage
<p><i>Rule for Solitaries</i> By Grimaicus (c. Tenth century) Translated from Latin by Andrew Thornton (2011)</p>	<p>The cell of reclusion should be small, and it should be surrounded on all sides by very solid walls, so that there be left for the solitary no opportunity for roaming around outside and so that no entry be left open for someone to go in to him, a thing that is not allowed (Thornton 2011:55-56).</p> <p>A curtain is to be hung in front of this window, both inside and outside, so that he cannot easily be seen from the outside or himself see outside (Thornton 2011:56).</p> <p>Within the walls of reclusion he should have a little garden, if it can be arranged, in which he can from time to time go out and plant and collect some vegetables and get some fresh air, for fresh air will do him a great deal of good (Thornton 2011:56).</p> <p>Outside the walls of reclusion there should be also other little cells in which his disciples live. These cells should be contiguous to his, so that his disciples may have suitable means of providing him, at the proper time, with the things he needs (Thornton 2011:56).</p> <p>...if women need to speak with the solitaires in order to confess or to take counsel about their souls, let them come into the church and, in full view of everyone, let them speak in front of the window that opens on the oratory...(Thornton 2011:57).</p> <p>Inside the cell of their reclusion, they should also have a tub, and as often as appropriate, the priests should make use of baths to cleanse their bodies (Thornton 2011:137).</p>
<p><i>Ancrene Wisse</i> (Thirteenth century) Translated from Middle English by Anne Savage and Nicholas Watson (1991)</p>	<p>"Therefore my dear sisters, love your windows as little as you possibly can. Let them all be little, the parlor's smallest and narrowest. Let the cloth in them be of two kinds: the cloth black, the cross white, both inside and outside" (Savage and Watson 1991:66).</p> <p>"Do not talk with anyone through the church window ... and use the house window for talking sometimes with your women; for others use the parlor window. You should not speak except at these two windows" (Savage and Watson 1991:74).</p>

Table 1: Mentions of the layout and elements of anchorite cells from anchorite guides.

Father Radar, a German scholar who published a clarification of a rule for recluses in 1627, explained the architecture of the anchorite cell, including the provision of windows:

... built of stone and to be twelve feet square; it was to have three windows, one looking into the church, one covered with horn or glass for light and air, and one closed with a wooden shutter, which was opened to take in food. (Dale 1903:9)

Clay (1914:78) refers to a similar Rule, although she called it a “Bavarian Rule”:

... the cell be of stone, 12 feet square. Through one window, towards the choir, the recluse partook of the Blessed Sacrament; through another, on the opposite side, he received his food; a third, closed with glass or horn lighted the dwelling.

These three small windows formed core elements of the anchorite cell. One window would be set high for light. The parlour window or ‘squint’—the window to the outside world—would be set so that the anchorite could accept visitors for spiritual counsel and intercessory prayers, have their own confessions heard and participate in Holy Communion; to be shut off from the world, at all times, by a black curtain with a white cross. The third window, or ‘altar squint’, was set so that the anchorite could view the High Altar to follow services and prayers.

Gilchrist (1994:179) maintains that concerns pertaining to an anchorite’s piety and spirituality may have been reflected in the “material culture of the church and the cell”. This may have been most pronounced in terms of the uses and symbolic attributes of windows in cells. Hasenfratz (2005), in fact, has suggested that the architecture of the anchoress’ cell was symbolically portrayed in Part II of the *Ancrene Wisse* through the female body parts of “eyes, ears, nose, throat, and skin”, and that the cell, like the female body — “fallen and dangerous”— needed to be “guarded, restricted, and controlled carefully” (Hasenfratz 2005:1-2). The three windows were thus particular points of risk. The *Ancrene Wisse* was particularly fixated on the windows of a cell to highlight the danger of sight (see Table 4).

Examples include Part 2.1.37 “... love your windows as little as possible; [and see that they] are small, the parlour’s smallest and narrowest”; “See that your parlour windows be always fast on every side, and likewise well shut; and mind your eyes there, lest your heart escape...”; Part 2.2.46 “... when you have to go to your parlour window, learn from your maid who it is that is come; for it may be one who you ought to shun ...”; and “hold not conversation with any man out of a church window”.

The addition of a curtain to the parlour window meant that essentially no one could see the anchorite once enclosed, except perhaps their servant/s. This, of course, added to the mysterious aura of the anchorite. The parlour curtain was thus also a protection mechanism for the enclosed anchorite’s chastity (Sauer 2014:154). This was particularly the case for the anchoress, who was not only hidden behind a window and curtain but also forbidden to speak to anyone other than her servant/s and confessor or to have any physical contact with another human. Rather than being a mechanism of disempowerment, however, Sauer argues that the anchorite, in controlling the curtain, was, in fact, in control of access to the parlour or ‘conversation’ window and, therefore in control of access to herself at all times (Sauer 2014:151).

Not all cells were spatially constrained, and the dimensions and comforts of cells varied greatly. In rare circumstances, the enclosed anchorite could negotiate a garden, such as in the fifteenth-century enclosure at the Charterhouse of Sheen (Building Conservation 2012). This was consistent with the rule written by Grimlaic (Grimaicus) of Metz in the c. ninth/tenth century CE (d. unknown date), in which he stipulated that an anchorite was permitted to “have a small yard joined to the cell” (Dale and McNabb 1903:8; Table 1). Multi-storeyed cells

are also known, such as those located at St Mary and St Cuthbert's Church, Chester-le-Street, Durham, giving the incumbent more living space. Comforts such as fireplaces for warmth were frequent, although these were not built into every cell, and some may have had a free-standing hearth. In some instances, there was more than one anchorite sealed in a cell: Roberta Gilchrist alerts us to a rare occurrence where a male servant was shared among three anchoresses enclosed together in fourteenth century Dorset (Gilchrist 1994:178).

2.6 Daily Life for the Anchorite

Regardless of its precise size, form and other elements, the eleventh-century Benedictine monk, Goscelin (d. c. 1106 CE), highlighted the perceived virtues of an enclosed cell for the suitably devout anchorite:

... you are more blessed, having the spaces for all your activities combined in a single room. Here is your sanctuary, or oratory, your dining hall, your dormitory, your hall, your bedroom, your vestibule, your cellar, your office – you have merged all those living spaces into one ... A stone is your armchair, the ground [your] bed, a hair shirt your dress, the fat under your skin protects you from cold; your bread is healthy, your vegetables pure water crystal-clear to match your pure conscience and Christ's pure grace.

Goscelin of St Bertin – Book III. P. 92

A probable daily routine for anchoresses is outlined in Table 2, compiled by Robert Arkerman and Roger Dahood (1984, as cited by Hazenfratz, 2000) and extracted from the *Ancrene Wisse*. This daily routine derives from the Benedictine Order of the Day, a schedule followed by many nunneries and monasteries belonging to the Benedictine, Cistercian, and Cluniac orders

(Heale 2009:77). Because of this, it may have also been used by male anchorites, although this has not been confirmed. The Order of the Day incorporated several ascetic virtues, for instance, fasting, silence, the chastisement of the body and manual labour (Gert 2016:37), which also become part of the daily life of the anchorite and hermit and may have been used to provide an understanding of what was expected of those enclosed, and the means for guarding their purity in both body and mind.

<u>TIME</u>	<u>TASK</u>
3-5 A.M.	Preliminary devotions and prayers Matins and Lauds of Our Lady (recited <i>seriatim</i>) Dirige (Matins and Lauds of the Office of the Dead) Suffrages and Commendations Litany of the Saints (daily except Sundays) Lauds of the Holy Ghost (optional)
5-6	Listen to the priest's celebration of the canonical hours when possible.
6-7	Prime of the Holy Ghost (optional) Prime of Our Lady
7-8	Preciosa
8-9	Terce of the Holy Ghost (optional) Terce of Our Lady
9-10	Prayers and supplications Devotions before the cross
10-11	Devotions to Our Lady The Seven Penitential Psalms The Fifteen Gradual Psalms
11-12	Mass (communion fifteen times annually)
12-1	Sext of the Holy Ghost (optional)
P.M.	Sext of Our Lady Meal (first meal in summer; only meal on weekdays in winter) None of the Holy Ghost (optional)
1-2	None of Our Lady

	Rest period
2-3	Private prayers and meditation
3-5	Reading in the Psalter, AR, and other edifying books in English and French
	Instruction of maidservants
	Work: plain needlework on church vestments or clothing for the poor
	Vespers of the Holy Ghost (optional)
	Vespers of Our Lady
	Placebo (Vespers of the Office of the Dead, omitted before a feast of nine lessons)
	Meal (second meal on Sundays; on weekdays in summer only)
5-7	Compline of the Holy Ghost (optional)
	Compline of Our Lady
	Bedtime prayers and devotions.

Table 2: Daily routine for anchorites. Table compiled by Robert Hasenfratz (2000) from the prayers and times cited in the *Ancrene Wisse*.

A typical anchorite's day started at 4.30am with Vigils (morning prayer), followed by multiple bouts of prayer until bedtime. There would have been time made for needlework or making clothes for the poor, if a female anchorite. If a male anchorite, this time may have been set aside for the copying of texts for the Church, or other duties as requested by the Church (Jones 2013:93). Such works may have earned the anchorite an exceedingly small sum and were far from a guaranteed income, but gave the anchorite some means of financial support, even if they had other types of income, such as a patron (Thornton 2011:114 and 116). To supplement this meagre income, regular alms were given by wealthy families, royalty, aristocracy and religious houses, and small gifts, including food and clothing, by the local community and pilgrims. Other activities included formal mass and time spent with visitors seeking guidance or asking for intercessional prayers.

In addition to giving advice on spiritual matters and the ‘internal rules’ – rules for the inner psyche – the anchoritic guides also advised the anchorite on domestic matters or ‘external rules’. These included what and how much the anchorite should eat and when to fast (*Ancrene Wisse* Part 8:224). One meagre main meal, possibly two, would have been eaten each day (*Ancrene Wisse* Part 8:224-225), prepared and brought to them by a servant, with whom the anchorite was forbidden to gossip or talk idly (*Ancrene Wisse* Part 2:42-56). In terms of diet, the *Ancrene Wisse* suggests that the anchorite not eat flesh or lard of any kind (*Ancrene Wisse* Part 8:225). However, it has been documented that some patrons gave anchorites not only allocations of barley and wheat, but also of fish annually. Those anchorites who were lucky enough to have their own garden may have grown some vegetables, but others would have had to rely exclusively on their servants to purchase fresh produce from a market or from neighbourhood farms (Warren, 1985).

2.7 A Comparison of Monastic Space (Male and Female) to Anchorite Space

Although the anchorite was voluntarily enclosed, willing to suffer isolation in order to be closer to God, it is important to consider how such a life compared to other religious choices, governed often by more stringent rules, but also allowing more freedoms. As in any society, space and its meanings and uses, including what were deemed to be appropriate activities for different groups, defined social roles in society, particularly in a religious framework, and were therefore used to regulate and control social behaviour (Schulenburg 2005:185).

The following discussion will undertake a comparative analysis of the available space for inhabitants within cells of three prominent religious orders in the Middle Ages and those of

the anchorites to offer an interpretation of their unique spatial dynamics. The Benedictine, Carthusian and Cistercian Orders, in both monasteries and nunneries, each offer notable differences to each other, and this shows in the distinctive spatial dynamics within each religious context. While Benedictine monasticism emphasised communal living and structured routines, the Carthusians prioritised individual solitude and an austere lifestyle. The Cistercians, known for their strict asceticism, also contributed to varied religious practices and spatial dynamics.

Both religious communities and anchorite cells constrained the space available to inhabitants in order to bring them closer to God. *The Rule of St. Benedict*, for example, decreed:

Let the brethren sleep singly, each in a separate bed. Let them receive the bedding befitting their mode of life, according to the direction of their Abbot. If it can be done, let them all sleep in one apartment; but if the number doth not allow it, let them sleep in tens or twenties with the seniors who have charge of them. Let a light be kept burning constantly in the cell till morning ...

Rule of St. Benedict – Chapter 22: How the Monks are to Sleep (Verheyen 1949)

Although the *Rule of St. Benedict* decreed it preferable to have all of the monks sleeping in one apartment, this direction has been interpreted in various ways. For example, a small amount of privacy was given to the monks of the Durham Monastery. Attached to Durham Cathedral, the “Great Dortor”, or dormitory, was “divided by wainscot partitions into a series of cubicles, or “little chambers”, with a passage down the middle. Each cubicle was lighted by a window and contained a desk. In general, everything was carried out as a community, including prayer, work, and study (Page 1928:123-136).

Benedictine monasteries and nunneries both followed the same rules, and “the inmates of a house spent almost the whole time together. They prayed together in the choir, worked together in the cloister, ate together in the frater, and slept together in the dormitory” (Power 2012:315). Both continued with these strict rules until the late Middle Ages, when more privacy was allowed, including private living spaces (Power 2012:316).

The Order of Carthusian monks, whose first Rule was written by Prior Guigo (d. 1136), in c.1127, in Chartreuse, distinguished itself through its unique practice of residing in individual, private cells, adhering to an austere lifestyle. Despite being part of a collective community, each monk lived in solitary seclusion within their individual cell, emphasising a balance between communal affiliation and personal solitude (Soden 2007:161). The Carthusian monks of Mount Grace, Yorkshire, for example, isolated themselves from the outside world and also had minimum contact with each other. This limited interaction was most notable in their living arrangements. The monks each had an individual ‘cell’, which resembled a small house, including a garden for each monk’s sole use, rather than a typical monastic cell. Patrick Greene (2005) discusses excavation work carried out on these cells and states that each of these cells was:

two storeys and 8 metres square. The ground floor was divided into four compartments, two of which were lobbies, one with a door that gave access to the cloister walk and the other to the garden; the latter also enclosed the stairs to the upper floor. A third compartment served as the monk’s living room. It had a fireplace and a two-light window. The remaining compartment was a bedroom and oratory. The upper floor was probably a workshop. A covered walkway led from the cell to an

individual latrine projecting from the back wall of the precinct ... an enclosed garden was provided for each cell. (Greene 2005:27).

To emphasise the individual's isolation once in their cell, hatches were located in the walls of the cells "through which food was passed to the monks" (Greene 2005:27). These cells gave the inhabitant a life of absolute personal devotion akin to that of an anchorite, yet, unlike an anchorite, the monks were still within a religious community which surrounded them. The community included a brewhouse, bakehouse, stables, granaries, refectory, kitchen, chapter house and church (Greene 2005:27).

The Carthusian Order of nuns, which was officially ratified in 1155 CE, took centuries to evolve, however, eventually, they too took on the same type of rules and regulations as the monasteries. Carthusian nuns dedicated themselves to lives of solitary devotion and spiritual contemplation. Like their male counterparts, they lived in individual cells rather than communal dormitories, emphasising the importance of personal solitude and inner reflection. Each nun's cell typically consisted of a small living space with basic furnishings, including a bed, a desk for study and prayer, and a modest chapel area for worship.

The third Order under discussion was founded in the early 12th century by a group of monks seeking a return to the austere principles of monastic life. Cistercian monasteries distinguished themselves by their emphasis on manual labour, self-sufficiency, and contemplative prayer. Situated in remote and rural locations, Cistercian monasteries often comprised simple, yet elegant structures built from local materials, reflecting the order's commitment to humility and harmony with nature. The layout of Cistercian monasteries followed a functional and practical design, with central cloisters serving as hubs for communal

activities such as prayer, work, and study. Individual monks lived in sparsely furnished cells, each equipped with basic amenities for prayer and rest, fostering an environment conducive to spiritual reflection and discipline. Despite their seclusion from the world, Cistercian monasteries played a vital role in medieval society, serving as centers of learning, agricultural innovation, and spiritual guidance for both monks and laypeople (Burton and Kerr 2011).

Cistercian nunneries emerged as significant centres of religious devotion and community life for women seeking a life of piety and contemplation. Following the strict ascetic principles of the Cistercian Order, these nunneries were characterised by simplicity, humility, and a strong emphasis on manual labour and prayer. Cistercian nuns lived a disciplined and austere lifestyle, adhering to a strict schedule of prayer, work and study. The architecture of Cistercian nunneries reflected these values, with simple and utilitarian buildings constructed in rural settings, often near rivers or forests to facilitate agricultural activities and self-sufficiency. Within the confines of the nunnery, individual cells provided secluded spaces for personal prayer and meditation, fostering an environment conducive to spiritual growth and contemplation. Despite their seclusion from the outside world, Cistercian nunneries played an integral role in the religious and social fabric of medieval society, offering spiritual guidance, education and charitable works to their surrounding communities.

Individual monastic living space in a nunnery included only “a bed, a crucifix, a small altar, and a kneeling stool for prayer, a breviary, and a chest or cabinet” (Evangelisti 2008:28). Although a ‘private’ area for the inhabitant, each cell was inspected by the Abbess to make certain that the cell contained nothing that the occupant did not absolutely need. However, nuns who had a life of wealth before they took their vows were able to procure additional items from

family, friends or patrons, as long as those items were definitive for a life of religious devotion, such as “books, paintings or devotional images” (Evangelisti 2008:29). Those who came from poorer backgrounds depended on the Church to provide for them, and in some cases had more than in their previous lives. There were definitively two groups of nuns: those who were noble and from wealthy families, who were called choir or veiled nuns, and those who came from lower-class families, who were “servant or conversae” nuns. Those from the lower classes “were usually given the smallest and less desirable” cells (Evangelisti 2008:30-32). The enclosure of nuns was certainly stricter than that of male religious. Idung of Prufening, a twelfth-century Cistercian monk suggested that “because the feminine sex is weak, it needs greater protection and stricter enclosure” (Evangelisti 2008:44).

The basic design of a medieval monastery included a chapel or church, dormitory or solitary cells, refectory, cloisters, storehouses, and a chapter house where the leaders would meet to conduct business (Stalley 1999:167-168, 176 and 185). Many also included a scriptorium for the monks’ intricate work on manuscripts. Figure 8 is the plan of the Cistercian Fountains Abbey in North Yorkshire. Founded in the twelfth century, Fountains Abbey was one of the largest monasteries in England, with the abbey precinct covering approximately 28 hectares. The monastery included a library, a warming house (also called a calefactory) where the monks would be able to warm themselves in the winter months, a kitchen, guesthouse, cloisters, a church, a chapter house, a bakehouse, a malthouse, a parlour, a day room, the dortor (the monks’ dormitory), lay brothers’ range – used by laymen who worked and lived at the monastery, an infirmary, gatehouse, and a separate house for the abbot, along with extensive grounds (National Trust 2021).

In contrast, although of a similar ground plan, the thirteenth-century Craswall Priory in Hereford was a much small monastery at just c. 65m square and consisted only of a church, kitchen, dortor, cellar, and guest lodgings (see Figure 9).

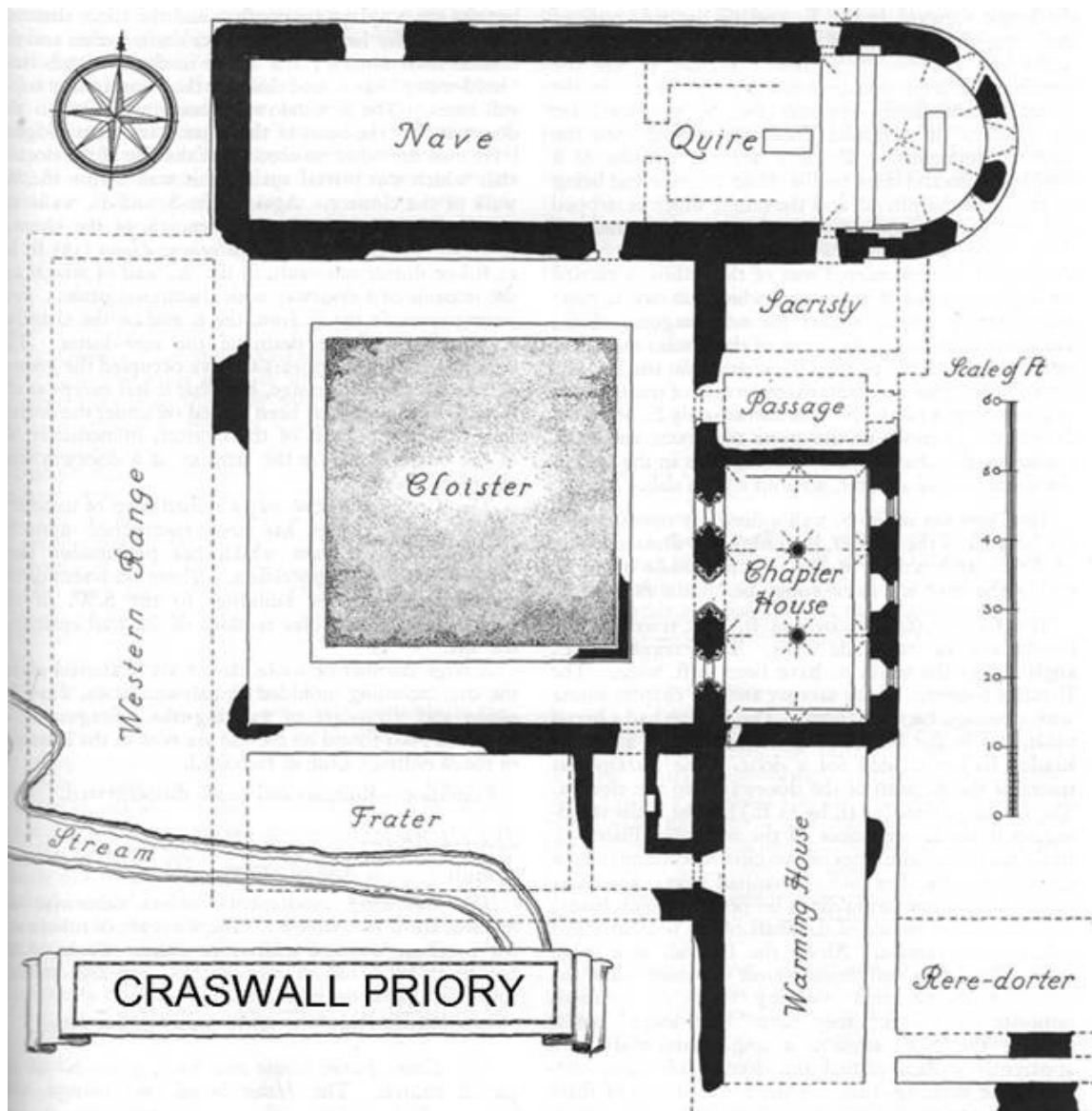


Figure 9: Historical Ground Plan of Craswall Priory. His Majesty's Stationery Office (1931).

Nunneries had a similar range of spaces, as can be seen by the plan of Lacock Abbey, a fourteenth-century Augustinian nunnery (see Figure 10). The abbey included a central open area or 'garth' surrounded by a cloistered walkway attached to the main church (built at the southwest end of the abbey). Additionally, there was a chapter house, dormer (nun's dormitory), kitchen, cellar, and various rooms for reading, prayer, infirmary, and internal offices for work. The property was gated with a courtyard at the front and extensive land surrounding the property (National Trust 2.01; Power 1922:402-403).

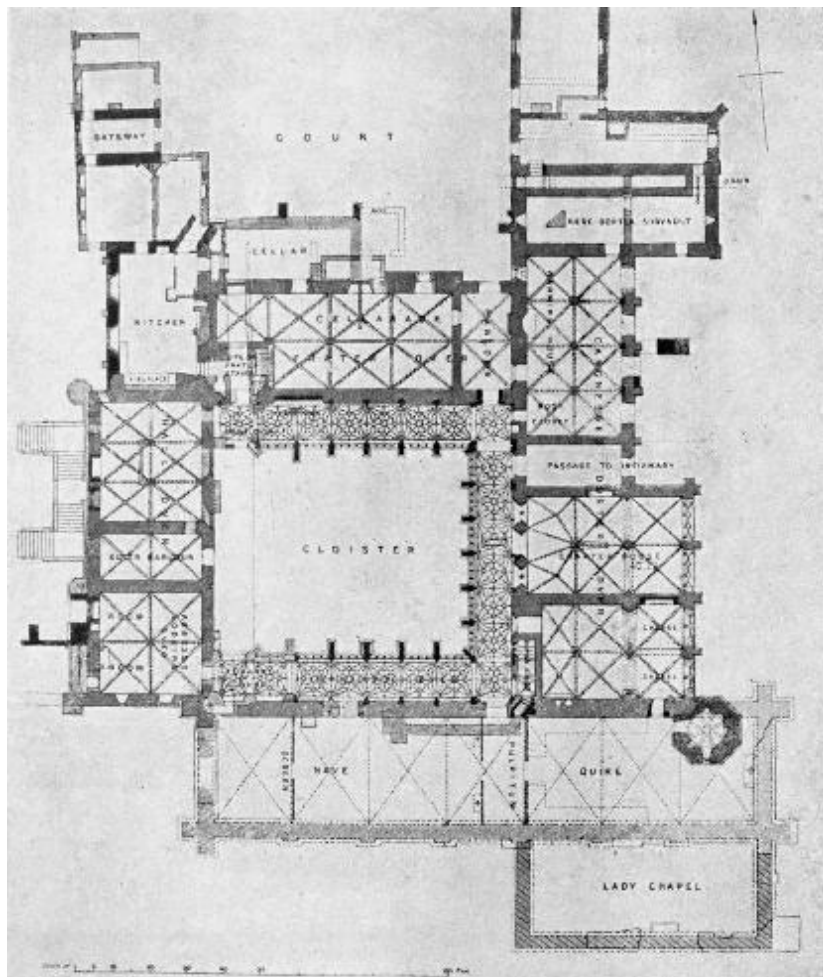


Figure 10: Plan of Lacock Abbey, Wiltshire. Eileen Power (1922)

Archaeological excavations of the thirteenth century Premonstratensian priory and abbey of the Holy Trinity, Lough Key, in County Roscommon, Ireland, unveiled intriguing insights into its architectural layout. The “conventional buildings” included, for example, a pair of chambers/rooms (see rooms marked 4 and 5 in Figure 11) measuring respectively 2.2m x 6.1m and 3.9m by 6.1m. These rooms were connected, suggesting that they were a singular cell. Noteworthy was the presence of door (orange on plan), providing access to the outside. Room 3, the largest of the rooms at 8.0m x 6.1m, may have acted as a central parlour room or foyer. In room 4, a hatch was found embedded within the wall facing room 3, resembling the food access hatch found in Cistercian cells, (Clyne 2005: 50).

Eight burials in total, all male, were also found. Three were located in room 1, one in room 2 and four in room 3. Each followed the west to east orientation typical of Christian burials, orientation with the exception of one in room 1, who was buried north to south. Although the excavation report does not discuss this, Room 2 (see enhanced plan Figure 12), may have been an anchorite cell. It has a blocked doorway (red on plan), window to the outside (blue on plan), an altar window in the south wall of the Chancel (green on plan) and a hatch for food (yellow on plan) that leads into room 1. Indeed, room 1 may have been the anchorite’s servant’s room, which would explain the doorway to/from the outside (purple on plan) and possibly the different orientation of one of the bodies interred.

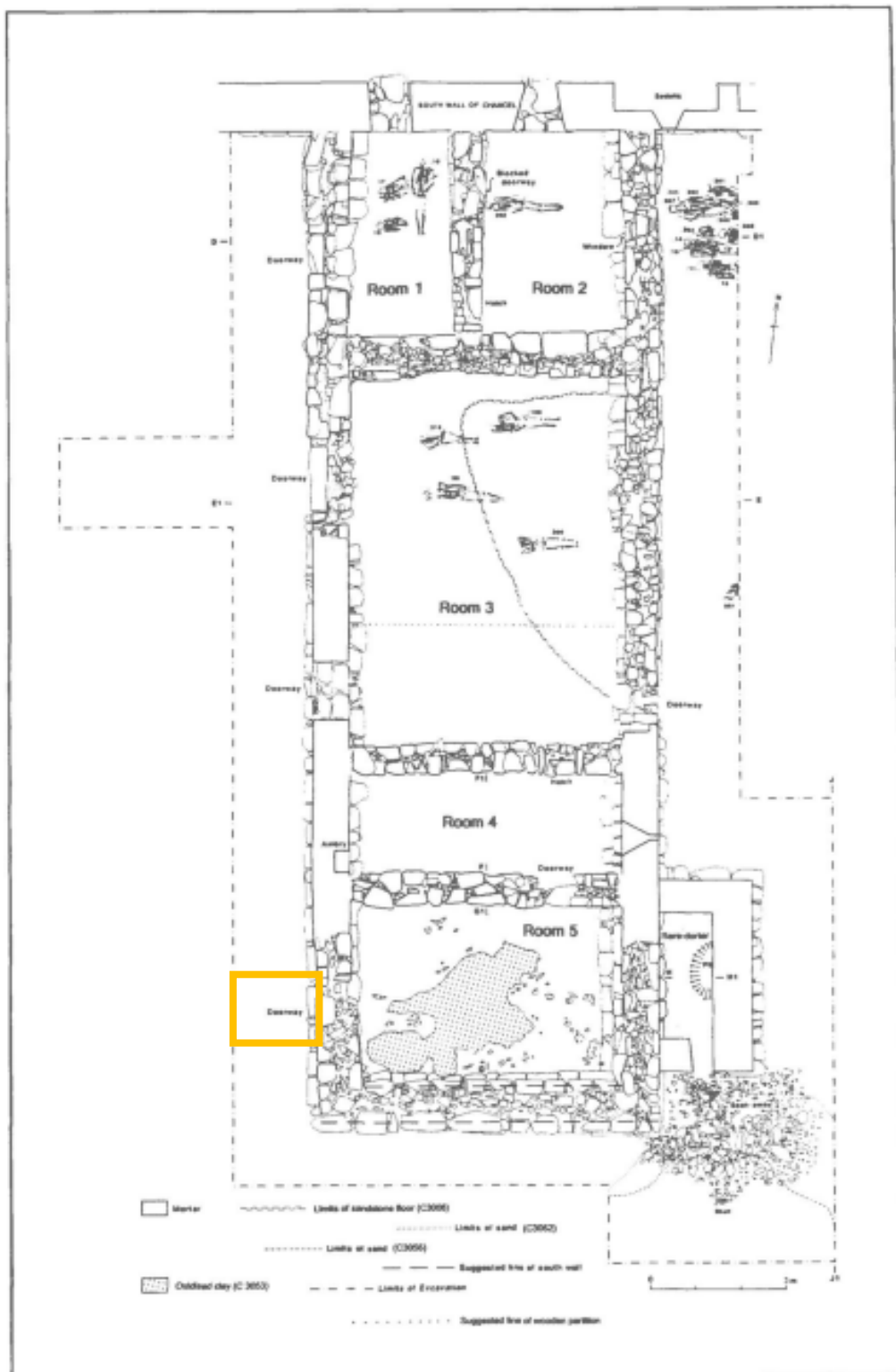


Figure 11: Floor plan of the east range of Holy Trinity Abbey Lough Key, Co. Roscommon. (Clyne 2005: 51).



Figure 12: Enhanced floor plan of the east range of Holy Trinity Abbey Lough Key, Co. Roscommon. (Clyne 2005: 51).

2.8 Summary

This chapter has considered the authority and influence of the medieval Church over both secular society and religious communities and individuals. It has discussed the influence form and fabric had and how this shaped particular behaviours required by the Church. The medieval Church exhibited a clear male dominance, as evidenced by the allocation of physical space and the authority exerted over various aspects of a woman's life, including her servants, daily routine, and visibility. In addition, this chapter also compared monastic space to that of the anchorite cell. The comparison of the privacy of the individual monk in a monastery to that for the anchorite demonstrated the different ways in which individuals in religious

communities sought solitude and connection with the Divine. The uses of space in a religious context, notably how anchorites used and interacted within their confines and the restrictions they faced, were also examined. In short, it has been found that the male ascetic was less governed, had more autonomy and fewer restrictions on his visibility, and male anchorites were perhaps also enclosed in more favourable areas of the church. A review of the most relevant anchoritic research will be presented in Chapter 3.

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CHAPTER THREE

UNDERSTANDING THE ANCHORITE LIFE

In this cell, following a formal rite of enclosure closely resembling the funeral rite, the recluse would be locked up to spend a life praying, meditating, and mediating between humanity and its God, veiled from the world behind a small window and dark curtain (McAvoy 2011:1)

This chapter explores the content of, and assesses the value of, the most relevant scholarly work written on anchorites in England and Wales, including details about their way of life and their individual cells. In addition, this chapter demonstrates the gaps in current anchoritic knowledge.

The literature reviewed has been explored under the following themes, which specifically relate to the thesis aim and questions as detailed in Chapter 1:

- The reasons for enclosure and ideologies of religious behavior
- The status of individual anchorites
- The sex ratio of anchorites
- Previous archaeology of anchorite cells

It has been organised under the following disciplinary categories, where relevant:

- Literary studies
- Historical studies

- Archaeological studies

This thesis defines literary studies as the analysis and interpretation of written works about anchorites to understand their meaning, context and cultural significance. In comparison, historical studies are focused on the critical examination and interpretation of historical sources about anchorites, to understand and reconstruct the events and developments surrounding the anchorite phenomenon. Archaeological studies include work based on some level of material analysis of cells or their features, regardless of whether these were undertaken by archaeologists or others interested in the material culture of the anchorite.

3.1 Reasons for Enclosure and Ideologies of Religious Behavior

There were several reasons for a man or a woman choosing to be enclosed for either a large portion, or the entirety, of their life. The period spanning from high to late Middle Ages in Europe, was marked by significant social, political, and economic changes, which in turn influenced gender roles, the status of women and the possible reasons why either sex committed themselves to becoming an anchorite. There are four areas that this section will focus on: widowhood, changes in social standing, age, and financial ability, followed a discussion around other areas of tensions and crisis which may have had an effect on the decisions made around becoming an anchorite.

Widowhood was a pivotal event in the life of medieval women, often altering their social and economic status significantly. Unlike married women, who were under the legal authority of

their husbands, widows could own property, manage their finances, and act independently in legal transactions. In England under Common Law, for example, women who were widowed “were entitled to receive the proceeds of one-third of all the land owned by their late husbands, as their ‘dower’” (University of Nottingham Manuscripts and Special Collections, n.d. Ref: Ne D742). This autonomy, however, came with its challenges. While some widows, particularly those from the nobility or wealthy merchant classes, could live comfortably and exert considerable influence, poorer widows might struggle to survive and become dependent on charitable institutions or remarry out of financial necessity – this was particularly so before the introduction of the Poor Laws in England (Dryer 2012:41). Becoming an anchorite may have been an honourable alternative to remarriage. Margaret Labarge (1990:159-60) suggests that widowhood, “among the upper classes”, could in fact allow a woman, regardless of age, to select from a variety of religious “careers”. These included becoming a nun, a recluse, a hermit, or a visionary. For example, Marie-Madeleine Renauld (2021) discusses a twelfth-century Belgium anchorite, Yvette of Huy (d. 1228 CE), who chose to become an anchorite after being forced to marry at thirteen and becoming a widow at eighteen. As a widow she was able to refuse to marry again and devoted the rest of her life to living in a cell near a leper colony. Similarly, Loretta, Countess of Leicester (d. 1266 CE), and one of four daughters of William de Braose (d. 1211 CE) who was once a powerful member of the Marcher nobility and then persecuted for debts to the Crown, was widowed in her early twenties and, to avoid another marriage, devoted the rest of her life to being an anchoress. She was enclosed in a cell in Hackington, Leicester in 1221 CE and lived until she was in her eighties. Her three sisters, Margaret (d. 1255 CE), Annora (d. c. 1241 CE) and Flandrina (d.

unknown date) also chose a religious career in widowhood. Margaret and Flandrina as nuns and Annora as an anchorite “at Iffley, near Oxford” (Innes-Parker 2011: 95-96). Whether their decision to enter the religious life was due to personal want or the need which arose from their family being condemned by King John (d. 1216 CE), (their mother and eldest brother were starved to death as a result of this in 1210 CE), it is unknown (Innes-Parker 2011:99). Another example of a widow choosing to enter the life of solitude of the anchorite cell is Katharine de Audley (d. 1324 CE). Her life is surrounded by various legends which suggest reasons for her choice to be enclosed as an anchorite, including experiencing a vision and escaping remarriage. It is unknown exactly what made her choose a recluse’s life, however, as a widow, it is one of the many choices she had available to her, particularly if she was not wanting to remarry (McAvoy 2013:809-10).

For men, the loss of a wife did not alter their legal or social status to the extent it did for women. Men retained their rights and properties, and their role as the head of the household. However, the loss of a wife could pose practical difficulties, particularly in managing household affairs and child-rearing, areas traditionally overseen by women. As a result, male widowers were often expected to remarry relatively quickly. Remarriage was seen not only as a means for managing household needs but also as a way to secure alliances and increase wealth or land through dowries (Kane 2019:143-144, 161-162).

The social standing of medieval women could vary greatly depending on their marital status, their family’s wealth, and their social class. Noblewomen could wield significant influence

within their domains and participate in the management of estates, but their primary role was still seen as bearers of heirs and managers of household affairs (Kane 2019:57-58). Contrary to this, peasant women worked alongside men in the fields, as well as being responsible for the domestic duties. However, their labor was often undervalued, and they had limited access to the legal and political tools that could raise their social standing (Wright 2020:3).

Age impacted medieval women's lives profoundly. Young women were typically under the control of their fathers, with their primary role being to marry and strengthen family alliances (Harris Stoertz, 2001:22-23). As they aged, their value to society could weaken unless they bore children, particularly sons, who could secure lineage and inheritance. Elderly women, especially widows who had outlived their husbands and children, often faced marginalization, although they could also be respected as matriarchs and keepers of family knowledge and traditions. As with women, age overlapped with social class and economic status, but it uniquely affected men due to their social roles as heads of households and as community leaders (Niebrzydowski, 2011:3).

When young, depending on their social class, boys had differing upbringings. Nobles' sons might be sent away as pages and later squires in other noble households to learn chivalry, military skills and courtly manners, a process that also served to forge political alliances. This education prepared them for the responsibilities of managing estates (Adams, 2005:265-266). Commoner boys received less formal education, learning trade skills or farming from their

fathers or, for the fortunate who were selected, apprenticeships in towns (Hanawalt, 1995: 131). Entering adulthood, men took on responsibilities within their communities. For commoners, this typically meant working the land and supporting their family. For nobles, adulthood typically involved managing lands, participating in governance and for some, fulfilling military duties. Adulthood meant eligibility for marriage, which was often used to secure alliances and transfer property across generations. As men reached middle age, they often attained peak influence and responsibility. It was often when men had authority, managing extensive networks of family and feudal relationships (Karras 2003:6,10, 14-15). In religious life, middle-aged men could hold significant ecclesiastical positions, influencing spiritual and community matters. Elderly men were respected by the community and society for their wisdom and experience, especially those who had successfully raised families and managed their affairs without scandal. They often played advisory roles in the community. In noble families, while an older man might formally retain his titles and lands, day-to-day management might pass to younger relatives. Despite the respect accorded to age, elderly men could become vulnerable if they lacked family support or faced health issues. While some might retire quietly, others could be pushed aside if perceived as unable to handle their responsibilities, particularly in noble courts or competitive merchant environments. For those in religious orders, old age was often spent in contemplation and service, provided they were part of a supportive monastic community (Clark, 2013:163), or an anchorite who was physically and financially supported.

Economic status was perhaps the most critical factor affecting medieval women's lives. Wealth could provide women, especially widows, with the means to influence local politics, patronize the arts, and fund religious institutions. In contrast, poverty could severely limit a woman's options, making her vulnerable to exploitation and marginalization. The guilds in urban centers sometimes offered avenues for women to participate in commerce, but these were often restricted to certain trades and tightly regulated by male-dominated hierarchies. Economically, male widowers might have faced challenges, especially if their deceased wife had brought a substantial dowry or had managed the household competently. However, men had greater access to economic activities and could continue to work, trade, or manage estates without the limitations placed on women by society. The economic impact of widowhood on men often depended more on their wife's role in managing or contributing to family finances or estates (Hanna 2021:64-74).

Unlike women, whose rights to act independently could increase upon becoming a widow, men's legal and custodial rights remained stable after the loss of a spouse. They continued to have full control over their children, property, and decision making within the household. This autonomy meant that widowhood did not significantly alter a man's position in legal or social hierarchy areas.

Medieval sources rarely research the emotional or psychological impact of widowhood on men, focusing more on legal and social structures. However, it is reasonable to assume that individual experiences of grief and loss were as complex for men as for women, even if social

norms dictated a swift move towards practical resolutions like remarriage (Friedrichs 2006:69). While widowhood was a significant life event for a man, the impact was more social and economic compared to the experience of women. The expectations for men to remarry and maintain their household and economic activities continued to reinforce their roles within the patriarchal society of the time.

The community and the Church likely provided support to widowers, especially in managing the immediate needs following a spouse's death. This might have included help with the children from family members and spiritual guidance from the Church. The Middle Ages saw the rise of religious institutions that played a significant role in shaping society's views about gender. The Church's teachings often reinforced women's subordinate status, emphasizing virtues like chastity and obedience. However, the Church also provided some women with an alternative to marriage through the convent, where they could receive an education, and, in some cases, hold positions of power within the religious hierarchy. Among other alternatives too, there was the possibility of becoming an anchorite. The decision to become an anchorite could be influenced by any or all of these factors.

Widowhood was a significant turning point for many individuals, providing opportunities to consider that were otherwise inaccessible during married life, for most. For both men and women, the death of a spouse could prompt a reassessment of commitments and a turn towards spiritual paths. Widowhood freed individuals from marital obligations, allowing them to devote themselves fully to religious life without distraction. This was particularly true for

women, who, after being widowed, might find the role of an anchorite a respected alternative to remarriage or a life of dependency on relatives.

Age may have also played a crucial role in the decision to become an anchorite. Older individuals may have been motivated by a desire to spend their remaining years in contemplation, being taken care of by the community and a servant and looked upon with reverence and awe. Furthermore, their life experiences and maturity may have given them credibility as spiritual advisors, an important role often assumed by anchorites.

The financial implications of becoming an anchorite were, as previously discussed in this thesis, significant. Community support was crucial, and this support may have been more readily extended to those who had previously held some degree of social standing or who could inspire local devotion through their piety and reputation. Social standing could have also affected an individual's access to the anchoritic life in several ways. Those from higher social classes might have found it easier to secure the necessary ecclesiastical and communal support for their enclosure. Their status could make them attractive recipients of patronage, with local nobility or even royalty providing for their needs as a form of piety or for the prestige of associating with a renowned holy figure. On the other hand, those from a lower standing might struggle to establish themselves as an anchorite unless they could provide some long-term financial support or unless they had demonstrated exceptional piety and had the backing of the local clergy.

The combination of these factors meant that the anchoritic life was not a path chosen lightly or one that was available to all. It required a clear calling, community, and clergy support, and often a certain alignment of personal circumstances such as widowhood, age, and or prior social standing. The life of an anchorite, though isolated, was deeply interwoven with the society and community frameworks of the Middle Ages, reflecting the broader dynamics of medieval spirituality and social structures.

McAvoy (2011:1) likens the anchorite cell to “their figurative desert, an empty space within which they could encounter ... silence, solitude and the ineffable”. The origins of such an activity came directly from the Bible – Moses’ wanderings and Christ’s temptation during his forty days and nights praying and fasting in the desert (McAvoy 2011:2). The first and most apparent reason for the choice of isolation as an anchorite was the devotion and the desire to be closer to God through silence and solitude. Ann Warren (1985:100) maintains that it was inside the cell that the anchorite achieved their goal of being free of all worldly concerns so that they could focus passionately and uninterruptedly on God. Hughes-Edwards (2012) similarly suggests that the primary purpose of the cell was to enhance the recluse’s connection with God through complete isolation and maintains that the cell was a refuge from a sinful world from which the anchorite was completely sheltered. The anchorite, in this respect, was a symbol of religious purity and a reminder to villagers or towns folk of Christian faith, values, and ‘correct’ Christian behaviour (Warren 1985:7).

Sauer contends that the anchorite's role was intercessory, to pray for sinners and provide spiritual guidance to visitors, having served a penance after contemplating their own sinfulness and asking forgiveness from God, securing their individual salvation (Sauer 2013:545, 2017:110). In addition to devotion and penance, anchorites were also used by their bishops and priests for their own advantage in securing personal ambitions, and for accruing advantages to the church and community. An anchorite in one's village created enormous financial value. Pilgrims from afar, wealthy and poor alike, would travel to visit the anchorite, generating the need for housing, food, and other commodities during their stay.

In support of Warren's claims that a cell gave the anchorite's ultimate freedom of the world and their own space to fully focus on the Divine, she provides examples of anchorite petitions and subsequent permissions from the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries:

... in 1293 (Archbishop) Romeyn (of York) gave permission to another Agnes, 'a virgin ... to enter into an honest cell ... next to the church [at Kirkburton, Yorkshire] having cast away worldly pleasures, where she, as a solitary anchorite, desires to attend divine service, and to live as a penitent of God'.

... a nun petitioned Archbishop Melton in 1320 to be enclosed 'in a proper and worthy place', so that she might serve God more strictly by leading the solitary life.

A 1418 entry in Bishop Lacy's register ... describes the anchoress Margaret Shiptster as desiring to lead the contemplative life ... in order to 'serve God more freely and to

hold herself immaculate from the sins and wickedness of this world'. (Warren 1985:117-120)

Hughes-Edwards quotes from the *Ancrene Wisse*, which states that the walls and windows of a cell provided a “protective Shield” (Hughes-Edwards 2012:34). This was particularly relevant to the woman in order to stay pure, since “[s]exuality represented to them the gravest danger and the fatal flaw” (Warner 1983:50). Discussing Aldhelm (d. 709-10 CE), McAvoy states that his opinion was that the female body was “problematic and sinful” (McAvoy 2011:81) and so enclosure away from society and in particular away from men, shielded not only themselves but also the ‘righteous man’ from possible sinful interactions.

Peter Damian (d. 1072 CE), the eleventh-century Benedictine monk, Cardinal to Pope Leo IX (d. 1054 CE), and saint, offers an entirely different argument for enclosure. He maintained that the anchorite’s life in their cell was a penance and that their vocation was more of a purgatorial one than a purely devotional task (Licence 2011:120). J. S. Easterling (2021:167) notes that the Cistercians in Europe and England believed that recluses who remained in their enclosure (or within the “secure confines of their order”) were guaranteed the salvation of their soul. This is especially noted in the anchorite guides, which reiterate the imperative for the anchorite to remain in their cell for the rest of their lives in order for salvation to be obtained. The discussion on motivation for enclosure, as expressed by Peter Damian (d. 1072 CE) and the Cistercians, set the stage for understanding the penitential nature of the anchorite’s life and the belief in salvation through enclosure.

Motivations for men to live their life as an anchorite, ironically, are less readily available through historic sources, although some are discussed in anchoritic guides. The fourteenth-century guide for male anchorites, the *speculum inclusorum*, contains four chapters outlining the motivations behind living the anchoritic life: “to live life as one wishes without grave labour, to do penance with great fervour, to avoid opportunities for sin, and to be more freely at leisure for the contemplation of God and to praise him” (Hughes-Edwards 2012:30). In contrast, there were no specific motivations stipulated in the anchoritic guides for women, this underscores the gendered perspectives surrounding anchoritic life.

This gendered perspective is seen to be further complicated in the atypical and unfortunate violent life of Dorothy of Montau (d. 1394 CE), a Prussian anchorite and patron of the Order of Teutonic Knights. Manipulation by her confessor, Johannes Marienwerder (d. c. 1392 CE), who also wrote her *vitae*, illustrates how the position of an anchorite could be exploited for personal and political gain, revealing the power dynamics at play within religious communities (Sauer 2015:136-137). Marienwerder used his position as confessor to gain personal and political power through securing patronage and financial gain for the Church, as well as influence with the Teutonic Knights. This was especially so even after Dorothy’s death, when Marienwerder attempted to have her venerated as a saint. Although the community and church mostly profited from having an anchorite in their midst, it was likewise possible that the abbey or monasteries attempted to sway the church and general community against the enclosed anchorite.

Some of these religious houses were given the task of supporting an anchorage, a long-term obligation that could place a heavy financial burden on already struggling communities. In at least some instances, religious houses campaigned in various overt and covert ways for the sole purpose of having the anchorite removed from their care, and in this way reclaim the financial grants from the Crown. One example is Isold De Heton (c. 1437 CE), the anchoress of Whalley in Lancashire. English church historiography has painted a very lewd picture of Isold (Flynn 2020:52). She was accused of misgoverning her servants, one of whom became pregnant on the grounds of the church, and Isold herself eventually broke out of her cell, also breaking her most solemn vows to God and the Church. Early versions of events, recorded by a vicar and self-taught historian of the Whalley Parish in the nineteenth century, Thomas D. Whitaker, portrays Isold as “an inconstant widow, temporarily overcome with piety during a moment of grief, but who soon grew bored of confinement and abandoned her vocation” (Flynn 2020:51). Later interpretations either similarly brand Isold as fickle (Pope 2002:69-72) or argue to the contrary that her abandonment of a solitary life was due to family concerns that outweighed her own spiritual needs. Flynn (2020) argues that Isold was a caring mother, who only left the confinement of her anchorhold to save her son from a bad marriage. She also speculates on the ulterior motives of the monks engaged to care for her. Upon the closure of the anchorhold, the abbey received the extra money which had been kept aside specifically for the care of the anchorite (Flynn 2020:59) and did not return it to the Crown.

The social and religious developments of the Middle Ages, particularly from the eleventh to the sixteenth centuries, had a profound impact on the practice of anchoritism, including the

experiences of female anchorites. Crisis' such as the Black Death, which swept through Europe in the mid-fourteenth century, and the religious tensions of the pre-Reformation era in the sixteenth century, had a profound effect of social structures and religious life. These periods of crisis sparked a significant re-evaluation of religious and social norms. The Black Death, responsible for the deaths of an estimated one-third of Europe's population, dramatically reshaped communities, economies, and religious institutions. The immense loss of life and visible, rapid spread of the plague led to a widespread sense of existential uncertainty and a reinvigoration of religious fervor. Many people turned to the Church for explanation and solace, but they also questioned the efficacy of existing religious structures and practices in the face of such devastating mortality. This period of intense mortality heightened the appeal of religious life. It was seen as a way to seek spiritual purity and personal salvation. The fear of death and the afterlife, heavily emphasized by the Church during the and after the Plague, made this life appealing as a means of achieving spiritual security and societal withdrawal.

The pre-Reformation challenges, marked by debates over clerical corruption, the validity of indulgences, and the true nature of piety, further stirred the religious landscape. As reformers began to critique the Church's practices and doctrines, many people sought more personal and direct forms of spiritual expression. Anchoritism offered an alternative to the traditional clergy-led religious practices providing a model piety that was intensely personal and, appeared uncorrupted by the institutional issues plaguing the Church.

The combination of the Black Death's impact, and the religious scrutiny of the pre-Reformation era likely led to an increased number of people pursuing different avenues of religious satisfaction. This shift was part of the broader movement seeking deeper, more personal spiritual renewal and a more direct connection with the Divine.

The twelfth century was a period of significant religious enthusiasm and reform across Europe. This time saw the growth of the monastic reform movements, such as the Cistercians, who emphasized a return to the strict observance of the Rule of Saint Benedict. These movements encouraged forms of religious life focused on austerity and personal piety, which made the anchoritic lifestyle appealing to those seeking a more profound spiritual experience. The twelfth century was relatively stable compared to the period following the Black Death, which brought widespread social disruption. It was known as the twelfth century renaissance, a time of cultural and intellectual revival where learning and literary spread, along with the foundation of universities. The increase in anchoritic practices directly before and after the Black Death may not have been as pronounced due to the chaos and breakdown of social structures that accompanied the plague. While the Black Death did lead to a deep spiritual introspection and a questioning of established religious authority the immediate aftermath was more about survival and recovery which could have detracted from the establishment of new anchorites being enclosed who required the support of the community.

The rise of the merchant class during the Middle Ages brought significant economic changes that also impacted on religious practices. This new class comprised individuals who engaged

in trade, commerce and the accumulation of considerable wealth and elevated social status through business ventures. This class emerged prominently as towns and cities developed and trade routes expanded across and beyond Europe, facilitating the exchange of goods like spices, textiles and precious metals. Unlike the feudal lords who derived their income from landownership and agricultural means, merchants accumulated capital through the buying and selling of goods. This ability to generate wealth independently of the traditional structures allowed them to influence various aspects of society, including religion.

One notable impact was the way members of the merchant class engaged with religious life, if when such a life was chosen by them. Wealth may have enabled these individuals to choose a life of religious seclusion without the typical financial constraints faced by others. They may have used their resources to construct more comfortable anchorholds, which were more than mere functional living spaces. These cells may have featured architectural enhancements, like fireplaces, and better accommodations that reflected their social status and financial capabilities.

Moreover, the merchant class was able to secure ongoing support for their secluded lives through endowments and patronage. This ensured a continuous supply of necessities, which was crucial for sustaining their life of contemplation and prayer, isolated from the economic concerns which may have plagued the average person of the time.

These economic capabilities also influenced the broader religious landscape. By funding religious institutions and practices, the merchant class contributed to the proliferation of the construction of churches and chapels, and the sponsorship of religious texts and translations.

Women, in particular, found a unique position within the anchoritic tradition. Figures like Julian of Norwich became spiritual authorities, consulted by royalty and nobility, indicating a form of respect and recognition that transcended conventional roles within society. The cells of female anchorites, however, did not typically reflect distinct architectural features indicating their gender, suggesting a uniform approach to the design of anchoritic spaces regardless of the occupant's sex, except perhaps in the case of a priest where an altar or oratory may have been included.

There are no current or historical archaeological studies that give evidential support of reasons for enclosure, although, in regards to the ideologies of religious behavior, there are several studies and historical texts, which highlight certain religious behaviours of the anchorite. Sauer (2013:545) suggests that the architecture of the cell became “part of the actual vocational parameters of anchoritism”, due to the vow that the recluse would not only remain enclosed but would stay in a single location for the rest of their life. Thus, the architecture became an integral aspect of the anchorite's vocation, as it symbolised their commitment to a life of seclusion and solitude, as well as their dedication to the Divine. The design of the cell was carefully planned to accommodate the recluse's spiritual needs first and foremost, providing them with a space for prayer, contemplation and self-reflection. The

architecture of the cell not only served as a practical, though sparse living space, but also as a visual representation of their devotion and chosen spiritual path. Sauer (2013:546), offers other, more metaphysical associations between the cell and the body of the anchorite: the cell being “fused” to the walls of the church and thus becoming one with the house of the Lord, perhaps also symbolised the cell as fused with the anchorite’s body and therefore “the physical anchorhold was conceived as an extension of the anchoress’s body”.

3.2 The Status of Individual Anchorites

Most of what we know about the status of individual anchorites is based on primary written records, although this is sparse and the anchorites are few. The level of historical documentation of any particular anchorite varied widely according to their stature within the community (either before enclosure or afterwards), their notoriety and the stature of their patrons. Unsurprisingly, wealthy and aristocratic anchorites, famous anchorites or those lucky enough to secure patronage from wealthy citizens, were more likely to have been individualised in historical records. Wealthier people in general are more likely to leave a trace in written records, especially those who did not necessarily conform to the expectations placed upon them, warranting written description of their behaviour. These represent a relatively small slice of the total number of enclosed anchorites, however, and by far the majority were unremarkable, unremarked, or unrecorded.

There are no current literary studies and only one historical literary work which give evidential support of the possible status of individual anchorites. The only literary works identifying

named anchorites are a few guides written for individual recluses. One, which clearly identifies the sister of a high-status individual, is the *de institutione inclusarum*. This twelfth century guide was written by Aelred of Rievaulx (d. 1167 CE), for his sister, who was not named. It may be assumed that his sister held some status, as their family, we are told by Walter Daniel in the *vitae* of Aelred, written shortly after Aelred's death in 1167 CE was of high status and Aelred himself held a position of steward at the court of King David of Scotland prior to entering the monastery (Powicke et al. 2006: 1). Most other works only identify the sex of the anchorite, although occasionally a person is identified by name or according to whom they are related (see Chapter 4).

Tom Licence (2011:82-83), discusses the status of three named female anchorites who were high-born, including Aelfwen, daughter of the royal thegn, Thurketel, and the noble born sisters Loretta (d. 1266 CE) who was Countess of Leicester and Annora De Briouse (d. c. 1242 CE), (see also Hillary Pearson 2019). He maintains that, before her enclosure, Annora arranged a salary of one hundred shillings a year to support herself, which was more than double the income of the average anchorite. Annora also had wealthy patrons who gifted her with extra items, such as clothing, firewood, bacon, oats, and numerous other food items (Licence 2011:107). Both sisters became anchoresses after they were widowed (Innes-Parker 2011:97). This decision was significant, because by choosing a life of seclusion as anchorites it allowed the sisters to maintain independence and autonomy following the deaths of their husbands. This was a departure from the traditional roles and expectations places on women

in medieval society, where widows often faced pressure to remarry or live under the authority of male relatives.

Other categories of non-aristocratic anchorites were usually lay prior to enclosure, and details about them can generally only be gained from the wills or gifts of patrons. Even then, these records do not provide a personal name for the anchorite, who would typically be recorded only as the recluse of, or the anchorite of, such-and-such a church or area. In general, female anchorites, both lay and religious, were less likely to be recorded in documentary sources compared to their male counterparts. Male anchorites were often clerics before enclosure, providing at least some limited footprint in documentary records. A cleric anchorite may also, in some instances, have had an oratory attached to their cell, which gave them the freedom to offer Mass, either in private or for the community. Furthermore, Warren (1984) maintains that licenses for the enclosure of anchorites were only common from the thirteenth century onwards. Prior to this, an anchorite could have entered enclosure without necessarily having the act recorded in any document. As a result, it may be assumed then that there were many more anchorites enclosed than are currently recorded, most of whom will probably always remain nameless. Even the use of the term 'anchorite' to describe an enclosed recluse only became exclusive from the twelfth century onwards. Prior to this, enclosed anchorites could be referred to as hermits, recluses or solitaries, and their enclosures were rarely recorded, complicating the picture that can be derived from historical records.

There are no current or historical archaeological studies that give evidential support of the status of individual anchorites. The architecture and structure of the individual anchorite cells are different in many aspects from each other, and do not offer a verifiable status distinction.

3.3 Understanding the Life of a Solitary and the Gendered Roles

Gilchrist (1994) offers a very brief overview of the gendered nature of anchoritism. Although she noted that Warren, in her ground-breaking work on anchorite numbers and locations, completed in 1984, “demonstrated that English recluses were predominately women”, (Gilchrist 1994:177), Gilchrist also acknowledged that the anchorite phenomenon was not solely the purview of women (Gilchrist 1994:178-179). Warren did not take into account the equally high numbers of unknowns, discussed in further detail in the results section of this thesis. Most researchers, including Eddie Jones, (2006, 2012) Michelle Sauer (2004, 2013, 2014, 2021), Liz McAvoy and Cate Gun (2017), use the research completed by Warren and are inclined to consider that more female anchorites were enclosed than male without further investigation or confirmation of Warren’s statistics.

Scholars have also argued that there are various possibilities for understanding the ways in which anchorites’ emotional lives unfolded within their respective cells, up to and including the possibility of same sex relations between the inhabitants of shared cells. Michelle Sauer, a scholar of the history of gender and sexuality for example, argues for the possibility of gay and lesbian behaviour amongst anchorites:

the solidly enclosed four walls of the anchorhold, bolstered by phallogentric notions of sexuality, provided the ideal lesbian void – a safe, private space where women who live in close proximity could enjoy erotic woman-woman encounters with little fear of discovery (Sauer 2004:online).

Sauer based her argument around double or multi-enclosure cells with two or more anchorites enclosed together (Sauer 2010:133). She argues that larger cells “provided safety from the world, and also introduced a new realm of sexual temptations ...” (Sauer 2010:136). However, the majority of recorded anchorites were solitary recluses, however, which means that they lived alone in their cell. These solitary anchorites were walled into their enclosure, or, at a minimum would have been locked behind a door, sealed by the bishop, with only one trusted, usually mature, servant holding the keys to the door in case of serious illness or death. The solitary status of anchorites can also be seen in wills and patron records, such as Pipe Rolls and accounts from monasteries, churches and Royalty, where only one recluse is referred to in their records of payments, gifts and alms. That said, in her exploration of anchorites, Sauer may have approached the topic of same-sex relationships among these women as a possibility to consider within the context of their secluded lives, rather than a definitive indication of same-sex desire within the cell. Sauer’s analysis may have focused on the emotion and intellectual connections that could develop between anchorites and/or anchorite and servant, living in close proximity, highlighting the potential for deep, intimate relationships that transcend the traditional norms. By presenting same-sex relationships as a plausible aspects of female anchorite life, Sauer’s work could serve to broaden our

understanding of the complexities of female relationships within the medieval religious settings, without necessarily attributing them to sexual desire.

Sauer's research also neglects to discuss the religious intolerance of 'homosexuality' in the medieval period, as considered by D.F. Greenberg and M. H. Bystry (1982:537) – specifically male same sex attraction and sodomy. These scholars examine the “powerful impact” that the “condemnation of homosexuality” had on Christianity and Judaism (Greenberg and Bystry 1982:516). Sauer's omission of any discussion of this intolerance by the Church may be deliberate, with a focus towards female-to-female relationships, rather than on male relationships. Robert Mills (2010:8) argues that “interactions between women ... are habitually legitimized implicitly to the extent that they are assumed to be devoid of erotic potential”, and that this nonchalance in close friendships between females would lead to same-sex relations. Of course, this is not to say that same-sex relationships did not occur, but there is no existing historical nor archaeological evidence that they did so within a shared anchorite cell.

While Judith Butler is primarily known for her contributions to feminist and queer theory, her ideas have been applied to various disciplines, including religious studies and anthropology, to examine how social identities are constructed and enacted within religious contexts. Central to Butler's theory is the concept of performativity, which suggests that gender is not an inherent trait, but rather a social construct enacted through repeated performances. Butler argues that gender norms are imposed and reinforced through repeated acts and

rituals, rather than being biologically predetermined. This perspective can be applied to the construction of gender roles and behaviors within sacred spaces, where religious rituals and practices serve to reinforce traditional gender norms and expectations. Butler's work questions typical ideologies about how people should act, pointing out that power and social pressure heavily influence how individuals see themselves. In religious settings, this perspective can demonstrate how some behaviors and identities are seen as more important or acceptable than others. For example, by using the concepts of Butler's research it may be suggested that medieval ideas about gender and sexuality may have been promoted through religious rituals or teachings to reinforce social hierarchies and inequalities.

Older research on the development of thought and emotion in the Middle Ages provides an overview of the Christian *vita contemplative* or contemplative life (see Taylor 1911:368-391). These advocate variously that the emotional life of the recluse was an unceasing attachment to enclosure and solitude, and to absolute devotion of the Church and its teachings. Taylor (1911:369-370) cites Saint Peter Damian, who argues in relation to male recluses that this attachment to enclosure, as well as the need for a life free of temptation, offers "an aid to victory":

The wise man, bent on safeguarding his salvation, watches always to destroy his vices; In this way, then, our mind begins to be at rest in its Author and to taste the sweetness of that intimacy. At once it rejects whatever it deems contrary to the divine law, shrinks from what does not agree with the rule of supernal righteousness. ... he seeks seclusion, he longs for a hiding-place; he avoids the monastery's conversation-

rooms and rejoices in nooks and corners; and that he may the more freely attend to the contemplation of his Creator, so far as he may he declines colloquy with men (Damian, *De perfectione monachi*, caps. 2, 3 Migne 145, col. 294).

Emotion, in this context, was not to be denied, but channelled into a purer love of God. Eliminating negative emotions created a space for contemplation, clarity and grace: (Taylor 1911:369-370):

Cut off the cares and anxieties of mundane action; clear them away as a heap of rubbish which stops the fountain's flow. ... So, if you would attain the grace of tears, you must even curb the exercise of spiritual duties, eliminate malice, anger, and hatred, and the other pests from your heart. ... Indeed, the confidence of holiness (*sanctitatis fiducia*) and a conscience bearing witness to its own innocence, waters the pure soul with the celestial rivulets of grace, softens the hardness of the impure heart, and opens the floodgates of weeping (Damian *De ins. ord. eremitarum*, cap. 26, Migne 145, col. 358).

Other strands to understanding the life of anchorites under various conditions connect to modern scholarship on the history of emotions, particularly those which investigate the emotional development of medieval Christianity (Lynch and Broomhall 2020).

Research into the history of emotions has focused on whether emotions are natural and come without any interplay from outside forces or are nurtured by culture (Boddice 2017). Boddice (2017:11) emphasises that historical emotions should be dealt with cautiously: "we cannot

preconceive what emotions are and then simply write about them”, since some have now been lost entirely and people from a different period held “different affective experiences”. It is Boddice’s belief that emotions are partly natural and partly nurtured by culture — “biocultural”— therefore emotions have a central place in history and its culture, as too does the reasoning behind these emotions (Boddice 2017:12).

Rebecca McNamara (2020) discusses emotions with respect to medieval religious beliefs and practices, particularly in relation to the body, the “focus on words” and physical action, and how emotions became embodied in these. McNamara (2020:106) suggests that the “the body was integral” to Christian belief, and that according to a Platonic and Aristotelian view, both body and soul “existed separately but were bound up temporarily on earth”. In discussing this Platonic dualism McNamara notes that the body was thought the place where the emotions reside. Further, the body was vilified, but as God “acts on the spirit” the soul was revered. McNamara also suggests that the thirteenth-century saint, Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274 CE), took up this dualism of body and soul and also “associated emotions with the lower, animal, sensate soul”. Thus, emotions were belittled and criticised because they were not associated with the higher self, the spirit or soul which God acts upon. McNamara (2020:114) also touches on how emotions form through experiences and materiality, suggesting that there is a relationship between “things, religion and feeling”, and that emotions “affect and are affected by” the “material world”.

The design and architecture of cells within sacred spaces, play a crucial role in shaping emotional responses and aiding spiritual experiences. Judith Butler's theory (as cited in Gilchrist 1999:82) suggests that performing tasks repeatedly contributes to the formation of personal identity. These repeated tasks or performances, "provide the experience of gender difference", and so are often associated with gender roles. Moreover, these experiences and ideologies become ingrained in long-term memory and shape social interpretations, belief, and social acceptance. Gilchrist (1999:98) extends this idea by suggesting that "lifecycle rites" are social performances involving participants in creating and reinforcing distinctions between genders and identities. Essentially, both Butler and Gilchrist argue that the repeated performance of tasks and participation in social 'rituals' play a crucial role in shaping individual identities and reinforcing societal norms regarding gender.

The theory outlined can be loosely applied to understand the construction of behaviors within sacred spaces, and in particular, the anchorite cell. The cell provides a unique setting where behaviors are not only influenced by religious beliefs, but also by the specific rituals and practices performed within that space. The recluse may engage in repetitive tasks and rituals as part of their religious practice – possibly as suggested in gender specific anchoritic guides, such as the *Ancrene Wisse*. These could include daily prayers, meditations, or specific religious observances. According to Butler's theory, the repetition of these tasks would have contributed to the formation of personal identity. The anchorite's identity becomes intertwined with their religious role, shaped by the repetitive performance of these tasks within the confined space of the cell. Tasks and rituals performed by the anchorite within the

cell may be associated with specific gendered roles. For example, certain prayers and practices may be considered more traditionally masculine or feminine within the religious context, influencing the anchorite's behavior and perception of their own gender identity. Just as Gilchrist suggests that social performances such as "lifecycle rites" contribute to the construction of gender and identity, the anchorite's practices within the cell can be seen as a form of social performance. While the anchorite may be physically isolated, their behaviors within the cell are still shaped by the broader religious community and its beliefs. The anchorite's adherence to religious rituals and observances serves not only to reinforce their own identity, but also to uphold society expectations regarding religious piety and devotion. Gilchrist (1999:100) suggests that "space assists in establishing and reproducing social order", which can also be viewed the same way in a religious context.

Tim Pestell (2016:162) suggests that architectural features, such as "fixtures and fittings", may have played a significant part in regulating the different spaces within a church, however, he further suggests that beyond architectural elements, there were many non-structural components too, such as paintings and decoration, that may have played a crucial role in constructing distinct sacred spaces. For instance, Pestell cites research completed by Roberta Gilchrist, who investigated the ornamental vaulting corbels and bosses at Lacock Abbey, revealing how these decorative elements were utilized to demarcate areas designated for different sexes. Gilchrist (1999:86) expands on this notion by proposing that the spatial division between of nave and chancel in the church symbolized the separation between earth and heaven (see Figure 13), and that "space and time was experienced differently according

to social status, sex and age.” This insight emphasizes the possible different perceptions of the occupants of the anchorite cells, and the parishioners, of the physical environment of the church. As can be seen in Figure 13, the majority of the case study cells were located between the earthly and heavenly realms.

This symbolic division reflects broader religious beliefs and cosmological understandings where the church itself becomes a small-scale version of the universe. The distinction between earthly and heavenly realms within the church space can influence behaviors and experiences of the worshippers, shaping their perceptions of the sacred space and their relationship with God. Gilchrist also indicates here that the experience of space and time within the church varied according to social status, sex and age, suggesting that the construction of behaviors within sacred spaces is not uniform but is instead shaped by intersecting factors such as, social hierarchy, gender roles, and life stages. Different individuals or groups within the community may have had distinct perceptions and interpretations of the sacred space based on these factors, influencing how they engaged with religious rituals and practices.

The placement of anchorite cells between the earthly and heavenly realms is significant in understanding the construction of behaviors within these specific sacred spaces. The physical placement of the cells within the church reflects their liminal status, positioned at the threshold between the mundane world and the Divine. The spatial arrangement likely had profound psychological and spiritual implications for the anchorites, influencing their

perceptions of their own spiritual journey, and their role within the broader religious community. These spatial configurations would have influenced the individuals' movements, interactions, and perceptions within the sacred environment, reinforcing symbolic meanings and social hierarchies. The construction of sacred spaces within churches and anchorite cells involves a mix of architectural, decorative, and symbolic elements. These, along with the individual perceptions and social dynamics, shaped behaviors and experiences within both of these environments.

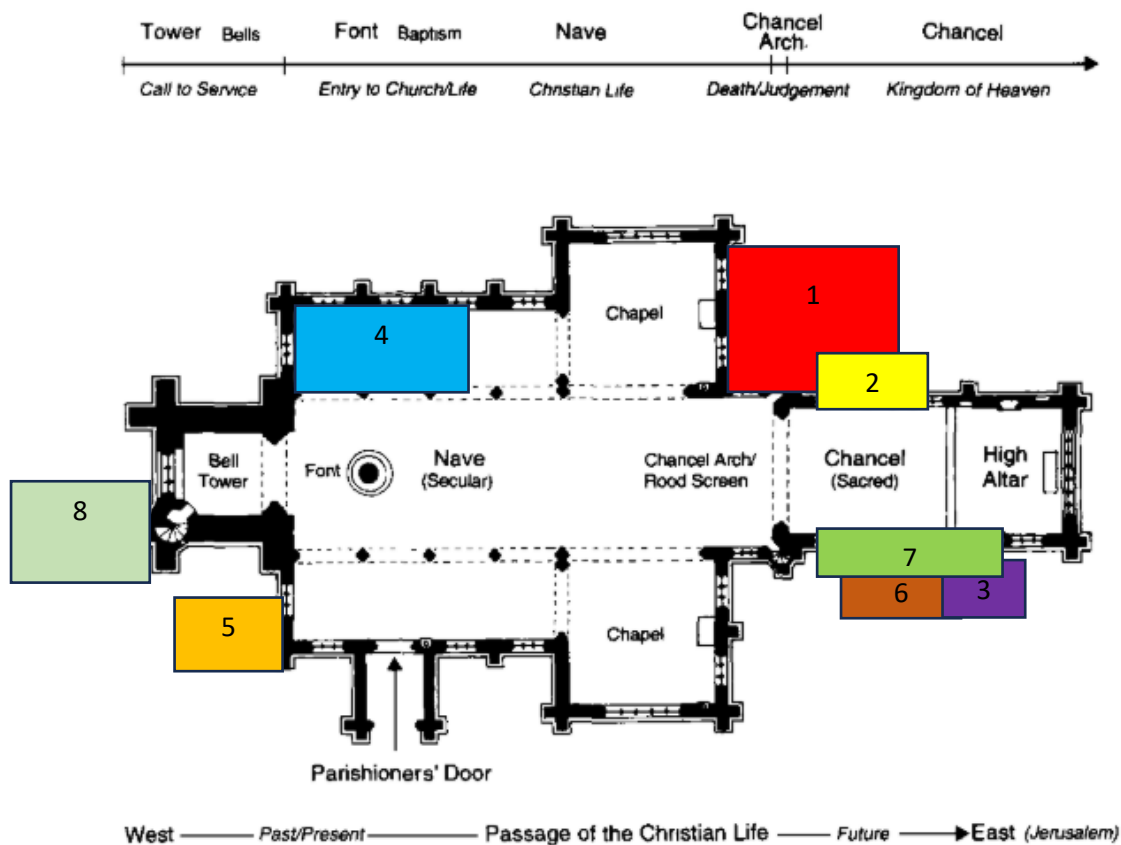


Figure 13: Plan of a later medieval parish church used to illustrate the passage of a Christian life from the west to the east through the spaces of the church (Gilchrist, 1999:86). The numbered coloured areas [added by De Beaux, 2024] show where anchorite cells were located based on each of the case studies in this thesis. Note that although the architecture of the case study churches are different, the orientation remains the same.

The layout of the cell itself can influence emotional responses. The enclosed space of the anchorite cell created a sense of intimacy and seclusion conducive to contemplation and prayer. The compact size may have also evoked feelings of safety and protection, fostering a sense of closeness to the Divine. However, the confined space may have also induced feelings of confinement or isolation, depending on the individual's psychological make-up. The interaction of light and shadow within the cell may have too, evoked different emotional responses. Controlled lighting, such as through small windows or candlelight, may have created a subdued atmosphere that encouraged introspection and meditation. Additionally, the play of light filtering through stained glass windows or illuminating devotional images may have evoked a sense of transcendence and awe, enhancing the spiritual experience. On the other hand, limited access to natural light or excessive darkness may have evoked feelings of sombreness or melancholy.

Devotional imagery adorning the walls of the cell, the church walls those within sight of the anchorite through their squint, or the main altar, may have served as focal points for prayer and meditation, provoking emotional responses through visual stimulation. Icons depicting religious figures or scenes from sacred narratives can evoke feelings of reverence, devotion, and connection to the Divine. The presence of familiar religious symbols may have provided comfort and solace, reinforcing the individual's faith and sense of belonging. Additionally, devotional images may have served as sources of inspiration, prompting contemplation on spiritual themes and virtues.

The architectural features of the cell, such as the altar squint, high vaulted ceilings, the blocked doorway, and/or the window to the outside world, could have given the space symbolic meaning and evoked emotional responses. Architectural elements of the church itself may also have evoked a sense of sacredness and grandeur, inspiring feelings of awe and humility in the presence of God. Conversely, the austere architectural features of the cell may have elicited feelings of simplicity and purity, facilitating a sense of spiritual clarity and focus.

Overall, the spaces and art/architecture of cells within sacred spaces were carefully designed to promote and articulate emotional responses conducive to spiritual contemplation, prayer, and devotion. Through the interplay of spatial layout, lighting, devotional imagery, and symbolic architecture, anchorite cells created an immersive environment that facilitated a deepening of the individual's spiritual journey and emotional connection to the Divine.

In relation to the emotions of religious women in the Middle Ages, Claire Walker (2013) gives an insight into the emotional requirements of enclosed nuns at English Tridentine religious houses. Within these houses the community were required to exercise self-control and suppress their emotions for anything outside of their community or the Church, including family. Walker (2013:167)

3.4 The Anchorite as Part of the Community

McAvoy (2011) explores the concept of anchorites as being individuals who chose a life of solitude and seclusion. However, McAvoy also investigates the contradictory nature of

anchorites as being deeply connected to their external communities despite their physical isolation. This, despite anchorite guides warning against such interactions:

The high-medieval texts, such as *de Institutione Inclusarum* and *Ancrene Wisse*, actively discourage reclusive sociability. Although the later-medieval guides, such as *Speculum Inclusorum*, Rolle's *Form of Living* and Hilton's *Scale of Perfection*, demonstrate that it has become increasingly acceptable for the recluse to have social contact, it is by no means shown to be the central interest of these writers, or the *raison d'être* of the vocation.

(Mulder-Bakker 2005:3)

we see a definite connection to the external community was achieved through various means. Firstly, the anchorite would act as an intermediary, praying for individuals' needs, the needs of their community, and for those in Purgatory (see Chapter 1 and Sauer 2017:103) and secondly as a spiritual guide and advisor/mentor. This role allowed anchorites a significant presence and influence within the external community. According to Gunn and McAvoy (2017:3), "to the medieval mind it was commonplace that solitude is a state of being that can be readily achieved within the social setting of community", with the belief that communities are ultimately formed out of solitude. Gunn and McAvoy (2017) highlight that by actively engaging with the external community in these ways, anchorites were able to maintain a sense of connection and relevance.

3.5 Previous Work on the Material Remains of Anchorite Cells

Much of the known physical documentation of anchorite cells derives from a fascination with church architecture.

One of the earliest systematic architectural surveys of an anchorite cell was a 1901 report by Phillip Mainwaring Johnston, a well-known English architect and historian, on the St. Botolph church in Hardam, West Sussex (Johnston 1901:61-92). The report is a descriptive architectural survey, including some measurements and detailed drawings of the church and the cell squint, the only remains of the cell which survived. It may have indeed been dismantled, however, there is no archaeological or architectural evidence for this. Although the majority of the report is focused on the descriptions of the paintings on the walls of the interior of the church, it also offers some insight into the dimensions of the anchorhold and its possible dates, and provides some historical background taken from the will of the Bishop of Chichester, St. Richard de la Wych (d. 1253 CE), who provided for the anchorite at Hardham (Johnston 1901:68). As the will was dated between 1245 CE, the year that St. Richard became Bishop of Chichester, and 1253 CE, the year of the bishop's death, it can be assumed that the anchorite was enclosed during this period (Johnston 1901:80). Johnston also alludes to several architectural features, arguing for some modifications to the anchorhold in c. 1330 CE when a large ornate window was installed on the same side of the chancel as the cell, and partially destroyed the squint (Johnston 1901:67). It is unknown whether the anchorite remained in the cell after this alteration. An examination was conducted of the form and

fabric of this church at the time of the cell assessment and no further features are evident that would suggest that the cell was moved or dismantled.

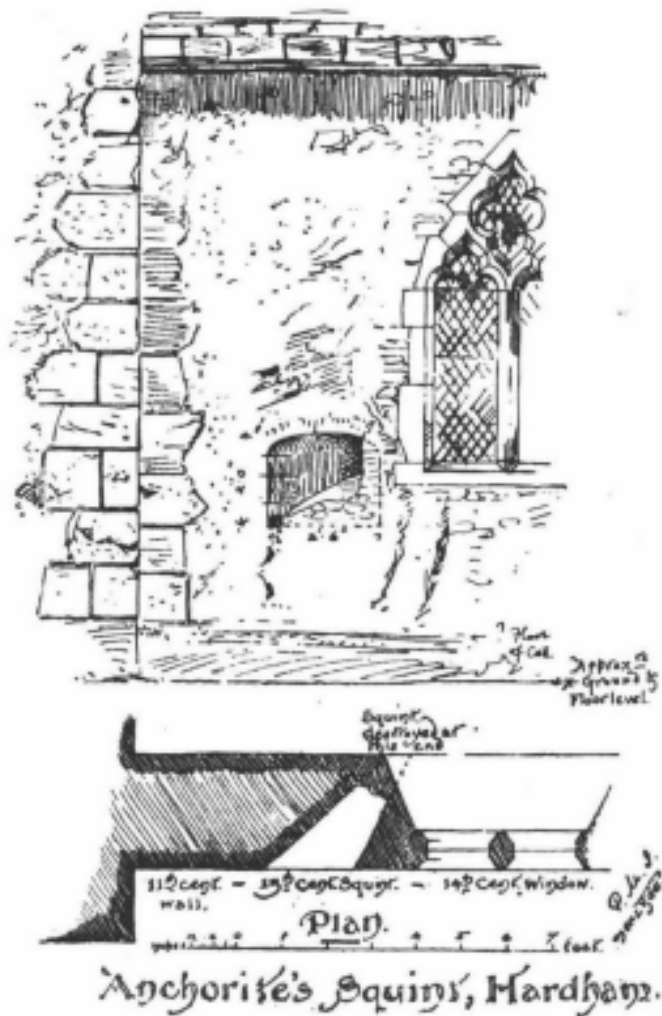


Figure 14: Scale elevation and cross section of the squint at Hardham church, showing later ornate window installed c 1330 CE (Mainwaring Johnston 1901:79).

Johnston published several other reports in the same format. For example, in 1907 he recorded the features of Leatherhead church, Surrey, which had contained an anchorite cell that was subsequently demolished (Johnston 1907:223-228). Although an architect by

training, Johnston seems to have been an amateur archaeologist as well, since, with the help of the vicarage gardener and a local labourer, an excavation of sorts was carried out to locate the foundations of the cell. As could be expected, no details of the excavation process or any other artefacts apart from the foundations were noted. Johnston thoroughly described the remains of the cell, located on the north side of the church, producing a detailed plan of its location in relation to the chancel, an elevation of the cell, and a drawing of the fragments of the brass border of a tomb built later, on the site of the cell (see Figure 14).

Johnston also discussed in passing other anchorite cells, including examples in Shere and Compton, Surrey. It would seem he presumed his readers had knowledge of these cells, as he did not go into any detail other than to state their location in general terms. For example, while he included some discussion of the cell in St. Nicholas' Church in Compton, he did not refer to it by name, simply stating "... while of the later type of cell, that at the equally well-known church of Compton ..." (1907:227). Although Johnston's descriptions are impeccably detailed, most are limited. Early architectural records such as Johnston's are critical, however, for understanding the history of at least some churches associated with cells, the anchorite (where known), and extant architectural features of both the churches and the cells themselves.

In 1927 Walter Hinde Godfrey, an English architect and historian, undertook an in-depth recording of the remains of a cell and the retrieval of the interred remains of an anchoress buried in the cell at St Anne's, Lewes, West Sussex. This was conducted as part of the

renovation of the vestry and, although Godfrey was not an archaeologist by training, his work was subsequently published in the *Sussex Archaeological Collections* journal of 1928 (Godfrey 1928:159-169). Godfrey provided detailed drawings of architectural features, such as the columns, arches and doorways within the church, and the squints of the anchorite cell. Detailed plans of the church, highlighting the areas built in different periods, and of the cell, are also included.

The remains of the anchoress were examined by Sir Arthur Smith Woodward, an English palaeontologist, and Sidney Spokes, an English Doctor of Medicine and Dentistry, who described and measured the bones and described the stature and probable age of the woman, prior to her remains being reburied. A copy of an anonymous osteological analysis was located when conducting fieldwork at St. Anne's church for this thesis that is assumed to be a copy of the Woodward and Spokes report (church Warden pers. comm. 1.5.2017). The analysis suggested that the anchorite was a woman of "perhaps 70 years or more" (see Appendix V).

Work by professional archaeologists is also limited. The earliest known professional archaeological study of an anchorite cell took place in 1987, investigating the 'Anker House' at St. Mary's and St. Cuthbert's at Chester-le-Street, Durham (Drury 1987:79-81). Linda Drury's work researched the history of the church's foundation, gave an overview of anchorites enclosed there and charted what became of the anchorhold following the

Reformation. The cell survives largely intact, with modern instalments such as a boiler in the lower floor. The cell was two storeys, with one room on the lower and one on the upper.

There is one other known archaeological investigation, conducted by Time Team and Wessex Archaeology on a church in the grounds of Colne Priory, Essex in 2012. During fieldwork at Colne, the partial remains of a small room were discovered attached to the church. This was interpreted by Cate Gunn (2012 and 2017) as a potential anchorite cell based on its approximate dimensions of “just four metres by one-and-a half” (Gunn 2017:38). However, it must be noted that this has not been confirmed and is speculative at best.

Wessex Archaeology noted:

The northern wall of the north aisle (311), as seen in Trench 3, was constructed in the same manner as the walls recorded in Trenches 1 and 2, and so is likely to be contemporaneous and part of the pre-determined blueprint, as was the apsidal-ended Chapter House seen in Trench 4. Wall 311 had been butted by a later addition, but this had been extensively robbed. The function of this later addition is unknown although an anchorite’s cell would fit the position, on the northern, cold side of the church away from the domestic activity. (Wessex Archaeology 2012:22)

Archaeologically there was no structural evidence of the cell other than the trench for the wall abutting the outer wall on the north side of the nave (Gunn 2012:117). Modern scholarship suggests that at least some anchorite cells were built as lean-to structures and not standalone structures, with their foundation and walls attached to the main church (Gunn

2017:38; Licence 2011:87-89). This architectural form conforms to the footprint at Colne, lending weight to the argument that this was possibly the remains of an anchorage.

However, there is limited historical evidence to support the identification of this small addition to the church as an anchorage. Historical research indicated that the twelfth-century Abbot of Abingdon started a building programme which completed a number of “alterations and improvements to the priory”, including a *camera monachorum* (Gunn 2012:117), in translation this means ‘room of the monks’ and may have been used by the monks as a sitting room. However, at most, due to the size of the excavated ‘room’, it may have been a single cell or sleeping space for a monk. Gunn also identified three Charters signed by “*Roberto filio recluse*” (Robert, the son of the *recluse*) and various accounts of other abbeys that referred to an anchoress within or near their own religious houses (Gunn 2012:119-122). The only charter explicitly identified in Gunn’s article, however—Charter 43—was also signed by six other men, “William the son of Fulco, Robert son of Baldwin, clerics called Michael and Ralph, William the son of Ralph and his brother Richard and Geoffrey”, none of whom had any known relation to an anchoress (Gunn 2012:122). There is also no record of Colne Priory having had an anchorite within or near their church, and no records such as wills listing patrons of an anchorite or items being gifted to an anchorite at the priory.

More recent work was undertaken by Victoria Yuskaitis, who conducted a study on the anchorites of Shropshire. Although the Doctoral thesis deriving from Yuskaitis’ is currently under embargo, and permission was not given for it to be viewed as part of this research,

publicly available information notes that Yuskaitis uses her “own archaeological methodology to study surviving anchoritic features ...” (Yuskaitis nd). Yuskaitis’ one published output from her thesis is in a collection of essays edited by Michelle Sauer and Jenny Bledsoe (2021). Sauer and Bledsoe (2021:2) comment in the introduction to this collection of essays, that “putting the object at the centre of various analyses offers new perspectives on religion, culture, the sacred, and the secular ...”, and in particular, how “objects and bodies interact and constitute devotional practices”. This is precisely what Yuskaitis (2021:129-134) shows in her paper, demonstrating how an anchorite may have interacted with the form and fabric of the church and the community from their cell. Yuskaitis provided a brief discussion of her investigations of the anchorite cell of Ruyton, Shropshire, in which she demonstrates that the archaeological context provided the evidence that the design of anchorite cells was influenced by the specific needs of the communities around the church and the church architecture itself. This aligns with earlier research conducted by Clare Dowding (2017:117-118) and Mulder-Bakker (2005:3), which also emphasized the importance of social interaction between the enclosed anchorite and the wider community in the Middle Ages. The church served as the focal point for the parish, and guides like Groscekin’s *Liber confortatorius* (c. 1080 CE) recognised the significance of fostering social connections between the recluse and the community.

Other work has focused on individual elements of cells, rather than the architecture of a cell in its entirety. Simon Roffey (2023) has provided a detailed analysis of the use of squints in medieval religious architecture. By demonstrating that squints were placed in very specific areas of the church, Roffey argues that they were not just a functional piece of architecture,

but also provided a “level of visual participation”, a “spatial relationship” (Roffey 2023:123), a focus on the Eucharist and the role it played in the salvation of the soul. It was the architecture, he suggests, that provided a “mood of reverence ... to engage the emotions”. It was, after all, vision, that “gave access to a personal and direct experience of the holy” (Roffey 2023:127), and the squint gave a specific line of sight. His article sheds light on the social and religious significance of squints, their role in religious practices and their significance in religious architecture. Roffey also suggested that many squints have been “incorrectly termed ‘leper windows’ or ‘hagioscopes’ ”, although he does not offer an explanation for this, only that squints “were commonly small internal windows, or view-holes” (Roffey 2023:127).

Another scholar, Monica Stewart (2013), has published an article around the exploration of the anchorite’s lifestyle through archaeology, although she does not offer any new archaeological research. Stewart simply restates research by Gilchrist (2000), Sauer (2004), Waggoner, Marsha Frakes (2005) and Barbara Voss (2008). Although Stewart provides an interesting comparison between the anchoress and women of the Magdalen Society of Philadelphia, in that both paths shared the provision of possible redemption for women, those that have been cast out from society and those who believed they were sinful and could be saved through prayer and solitude with God (Stewart 2013:29-30), and that both were removed from society and were “positioned directly adjacent to the sanctuary of a church” (Stewart 2013:31), it is important to remember that the Magdalens were forced into religion for rehabilitation, unlike the situation for the anchorite.

3.6 Summary

A considerable amount of literature has been published on anchorites which spans a period of over 112 years. However, evaluation of historic and current anchoritic studies indicates comparatively little focus on the actual cell, its purpose and use of space, form and fabric, gendered cell comparisons, or detailed archaeological investigations of cells, with the exception of very recent studies (Roffey 2023; Yuskaitis 2020, 2021). Indeed, anchoritic research has focused more on historical accounts and gender-related issues, including sexuality and homoerotic relations and the representation of female anchorites (including McAvoy 2015; Mills 2010; Sauer 2004, 2010, 2013, 2014, 2021). Greater, more comprehensive, research in the areas of archaeological investigation and cell comparison is required. Early researchers focused more on the rules and guidance given to the anchorite and the matters around enclosure and the architecture of the church that the cell was attached to, rather than the use of space within the cell, including the location of the cells or the sex of those enclosed. Both early and modern investigations, with the exceptions noted, demonstrate a lack of archaeological consideration. The ideologies of religious behaviour and reasons for enclosure have been examined and highlight possible motives behind the choices of lay and religious men and women who decided to be enclosed as an anchorite, along with the characteristics and attributes of anchorites. Given that such a limited number of archaeological or material culture investigations have taken place, further surveys and analysis are crucial to moving the current state of anchoritic knowledge into innovative, fresh, and unfamiliar territory.

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CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODS

This chapter describes the methods of the archaeological survey and plan reconstructions of a sample of anchorite cells from England and Wales. The initial fieldwork, partially funded by a Flinders University Overseas Fieldtrip Scholarship, was conducted in the UK in October 2016. This initial stage included manuscript and rare book research at the key archives and libraries of England and Wales: The British Library, The British Museum Library, Cambridge University Library, The Lambeth Palace library, The National Archives, and The National Library and Archives of Wales, along with a survey to locate, and then record, extant anchorite cells. Further fieldwork, archival, and manuscript research was conducted in the UK during 2017 and 2018, over a period of three months. Final research fieldwork in the UK, due to be completed in July of 2020, unfortunately had to be cancelled due to the Covid-19 virus and ensuing restrictions.

The research undertaken in this thesis required both quantitative and qualitative data. The data collected included primary historical data relating to the lives and routines of anchorites, general layouts of cells, daily activities and other contextual information, secondary archaeological data extracted from modern scholarship, and measurements and observational data collected during fieldwork on a range of cells.

4.1 Historical Sources

The historical sources researched for this thesis were five-fold. Firstly, the anchorite guides, which were written for the enclosed ascetics by male members of the Church (see Tables 3 and 4). The guides have been sourced primarily from Warren's (1985) dataset of patrons, and span from the eleventh through to the fourteenth centuries. These guides have provided an understanding of the probable daily routine undertaken by an anchorite. They also discuss the suggested architectural and domestic layout for a cell, as well as the activities that were endorsed, and those that were forbidden, to the anchorite. This provided a basic understanding of the possible uses of space within a cell, as well as how that space and certain features within it were conceptualised at the time.

Period	Language of Composition	Guides for Female Recluses
Eleventh century c. 1058	<i>Latin</i>	<i>Liber Confortatorius (Book of Encouragement and Consolation)</i> : by Goscelin of St Bertine, a Benedictine monk, for Eve, a former nun of Wilton Abbey.
Twelfth century, c. 1102 and c. 1105, (the other, c. 1086, was for the hermit, Caen).	<i>Latin</i>	<i>Three Letters of St Anselm</i> : by St Anselm a Benedictine monk, Prior and Abbot. Only two of these letters were for the instruction of female anchorites.
Twelfth century c. 1160-2.	<i>Latin</i>	<i>De institutione inclusarum</i> : by Aelred of Rievaulx for his (un-named) sister.
Thirteenth century c. 1215-30.	<i>English</i>	<i>Ancrene Wisse</i> : scholars disagree as to the author of this manuscript, with possibilities including, Richard Poor, Simon of Ghent and the hermit, Godwine and a Dominican confessor. It was written for a group of anchorite sisters living together, whose location and identity remain unknown.
Fourteenth century c. 1348.	<i>English</i>	<i>The Form of Living</i> : by Richard Rolle, Hermit of Hampole. Composed for an anchoress who was a disciple of his, Margaret de Kirkby, a recluse whose locations included Layton and Ainderby Steeple.
Fourteenth century c. 1384-6.	<i>Unknown</i>	<i>The Scale of Perfection</i> : by Walter Hilton, Augustinian Canon. The first book was written to "an unnamed, single, female anchorite", and was subsequently used as a guide for other

		anchoresses. Although written for a female, this guide was well-known and was widely used by male religious.
Fifteenth century c. 1430-40.	Latin	Vernacular redaction of <i>De institutione inclusarum</i>: by Aelred of Rievaulx for his (unnamed) sister. The redaction may have been intended for a male audience, but this has not been proven.
Fifteenth century c. 1450.	Latin	<i>The Myrour of Recluses</i>: containing only eight chapters of the translated version of the fifteen-chapter <i>Speculum inclusorum</i> (a guide for male anchorites).

Table 3: Key guides for female recluses (Millett 1992:213; Warren 1985:294-298; Hughes-Edwards 2012:159-168 and Sargent 1983:189-90).

Period	Language of Composition	Guides for Male Recluses
Ninth century c. early 900's.	Latin	<i>The Continental Rule for Monastic Recluses</i>: by Grimlaicus of Metz.
Twelfth to thirteenth century c. 1140-1215.	Latin	<i>Admonitiones</i>: by Robert, a priest for Hugo the anchorite.
Thirteenth century c.1220.	Latin	<i>Regula Recluserum Dubliniensis (The Dublin Rule)</i>: by an anonymous author. The <i>Admonitiones</i> was also published as an appendix to the Dublin Rule.
Thirteenth century c.1280.	Latin	<i>Regula reclusorum Walteri reclusi (Walter's Rule)</i>: by Walter an Augustinian Canon.
Thirteenth century.	English	<i>The Lambeth Rule</i>: by an unknown author. Written for lay male recluses.
Fourteenth century.	Latin	<i>The Reply of a Fourteenth Century Abbot of Bury St Edmund to a Monk's Petition to be a recluse.</i>
Fourteenth century The precise date of authorship is unknown, however was in the fourteenth century between c.1349-1392.	Latin	<i>Speculum Inclusorum</i>: by an unknown author.
Fifteenth century c. 1430-40.	Latin	Vernacular redaction of <i>De institutione inclusarum</i>: by Aelred of Rievaulx for his (unnamed) sister. The redaction may have been intended for a male audience, but this has not been proven.

Table 4: Key guides for male recluses (Warren 1985:294-298 and Hughes-Edwards 2012:159-168).

Secondly, the routines and practices of three well-known anchorites were researched: Wulfric of Haselbury c. 1080-1154 CE; Christina of Markyate c. 1096-1155 CE; and Julian of Norwich c. 1342-1423 CE, using their personal narratives and biographies or *vitaes* (lives). These anchorites were chosen specifically because they had their *vitaes* written for them, or because they themselves had written books or other personal narratives about their lives and spiritual matters, and therefore information could be collected from these records.

Other documents that gave information about individual anchorites' lives were *vitaes* as told by a third party, rare personal letters, wills, deeds to land, church and monastery records, and royal records. These sources held small amounts of information, such as who the anchorite's spouses were (if married or widowed); occasionally the anchorite's first names and/or what their occupation was prior to being enclosed; and, in personal documents or from their *vitaes*, descriptions of how they experienced life in their cell. This information was collated and used to generate a general description of an archetypal anchorite and provide a broad understanding of the day-to-day habits, interactions and practices of these ascetics. These understandings have subsequently assisted in the interpretation of the cells which were selected for detailed study.

Thirdly, and again using Warren's (1985) dataset as the foundation, financial contributions of patrons towards the maintenance of anchorites and their cells were sourced from records in the British Library, Cambridge University Library, and the national archival repositories in England and Wales. These financial records included Royal and religious wills, Exchequer rolls

of England (also called the Pipe Rolls, or Great Rolls), and property portfolios and financial records of religious houses and local lords. Apart from recorded financial stipends and alms which were noted to have been given to the anchorites, these documents show some details of anchorites, their sex, location, and, in a few records, their name. The status of the anchorite has been gleaned from the anchorite's family background (where known), the amount of alms and stipends given and from whom, and the annual sum the anchorite had allocated to themselves from their own estate.

In order to understand more about an anchorite's life, and, in particular their cells, other primary sources, such as ceremonies of enclosure, unofficial guidance in personal correspondence, court papers, ecclesiastical correspondence and art were consulted to identify cells, their location, structure, and any gender-related issues in connection with either the construction of the various individual cells, additions to them, the movements of anchorites or their financial security prior to and/or after their enclosure. Other documentation, such as parish records, specifying the patrons of anchorites and visits by royalty or those of higher status in the community, have also been examined to discern any indications of gendered differences in the treatment of, consultation with, or access to, anchorites by noted visitors and patrons.

Additionally, two enclosure ceremonies as performed by bishops have been located (see Table 5). These particular ceremonies were chosen because they are the only two known to have been recorded and are thus the only representatives of the type of ceremony

conducted. One of these: *Servitium Includendorum* the only one of the two that is fully accessible, has been analysed for any gender-related inferences. The wording of the ceremony is provided in full in Appendix III and is discussed in Chapter 7.

Date of Manuscript	Manuscript	Location
c. Twelfth Century	London, British Library MS Vespasian D. XV: The Pontifical of Magdalen College <i>Servitium Recludendi (Service for Enclosure)</i> , Folios 61r-65r	Canterbury, Kent (?)
c. Fifteenth Century	Trinity College, Cambridge, MS B XI 9: The Pontifical of Henry Chichele, Archbishop of Canterbury 1414-43. Enclosure of a male anchorite in folios 98v-116v Enclosure of a female anchorite in folios 116v-126r	Canterbury, Kent

Table 5: Two anchorite enclosure ceremony texts from the twelfth and fifteenth centuries.

The key challenge throughout this thesis is that an anchorite's life before their enclosure was largely blank, and only recorded in very rare instances if the individual held high status. Even after their enclosure, unless they were one of the rare famous anchorites, they were simply known as the anchorite enclosed in such-and-such church. The main issue, therefore, was a lack of information on the anchorites themselves. Their life was a dedication to God, and the individual ceased to exist. This seems to be particularly the case for female anchorites. Information about who they were, where they came from, their occupation, when they were enclosed, and for how long, if they were buried in the cell or elsewhere, what they died of or whether they were lay or religious, was very scarce.

4.2 Existing Datasets of Anchorite Cells

In order to gain insight into the status quo of current research, and which cells are still extant, it was necessary to review all of the existing findings on anchorites and their cells. This consisted of reviewing current and historical literature on the history of the churches which have or had cells attached to them, information on known anchorites, their status and their families, patrons of churches and anchorites, and previous archaeological surveys of cells.

Analysis of the four datasets—Dale (1903), Clay (1914), Warren (1985) and Jones (2010, 2017, 2019)—was carried out by comparing all of their constituent information to trace and confirm extant cells. All prior records from each of these four datasets with either a date of enclosure or date of death for the anchorite were collated to form a single amalgamated dataset (Appendix IV). This initial collation of data allowed the extent of knowledge on each cell to be compared between the various sources, but also revealed gaps in the data. More importantly, the extent of these data allowed an assessment of the level of anchorite activity by both sexes throughout the Middle Ages in England and Wales and showed the various occupancy patterns (see Chapter 7).

The main issue with combining the four datasets was that three (Dale, Clay and Jones) had exact dating, for example 1200 CE, for at least some of the anchorite enclosures, whereas the other dataset (Warren) only referred to the century in which the anchorite was enclosed. Warren (1984) also only recorded the sex of the anchorite for each of the cells, whereas Dale, Clay and Jones recorded names, status and whether the anchorite was religious or lay (where

known). When combined, the four datasets reveal an overlap of 25% (see blue entries in Appendix IV). This overlap demonstrates that 37 anchorite cells were duplicated across the four datasets, with an additional seven cells possibly duplicated.

Additional issues encountered were the absence of confirmation of extant cells and their exact location and, in the case of Warren's data, the absence of particulars relating to individual cells, for example, the location and name of the church the anchorite cell was attached to, and the name of the anchorite (where known). This is possibly because her research was focused specifically on who the patrons were, the sex of the anchorite and the number of anchorites enclosed throughout the centuries. Because of this, descriptive statistics drawn from the amalgamated dataset cannot be absolute, and it was not possible to identify all possible overlaps between the four datasets. Due to a lack of information on individual cells it was also not possible to verify the number and locations of all extant cells. Because of these issues, only eight extant cells were able to be located and surveyed. The amalgamated dataset included only those cells for which dates of establishment and/or alteration could be determined and those which were able to be dated subsequently when visited.

4.3 Previous Archaeological Investigations of Cells

Using the existing datasets as guides, information from previous archaeological investigations of recorded anchorite cells was also collated. The Archaeological Data Service records (ADS) were searched to find any cells that have been excavated or recorded. This revealed work

largely conducted before 1950 and there has been minimal reported excavation work carried out on confirmed anchorite cells since then. Most archaeological research which modern scholars use therefore comes from outdated sources and, although those which were carried out in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were published by county archaeological societies, such as the Surrey Archaeological Society and the Sussex Archaeological Society, they were conducted by architects or self-taught historians/archaeologists. The only modern archaeological work on anchorite cells has been undertaken by Roffey (2023) and Yuskaitis (2020, 2021), and is therefore critical to the complete understanding, interpretation and advancement of research into this subject matter. The data collected from ADS sources were added to the amalgamated spreadsheet for further analysis and discussion in Chapter 7.

4.4 UK Fieldwork 2016-2018

Archaeological Recording of Extant Cells

For the purpose of this research project the study area was focused solely on England and Wales. The areas listed in Table 6 were selected for fieldwork due to the possible number of extant anchorite cells in these towns as indicated in the historical datasets (see section 4.2). A total of 336 cells that may have been still in existence were identified from this phase. It is to be noted that the historical datasets did not include the exact location of these cells. Rather, the county or town were recorded, along with a brief description of the cell, where it was close to or the church it was attached to. The areas visited during the fieldwork were

those that were most accessible. Examples of the original datasets can be seen in Figures 15 and 16. These show respectively, a copy of Rotha Mary Clay's record of Durham cells, (the initials A and H located in the second column stand for anchorite and hermit) and a copy of Darley Dale's record of cells in Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire and Cornwall.

Churches visited were not only those that were identified in the datasets, but as many churches as possible in each area. to ensure that both the recorded cell and any unrecorded cells were located. The churches visited were identified using local maps and by physically exploring the areas by driving and walking through the regions to locate churches which were approximately within the period of research (c. 1000 – 1500 CE). In order to determine exactly where cells were, and if any still existed, it was necessary to investigate every possible church in each location, where achievable, although in some areas it was only possible to visit one or two. If a potential anchorite church was identified that may have been in one of the datasets, contact was made with the Rector and/or churchwarden to establish if they knew of any cell or history of anchorites being attached to their church. Contact was also made with local historians, where available, to obtain any relevant information. An appointment was then made to visit the church so that access was available to all areas, where required. If at that time an anchorite cell was identified, a survey was conducted, and the results recorded. In total 86 churches were visited across the England and Wales (see Table 6 for town and county distribution). Individual descriptions are provided in Appendix I.

XI. DUR HAM

	Place.		Description	Date.	Patron.	Name.
1	Chester-le-Street	A.	in church	1383	—	John de Wessington
2	" "	H.	—	1400	—	John Blenkinsopp
3	Durham	A.	in cathedral	—	Priory	—
4	"	H.	—	1238	Bishop	Thomas
5	"	—	by St. Oswald's Church	—	—	—
6	" diocese of	H.	—	1373	—	William Shepherd
7	" in or near	H.	—	c. 1365	—	G.— M.—
8	" " "	H.	—	1493	—	John Man, of Yorkshire
9	Eighton or Skottewell	H.	chapel of Holy Trinity	1387	—	Robert Lambe
10	Finchale	H.	chapels, St. Mary V., St. John B.	c. 1110	Bishop, Durham Priory	St. Godric
11	"	A.	near " " "	—	—	Burchwene
12	Gainford (Barmore)	H.	chapel of St. Mary M.	1435	—	Rob. Perules ; Thos. Apulby, 1486
13	Gateshead	A.	by church of St. Mary	1340	—	—
14	Heighley [in Winston]	H.	—	bef. 1315	—	—
15	Norton	H.	—	—	—	—
16	Pounteys Bridge [in Middleton St. George]	H.	chapel of St. John	1426	Durham Priory	Jn. Teyssedall, 1402 ; Wm. Byn-delawes, 1426
17	Satley	H.	—	bef. 1195	" "	John
18	Staindrop	A.	adjoining church	1336	—	John de Camera
19	Tyneside (nr. Bishop's Park)	H.	St. Cuthbert	1312	—	John " called Godesman "
20	Wolsingham	H.	—	bef. c. 1110	—	Aelric and Godric
21	Yareshale on Derwent	H.	St. Mary	bef. 1188	Bishop, Durham Priory	John

1, 2. Boyle, *Guide*, 420 ; Chantries (S.S., 22), App. vi. p. lxiv. 3. Rites of Durham (S.S. 15, 107), I. 15 ; II. 17. 4. Close, 1238. 5. Surtees, *Hist.* IV. 84. 6. *V.C.H.* II. 131. 7. Yk. Pontif. (S.S. 61), App. v. 288. 8. Tres Script. (S.S. 9), App. p. ccclxxix. 9. *V.C.H.* II. 131 ; *Ely Dioc. Rem.*, 1900, p. 54. 10, 11. Reginald, Vita S. Godrici (S.S.

20). 12, 13. *V.C.H.* II. 131 ; Pat. 1486, 1510 ; Reg. Pal. Dunelm (Rolls, 62), III. 300-1. 14. Surtees, *Hist.* IV. 38. 15. *Gent. Mag.*, 1864, I. 710-2. 16. Surtees, *Hist.* III. 228. 17. Feod. Prior. (S.S. 58), 240. 18. Boyle, 700-1. 19. Reg. Pal. Dunelm. I. 197. 20. Vita S. Godrici, 45-52. 21. *Ibid.* 192-3 ; Feod. Prior. 240, 279, 280.

Figure 15: Copy of page 212 of Rotha Mary Clay's *Hermits and Anchorites of England* (1914), showing detail of cell locations.

TABLE OF ENGLISH RECLUSES.

County Bucks.

PLACE.	RECLUSE.	NAME.	STATE OF LIFE.	DATE.	REMARKS.
High Wycombe	Anchorite	Unknown	Unknown	Uncertain	Cell.

County Cambridge.

Cambridge	Anchoress	Alice Graunsetter	Carmelite nun	—	—
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County Cornwall.

Michaelstowe	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	—	Window in exterior, squint in interior wall of chancel
Kneighton Kiene, St. Sectarior's	Anchoress	Sisters (two)	—	—	Robert Hawker wrote poem about them
St. Burian's	Anchoress	St. Burian	Irish birth	630	Canonised
St. Guerin's, now Neot-Stoke	Anchorite	St. Neot	Related to King Alfred	877	Remains moved to St. Neot's, Hunts

234

ANCHORESSES OF THE WEST.

Figure 16: Copy of page 234 of Darley Dale's Anchoresses of the West (1903), showing minimal detail of cell locations.

McAvoy (2010:21) states of anchorites in Wales that: “... no research has ever been undertaken into the solitary life in this region, and even more so than in medieval Scotland the incidences of solitary life have been subsumed into hagiography, legends and pseudo-histories”. It was therefore imperative that some anchorite research was completed in Wales to offer a distinct contribution to academia.

Town	County
Bengeo	Hertfordshire
Cambridge	Cambridgeshire
Compton	Surrey
Exeter	Devonshire
Durham	Durham
Gloucester	Gloucestershire
Hardham	West Sussex
Huntingdon	Cambridgeshire
Letherhead	Surrey
Lewes	East Sussex
London	Middlesex
Nottingham	Nottinghamshire
Oxford	Oxfordshire
Rettendon	Essex
Sprotbrough	Yorkshire
Tintagel	Cornwall
Salisbury	Wiltshire
Bath and Shepton Mallet	Somerset
Winchester	Hampshire
Worcester	Worcestershire
York	Yorkshire
Abergavenny, Patrishow	Wales

Table 6: UK Fieldwork Study Areas.



Figure 17: Map of thesis fieldwork locations. Black crosses indicated counties where fully extant cells were found; red ticks indicate areas visited for this research. Map of counties from 17qq.com printable maps.

4.5 Recording Cells

The eight cells located were subject to detailed recording. These cells were chosen because some have only received minimal scholarly attention from modern researchers, and others none: St Issui's, Abergavenny, Wales; St. Anne's, Lewes, Sussex; St Materiana's, Tintagel, Cornwall and All Saint's, Rettendon, Essex. Consequently, they offered a unique opportunity to research previously unexplored aspects of the historical landscape, thereby providing a valuable addition to the existing body of knowledge. These churches and cells were fully accessible (see Table 9), although St. Botolph's Church, Hardham, West Sussex, was only partially intact. The recording of this cell focused on the remains of the external windows, as there were no other remains evident.

Each cell was recorded to the specifications detailed below. Measurements were taken using a hand-held laser distance measurement device. The archaeological recording practices employed during the fieldwork are based on the ClfA, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (UK) and MoLAS, Museum of London Archaeological Services Archive standards and guidance (ClfA 2017 and Museum of London 2013).

The following detailed specifications of individual cells were systematically recorded:

- Name of church, if cell was attached to a church, including any variation of the name over time.
- Age of church / year or period range of construction (where known)
- Parish and County

- Location: Street address
- National Grid Reference
- Situation: Geology, from maps: land formations, such as mountains, and lakes and oceans.
- Cell alignment (i.e., cardinal direction)
- Name of anchorite (where known)
- Sex of anchorite (where known)
- Status of anchorite (where known)
- Period of enclosure (where known)
- Building materials used (where identification can be made)
- Presence of architectural features, including windows, fireplaces, stairs, squints, altars, doors - includes embellishments.
- Measurements of features, including windows, squints, altars, doors, and fireplaces. Each cell was measured internally (length, width, and height), where possible, using a hand-held laser distance measuring device, using metres and millimetres. If there were more than one room, all rooms were measured using the same specifications. The dimensions of basic layout of the cell (where possible) were taken using the same method as the measurements of the features.
- Location of squint: Cardinal direction and location relative to the altar. This was confirmed by the use of a handheld compass.
- Reconstruction and or alterations or renovations
- Contact details of Rectors, Churchwardens, and local historians

- Date of cell construction (where known)

These data were subsequently added to the spreadsheet for analysis.

Some areas of cells were not accessible due to renovations, or the positioning of organs and or statues. This is noted in the results section of this thesis. Plans and drawings of key features in each of the surveyed cells were completed at 1:20 scale.

A photographic record of the cells and their features is included in Appendix II. All photographs of the cells and features were taken using a Fujifilm Finepix S6800 digital camera with 30x zoom. Each cell was photographed in the following manner:

- The cell from outside the church
- The cell from inside the church
- The squint from inside the cell
- The squint from inside the church
- The window to the outside from inside the cell
- The window to the outside from outside the cell
- The third window (for light) from inside the cell
- The third window (for light) from outside the cell, where possible
- Any/all features inside the cell individually photographed
- The cell interior from the cell door.

No excavation or other physical disturbance of cells was carried out for this project.

4.6 Limitations

The core limitation of any archaeological work on anchorite cells is that the majority of the 1267 cells identified historically have not survived, having been renovated and remodelled out of existence during the Victorian era, bombed and destroyed during World War II, or demolished to make way for modern developments. Subsurface data from some of these may be retrievable via excavation, but that was not possible for this project. Thus, the main limitation for this thesis is the available sample size. The inability to excavate or to investigate further churches due to COVID restrictions was also a limitation. This included a planned, and authorised, semi-invasive excavation of a cell at All Saints Church, Rettendon, Essex.

4.7 Summary

The methods and techniques used in the research and survey of the anchorite cell sample from England and Wales are described in this chapter. These methods collected both quantitative and qualitative data, on the daily lives and routines of anchorites, as well as archaeological evidence through onsite observations and measurements of cells and features.

This chapter also examined the limitations and restrictions of the study. In Chapter five, the data gathered by previous researchers will be analysed. In addition, the chronological pattern of anchorite enclosure, the geographical and gendered distribution of cells, the locations of clusters across the time span of c. 1000-1500 CE, and the potential causes for these clusters will also be explored.

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CHAPTER FIVE

RESULTS 1: PATTERNS AND DISTRIBUTION

This chapter first discusses the concept of clusters as a way to understand the patterning of anchorite cells across time and space. It then presents the chronological patterning of cell construction, the spatial and gendered patterning of cells, and discusses the possible reasons behind these results. Data for these analyses are drawn from the combined dataset of all known anchorite cells compiled from Dale (1903), Clay (1914), Warren (1984) and Jones (1998, 2005). For descriptive statistical purposes all undated cells have been excluded from analysis. Because each researcher recorded their data slightly differently, not all data are able to be compared and each researcher's work contains slight variations. For this reason, results are first presented according to each individual dataset (e.g., Dale, then Clay, then Warren, etc). These are then compared and contrasted where possible. Further, data from David Knowles and Neville Hadcock (1953) on the Religious Houses in England and Wales has been collated and added to demonstrate the location of anchorite clusters of five or more cells in relation to religious houses in the different counties and centuries. Due to the large amount of data presented, the amalgamated dataset can be seen in Appendix IV.

5.1 The Concept of Clusters – Definition and Importance

Clusters are similar objects which are found grouped together. In archaeology, this may be specifically within an identified site, or in a chronological, landscape or geographical location. There are a variety of clustering methods, such as statistical measures and graphical

(Aldenderfer 1982:62). The method used in this thesis is graphical via scatterplots, graphs and maps to illustrate the results, as well as discussing previous archaeological surveys to provide context for these. Past archaeological surveys provide information on the spatial organisation of the sites and the environment they were located in, which helps to better understand their significance. Understanding the context of previous archaeological surveys provides useful information that can help with the interpretation of current research and help guide future studies. For the purpose of this thesis, the parameters used in defining a cluster included chronological and geographical, the identification of cells which were of the same century (within 100 years of each other), and in the same county. An arbitrary definition of five or more cells has been defined as a 'cluster'. The analysis also discusses the patterning of gendered cells.

5.2 Darley Dale (1903)

Darley Dale (aka Francesca M. Steele), recorded 176 anchorite cells, and one probable cell in 33 counties (see Figure 18). Dale discussed documents for the ceremony for enclosing anchorites, and their daily life once enclosed. Of these, 119 were able to be dated (Figure 19). Although outside the timespan of this thesis, the earliest cell recorded by Dale was constructed for an anchorite who was enclosed in the fifth century in Gloucestershire. The numbers increased from this time onwards, until the fifteenth century when 38 anchorites were enclosed. The majority of anchorites recorded by Dale were enclosed in England (see Figure 20), with Hertfordshire and Northamptonshire having the most consistent numbers between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries.

Dale's chronology suggests a higher enclosure rate in the fifteenth century in the areas of Devon, Durham, Gloucestershire, Hertfordshire, Kent, Lincolnshire, Middlesex, Northamptonshire, Northumberland, Norfolk, Nottinghamshire, Sussex, and York. With the exception of Devon, Kent, Middlesex and Sussex, these cells are located in the mid to northern part of England.



Figure 18: Location of dateable cells recorded by Darley Dale 1903.

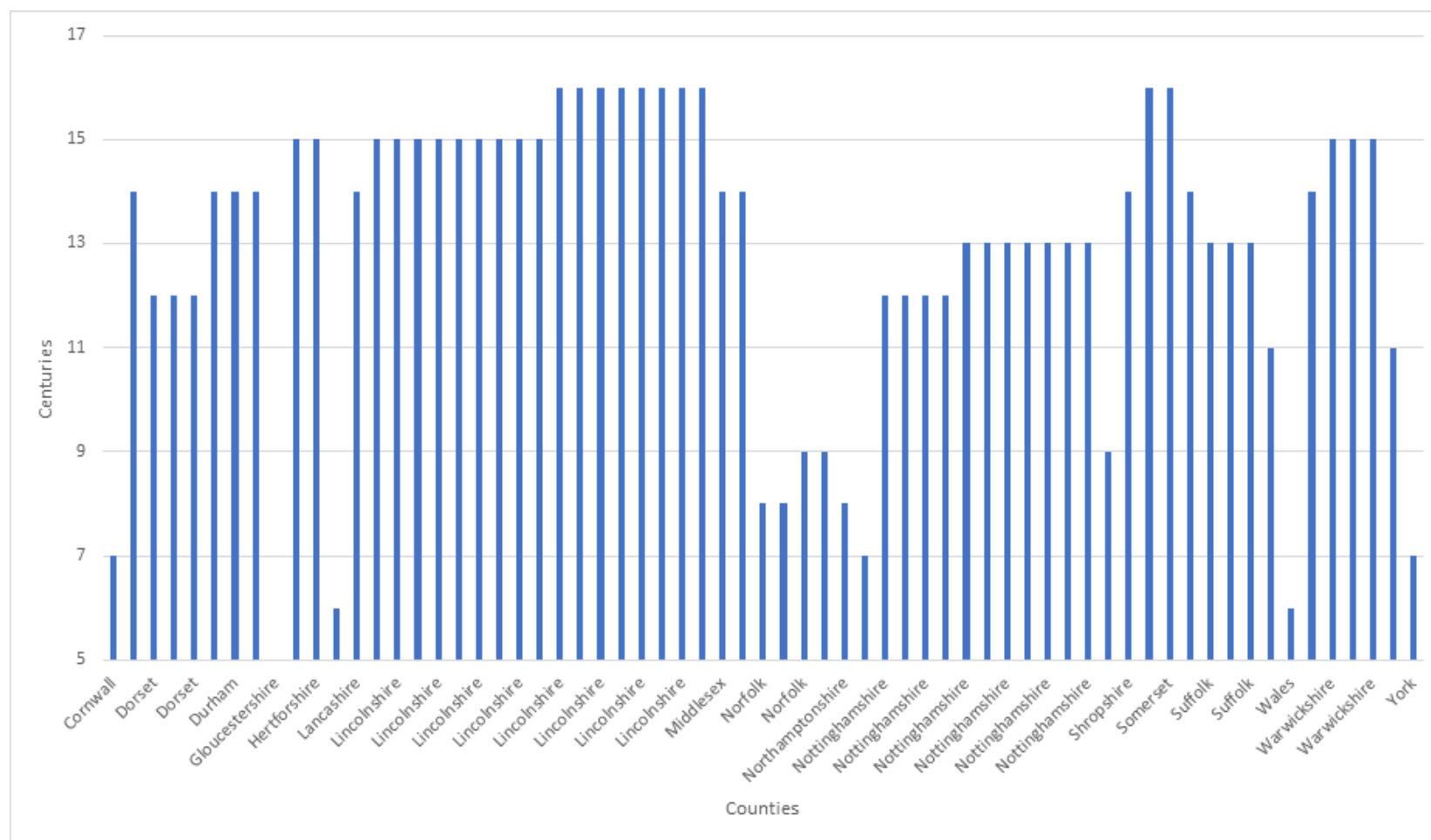


Figure 19: Time span of anchorite cells recorded by Darley Dale (1903).

Over the period of Dale’s research, from the fifth to the sixteenth century, cells emerged in the counties of Norfolk, Northumberland and Yorkshire. The highest number of dated cells Dale recorded were 33 in Norfolk, 12 in Northumberland and 13 in Yorkshire.

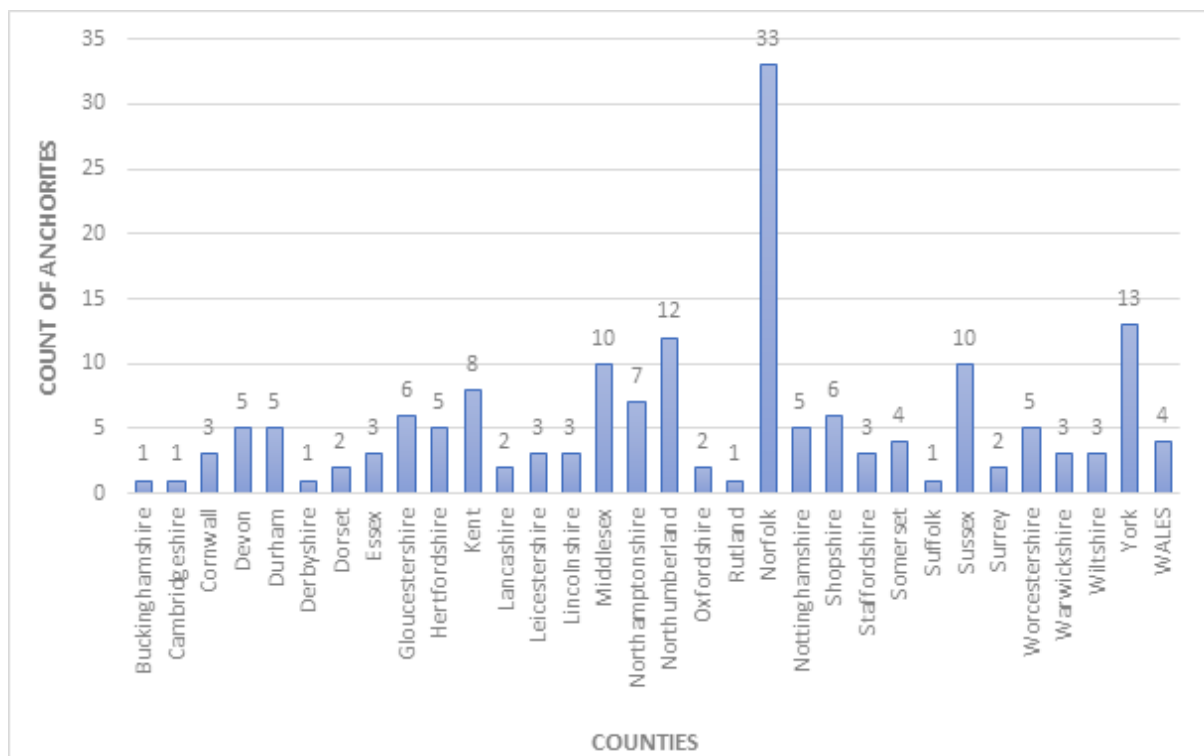


Figure 20: Anchorite cells by county as recorded by Darley Dale 1903.

Gendered Distribution of Cells

Figures 21 and 22 show Dale’s data broken down by sex. This indicates an extremely similar percentage of male/female cells (42% male to 40% female). The male count includes two hermits of unknown dates: these are Sir Bertrum of Bortral, a knight who was a recluse in Warkworth Hermitage, and Werstan, who resided in Malvern in an oratory. These were the only two hermits in Dale’s table of English recluses, and Dale includes them in her count of anchorites and anchoresses (1903:25), which may suggest that she was proposing that they

were in fact enclosed recluses. Although Dale used the term hermit, these men may fit more relevantly under the umbrella of anchorite. Even with these two 'hermits' removed, cells for male anchorites still constitute a slightly higher percentage than those for female.

There are 32 cells for anchorites with unknown sex. This is a considerable number, and there is no evidence to assist with apportioning these to either sex. Dale notes at the end of her work that there were a number of anchoresses residing at the Church of the Holy Cross in Polton, near Devon, who were mentioned by Mabillion, a seventeenth-century French monk and scholar. Unfortunately, Mabillion did not record a precise number, only the fact that there were 'many' anchoresses living there. We must therefore take this into account when calculating Dale's sex ratio, and, as such, conclude that there may have been more females enclosed over the period of her research. Dale stated that, even "if we put this number as low as four it will make the number of anchoresses in excess of the anchorites, which we believe to be correct" (Dale 1903:251). In effect, Dale is confirming that she believed there were more female anchorites than male, after the addition of the anchoresses which resided in Polton, Devon.

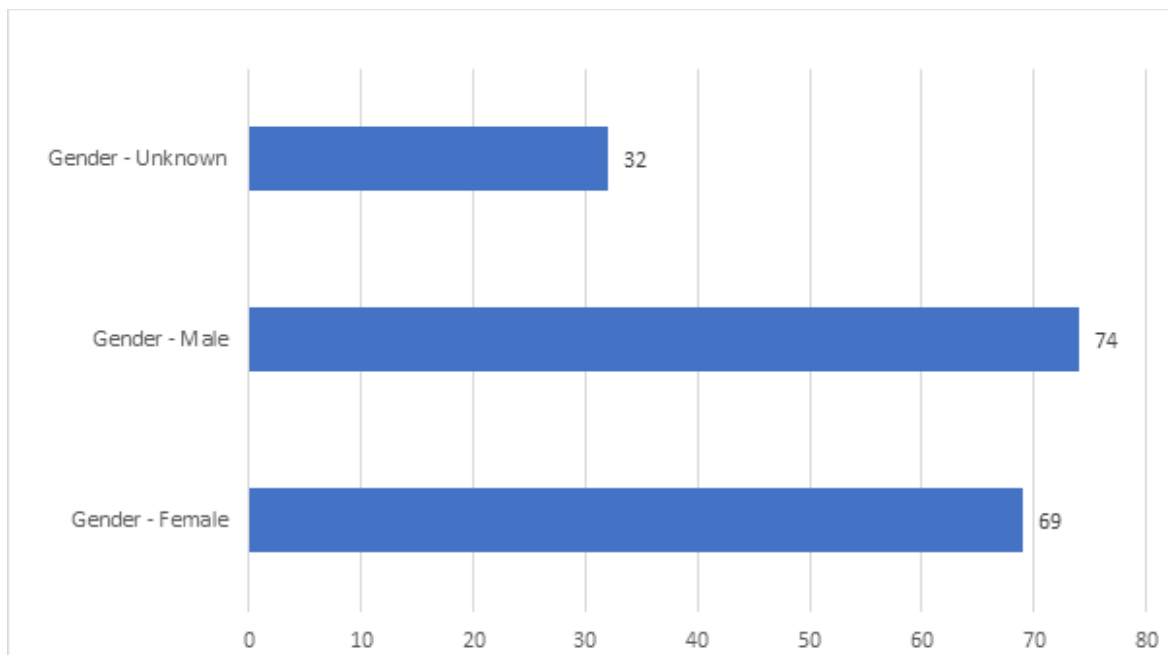


Figure 20: Count of gender sex of anchorites in datable cells as recorded by Darley Dale 1903.

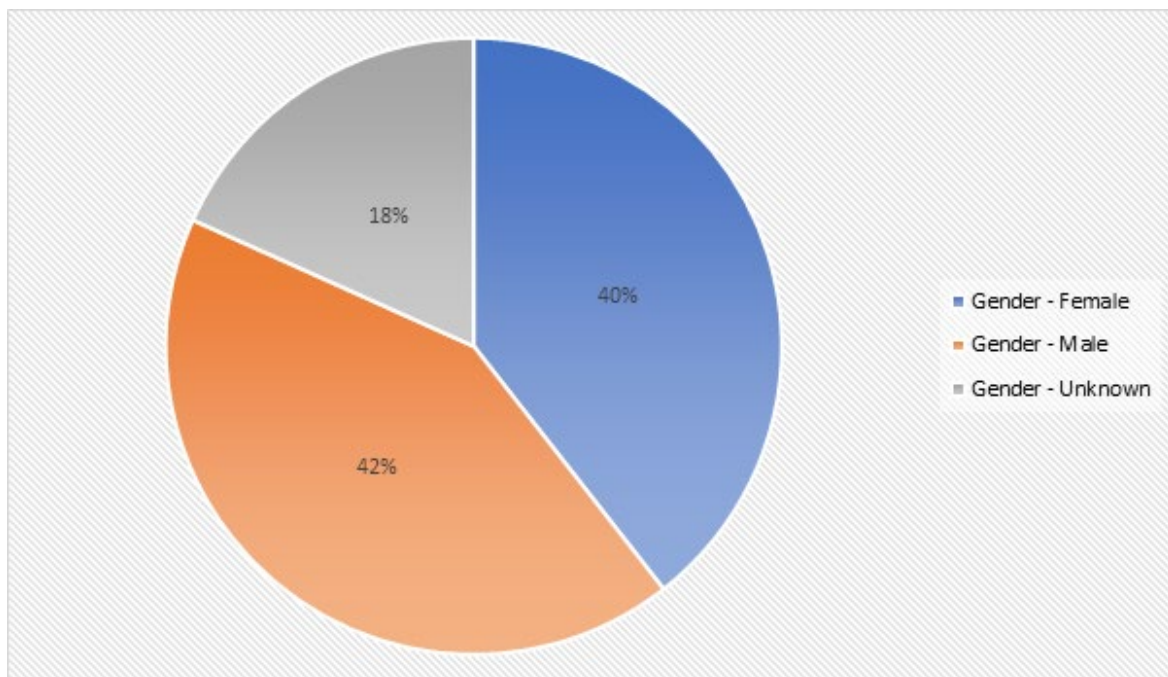


Figure 22: Percentage of female/male/unknown ratio of anchorites between the fifth and sixteenth century as recorded by Darley Dale 1903. Rotha Mary Clay (1914)

Rotha Mary Clay recorded 400 anchorite cells in 34 counties of England (see Figure 23), as well as cells in four unidentified counties, but no cells in Wales. The dates of cells recorded by Clay are given in Figure 24. This reveals that, of the 400 cells, 304 could be dated. Additionally, there were 37 recorded as neither hermit nor anchorite and five cells recorded as both hermit and anchorite.

Of those identified as anchorite cells, the earliest cell recorded by Clay was constructed for an anchorite who was enclosed in the tenth century in Yorkshire, followed by one in Worcestershire during the eleventh century. Numbers expanded in the twelfth century to 29, and continued to rise until the fifteenth century, when 97 anchorites were enclosed, falling to only 19 enclosures in the sixteenth century. Middlesex, Norfolk and Yorkshire had the most consistent numbers between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Clay's chronology suggests a higher enclosure rate in the fifteenth century in the areas of Cambridgeshire, Cornwall, Devonshire, Essex, Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Hertfordshire, Kent, Lancashire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Middlesex, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Northumberland, Nottinghamshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Sussex, Wiltshire and Yorkshire. These cells are spread throughout England (see Figures 24 & 25).



Figure 21: Location of dateable cells recorded by Rotha Mary Clay 1914

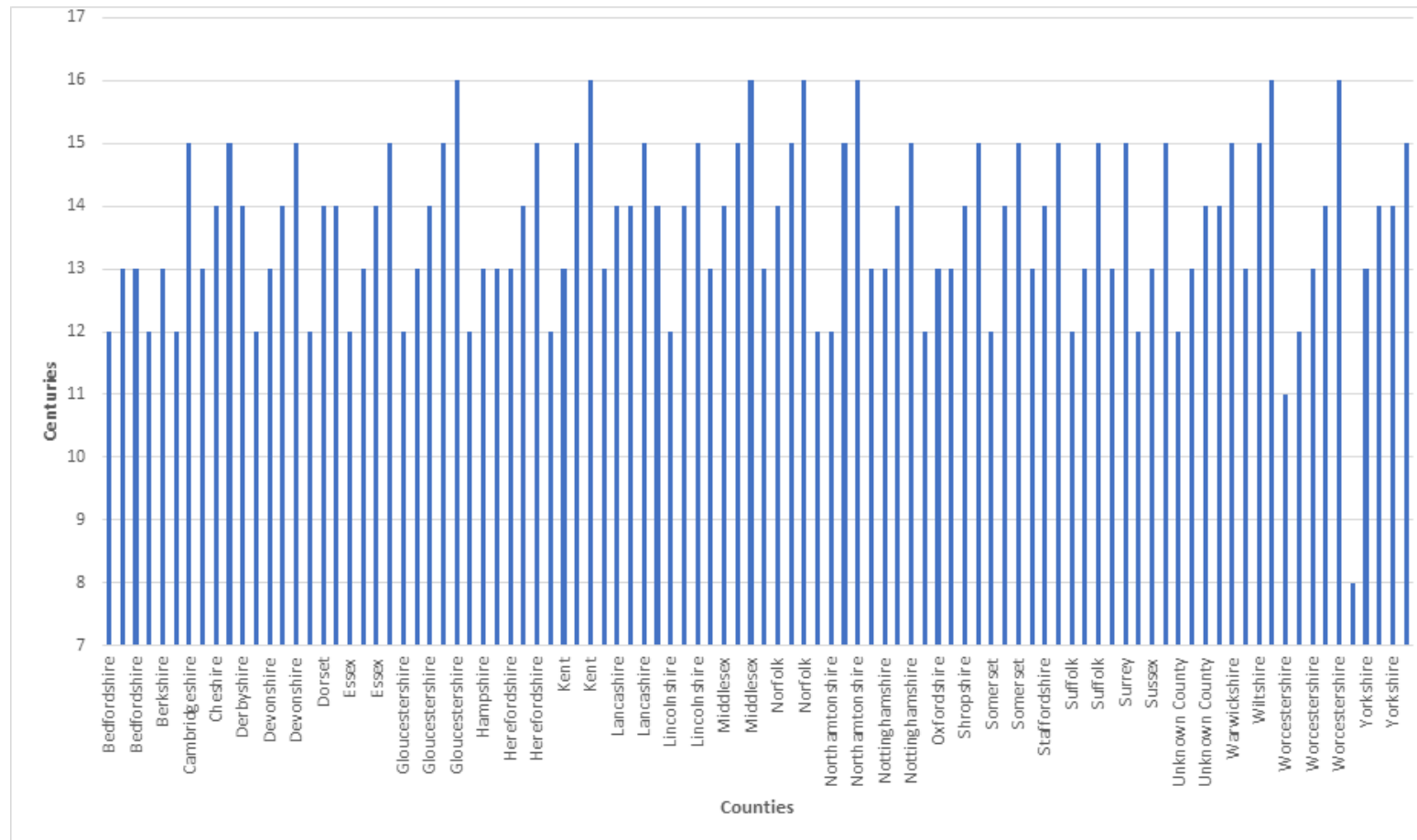


Figure 22: Time span of anchorite cells as recorded by Rotha Mary Clay 1914.

As with Dale's research, Clay's also points to high numbers of cells in Norfolk and Yorkshire, as well as Middlesex.

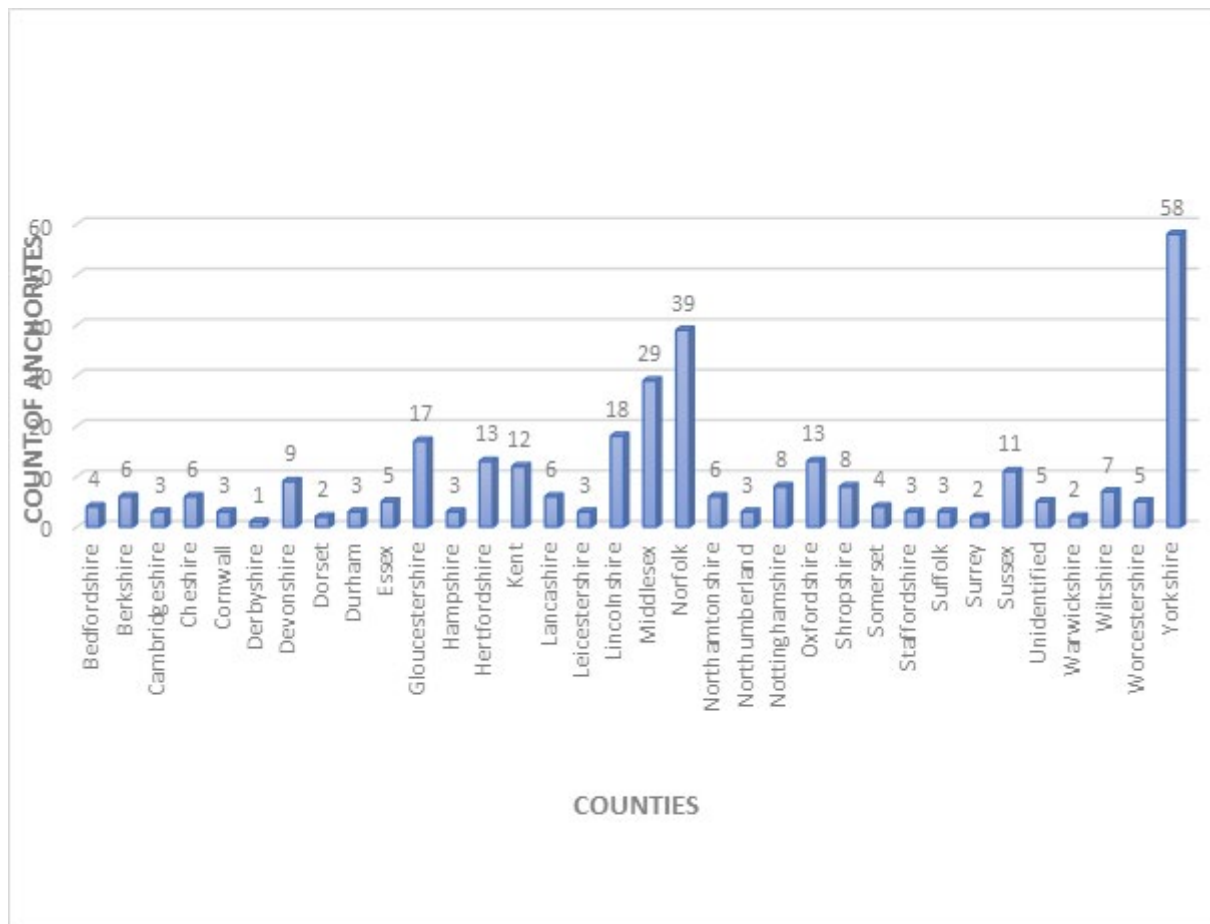


Figure 23: Anchorite clusters by county as recorded by Rotha Mary Clay 1914.

Gendered Distribution of Cells

Figures 25 and 26 show the distribution of cells recorded by Clay according to sex. This shows a much higher ratio of female cells (45%) to male (20%). There are, however, 105 cells (35%) with no record of the sex of their inhabitant, and which therefore must be excluded from any such analysis.

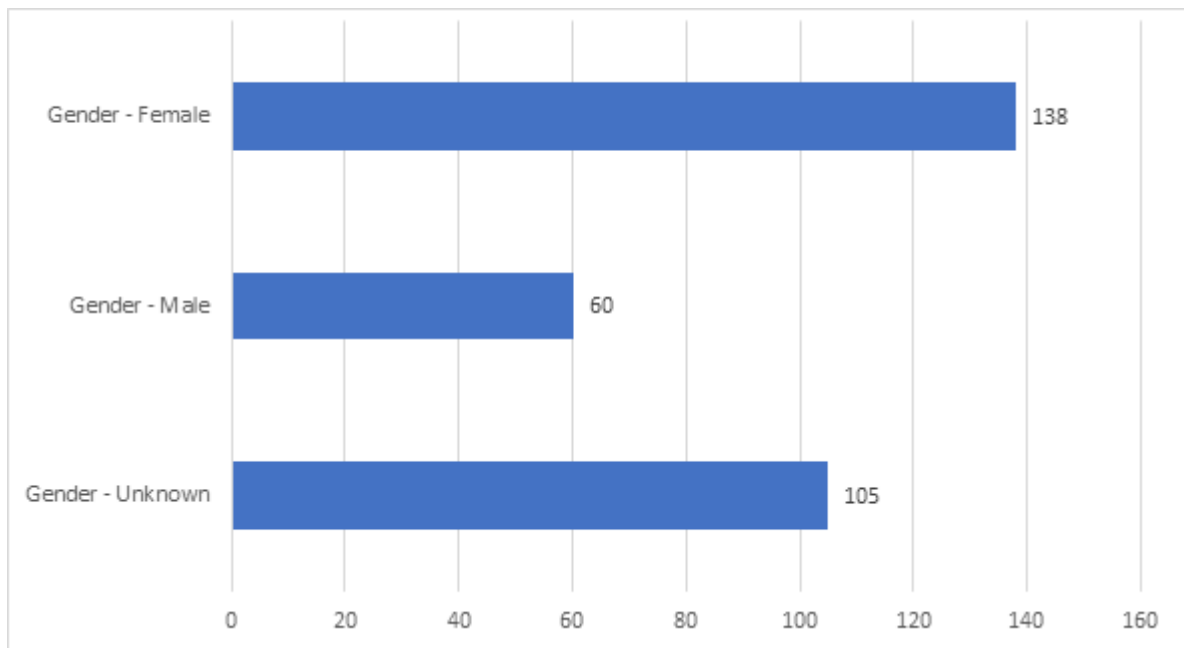


Figure 24: Count of the sex of anchorites as recorded by Rotha Mary Clay 1914.

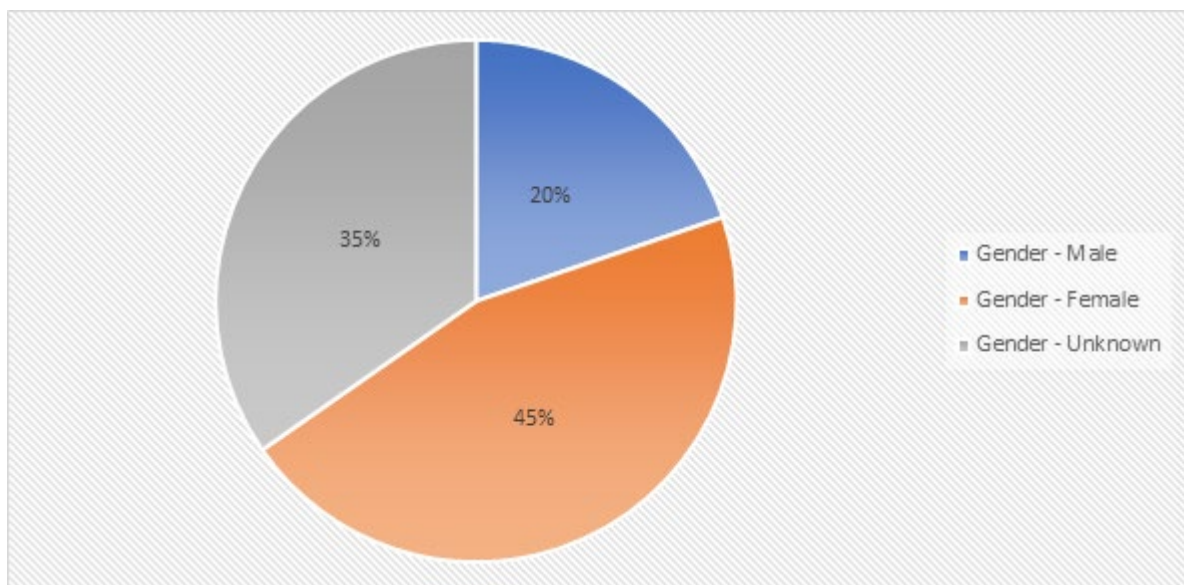


Figure 26: Percentage of female/male/unknown ratio of anchorite cells as recorded by Rotha Mary Clay 1914.

Of the 37 cells which Clay recorded as neither hermit nor anchorite more than half (54%) had no sex recorded for their recluse. Only thirty-eight percent of these cells were known to have been constructed for a male inhabitant and 8% for a female. Unfortunately, it cannot be assumed that any of these cells were for anchorites, therefore they have been excluded from analysis. The five cells which Clay recorded as both hermit and anchorite were for two women and two men, with one for a recluse of unknown sex. Because of the uncertainty over the precise nature of the inhabitants in these cells, these too are excluded from the analysis.

5.3 Ann Warren (1984)

Warren recorded 780 cells in 37 counties from the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries (Figure 27), all of which were in England and all of which could be dated. Warren did not record any Welsh anchorite cells. Unfortunately, the only details Warren recorded were county, sex, and century. No details of the date of enclosure, name of the church, location or other contextual information were recorded. Nonetheless, relevant patterning can be extracted from these data. Warren's research suggests that the highest enclosure rate (214 cells), took place in the fourteenth century (see Figure 28). Unfortunately, as Warren only recorded the centuries in her data and did not record the exact dates, the earliest and latest dates of enclosure are unable to be determined more precisely. The highest number of cells in any one county during this period was 53 in the county of Worcestershire, followed by Suffolk with 38 cells (see Figure 29).



Figure 25: Map of the counties recorded by Anne Warren (1984) as having cells between the twelfth to the sixteenth century.

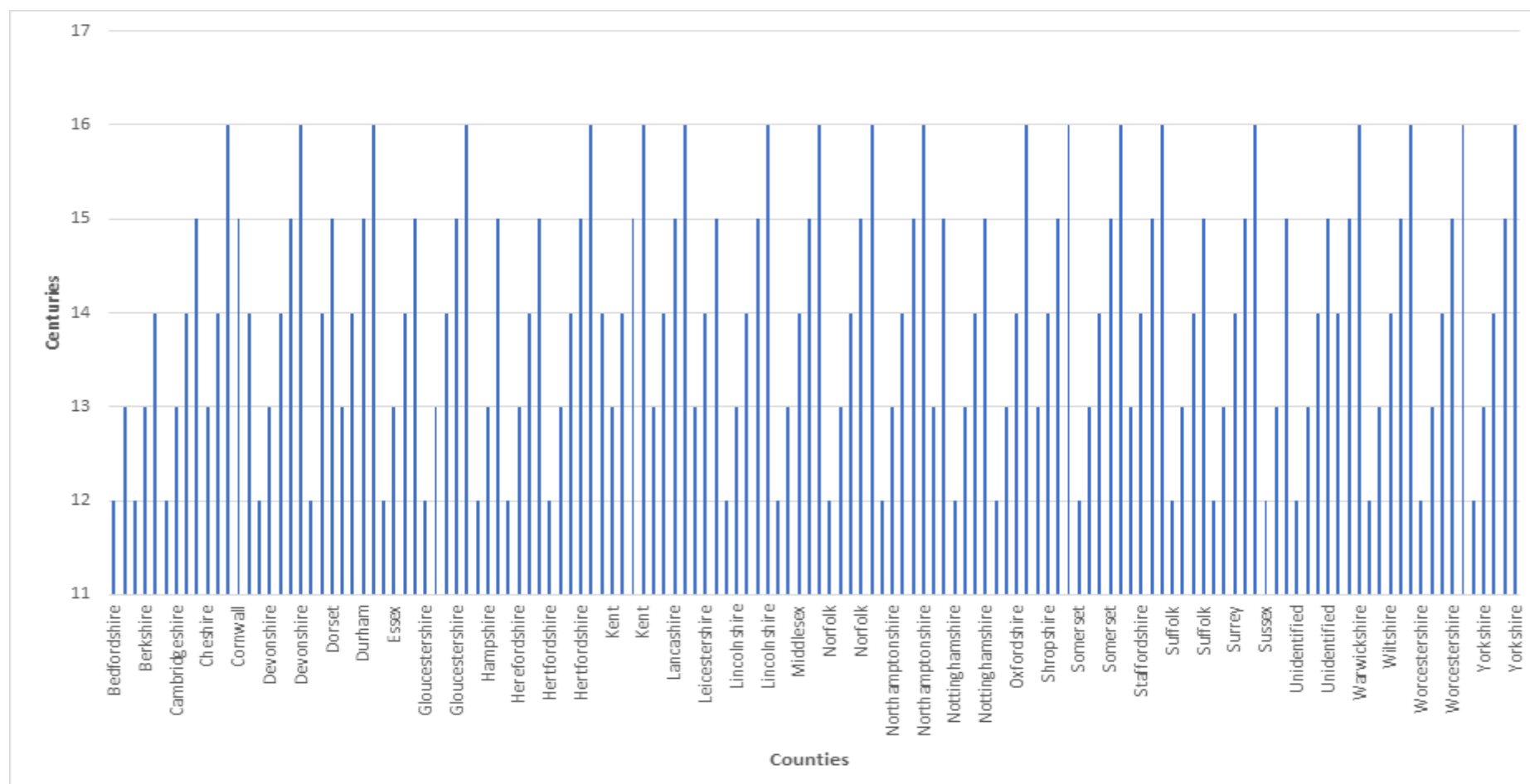


Figure 26: Anchorite clusters by county as recorded by Ann Warren 1984.

Warren's research confirms both Dale's and Clay's, who also noted a higher number of cells in Norfolk and Middlesex.

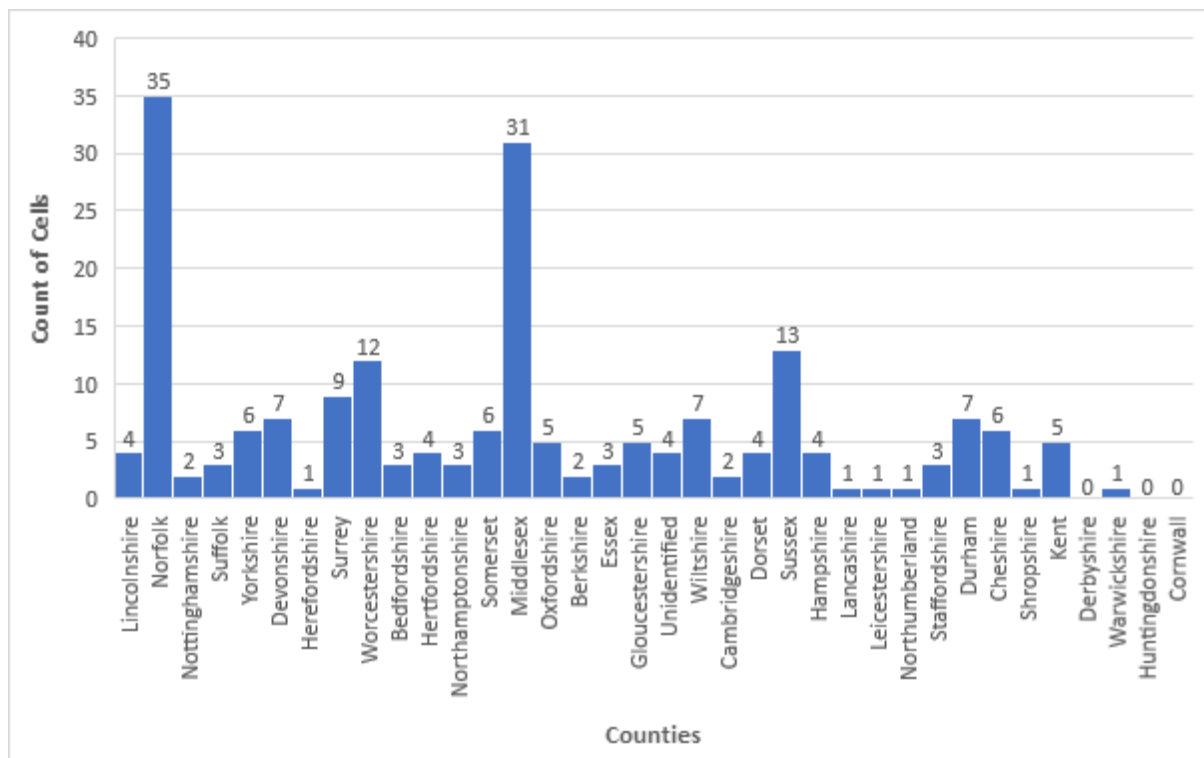


Figure 27: Anchorite clusters by county as recorded by Ann Warren 1984.

Gendered Distribution of Cells

Figures 29 and 30 show the distribution of cells recorded by Warren according to sex. This shows a much higher ratio of cells for female anchorites (53%) compared to males (26%), although it also shows a significant percentage of cells with an inhabitant of unknown sex (21%). Again, all cells that could not be identified to an anchorite of either sex have been excluded from this analysis (albeit they are included in the imaged figures to indicate the number of unknowns).

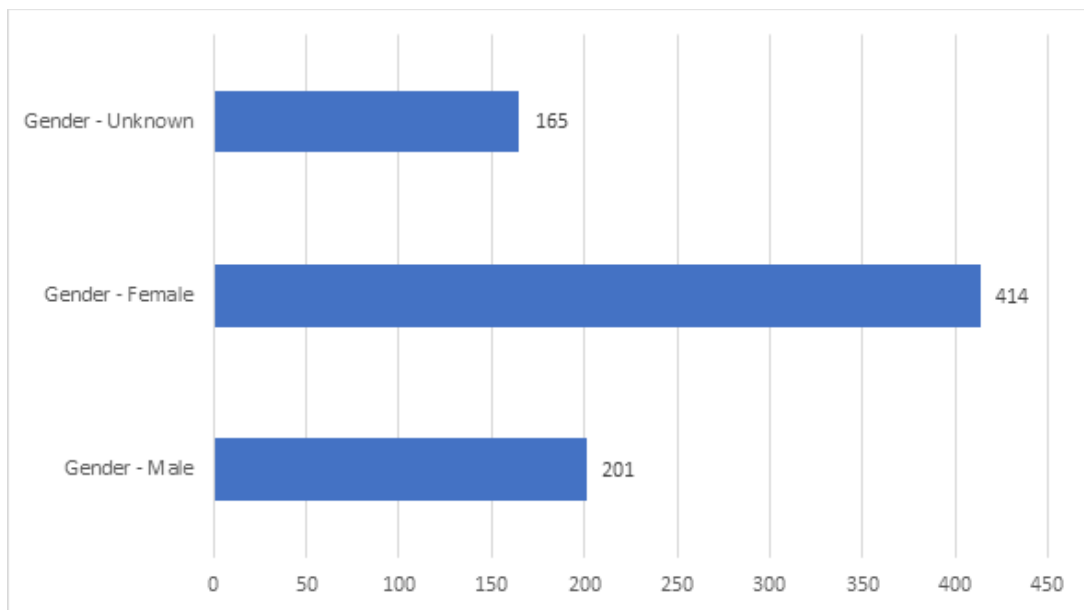


Figure 28: Count of the sex of anchorites as recorded by Ann Warren 1984.

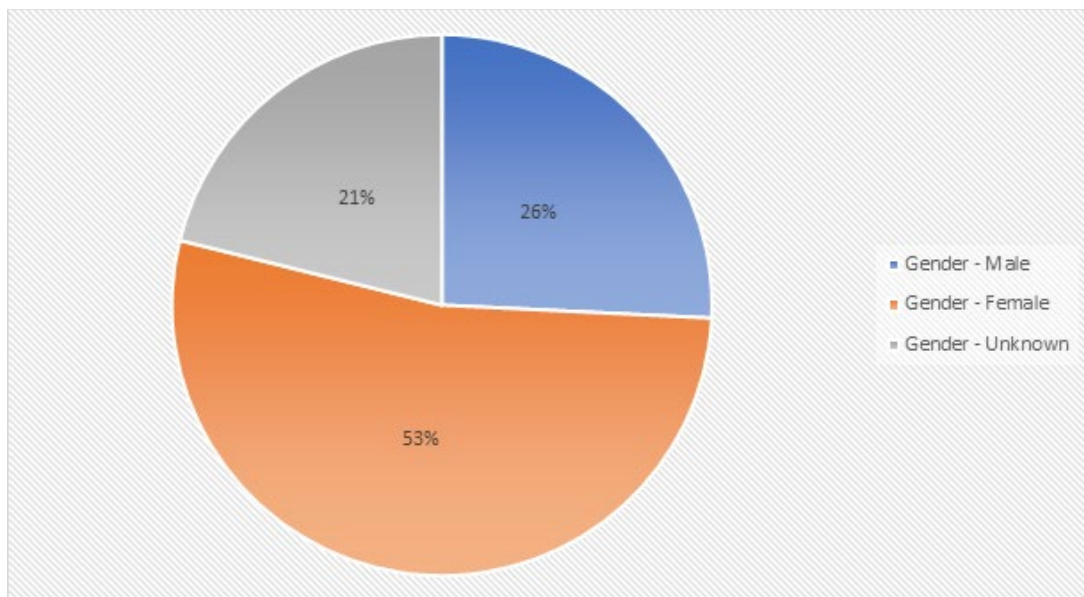


Figure 29: Percentage of female/male/unknown ratio of anchorites as recorded by Ann Warren 1984

There are 165 cells recorded for anchorites with unknown sex. Once again, this is a considerable number, and there is no evidence to assist with apportioning these to either sex.

5.4 Eddie Jones 1998, 2005

Jones's revision of Clay's data focused only on cells in Oxfordshire (Jones 1998), Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, and Huntingdonshire (Jones 2005). In total, Jones recorded 41 cells built in 17 locations in four counties between the twelfth and the sixteenth centuries, although he included both anchorite and hermit cells within his remit (see Figure 31).

Figure 32 shows the chronological distribution of the cells recorded by Jones. The earliest cells recorded were three from the twelfth century in Bedfordshire and Oxfordshire. His research suggests a higher enclosure rate of 16 cells in the thirteenth century, with 11 of these all being constructed in Oxfordshire.

Jones's research suggests a higher enclosure rate of 16 cells in the thirteenth century, with 11 being constructed in the county of Oxfordshire.

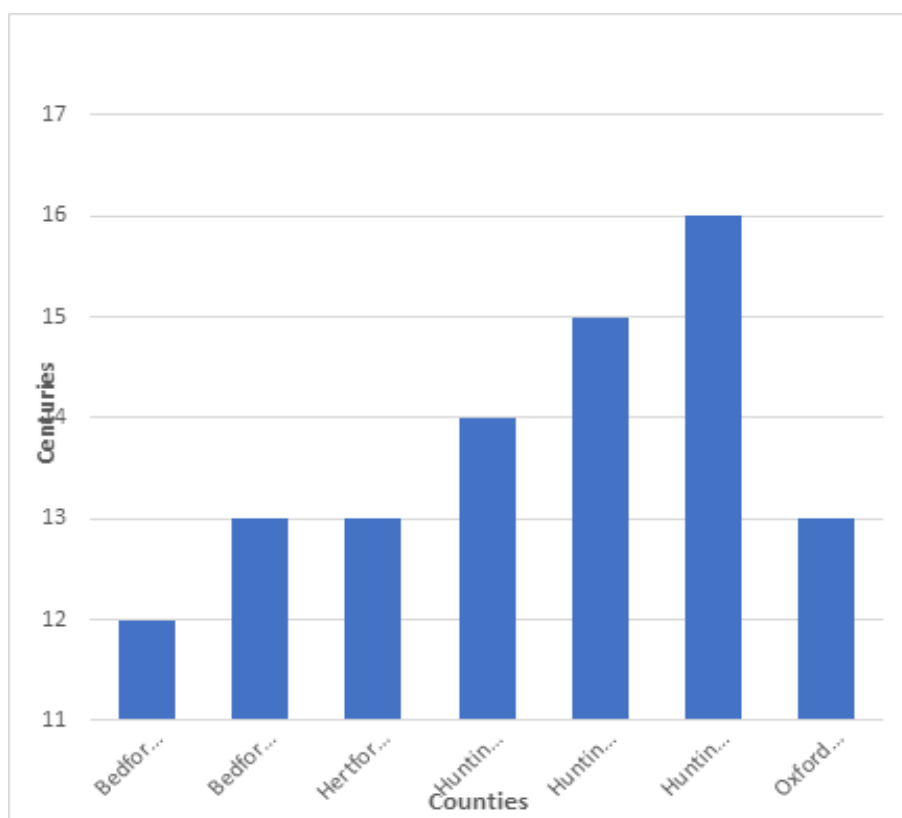


Figure 30: Time span of anchorite cells as recorded by Eddie Jones 1998, 2005.

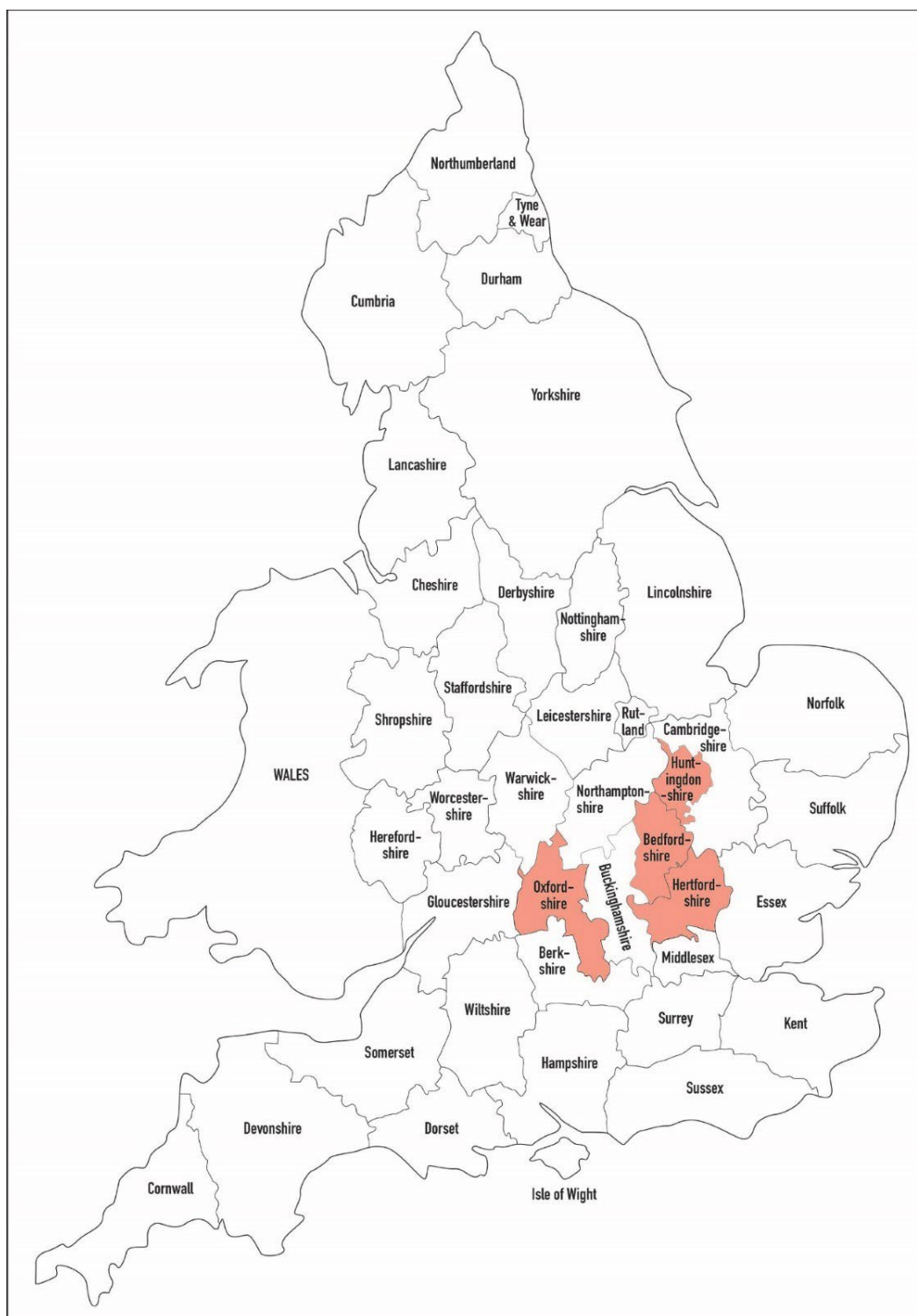


Figure 31: Map of the counties recorded by Eddie Jones (1998,2005) as having cells between the twelfth to the sixteenth century.

Jones recorded the highest number of cells in the counties of Hertfordshire and Oxfordshire, with 18 cells in Hertfordshire and 17 in Oxfordshire (see Figure 33).

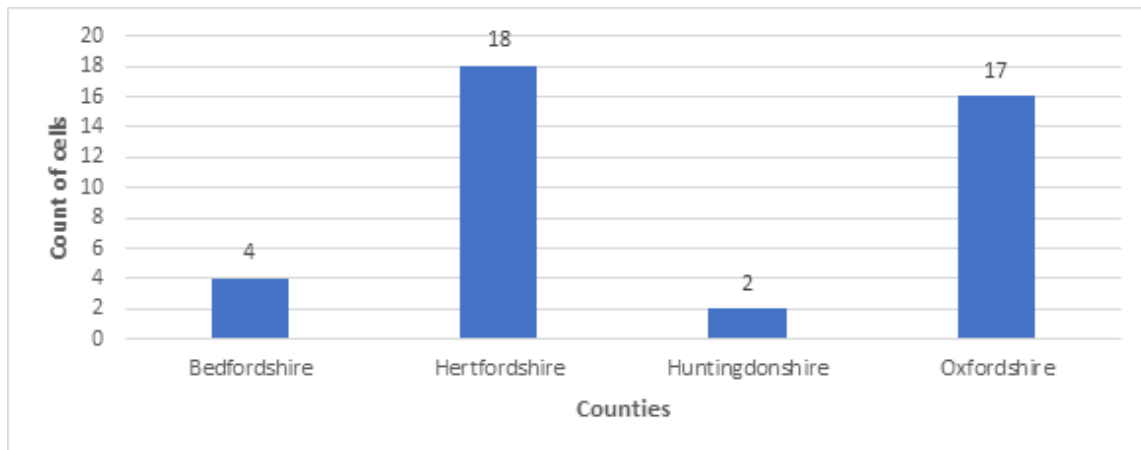


Figure 32: Anchorite clusters by county as recorded by Eddie Jones 1998, 2005.

Gendered Distribution of Cells

Figures 34 and 35 show the distribution of anchorites by sex in 17 locations. This indicates much higher frequency of cells for female anchorites (54%) compared to males (29%) and a smaller percentage of cells with an inhabitant of unknown sex (17%).

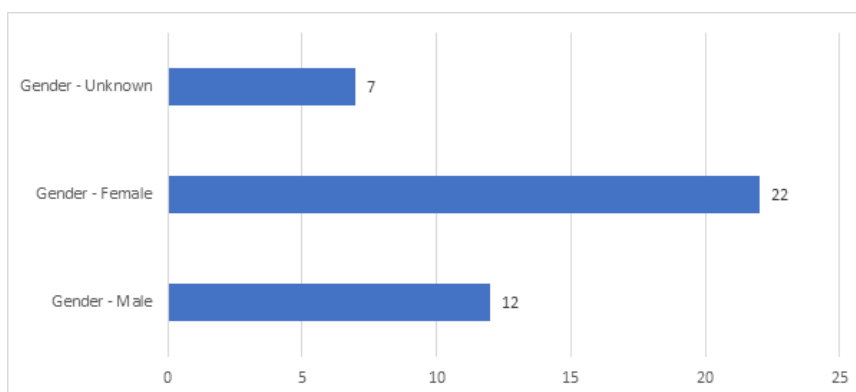


Figure 33: Count of the sex of anchorites as recorded by Eddie Jones 1998, 2005.

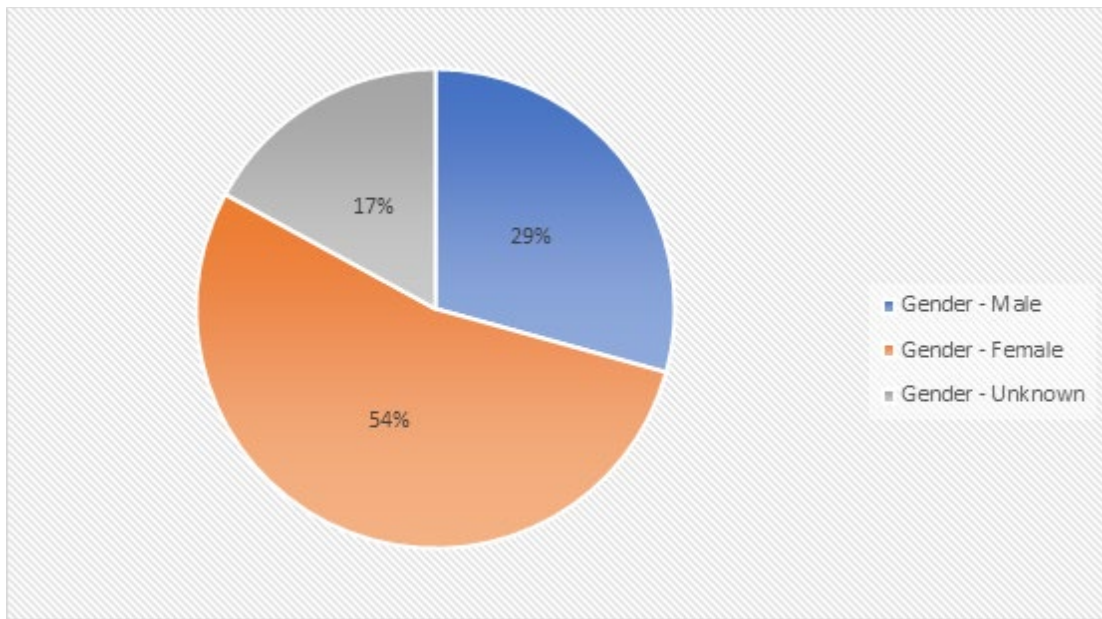


Figure 34: Percentage of female/male/unknown ratio of anchorites as recorded by Eddie Jones 1998, 2005.

5.5 Combined Patterning in Anchorite Cells

The various limitations of these datasets discussed in Chapter 4 mean that combined patterns can be explored using only Dale's, Clay's, and Jones' data. Dale recorded 88 dated cells, Clay 304, but only in England, as well as five dated anchorite cells in unidentified counties. The overlap between Jones and Dale includes two anchorite cells which are also recorded in Clay's dataset. Jones does not mention any cells in Wales, nor does he refer to Dale's 1903 dataset. All datasets recorded the county, however only 679 out of the 927 cells (duplicates removed) recorded a sex for the enclosed anchorite. Nonetheless, these data allow a gross tier assessment of the level of anchorite activity throughout the Middle Ages in England and Wales and show various occupancy and other patterns.

The Chronological and Spatial Distribution of Anchorite Cells

The geographical distribution can be seen in Figure 36. The collated and combined datasets of Dale, Clay, and Jones, (Warren is shown is the amalgamated dataset for completion, but the data not used in the combined analysis for reasons as discussed), show that, although the anchorite phenomenon started as early as the fifth century, it peaked in the sixteenth century in England (see Figures 37), giving the movement a period of over 1000 years from inception to destruction by Henry VIII and the Reformation.

Geographically, of all the counties in which cells have been recorded, six emerge as consistently having higher numbers of cells than others. These are: Norfolk, Northumberland, Yorkshire, Middlesex, Hertfordshire and Oxfordshire (see Figure 37). Each of these counties was important economically and politically in its own way, meaning that each possessed advantages that could have attracted enclosures.

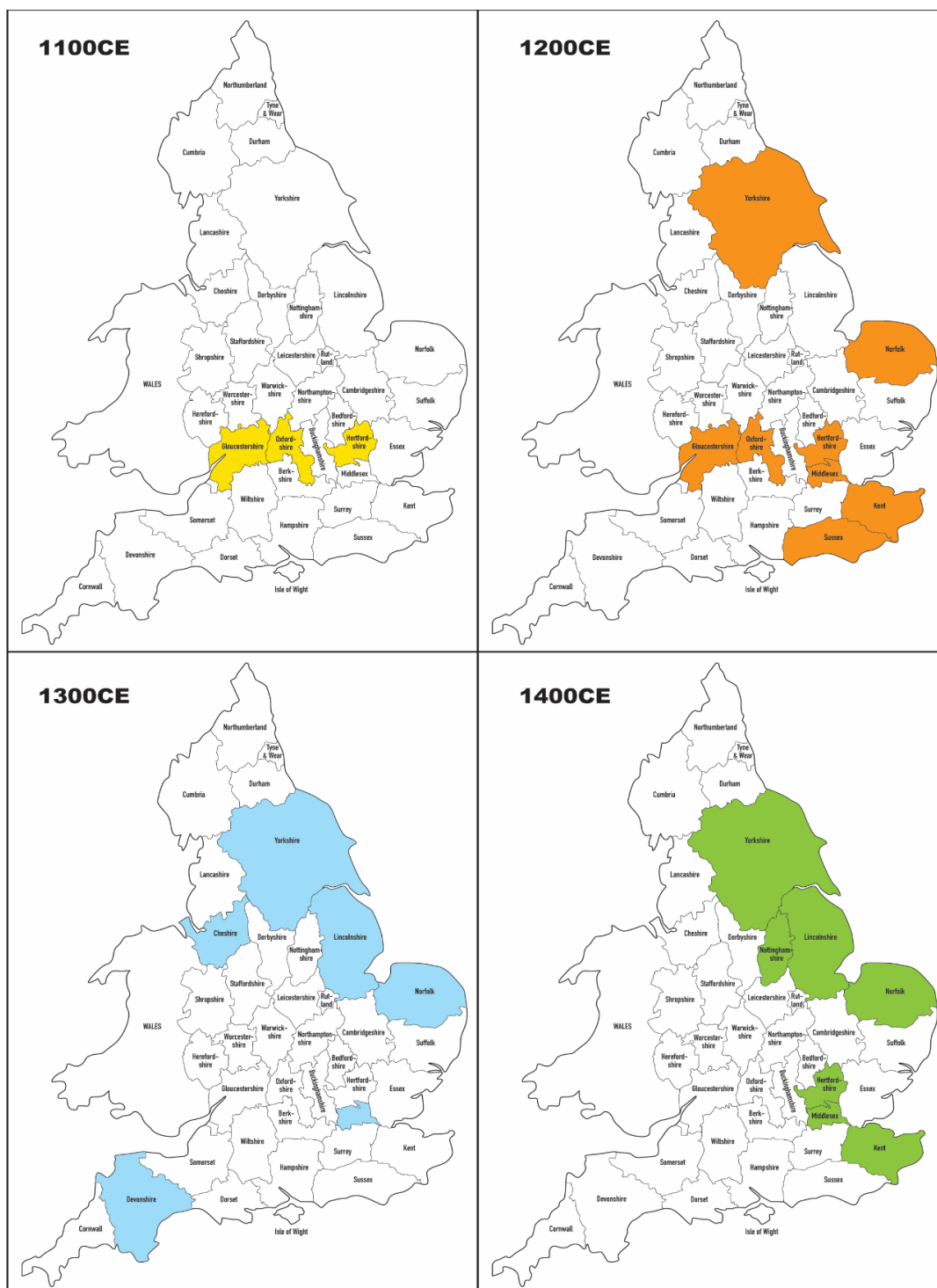


Figure 35: Geographical distribution of clusters (of 5 cells and over) by century and county. Combined datasets of Dale, Clay, Warren, and Jones.

The counties in which only one anchorite cell have been recorded are Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Derbyshire, Rutland, and Suffolk. Their main growth started from approximately the ninth century, but they began to decline in the fourteenth century, with the main reason being a downwards shift in the agricultural economy and then, consequently, the abandonment of villages to make way for pastures for livestock. The Black Death too was to blame for many village and town desertions (Dobson 2000:271-290; Taylor-Moore 2007:5-6), although this was not solely in these counties. Rutland was the smallest county in England, yet from the twelfth century was well known as a hunting county. The fourteenth century saw its popularity increase due to sheep farming (Page 1935:27, 29). Similar to other most agrarian communities, Suffolk faced a series of unfortunate events. With not only famine in the fourteenth century between 1315-1322, but also the Black Death (1349) and Peasants' Revolt of 1381, which had arisen from the heavy taxes placed on the peasantry brought about by the economic and social changes of the Black Death, the county experienced significant challenges. These disruptions, and uncertainty would have prevented or in the very least halted new anchorite enclosures in these counties (Bailey 2010:176-203).

The plague contributed to the decline of trust in the Church. Religious perspectives changed not only in England but also in Europe as a result of people becoming disappointed that prayer could not save the sick and dying. Because of the clergy were frequently given the task for caring for the afflicted, there were many more religious dying of the plague than the general public. This caused a huge decline in the ecclesiastical population and the decline in the standard of clerical services. It was recorded that Norwich alone lost 50% of their clergy in

1349, which culminated in the loss of four of its parishes. It is not known if any of the parishes which were lost in Norwich or indeed throughout England had an anchorite attached to the church. However, if this was the case, there must have been flow-on effects, such as in the provision of food, general care or counsel for the anchorite (Aberth 2000; 125,272; Blomefield and Parkin 1805-10:366). There are no known records of anchorites who were victims of the plague.

Despite these disruptions, there are records of anchorite enclosures in both Rutland and Suffolk. In fact, there are records of anchorite enclosures in all counties in England during times of famine and disease. This suggests that the anchorites were not deterred by such events, and though most were self-financed - the wealthy being able to support themselves, while the less wealthy looked to “outside sources” (Warren 1985:42), they were able to further find support before and during their enclosure in the form of patronage, regardless of the economic hardships the country was suffering.

Norfolk was a minted county, with the ability to strike its own coins from the tenth century, and as such was a hive of commercial activity, creating both wealth and a large population (Bloomfield 1805:131-132, Hillen 1907:52-53, Norfolk Heritage explorer – online records 2007 – Parish Summary, Norfolk Heritage Explorer – online records 2007 – Monument Records). This commercial hive and wealth may have given more support to the anchorites which were enclosed in the county, through the alms and gifts which they may have received by travellers to and from the county and its populace. Based on records held by English Heritage (English

Heritage 2022:online), the National Trust (National Trust 2022:online) and Landmark Trust (Landmark Trust 2022:online), c.89 monasteries and nine nunneries were founded in Norfolk between the eighth to the fourteenth centuries, including one double house, with c. 31 monasteries and one nunnery founded in the thirteenth century.

Northumberland prospered from the production of wool and crafts, such as leather and general textile manufacturing (Tillott 1961:84-91). There were four moneyers able to mint coin located in Oxford in the early Middle Ages, more than any other county except London, making it “one of the largest towns in England, exceeded in size only by London, York, Norwich, Lincoln and Winchester” (Chance et al. 1979:10).

In the twelfth century York had become a commercial centre, particularly in wool trading, and was known as the ecclesiastical capital of northern England (Tillott 1961:25-29, Yorkshire Museum and Gallery Trust 2021). York first became an archbishopric in 735 CE, with Egbert, or Ecbert (d. 766 CE), who belonged to the Northumbrian royal family, holding the first northern archbishop’s post. Two of the largest monasteries in England, Fountains Abbey and Rievaulx Abbey, both Cistercian, were founded in Yorkshire. Both created a large network of estates, which in turn provided sizable income streams. Yorkshire contained slightly more religious houses, with 97 known monasteries and c. 25 nunneries being founded between the seventh and fourteenth centuries, including one double house in the twelfth and one in the seventh century.

Middlesex was an ecclesiastical county, as well as a commercial hub. The Bishop of London recorded five religious houses in the thirteenth century (between 1244 and 1259 CE), including the “nunneries of Stratford at Bow and Kilburn”, and the leper hospitals of Enfield, Hammersmith, Highgate, Kingsland, Knightsbridge, Mile End, St James, Westminster, and St Giles-in-the-fields (Cockburn et al. 1969:152-155). There were also the nunneries of Haliwald and St Mary, Clerkenwell, and priories including Hounslow Priory and the Priory of St John of Jerusalem, Clerkenhall (Cockburn et al. 1969:152-155).

Hertfordshire’s first enclosure was recorded in the tenth century and thus is one of the oldest enclosures in England. This county borders on London and as a result may have had many travellers going through on their way to London (Britannica 2017). Locating anchorite cells in or around major medieval cities or towns suggests that, in planning their enclosure, the anchorite, either by themselves or at the suggestion of the enclosing Bishop, may have sought a cell which provided more support from the community. If the cell was positioned in a major city or town with a high population in which commerce, trading and travellers frequented, this would suggest that the anchorite and/or church would be given more alms in exchange for his/her prayers. In short, wealth, and trade may have provided monetary advantages in the form of alms and gifts of food and clothing for the recluse and their associated supporters.

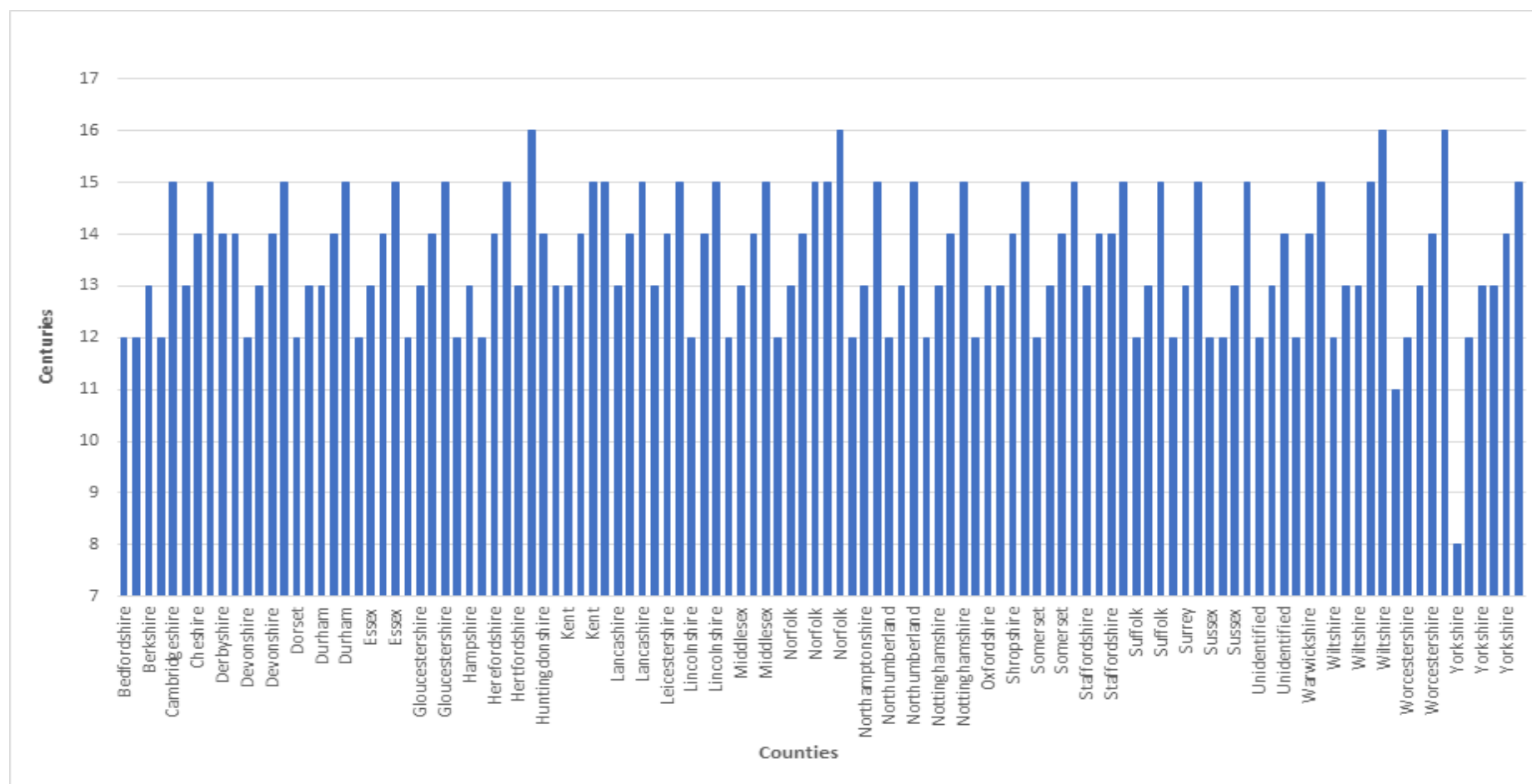


Figure 36: Combined data showing chronological distribution of cells.

It is also possible that the rate of cell enclosures may be due to the quantity of religious houses in each of the areas from which at least some of the recluses may have originated.

5.6 Religious Houses and Clusters

Religious houses were typically located close to major cities and towns. David Knowles and Richard Hadcock (1953) compiled an extensive dataset of medieval religious houses in England and Wales, which this thesis has analysed alongside the combined datasets of Dale, Clay, and Jones (Warren not included) to demonstrate spatial and chronological similarities. Knowles and Hadcock's data are divided according to the various orders of formal and non-formal religious.

Table 7 shows the male and female religious Houses which are recorded in this dataset.

Male Religious Houses	Female Religious Houses
The Benedictines	Benedictine Nuns
The Order of Frontevrault Order of Tiron	Cluniac Nuns
The Grandmontines	Cistercian Nuns
Cistercian Abbeys	Augustinian Canonesses
Cistercian Dependencies	Sisters of O&J
Carthusians	Premonstratensian Canonesses
Augustinian Canons	Dominican Nuns

Premonstratensian Canons	Franciscan Nuns
Gilbertine Priors	
Houses of Gilbertines	
Priests & Brothers in Nunneries	
Abbey of Bridgettines	
Houses of Bonshommes Trinitarians	
Dominican Houses	
Franciscan Houses	
Carmelite Houses	
Austin Friars	
Crutched Friars	
Friars of the Sack	
Knights Templars	
Knights Hospitallers	

Table 7: Male and Female Religious House of England and Wales. Adapted from Knowles and Hadock 1953.

Each religious house is shown in its county and the century it was founded, together with the number and sex of anchorites known to have existed in that county and century between c. 1000 – 1500 CE. Proposed relationships here are generic, since the exact geographical location of the cells in relation to these religious houses is unknown. Appendix VI shows the

religious house data alongside clusters of anchorite cells (five or more). Table 8 shows the locations of the largest clusters:

Date and religious order/house	Total number and sex breakdown of enclosed anchorites
Thirteenth Century:	
Cistercian Dependencies North Yorkshire	24: 10 females, 3 males, 11 unknown
Fourteenth Century:	24: 6 females, 6 males, 12 unknown
Benedictine Monks West Yorkshire	
Cluniac Houses West Yorkshire	26: 11 females, 4 males, 12 unknown
The Grandmontines North Yorkshire	28: 12 females, 5 males, 1 unknown
Carthusians North Yorkshire	25: 8 females, 5 males, 12 unknown
East Yorkshire	20: 12 females, 1 male, 7 unknown
Fifteenth Century:	22: 10 females, 12 males
Benedictine Monks Norfolk	
Augustinian Canon Norfolk	26: 15 females, 11 males

Table 8: Clusters of anchorite cells in relation to religious houses in same country and century. Adapted from Knowles and Hadock 1953 and amalgamated dataset (Appendices VII and IV).

The results highlight the high number of anchorite cells between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries in Yorkshire and Norfolk, at the same time that the religious houses of the Benedictine monks, Cluniac, Grandmontines, Carthusians and Augustinians flourished. These

houses were all male religious houses, although the sex of most enclosed anchorites is unknown. More known female anchorites were known to have been enclosed in these counties than male, however.

5.7 Summary

This chapter explored the concept of clusters as a means of understanding patterning in anchorite cells over time and space. It has presented the chronological and spatial patterning of cell construction. The results suggest that the cells are not randomly distributed, but rather there are clusters that were most likely influenced by various factors such as environment, wealth, and surrounding societal and religious communities. It has provided a useful framework for understanding the complex distribution of anchorite cells. The next chapter builds on this information and provides a detailed analysis of the individual cells surveyed for this thesis.

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CHAPTER SIX

RESULTS 2: CELL CASE STUDIES

This chapter presents in-depth case studies of eight anchorite cells: seven extant cells located in England and one in Wales. These cells were selected based on their accessibility, taking into account factors such as the relevant approvals obtained from church authorities. The selection process aimed to ensure a comprehensive representative sample across different centuries and counties. By examining these anchorite cells, both through archaeological investigations and historical records, the case studies offer valuable insights into the practices and lifestyles of those enclosed. Moreover, the inclusion of detailed photographs of the relevant features of each cell in Appendix II and associated maps in Appendix X, enhances the comprehensive understanding of these case studies. The examination of the diverse features of these cells, along with the primary and secondary thesis questions, will be thoroughly explored and analysed in Chapter 7.

6.1 Selection Process and Justification

A total of 86 churches were visited across England and Wales (see Appendix I) to locate anchorite cells, given the limited availability of precise location details in historical records and scholarly datasets. As previously discussed, there were many cells recorded with little to no exact location details, and so it was necessary to visit as many churches as possible within each area to confirm if cells were present, intact and accessible. From this extensive survey,

eight extant cells were located and selected for a comprehensive examination. The selection criteria prioritised intact and accessible cells, offering a diverse representation of anchorite practices spanning the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries. It is to be noted that most of the known anchorites within these cells were male (Table 9).

Century	Location	Male	Female	Unknown Sex	Possible anchorite/s of Unknown Sex
Twelfth	Compton, Surrey	1		1	
Thirteenth	Hardam, West Sussex	2		1	
	Lewes, East Sussex		1		2
	Brecon Beacons	1			
Fourteenth	Chester-le-Street, Durham	2			
Fifteenth	Rettendon, Surrey			1	
	Tintagel, Cornwall	1			
	York, Yorkshire		1		

Table 9: Surveyed anchorite cells, demonstrating the sex of the anchorite enclosed, century of enclosure, and known number of anchorites within each cell.

6.2 Cases Studies

Rettendon, Essex: All Saint's Church

All Saint's Church is a large parish church in the village of Rettendon, Essex, approximately 13km south-east of Chelmsford. The village itself was recorded in the Domesday Book (1086 CE) and was owned by the Bishop of Ely in the twelfth century (Crosby 2002:161-162). The church is positioned on Main Road, Rettendon, on a hill overlooking a valley with a view to Runwell village. Maps demonstrate that the church is situated 100 yards to the north of a sixteenth-century, two storey barn and a quarter of a mile south-south-east of Pound Farm

(now called John Little Farmers), also built in the sixteenth century. Runwell Nunnery was located close to the church, within 1.2km, although the precise location is now unknown, as the nunnery is no longer extant; its associated thirteenth-century church, St. Mary's, however, is located 2.27km from All Saints (see Figure 38).

The location offers a serene and secluded setting conducive to contemplation and spiritual retreat. Moreover, the proximity to other notable landmarks, such as the sixteenth century barn and Pound Farm, highlights the agrarian character of the surroundings, suggesting a harmonious coexistence between religious devotion and rural livelihoods. The former presence of Runwell Nunnery further underscores the area's religious practices within the community. Overall, the environment surrounding All Saint's Church offered solitude, tranquillity and a connection to both spiritual and earthly realms.

Although All Saint's church was founded in the thirteenth century, the building was constructed in several stages and was not fully completed until the fifteenth century (see Figure 39). The current altar was installed in the north end of the chancel when it was re-built in the later part of the thirteenth century, and an altar was also located in the north chapel in the north aisle in the early fifteenth century when the anchorite's house was built (His Majesty's Stationary Office 1923:124; Archaeology Data Service n.d.).



Figure 37: Position of All Saints Church (indicated in red), sixteenth century barn (indicated in yellow), and St Mary's Church (indicated in blue), Rettendon, Essex (Base map: Google Earth).

Further additions and renovations continued in the Victorian period (1898) and into the twentieth century, when toilets and a kitchen were added to the west end of the north aisle (Historic England Official List Entry 1235573). The anchorite cell is now used as a vestry, and it may be assumed that the anchorite's house fell into disuse after the Reformation in the sixteenth century and may have started to be used as a vestry from early in the seventeenth century. It is now used partially as a storage area, the present rector having no knowledge that the space was once an anchorite cell. Current access to the rooms is by the vestry door situated off the chancel.

The shift from anchorite dwelling to vestry reflects the broader changes following the Reformation in the sixteenth century. With the decline of monasticism and the dissolution of religious houses, including anchorholds, the functions of such spaces evolved to meet the needs of Protestant worship. The conversion of the cell into a vestry not only symbolises the decline of medieval religious practices, but also signifies the adaptation of ecclesiastical spaces to accommodate the needs of new congregations. As a vestry, the former anchorite cell serves as a functional space for clergy preparations, storage of liturgical items and administrative tasks related to the church. This transformation underscores the pragmatic approach of repurposing existing structures to meet the changing demands of religious worship in the post-Reformation period.

The identity and sex of the anchorite/s enclosed in this cell have not been recorded, and no further details have been discovered.

The Cell

The largest cell of all of the case studies is built on the north east side of the chancel, architecturally the cell is double storey, built in a mix of styles from the fifteenth to the twentieth centuries. The cell originally had three rooms: two rooms on the lower floor and a large open room as the upper storey (see Figure 40).

The ground floor room is reached from the chancel through a fifteenth-century arch-style doorway with stone frame; the upper room, also currently used for storage, was accessed

internally via a post Reformation stone staircase made from a mix of coffin covers and an assortment of different types of stone from a variety of origins. Externally, the cell had a wooden staircase on the northeast side of the building leading from the lower-level door to an upper-level door; this staircase was demolished, and the door bricked over during Victorian restorations (Church Warden, pers. comm. 5 October 2016). This may have been used originally as an entry to the cell for servants and/or in case of an emergency or illness.

A large chimney on the north-eastern exterior wall of the cell combines two internal fireplaces, which offer insight into the heating and domestic arrangements. The chimneys were both renovated in the late Victorian period. One fireplace opens into the parlour room on the lower level and the second into the large upper room. There is a second external door on the north-eastern side that provides entry to the lower-level parlour area and leads into the cemetery. This may have been used by the servant/s, offering direct access to the lower-level parlour area and suggests a practical consideration for the movement of individuals around the cell and parlour. The proximity of the cell to the cemetery underscores the anchorite's role in praying for the deceased, further integrating them into the religious life of the community. Additionally, the external door may have allowed the anchorite to engage with visitors or receive alms from the wider community while maintaining a degree of separation from the church interior.

Moreover, the external door symbolises the anchorite's connection with the outside world, like the windows of other cells which acted as a direct link to the broader community, despite

their seclusion within the cell. This connection highlights the anchorite's dual role as both a solitary devotee and a participant in the communal life of the church and village.

RETTENDON *The* PARISH CHURCH of ALL SAINTS

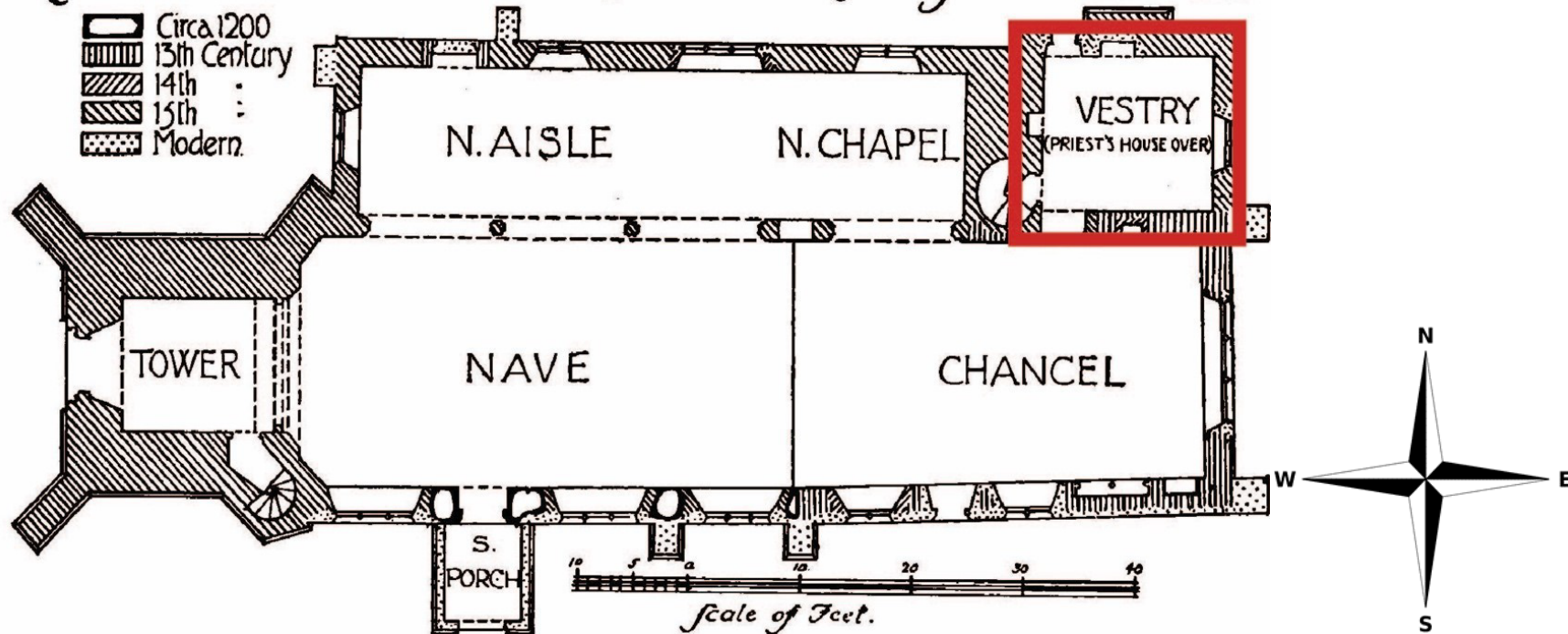


Figure 38: The stages of construction of All Saint's Church of Rettendon, Essex (His Majesty's Stationery Office 1923:124). Anchorite cell indicated in red.

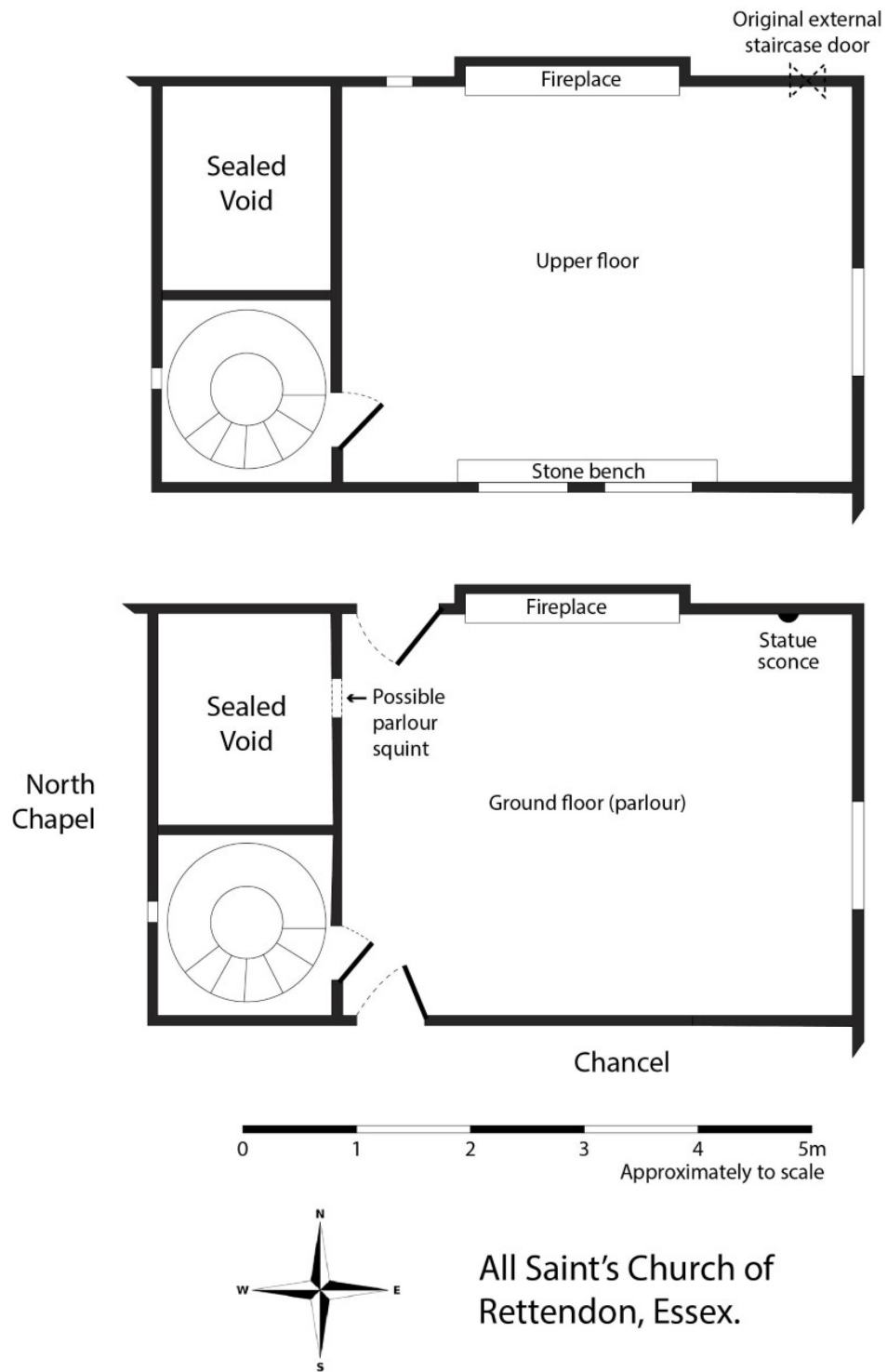


Figure 39: Drawing of the 'anchorite house' – upper and lower levels, and parlour. All Saint's Church of Rettendon, Essex.

The two ground floor rooms consist of a large rectangular parlour room and a smaller, sealed and currently inaccessible void which may have been part of the lower level of the anchorite cell. Immediately on the left-hand side of the door from the chancel (see Figure 41) is a doorway (see Figure 42). Beyond this, and to the right, is the sealed void, which measures approximately 2m x 1.5m. Although this was inaccessible for recording purposes, its size suggests that it could have been a functional space; this may have been a room for the anchorite to hold counsel with visitors, take confessions and interact with servant/s. Although the parlour room is one large space, the shape, size and location of the sealed void suggests that it was always a second and separate space to the parlour. The parlour squint and void opening that would have led to the internal stairs may have been sealed off during the late Victorian period reconstruction.



Figure 40 Anchorite cell, Rettendon, Essex, now vestry, north entry doorway from chancel.



Figure 41: Cell door lower level. This opens to the stairs.

Stairs originally led from the cell's lower-level room to the upper-level. The servant may have slept in the parlour area, as it is a large room, and they may have used the fireplace to cook food for the anchorite. A piscina is located on the northern wall in the ground floor parlour room. Piscinas were stone basins, usually semi-circular, in which the vessels used during the Mass were washed so that any of the pieces of the Eucharist are saved from the drain. It could also be used to hold Holy water (a stoup), for a person to dip their fingers into it for the ritual of making the sign of the Cross on their bodies, as is the Catholic tradition. The Rettendon example may have been either, but since it was located in the parlour it is more likely to be a Holy Water stoup. It is of unknown age, as is a nearby stone statue holder (see Figure 43).

Evident in the western wall of the parlour is an indentation in the wall which suggests a parlour squint, as it is of an approximate size, shape, and height. This has obviously been sealed and plastered over, probably during the Victorian period (see Figure 44).



Figure 42: Statue holder in north eastern wall of lower-level room (parlour).



Figure 43: Possible parlour squint – sealed, plastered and painted over during later reconstructions.

No altar squint is apparent in the western wall of the cell because the entirety of this wall facing the north chapel is now covered by a large statue in memory of Edmund Humfrey, which was installed in the eighteenth century (see Figure 45). The memorial positioning also removed the original altar in the northern aisle. The placement of the memorial highlights the changes in religious practices, commemorative traditions and development of architectural aesthetics and functional space within the church environment. The alteration indicates a major shift away from the symbolic significance of the anchorite cell, rendering its original symbolism obsolete.



Figure 44: Statue in memory of Edmund Humfrey installed in the 18th century in the area of the original altar in the northern aisle (looking east).

The upper level of the cell is a large rectangular room with a fireplace against the north wall and two stone benches built against the south wall. These benches were part of the original layout of the cell and may have been used as a sleeping pallet or seating area. They are located below windows which look out into the chancel of the church, and which may have been shuttered at some stage (see Figures 345, 46 and 47). The room has a small c. fifteenth-century square window in the northern side (see Figure 48). During the 1989 reconstruction, a large double window was installed in this upper room, the original external staircase was

demolished, and the upper external door bricked up and painted over (British History Online 1923:124-126; Churchwarden, pers. comm. 5 October 2016). Figure 46 shows a woodcut of an imagined layout for the upper-storey room as published by the Reverend Edward Cutts in 1911. This conforms to the basic layout visible today, including the fireplace, benches along the east wall, and the west doorway through which can be seen an outline of one of the staircase windows to the northern aisle and chapel.

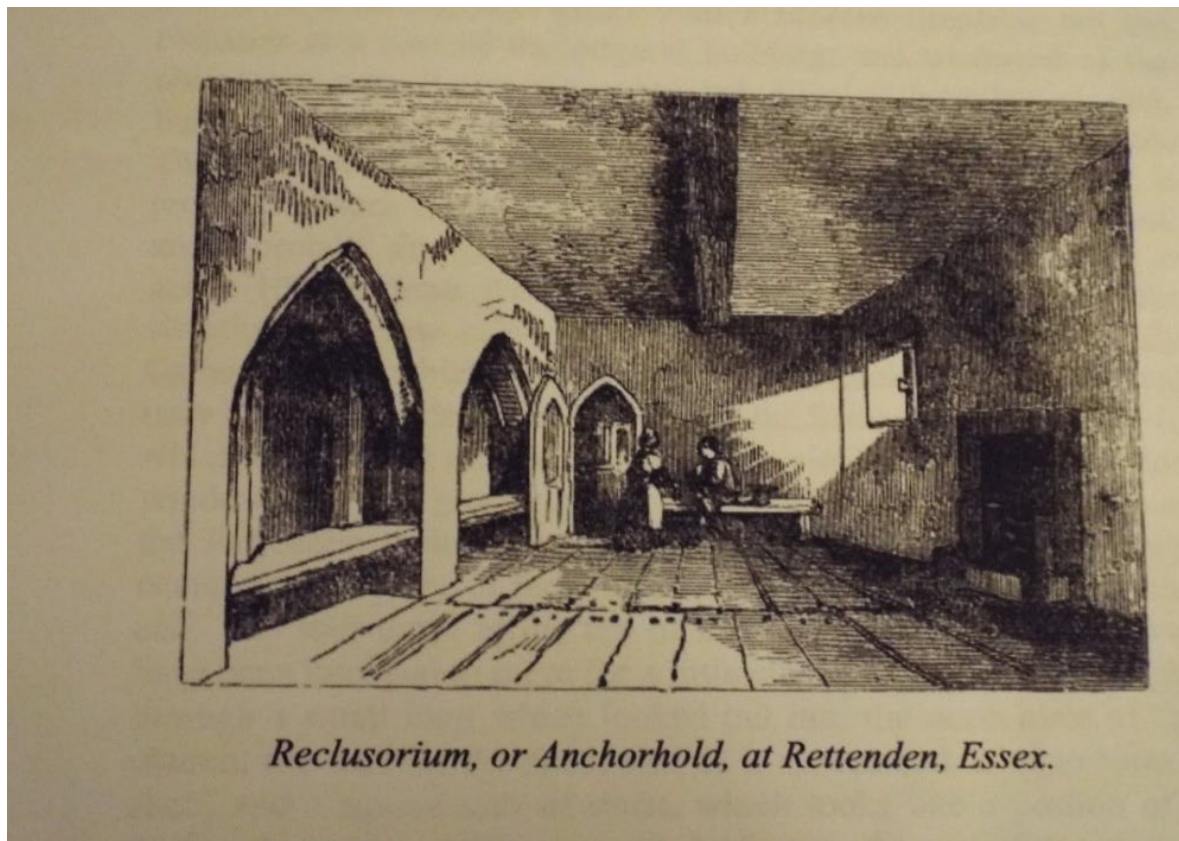


Figure 45: Imaginative woodcut of the upper storey of the anchorhold (looking west) of All Saints' Church, Rettendon, Essex (Cutts 1911:136).



Figure 46: Window above chancel and altar showing stone bench.



Figure 47: Stone bench /large sill under window overlooking chancel/altar area.



Figure 48a and 49b: Upper-level high window – internal and external view.

Cell/Features	Height	Length	Width
Lower-level room	2.14m	4.628m	3.783m
Upper-level room	5.09m	5.024m	3.793m
Windows over-looking (east) altar and chancel	0.992m		
Width from base of altar/chancel windows		0.437m	
Sills of altar/chancel windows		1.558m	
Benches/sills to floor	0.383m		

Table 10: Dimensions of cell and features – All Saints Church, Rettendon, Essex. Upper-level window was inaccessible and therefore not measured.

The current fireplaces are of the Victorian period and so were not measured.

The case study of All Saint's Church, Rettendon, demonstrates the intricate interaction between architectural evolution and anchorite practices, especially the changes wrought by the Reformation.

Compton, Surrey: St. Nicholas' Church

St. Nicholas' Church is the parish church of the village of Compton, Surrey. Compton village is approximately 4km from Godalming and 6km from Guildford village. The Guildford area was inhabited during the Roman occupation of Britain and continued to be inhabited during the Saxon period, when a village was founded called Guilden Ford. A castle was built in the town centre not long after the Norman invasion of England in 1066 CE, along with a monastery for the Dominican Friars (founded in 1275 CE); the Crutched Friars had a house just outside of the town (Victoria County History 1967:114). The historical progression of the town provides context for Compton's medieval development. Compton is recorded in the Domesday Book (1086 CE) as Contone and evolved over centuries of inhabitation. The name changed to Cumpton in 1190 CE, Comton in 1260 CE and then Compton in 1287 CE. St. Nicholas' Church is 4.9km away from Guildford castle, and 5.03km from the site of the Dominican monastery (see Figure 50).

The church is located on The Street, Compton, next to the grounds of c. fourteenth-century Eastbury Manor, now a nursing home. St. Nicholas' Church is mentioned in the Domesday Book, so was certainly established prior to 1086 CE, but no definite date is recorded for its construction or dedication. It was constructed in several stages, the first of c. Anglo-Saxon

period, at which time the tower, small nave and chancel were completed, the second in the Norman period, during which the nave was enlarged to include aisles and large windows were added in the western wall of the aisles (Boston 1987:131-132).

The original anchorite installed in this church was first housed in a cell constructed on the north side of the church which predated the twelfth century, but that is no longer extant. It was in c. 1180 CE (Bott 2000:11) that the anchorite was moved from this original cell to a new cell on the southeast side of the chancel. This was presumably so that the anchorite could continue to follow and participate in the services and prayers, following alterations in the chancel layout when the original altar was shifted from the south to the east side of the chancel. It is significant as it indicates a deliberate effort to accommodate the anchorite's spiritual practices within the evolving architectural layout of the church, reflecting the importance placed on maintaining the anchorite's role in religious observance, despite the changes in the church's configuration.



Figure 49: Position of St Nicholas' Church (indicated in red), Guildford Castle (indicated in yellow), and the site of the Dominican Monastery (indicated in blue). (Base map: Google Earth).

Subsequent minor renovations and additions occurred during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Bott 2000:10), as well as in the nineteenth century when an organ was added to the western end in 1862. There is also a 'modern' vestry attached to the north side of the chancel wall (Boston 1987:158). It is not recorded when this was built, and there was possibly an earlier vestry or sacristy in the same location (Boston 1987:141). A sketch completed by R.C. Hussey shows no vestry in existence in 1847 (Figure 51), so the new vestry was built sometime after this date (Bott 2000:11); if there was an earlier vestry, its construction has not been recorded. Hussey's sketch hints at the possible site of the original cell enclosure, now incorporated into the internal door of the modern vestry. The sketch shows the outline of a blocked doorway, drawn within the shadow of a buttress, which may have been the enclosure site for the anchorite. This doorway, however, is not now visible externally but is being used as the internal door to the new vestry from the chancel (Figure 46). While earlier renovations are evident, the precise date of the vestry's construction remains unrecorded.

A ground plan of St Nicholas' Church drawn in the late 1800s can be seen in Figure 52 (Andre 1895: XVIII). The areas of the two anchorite cells are noted on Figure 53, by the letters A and B (A for the earlier cell and B for the later cell). It is interesting to note that in Andre's plan he has marked the later anchorite cell with a well hole. A well is not recorded elsewhere for this cell and there is no current visible evidence within the cell of a well having existed here. Smaller restoration activities in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, such as the addition of a 'modern' staircase to provide access from the cell to the adjacent oratory, further attest to the church's evolving architectural and functional dynamics.

Anchorite/s:

While the identities of the anchorites enclosed in either of the cells at St. Nicholas' Church remain undocumented, there are some indications suggesting that the anchorite enclosed in the twelfth century in the second cell, may have been a priest. It was customary for a priest anchorite to have either an altar inside their cell or a separate oratory exclusively dedicated to their use, as discussed in Chapter 3. Oratories served as private spaces for the celebration of the Mass or divine worship, typically featuring an altar oriented towards the east. Although altars were observed in other cells, such as those at the Church of St. Materiana in Tintagel, Cornwall, and St. Issui Patricio's in Wales, the presence of an extant oratory is rare.

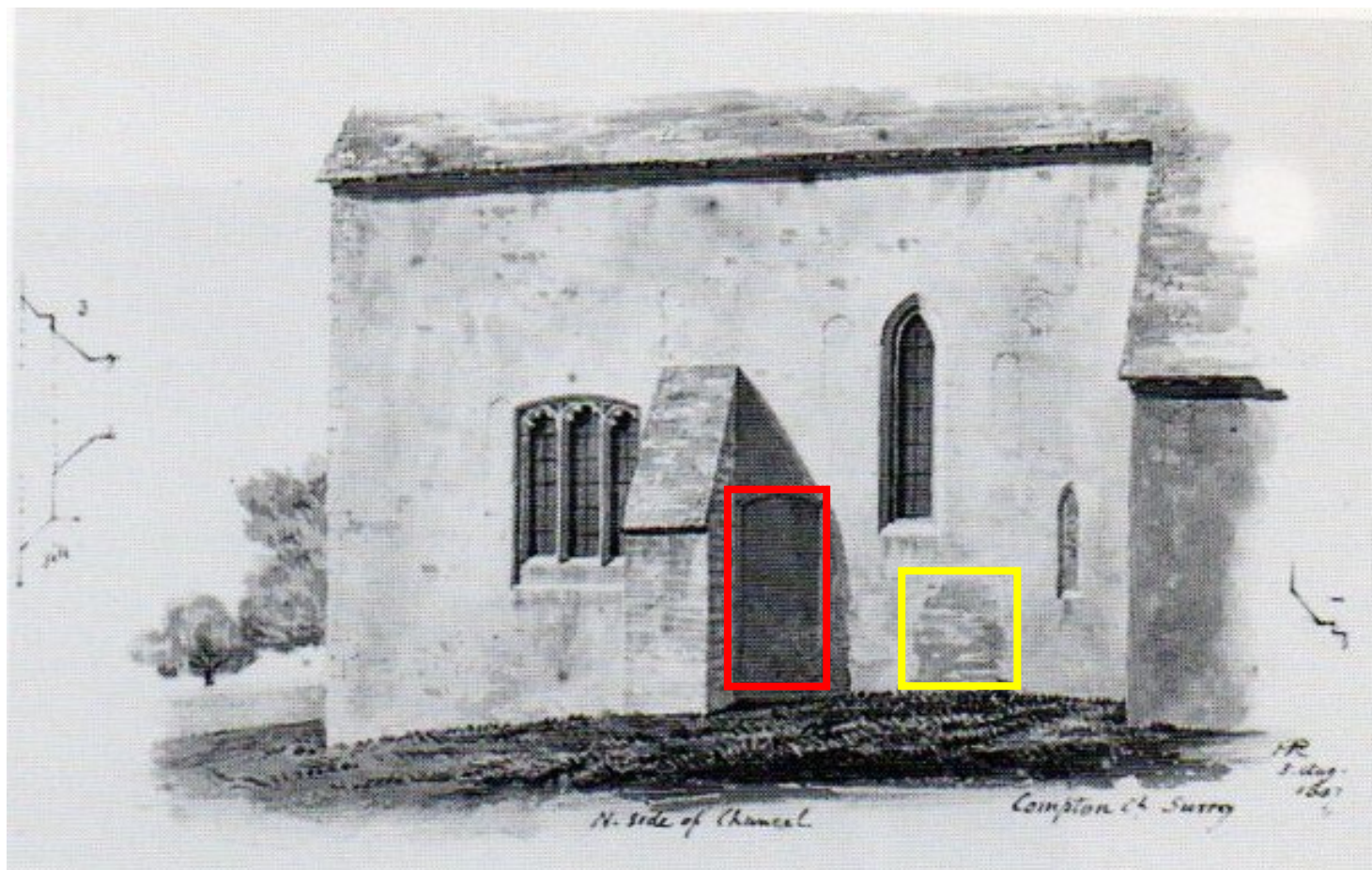


Figure 50: Sketch of north side of the church by R. C. Hussey in 1847, showing outline of blocked anchorite door (indicated in red) and squint area (indicated in yellow) (Bott 2000:11).

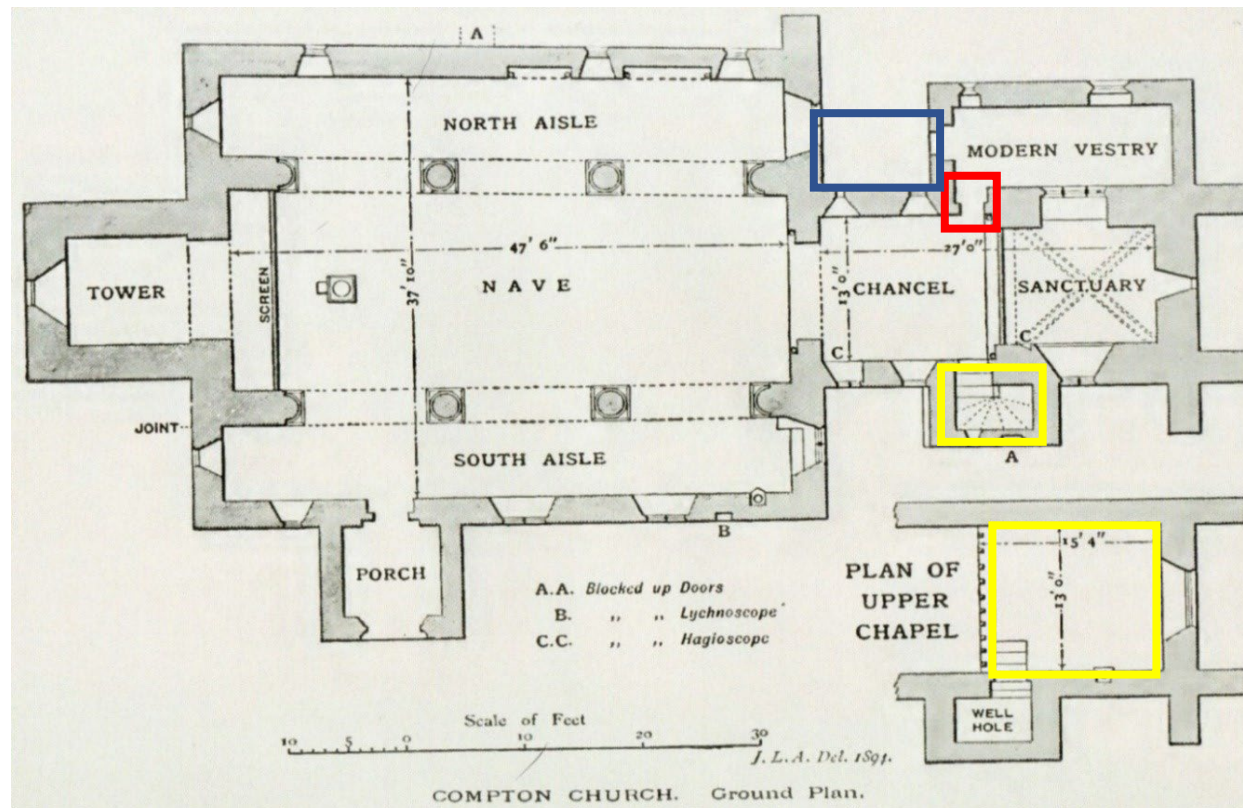


Figure 51: Ground plan of St Nicholas' Church, Compton Surrey, 1895 (Andre 1895: XVIII). Entry to vestry from Chancel indicated in red. Cell A in blue. Cell B and attached oratory in yellow.

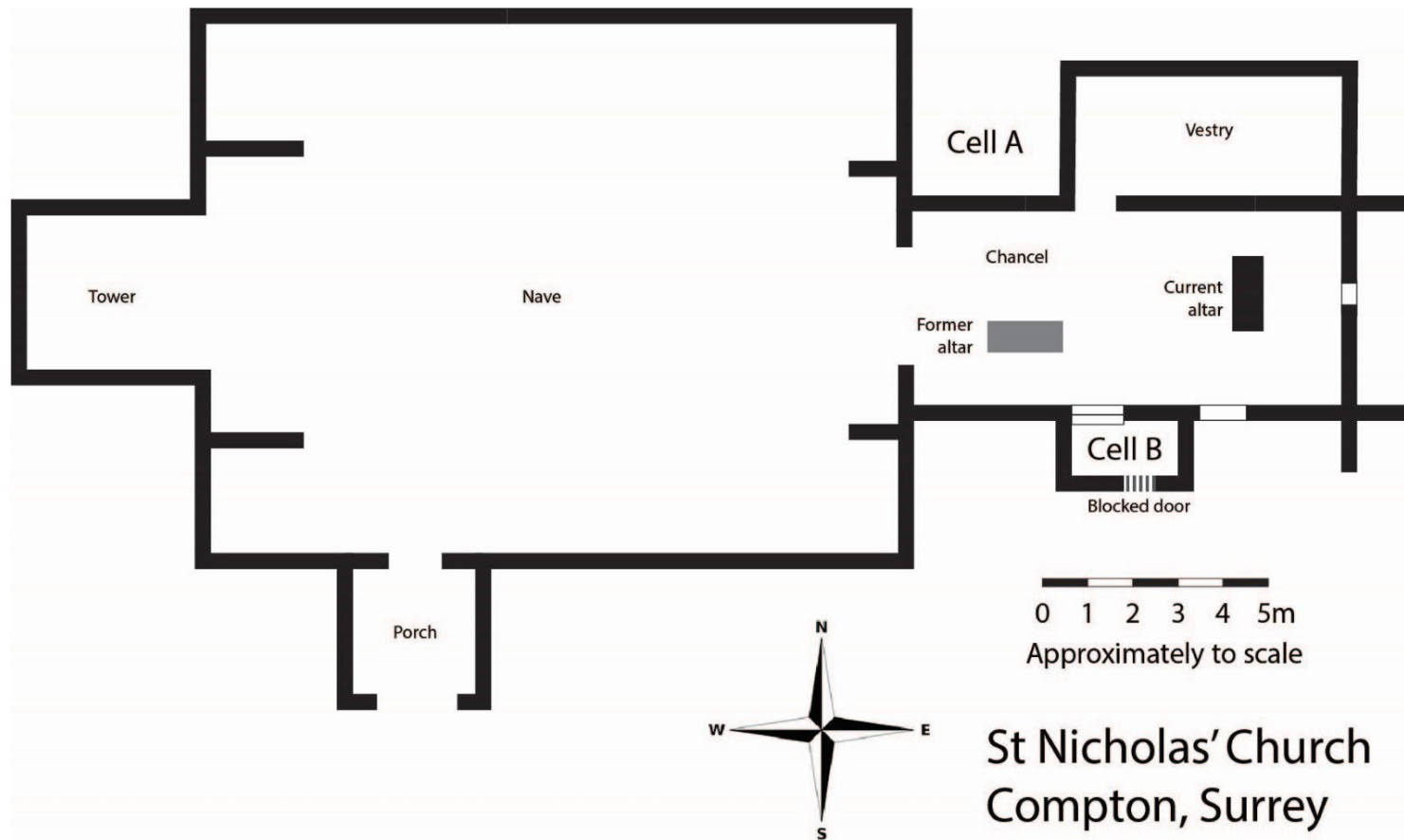


Figure 52: Ground plan of St Nicholas' Church, Compton Surrey showing the location of the two anchorite cells.

The Cells

St Nicholas' church contains two anchorite cells. These reveal a history of medieval religious architectural adaptation. The original cell (Cell A) was located on the south-west wall of the chancel (see Figure 54). This site was investigated in 1929 by Philip Mainwaring Johnson, who suggested that, due to no masonry of any kind being found, "the cell would have been simple, constructed out of wattle-and-daub and fixed against the wall without foundations" (Boston 1987:132). The date of construction and subsequent use of this cell would have been prior to c. 1180 CE, when the new cell (Cell B) was constructed. All that remains of Cell A are the squint, which is still in situ and covered with Perspex to protect it against damage (see Figures 55, 56, 57), and mortar marks on the wall above and on each side of the squint indicating where walls of the anchorite house may have been attached (see Figures 55, 56), contrary to Mainwaring's suggestion (Boston 1987:132). It is assumed that Cell A would have been a single-storeyed building, suggesting a humble yet spiritually significant space.

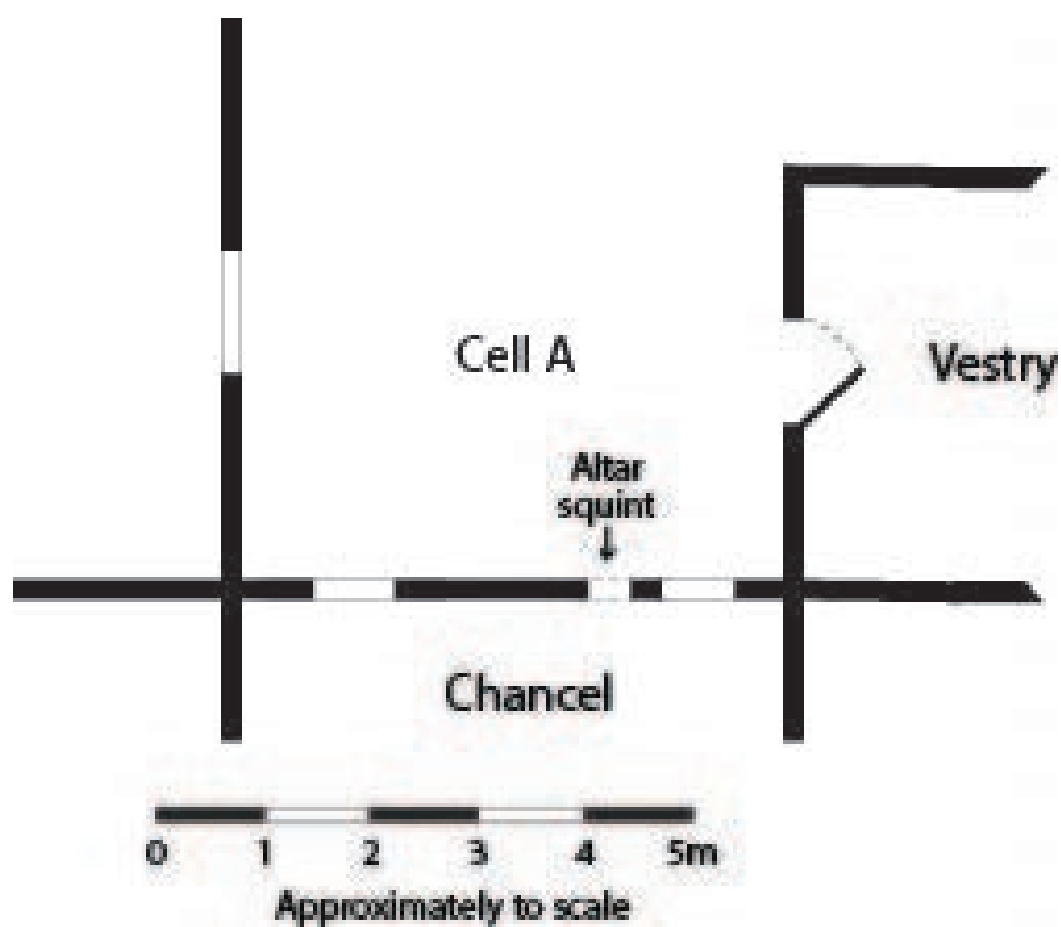


Figure 53: Ground plan of St Nicholas' Church, Compton Surrey showing the location of the original anchorite cell in relation to the modern vestry.



Figure 54: Remains of Cell A on the north side of the chancel. The external vestry door is to the left of the anchorite squint.



Figure 55: Mortar on wall which may be from Cell A. This is located above the anchorite squint (see Figure 49).



Figure 56: Remains of the altar squint from Cell A.



Figure 57: Close up of remains of altar squint from Cell A.

In contrast, Cell B demonstrates a more sophisticated architectural design. It is a two-storeyed cell built on the east side of the chancel when the altar was relocated to a new sanctuary in the south end of the church. The architectural style of the cell suggests that it was constructed in c. 1180 CE (Bott 2000:11). Cell B has a cruciform shaped altar squint in the south-west wall of the lower level, with a wooden sill still in situ which has visible burn marks, consistent with the use of candles (see Figure 59).



Figure 58: Altar squint in cell B, looking into the chancel of the church and onto the altar.

Michelle Sauer (2013:548) has suggested that the cruciform, or quatrefoil, shaped squint windows were “constructed specifically for women”, in order to help control their gaze and mitigate their “lust, lechery and temptation” which stemmed from the female gaze (Sauer 2013:547). Although, there are certainly some instances where a cruciform squint has been used for a female anchorite, for example at St. John the Baptist Church, Newcastle upon Tyne and St. James, Shere, this is certainly not the norm. In fact, Sauer also states that there were “other methodologies of filtering the female gaze” used instead, though these were not stipulated, it is assumed that she mean the black curtain with white cross which was suggested in the *Ancrene Wisse* (Sauer 2013:548). This points to the cruciform styled squint not necessarily being solely linked to women, and the presence of the oratory attached to this cell suggests that the anchorite enclosed within Cell B was more likely to be male.

A second window is located on the east side of the cell; this would have been the external window used for visitors and for servant access to the anchorite. There are also visible external bolt indentations that would have held wooden shutters attached to the outside of the window (see Figure 60a and b), reflecting the anchorite’s secluded lifestyle and illustrating the personal control of their interaction with the outside world.



Figure 59a and 60b: External window in Cell B looking out to the south and looking at the window from the outside of the cell, showing where shutters may have been attached.

The ground floor of Cell B includes an external doorway in the south wall which was bricked up after the anchorite was enclosed. Two names have been scratched/carved into the internal north stone wall of the cell, directly in front of the external window (see Figure 61). The inscriptions read:

BR[u]de[n]f[or]d Sway[ne]

GilBRetus L eM[areschall]

There is no record or research which can be found around these inscriptions, therefore, it is not known if they may have been inscribed by the anchorite as a reminder of those who requested intercessory prayers, offering an emotional connection to the community and emphasising the anchorite's role as an intercessor or if they were the names of patrons or

other peoples connected with the enclosed anchorite. The date of the inscriptions cannot be confirmed.



Figure 60: Inscriptions on north wall of cell B.

An oratory spans the width of the upper storey, at the east end of the church and is attached to the cell via a doorway. High set windows allow natural light to enter, and the space provides a view down into the nave. The wooden Romanesque balustrade installed in the front of the oratory, measuring 4 metres in length x 30cm in width, is one of the best and oldest examples of surviving Norman installations in a church in England to date. It was famously whitewashed in the late nineteenth century, but the whitewash was removed approximately 30 years

afterwards by the Reverend H. H. Gillet, who found it a “noxious disguise” (Bott 2000:39-40). Although open to the nave, the oratory could only be accessed through the anchorite cell and therefore only by the enclosed anchorite (see Figures 62, 63). To gain entry to this space there may have been a wooden ladder of some description. This ladder may have also taken the anchorite up to a sleeping pallet within the cell proper. The lower level of the cell proper had limited space, and the anchorite may have therefore utilised the height of the cell (4.860m at its highest point) for more comfort. It is in the oratory that the priest anchorite would have offered mass either for the community or privately for himself.

A large stained-glass window was installed in the south wall in the upper oratory in 1859 but was removed in 1953, the void blocked up, and the wall restored (Bott 2000:19). However, the outline of the bricks of the window can still be seen on the outside of the east wall of the church (Bott 2000:19), leaving evidence of deliberate alterations to the architectural landscape over time. A piscina of unknown date is located in the south-east corner of the oratory and provides an insight into the spiritual lives of the anchorites and their engagement with sacramental practices. There is no evidence of a fireplace on either level, nor is there an external chimney to suggest that there was previously one installed. It may have been possible that a brazier or portable hearth was used by the anchorite, especially in the winter months, though there is no physical evidence for one.



Figure 61: Anchorite's oratory of Cell B as seen from the Nave.



Figure 62: Anchorite's oratory looking down into the nave of church to the west.

Cell A/Features	Height	Length	Width
Altar squint	0.283m		0.182m
External squint from sill to arch of window (external window covered with Perspex)	1.230m		1.460m
From eastern wall of church to western wall of church		3.233m	
From eastern corner of the corner of the area associated with Cell A to the western corner of the vestry			2.971m
Possible height from floor to where the old masonry disappears	3.272m		
From the old altar site on the southern wall of the Chancel to the altar squint of cell A		3.996m	

Table 11: Approximate dimensions of Cell A - located on the north side of the Chancel.

The dimensions of Cell A could not be taken or estimated because the vestry, partly covers the area of the cell. It was not accessible for the purposes of this recording. The only feature still in situ is the altar squint (see Figures 55, 57, 58). Despite the lack of recorded dimensions for Cell A, the presence of its altar squint serves as a reminder of its historical importance. Together, the anchorite cells at St. Nicholas' Church present diverse evidence of medieval spirituality, architectural innovation and evolution, and ties with the community, providing insight into the lives of the anchorites and their lasting influence on the Compton community.

Chester-le-Street, Durham: St. Mary and St. Cuthbert's Church

St. Mary and St. Cuthbert's is a unique church with an equally unique history. It is the parish church of the Roman town of Chester-le-Street, Durham, with parts of the church dating to

the ninth century. Chester-le-Street is 12km from Durham and 18km from Newcastle-upon-Tyne. The town was not recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086 CE, although Lindisfarne monks had travelled with the coffin and body of St. Cuthbert in 883 CE to Chester-le-Street, where a wooden (or possibly wattle-and-daub) church was built specifically to house his body, which underscores its significance as a religious centre in the region. This building was the basis of the current church as seen today (Church of St. Mary and St. Cuthbert 2021).

The church is located on Church Chare, Chester-le-Street, Durham. It is 4.57km from the twelfth century Finchale Priory (see Figure 65). It is not recorded if there was any relationship between the Priory and the church, but the two religious sites were certainly in accessible distance and thus suggests a potential association between these religious sites. In the thirteenth century a stone cathedral was built on the same site as the original church and was dedicated to St. Mary and St. Cuthbert. The church continued to be extended and renovated until the nineteenth century. These additions and renovations included the extension of the nave and aisles in c. 1267 CE, and the construction of an anchorite house in the late fourteenth century, achieved by altering the western end of the north aisle. The building was constructed from locally sourced stone (Church of St. Mary and St. Cuthbert 2021).



Figure 63: Position of St. Mary and St. Cuthbert Church (indicated in red) and Finchale Priory, Durham (indicated in yellow). (Base map: Google Earth).

Key:	
Site of wooden shrine	15th Century
Saxon c.1056	Post Medieval
13th Century	1742
14th Century	1829
Door	Windows
1 Vestry	3 West Door
2 Sanctuary	7 Anchorage
3 Chancel	10 Anchorage Extension
4 Memorial Chapel	11 Aisle of Tombs
5 South Aisle	12 Nave
6 South Porch	13 Lambton Pew
7 Baptistry	14 Organ

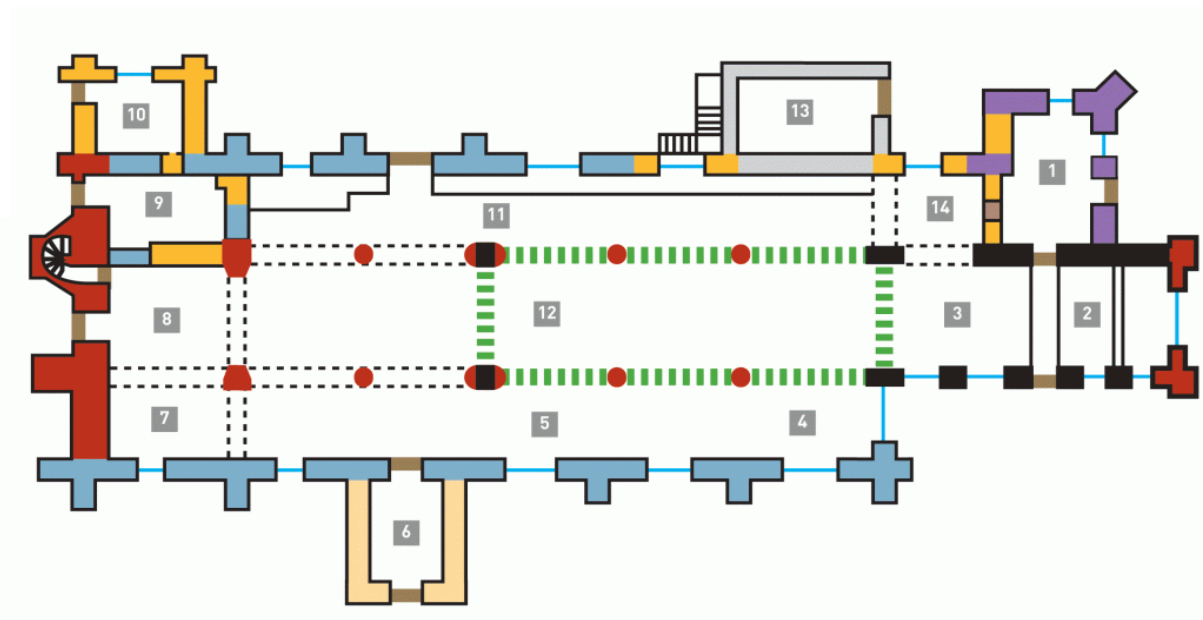


Figure 64: The stages of construction of St. Mary and St. Cuthbert's church of Chester-le-Street, Durham (<https://maryandcuthbert.org.uk/our-history>). Area 9 indicates the location of the anchorite cell.

Anchorite/s:

The Chester-le-Street cell is known to have housed two notable male anchorites: John de Wessington, enclosed in 1383 (possibly the Benedictine monk who became Chancellor of Durham Cathedral in 1400 and then Prior of Durham Abbey in 1416 – if so, d. 1451 CE), and John Blenkinsopp (d. unknown date), enclosed in 1400 (Clay 1914:215), for whom there are no further details. The cell was inhabited from 1383 to 1547, with additional anchorites having been enclosed, whose identities are unknown. It is thought the cell did not have an enclosed recluse after 1548, when the chantries recorded “the Ankers howse” but did not record an anchorite enclosed in the house (Fugelso 2020:146). Following the Reformation, the cell underwent modifications to serve as a widow’s house, signifying a shift in its purpose and function within the community (Figure 65, area 10, and Figure 66).

The Cell

The cell is located on the northwest side of the church. It is two-storey, with a single room on each floor. The footprint for the cell combines a larger space inside the church structure with a smaller double-storey space built outside, and against the northern wall of, the church. There is evidence that the cell was restored and/or renovated in the Victorian period, most visibly through a Victorian doll’s head which was placed in the upper west wall of the cell (see Figure 67). When the cell was extended into a house for widows and children after the Reformation, several rooms were added to the north-west side and an internal staircase installed in these new sections of the house (Fugelso 2020:146). The cell once had its own well inside the room on the lower level, at the same level as the now blocked enclosure

doorway. The enclosure door is located in the north-western wall of the internal portion of the cell and leads to inside the church (see Figure 66). The architectural changes of the cell offer an understanding into the cell's historical function and adaptations over time, reflecting the evolving needs and practices of the community it served.

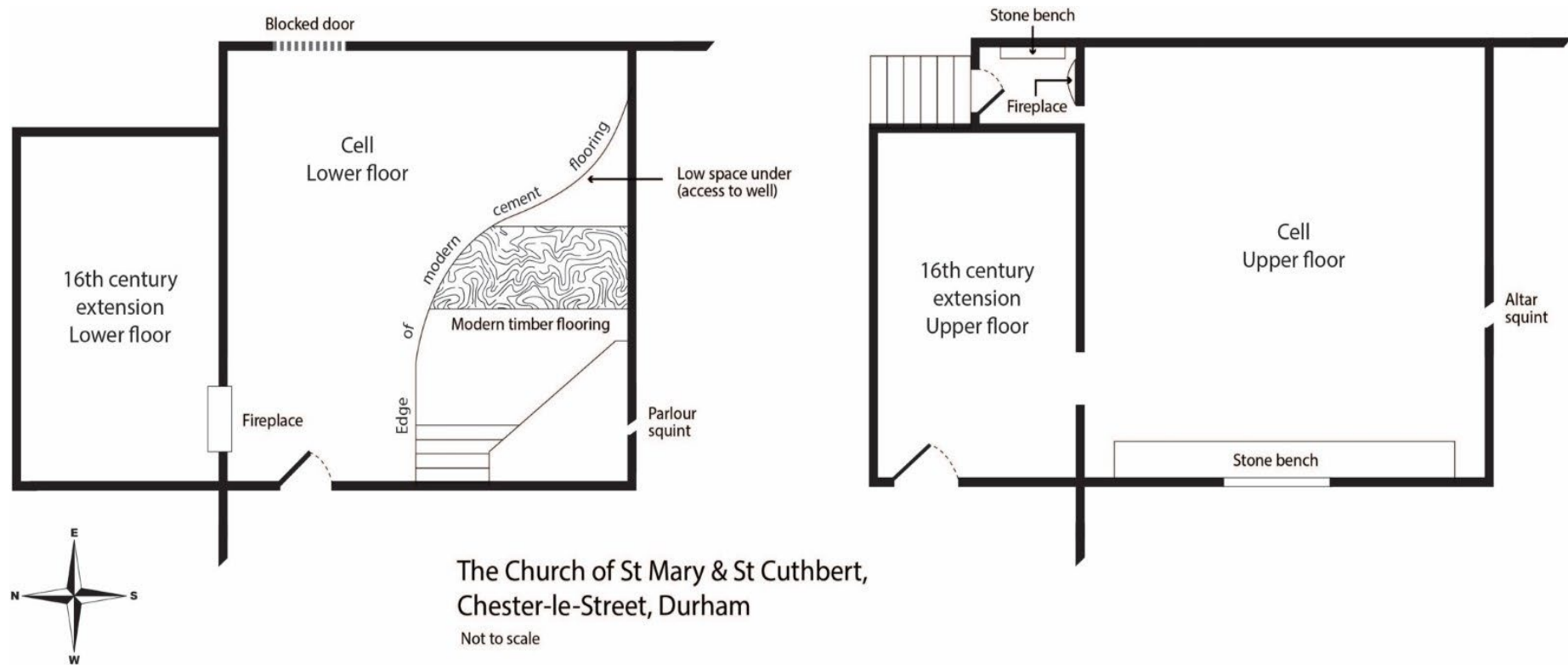


Figure 65: Floor plan of the anchorite cell of St. Mary and St. Cuthbert's church of Chester-le-Street, Durham

To access the enclosure door, one would now need to stoop so low as to effectively crawl, as there has been a new mezzanine floor constructed above the lower-level room (see Figure 66).

The cell may have had servant's quarters on the lower level and steps leading down to the well area. Alternatively, this cell may have been self-sufficient, with the only interaction between servant and anchorite between the wall openings in the lower room. However, in this case there would not have been anyway to provide wood for the fireplaces, unless the servant/s held keys for the outer door and used this to restock items as required. The entire lower room has now been renovated and cemented over and contains the church heating system. Although no physical evidence remains, there was possibly an internal staircase leading to the second floor, but due to the installation of the heating system this is impossible to confirm. The lower level is therefore only partially accessible. Above the now cemented area is a newly built mezzanine level which houses the heater and associated items. This level is also currently used as a storage area.

A narrow parlour window is located in the south-west wall on the lower level (see Figures 67, 68), so the anchorite must have had access to this level in order to be available for visitors, and therefore, if this was indeed the servants area as well, the anchorite would have been in the same space as their servant/s. Close to this window, a small, rectangular opening, approximately 150cm above floor level and with an angled sill, is also visible in the south-west wall of the cell (see Figures 68, 69). This opening measures approximately 20 x 15cm. Although

the date of this feature is unknown, its location adjacent to the parlour window suggests that it may have been an opening through which a visitor could deposit alms. There are no other known extant examples of alms openings with which to compare this feature. There is also another possibility of use for this opening: it may have been where the anchorite received meals, if their servant/s did not reside in the cell complex itself.

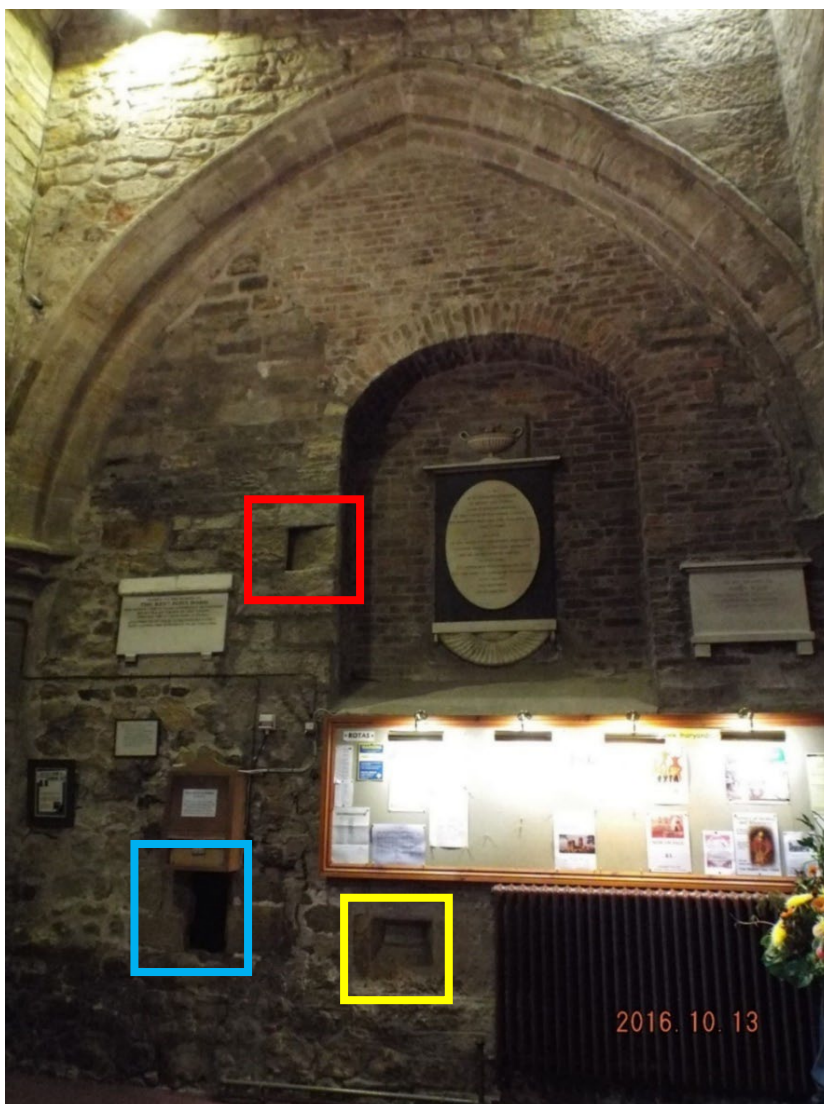


Figure 66: Internal church wall showing the lower and upper levels of the anchorite cell. The cell was located behind this wall. Details include parlour window (lower level – blue), possible alms box (lower level – yellow), and altar squint (upper level – red).



Figure 67: Parlour window for visitors - view from inside church nave.



Figure 68: Possible cell alms box/meal delivery - view from inside church.

There is evidence of two fireplaces, one located on the north-west wall of the lower level and a second on the north-east wall of the upper level. Notably, the upper-level fireplace was much larger and included a stone bench inglenook inside the fireplace and along the eastern wall of the cell (see Figure 70). This suggests a central heating source within the cell. The original fireplace now cuts off where the new boiler chimney starts, and a piece of stone has been placed in the chimney opening to seal it.



Figure 69: Stone bench on the inside right of the large upper floor fireplace in anchorite cell.

An angled altar squint is visible built into the south wall of the upper floor for the anchorite to follow services and prayer. To view the altar the anchorite would have needed to be in a

seated position, with their head inside the squint and turned slightly to the left (Figures 71, 72 and 73). This architectural feature not only facilitated the anchorite's spiritual participation, but also highlights the deliberate design considerations aimed at enhancing their immersive experience within the sacred space of the church.



Figure 71: Altar squint from inside of cell (indicted in red).



Figure 70: Close up of altar squint.

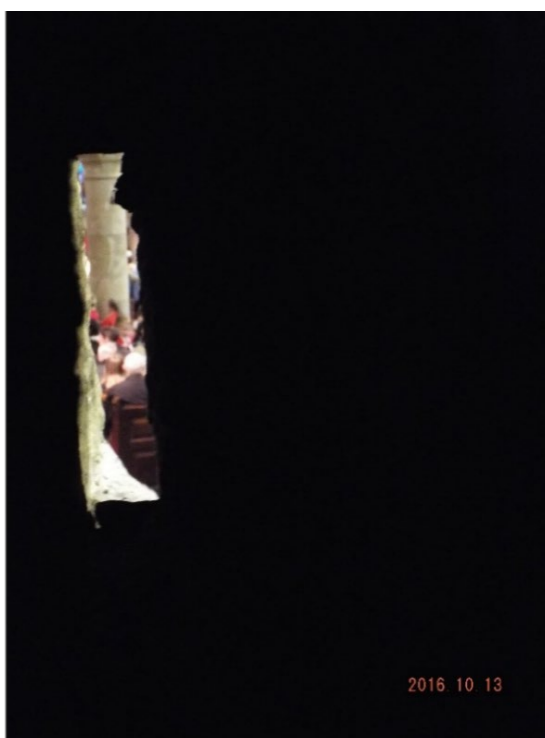


Figure 71: Magnified view when looking into altar squint.

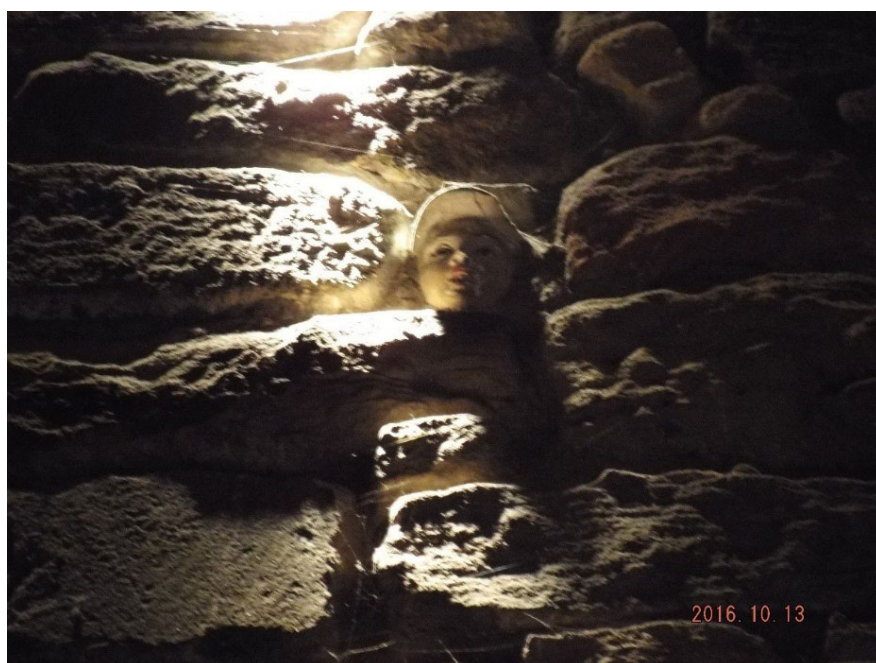


Figure 72: Victorian doll's head placed in the west wall of cell during renovations.

Cell/Features	Height	Length	Width
Upper-floor room – to stone buttress	4.884m		
Upper-floor room – to squint wall on southern side of cell		5.843m	3.235m
Altar squint	0.381m		
Altar squint - widest section			0.226m
Altar squint - narrowest section			0.123m
Parlour Squint	c. 200m		c. 150m
Length of squint from opening inside frame		0.733m	
Length of external windowsill (window to the outside) – widest section		1.002m	
Length of external windowsill (window to the outside) – smallest section		0.989m	
Window arch	2.194m		2.890m
Groove in wall under window arch (width unable to be measured due to being inaccessible)	0.180m		
Upper floor fireplace	2.658m		1.67m
Upper floor doorway on the north-eastern side of cell	1.757m		
Upper floor doorway on the north-eastern side of cell - widest section			0.930m
Upper floor doorway on the north-eastern side of cell – narrowest section			0.840m

Table 12: Dimensions of anchorite cell upper floor.

The case study of St. Mary and St. Cuthbert's anchorite cell offers an insight into the interconnection of medieval spirituality, architectural adaptation, and communal evolution. The cell itself stands as a testament to the adaptive nature of religious spaces, transitioning from a solitary space for anchorites into a dwelling for widows and children post-Reformation. Moreover, the design elements, such as the angled altar squint and the presence of the fireplaces suggest an intricate balance between practicality and spiritual engagement within the confined quarters of the cell.

York, Yorkshire: All Saint's Church

All Saint's Church is a large parish church located near the River Ouse in the Roman town of York, Yorkshire (see Figure 74). The city's religious landscape flourished during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Within this time period, York had no fewer than ten anchorite cells within the city limits (see Appendix IV). Additionally, there was also extensive building of monasteries, abbeys and nunneries starting in the twelfth century, which continued until the Reformation in the sixteenth century. These represented various orders such as Carthusians, Cistercians, Augustinians, Premonstratensians, and Benedictines, underscoring York's significance as a prominent ecclesiastical hub (Simpson 2021; Waites 1958:231-234).

The church is located on North Street, York, just 0.46km from the eleventh-century Benedictine Abbey of St. Mary's and 0.66km from the seventh-century York Minster. All Saint's is surrounded by six recorded medieval nunneries in close proximity (see Figure 75). The twelfth-century Clementhorpe Nunnery (also called St Clements) established between c. 1125-1133 CE was the closest. Further away, but still in close proximity to York city, were the Thicket nunnery, and Wilberfoss, Nun Appleton, Nun Monkton and Sinningwaite nunneries (Dobson and Donaghey 1984:9). These landmarks solidify the area's status as a spiritual centre.

Also, in close proximity to All Saint's church is an extant high-status chantry building in North Street, which may have provided the residence for a priest of the church. The site's proximity to other noteworthy structures such as the eleventh-century St. Mary's Abbey, the twelfth-

century St. Mary's Church, York Minster and the eleventh-century York Castle (see Figure 75), further amplifies its historical significance.

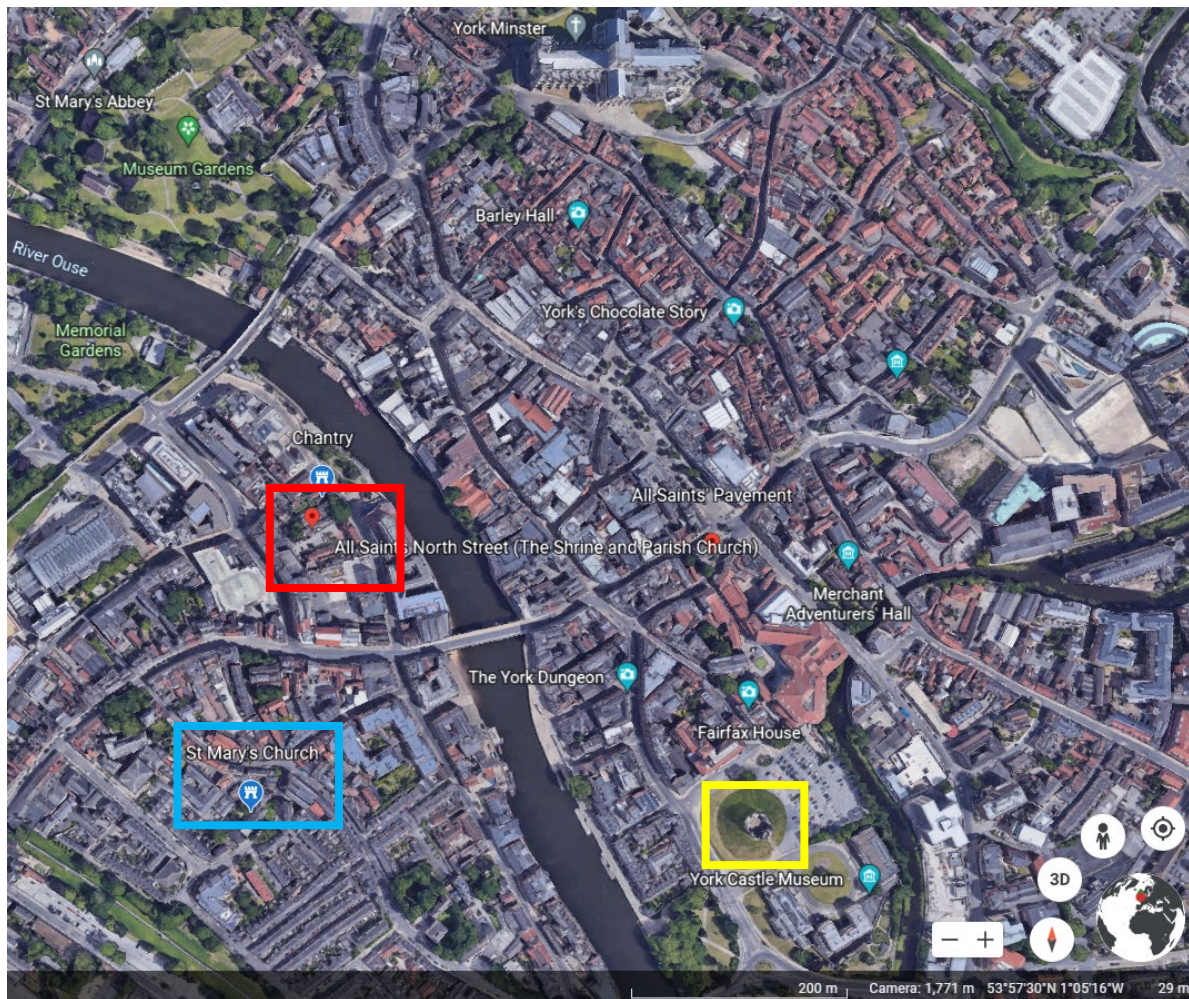


Figure 73: Satellite imagery showing the position of All Saint's Church (indicated in red), York in relation to key historic features in the area, including York Castle (indicated in yellow) and St. Mary's Church (indicated in blue).



Figure 74: Medieval nunneries in close proximity to York – York marked inside red box (Dobson and Donaghey 1984:10).

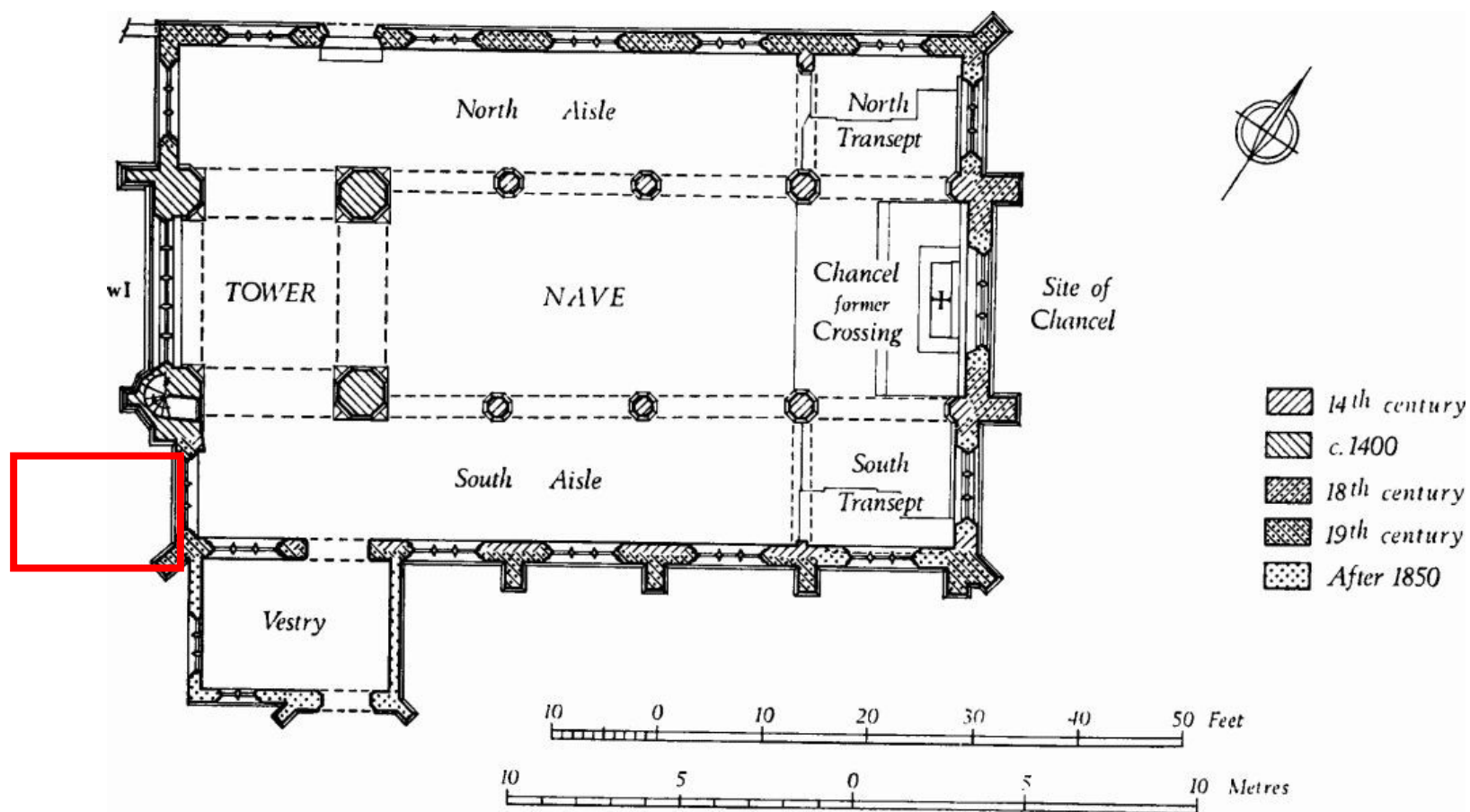


Figure 75: The stages of construction of All Saint's Church North Street, York, Yorkshire (His Majesty's Stationery Office 1981:3). Area of anchorite cell indicated in red.

Anchorite/s

The cell at All Saint's is known to have enclosed a female anchorite, Dame Emma Rawghtone, in c. 1422 CE (Clay 1914:261). Emma was said to have had visitations from Mary (the mother of Christ) and was a renowned visionary whose prophecies were recorded by John Rous in the fifteenth century (d. 1491 CE). The thirteenth Earl of Warwick, Richard Beaucamp (d. 1439 CE), is recorded as visiting her to ask for guidance in 1421 CE (Holmes 2007:2-4), which demonstrates the reverence in which she was held.

Although records indicate only one other named recluse was a Brother Walter (Figure 77), who was the last to be housed in All Saint's in the early twentieth century (All Saints – North Street, York n.d), it is not known if there were other anchorites in England after this. In total, this cell may have been occupied for over 150 years, from c. 1422 CE until the Reformation in the sixteenth century, and then again, after the restoration of the cell in 1910, from c. 1930 to c. 1970. It cannot be said that the cell was inhabited by anchorites of both sexes during the medieval period, as there is only record of one anchorite.

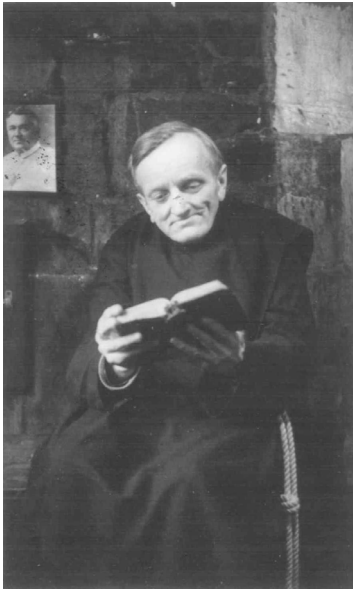


Figure 76: Brother Walter – last recluse at All Saints Church, York (All Saints – North Street: Online).

The Cell

Following the upheaval of the Reformation, the original cell itself was demolished and replaced by a reconstructed anchorhold in c. 1908-1910. There is no known record of the early twentieth-century reconstruction, or what it was based on, except that it was carried out by the architect, antiquarian and amateur archaeologist, Edwin Ridsdale Tate (York Civic Trust n.d). The cell was restored again in 1991 under the guidance of Peter Marshall Architects (York Civic Trust n.d).

The cell was positioned on the south-west wall of the south aisle of the nave to the south-east of the tower. Evidence suggests the cell was double storeyed because there are two squints still in situ. One, situated high in the wall, likely served as an altar squint (see Figures 78, 79). The second squint, lower in the south-west wall of the church (see Figure 75), may

have been used as a parlour window facilitating communication with visitors and servants. This lower squint has now been boarded up and plastered over. The upper squint has a modern wooden shutter fitted on the inside and is integrated into the reconstructed anchorite house/cell (see Figure 79).

Additionally, remnants of a fireplace base in the north-east wall of the upper floor (south-west wall of the church) hint at the cell's domestic comforts, providing an insight into the daily lives of its inhabitants. Through restoration and preservation efforts, the reconstructed anchorhold stands as an example of the spiritual contemplation centre of All Saints Church.



Figure 77: Upper-floor altar squint.



Figure 78: Upper-floor altar squint – showing portion of modern wooden shutter far left.

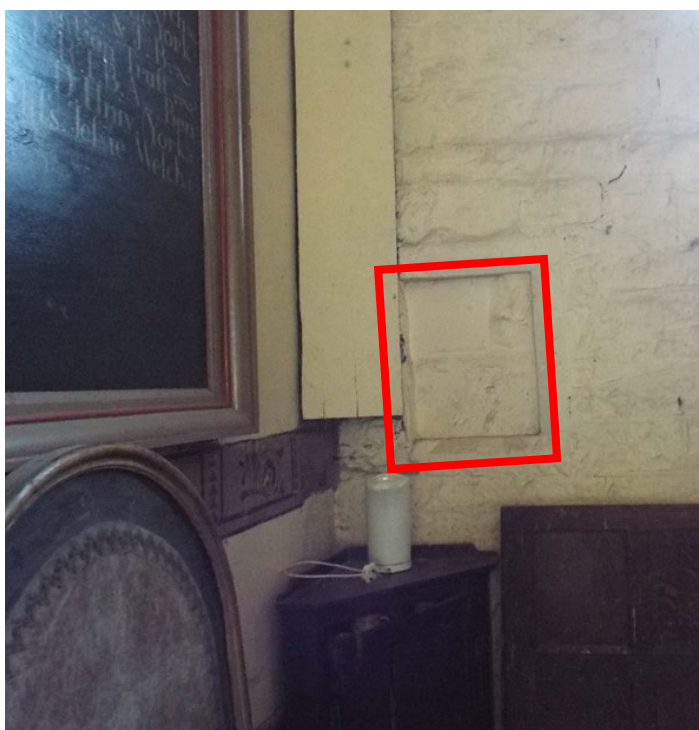


Figure 79: Lower floor parlour squint – indicated in red.



Figure 76: South-west wall of church showing anchorite squints on two levels. Upper in yellow and lower indicated in red.

Cell/Features	Height	Length	Width
Upper-floor squint – inner lip to opening		0.591m	
Upper-floor squint – right inner opening to left inner opening			0.380m
Upper-floor squint – inner opening to top of inner opening	0.335m		
Upper-floor squint – Opening			0.311m
Upper-floor squint – height at centre of opening	0.271m		
Base of fireplace			0.609m
Lower-floor parlour squint – height from centre	0.498m		
Lower-floor parlour squint – height from centre	0.496m		
Lower-floor parlour squint – width of base of squint			0.415m
Lower-floor parlour squint – - width of top of squint			0.433m
Height from lower-floor squint to roof above top squint	4.069m		

Table 13: Dimensions of cell features, All Saint's Church

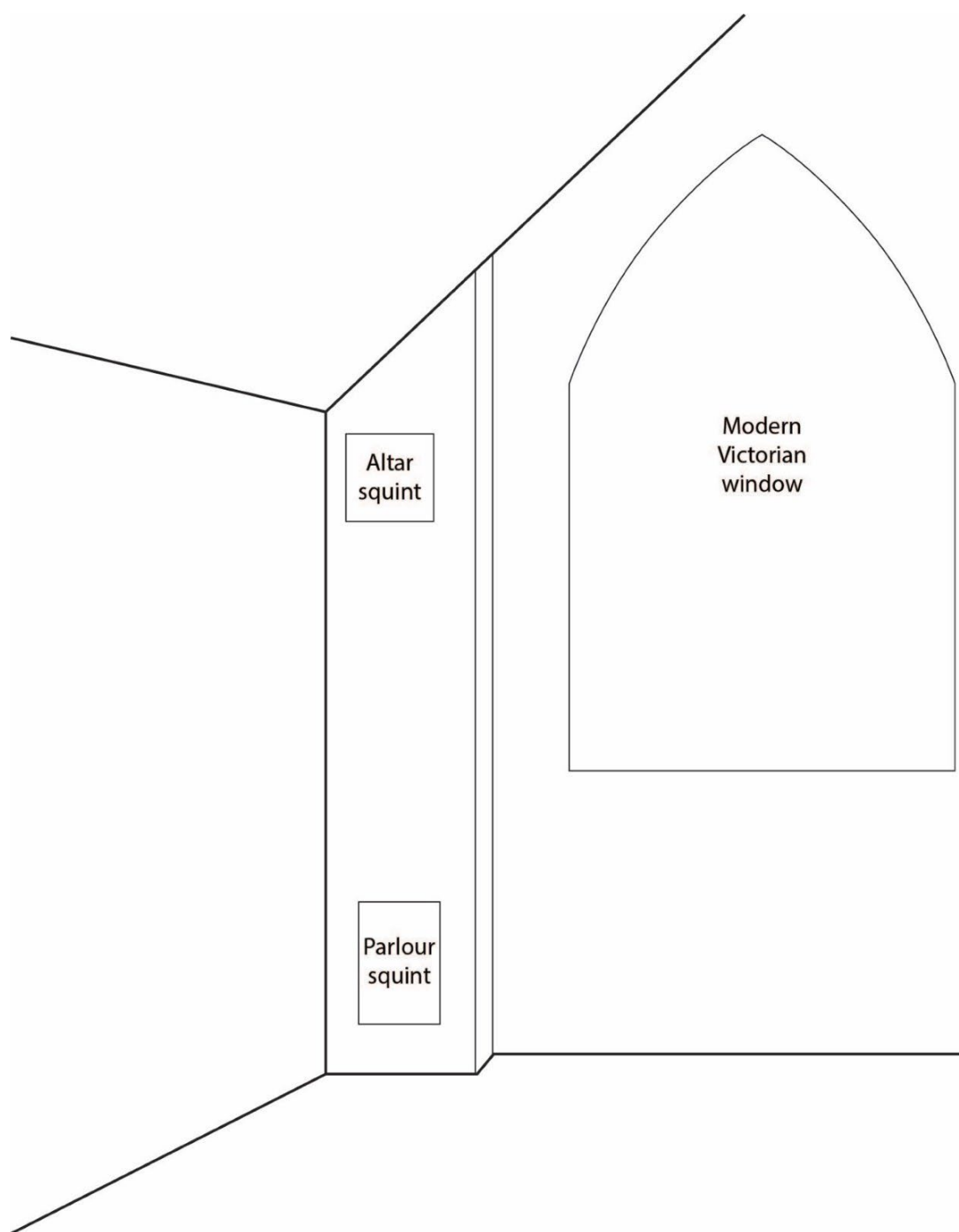


Figure 77: All Saints elevation.

Hardham, West Sussex: St. Botolph's Church

St. Botolph's Church is located on London Road, Hardham, West Sussex. St. Botolph's (see Figure 78) is a small, pre-conquest church (Johnston 1901:73) located in the valley of the River Adur in a pastoral landscape, in the parish of Coldwaltham, in Hardham. Hardham is approximately 2km southwest of Pulborough and 25km from the Norman-medieval market town of Chichester. The church was not included in the Domesday Book survey. The church's significance within the local ecclesiastical landscape is cemented by its proximity to notable landmarks such as the Norman Bramber castle, located 1.5km away, the eleventh century Coombes Church, situated 1.25km from the church, and the oldest known church in Bramber, the Saxon church of St Nicholas', positioned 2km from St Boltoph's. It is not known if either of these held anchorites. St. Botolph's is also 10.61km from Arundel Priory (also known as The Priory of St. Nicholas), which was established in the twelfth century. Unlike larger urban churches, St. Botolph's remains a relatively small and understated structure, although with extraordinary paintings of the story of Genesis on the internal walls.



Figure 78: Position of St. Botolph's Church, Hardham (indicated in red), in relation to the key historic feature of the area, Bignor Roman Villa (indicated in yellow).

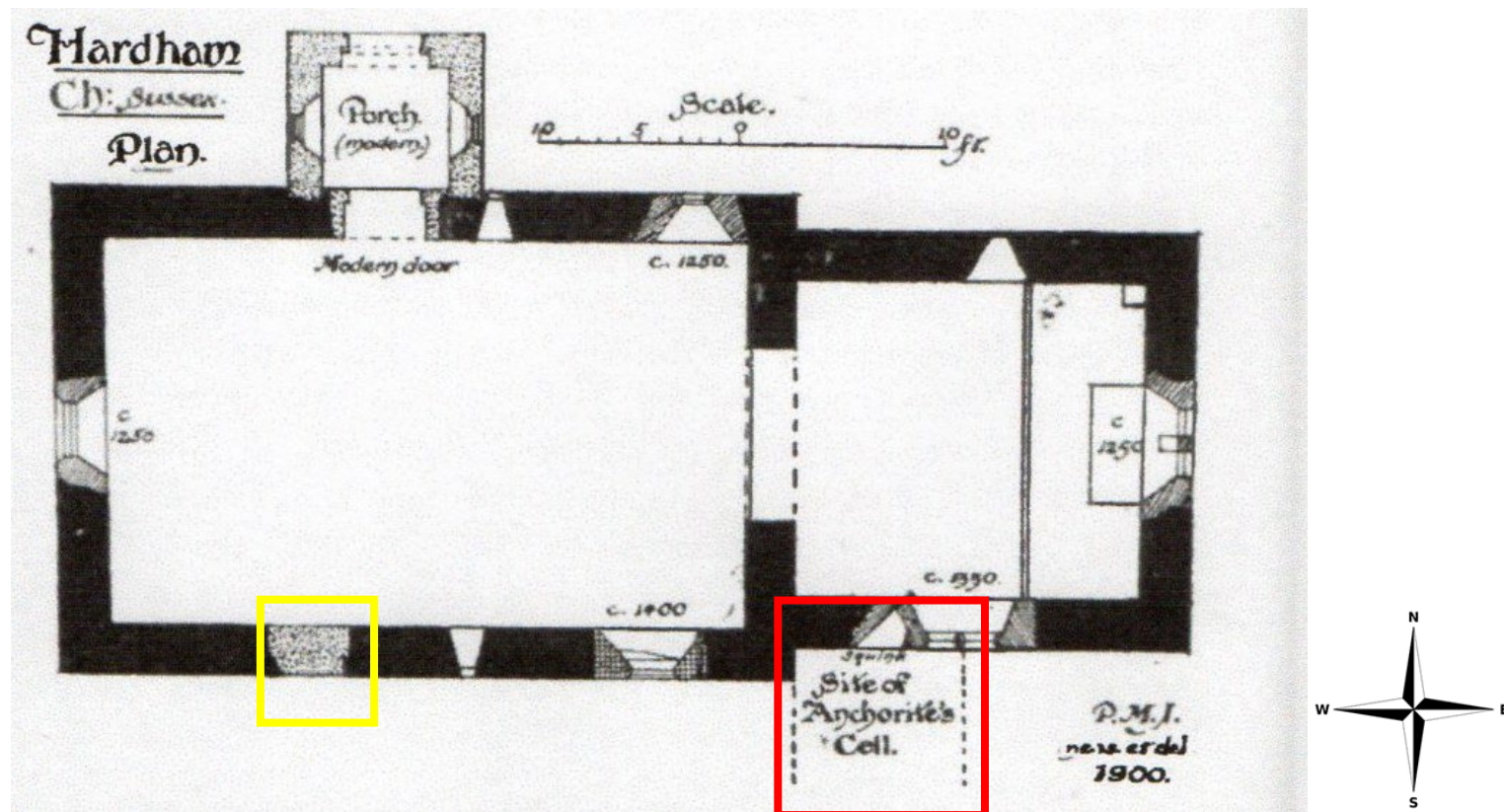


Figure 79: Plan of St. Botolph's Church, Hardham Sussex (Johnston 1901:62) - red box shows location of anchorite cell. Yellow box indicates location of the 'Devil's Door'. The cell may have however extended to the east corner of the church where a possible anchor mark has been found (see Figures 79 and 80).

The Anchorite/s:

An anchorite of unknown sex was enclosed in this cell sometime between 1245 and 1253 CE, in which year there is mention of the “recluse of Hardham” in the will of St. Richard (d. 1253 CE), Bishop of Chichester from 1245 CE (Johnston 1901). Johnston speculates that the Bishop may have been involved in the supervision of the inclusion of the Hardham anchorite (Johnston 1901:68). Another, later, anchorite enclosed at St. Botolph’s was also named ‘Richard’. Warren suggests he may have been the Prior of Hardham Priory (Warren 1984:46). He was enclosed in the cell in 1285 CE. It is unknown if Bishop Richard and Prior Richard were one and the same person, but this is unlikely. The enclosure of anchorites in the St. Botolph’s cell during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries highlights the continuity of spiritual devotion over time, while also raising questions around the identities and motivations of these recluses. Moreover, the details within the will of Bishop Richard of Chichester in connection with the inclusion of the Hardham anchorite suggests a deeper level of institutional involvement in the practice of this enclosure, hinting at the broader religious and social networks that sustained anchoritic communities.

The Cell

The anchorite cell was located on the south side of the church but is no longer fully extant. Johnston suggests that the squint was partially destroyed by the construction of a large window c1330 CE and that this indicates the cell may have been demolished or “fallen into disuse” by this time (Johnston 1901:67). A section of red brick is visible on the same side of the external wall as the squint and may have been where the anchorite cell was ‘anchored’

to the church (see Figures 81, 82). A squint is visible externally on the south wall (see Figure 82), and still has a shutter rebate for internal shutters. These were no doubt wooden, in keeping with other extant examples. The original layout of this cell can only be assumed, as there are no visible foundations above the ground and the cell itself may have been constructed of wattle-and-daub.



Figure 80: Front view (north side) of church.



Figure 81: External south-east corner (chancel) of church, showing exposed red brick on wall - indicated in yellow.



Figure 82: South side of church showing remains of altar squint. Exposed red brick visible at far right.

A 'Devils door' is located on the south-west wall of the nave (see Figure 83). These doors were traditionally placed in the north wall of a church and the folklore surrounding them demanded that they be left open during baptisms as a symbolic way to "let out any evil spirits in the child" (Burne 1908:459; National Churches Trust UK 2021). Indeed, an unnamed 1602 manuscript from Sussex deemed "the north door is clene dammed" (Victoria County History, 1953).

In reality, these doors, often called "low" or "priest's" doors, served practical purposes rather than symbolic or supernatural ones. They provided a secondary entrance for clergy or parishioners, allowing them to enter or exit the church without disturbing the main service or procession. Additionally, they may have been used to facilitate the movement of goods or materials into or out of the church. They were all bricked up after the Reformation, with examples seen in all of the case studies provided in this research. The presence of this door confirms that the structure of the anchorite cell at St. Botolph's did not extend further to the west than this door, as the door would have been in use during the same period as the cell.



Figure 83: Devils door / bricked up doorway of church on the south-west wall of the Nave.

Dimensions

A decision was made not to measure the squint remains as there is not enough of the extant squint to measure in full. However, a speculative measurement of the single-storey cell is approximately 6 metres long according to its location. Further photographs are recorded in Appendix II.

The case study of St. Botolph's Church offers valuable insights into the complex relationship between spirituality, architecture, and community. Additionally, the enduring legacy of

religious devotion and the impact of the anchoritic tradition on the local landscapes and community in medieval England is demonstrated.

Lewes, West Sussex: St. Anne's Church

St. Anne's Church, formerly St. Mary Westout, is located in the town of Lewes, West Sussex.

The town has a long history dating back to the tenth century, when it was named 'Laew'

(<https://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/resources/assets/inline/full/0/259657.pdf>).

It was recorded in the Domesday Book as 'Lewes' in 1086. The town is of major historical interest, having the remains of Lewes Castle, a sixteenth-century house that once belonged to Anne of Cleves, and the Lewes Priory.



Figure 84: Satellite image of position of St. Anne's Church, Lewes, (indicated in red) in relation to key historic features of the area, including Lewes Castle (indicated in yellow).

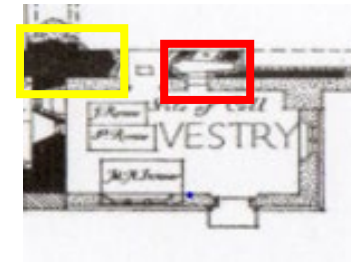
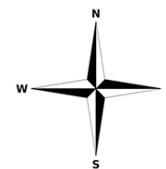
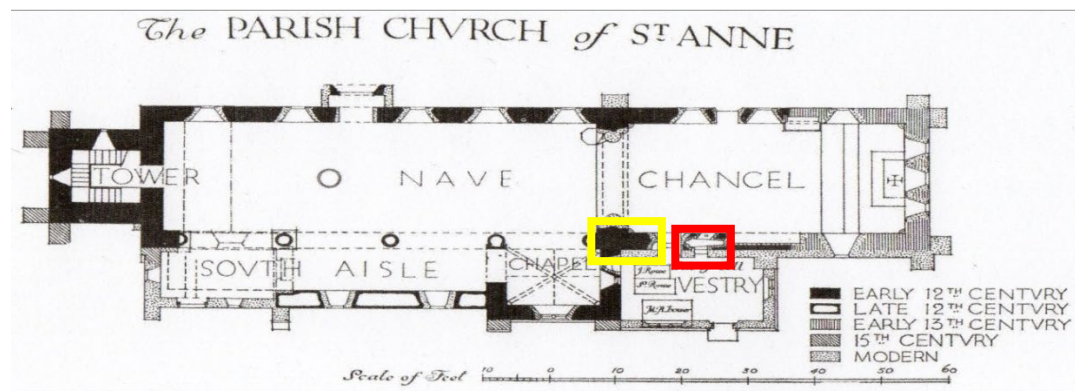


Figure 85: The stages of construction of St Anne's Church, Lewes, East Sussex (Godfrey 1933:160). Included in a magnified view of cell area. Area of anchorite cell A indicated in yellow and cell B indicated in red.

The church is located on Western Road, Lewes (see Figure 84). There is a cluster of c.20 monastic houses in East Sussex. St Anne's Church is 0.80km from Lewes Priory and 0.69km from the Church of St. John's de Castro, which was built over the ruins of a Saxon church that once housed another anchorite, a male, whose name was Magnus and recorded as a Danish noble (A History of the County of Sussex, 1973).

Anchorite/s:

A female anchorite is mentioned in the will of "St. Richard de Wych, Bishop of Chichester, who left 5 shillings to the female recluse of St. Mary Westout [in 1253]" (Godfrey 1933:165), although the identity of this or any other anchorite who may have been enclosed in this cell is not recorded. The remains of a female anchorite were discovered in 1927 when a new vestry was built and is the only *known* burial of an anchorite in England and Wales. However, in 2007, an excavation was completed on a burial discovered in All Saint's Church, Fishergate, York. The burial was of a female between the ages of 30 – 50 years old, who had suffered with arthritis and had dental wear. The burial was located in a room at the back of the altar (to the east of the church), a position normally held for the very wealthy or for priests. The radiocarbon date for the bone samples is between 1426 – 1486 CE. Unfortunately, there is no conclusion that can be confirmed around the identity of this female or if she was indeed an anchorite. The skeleton of the anchoress at St. Anne's, Lewes was exhumed in 1927, studied, and reburied. Full measurements of the skeleton were carried out, and a description was given of the remains. The report described her as "about 5 '5 in height", with no unusual medical issues and probably around 70-years-old (see Appendix V). The significance of this

lies in the rarity and historical importance of the finding. It also adds to the knowledge currently held about the enclosed anchoress.

The Cells

St. Anne's originally contained one cell, that may have been extended to include a second and perhaps even a third cell at an unknown date (Godfrey 1933:168), (see Figure 85). The original anchorite cell (Cell A), dated to the thirteenth century (Godfrey 1933:165), is partially extant. It was located against the south-east wall of the church, in the space that is now the vestry. Details of the original cell were revealed when the current vestry was built in 1927 (Godfrey 1933:161). The building was in disrepair at this time and much rubble had to be moved. In the process of re-building, a squint in the east wall of the chapel was discovered, which included wooded shutters and an iron pin that was still in situ (see Figure 86). This may have been used as a parlour window for visitors and pilgrims.



Figure 86: Parlour squint located in the east wall of the chapel.

A modern doorway was added to the new vestry building by cutting a section of the cell wall. In doing so an altar squint was discovered facing east toward the altar, although it had been blocked up and whitewashed (see Figure 87). This angled squint is very similar to the altar squint in St. Mary and St. Cuthbert's Church in Chester-le-Street, Durham. An empty grave

was located just underneath this squint (churchwarden per.comm, 5 May 2018). No dimensions, or contents, of this grave are known. The door of this cell was locked at the time of the scheduled visit and therefore it was not possible to view this grave or to reschedule another visit to the cell.



Figure 87: Altar squint of Cell A. This is positioned in the vestry entry the north wall of the cell.

A second altar squint (see Figures 88, 89) was found to the east of the first in the north wall of the cell, together with a grave and the previous mentioned burial (Cell B), (see Figure 90). This second altar squint may indicate a separate second cell rather than one that had been enlarged, as no other known anchorite cell has two altar squints.

There may have been a third cell, now hidden behind the organ, which was installed in the early part of the twentieth century in 1935 by 'Bishop & Sons'. Because no parts of these cells survive other than the windows, there is no physical evidence for any features that may have been part of these cells and their original size, shape and configuration cannot now be reconstructed from above ground evidence. There is no evidence of a fireplace having been part of the original cell.



Figure 88: Looking south towards original anchorite cell. The red box indicates where the small, blocked squint of Cell A and empty grave is located – in the entrance to the now vestry. The yellow box indicates where Cell B and burial is located.



Figure 89: Altar squint from Cell B looking out into the Chancel and facing onto the altar.



Figure 90: Grave/burial in Cell B, located directly under the altar squint as seen in Figure 89.

Cell/Features	Height	Length	Width
Cell A – squint looking towards the altar	0.412m		
Cell A – squint looking towards the altar – at opening			0.252m
Cell A – squint looking towards the altar – at centre			0.256m
Current depth - (D = 0.333m)			
Parlour window to lady's chapel – front window to top of opening inside	1.068m		
Parlour window to lady's chapel - height inside the opening	0.341m		0.268m
Parlour window to lady's chapel – height of internal kneeling step to ceiling	0.851m		
Parlour window to lady's chapel - Width on lowest step			0.644m
Cell B – Burial cemented floor		1.567m	0.573m
Altar squint	0.472m		
Altar squint – bottom			0.703m
Altar squint – top			0.809m

Table 14: Dimensions of cell features, St Anne's Church.

Tintagel, Cornwall: The Church of St. Materiana

The Church of St. Materiana is an isolated parish church in the seaside village of Tintagel, Cornwall. A basic chancel and nave church was constructed on the burial ground of Tintagel Castle in the eleventh to thirteenth centuries, between c.1080 and 1200 CE (Nowakowski 1990:14). Two visible burial mounds in the grounds were investigated, first by the Reverend E D Arundell in 1942 and then in 1990 by the Cornwall Archaeological Unit, who interpreted them as a “high status burial ground” (Nowakowski 1990:14). This suggests a social hierarchy intertwined with the spiritual significance of this sacred space, perhaps the reason why such high-status individuals, (presumably pagan as they were buried in mounds), were buried in these grounds.

The church is located on Church Hill, Tintagel, 0.64km from the ruins of Tintagel Castle, and 2.72km from the c. fourteenth-century St. Piran church and its associated holy well, which is located in a lane leading up to this chapel. St. Materiana’s is also 3.09km from the c. sixth-century St. Nectan’s hermitage (see Figure 91).



Figure 91: Position of the Church of St. Materiana, Tintagel (indicated in red), in relation to key historic features of the area, including Tintagel Castle (indicated in yellow).

The only known restorations to the Church of St. Materiana took place in 1851, when mural paintings from the Norman period were exposed and whitewashed, and in 1870, when the church lost its roof (Historic England Entry 1327752:1962). At this time the plaster over the murals was removed, destroying the majority of the paintings in the process. A pipe organ was installed, presumably in the Victorian period, since this was a common addition at this time. A full survey of the dimensions of this cell was not carried out, as this cell was not a planned find.

Anchorite/s:

There is no record of any anchorite who was enclosed in this cell. An altar was an original feature of the cell, however, so it can be assumed that the anchorite was a priest, and therefore male.

The Cell

The church was originally built in a cruciform shape, with the addition of the anchorite cell on the northeast side at an unknown date (see Figure 92). If the three lancet windows, an architectural style of the Early English period (thirteenth century), were installed at the same time, then this cell may have been built between the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. The cell is a single-storeyed room with a fireplace set in the north wall (see Figures 93, 94) and, a stone altar on the east wall under a single lancet styled window (see Figure 96), which was presumably placed in the east side for light. A marked indentation in the wall, approximately 35cm square, is evidence that there may have been a window between the anchorite cell and an adjoining space on the western side, close to the north transept of the church (see Figure 98). This may have been a servant's room. The current door to the cell is not original. This is evident from the separate door jambs still in situ, and plaster surrounding the internal door frame.

An altar window (see Figure 98), again in the lancet style, is located in the southeast wall of the cell. The shape and style of this window, however, does not lend itself to allowing an

anchorite to see the altar nor follow the services and prayers, therefore there may have been an earlier squint in this location which has been replaced with the current window. There is a third, but much smaller, Early English lancet style window to the left and above the fireplace in the north wall of the cell (see Figure 94).

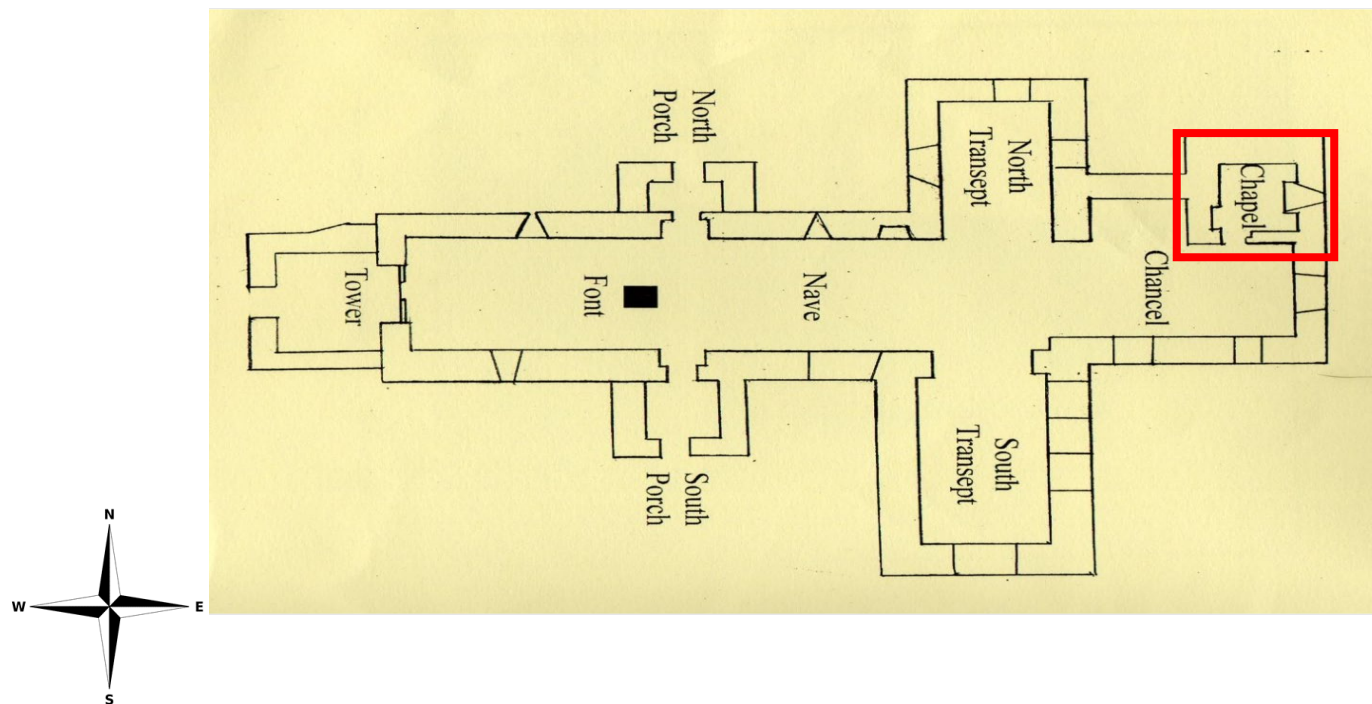


Figure 92: Plan of The Church of St. Marteriana (Official Church Guidebook 2018:1). Area of anchorite cell indicated in red.

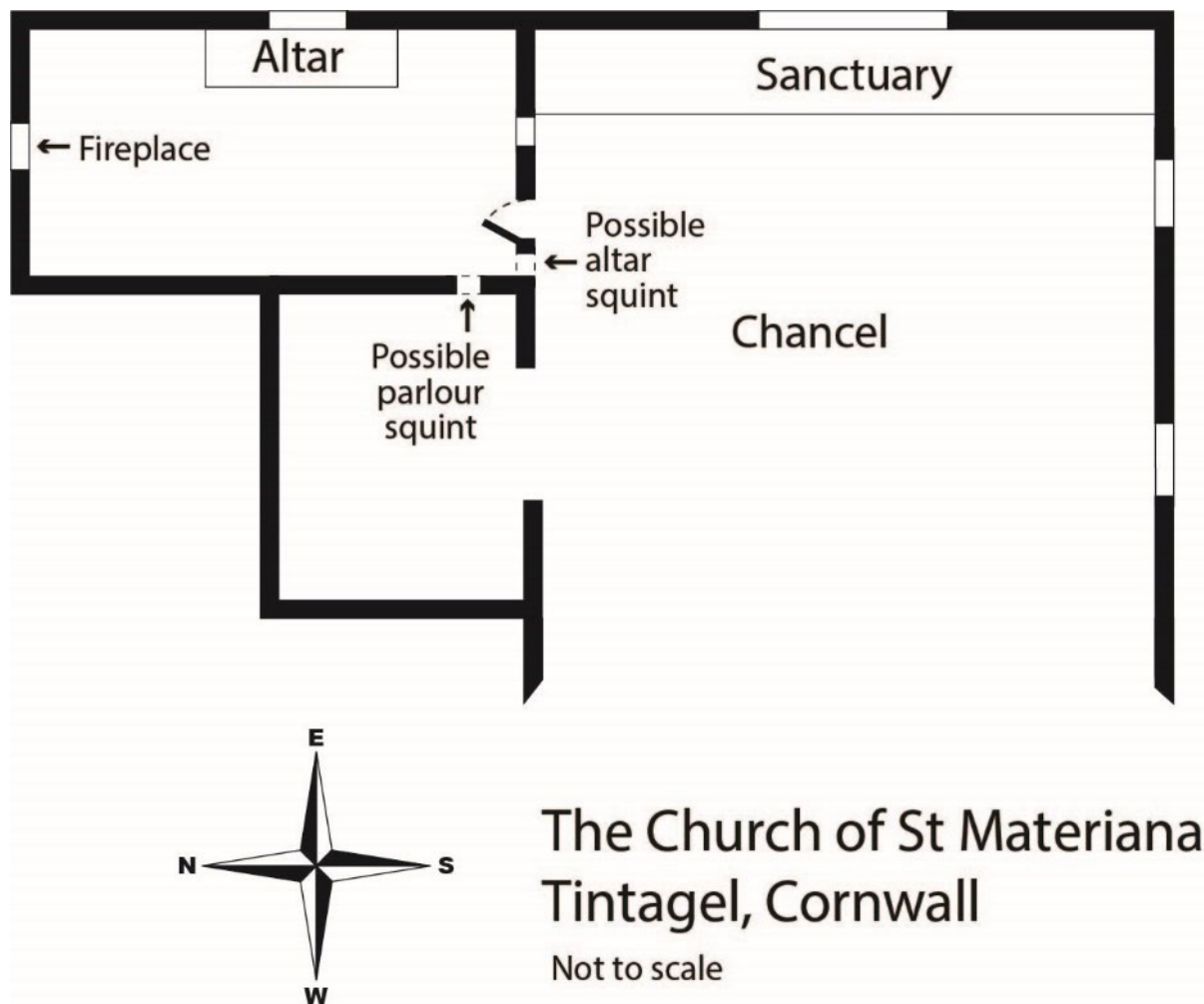


Figure 93: Floor plan of the anchorite cell of St. Materiana, Cornwall.



Figure 94: Fireplace on north wall.



Figure 95: External view of cell, showing window positioned over the fireplace (indicated in red). This also shows the chimney.



Figure 96: Cell altar on east side of cell.



Figure 97: External view of anchorite cell, showing window positioned over altar (indicated in red).



Figure 98: Internal view of cell showing altar (far left), lancet window into the chancel and entry door to chancel. At far right, behind door, there may have been a parlour window (indicated in red).

Partrishow, near Abergavenny, Wales: St. Issui Patricio's Church

St. Issui Patricio's Church is an extremely isolated fourteenth-century church located in Partrishow, near Abergavenny, Powys, in the Vale of Grwyney, Wales. Archbishop Baldwin preached to the third crusade in 1188 CE on the site, and there is a holy well located in the valley directly in front of the church. The church is named after the hermit who resided in a cell next to the well in the sixth century, St. Issui (National Church Trust 2021), and the money for the initial building of the church was left by a man who was convinced the well had cured him of leprosy.

The twelfth-century Book of Llandaff calls the area Merthyr Issui, or the martyrdom of Issui, because it is thought that he was murdered by a traveller to whom he gave shelter. It is thought that St. Issui is buried in a tomb built into a raised stone feature inside the anchorite cell (National Church Trust 2024; Churchwarden 6 May 2018), however, there are no records to confirm this. The church is 5.4km from the twelfth-century Llanthony Abbey, St. David's Church and St. David's sixth-century cell (now non extant), and 2.22km from the c. twelfth-century St. Martin's Church (see Figure 101).

St. Issui Patricio's is a simple Gothic church with a nave and chancel, porch, chapel, and bellcote (RCAHMW 2007), (see Figures 99, 100). It is not known when the anchorite cell was built. The church was renovated in 1908, and it may be that the anchorite cell was also altered at this time.

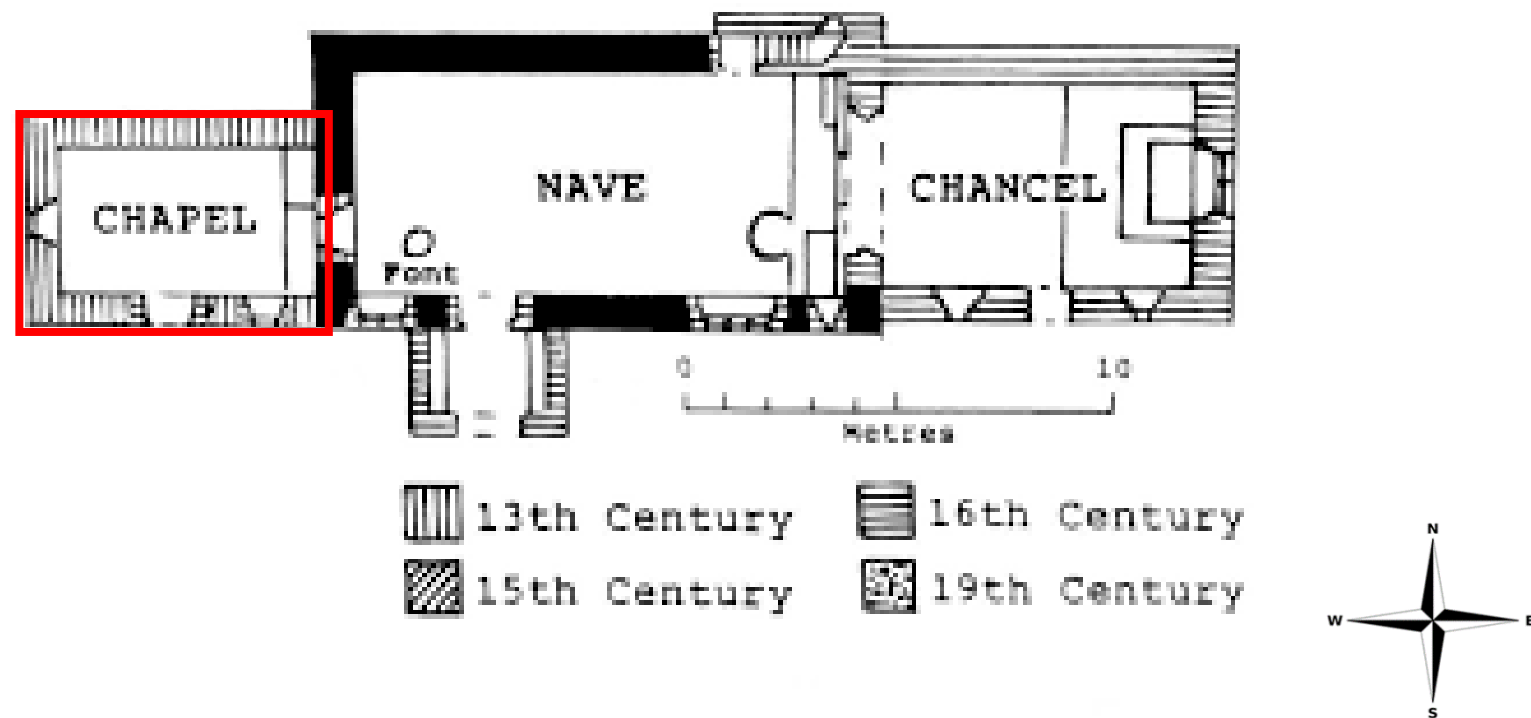


Figure 99: Plan of the St. Issui Patricio's Church (Salter 1997:5). Area of anchorite cell indicated in red.

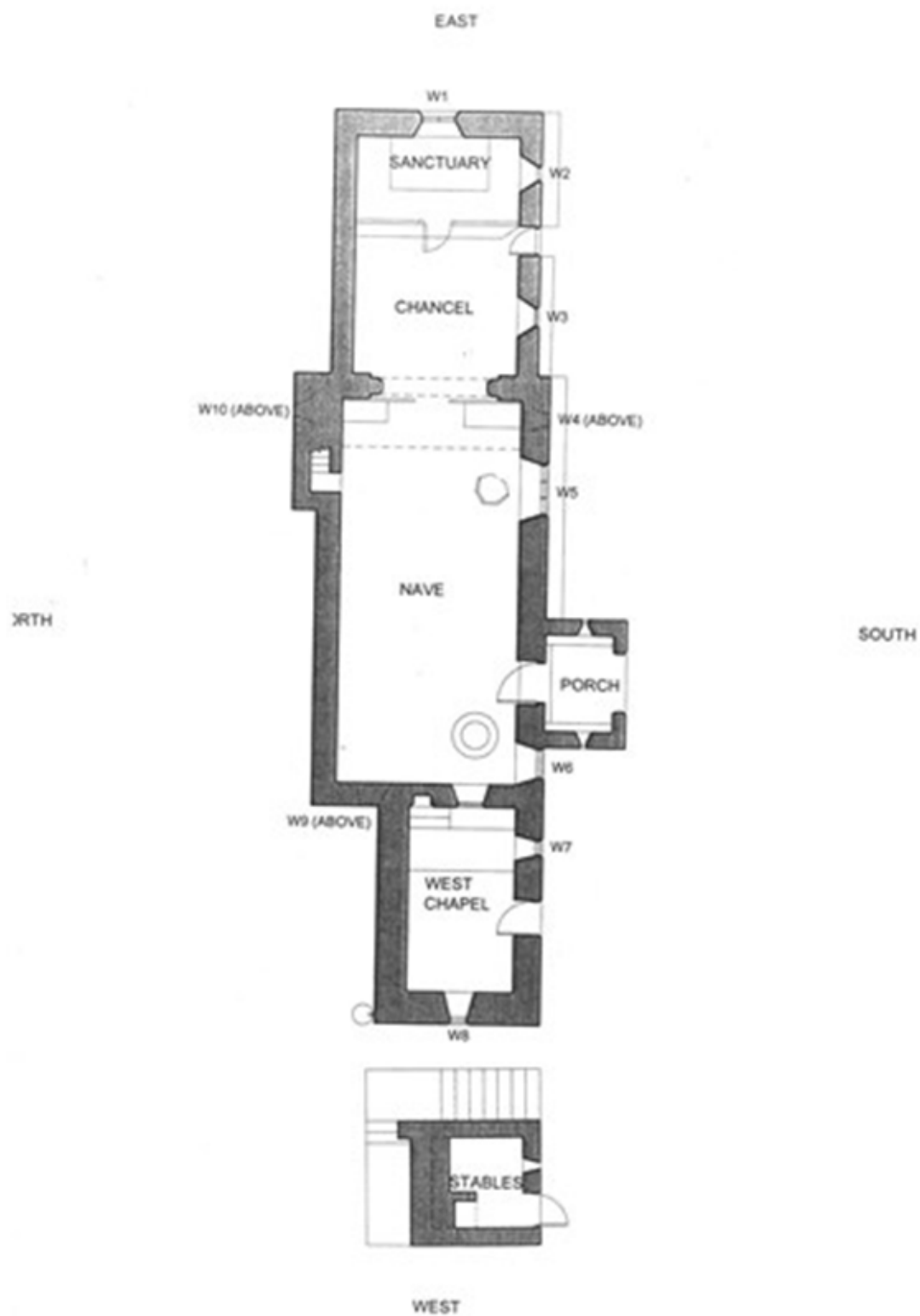


Figure 100: Patricio Church Plan (Baker 2017), showing stables next to the cell.

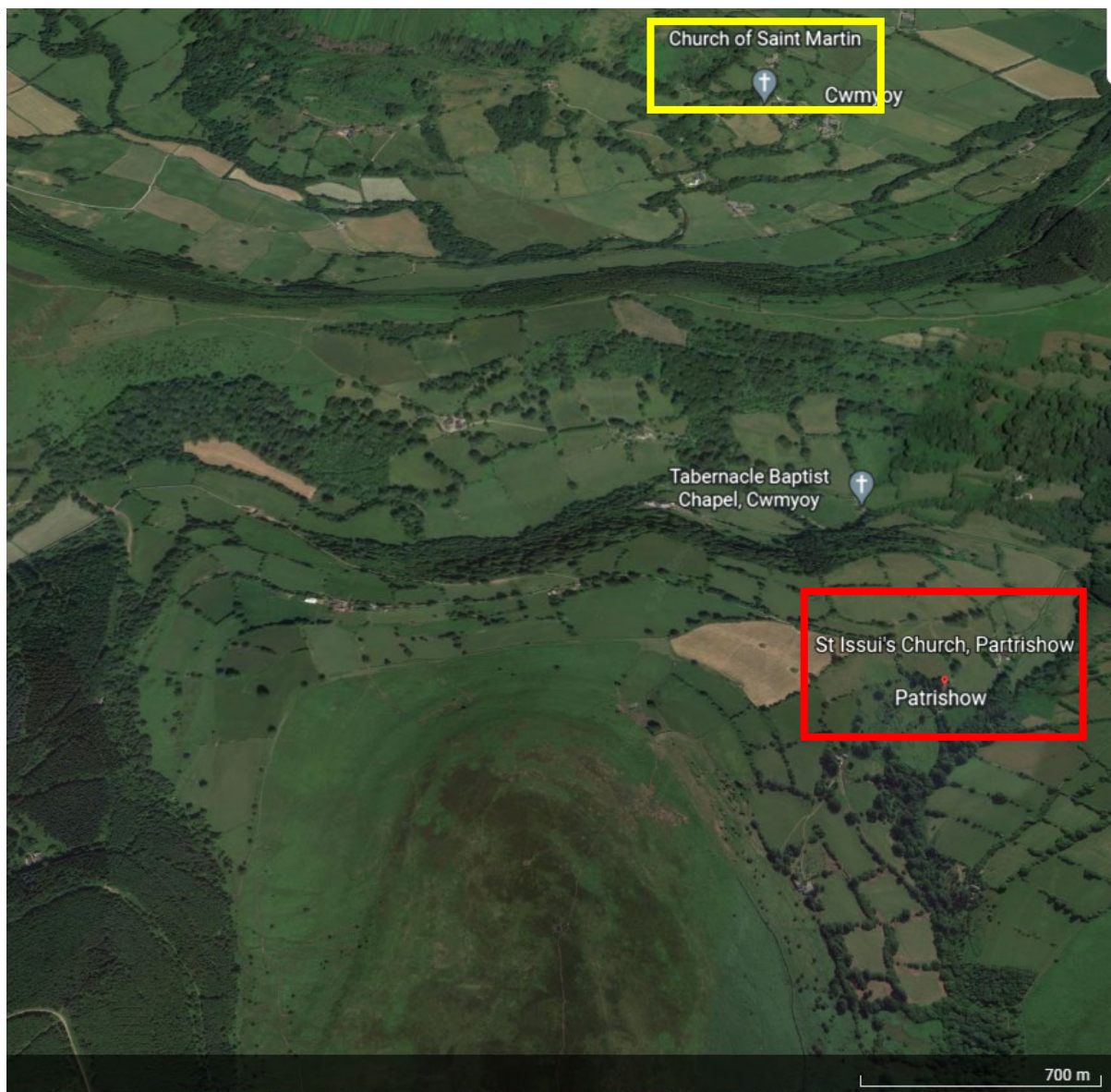


Figure 101: Satellite map Position of St. Issui Patricio's Church, Partrishow, near Abergavenny, Powys (indicated in red), in relation a key historic feature of the area, the twelfth century church, St. Martin's (indicated in yellow).

Anchorite/s

The anchorite who resided in this cell is unknown. However, it is possible the anchorite was a priest, and therefore male, because the cell may have had its own altar, although there is

some doubt as to the original function of this feature (see below). It may also have been the tomb of the sixth-century hermit the church is named after Issui (or Ishow).

The Cell

The cell is a single-storey structure, and consists of one large, open room. It is located on the south side of the church (see Figure 102). A fireplace with external chimney was an original feature of the cell at its south end (Figure 103), although there is now no visible sign of a fireplace internally. This may have been removed during the 1908 renovation, or earlier. A small, detached, skillion_roofed stone building to the south of the cell is of the same construction period and material, and may have been used to store firewood or as a stable (Figure 105).

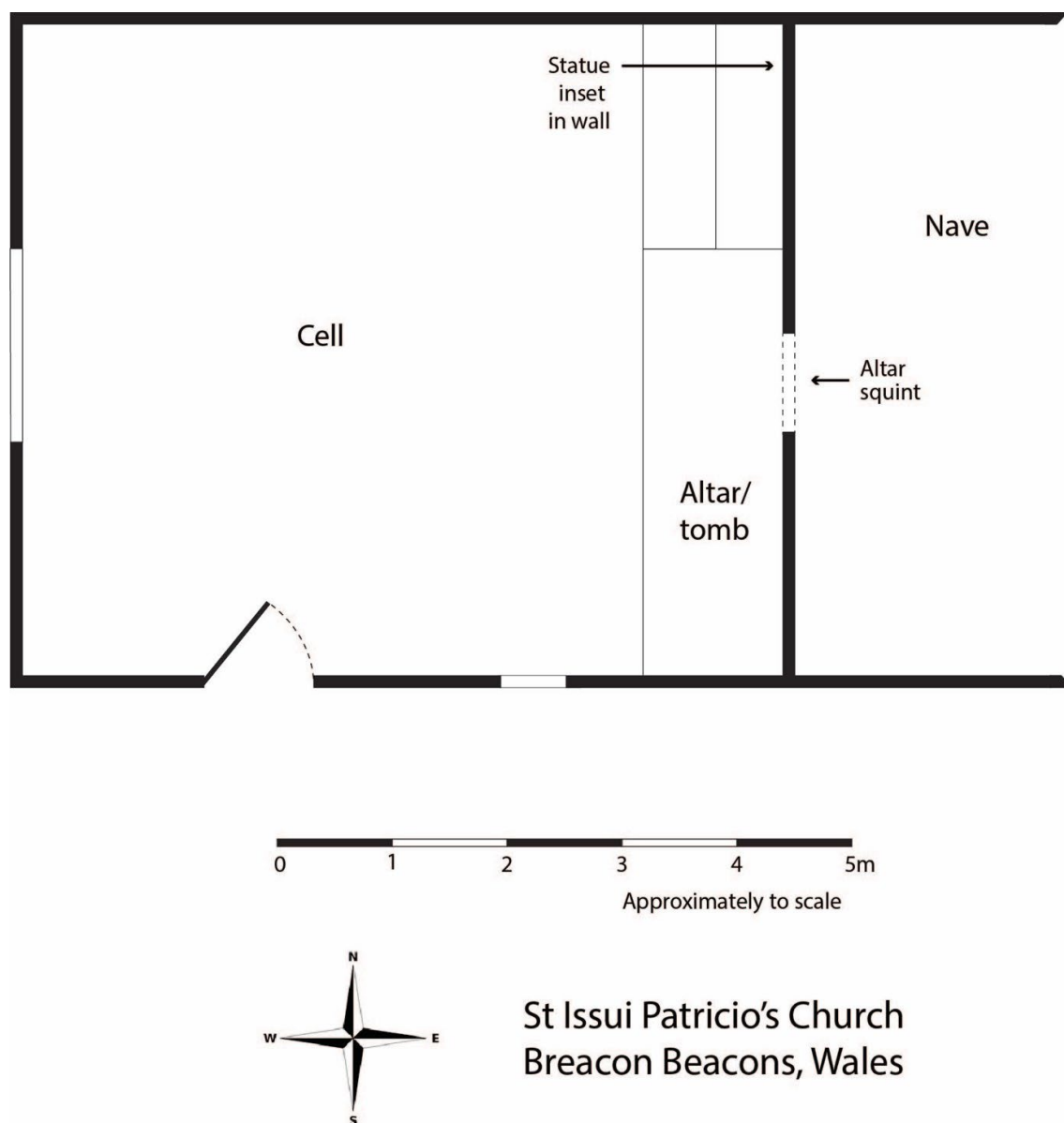


Figure 102: Floor plan of the anchorite cell at St. Issui Patricio's Church.

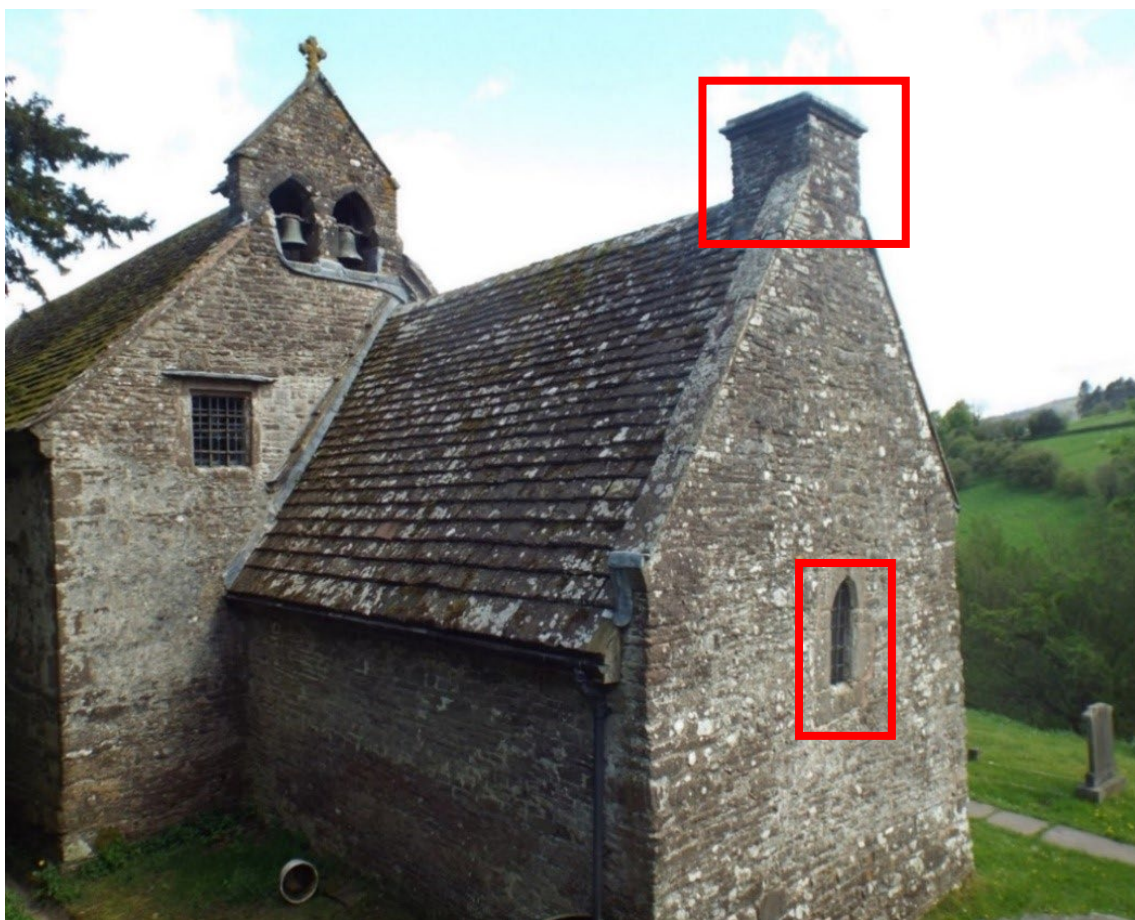


Figure 103: External view of cell showing chimney and high window on south wall (indicated in red).



Figure 104: External view of window in south wall of cell.



Figure 105: External view of church, showing detached building on the forefront left side of the picture.

A raised, rectangular stone feature is still extant along the wall on the north side of the cell, beneath an altar squint located approximately 2 feet above floor level (see Figure 106, 106). This has a solid stone base with a rectangular capping stone on top. The feature appears to be the same age as other original internal features of the church. There are two steps leading up to a more recent statue in a niche to one side of the feature, although it is not known where these steps originally led to, as there is nothing currently visible. It is not known if this niche is an original feature of the cell as it may have been made specifically for the statue at an unknown date. The upper face of the stone feature is incised with six crosses, which may

include the representation of the five wounds of Christ, suggesting that it may have been used as an altar. The addition of six crosses is unusual, however, as the customary symbolism is restricted to five, one in each corner and one in the centre of the altar stone (Child 2017:6) (see Figure 107).



Figure 106: Altar squint with view of altar to the east.

Apart from the altar squint, the cell has two further windows: one on the southern wall (see Figure 108) and another smaller window on the western wall (see Figure 104). The south window is a trefoil shape and may have been the parlour window (see Figure 108). It has a hole in the internal wall next to the window (see Figure 109), which may have been for a bolt for a wooden shutter. The western window is a lancet shape, set higher and may have been for light.



Figure 107: Internal view of cell looking towards the north wall, altar squint, and raised stone feature.



Figure 108: Front of cell showing entrance which at one time may have been blocked, and the possible parlour window indicated in red.



Figure 109: Internal view of southern window. Possible bolt hole indicated in yellow.

Cell/Features	Height	Length	Width
External parlour window in southern wall of cell	0.827m		0.328m
External parlour window in southern wall of cell – windowsill		0.510m	
External parlour window in southern wall of cell – at widest section			0.713m
External parlour window in southern wall of cell – at smallest section			0.426m
Square in stone for window shutter (Depth = 0.178m)	0.189m		0.194m
High set window on south wall of cell – windowsill		0.620m	0.847m
High set window on south wall of cell – - opening at widest section on sill	1.157m		
Stone altar (positioned east towards main church altar (includes tomb below and attached top stone)	1.100m	1.858m	0.709m
Altar squint (Depth = 0.957m)	0.684m		0.680m
Steps on left side of altar leading to (modern) statue – Step 1		1.269m	3.343m
Steps on left side of altar leading to (modern) statue – Step 2		1.226m	3.301m
Floor to ceiling – at highest point	6.003m		
Cell – south wall to start of altar		4.863m	3.119m
Door – floor to lintel	1.813m		
Door width			1.084m
Floor to start of ceiling beams	2.655m		
Windowsill		1.054m	1.087m
Height from windowsill	0.975m		

Table 15: Dimensions of cell features.

The following table (Table 16) is a collated view of the measurements of the cell squints demonstrating the differences between them. The squints vary greatly in their size and shape, the largest is Compton, at 1.230 m x 1.260 m and the smallest is Durham, at 0.200 m x 0.150 m. The influences of historical context and architectural trends may have had some bearing on the design and construction of these squints. Factors such as changes in liturgical practices,

shifts in religious beliefs, or even the preference of individual craftsmen may have contributed to the different dimensions observed. Additionally, the spatial relationships between the cell squint and other elements in the church, such as altars my warrant further investigation. Further analysis has been given in Chapter 7 around the possible reasons for the difference in dimensions.

Squint	Height	Width	Sex of anchorite	Squint	Height	Width	Comments
Rettendon, Essex: Altar squint	Nil	Nil	Unknown	Rettendon, Essex: Parlour Squint			Measurements of altar squint could not be taken as it likely to be located behind an eighteenth-century statue
Compton, Surrey: Altar squint	0.283m	0.182m	Male	Compton, Surrey: Parlour /External Squint	1.230m	1.460m	
Chester-le-Street, Durham: Altar squint	0.381m	0.226m (at widest)	Male	Chester-le-Street, Durham: Parlour Squint	c. 0.200m	c. 0.150m	The parlour squint measurement are only approximate taken from inside church, as no access was available to squint inside cell.
York, Yorkshire: Altar squint	0.335m	0.380m	Female	York, Yorkshire: Parlour Squint	0.498m	0.433m	

Hardham, West Sussex: Altar Squint	Unknown	Unknown	Male	Hardham, West Sussex: Parlour Squint	Unknown	Unknown	Cell altar squint only partially extant, filled in and is whitewashed. Parlour squint non-extant
Squint	Height	Width	Sex of anchorite	Squint	Height	Width	Comments
Hardham, West Sussex: Altar Squint	Unknown	Unknown	Male	Hardham, West Sussex: Parlour Squint	Unknown	Unknown	Cell altar squint only partially extant, filled in and is whitewashed. Parlour squint non-extant
Lewes, West Sussex: Altar Squint A	0.412m	0.256m	Female	Lewes, West Sussex: Parlour Squint A	1.068m	0.268m	
Lewes, West Sussex: Altar Squint B	0.472m	0.809m	Unknown (Female ?)	Lewes, West Sussex: Parlour Squint B	1.068m	0.268m	Altar squint partially filled in and is whitewashed

Tintagel, Cornwall: Altar Squint	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Tintagel, Cornwall: Parlour Squint	Unknown	Unknown	Original squints are non-extant
Squint	Height	Width	Sex of anchorite	Squint	Height	Width	Comments
Partrishow, Abbergavenny, Wales Altar Squint	0.684m	0.680m	Unknown	Beacon Beacons, Wales Parlour /External Squint	0.827m	0.426m (at opening)	

Table 16: Collated view of squint measurements demonstrating the differences/similarities between cell squints.

6.3 Gendered Placement of Cells

The positioning of anchorite cells provides an insight into beliefs around femininity and masculinity during the medieval period.

Traditionally, the cardinal north has been associated with femininity and the south with masculinity (Gilchrist 1999:86). This association is reflected in the placement of some anchorite cells, with cells for female anchorites typically located in the northern parts of churches, the less hospitable side, known for their harsher condition and colder temperatures, while those for male anchorites were often positioned in the southern, more hospitable sections (McAvoy 2005:7; Robertson 2006:137). Clay (2014:120), discussing anchorites in general, suggested that there were a number of examples that “the ascetic would deliberately forgo the sunshine with the rest of nature’s gifts”. Although, Clay (1914:119) also stated that “there was no rule as to the situation of such dwellings” and that it was stated in one record a “religious woman abode in a remote corner of the church”, which in fact could point to either cardinal location.

This spatial organisation likely stemmed from religious ideologies regarding gender roles, (the sinful woman and the male who upheld morality), and divine symbolism. By examining the placement of anchorite cells, insights are gained into the gender dynamics prevalent in medieval religious communities and in society in general, and the symbolic importance attributed to architectural configurations. In a modern discussion around the cardinal points

and their representation, Micah Gill (2022:26), in discussing cardinal direction symbolism in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, acknowledges Milton's use of these directions around God's position. The east and south were before God and at his right hand, and therefore were favourable directions, were as west and south were behind God and to His left, and therefore unfavourable. Additionally, the east was where the light emerged, and thus where the altar was place (Gill 2022:30).

The eight case studies presented in the research, challenge the traditional cardinal symbolisation of anchorite cell placement, though further case studies would need to be completed to give a solid conclusion. Contrary to the conventional association of north with femininity and south with masculinity, these case studies reveal a surprising randomness in the positioning of cells. In some instances, male cells are found on the northern side of the church, while female cells are located on the southern side, defying the expected gendered spatial arrangements. This departure from the perceived norm, highlights the complexity of architectural design and suggests that factors beyond gender symbolism may have influenced the placement of anchorite cells in medieval churches. Accordingly, the case studies provide valuable insights into the diversity and unpredictability of spatial configurations in religious architecture, challenging preconceived notions about gendered symbolism in medieval contexts.

Additionally, the case studies suggest that the sole determining factor for the placement of anchorite cells may have been the practical, and spiritual, necessity for the anchorite to

participate in church services and have a clear view of the main altar. This functional consideration emphasises the practical approach taken in designing religious spaces and the importance of accessibility and visibility for anchorites in their solitary devotional practices.

The detailed analysis is elaborated on in Chapter 7.

Anchorite Cell	Male	Female	Unknown	North	South	West
Rettendon, Essex			X	X (NE)		
Compton, Surrey (Original cell)			X	X		
Compton, Surrey (New Cell)	X				X	
Chester-le-Street, Durham	X			X(NW)		
York, Yorkshire		X			X (SW)	
Hardham, West Sussex	X		X		X (SE)	
Lewes, West Sussex		X			X	
Tintagel, Cornwall			X	X (NE)		
Partrishow, Abbergavenny, Wales			X			X

Table 17: Table showing the cardinal placement of each case study cell in relation to the anchorite's sex.

6.4 Gender occupation of cells

The gender occupation of these cells, and indeed other cells is a difficult question to answer. The gender assignment of cells would be a reasonable request if there was documented records which specified the sexes of all enclosed anchorites. However, in these and many other cases, there is a lack of comprehensive data to establish which sex was enclosed or consistently enclosed within each cell over time. This limits the ability of researchers to fully comprehend the enclosure history for each individual cell. Consequently, the discussion can only rely on the available information. For the cells where the inhabitant's gender is unknown or for which the enclosure records do not indicate a consistent male or female presence over time, the generic term 'anchorite' has been used. This approach ensured that the analysis remained grounded in the available data and avoided making assumptions about the specific gender identities of the occupants, unless there were other additional architectural features that provided evidence or clues regarding the gendered occupancy of the cells.

6.5 Summary

Chapter 6 offers a comprehensive exploration of anchorite cells, using eight case studies. Through analysis of historical records, architectural features, and local contexts, each case study offers insights into the lived experiences of anchorites and their integration into the communities they lived among.

Most of the surveyed cells have been thoroughly altered by subsequent renovations and changes to the fabric of the churches, which is not unexpected for buildings that have been

in constant use for hundreds of years. Despite this, it has been possible to tentatively reconstruct floorplans for the original cells, although two were beyond reconstruction because insufficient material evidence for their layout survives. The cells were a mix of single-storey (small) and double-storey (large) cells, with two, St. Mary and St. Cuthbert's, Durham, and St Anne's, Lewes, being quite large and possibly holding more than one anchorite.

The selection of the eight cells was used to demonstrate their significance within their respective communities and the broader ecclesiastical landscape. These churches not only served as spiritual centres but also provided physical spaces for solitary contemplation and devotion. The detailed examination of each cell's architecture, historical context and inhabitants', sheds light on the diverse motivations and practices of anchorites from their religious devotions to their social roles within the community. Finally, this chapter offers a discussion around the continuous use of these cells and the possibility of determining whether one sex consistently occupied them over time.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

The primary aim of this thesis has been to understand how gender, hierarchy and status were constructed through the placement, size, form, and space of anchorite cells in medieval England and Wales. Central to this investigation is whether the form and fabric of these cells served to construct and reinforce ideologies of gender, hierarchy, class and religious behaviour. This chapter will explore and analyse the overarching aim, along with the secondary questions outlined in the introduction chapter of this thesis, within the context of the surveyed anchorite cells.

7.1 Movement and Spread of Anchorite Cells Over Time

Clusters of Cells Across Space and Time

The recorded areas of anchorite clusters, consisting of five or more cells, spanned the counties of: Cheshire, Devonshire, Gloucestershire, Hertfordshire, Kent, Lincolnshire, Middlesex, Norfolk, Oxfordshire, Sussex, and Yorkshire. Notably, these regions not only boasted higher concentrations of anchorite cells but also served as hubs for various religious institutions, comprising both monasteries and nunneries (see Appendix VI). Chapter 6 explored the possible reasons behind the clustering phenomenon observed in these specific areas. It was concluded that these regions were characterised by robust commercial activities, fostering prosperity and wealth among their communities. This economic force enabled the anchorites

to maintain themselves by providing them with potential monetary benefits in the form of alms, and gifts of essential provisions, such as food, firewood and clothing. Beyond material sustenance, the influx of commercial activity likely generated broader implications for anchoritic life, influencing social and community interactions, and spiritual practices and rituals. These clusters are examined in this section in terms of their geographical and chronological spread, to provide an assessment of the development of anchoritism in these regions.

The movement and dispersion of anchorite cells throughout the timeframe examined in this thesis, segmented into 100-year time blocks from 1000 to 1500 CE (spanning from the eleventh to the sixteenth century), is detailed in Table 17. These data derive from the comprehensive combined dataset (see Appendix IV). However, it is noteworthy that only the data of Dale (1903), Clay (1914), and Jones (1998, 2005) were appropriate for analysis. Anne Warren's dataset was excluded from this analysis as it was not possible to define the extent of overlap between it and the other datasets. This table demonstrates that the earliest documented cells were constructed in the 1100s, with activity peaking in the 1400s when 97 cells are known. Throughout the entire duration covered by this study, a total of 247 clustered cells were documented across seven counties, underscoring the chronological and geographical evolution of anchoritic presence within the scope of this research. However, further evidence and analysis are warranted to bolster interpretations and substantiate claims regarding the trends and patterns observed in anchoritic movements and distributions over time.

The earliest recorded enclosures within the scope of this thesis provide an insight into the historical development of anchorite cells in England and Wales:

- 1043 CE – Evesham, Worcestershire – St Wulsi or Wulfey (male), (d. c. 1105 CE)
- 1103 CE – Llanthony – Wales – Sir William de Lacy, knight and Erinicius, priest (males), (d. unknown date)
- 1112 CE – Barnwell, Cambridgeshire – Godesone (unknown sex), (d. unknown date)

These anchorite cells coincide with the presence of religious houses in the respective regions, offering valuable context for understanding the socio-religious dynamics of the medieval period and may shed some light of the factors that facilitated the emergence and proliferation of anchorite practices. Firstly, the presence of established houses (see Table 7), signifies the religious fervour and institutional support that may have been made available for the anchorites. These religious institutions often served as hubs of spiritual and intellectual activity, attracting devout individuals seeking a deeper connection with their faith. The religious houses also acted as centres of learning, with Benedictine monasteries and nunneries acting as schools for children, as well as adults (Kersey 1980:188; Curran 2015:25) and devotion, fostering a culture conducive to ascetic practices and contemplative lifestyles. The teachings and practices promoted by these institutions likely influenced individuals to pursue a life of seclusion and prayer as a means of seeking spiritual fulfillment and closeness to God.

Eleventh Century	Twelfth Century
<p>Benedictine Monks:</p> <p><i>Worcestershire</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Astley (founded c. 1066) • Great Marvern (founded in 1085) 	<p>Benedictine Monks:</p> <p><i>Cambridgeshire</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denney (founded in 1159) • Ely (monastery originally founded in 970, Ely was formed as a diocese and cathedral founded in 1109) • Linton (founded in c. 1163) • Trokenholt (founded in c. 1154) <p><i>Monmouthshire</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bassaleg • Goldcliff (founded 1113) • Llangua (founded c. 1183) <p>Benedictine Nuns:</p> <p><i>Cambridgeshire</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swaffham Bulbeck • Ickleton (founded in 1190) • Cambridge (founded c. 1133) <p>Cluniac:</p> <p><i>Monmouthshire</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malpas (founded c. 1110) <p>Cistercian:</p> <p><i>Monmouthshire</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Llantarnam (founded 1179)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tintern (founded 1131) <p>Augustinian Canons:</p> <p><i>Cambridgeshire</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cambridge (founded c. 1112) <p><i>Monmouthshire</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Llanthony I (founded c. 1087) <p>House of the Knights Templars:</p> <p><i>Cambridgeshire</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denney (founded in 1169) <p>Knights Hospitallers:</p> <p><i>Cambridgeshire</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chippenham (founded in 1184) • Shingay (founded in c. 1144)
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Table: 18: Religious houses in close proximity to anchorite cells within the same century. Data from Knowles and Hadcock (1953) and McHardy (2016) – (see Appendix VI).

The twelfth century witnessed several factors that contributed to increased religious vocations and fervour. A wave of monastic reforms across Europe, most notably the Cluniac and Cistercian reforms, aimed to revitalise monastic life by emphasising austerity, discipline, and strict adherence to the Rule of Saint Benedict (Vanderputten 2020). The renewed focus on spiritual purity and communal living attracted many individuals to monastic life. The twelfth century was also characterised by a flourishing of intellectual and cultural activity – the twelfth century renaissance (Constable 1982). The revival of classical learning, the

translation of ancient texts and the establishment of centres of learning such as cathedral schools and universities created an intellectual environment conducive to religious inquiry and spiritual exploration (Beach 2004). Many individuals, inspired by the intellectual ferment of the time, were drawn to religious life as a means of pursuing knowledge and seeking spiritual fulfillment. The twelfth century also saw the onset of the Crusades, a series of military expeditions launched by European Christians to reclaim the Holy Land from Muslim control (Constable 2020). The Crusades, accompanied by religious enthusiasm and calls for holy war, stimulated religious sentiment and inspired many individuals to dedicate themselves to the service of God through acts of piety and devotion, including, embarking on pilgrimages, joining monastic orders or observing more ascetic practices, such as anchoritism.

Overall, the twelfth century stands out as a period of religious renewal, intellectual awakening and cultural vibrancy, all of which contributed to an increased attraction to religious vocations, for both male and females, and a heightened sense of religious fervour among the communities.

The presence of influential figures, such as Sir William de Lacy, a knight and priest, amongst early anchorites suggests the existence of networks of patronage and support within religious communities. These individuals may have been drawn to the anchoritic life as a form of religious devotion or as a means of expressing their piety and status within society. The patronage of local religious institutions could have provided material support and legitimacy to anchorite endeavours, contributing to their establishment and sustenance over time.

The emergence of anchorite cells within the vicinity of religious houses may also reflect responses to broader social and political contexts. In times of upheaval or uncertainty, individuals may have sought refuge and solace in the contemplative life offered by anchorite enclosures, viewing them as sanctuaries from the turmoil of the outside world. Additionally, the presence of anchorites within or near religious institutions could have served as a form of spiritual guardianship, offering prayers and intercession for the well-being of the religious community, as well as the community at large.

Overall, the coexistence of anchorite cells and religious houses highlights the interconnectedness of spiritual, social, and institutional dynamics in shaping the religious landscape of medieval England and Wales. By examining these relationships, we gain a deeper understanding of the motivations behind anchorite practices and their role within the broader religious framework.

The county with the highest number of clusters over the 600 years investigated is Yorkshire, with 58 clusters spread across the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries. This fact alone contributes to the identity of Yorkshire as a centre of medieval spirituality and piety. It also suggests that factors such as economic prosperity, and patronage from local wealthy benefactors, religious institutions and local communities played a significant role in establishing and sustaining anchorite cells by providing material resources and spiritual guidance to the anchorites within the region. Yorkshire also had the single largest cluster of cells, with 29 anchorites—five male, twelve female and twelve of unknown sex — having been

enclosed in the fourteenth century. Unfortunately, the data do not demonstrate the length of time any of the individual anchorites were enclosed and it is therefore not possible to identify the location of the longest inhabited cell.

Yorkshire may have been the most popular location for anchoritic cells, but it was not the first. The construction of the first known anchorite cells in Gloucestershire, Hertfordshire, and Oxfordshire began in the twelfth century.

Gloucester was the site of a royal palace – (the Anglo-Saxon Kingsholm Palace), a castle - Gloucester Castle (built after the Norman conquest), and farming lands; this was significant as the county saw many visits by the Crown, including, Kings William I (d. 1087 CE) and II (century. 1100 CE), the Empress Maud (d. 1167 CE), Kings Henry II (d. 1189 CE) and III (d. 1272 CE) and Queen Eleanor (century. 1204 CE) (British History Online, 1988). Edward II (d. 1327 CE) was buried in Gloucester Cathedral. Significant also for this county was its strategic position close to the borders of South Wales, which is why “the crossing of the Severn [was] controlled by the town [and] secured by a castle” (British History Online, 1988:.13).

The county was also home to a mint, making it one of the few producers of coin in England. Other counties which held mints included: Hampshire, Norfolk, Middlesex and Kent (Allen, 2016). This made Gloucestershire a major trading centre, with many commercial traders and travellers visiting the city. In addition to royal visits and commercial trade, there were eleven churches in the county by the late twelfth century, which not only held ecclesiastical but

secular jurisdiction in the community (Herbert 1988:13-18). These included St. John the Baptist, Great Rissington, St. Mary's, Great Washbourne, St. Michael's, Guiting Power, Hailes Church, St George's, Hampnett, St. Mary's Church, Hartpury, St. Andrew's, Hazleton, and St. Mary's, Kempley. The presence of churches with dual ecclesiastical and secular jurisdiction emphasises the close intertwining of religious and secular authority during the medieval period in Gloucestershire, as elsewhere. These churches not only served as places of worship, but also functioned as centres of local governance, exerting influence over both spiritual and temporal matters within their respective communities (Teunis 1999).

The proximity of anchorite cells to churches with dual jurisdiction would have provided anchorites with access not only to spiritual guidance and pastoral care, but in the case of anchorites who still owned property, these churches may also assist the anchorites in matters such as land tenure, property rights and legal disputes. By leveraging the church's authority and resources, the anchorite could ensure their rights and interests were protected. By being closely connected to established religious institutions, and being housed within or near a church, anchorites would be provided a measure of protection and security, safeguarding them from any potential threats or conflicts within the community. Additionally, they could effectively navigate the challenges of solitary contemplation while remaining integrated into the broader fabric of medieval society. The wealthy Augustinian Priory, Llanthony Secunda Priory, was established in Gloucestershire in 1136 and went onto become one of the largest and wealthiest Augustinian Priories in England, owning 97 churches and 51 manors, together with land, farms and quarries, not only in England but also in Wales and Ireland (Herbert 1988:

13-18). Herbert (1988:13-18) states that the town of Gloucester had three hospitals, including leper hospitals controlled by the Llanthony and Gloucester Priors, but Knowles and Hardcock (1953) and McHardy (2016) state that from the eleventh to the sixteenth centuries Gloucester had 15 hospitals, including leper hospitals in Tewkesbury, Cirencester and Gloucester. It is not known whether anchorite cells were attached to any of these hospitals.

Gloucestershire's popularity as an early centre for anchoritism seems to have waned by the end of the eleventh century, and of the three earliest clusters, only Hertfordshire continued to have cells into the fifteenth century, although there are no cells recorded for this county in the fourteenth century. Hertfordshire also had a large array of monasteries and nunneries, most of which were established in, or just prior to, the twelfth century, except for possibly Sopwell nunnery, which may have been established at a later, unknown date. Sopwell originally consisted of "a cell and houses for two holy women who had settled near Eywood about 1140 in rough shelters made of branches of trees wattled together" (Page 1971: 422). The cell mentioned was reportedly rebuilt by the recluse Roger – the same recluse who harboured 'Christina of Markyate' (Clay 1914:22). The county's nunneries were established in "Chestnut, Rowney in Little Munden, Flamstead and Sopwell" (Page 1971:365). These were all Benedictine, as were the majority of monasteries in the county, which included the extensive St Albans Abbey. St Albans was the most famous monastery in England, holding the relics of the first English martyr, St. Alban (d. 305 CE), and the Christian priest Amphibalus (d. c. 305 CE) whom St. Alban sheltered from the Roman authorities (Richardson, 2019), as well as being highly esteemed for its chroniclers and their work (Taylor 1995), so much so that its

reputation spread to other countries. Because of this, the county would have had a constant stream of pilgrims and visitors, bringing with them alms for the religious. Other monasteries and houses included two Austin Canons houses, a Knights Templar preceptory, a Gilbertine monastery, a hospice for Franciscans and Dominicans, Friars Preachers, Carmelites and Friars Minors (Page 1971:366-367). Additionally, the county also had between five and six leper hospitals, with two—St Julian's and St Mary de Pre—holding a close association with St Alban's Abbey. Page (1971) also mentions that many recluses were to be found in the county, and that:

The oratory of St German, St Albans, was used as a hermitage in Saxon days; a recluse called Roger and Sigar, a hermit of Northaw, who lived in Abbot Geoffry's time, established such reputations for sanctity that pilgrimages were made to their tombs in the conventual church of St Albans; the anchorite living in 1258 at St Peter's had successors in the 15th century, when there is mention too of recluses at St Michael's (Page 1971:67).

Hertfordshire possessed the longest lasting cell on record, attached to St Michael's Church, St Albans. This cell had enclosures from c. 1235 to 1531 CE, a span of 296 years. Historic England's record for this church identifies a "small low-side window or former squint", located in the chancel's south wall, and a formally blocked eleventh century door in the chancel north wall. The blocked door may have been a cleric door, (commonly called a 'Devil's Door'). Rotha Mary Clay (1914:218) records this church in her tabulated list of cells, stating that it was

established in c. 1235 and that the following female anchorites inhabited the cell in the fifteenth century:

1421	1452	1483
Kathryn Dytton	Anges Vertesance	Margaret Smythe
d.1437	d.1478	d. unknown date

Dale and McNabb (1903:237), record a male anchorite “Symon Appulby” (d. 1537 CE), as “authorised to have the cell vacated by Lady Margaret Smythe” (d. unknown date). Whether the lady was required to vacate the cell to make way for the male anchorite, and go elsewhere, is unknown. However, this does demonstrate that, in some cases, both sexes were enclosed in the same cell over time, one after the other. There are no records in any of the available datasets of earlier anchorites enclosed in this cell.

Royalty and its military were closely involved in the history of Oxfordshire. Oxford’s St Frideswide’s Priory was established by the Augustinians in 1122, with King Henry I attending the dedication ceremony, highlighting the religious significance of Oxfordshire and the patronage of royalty towards religious institutions and their involvement in the establishment and expansion of such establishments. Though the eighth century St. Frideswide was an anchoress in Thornbury (Dale & McNabb 1903:242), it is unknown if there were any anchorite cells attached to St. Frideswide Priory. Although previously recorded as a church in the Domesday Book, it was rebuilt after it was destroyed in 1002 during a skirmish and the royal

chaplain, Gwymund, who was celebrated for establishing the priory, was provided with extensive lands and entitlements by the King (Page 1907:97-101). In fact, extensive rebuilding of, and additions to, the city of Oxford also occurred in the early twelfth century after the civil unrest/war in 1142 which ended in King Stephen (d. 1154 CE) burning the city. It is not known if any anchorite cell was destroyed or if any anchorite was killed during this siege.

Oxford was a town of prosperity before and then again after the civil war and siege of the city, being a trading centre for cloth, leather, and wool. Additionally, royal councils were held in Oxford in 1165, 1177 and 1186, which brought the royal court to the city which further demonstrates the political importance of the city and its role as a centre of governance. Oxford was also a minting town until 1250, which enhanced the city's significance further, indicating the city's role in economic and monetary affairs of England (Chance et al. 1979:9-10).

Overall, the twelfth century for Gloucestershire, Hertfordshire, and Oxfordshire was a period filled with religious activity, expansion, intellectual activity and prosperity. This may have attracted anchorites to these areas for the sole reason that, due to the heightened activity, there was greater potential for patrons and thus financial and general support for their solitary religious pursuits.

After the 1200s, however, both Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire appear to diminish in their prominence as early centres for anchoritism. The exact reasons for this decline are unclear,

and it is uncertain whether it truly occurred. This ambiguity may stem from unrecorded anchorite cells, lost records, or the absence of documentation entirely. Both counties continued to be centres of wealth and commercialism, as well as areas of religious community strongholds, including the thirteenth-century Carmelite, Dominican and Franciscan friars' foundation of communities in Gloucestershire (Herbert 1988:18), the establishment of Augustinian, Carmelite, Dominican, Franciscan friaries and a house of study for Cistercian monks in Oxfordshire (Chance et al. 1979:364-68).

In the thirteenth-century Middlesex, Norfolk and Yorkshire took over from the three early clusters, and became the three counties with the highest numbers of recorded anchorites between the thirteenth and the fifteenth centuries inclusive: Middlesex with 33 cells, Norfolk with 48 cells and Yorkshire with 58. One possible pattern that can be discerned from this is that the establishment and subsequent growth of the numerous religious houses within these counties coincide with the establishment of numerous anchorite cells. We know from that Middlesex (which included London) had 14 religious houses (12 male and 2 female), Norfolk had 28 (27 male and 1 female) and Yorkshire 35 (all male), in the thirteenth century – though the exact dates have not been recorded (see Appendix VI). As Table 16 shows, the greatest number of cells for any time-period covered by this thesis was constructed in the fourteenth century in Yorkshire (which had 19 male religious houses recorded as having existed at this time), and in the fifteenth century in Norfolk (no new religious houses recorded) respectively, confirming these two counties as hubs for the anchorite movement.

The thirteenth century also saw anchoritism flourish in Sussex, but this is the only century for which cells are recorded in the datasets of Dale, Clay, and Jones for this county. Page (1973), however, points out that not only were anchorites numerous in Sussex, but some were known to have been enclosed in the fifteenth century:

Of the stricter order of anchorites or recluses a good many examples are found in Sussex ... St. John's-subCastro in Lewes ... Magnus by name, of noble Danish birth, ... remains of an 'anker-hold' or recluse's cell in the south wall of Hardham church. The Pipe Roll of 1 Richard I mentions the recluse of Stedham, and St. Richard in his will bequeathed money to the anchorites of Pagham and Hardham, and the female recluses of Houghton, Stopham and Westout. About 1402 one of the Dominican friars of Arundel had himself walled up as an anchorite in a cell of his priory, and in the same year Dom. William Bolle, rector of Aldrington, was allowed to retire from the world into a cell on the north side of the Lady Chapel of Chichester Cathedral (Page 1973:47).

From the eleventh century through to the Reformation in the sixteenth century Sussex had an array of religious houses, both monasteries and nunneries, including Augustinian canons, Austin friars, Benedictine monks and nuns, Carmelite friars, Cistercian monks, Cluniac monks, Dominican friars, Franciscan friars, Knights Templar, Premonstratensian canons and eight Alien houses (Knowles and Hadcock 1953; Page 1973). Apart from demonstrating the diverse religious landscape of Sussex this array also implies a significant pool of potential religious

patrons for anchorites in the area. The presence of alien houses, which were religious houses affiliated with foreign orders, indicates a degree of cultural exchange and international religious influence. The diverse religious environment certainly would have created a rich spiritual atmosphere conducive to the establishment of anchorite cells, as individuals seeking deeper spiritual experiences could have been drawn to the region.

Nottingham was fortified by a high wall in the tenth century, built on command of the King, Edward the Elder (d. 924 CE), (the second eldest child, and the eldest son, of Alfred the Great, d. 899 CE), for defence purposes (Throsby 1790). The castle of Nottingham held “three wells, three chapels, and a college of secular priests” (Throsby 1790). Though there was no mention of the castle chapel having a recluse or anchorite attached to it, the city itself had cells in the sixteenth century, just prior to the Reformation, and there were many hermit caves, shrines and religious men based outside of the city walls in and around Sherwood Forest, in particular in the village of Sneinton (MAS 2013). Clay discusses several chaplains who lived in Sherwood Forest, two of whom had royalty as their patrons:

A succession of chaplains dwelt at Clipston in the royal forest of Sherwood. To one of these King John aid 40s a year, and Henry III continued the grant to one Benedict, hermit of St. Edwin at Birkland. (Clay 1914:41-42)

It is not unlikely that some of the Rock Holes in Nottingham Park were occupied by hermits. Two monks used to minister in the chapel of St. Mary of the Rock under the castle. (Clay 1914:71-72)

The remotest cells were located in Abergavenny, Powys, Wales, and at Tintagel in Cornwall, with enclosures occurring here in c. thirteenth – fourteenth centuries respectively. Both cells may have enclosed priest anchorites. The location of these cells suggests that these anchorites may not have needed (or wanted) to depend on the wealth of large towns. The significance of these remote anchorite cells lies in their reflection of the diversity of anchoritic lifestyles and motivations. They illustrate that while some anchorites may have thrived in urban environments with constant visitors and access to wealth and patrons, others preferred the solitude and simplicity of remote locations where they could lead lives of greater independence and spiritual focus. Huitson (2014:55) has argued that remoteness was in fact the “natural habitat” of the anchorite, although he cites a few examples and in fact conflates all forms of recluse, making it difficult to validate his claim.

The frequency of anchorite cells began to decline and no clusters of five or more cells have been recorded immediately prior to the Reformation in the sixteenth century in any county. The decline in the frequency of anchorite cells, particularly the absence of clusters immediately prior to the Reformation carries several implications. Firstly, the decline suggests a shift in religious practices and spiritual preferences leading up to the Reformation. As the religious landscape underwent transformations, with the emergence of new theological ideas and challenges to established doctrines, traditional forms of asceticism like anchoritism may have lost popularity or faced opposition from reformist movements within the religious hierarchy. Secondly, this may also reflect economic shifts, changes in land ownership

patterns, and shifts in political power that could have influenced the availability of resources and changed the support networks necessary for sustaining anchorites.

Additionally, reformist ideologies, which sought to challenge perceived excesses and abuses within the Catholic Church, may have viewed practices like anchoritism as irrelevant to the reform agenda. Consequently, policies enacted during the Reformation era may have discouraged or even actively suppressed the establishment of anchorite cells. Societal attitudes towards asceticism and individual religious experiences also may have contributed to the decline of anchoritism. As notions of personal piety and spirituality evolved, individuals may have sought alternative forms of religious expression and community engagement, moving away from the solitary lifestyle associated with anchoritism.

County	AD 1000	AD 1100	AD 1200	AD 1300	AD 1400	AD 1500	TOTAL
Cheshire				5			5
Devonshire				5			5
Gloucestershire			8				8
Hertfordshire			5		17		22
Kent			7		5		12
Lincolnshire				7	10		17
Middlesex			8	11	14		33
Norfolk			12	10	26		48
Oxfordshire		5	17				22
Nottinghamshire					6		6
Sussex			11			2	11 (14)
Yorkshire			10	29	19		58
TOTAL		5	78	67	97		247 (249)

Table 177: Table showing the movement and spread of clusters of anchorite cells (male, female and unknown sex) over the period covered by this thesis – 1000 CE – 1500 CE, with the data taken from the amalgamated dataset (Appendix IV). NOTE: Anne Warren’s data not included. The blue is the notations of anchorite cells by Page (1973).

The latest known enclosures were:

1531 CE – St Albans, Hertfordshire – Name unknown – (male)

1523 CE – Faversham, Kent – Name unknown – (female)

1538 CE – Worcester, Worcestershire – Name unknown – (unknown sex)

1546 CE – Carrow, Norwich, Norfolk – Dame Margaret Kydman – (female) (d. unknown date)

The anchorite cell in Kent coincides with the presence of a friary in Greenwich, in north west Kent. No other religious houses are recorded for this period, in these areas.

The results of this thesis, though limited in scope, suggest a correlation between the location of anchorite cells and the gender of the inhabitants. Cells located in more remote areas may have been more likely to have housed male anchorites, whereas those closer to, or in, towns and villages were more likely to have accommodated female anchorites. Several factors may have contributed to this pattern, rooted in medieval perceptions.

Firstly, medieval attitudes towards gender roles and capabilities may have influenced the distribution of anchorites. The prevalent belief in the “Legacy of Eve” and the perceived moral weaknesses of women, including their supposed lack of moral fibre, could have led to the assumption that female anchorites required more supervision and guidance than their male counterparts, or that females were not deemed to be strong enough, mentally, or spiritually, to survive their enclosure without constant guidance or motivation from clerics (see Chapter 2).

Moreover, the disparity that existed in financial support between male and female religious institutions in general, may also have extended to female anchorites, necessitating a greater reliance on their part on alms and external support from pilgrims and supplicants, in addition to their initial financial arrangements prior to enclosure, to help sustain them (see Chapters 1 and 2). While these assertions are speculative, they are supported by broader historical trends and perceptions of gender roles in medieval society.

7.2 Cells by Sex Across Space and Time

The distribution of enclosures per county was discussed in Chapter 5. This reveals that, during the 600 years which has been investigated, 47% of cell clusters were for male anchorites and 53% for female anchorites. This does not necessarily confirm that there were more female anchorites overall, as there are many cells with an inhabitant of unknown sex. However, based on the records that do stipulate sex, there were 6% more enclosures for women than men over the 600-year period investigated. Women dominate across all centuries in fact, with the largest concentrations of men in Norfolk only at the very end of the period. Middlesex and Cheshire are the only counties with more male enclosures than females in the fourteenth century, a phenomenon attributable to the fact that this was the only century in which there were more named men than women (see Table 19).

Century	County	Male	Female
Fourteenth	Cheshire	4	1
Fifteenth	Hertfordshire	3	7
Thirteenth	Kent		5
Fourteenth	Lincolnshire	1	5
Fifteenth		3	3
Thirteenth	Middlesex	2	3
Fourteenth		6	1
Fifteenth		4	10
Fourteenth	Norfolk	2	5
Fifteenth		11	15
Thirteenth	Oxfordshire	3	10
Thirteenth	Sussex	3	5
Thirteenth	Yorkshire		9
Fourteenth		5	12
Fifteenth		1	10
TOTALS		49	103

Table 19: Numbers of male and female anchorites enclosed by century. Unknown sex not counted.

This long-term trend of women dominating the landscape of anchoritic enclosures over 600-years suggests patterns in religious practice and societal attitudes towards gender roles and spirituality. First, women may have had greater access to the anchoritic life due to society's expectations as well as practical considerations. Women seeking refuge from social pressures (including marriage) or pursuing a life of intense prayer and contemplation may have been pushed more towards the anchoritic life. Second, the call to female anchoritism may have been influenced by the cultural and religious context of the time. Medieval society was deeply influenced by Christian teachings which emphasised humility, obedience and self-denial, qualities often associated with female spirituality. The cult of the Virgin Mary, often portrayed as the epitome of purity and obedience, served as a model for female spirituality. Women who embraced lives of chastity and devotion, such as anchorites, were seen as emulating

Mary's virtues and were revered within their communities (Warner 1983:67,77 and 184). Ecclesiastical authorities often encouraged female piety and supported the establishment of female religious communities, including anchorite enclosures. The Church's endorsement of female spirituality may have contributed to the prevalence of female anchorites within medieval society. Finally, women's religious activities in enclosed settings may have been more carefully documented than those of men due to expectations on the part of, and the interests of, contemporary chroniclers.

Only two possible multi-occupant cells were located during the course of research for this thesis: these are in Lewes, Surrey, and Chester-le-Street, Durham. This indicates the rarity of such structures and suggests that the vast majority of anchorite cells were intended for solitary occupation, reflecting the solitary nature of anchoritic life and the emphasis on individual spiritual devotion. Lewes, Surrey, is also the only possible multi-celled structure encountered, containing one cell with an empty grave and another with a burial. There is evidence to suggest that this anchorhold may have been extended from one cell to two, and possibly three, indicating that cells were sometimes adapted or expanded over time to accommodate changing needs or circumstances. The altar squint in cell A is located in a position that was only exposed when the door area for the new vestry was cut through. A view of the altar would have been possible through the squint in Cell A if the altar was at one point located on the northern side of the chancel (as it was at St Nicholas' Church, Compton, Surrey, before the Norman period). According to Godfrey (1933:160, see magnified plan in Figure 110), both Cell A and Cell B are of the early twelfth to thirteenth centuries, but Cell B

is on a slight angle. This may have been built on purpose so that the anchorite in Cell A could still view the altar.

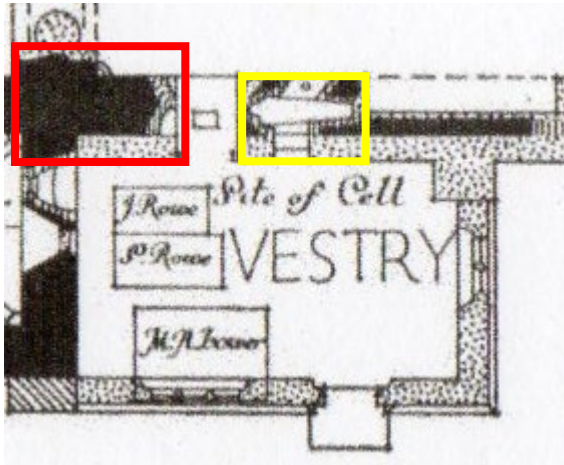


Figure 110: Magnified view of Godfrey's ground plan of the cell at St Anne's Church, Lewes, Surrey and the modern vestry (Godfrey 1933:160). Cell A (red) - empty grave. Cell B (yellow) - extant burial).

The anchorhold may have originally formed a longer, more rectangular building, with the addition of a possible third cell at the eastern end. There is only one visible parlour window which opens to the Ladies Chapel, but there may have been more that opened externally for the other two cells when the building was fully extant if these were separated from each other and did not have a 'common' living area. This possibility provides valuable evidence of the diversity and complexity of anchorite cells and challenges the common notion of anchorites as isolated individuals. It is to be noted however, that when St Richard de Wych, Bishop of Chichester left money in his will to the specific recluse in 1253, there seems to have been only a single female recluse in the anchorhold.

Ann Warren has suggested that "*perhaps* three or four" multi-occupant cells in each century could be found (Warren 1994:33, italics added), meaning that more multi-occupant cells may

exist or have once existed. Although the cells in Surrey and Durham were noted as having two or more anchorites enclosed, it is also noted by Warren that “an anchorhold for more than one recluse was likely to contain separate and isolated chambers for each” (Warren 1994:52). This occurred because at times there were not enough cells to house the multitude who wished to be enclosed as anchorites. At these times any multi-celled anchorite house would have needed to be authorised by the archbishop (Warren 1984:34-35).

Four two-storeyed anchorite cells were recorded for this thesis: Compton, Surrey; Chester-le-Street, Durham; Rettendon, Essex, and York, Yorkshire. The cells at Compton and Durham both housed male anchorites. The cell at York enclosed a female anchorite, but it cannot be confirmed whether a male or female was enclosed in the Rettendon cell. Only one was certainly built for a priest anchorite, as it incorporated an oratory – the cell in Compton, Surrey. The single storeyed Tintagel, Cornwall, and Abergavenny cells are also likely to have housed males - possibly priests/clerical, because of their internal altars - but they do not possess a separate oratory and are much smaller than the cells at Rettendon and York. The fifteenth-century cells of Rettendon and York are spacious and located in the centre of a town. The cell at Rettendon, in fact, is the most spacious of all cells surveyed, with the double cell at Durham closely following suit. The significance of these cells lies in their contribution to the knowledge of the diversity, functionality, and spatial dynamics of anchorite cells within broader religious and societal contexts.

7.3 The Form, Layout and Features of Cells

Form and Layout

The average size of an anchorite cell (based on the case studies investigated) was H 4.5954m x L 4.4428m x W 3.0994m, with a size range of between H 2.14m to 6.003m, L 1.856m to 5.843m and W 1.567m to 3.793m.

The main focus for the anchorite was prayer and communion with God. Linda Georgianna (1981:34) compares the solitude of the anchorite to that of the desert for the Desert Fathers and Mothers, with its individualistic personal contact with God. The concentrated area of the cell made focus on contemplation complete. The only window from which the anchorite could look out unhindered was the squint to the altar, focusing once again on prayer and communion with God alone. The parlour window was restricted (for the female anchorite at least) by the use of a black curtain, its use by anchoresses instructed in the *Ancrene Wisse* – (White 1993:27-28,35) in the guard against the immorality of the world, protecting the anchorite's chastity and purity. The anchorite was segregated from society, yet still an influence upon it by the reinforcement of commitment and devotion to God and His Church. At the same time, societal influence was perceived as a potential taint upon the anchorite, and so required management and intercession.

All cells had high ceilings (see Tables in Chapter 6). It is possible that this height served a number of practical purposes. First, and most functionally, they may simply demonstrate a potentially space-saving placement of sleeping areas. Sleeping pallets may have been built

high, with the use of a ladder to reach the space, creating an area underneath for work and prayer. Secondly, high ceilings could have facilitated ventilation and airflow within the cells, improving air quality and providing a more comfortable living environment for the anchorite. This would have been particularly important in enclosed spaces where fresh air circulation may have been limited. Additionally, a higher ceiling may have enabled the use of a hearth in those cells that did not have a built-in fireplace. Internal hearths—fireplaces without chimneys—were common in the early medieval period. LeRoy Dresbeck (1971) describes how early medieval buildings would require a high ceiling when being heated by a central internal hearth, so that any outbreak of fire could be prevented, and smoke safely dispersed (Dresbeck 1971:21). This may have certainly been the case in the Compton cell, which has an extremely high ceiling (4.860m at highest part and 3.527m at lowest part of ceiling) and no built-in fireplace.

Internal and External Features

The sole consistent standard features of cells, present in all examples, is the windows. This uniformity is a result of the lack of extant cells, leaving behind only isolated architectural features within the walls of their churches to which they were once connected. The types of windows included in a typical anchorite cell are:

- An altar squint
- A parlour or external window/squint
- A high third window intended to provide ample light (and possibly airflow).

The average size of an altar squint was H 0.571m x W 0.39 (based on the sample investigated). The average altar squint size was 0.431 m x 0.422 m. The largest of the extant altar squints was 0.492 m x 0.809 m, in a thirteenth century female cell in Sussex, and the smallest 0.283 m x 0.182 m, in an eleventh century male cell in Surrey. Most altar squints are located in sight of the altar. This view did not have to be directly facing the altar, however, and a squint could provide a side view, for example as at Chester-le-Street, Durham. This is the most unusual of all squints surveyed, since it was built in such a way that the anchorite would have had to place their head inside the opening and look to the left and down in order to see a small section of the altar (Figures 67, 71 and 72). A similar shaped squint is located in Cell A at St Anne's, Lewis (Figure 86 and 87). However, it cannot be confirmed that this was used in the same way, as it is only partially extant. Similarities in altar squints include the windows being small and arch shaped, with variations including more elaborate forms, such as the cruciform altar squint in Compton Surrey, or much larger squints, such as those at Lewes, Sussex and Abergavenny, Powys, Wales.

Cells, and therefore altar squints changed position over time due to the movement of church altars. Examples of this include at Compton, Surrey, where the first anchorite cell was built on the north side of the chancel. The altar was originally on the south side of the chancel but was subsequently moved to the north east in the twelfth century, causing one cell to be abandoned and a new one constructed (Boston 1987:132). Another example is the physical features of the cell at Rettendon, which suggest that a separate altar may have been in place in the aisle in line with the anchorite cell, although this is not recorded in any extant

documents. A possible altar squint positioned in the north wall of the cell suggests that the altar may have been located in front of the cell in the north aisle, whereas there is now only the one altar located in the south-east. Indeed, this means that at one stage there may have been two altars, because the north aisle and anchorite cell was a later addition; “the nave and chancel are C13 in date, the west tower, north aisle, arcade and vestry being added in the C15” (British Listed Buildings, online). The altar in the north aisle, if it existed, would have been ultimately moved to accommodate a large memorial statue in the eighteenth century. The original placement of the altar in St. Annes, Sussex, was also on the north side of the chancel, and subsequently moved to the east (at an unknown date), with a possible accompanying shift in the cell and squint further to the east of the chancel, allowing the occupant a clearer view of the altar in its new location (see Figures 89, 90). The movement of cells demonstrates the adaptive nature of church architecture to maintain its functionality in alignment with current religious practices. The movement of the church altars reflects the changes in liturgical practices and theological beliefs within the Christian tradition (Ratzinger 2006).

The most variable features of all cells were the number, size, and placement of windows (. The squint in the Hardham cell was much smaller compared to the one in Abergavenny, even though church sizes are comparable. Lewes, had both a very large and a very small squint: the example in Cell A being smaller than the Hardham altar squint, while the one in Cell B was much larger and comparable to the altar squint in Abergavenny (see Figures 106, 107). The openings of both the Hardham and Lewes altar squints are wide enough to see not only the

altar but also the nave and chancel. The Lewes cell in fact would have enabled the anchorite to see the chancel in full. The sizes of both the Lewes and the Welsh squints are unusual and may have been connected to the status of the individual anchorite, although no records can confirm this. A comparison chart has been provided in Chapter six which details the location of each cell, the types of squint it contains, their dimensions and comments.



Figures 112a and 112b: Abergavenny, Powys, Wales – St. Issui Patricio's Church. Male (presumably a priest) anchorite cell. Altar squint looking out from anchorite cell towards the church altar.



Figure 113: Lewes, Sussex – St. Anne’s Church. Female anchorite cell. Altar squint looking out from anchorite cell towards the altar.

The design of all surveyed cells included an external or parlour window, at which the anchorite would have received visitors. These did not differ on a gendered scale as much as on a scale of status. From the physical data collected parlour squints were larger than altar squints, with an average of 0.7646 m x 0.5474 m. The largest of the extant parlour squints in the case studies was 1.230 m x 1.160 m. from an eleventh-century male cell in Surrey, and the smallest was 0.200 m x 0.150 m, also from a male cell, in Durham. The parlour window on the lower level of the Rettendon cell would have looked out into an exceptionally large parlour/servant area, providing an internal view of the parlour, within the anchorite house rather than an

external view to the Nave of the church or the exterior of the building. The inward-facing parlour window may have contributed to the anchorite's sense of privacy and seclusion within their living quarters. By overlooking a designated area within the anchorite house, rather than the public space of the church or outside world, the window helped create a sense of more than usual separation from the outside world. The presence of the parlour area suggests a domestic context within the anchorite house, potentially involving interactions with servants or visiting guests, facilitating communication while maintaining a degree of separation and privacy.

All cells also contained a window for light, which was usually placed high in order to redirect as much light as possible into the cell.

The cells recorded for the purpose of this thesis exhibited distinctive features, such as:

- A parlour room separate from the church (Rettendon, Essex)
- More than one fireplace (Rettendon, Essex and Chester-le-Street, Durham)
- An external staircase to the cell (Rettendon, Essex)
- A lancet window/squint (Tintagel, Cornwall)
- A wooden sill on altar squint (Compton, Surrey)
- An altar or oratory for a priest/cleric anchorite (Abergavenny, Wales, Tintagel, Cornwall and Compton, Surrey)
- An alms slot/opening for depositing food (Chester-le-Street, Durham)

- A second altar squint (Rettendon, Essex)
- An anchorite burial (Lewes, Sussex)
- Piscinas (Compton, Surrey and Rettendon, Essex)
- Stone benches (Rettendon, Essex and Chester-le-Street, Durham)

There were no external/garden areas recorded in the combined historical dataset, and there were no extant external/garden areas visible at physically recorded sites.

The physical data collected indicate that anchorite cells possess a greater degree of physical complexity than suggested by historical records. This means that there may have been more scope in terms of the experience of individual enclosures that can only be teased out materially by investigating further the physical differences between the cells both archaeologically and architecturally. Perhaps there were more cells that were more comfortable than the literature suggests. Also, burials within the cells are expected to be more prevalent, although, the rarity of archaeological investigations conducted on anchorite cells, particularly in the last century, contribute to the scarcity of information regarding burials within them.

7.4 Experience within Cells

The underlying religious and secular routines of the anchorite would not have likely been markedly dissimilar between the sexes. This conclusion is drawn from the analysis of the data recorded in the case studies conducted for this thesis. In all cells an altar squint was present

to enable the anchorite to view the altar and follow services and prayers. The area in front of the altar squint held enough space for the anchorite to kneel, for example in the case of Cell B at the Compton church (Figures 53 and 11) or prostrate themselves in prayer in the case of the original cell, Cell A (Figures 49 and 51), and the Durham cell (Figure 65).



Figure 114a and 114b: St Nicholas' Church, Compton, Surrey. Altar squint looking out from anchorite cell towards the altar. The sill of the squint shows clear evidence of the use of candles (burn marks).

Secular routines, such as reading, sleeping, eating and most personal hygiene tasks would have been similar for both male and female anchorites. Female anchorites, within a relevant age bracket, would have experienced menstrual cycles. Although historical records regarding how anchorites managed menstruation are elusive. Given the seclusion and ascetic life of an

anchoress, it is reasonable to assume that menstruation would have presented challenges in terms of hygiene and possibly ritual purity. Monica Green (2005:59) suggests that medieval Christians believed that during this time the woman was deemed “unclean”, connecting it to the original sin of Eve. In fact, women who were menstruating were traditionally forbidden to enter a church, a practice which was argued against by Pope Gregory the Great in the late sixth century, although not all churches changed their practices until the twelfth century when Pope Innocent III abolished the practice completely and confirmed that the woman should not be prohibited from entering the church if menstruating. Certainly, there are no architectural features within the anchorite cell that would suggest washing facilities, leading to the assumptions that the servant/s would have been responsible for such tasks. The anchoresses’ experiences would have been shaped by the resources available to them, as well as their individual coping mechanisms.

The most obvious cell design differences between the sexes, however, are apparent in cells designed for male anchorites who were also priests. A priest anchorite was usually given a larger cell which incorporated an oratory and/or altar, so that he was able to continue to offer Mass and to administer the basic sacraments, such as confession (these sacraments may have even been performed via the parlour window of his cell). The work of the priest and/or monk in copying sacred manuscripts for the Church may have also necessitated a larger work area. An anchoress, on the other hand, whether professed or not, would have required a smaller work area for embroidery work or garment sewing (*Ancrene Wisse*, Book 8:232 – English Translation. Hasenfratz 2000).

In terms of status as opposed to sex, again underlying religious or secular routines would not have been dissimilar. An anchorite was required to adhere to the guidelines set by the Church, and unofficial guidelines set by anchorite guides. This meant that they were required to undertake some type of manual labour (Jones 2013:93), and the anchorite was – ideally – never to leave the confines of their cell. This last requirement was not always enforced, however, as the anchorite was able to relocate, given the appropriate permission, be replaced (see example of Margaret Smythe in the previous chapter), or because of a physical relocation of the cell as the church architecture changed (Jones 2013:23), as happened in two of the case study cells, Compton, Surrey and St. Annes, Lewes.

There are further requirements that the many unofficial guides suggested and which, regardless of status, the anchorite may have followed (Table 3 for a full list of the guides for the anchoress, and Table 4 for the anchorite). General routines, such as eating and sleeping, would of necessity have been the same. The only possible difference may have been that those of a higher status may have had more money for items such as firewood, better food, and warmer clothing, or patrons to provide same (Innes-Parker 2011:119).

The most common form of surviving archaeological evidence is, not surprisingly, those elements that indicate daily religious routines, such as altar squints and areas for kneeling or prostrating, altars or oratories for priest anchorites, and piscinas in the walls of cells. The predominance of such elements as the main surviving physical traces of anchorite routines, however, is influenced by the nature of church buildings themselves as containers of, and foci

for, religious observance. In other words, when renovations took place, these kinds of features are those that would have been most likely viewed as connoting religiousness and therefore the features that were preferentially kept when decisions about what to remove and what to retain were made.

Extensions to original cells – regardless of when these took place – have altered the contemporary appearance and forms of cells, sometimes to such an extent that the original cell itself can no longer be confidently reconstructed. The reasons for medieval extensions and/or renovations, such as adding an enclosed garden area (Hasenfratz 2005:5), or an extra cell within the same anchorhold (such as St Anne's, Lewes, Sussex), or attached to the same church (such as St Nicholas's Church in Compton, Surrey), may be due to the popularity of the anchorite phenomenon, the need for more living space, and/or the lack of complete cells. The examples shown in Figures 115 and 116 reveal that, as the church was extended and/or evolved, the anchorite cell may also have evolved and/or moved its location within the church. It demonstrates the importance of the anchorite, rather than the cell per se, to the church.

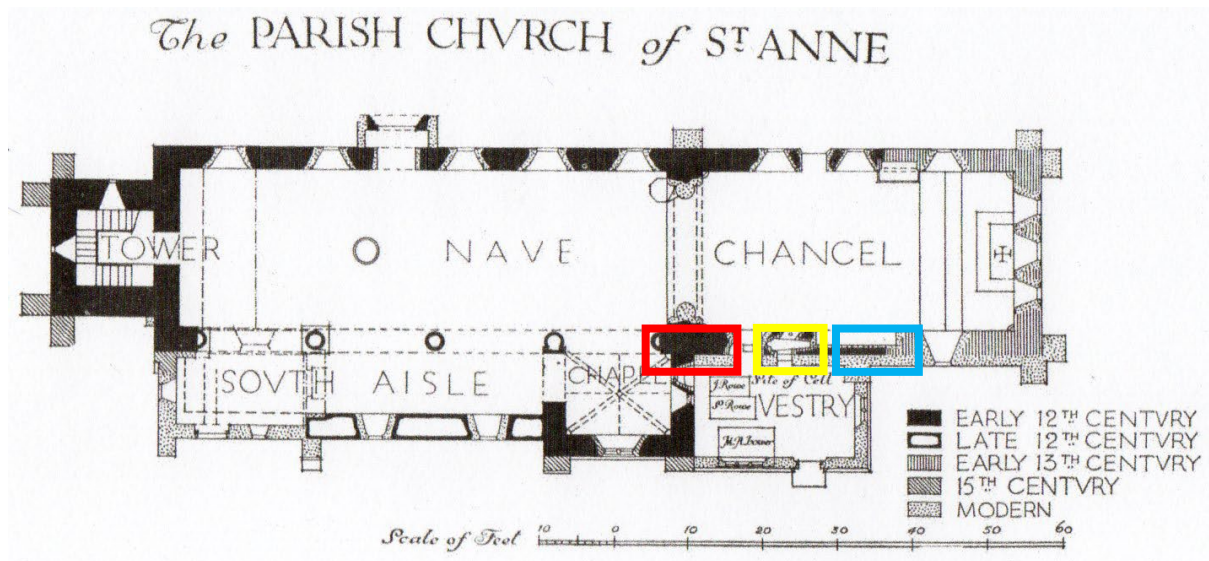


Figure 115: Magnified view of ground plan of St Anne's Church showing the evolution from the twelfth century of the anchorite house (Godfrey 1933:160). Area of anchorite cell A indicated in red and B in yellow. Possible third cell indicated in blue. Figure 116: Magnified view of ground plan of St. Mary and St. Cuthbert's Church anchorite house, showing stages of construction, renovation and extension (maryandcuthbert:online).

From the sixteenth century (after the Reformation), anchorite cells were gradually transformed into vestries (Church of England), and some in later periods into sacristies (Catholic). Both were areas where the priests' vestments, books, and religious objects were stored, and where the priests changed into their vestments prior to entry into the church to conduct services. Many cells are now used (or partially used) as church storage and/or boiler rooms, such as Rettendon, Essex, and Chester-le-Street, Durham. This shift demonstrates the changes in liturgical practices and rituals following the Reformation, as well as the continued importance of ceremonial and ritual elements within Christian worship. These spaces retained their role as integral components of church buildings and represent a tangible evolution of religious architectural adaptation.

7.5 Summary

The results and discussion chapters of this thesis presented an in-depth analysis of the investigations conducted on the case studies. In addition to analysing the cells themselves, investigations also examined the social and environmental implications of the enclosures within the communities. They included the examination of the dynamics between the anchorites and the broader community. The findings of the study were discussed and interpreted, providing valuable insights into the research questions presented in Chapter one.

In the conclusion chapter, a comprehensive summary of the main findings of the research will be provided. Additionally, a final analysis of the implications of these findings, considering their significance, will be presented. Furthermore, the conclusion will address the limitations on the research and offer suggestions for future study.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

This chapter will explore the relevance and importance of the key research results in relation to the thesis aims and research questions. It will also discuss the study's limitations and point out areas in need of further research. The findings have shed light on important aspects of the anchorite experience and contributed to the existing body of knowledge in the field of anchoritic research.

The primary objective of this thesis was to comprehensively investigate and critically evaluate the nature and function of anchorite cells, with particular focus on their use in relation to sex and ideology in medieval England and Wales.

The size, style, form, space, and location of anchorite cells served as visual representations of gender, hierarchy and status of the enclosed anchorite. In turn, the form and fabric of these cells constructed and reinforced ideologies of religious behaviour by creating a sense of awe and reverence, and by emphasising the power and authority of the Church. The anchorite cell reinforced the importance of religious devotion and the power of prayer, for this was a person who dedicated their entire lives to living in isolated solitude, in prayer and devotion to God. The location of the cell also helped to reinforce the importance of religious observance. Those placed within the town helped to create a sense of community and were a daily visual

reminder of devotion. Materially, urban cells tended to be larger, were more likely to contain creature comforts and were probably connected more intimately to a wider network of religious houses and observance. Examples of these types of cells from the eighth case studies in this thesis include: Durham, York and Lewes. Those which were located outside of the towns and villages reinforced an idea of austerity, emphasising the importance of renouncing worldly pleasures and focusing on the spiritual. These cells tended to be smaller, held fewer comforts or distractions and thus fewer temptations from the outside world because of their isolation. An example of this type of cell is the Abergavenny cell in Wales.

This thesis used various investigative techniques, including the compilation of all available datasets from the most frequently cited sources in the field of anchoritic studies. Additionally, this thesis also examined and incorporated less well-known, but equally important and relevant sources to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the topic. Furthermore, the investigation results of seven anchorite cells in England and one in Wales were incorporated into the amalgamated dataset. One, Tintagel, was previously not recorded.

Through these investigations, this thesis found that more female anchorites than males resided in cells in towns and villages, whereas more male anchorites were recorded to have been enclosed in cells in the countryside and isolated areas. This may have been due to women being looked upon as needing more guidance, protection and supervision than males, and due to women perceived as being more sexually promiscuous, and therefore naturally inclined towards sin than male anchorites.

The dimensions, construction, and design of the cells that were physically investigated demonstrated a lack of any clear correlations with the sex of the enclosed anchorite. Each extant cell was unique in its own ways, suggesting that there was wide variability in the form, size and comforts of cells, and therefore – at least in part – of the experience of each individual anchorite. However, a common feature among the cells was the presence of both an altar squint and parlour squint, noting that a number of these squints have been subsequently filled and sealed as a result of Victorian refurbishment efforts.

The presence of status or hierarchy in cells design was notable in certain cells, such as the Compton cell, which would have been occupied by a priest anchorite, as is evident by the attached oratory accessed solely through the cell. The existence of double-storey cells may also suggest a perceived elevated status of the anchorite. Sex may also have played a role in determining status, as evidenced by two two-storey cells designated for males, namely the Compton and Durham cells. However, this is not necessarily a gender marker, as there was also the double-storey cell in York in which a highly-regarded visionary female anchorite was enclosed, which points more towards the cell as a status symbol. This makes sense as the cell in Compton may have held a priest anchorite and the cell in Durham enclosed one John de Wessington in 1383 who may have been the same Benedictine monk who became Chancellor of Durham Cathedral in 1400 and then Prior of Durham Abbey in 1416 CE.

The extent of social status mediation of the anchorite's underlying religious and/or secular routines may have been influenced by such factors as the anchorite's sex, class or previous

occupation/status. Those from wealthier families may have been seen as more prestigious than those from poorer backgrounds and, as a result, the wealthier anchorites may have been able to navigate social hierarchies better in order to establish and maintain their position in society and their new position within the religious community. Furthermore, the religious routines established by the anchorite may also have been an attempt to mediate their status as a holy person for example, routines and practices such as fasting, prayer, and the performance of miracles or revelations, as was communicated through visionaries such as Julian of Norwich.

The archaeological evidence found in this thesis provides probable insight into the daily routines of anchorites, including prayer, sleeping, and possibly cooking. The architecture of the cells, oratories, and squints indicate that prayer was a central aspect of their daily routine. Fireplaces in the parlours or servant areas provided heat and light, and possible facilities for cooking.

Evidence of human remains within the cells could only be confirmed in one cell, St. Annes, Sussex, through an early twentieth-century excavation and subsequent examination of the skeletal remains. This is not to say that the other cells investigated did not contain burials, but, as these have not been excavated, this cannot be confirmed.

This thesis demonstrated that concentrations (clusters) of cells in certain areas show a high number of anchorite enclosures between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries in Yorkshire

and Norfolk, at the same time that the male religious houses of the Benedictine monks, Cluniac, Grandmontines, Carthusians and Augustinians flourished. The sex of most enclosed anchorites is unknown, but, of those that are known, more female anchorites are evident in these counties than male. This may be because, as previously mentioned, women were thought to have required more guidance and protection than males, or simply because more women were drawn to the anchorite way of life as an alternative to marriage or membership of a religious order.

These comparisons, and thus the results of this thesis, reveal that the nature of the medieval Church, its construction of gendered behaviours, and appropriate forms of sacredness were deeply intertwined. The thesis reveals that the Church had different expectations for the behaviour and religious practices of men and women, prescribing different forms of sacredness that were deemed by the Church as appropriate to each, which further reinforced gendered expectations and behaviours.

The limitations of this thesis included limited access to the cells at Lewes, due to Victorian refurbishments and the cell now being used as a vestry. There was also an organ in front of a possible third squint, which therefore could not be confirmed. Additionally, there was limited access to the lower level of the cell at Durham due to modern refurbishment. Sarcophagi within the church also blocked the enclosure doorway, preventing that too from being investigated. The core limitation was that the majority of cells identified historically have not survived, having been renovated and remodelled out of existence during the Victorian era,

bombed and destroyed during World War II, or demolished to make way for modern developments. Subsurface data from some of these may be retrievable via excavation, but that was not possible for this project. Thus, the main limitation for this thesis was the available sample size. The inability to excavate or to investigate further churches due to COVID restrictions was also a major limitation.

The original contributions to the field of anchoritic studies are as follows. The datasets of the most well-known and lesser-known anchoritic scholars were collated to form an amalgamated dataset. To this was added the details of cells physically investigated by this thesis to form a completed dataset of all known cells in England and Wales to date. Additionally, these collated cells were added to a combined dataset of all known religious Houses in England and Wales, demonstrating the location of clusters in relation to these Houses.

This thesis has addressed the following gaps in anchoritic research:

Gender bias: Most scholarly texts describing the lives of anchorite do so by citing the lives of female anchorites and so there has been less written about male anchorites. This gender bias could lead to a misunderstanding of the anchoritic life. This thesis offers a balanced comparison between both sexes and thus gives more evidence of the sex ratio of anchorites enclosed during the period of this thesis – c. 1000 – 1500 CE.

Social and cultural context: Anchorites lived in a specific social and cultural context. Their lives were shaped by the religious and political climate of their times. However, there has been a lack of research on how these factors influenced the anchoritic life. This thesis has examined and analysed these factors and has offered an overview of the aspects which influenced their lives during the period of this thesis.

Psychological and emotional aspects: The psychological and emotional aspects of the anchoritic life are also under-researched. There is little information available on how anchorites coped with the isolation and how they experienced their spiritual lives. This thesis offers an insight into possible psychological issues that may have occurred during the anchorite's enclosure. It also briefly touches on the history of emotion and how emotion may have affected the anchorite within their enclosure.

Spatial organisation: The spatial organisation of anchorite cells in relation to the larger religious community during the time period of this thesis has not previously been collated and analysed. This thesis combines a dataset of all known religious houses in England and Wales with the amalgamated dataset of anchorite cells and has demonstrated where clusters of cells were located and the possible reasons behind these clusters.

Form and fabric: The form and fabric of the anchorite cell has also not been previously analysed in relation to religious ideologies and social construction. This thesis examined and analysed a selection of cells, together with previous scholarly research around the isolation,

simplicity, connection to the Divine, and symbolism of the cell. This thesis has found that the isolation of the anchorite was a combination of the size of the cell, the thick walls and lack of line of sight to the outside world, which may have contributed to a sense of solitude and isolation. The simplicity of the cell was also evident as reflecting the ascetic ideals of the anchoritic life, in which the anchorite rejected worldly pleasures in the pursuit of spiritual purity and contemplation. A connection with the Divine can also be seen through the cell, especially a design centring around a sense of closeness to God through the use of the altar squint, reflecting the anchorite's spiritual connectedness. Lastly, the symbolism of the cell reflected devoutness and piety. The form and fabric of the cell was closely aligned to the religious beliefs and ideals of the Church, and thus the anchorites, but also demonstrated these for the wider community, in turn connecting them to the Divine as well.

Other future approaches to this field of study could include dedicated research to locating, recording and comparing the physical remains of all anchorite cells, or their features, that still survive in England and Wales. This would require long-term effort but would return the most useful archaeological dataset on cell form and variation. Comparing anchorite cells attached to churches to those that were not, if remnants of any such still remained, would also be enlightening.

Beyond the UK, comparative studies of anchorites throughout the world, including Africa, America, India and the Middle East, and enclosure practices in religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam would also be possible. Studies could explore the global extent of

anchoritism, its timespan and its societal and culture ramifications. Additionally, the excavation of cells could provide valuable insights into the material culture and daily life of the anchorite that is not available from other sources. In relation to the location and excavation of anchorite burials, these would result in a further understanding of the health, diet and lifestyle of the anchorite.

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APPENDIX I: CHURCHES VISITED DURING FIELDTRIPS 2016 – 2018

(Highlighted churches are those with anchorite cells surveyed for thesis.)

County	Church	Century	Location
Cambridgeshire	All Saint's Church	10 th	Market Square, High Street, Huntingdon PE29 3NR
Cambridgeshire	St Giles' Church	11 th	Castle Street, Cambridge CB3 0AQ
Cambridgeshire	St Benedict's Church	11 th	Bene't Street, Cambridge CB2 3PT
Cambridgeshire	St Peter's Church	12 th	Castle Street, Cambridge CB3 0AQ
Cambridgeshire	The Round Church	12 th	Bridge Street, Cambridge CB2 1UB
Cambridgeshire	The Leper Chapel of St Mary Magdalene	12 th	Barnwell Junction, Newmarket Road, Cambridge CB5 8JJ
Cambridgeshire	The Church of St Mary the Great	16 th	The University Church, Senate House Hill, Cambridge, CB2 3PQ
Cornwall	St Materiana's Church	c.11-12 th	Church Hill, Tintagel, PL34 0DL
Cornwall	St Neot's Church	13 th	St Neot, Liskeard PL14 6NG
Cornwall	St Teatha's Church	14 th	Fore Street, Bodmin, PL30 3JA

County	Church	Century	Location
Cornwall	St Michael's Chapel	15 th	Roche Rock, Roche PL26 8HD
Cornwall	St Mary Magdalene Church	16 th	Church Street, Launceston PL15 8AU
Devonshire	The Chapel of St Lawrence	13 th	Threshers, Crediton EX17 3NW
Devonshire	St Thomas a Becket	13 th	Church Street, Dodbrooke, Kingsbridge TQ7 1NW
Devonshire	All Saints' Church, Malborough	13 th	Luckhams Lane, Malborough, Kingsbridge TQ7 3RZ
Devonshire	St Petroc's Church	13 th	Hardford, Lydford, Okehampton EX20 4BH
Devonshire	St Thomas a Becket	14 th	Sourton, Okehampton EX20 4HN
Devonshire	St Martin of Tours Church	14 th	Sherford, Kingsbridge TQ7 2AU

County	Church	Century	Location
Devonshire	The Holy Trinity Church	15 th	Drewsteignton, Exeter EX6 6QN
Devonshire	St Edmund King and Martyr Church	15 th	70 Fore Street, Kingsbridge TQ7 1PP
Devonshire	Buckfast Abbey	11 th	Buckfastleigh TQ11 0EE
Devonshire	St Saviours Church	c.11-12 th	Anzac Streets, Dartmouth TQ6 9DL
Devonshire	The Church of St Winwaloe	12 th	East Portlemouth, Salcombe TQ8 8PF
Devonshire	St Clement's Church	13 th	Church Road, Dartmouth TQ6 9SN
Devonshire	Church of St Mary the Virgin	14 th	1 Church Cottages, Churchstow, Kingsbridge TQ7 3QW
Devonshire	St Mary's Church	15 th	9 High Street, Totnes TQ9 5NN

County	Church	Century	Location
Devonshire	The Church of St Nicholas and St Cyric	15 th	South Pool, Kingsbridge TQ7 2RW
Dorsetshire	Sherborne Abbey	8 th	Abbey Close, Sherborne DT9 3LQ
Dorsetshire	St Mary's Iwerne Minster	12 th	Iwerne Minster, Blandford Forum DT11 8NF
Dorsetshire	The Church of St Mary	13 th	60 High Street, Sixpenny Handley SP5 5ND
Essex	All Saints Church	13 th	Church Chase, Rettendon, Chelmsford CM3 8DR
Hampshire	Winchester Cathedral	9 th	9 The Close, Winchester SO23 9LS
Hampshire	St Mary's Church	13 th	Church Street, Fordingbridge, SP6 1BB
London	The Church of St Bartholomew the Great	12 th	Cloth Fair, Barbican, London EC1A 7JQ
London	The Temple Church	12 th	Temple, London EC4Y 7BB
London	The Priory Church of St. Bartholomew the Great	12 th	W. Smithfield, Barbican, London EC1A 9DS

County	Church	Century	Location
London	St. Helen's Church	13 th	Great St. Helen's, London EC3A 6AT
London	Westminster Abbey	13 th	20 Deans Yard, London SP1 3PA
London	St. Olave's Church	15 th	Hart Street, London EC3R 7NB
London	St Margaret's Church	16 th	St Margaret's Street, London SW1P 3JX
Nottinghamshire	Southwell Minster	12 th	Church Street, Southwell NG25 0HD
Somerset	St Andres (also known as the Plague Church)	c.11 th	Holcome BA3 5ES
Somerset	St Benedict's Church	11 th	Benedict Street, Glastonbury BA6 9NB
Somerset	St John's Church	12 th	Church Street, Selwood, Frome BA11 1PL
Somerset	St Mary the Virgin – The Chapel of the Tithing	12 th	Chesterblade Road, Chesterblade BA4 4QX
Somerset	Wells Cathedral	13 th	Cathedral Green, Wells BA5 2UE

County	Church	Century	Location
Somerset	St Peter's Church	c.14-15 th	High Street, Everscreech, BA4 6HX
Somerset	Bath Abbey	16 th	Abbey Churchyard, Bath BA1 1SX
Staffordshire	The Church of St Wolfrida	15 th	Horton, Wimborne BH21 7JA
Surrey	Church of St Nicholas	10 th	Compton, Guildford GU3 1EE
Surrey	St Mary's Church	11 th	Farleigh Court Road, Farleigh CR6 9PX
Sussex	St Anne's Church (formally St Marry-in-Westoute)	11 th	High Street, Lewes BN7 1RJ
Sussex	St Botolph's Church	11 th	Hardham, Pulborough RH20 1LB
Sussex	St Thomas a Becket at Cliffe	13 th	Cliffe High Street, Lewes BN7 2AH
Sussex	Trinity Church	c.14 th	Southover High Street, Lewes BN7 1JH
Wiltshire	The Church of Sarum St Martin	11 th	Church Street, Salisbury SP1 2HY
Wiltshire	Malmesbury Abbey	12 th	Gloucester Street, Malmesbury SN16 0AA

County	Church	Century	Location
Wiltshire	St Mary the Virgin	c.12 th	The Gardens, Upavon, Pewsey SN9 6NA
Wiltshire	St John the Baptist Church	c.12 th	Church Street, Pewsey SN9 5DL
Wiltshire	St Thomas a Becket Church	12 th	High Street, Tilshead, Salisbury SP3 4RX
Wiltshire	St Andrew's Church	13 th	Lower Road, Lower Bemerton, Salisbury SP2 9NR
Wiltshire	St Thomas's Church	13 th	St Thomas's Square, Salisbury SP1 1BA
Wiltshire	Salisbury Cathedral	13 th	Salisbury SP1 2EJ
Wiltshire	St Bartholomew and All Saints	14 th	1 Church Street, Royal Wootton Bassett, Swindon SN4 7BQ
Wiltshire	St John the Baptist	12 th	Long Street, Devizes SN10 1NP
Wiltshire	St Mary's Church	12 th	New Part Street, Devizes SN10 1DS
Wiltshire	All Saints Church	c.12-13 th	16 Church Street, West Lavington, Devizes SN10 4LB
Wiltshire	St James' Church	c.15 th	Church Walk, Devizes SN10 3AA
Worcestershire	St Nicholas' Church	c.11 th	2 St Nicholas Lane, Warndon, Worcester WR4 0SL

County	Church	Century	Location
Worcestershire	Worcester Cathedral	11 th	8 College Yard, Worcester WR1 2LA
Worcestershire	The Great Malvern Priory	11 th	Church Street, Malvern WR14 2AY
Worcestershire	All Saints Church	12 th	Market Place, Evesham WR11 4RW
Yorkshire	St Margaret's Church	c.11 th	Navigation Road, Walmgate, York YO1 9TL
Yorkshire	The Church of the Holy Trinity	12 th	Micklegate, York YO1 6LE
Yorkshire	St Mary's Church	12 th	Main Street, Sprotbrough, Doncaster DN5 7RF
Yorkshire	All Saints' Church	c.14-15 th	North Street, York YO1 6JD
Yorkshire	St Cuthbert's House of Prayer	15 th	Peasholme Green, York YO1 7PW
Wales	St Issui's Church	11 th	Partrishow Powys, Abergavenny NP7 7LP

County	Church	Century	Location
Wales	The Church of St David	12 th	Llanthony, Abergavenny NP7 7NN
Wales	Llanthony Priory	12 th	Llanthony, Abergavenny NP7 7NN
Wales	St Martin's Church	12 th	Cwmyoy, Abergavenny NP7 7NT
Wales	St John the Baptist	12 th	3 St John Street, Cardiff CF10 1GJ

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APPENDIX II: PHOTOGRAPHS

1. All Saints Church, Rettenton, Essex



Figure 1.1: External view of All Saints' Church, looking west towards the tower. Chimney to anchorite house can be seen on the right side of photo.



Figure 1.2: Close up view of east external wall of anchorhold.



Figure 1.3: External north wall of anchorhold showing chimney, door and upper-level window. Prior to Victorian restoration and external staircase was located to the left of the chimney, with a door to the upper-level.



Figure 1.5: Remains of external staircase indicated in red in front of chimney



Figure 1.6: Internal view of upper-level window (left photo). External view of same window (right photo).



Figure 1.7: Door to anchorhold parlour from chancel.



Figure 1.8: Victorian restoration of lower-level window in east wall of anchorhold parlour.



Figure 1.9: Outline of possible parlour squint – plastered over and painted possibly as part of Victorian restoration.



Figure 1.10: Sconce for statue on north wall of lower-level room.



Figure 1.11: Entry doorway to anchorhold leading to stairs to upper-level room.

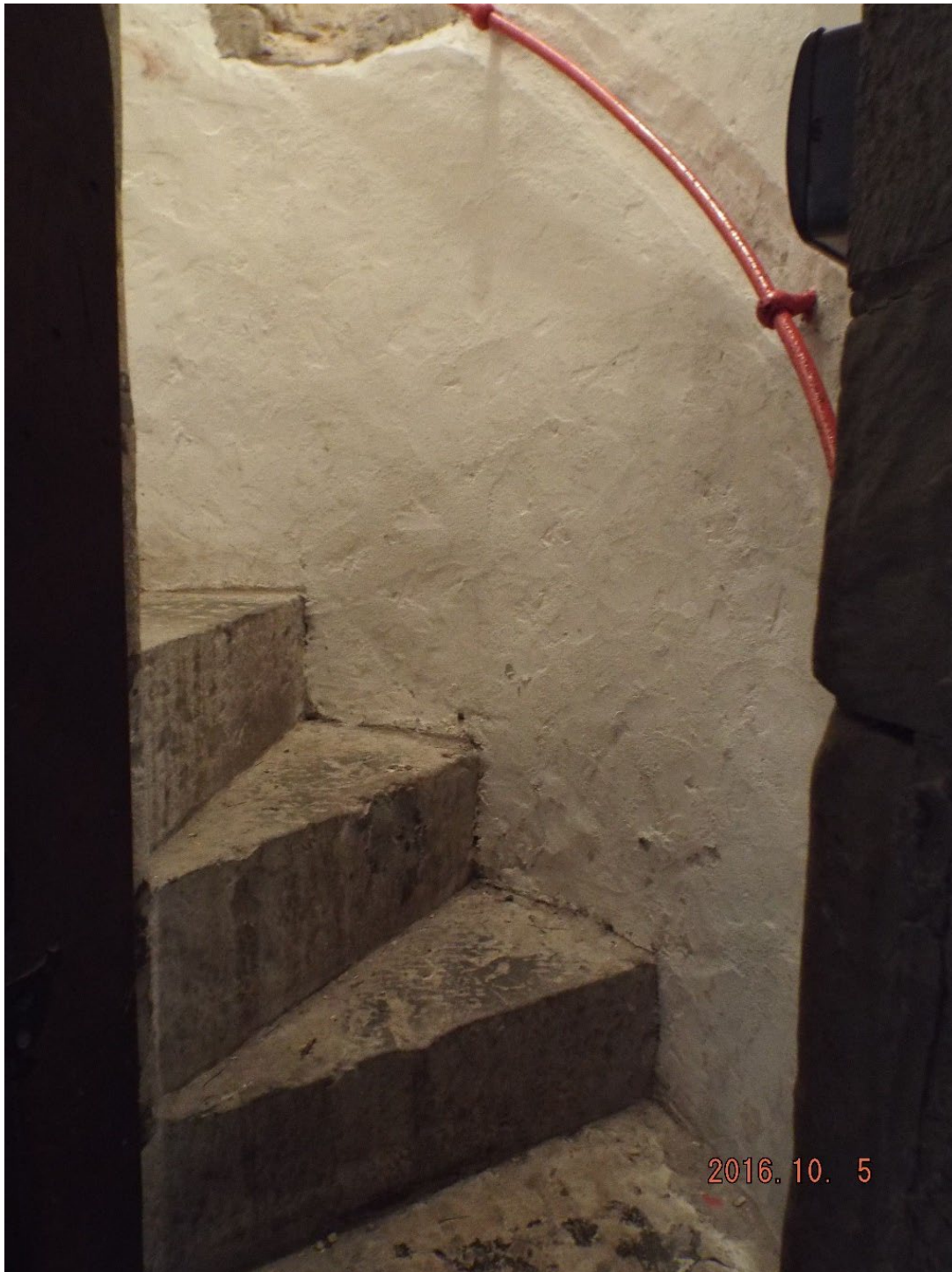


Figure 1.12: Stone staircase beyond doorway, leading to upper level of anchorhold. Void is directly to the right of these stairs (which may have been repositioned slightly during Victorian restoration).



Figure 1.13: Small blocked window on west side of staircase wall. This would have looked out into the north chapel and altar area.



Figure 1.14: Second small, blocked window on west side of staircase wall. This would have looked out into the north chapel and altar area.

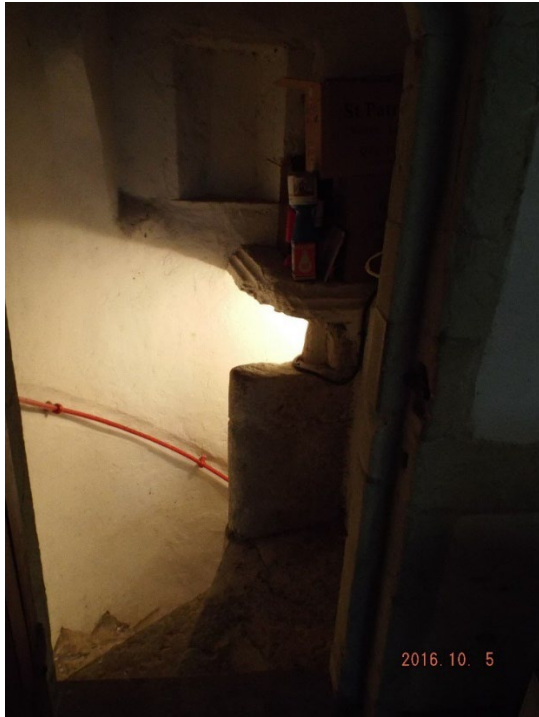


Figure 1.15: On upper-level looking down staircase. Second staircase window/squint can be seen in the upper left of photo



Figure 1.16: White plastered wall separating void from staircase. Staircase window/squint can be seen on left of photo.



Figure 1.17: Lid to child's coffin used as a material for staircase. The lid has been pushed under new plaster (see white plaster on right side of photo) to support the stair above.



Figure 1.18: Original stone can be seen at the side of coffin lid – also half covered with white plaster.



Figure 1.19: Stone on upper -level of staircase, blocking the void / room on the north-west side of the anchorhold.



Figure 1.20: Mortar on right inner side of door, upper-level of anchorhold.



Figure 1.21: Upper-level window on south side of room, which overlooks the chancel and altar.



Figure 1.22: Stone bench / sill under south side window



Figure 1.23: Monument covering staircase windows/squint and possible altar squint. Monument is location in the north chapel.



Figure 1.24: Demonstrating the width of staircase and void on other side of staircase. The photo shows side section of monument in north chapel (on left of photo) and the open door to the parlour room (now vestry) on right of photo.

2. St. Nicholas' Church, Compton, Surrey



Figure 2.1: Church Tower from Saxon period at east end of church.



Figure 2.2: Drawing of church and ground plan. Unknown artist or date, however as modern vestry not shown on ground plan it can be assumed to be prior to 1861 – the year in which the vestry was built.



Figure 2.3: East wall of sanctuary showing 13th century leadlight window of black Madonna. The upper-level shows outline of blocked window - removed in 1953.



Figure 2.4: Location of Cell A on north side of the chancel. To the left of the photo is the modern vestry. The outline of the walls of the anchorhold can be seen on the east wall of the north aisle, and faintly on the north wall of the chancel.



Figure 2.5: Cell A - altar squint in north wall of the chancel. Modern vestry can be seen on left side of photo.



Figure 2.6: Magnified view of cell B altar squint. Mortar on wall may be the 'anchor' point for anchorhold.



Figure 2.7: Cell A – magnified altar squint. Perspex in place to protect squint.



Figure 2.8: Magnified photo of altar squint to cell A. Note possible location of shutter attachment areas (indicated in red).



Figure 2.9: Mortar on external north wall of chancel – possible ‘anchor’ point of anchorhold.



Figure 2.10: Location of the original altar on the south side of the chancel, in direct view of Cell A's squint



Figure 2.11: Cell A altar squint (indicated in red) – view from inside the chancel. Vestry door can be seen to the right of the squint.



Figure 2.12: Cell A's alar squint – view from chancel.

Figure 2.13: Magnified view of altar squint – cell A, view from chancel.



Figure 2.14: Sanctuary and upper-level oratory – east view from chancel. Door to vestry can be seen on left and door to cell B on right of photo. Door to oratory from cell B can be seen in upper right of photo.

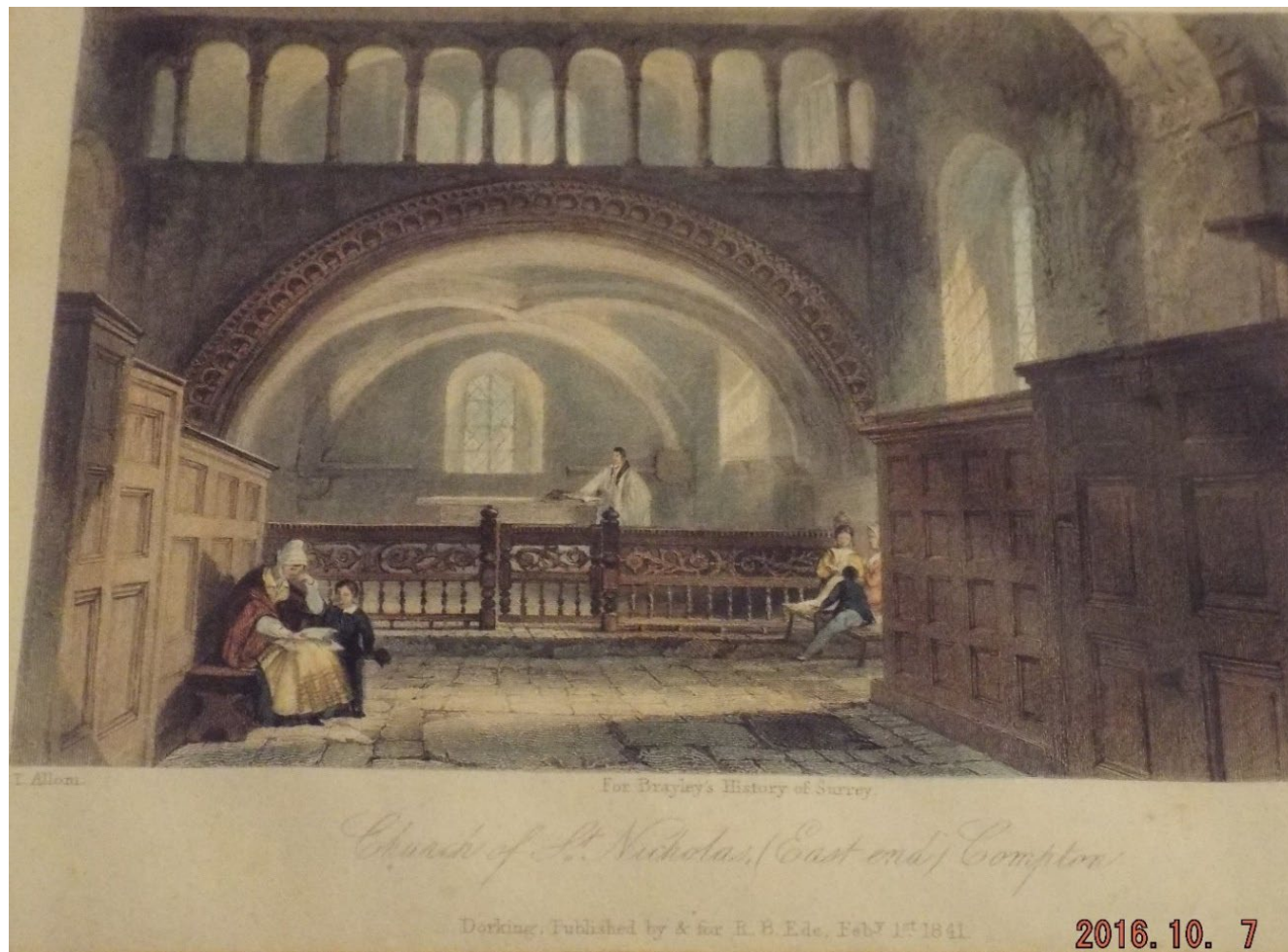


Figure 2.15: Sketch of chancel and oratory dated Feb 1st, 1841, for E.W. Brayley's History of Surrey. Artist: Thomas Allom.



Figure 2.16: Black Madonna and Child (13th century) leadlight window in east sanctuary - (window was moved from north side of sanctuary when modern vestry was built in 1859 (Bott 2000:46).



Figure 2.17: View of chancel, Sanctuary and oratory from nave of church.



Figure 2.18: Norman knight of the crusades, located on the south side of the chancel arch.



Figure 2.19: Door to cell B can be seen on the lower level. The upper-level door to the oratory can be seen top centre of photo. Altar squint can be seen next to the piscina in the Sanctuary (indicated in red).



Figure 2.20: Door to cell B – view from chancel.



Figure 2.21: Door to cell B looking outwards into chancel. Medieval graffiti can be seen on right of photo (indicated in red).



Figure 2.22: Magnified view of cell wall graffiti.

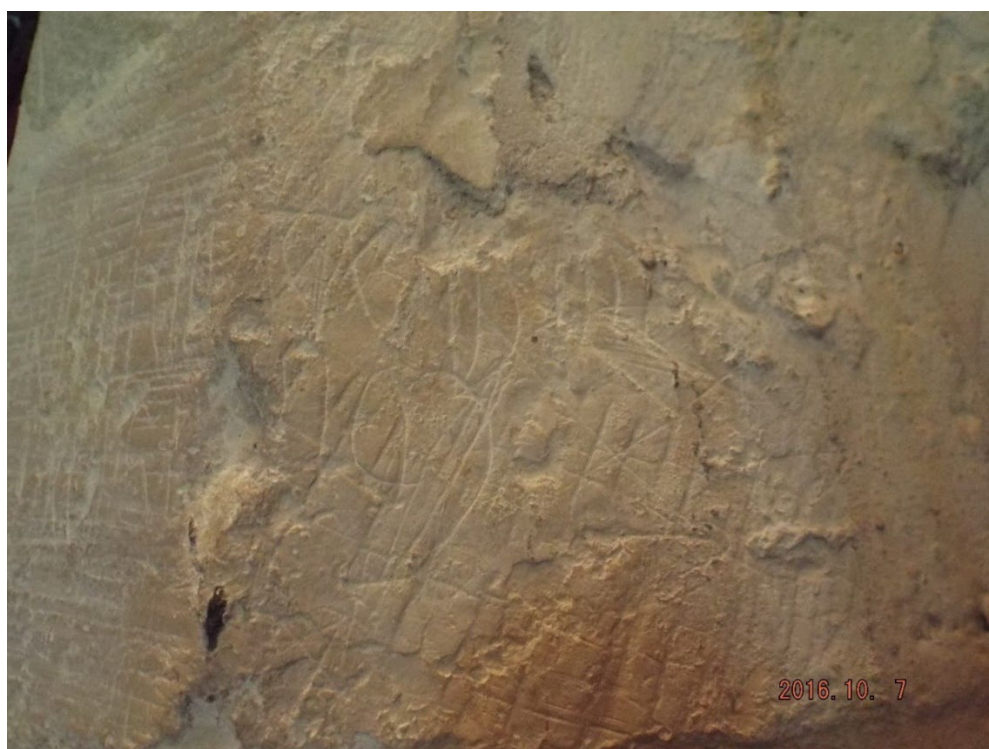


Figure 2.23: Magnified view of cell wall graffiti.



Figure 2.24: Magnified view of cell wall graffiti.



Figure 2.25: View from inside cell B looking up at north wall of cell and door to upper-level oratory.



Figure 2.26: View from inside cell B looking up at the east wall, ceiling and door to the upper-level oratory. Staircase is a modern installation.



Figure 2.27: Looking down from oratory door to inside cell B. Blocked door can be seen in left of photo and external parlour window to the right.



Figure 2.28: Looking down from oratory door to inside cell B. South wall of cell, blocked door can be seen in left of photo and external parlour window to the right.



Figure 2.29: Looking down into cell B from oratory door. View of south wall and ceiling.



Figure 2.30: Oratory door fitting.



Figure 2.31: Oratory door fitting



Figure 2.32: Upper-level oratory – view from chancel. Piscina and door to cell B can be seen in right of photo.



Figure 2.33: Piscina in oratory on south wall.



Figure 2.34: Magnified view of oratory's piscina.



Figure 2.35: Wooden balustrade fitted in oratory.



Figure 2.36: Looking down from the oratory, through the wooden balustrade, into the nave of the church.



Figure 2.37: Looking into the oratory from the door to cell B.



Figure 2.38: External 'parlour' window from inside of cell B.



Figure 2.39: External 'parlour' window from inside of cell B – full view.



Figure 2.40: Upper section of External 'parlour' window from inside of cell B.



Figure 2.41: Windowsill of External 'parlour' window from inside of cell B.



Figure 2.42: Cruciform altar squint – looking into cell B from the sanctuary. Shows that it is large enough for the anchorite to receive Communion (priests' hand could fit through the centre of the cross).



Figure 2.43: Cruciform altar squint from inside cell B, showing the wooden sill.



Figure 2.44: Cruciform altar squint from inside cell B – looking out into the sanctuary and onto the altar.



Figure 2.45: Space low enough for kneeling anchorite at altar squint in the corner of the room.



Figure 2.46: space in front of the altar squint (below modern staircase).



Figure 2.47: External view of cell B, showing blocked door, and external 'parlour' window.



Figure 2.48: Direct frontal external view of cell B, showing blocked door and external 'parlour' window to the left of photo.



Figure 2.49: External view of cell B showing roof.



Figure 2.50: External view of external 'parlour' window. A wooden shutter may have been installed to shelter anchorite from weather and for privacy.

3. St. Mary and St. Cuthbert, Chester-le-Street, Durham



Figure 3.1: External view of anchorhold (indicated in red). Area in blue box was renovated to become a widow housing in the mid-sixteenth century.



Figure 3.2: External view of anchorhold, original window on upper-level and modern door at lower-level. Bolt hole can be seen on upper right of door under lintel from original door.



Figure 3.3: Closer view of door lintel and bolt hole (right side under lintel).



Figure 3.4: Window to anchorhold – external view.



Figure 3.5: 'Modern' external doorway at back of upper-level room to cell. This entry was originally blocked as it held a fireplace.



Figure 3.6: Looking west from nave, showing blocked door (indicated in red) to lower-level of anchorite cell.

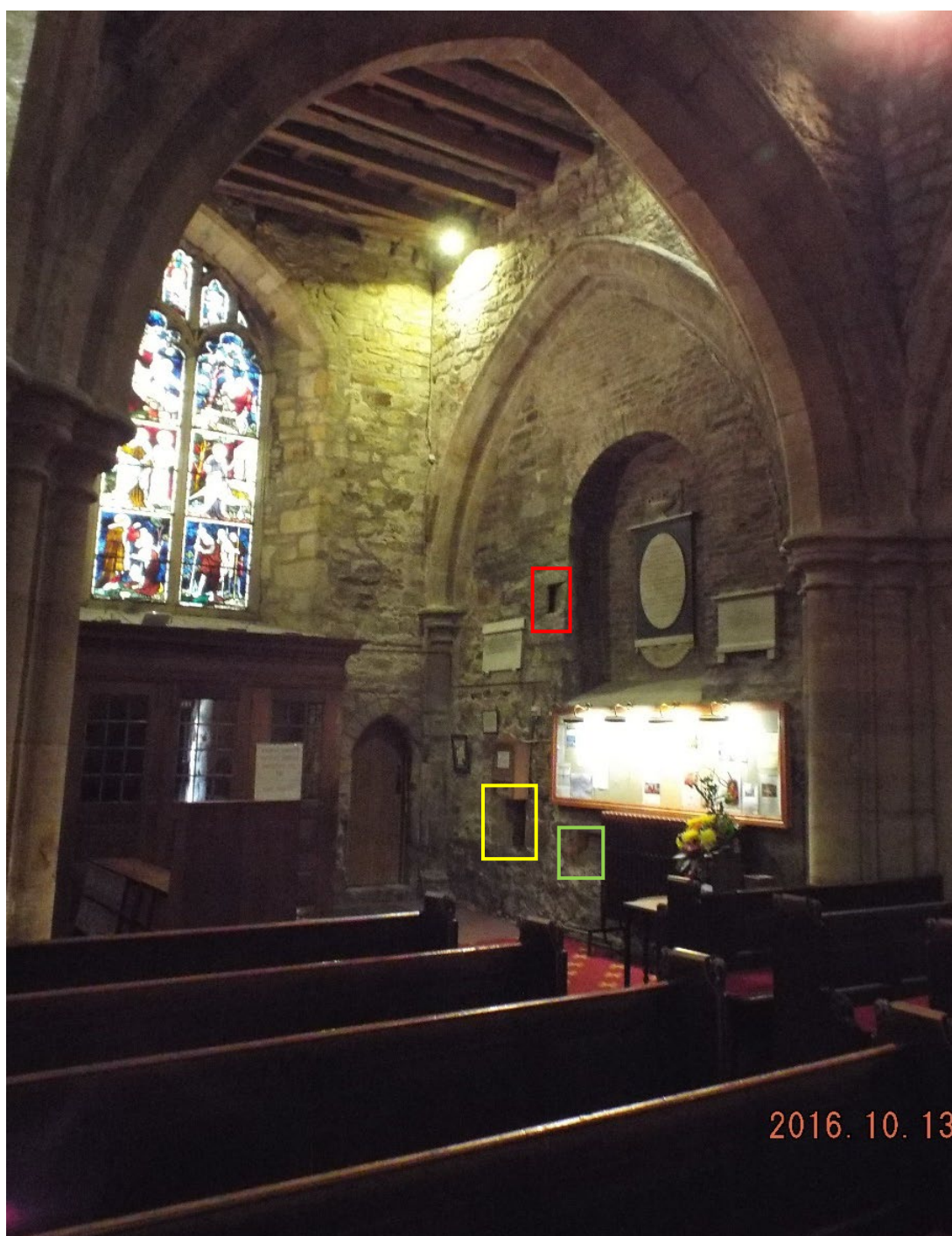


Figure 3.7: Looking northwest, showing altar squint (indicated in red), parlour squint (indicated in yellow) and possible alms box/opening for food (indicated in green).



Figure 3.8: Looking north at anchorhold from nave of church, showing altar squint (indicated in red), parlour squint (indicated in yellow) and possible alms box/opening for food (indicated in green).



Figure 3.9: Magnified photo of parlour squint – view from inside of church.



Figure 3.10: Magnified photo of possible alms box – view from inside of church.



Figure 3.11: Effigies/tombs line the north aisle, with the head of one placed inside entry of blocked doorway to anchorhold.



Figure 3.12: The head of male effigy /tomb placed inside door entry of blocked doorway to anchorhold.

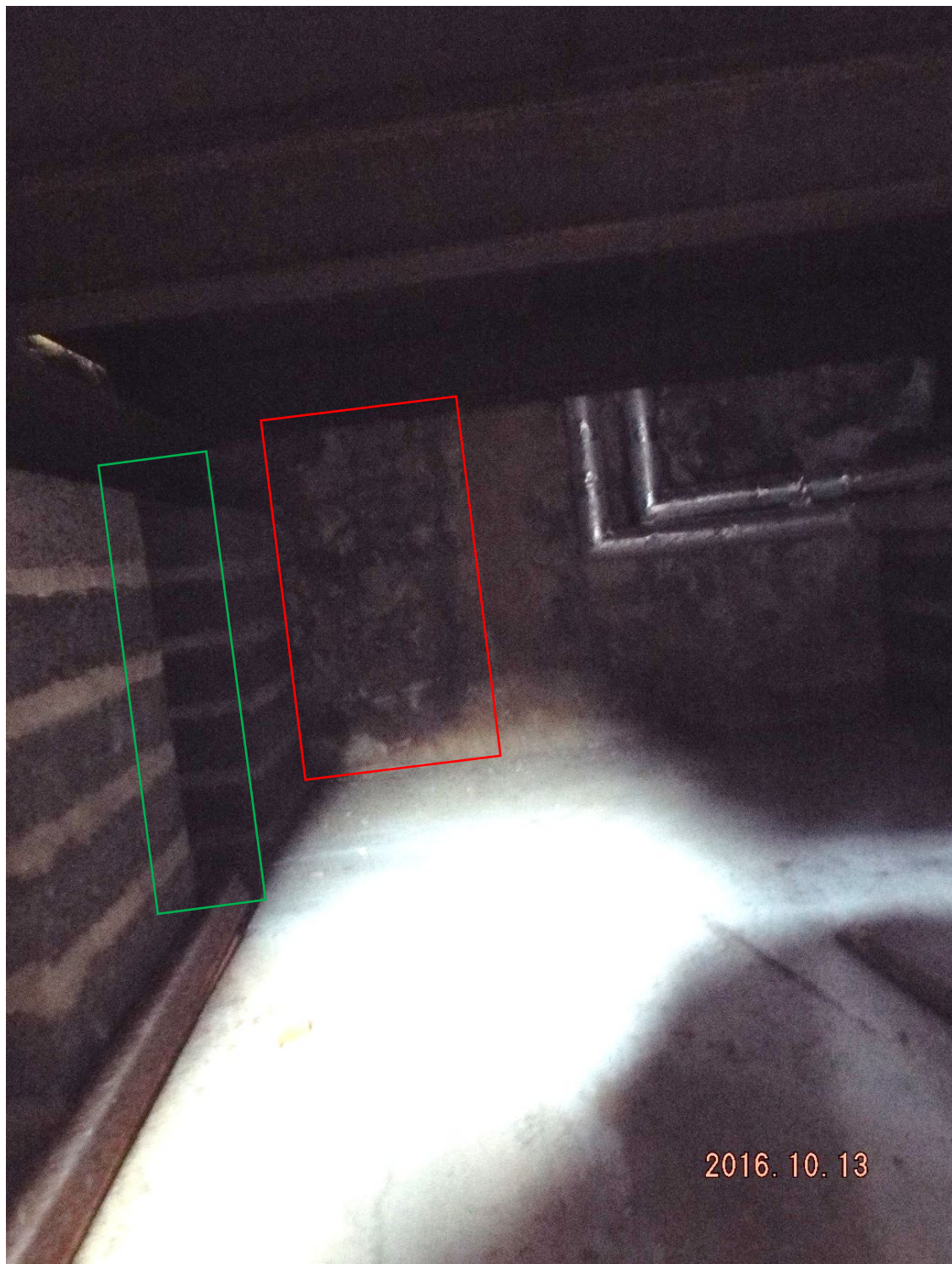


Figure 3.13: Original floor level showing blocked doorway (indicated in red), lower floor level also housed a well (however modern cement now covers original floor). Indication in green shows possible location of original staircase to upper-level (further investigation required).



Figure 3.14: Original steps leading to the original floor level (or possibly to the well area). Indication in red is where the lower level extends below the modern mezzanine flooring. Lower level of cell (see Figure 3:13).



Figure 3.15: Original stair leading up from the original floor level (possibly where well was located). Lower level of cell.



Figure 3.16: Entry to lower level of cell through modern door. Original stair can be seen and to the right the stair to the lower level original floor level where well may have been located. Fireplace located to the left as you walk into the cell.



Figure 3.17: Lower-level fireplace (currently – 2016 - used for storage).



Figure 3.18: Lower-level fireplace (with some of storage cleared away).



Figure 3.19: Blot hole under front door lintel.



Figure 3.20: Archway from extension for widows housing, looking into cell proper. Indication in red is possible external 'parlour' squint.



Figure 3.21 and 3.22: Upper-level cell window and sill looking west.



Figure 3.23: Stone windowsill with hole for possible wooden shutters to protect anchorite against weather and for privacy.



Figure 3.24: Altar squint in south wall of upper-level cell room.



Figure 3.25: Magnified view of altar squint (upper-level south wall of cell).

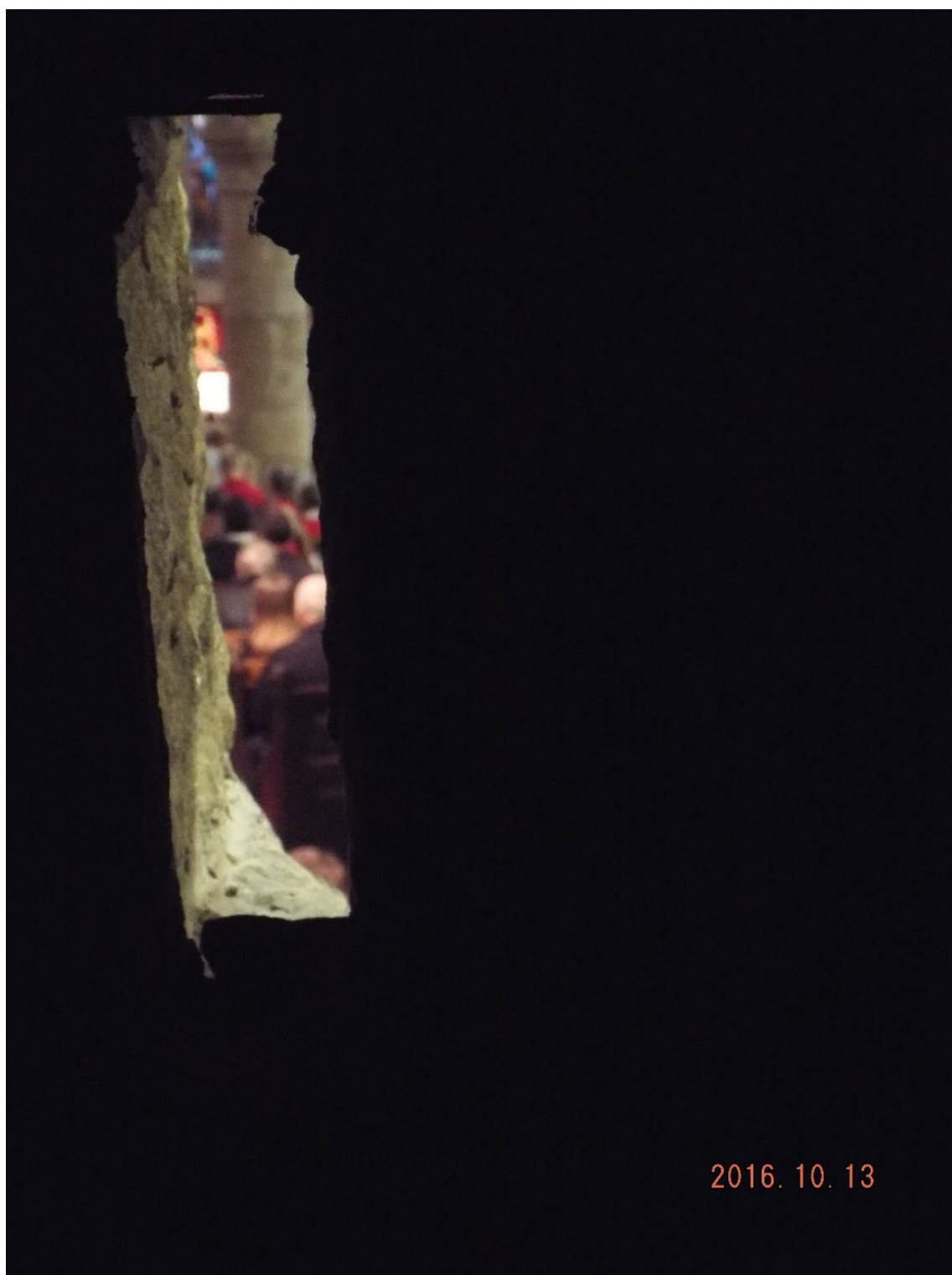


Figure 3.26: Magnified view from the altar squint – upper level of cell.



Figure 3.27: Looking north into the widow's accommodation extension from inside of cell – upper-level room.



Figure 3.28: Door lintel looking north from inside cell – upper-level room.



Figure 3.29: Showing blocked upper-level fireplace.



Figure 3.30: Closer view of blocked chimney to fireplace – north side of upper-level room.



Figure 3.31: View of fireplace left wall and blocked chimney to fireplace – upper-level room.



Figure 3.32: View of left side outer corner of fireplace – upper-level room.



Figure 3.33: View of fireplace low shelf right side of fireplace in upper-level room.



Figure 3.34: Victorian doll head in west wall of cell upper-level room - this may have been placed there during renovation work (on unknown date).



Figure 3.35: Looking east towards sanctuary from nave.

4. All Saints Church, York



Figure 4.1: Southwest of church showing 'modern' reconstruction of anchorite cell.



Figure 4.2: Southwest of church showing where 'modern' reconstruction of anchorite cell abuts to the church wall.



Figure 4.3: Southwest of church showing where 'modern' reconstruction of anchorite cell abuts to the church wall, also showing under reconstruction.

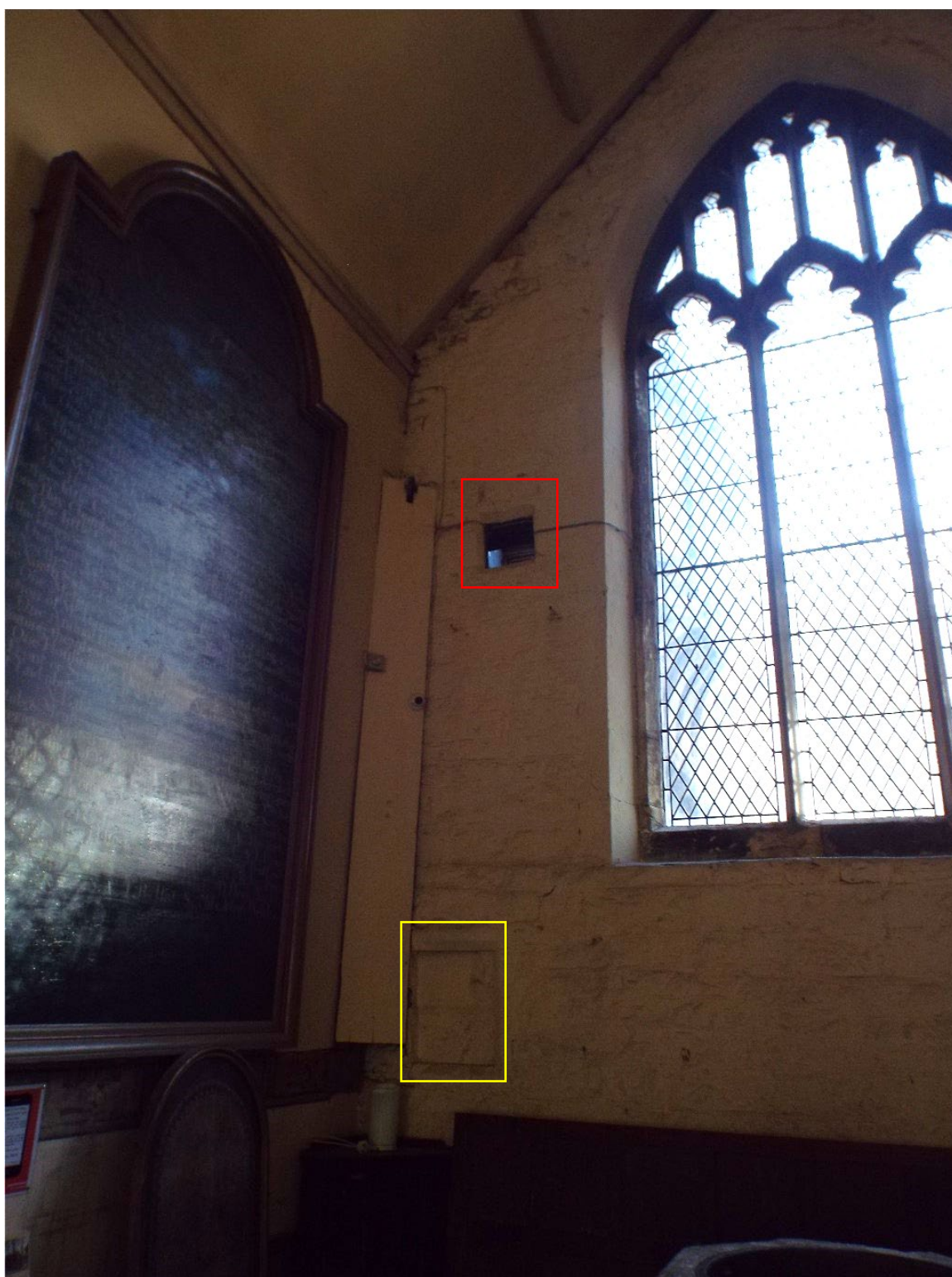


Figure 4.4: Looking to the southwest corner of the church, showing altar squint (indicated in red) and parlour squint (indicated in yellow).



Figure 4.5: Altar squint viewed from inside church.



Figure 4.6: Parlour squint viewed from inside church.



Figure 4.6: View of altar squint (indicated in red) from inside 'modern' reconstruction of anchorhold and the roof line of the original building (indicated in yellow).



Figure 4.7: Roof line of original anchorite cell (indicated in yellow).



Figure 4.8: Altar squint looking into the church nave. The altar can be seen if person kneels in front of squint. Modern wooden shutter.



Figure 4.9: View of nave and altar through altar squint at a kneeling level.



Figure 4.10: Magnified view of nave and altar through altar squint at a kneeling level.

5. St. Botolph's Church, Hardam, West Sussex



Figure 5.1: North wall of church (front entry of church).



Figure 5.2: South wall of church showing blocked 'Devils Door' on left and remains of altar squint (indicated in red).



Figure 5.3: View of church looking northwest, showing red mortar on south wall of chancel/sanctuary which may be anchor point on anchorhold.



Figure 5.4: Looking west showing red mortar of wall of church. Square (possible) foundation stone can be seen in the foreground of photo (indicated in red).



Figure 5.5: Blocked and white-washed altar squint on south side of chancel – external view.



Figure 5.6: View of altar squint and red mortar looking east – external view.



Figure 5.7: Magnified view of blocked and white-washed altar squint – external view.



Figure 5.8: View of chancel and Sanctuary from nave. Anchorite cell located to the right of chancel (behind entry wall).

6. St. Anne's Church, Lewes, East Sussex



Figure 6.1: Looking southwest from chancel towards cell B's altar squint.



Figure 6.2: Curtained off cell B. Open door to vestry can be seen at left side of photo (where the blocked altar squint from cell A is located).



Figure 6.3: Burial under altar squint in cell B.



Figure 6.4: Cell B's altar squint from chancel.



Figure 6.5: Cell B's altar squint taken from inside cell B



Figure 6.6: Ceiling of cell B above altar squint.



Figure 6.7: North wall of cell B



Figure 6.8: Reburial of anchorite in grave after excavation. A modern dedication to the anchorite was written on cement cover.



Figure 6.9: Blocked and whitewashed altar squint – Cell A.



Figure 6.10: View of blocked and whitewashed altar squint (left side of squint)– Cell A.



Figure 6.11: View of blocked and whitewashed altar squint (right side of squint)– Cell A.

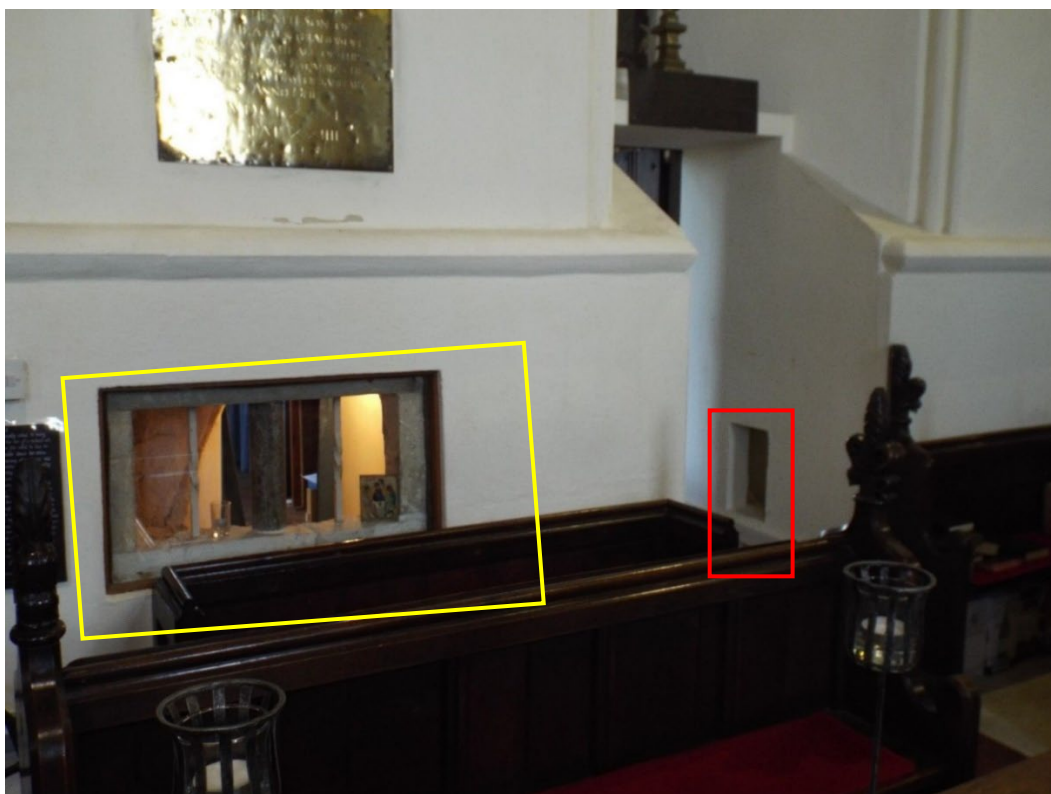


Figure 6.12: View from chancel looking south. Cell A altar squint can be seen indicated in red, altar squint of cell B can be seen indicated in yellow.



Figure 6.13: Curtained off behind a locked door – Parlour squint.

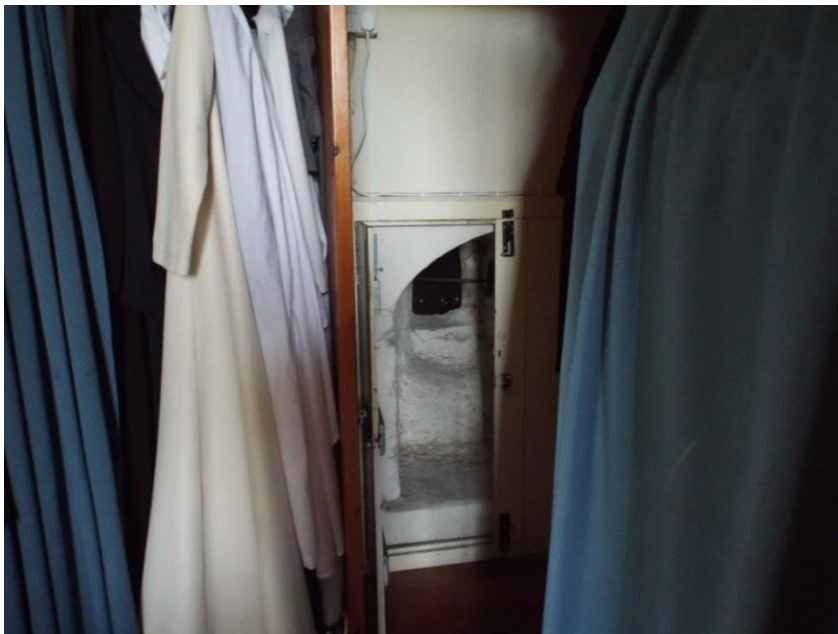


Figure 6.14: Parlour squint can be seen behind opened door.



Figure 6.15: Closer view of parlour window through open door. Original wooden shutter can be seen covering squint opening.



Figure 6.16: View of parlour squint from kneeling point.



Figure 6.17: View of wooden parlour squint shutter from inside.



Figure 6.18: View of parlour squint location (indicated in red) – looking out into Ladies Chapel behind (current) altar.



Figure 6.19: Closer view of wooden shutter of parlour squint. Located on east wall of Ladies Chapel.

7. The Church of St. Materiana, Tintagel, Cornwall



Figure 7.1: West side of church – view looking east.



Figure 7.2: View to east. Anchorite cell showing external chimney and window to cell.



Figure 7.3: North external wall of 'parlour'. East external wall of anchorite cell can be seen on the left side facing the 'parlour'.



Figure 7.4: External view of window which is located above the fireplace in cell – located on the east north wall of cell. Chimney can be seen directly above on roof of cell.



Figure 7.5: External view of window which is located above the fireplace in cell – located on the east north wall of cell. Photo shows position of window in relation to ground level.



Figure 7.6: External north wall of cell (seen in red box), showing chimney on roof and window which is located above the altar inside the cell.



Figure 7.7: Altar squint – view from sanctuary and chancel.



Figure 7.8: View from the chancel to door of cell and altar squint. Faint impression and outline of possible parlour squint can be seen in lower left of photo (indicated in red). Cell may have been slightly larger at one point to include this squint – see figures 7.10 and 7.12.



Figure 7.9: Door into cell – the fireplace and external window above fireplace can be seen on the north wall of cell.



Figure 7.10: Possible parlour window. Located between cell and possible parlour/servants' room to the left of photo. Now used as partially enclosed vestry.



Figure 7.11: Inside cell looking out towards chancel. Photo also shows altar squint, which has a latch to open (indicated in red).



Figure 7.12: Possible section of wall (behind internal door to cell from chancel) that may have been the area where the anchorite had a parlour squint (see figure 7.10) and where communication with the servant/s was possible. The wall may have been a simple alcove to allow anchorites access to parlour squint.



Figure 7.13: East wall of cell showing cell altar and window above altar. To the right of photo is the altar squint into the church proper.



Figure 7.14: Window in east wall above cell altar.



Figure 7.15: Cell fireplace and window in north wall of cell.



Figure 7.16: View of left arch pillar to possible parlour/servants' room which is located to the left of anchorite cell. Pillar shows different stonework which may indicate reconstruction or repairs at one point. Window shown is on north wall of room. Room locked – not accessible.



Figure 7.17: Chancel and Sanctuary south wall showing unusual 'porthole' window in centre (indicated in red). See internal view of this window in figure 7.11.

8. St. Issui Patricio's Church, Abergavenny, Wales



Figure 8.1: View of external building, anchorhold and church – looking north.



Figure 8.2: View of external building, anchorhold and church – looking north.



Figure 8.3: External northwest view of anchorhold, showing south wall and window, and east wall, door and outline of external 'parlour' window.



Figure 8.4: View of front of anchorhold and its abutment to the church. Difference in stone and architectural style can be seen highlighting the different periods of the builds.



Figure 8.5: Southeast view of anchorhold showing door, external 'parlour' window and chimney.
External building can be seen to the left of the photo.



Figure 8.6: View of west side of anchorhold and its abutment to the church to the north of the cell. Difference in stone and architectural style can be seen highlighting the different periods of the builds.



Figure 8.7: View of the west and south sides of anchorhold and its abutment to the church to the north of the cell. Difference in stone and architectural style can be seen highlighting the different periods of the builds. Chimney can be seen on roof (although no internal sign of a fireplace is now evident).



Figure 8.8: East wall of anchorhold showing chimney position on slate roof.



Figure 8.9: Internal view of altar squint from nave – south view.



Figure 8.10: Internal view of altar squint from nave. Baptismal font in foreground of photo and painting of 'Time' on right side of altar squint on south wall of nave.



Figure 8.11: View of nave and altar squint from chancel.



Figure 8.12: View of nave, chancel and sanctuary/altar from the south end of nave where cell is situated.



Figure 8.13: Threshold of anchorhold.



Figure 8.14: view from inside doorway of anchorhold looking east.



Figure 8.15: Top of doorway – internal view on south wall of anchorhold, showing timber frame and ceiling of cell.



Figure 8.16: Internal view of anchorhold looking north towards altar, showing steps to 'modern' statue on left, cell altar/tomb on left under altar squint and 'parlour' window to the outside world.



Figure 8.17: Internal view of anchorhold looking north towards altar, showing steps to 'modern' statue on left, cell altar/tomb on left under altar squint, 'parlour' window to the outside world and wooden ceiling beams.



Figure 8.18: Internal view of anchorhold looking northeast, showing steps to 'modern' statue on left, cell altar/tomb on left under altar squint.



Figure 8.19: Showing raised floor of cell in front of cell altar and stairs. There is a non-related nineteenth century gravestone laying on the raised floor area to the left of the photo.



Figure 8.20: View from inside the anchorhold from the altar squint (reflection of south cell window can be seen in the glass of photo).



Figure 8.21: External 'parlour' window. Bolt hole for shutter can be seen on left of window (indicated in red).



Figure 8.22: External 'parlour' window. Bolt hole for shutter can be seen on left of window.



Figure 8.23: Bolt hole for shutter can be seen on left of window



Figure 8.24: Magnified photo of shutter bolt hole on left of window.



Figure 8.25: External view of cell's 'parlour' window



Figure 8.26: Internal view of south wall of cell showing window with slightly slanted sill (possibly due to subsidence?). No evidence of fireplace, however this chimney is directly above this wall.



Figure 8.27: Internal view of south wall of cell showing window with slightly slanted sill.



Figure 8.28: Wooden ceiling beams inside cell.

APPENDIX III: ENCLOSURE CEREMONY WORDING

THE OFFICE FOR THE ENCLOSURE OF ANCHORITES

(According to the Use of Sarum)

(Manyale ad Usum Sarum (Surtees S. 63), 37-43.

The Office is “Servitium Includendorum”, from the York Manual).

THE SERVICE OF THOSE WHO ARE TO BE ENCLOSED

In what manner those who approach the order of anchorites ought to approach and to order themselves, that which follows according to the Use of Sarum will make clear. No one ought to be enclosed without the advice of the Bishop; but let him be taught and warned by the Bishop or some other presbyter that he must devoutly examine his own conscience, and in particular whether he desires holiness with a good or bad purpose, if he desires it to please God or to attain wealth or the praise of men; lastly whether he have strength and endurance of mind enough to avail against the crafts of the evil enemy, and against manifold mischiefs of that sort. When he shall have promised to bear such things for the kingdom of God, and to set his hope on God alone, let the Bishop, or a presbyter by command of the Bishop, enclose him. But let the one who is enclosed learn not to think highly of himself, as though he deserved to be set apart from the mass of mankind; but let him rather believe that it is provided and appointed for his own weakness that he should be set far from the companionship of his neighbours, lest by more frequent sin he should both himself perish and do harm to those who dwell with him, and should thus fall into greater damnation. Let him therefore think that he is convicted of his sins and committed to solitary confinement as to prison, and that on account of his own weakness he is unworthy of the fellowship of mankind. This rule must be observed with both sexes.

HERE BEGINS THE ORDER OF THE ENCLOSING SERVANTS OR HANDMAIDENS OF GOD

Let him who is to be enclosed take care that he be confessed of all his sins which he can remember, and that on the day before the day of his enclosure he be refreshed only with bread and water. On the night following that day, he is bound to watch devoutly in prayer with his light burning in a monastery near his cell. On the morrow, after an exhortation to the people and to the one who is to be enclosed, the Bishop or priest must begin his Responsorium:

Let us amend our ways.

The choir goes on – For the amendment of our sins of ignorance, lest, taken suddenly by the day of death, we seek time for repentance, and find it not. Hear us, O Lord, and have mercy, for we have sinned against thee.

Verse. Help us, O Lord our Saviour, and for the glory of thy name deliver us, O Lord. Hear us, O Lord.

After this the Bishop or Priest prostrating himself on the carpet before the altar shall with the clerks, begin these Psalms: vi, lxxxviii, with Gloria Patri, xx with Gloria Patri, xxxii, xxxv, xxxviii, xli, xliii, lvi, cii, ciii, 1-5 (only), cxxx, cxxxi, cxliii. Lord have mercy upon us. Christ have mercy upon us. Lord have mercy upon us.

Our Father, etc. And lead us not, etc. But deliver, etc.

Oh Lord, my God, save thy servant (or thy handmaid); Which putteth his trust in thee.

Let not the enemy prevail against him: Nor the son of wickedness nigh to hurt him.

Be unto him, O Lord, a strong tower: From the face of the enemy.

Send him help, O Lord, from thy holy place: And strengthen him out of Sion.

O Lord, hear my prayer: And let my cry come unto thee.

The Lord be with you. Let us pray.

Spare, O Lord, spare thy servant *N.* who though has redeemed, O Christ, with thy blood, and be not angry with him for ever. Who livest, *etc.*

Another prayer with Let us Pray.

O God of boundless mercy and great goodness, forgive his sins and heal all his weakness of soul, that having received forgiveness of all his sins he may rejoice in thy goodness. Through Christ, *etc.*

Let us Pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, have mercy on thy servant *N.* and of thy great goodness guide him in the way of eternal life, that by thy grace he may love those things which are pleasing to thee, and may go on from strength to strength.

Prevent us, O Lord, in all our doings with thy gracious favour, and further us with the continual help, that all our work may be begun, and ended in thee. Through our Lord, *etc.*

After this let the Bishop or Priest vest himself in a Chasuble and let any Mass he wills be at once begun; so that this prayer following be said for the one to be enclosed, with a single Per Dominum, and a single Oremus.

O God, who doest cleanse the wicked and willest not the death of a sinner; we humbly beseech thy majesty that in thy goodness thou wilt guard thy servant *N.* who trusteth in thy heavenly aid, that he may ever serve thee, and no trails may part from him from thee. Through our Lord, *etc.*

After the Gospel the one who is to be enclosed must offer his taper which must always burn above the altar during the Mass. And the one who is to be enclosed must stand before the altar step and read his profession in a loud voice: if he is a layman some servant must read it for him. The profession must be of this sort: -

I, brother or sister *N.* offer and present myself to the goodness of God to serve in the order of an anchorite; and according to the rule of that order I promise to remain hence forward in the service of God through the grace of God and the guidance of the church and to render canonical obedience to my spiritual fathers.

Then must the one who is to be enclosed make the sign of the cross on the deed of his profession with a pen, and placing it on his knees upon the altar, let him pray after the Bishop or Priest in this manner: -

Antiphon. Confirm, O Lord, that which thou has wrought in us, from thy holy temple which is in Jerusalem. Alleluia, Alleluia. Let [God] [sic] arise.

Afterwards let the Bishop or Priest say: -

Let us Pray.

O, God, who dost quicken thy servant who has turned from the vanity of the life of this world to the love of thy heavenly calling; cleanse the thoughts of his heart, and pour upon him thy heavenly grace, that trusting in thee, and guarded by thy mighty power, he may fulfill that which by the grace he has promised, and the work of this life well done, he may attain at last to that which thou hast vouchsafed to promise to those who trust in thee. Through Christ, *etc.*

Then shall the Bishop or Priest bless the habit suitable to his profession with this prayer: -

We mark the sign of our Lord Jesus Christ on this garment that his profession may be kept, and that the Holy Spirit may rule the heart and soul and in all the doings of him who receives it. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

Then shall he sprinkle both the habit and him who receives it with holy water: and when he gives the habit let him say when it is being put on: -

May God put off from thee the old man with all his works, and may God Clothe thee with the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

And let all answer: Amen.

When he who is to be enclosed is clad in his habit, let him immediately prostrate himself before the altar step and let him remain thus prostrate in prayer until he be summoned by the Bishop or Priest to communion. After that let the Bishop or Priest chant over him still lying prostrate this hymn: -

Ven, Creator Spiritus, etc.

Verse. Send out thy Spirit and they shall be made and thou shall renew the face of the earth.

Let us Pray.

O, God, who willest not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should repent and be cleansed; we humbly beseech thy mercy for this thy servant who has forsaken the life of the world, that thou wouldst pour upon him the help of thy great goodness that, enrolled among they chaste ones, he may so run the course of this present life that he may receive at thy hand the reward of an eternal inheritance. Through Christ, etc.

Then shall the Bishop or Priest going to the altar finish the Mass for the one who is to be enclosed.

Secreta. We beseech thee, O Lord, that by the power of these holy mysteries thou wilt cleanse us from all our faults, and wilt grant to thy servant N. forgiveness of all this sins. Through our Lord.

When the Bishop or Priest shall have communicated, let him also communicate the one to be enclosed. When Mass is finished let the aforesaid taper be handed to the one who is to be enclosed; and when a procession has been formed, let the Bishop or Priest, vested in a chasuble, go before, let him take by the hand the one to be enclosed carrying the taper, and let him lead him a goodly sort to his dwelling. Let the clerks meanwhile go before, singing the Litany. When they have reached the dwelling and the Litany is finished, the Bishop or Priest shall leave the one to be enclosed outside the dwelling and shall enter the dwelling alone, beginning with holy water, the Antiphon Purge me, or I saw water, as time permits.

Then let him hallow and bless the dwelling with the following prayers.

This prayer shall be said over the altar with Let us pray.

O, Lord, holy and merciful Father, who has neither beginning of days nor end of years whose greatness is bounded only by thy will; O God, whose majesty the heaven of heavens cannot contain; we bless thee and humbly beseech thee that this altar may be such an one as that with Abel the forerunner in suffering, being slain by his brother, moistened and hallowed with fresh blood. May this altar be to thee, O Lord, like that which Abraham our father, who was permitted to see thee, make, on which the High Priest Melchisedech set forth the pattern of a prevailing sacrifice. May this altar be to thee like that which Moses hallowed with seven days' purification and sanctified it with a threefold blessing; as though didst say unto him: Whosoever toucheth this altar shall be holy. On this altar then may all wantonness be destroyed, and every lust be smitten down; and there be offered, instead of turtledoves, the sacrifice of purity, and for young doves the sacrifice of innocence. Through our Lord.

The Blessing on the house: -

Hearken, O Lord, to our prayers, and let the clear light of thy presence shine upon this house. Let full measure of thy blessing fall upon those who dwell therein by thy grace, that, dwelling in all sobriety in these temples made with hands, they may ever be temples of thy Spirit. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Another prayer with Let us Pray.

Hear us, O Lord, Holy Father, eternal God, that if there be any thing against us or opposed to us in this house of thy servant *N.* it may be cast out by the power of thy divine majesty. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son, who with thee liveth and reigneth in the unity of the holy Spirit One God.

Another prayer with Let us pray.

Bless O Lord, this house and this house and this place, that in it may dwell health, holiness, chastity, power, victory, devotion, humility, gentleness, meekness, fulfilment of the law and obedience to God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and let a full measure of thy blessing rest upon this p[lace] and upon all who dwell therein with thee, that, dwelling in all sobriety in these temples made with hand, they may ever be temples of thy Spirit. Through our Lord Jesus Christ thy Son, who with thee liveth and reigneth in the unity of the holy Spirit One God.

After this, let the Bishop or Priest go forth and lead in the one who is to be enclosed bearing his light, beginning this Responsorium: -

The kingdom of the world. *The choir goes on* – and all the glory of it have I despised for the love of my Lord Jesus Christ, whom I have seen, whom I have loved, on whom I have believed, whom I have chosen for myself.

Verse. My heart has indited [sic] a good matter: I speak of my work for the King. Whom I have seen.

When this has been sung with its verse, let the bishop or Priest say: -

The Lord be with you *and* Let us Pray.

We beseech thee, O Lord, Holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, that thou wilt vouchsafe to pour the spirit of blessing upon this thy servant that, endues with power from on high, he may be enabled both to gain thy glorious gifts and to set an example of good living to others.

Response. Amen.

Also another blessing over him.

May God the Father bless thee. Amen. May God the Son preserve thee. Amen. May he guard thy body. Amen. May he save thy soul. Amen. May he enlighten the body. Amen. May he direct thy mind. Amen. And lead thee forth to everlasting life. Amen. Who is threefold perfection liveth and reigneth on God forever and ever. Amen.

After this, let the Bishop or Priest go forth from the house, the recluse alone remaining within and keeping strict silence, while he is being firmly enclosed from without, and in the meanwhile let the Bishop or Priest begin an Antiphon after this fashion in a loud voice:-

We have received thy mercy, O God, in the mist of thy temple.

Psalms xlviii, cxvi, cxlvii, cl, with Gloria Patri.

Let the Antiphon be repeated. We have received, O God.

When the Antiphon s finished, let the bishop or Priest cause them all to pray for him, that Almighty God, for whose love he has left the world, and caused himself to be shut up in a most strait prison, may so guard him and strengthen him in that service, that after death he may be found fit to live with him in all eternity.

Out Father, *etc.* And lead us not, *etc.* But deliver, *etc.*

Show forth, O Lord, thy mercy towards us.

That our peace may be in thee.

The Lord be with you. Let us pray.

We beseech thee, O Lord, to defend this thy servant, and through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and all the company of heaven, increase in him thy manifold gifts of grace, that being set free from the temptations of this world, he may have help in this life, and in the world to come everlasting joy. Through Christ.

Let us pray.

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from who no secrets are hid, cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee and worthily magnify thy holy name. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Let us Pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, guide us, we beseech thee, in all our doing with thy most gracious favour, that in the name of thy beloved Son we may worthily serve thee in all good works. Who with thee liveth and reigneth in the unity of the Holy Spirit on God for ever and ever.

Then let them all depart to enter the Church, the Choir singing some Responsorium with its versicle concerning the Saint in whose name and honour the Church is founded, ending at the choir step by the Priest saying a verse and prayer on the same subject. And if it be a Church or Saint Mary this Responsorium must be said: -

Happy art thou, O holy Maiden Mary, and most worthy of all praise. Because from thee arose the sun of righteousness, Christ our God. *In Eastertide:* Alleluia.

Verse. Holy Mother of God, Mary ever Virgin.

Strengthen our weakness, we beseech thee, O merciful God, and grant that we who plead in the name of Mary the maiden Mother of God may by the aid of her prayers be freed from all our sins. Through the same Christ our Lord.

The above enclosure ceremony wording has been taken verbatim from Campbell, Phillip (ed.), 2014, pp. 243-253, Clay, Rotha Mary, *Hermits and Anchorites of England*, Howell, MI: Cruachan Hill Press.

APPENDIX IV: AMALGLAMATED DATASET

*See attached separately.

APPENDIX V: BURIAL REPORT: ST ANNE'S CHURCH ANCHORITE CELL

Description of the Bones of the Anchorite Found at St Anne's Church, Lewes

When found, these bones were carefully examined and the remains allow one to say that the anchorite was a woman, slightly built, about 5'5" in height, perhaps aged 70 years or more.

THE SPINE. The Atlas and the Axis (the first two bones which support the skull) were intact. Four other Cervical Vertebrae, and fragments were all defective. Three Dorsal, and several other fragments. Three Lumbar, all corroded, but with squarish spinal processes.

THE SKULL. The main mass consists of the Occipital, parts of the two Parietals, right Temporal, and part of the Sphenoid bones. On the left side, the mastoid process of the Temporal is in this larger portion. A loose piece of the left Temporal can be fitted on, carrying a portion of the squamous, the base of the Zygoma, the eminentia articularis, and the anterior wall of the auditory meatus. The sagittal suture extends forward from the lambdoid for 8.5 cm. Five or six pieces of curved tabular bone with arterial markings and some depressions (? Pacchionian glands) represent missing portions of the parietals, and could probably be fitted together. The occipital protuberance and the superior and inferior curved lines are but feebly marked. A second, smaller, fragment of the skull shows a portion of the Frontal bone with the upper margin of the right orbit and a portion of its roof, the external angular process, and the commencement of the temporal ridge and fossa. There are no signs of the frontal or coronal sutures. Another fragment of the left side shows the internal angular process and the orbital margin for perhaps three quarters of its length. Another piece shows the left malar bone with orbital plate, and is attached to a small portion of the left maxilla, (suture between). A lower part of the right maxilla (very fragile). Shows the tuberosity forwards towards the incisor region. There are three or four very defective, irregularly-placed tooth-sockets. The mandible is in two pieces, and the portion between the left lateral incisor and left second bicuspid teeth is missing. What seems to be the latter tooth was found and fits the socket. A much abraded

molar was also replaced in the socket behind the premolar. The socket of the third molar persists on this side, but a stunted and worn-down molar which seems to belong to it was not forced down as the surrounding bone is very fragile. On the part from the right side are the sockets of two premolars, the first molar, canine, and two incisors, and indications of sockets of the left incisors. The tip of the left coronoid process is broken off. The mental foramina are well-marked, and the angle of the jaw is very obtuse.

BONES OF THE UPPER EXTREMITY. The outer half of the right Clavicle. A fragment of the right Scapula with the acromion process is in good condition. A small portion of the glenoid cavity; the coracoid process is much corroded. This fragment of the Scapula is fractured at the commencement of the spine, but another one shows a part of the spine with curved surfaces, above and below, for supra-spinatus and infra-spinatus muscles. The right Humerus has the upper part missing, but the olecranon fossa, (with a foreman) and both condyles are present. The left Humerus is represented by a longer shaft (22.5cm) and the fossa and condyles. A shell of bone represents the head of a humerus, with a bicipital groove. The right Ulna measures 23 cm. Another fragment (15cm) may represent the shaft of the left Ulna. The right Radius has probably the lower (?) missing (?), but head, neck and tubercle are present and the whole fragment measures 10 (?) cm. The left Radius is represented by the head and a portion of the shaft, measuring 5.5 cm.

BONES OF THE LOWER EXTREMITY. The Pelvis is represented by perhaps a (?) fragile pieces of various sizes, of which the largest is ileum showing some of the crest or (?) the right side. The sacrum piece is a lower portion down to the cornu. The head and great trochanter of the right Femur are missing, but the trochanter minor is well-marked, with the commencing of the curving of the neck. The “anterior inter- (?) ridge” is scarcely indicated. From the fractured neck to where the bone below is missing is 32 cm. The circumference at the middle of the shaft is 8 cm. The Left Femur is represented by two (?) portions of shaft. The trochanter minor is absent; but the bone extends below a little further towards the joint on the inside than the right one does. The fractured pieces together measure 33 cm. Of the right Tibia, both ends are

missing, but the remains of the shaft measure (?) cm. The left Tibia has the head, and the portion missing below is estimated at an inch and a half; so that the bone would measure about (?) cm. The left Fibula has some two inches missing at the upper part, but has the external malleolus below. Other bones are the right Os Calcis, fragments of astragalus, Scaphoid, Cuneiform, and other (?) bones. Also 15 metacarpel and metatarsal bones, and 21 Phalanges. (?) are of a light buff colour. The Manubrium Sterni is intact, (?) (?) pieces of Ribs, none entire.

The above report wording has been taken verbatim from the typed report which was located in the church archives on the day of survey (see copy of this report below).

Noted: the question marks in parenthesis have been added where the typed wording is not visible – the full copy of the typed report is included below.

DESCRIPTION OF THE BONES OF THE ANCHORITE FOUND AT ST. ANNE'S
SPURCH, LEWES.

When found, these bones were carefully examined and the remains allow one to say that the Anchorite was a woman, slightly built, about 5' 3" in height, perhaps aged 70 years or more.

THE SKULL. The Atlas and the Axis (the first two bones which support the skull) were intact. Four other Cervical Vertebrae, and fragments were all defective. Three Dorsal, and several other fragments. Three Lumbar, all corroded, but with squarish spinal processes.

THE SKULL. The main mass consists of the Occipital, parts of the two Parietals, right Temporal, and part of the Sphenoid bones. On the left side, the mastoid process of the Temporal is in this larger portion. A loose piece of the left Temporal can be fitted on, carrying a portion of the squamous, the base of the Zygoma, the eminentia articularis, and the anterior wall of the auditory meatus. The sagittal suture extends forward from the lambdoid for 8.5 c.m. Five or six pieces of curved tabular bone with arterial markings and some depressions (? Pacchionian granules) represent missing portions of the parietals, and could probably be fitted together. The occipital protuberance and the superior and inferior curved lines are but feebly marked. A second, smaller, fragment of the skull shows a portion of the Frontal bone with the upper margin of the right orbit and a portion of its roof, the external angular process, and the commencement of the temporal ridge and fossa. There are no signs of the frontal or coronal sutures. Another fragment of the left side shows the internal angular process and the orbital margin for perhaps three quarters of its length. Another piece shows the left malar bone with orbital plate, and is attached to a small portion of the left maxilla (suture between). A lower part of the right maxilla (very fragile), shows the tuberosity and the cavity of a rooky antrum extending from behind the tuberosity forwards towards the incisor region. There are three or four very defective, irregularly-placed tooth-sockets. The mandible is in two pieces, and the portion between the left lateral incisor and left second bicuspids teeth is missing. What seems to be the latter tooth was found and fits the socket. A much abraded molar was also replaced in the socket behind the premolar. The socket of the third molar persists on this side, but a stunted and worn-down molar which seems to belong to it was not forced down as the surrounding bone is very fragile. On the part from the right side are sockets of two premolars, the first molar, canine, and two incisors, and indications of sockets of two left incisors. The tip of the left coronoid process is broken off. The mental foramina are well-marked, and the angle of the jaw is very obtuse.

BONES OF THE UPPER EXTREMITY. The outer half of the right Clavicle. A fragment of the right Scapula with the acromion process is in good condition. A small portion of the glenoid cavity; the coracoid process is much corroded. This fragment of the Scapula is fractured at the commencement of the spine, but another one shows a part of the spine with curved surfaces, above and below, for supra-spinatus and infra-spinatus muscles. The right Humerus has the upper part missing, but the olecranon process, (with a foramen) and both condyles are present. The left Humerus is represented by a longer shaft (22.5 c.m.) and the fossa and condyles. A shell of bone represents the head of a humerus, with a bicipital groove. The right Ulna measures 23 c.m. Another fragment (15 c.m.) may represent the shaft of the left Ulna. The right Radius has probably the lower fourth missing, but the head, neck, and tubercle are present and the whole fragment measures 21 c.m. The left Radius is represented by the head and a portion of the shaft, measuring 5.5 c.m.

BONES OF THE LOWER EXTREMITY. The Pelvis is represented by perhaps six or seven pieces of various sizes, of which the largest is ileum showing some of the crest on (?) the right side. The sacrum piece is a lower portion down to the cornu. The head and great trochanter of the right Femur are missing, but the trochanter minor is well-marked, with the commencing of the curving line of the neck. The "anterior inter-trochanteric ridge" is scarcely indicated. From the fractured neck to where the bone below is missing is 32 c.m. The circumference at the middle of the shaft is 6 c.m. The left Femur is represented by two short portions of shaft. The trochanter minor is absent; but the bone extends below a little further towards the joint on the inside than the right one does. The fractured pieces together measure 33 c.m. Of the right Tibia, both ends are missing, but the remains of the shaft measure

27 c.m. The left Tibia has the head, and the portion missing below is estimated to be 1 inch and a half; so that the bone would measure about 28 c.m. The left Fibula has some two inches missing at the upper part, but has the external malleolus below. Other bones are the right Os Scaphoid, fragments of astragalus, (?) Scaphoid, Cuneiform, and other tarsal bones. Also 15 metacarpal and metatarsal bones, and 21 Phalanges. There is also a considerable number of fragile fragments, and the bones, when fully dried, are of a light buff colour. The Manubrium Sterni is intact, and there are 10 pieces of Ribs, none entire.

APPENDIX VI: MEDIEVAL RELIGIOUS HOUSES AND ANCHORITE CELLS
IN ENGLAND AND WALES 1000 – 1500 CE

*See attached separately.

APPENDIX VII – PLANS OF ANCHORITE CELLS

Floor Plans of Anchorite Cells

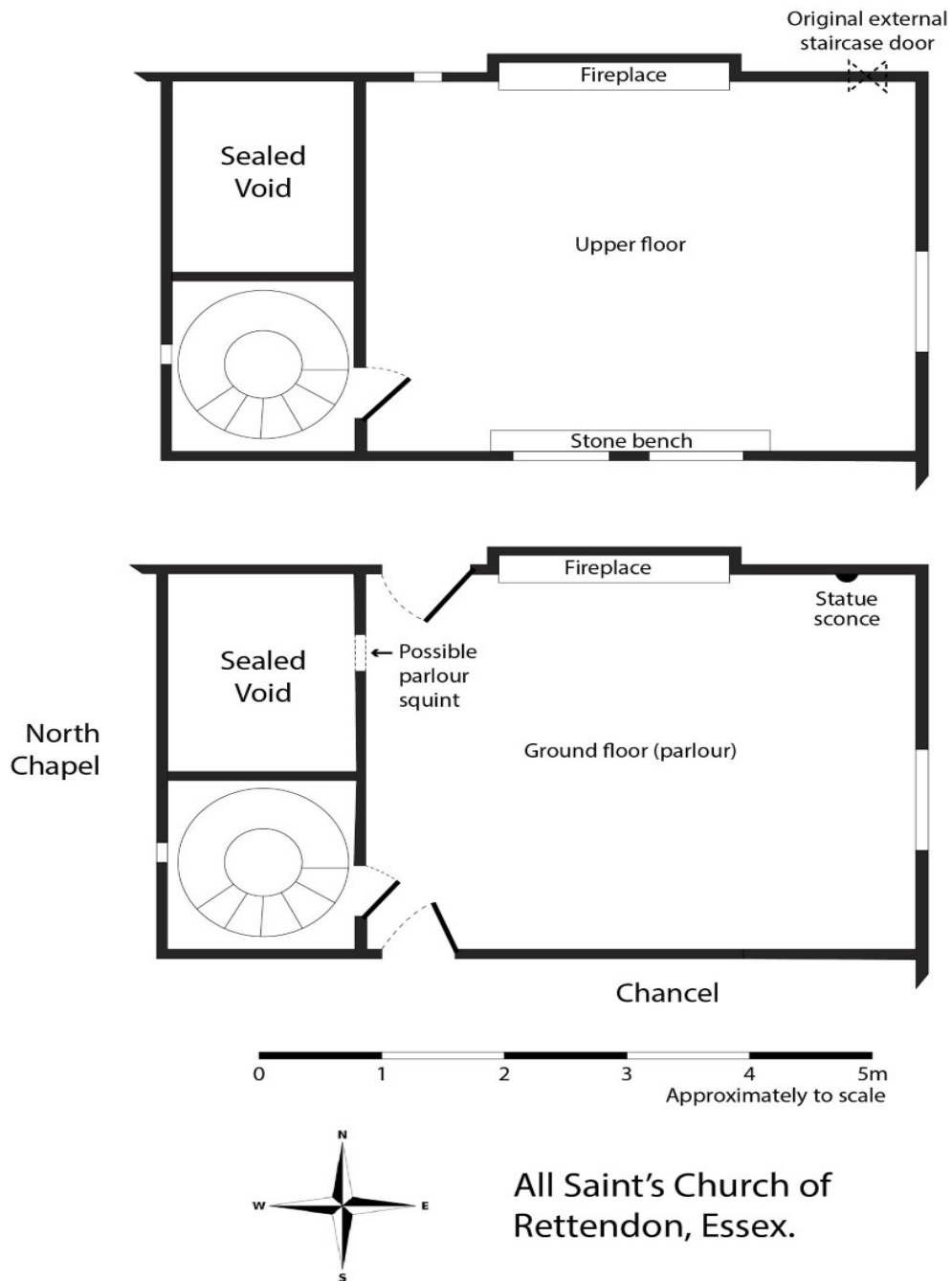


Figure 1: Drawing of the 'anchorite house' – upper and lower levels, and parlour. All Saint's Church of Rettendon, Essex.

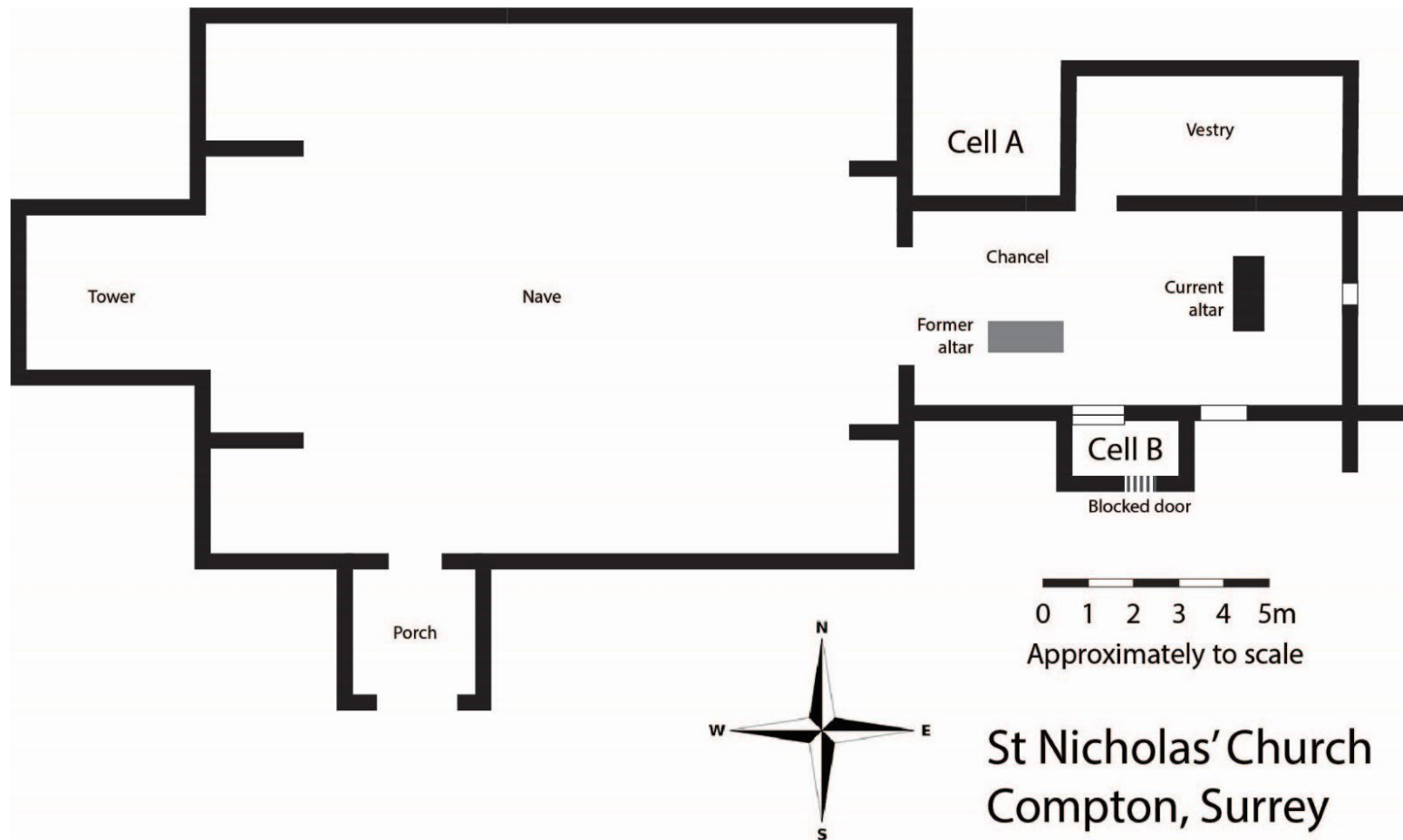


Figure 2: Ground plan of St Nicholas' Church, Compton Surrey showing the location of the two anchorite cells.

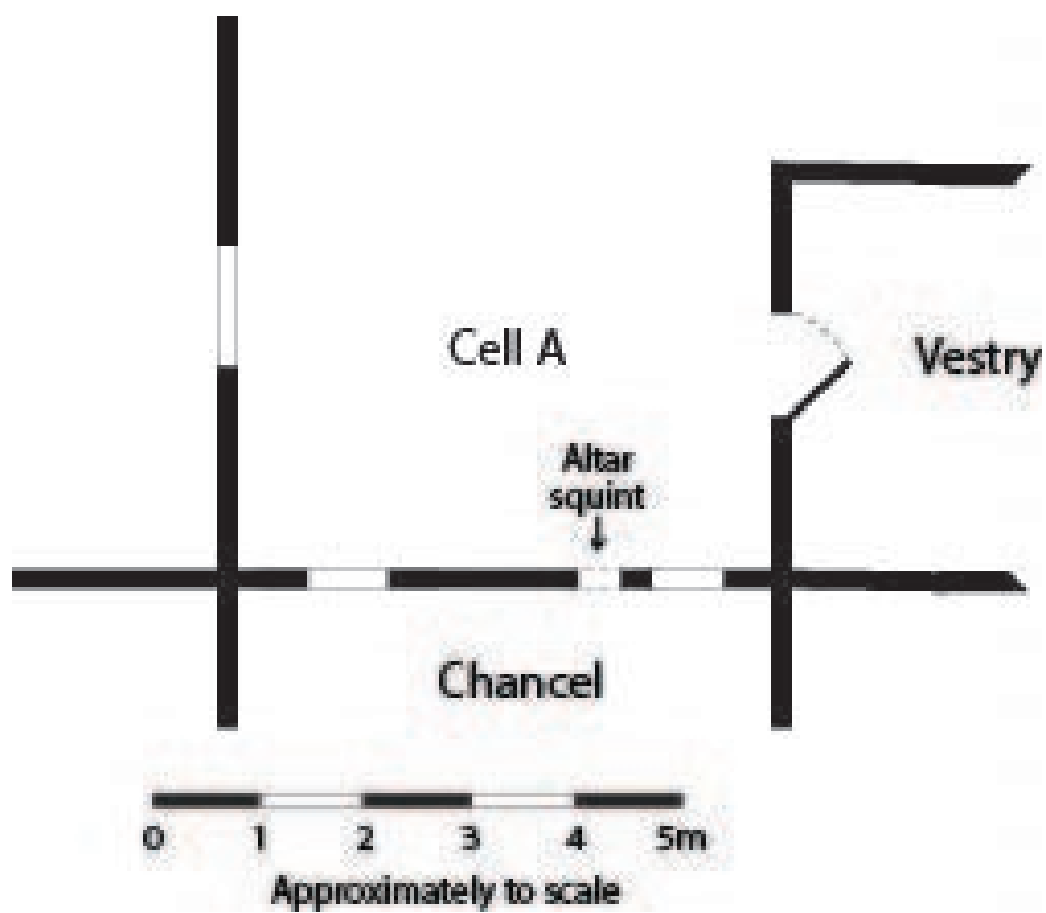


Figure 3: Ground plan of St Nicholas' Church, Compton Surrey showing the location of the original anchorite cell in relation to the modern vestry.

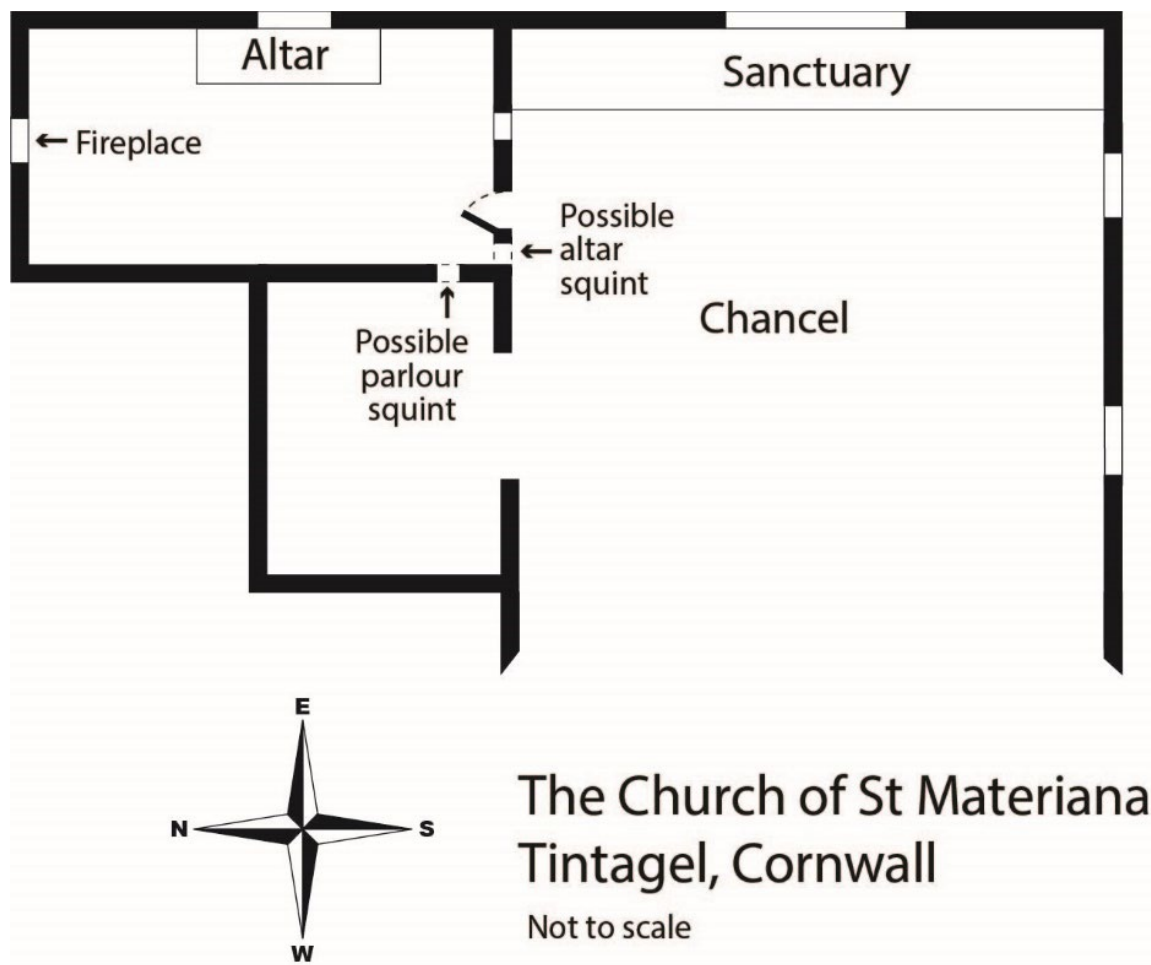


Figure 4: Floor plan of the anchorite cell of St. Materiana, Cornwall.

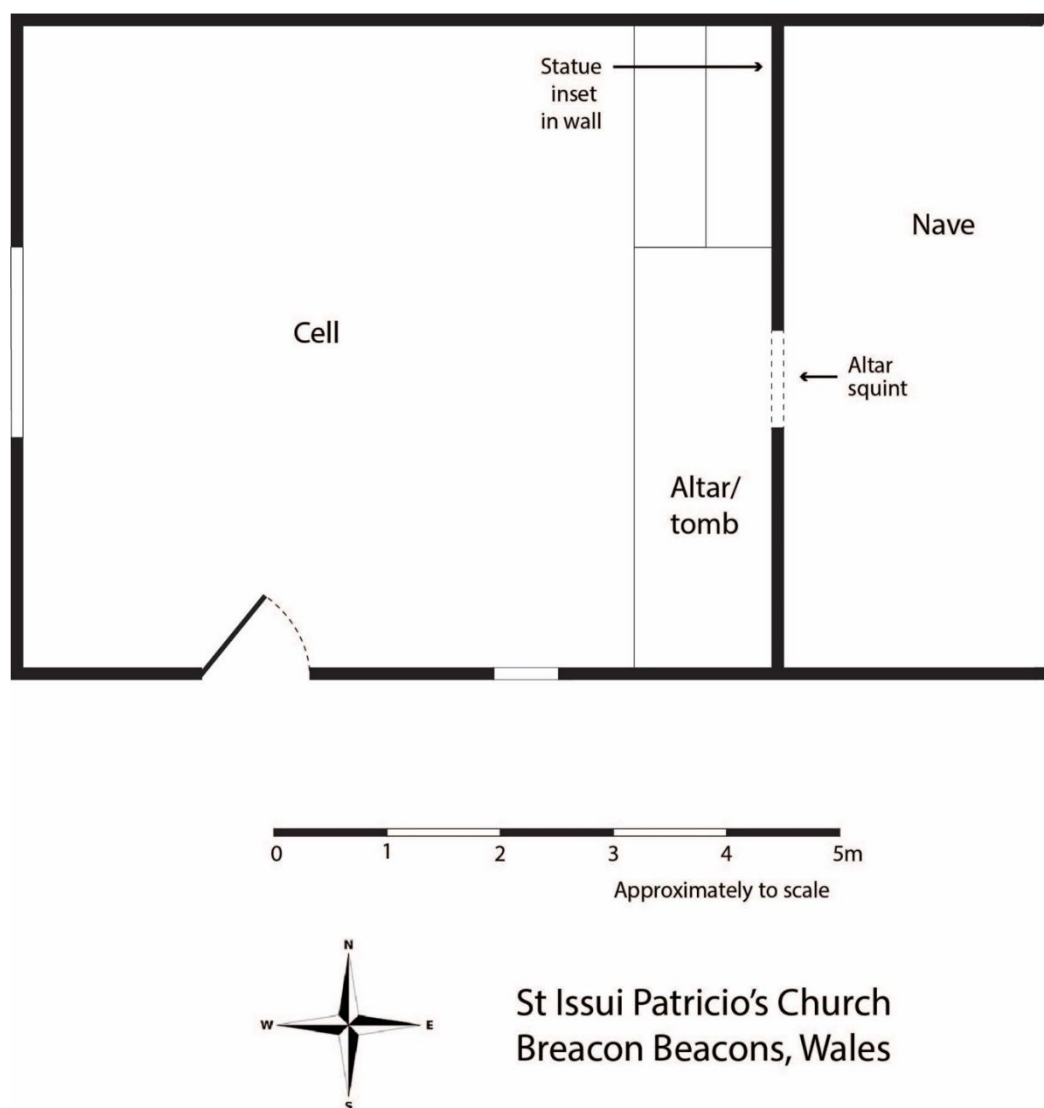


Figure 5: Floor plan of the anchorite cell at St. Issui Patricio's Church.

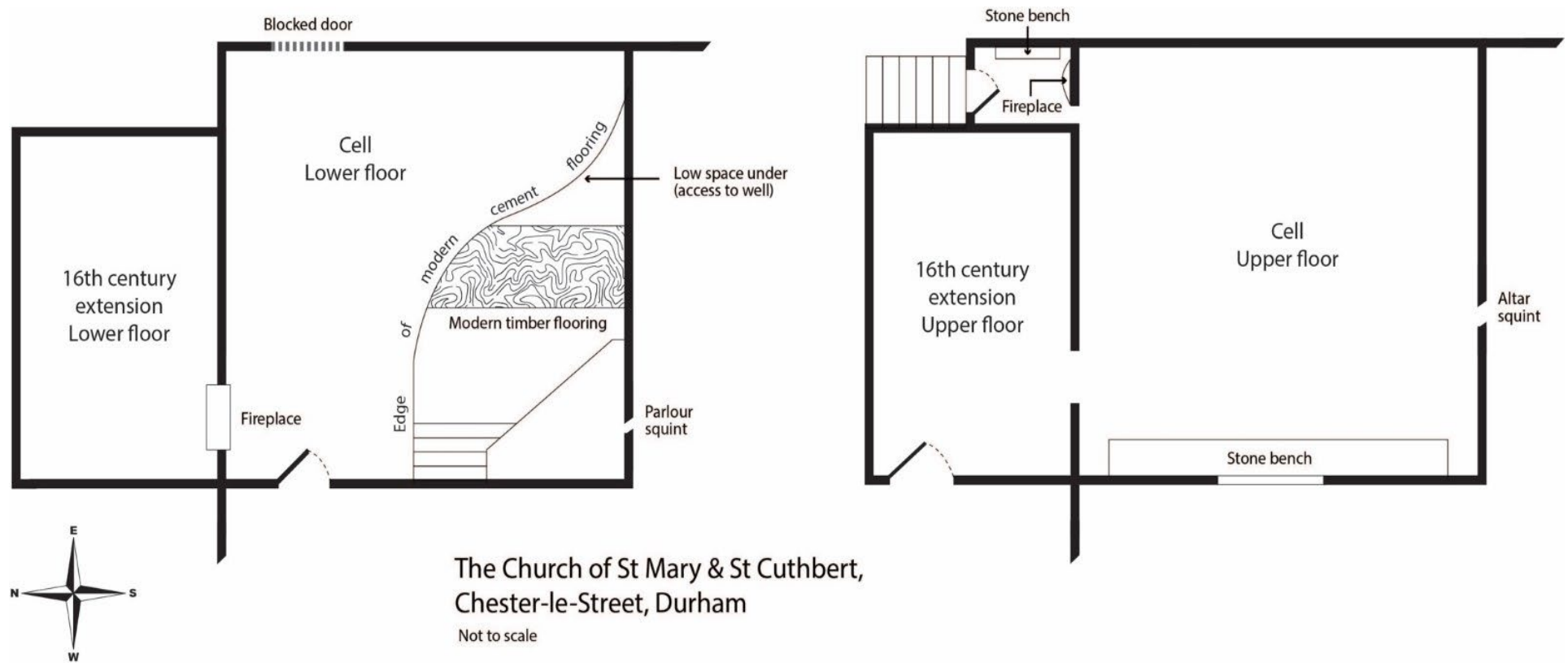


Figure 6: Floor plan of the anchorite cell of St. Mary and St. Cuthbert's church of Chester-le-Street, Durham

APPENDIX VIII: PLANS OF ANCHORITE CELLS AND CHURCHES BY PREVIOUS SCHOLARS

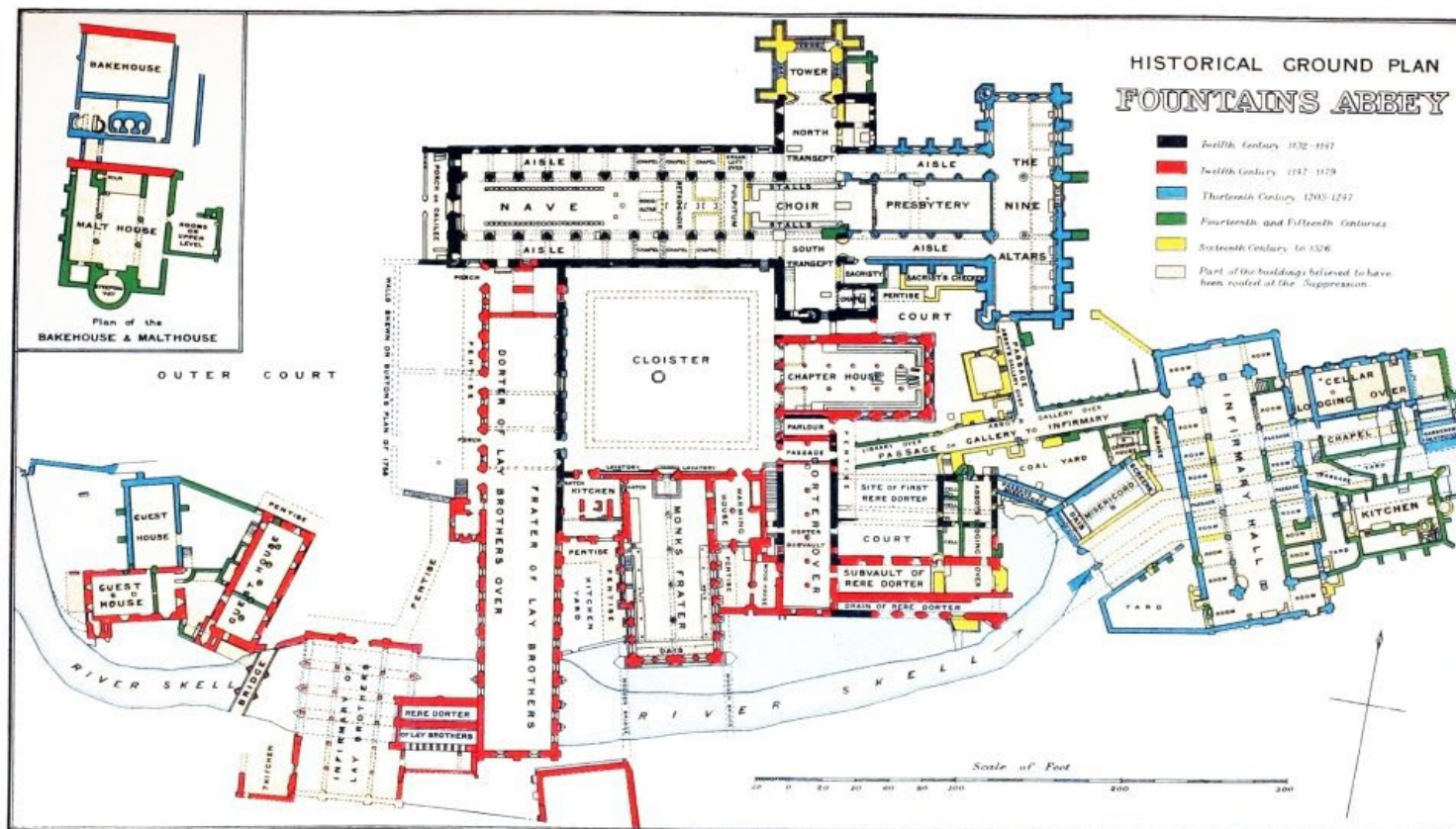


Figure 1: Historical Ground Plan of Fountains Abbey. George Hodges (1904)

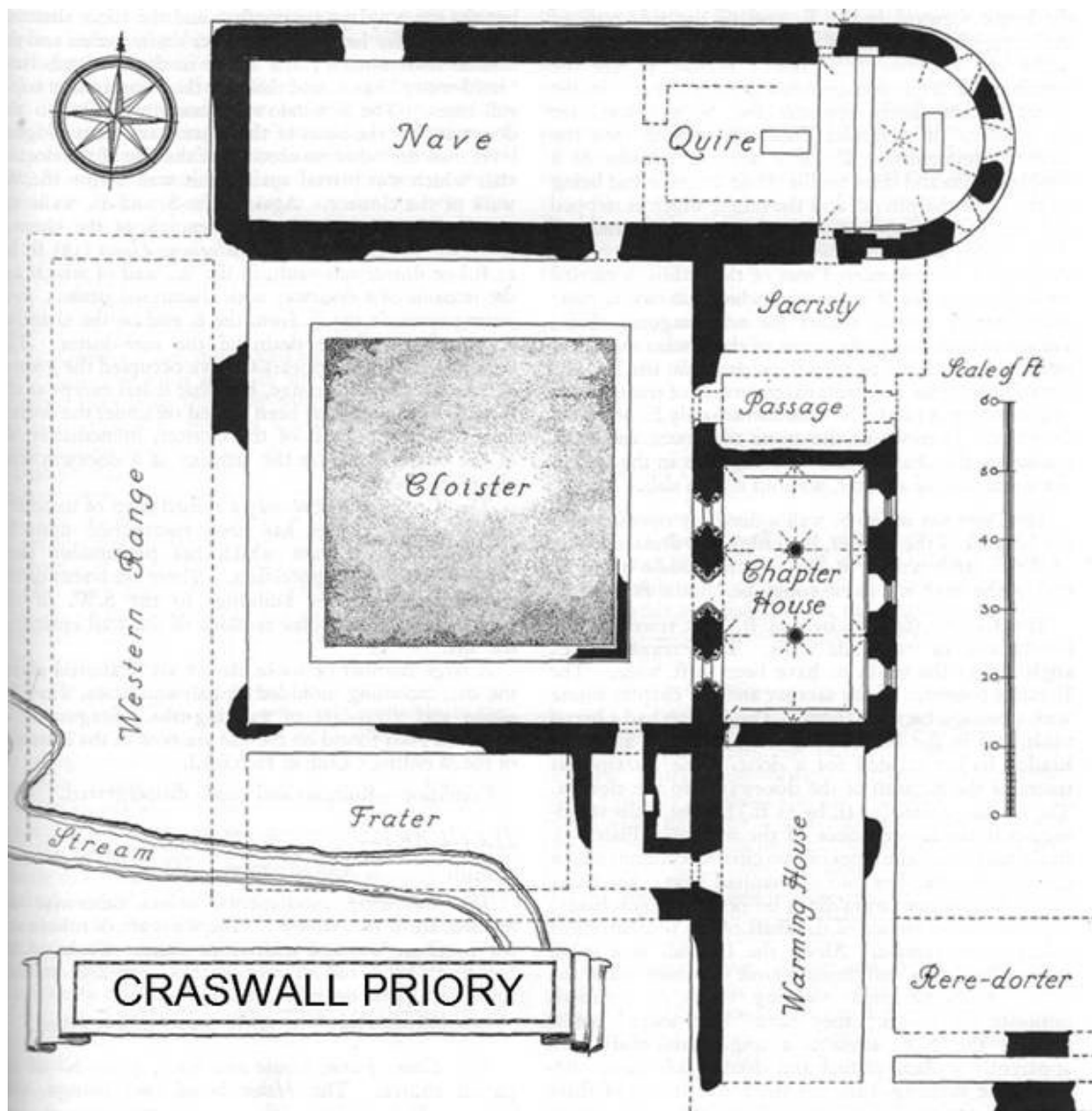


Figure 2: Historical Ground Plan of Craswall Priory. His Majesty's Stationery Office (1931).

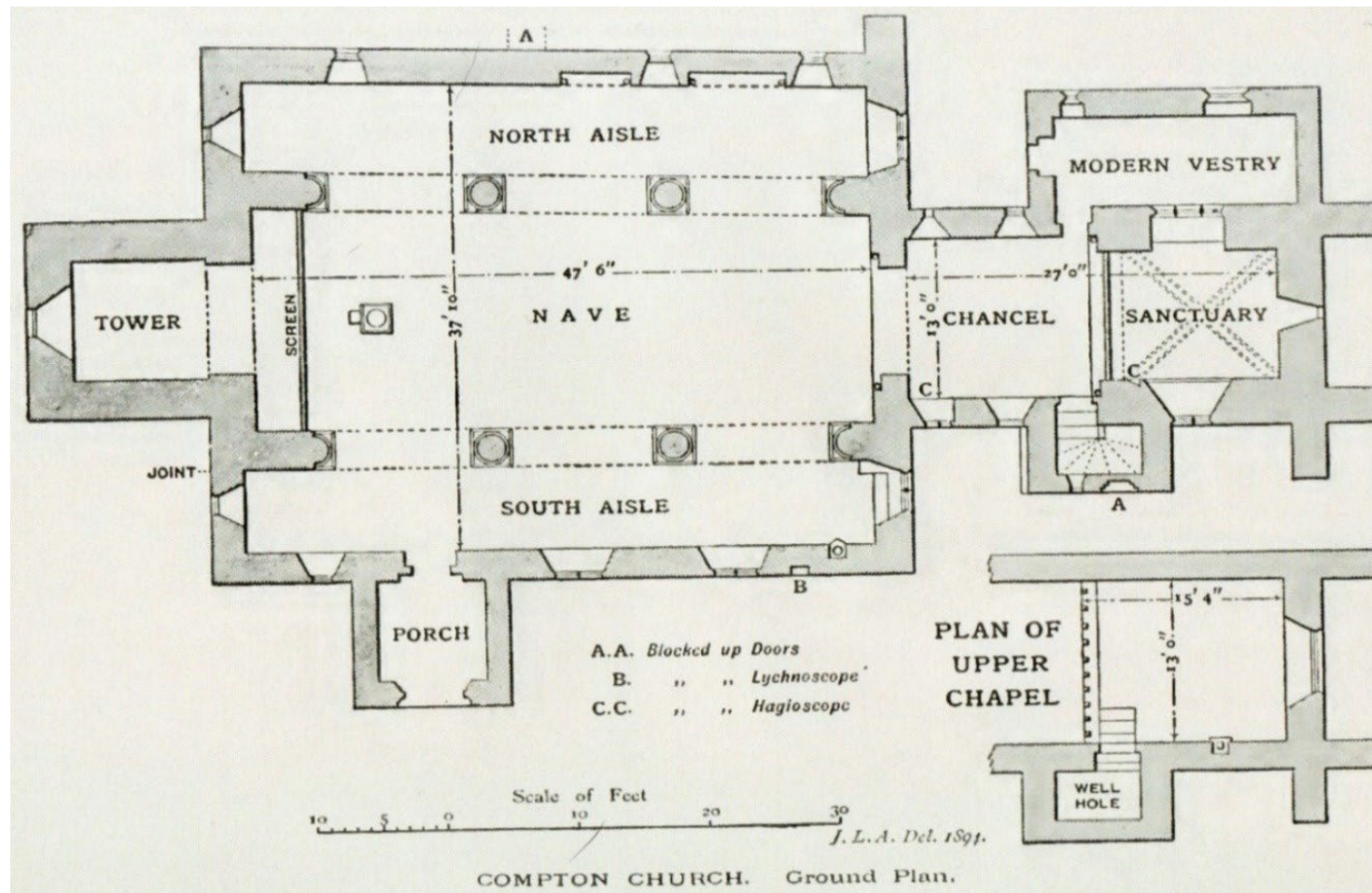


Figure 4: Ground plan of St Nicholas' Church, Compton Surrey, 1895 (Andre 1895: XVIII). Entry to vestry from Chancel indicated in red.

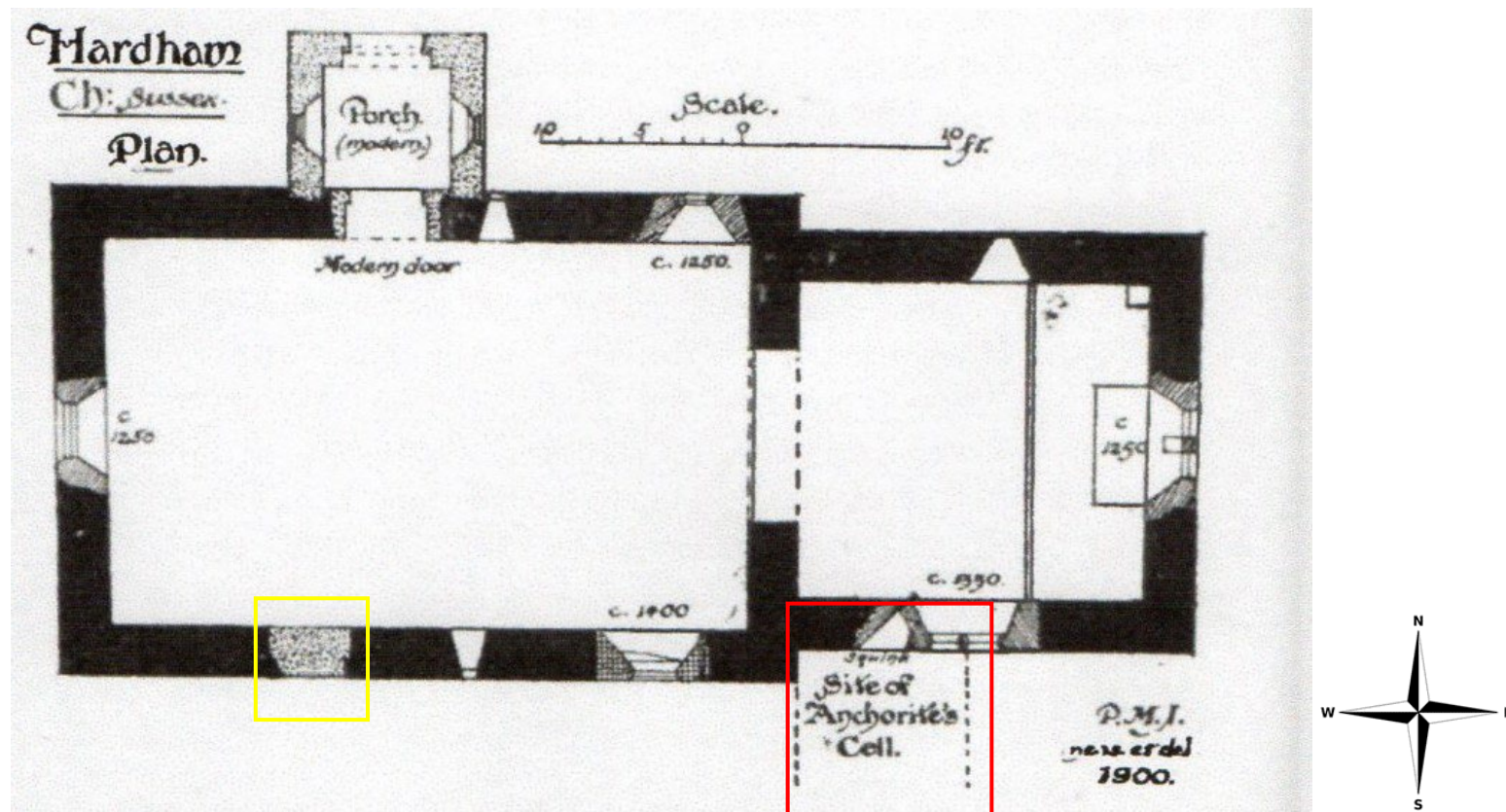


Figure 5: Plan of St. Botolph's Church, Hardham Sussex (Johnston 1901:62) - red box shows location of anchorite cell. Yellow box indicates location of the Devil's Door. The cell may have however extended to the east corner of the church where a possible anchor mark has been found.

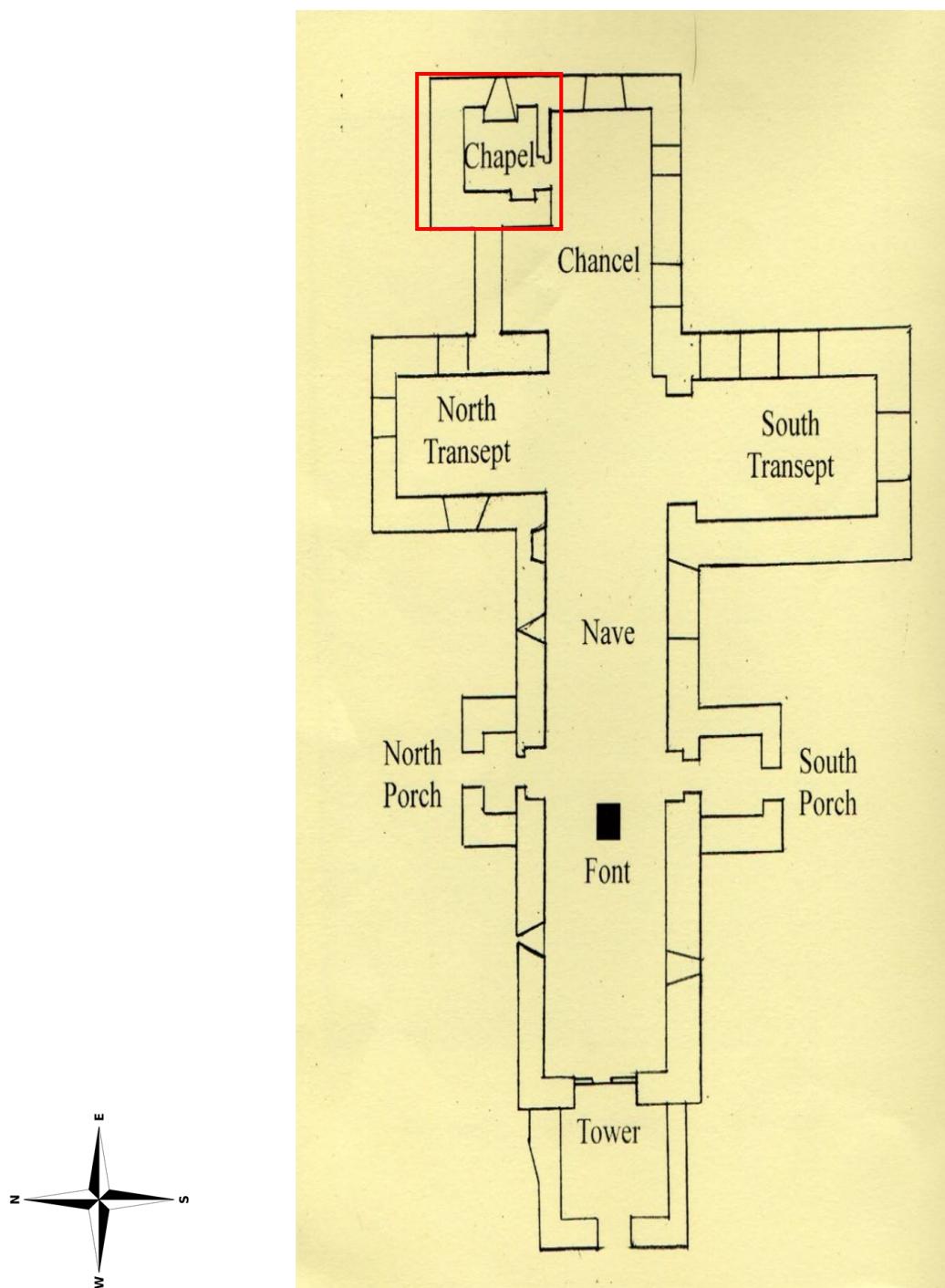


Figure 6: Plan of The Church of St. Marteriana (Official Church Guidebook 2018:1). Area of anchorite cell indicated in red.

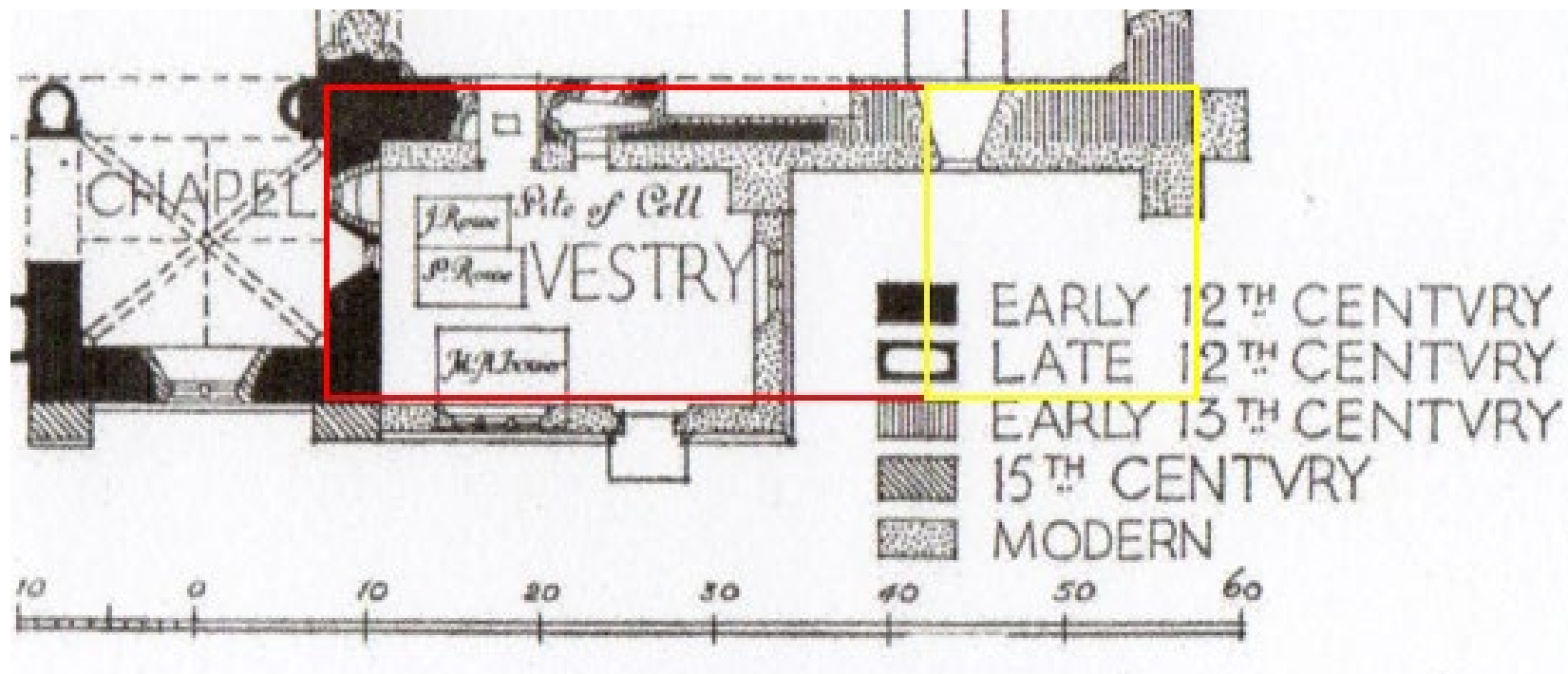


Figure 7: Magnified view of ground plan of St Anne's Church showing the evolution from the twelfth century of the anchorite house (Godfrey 1933:160). Area of anchorite cells (A and B) indicated in red. Possible third cell indicated in yellow.

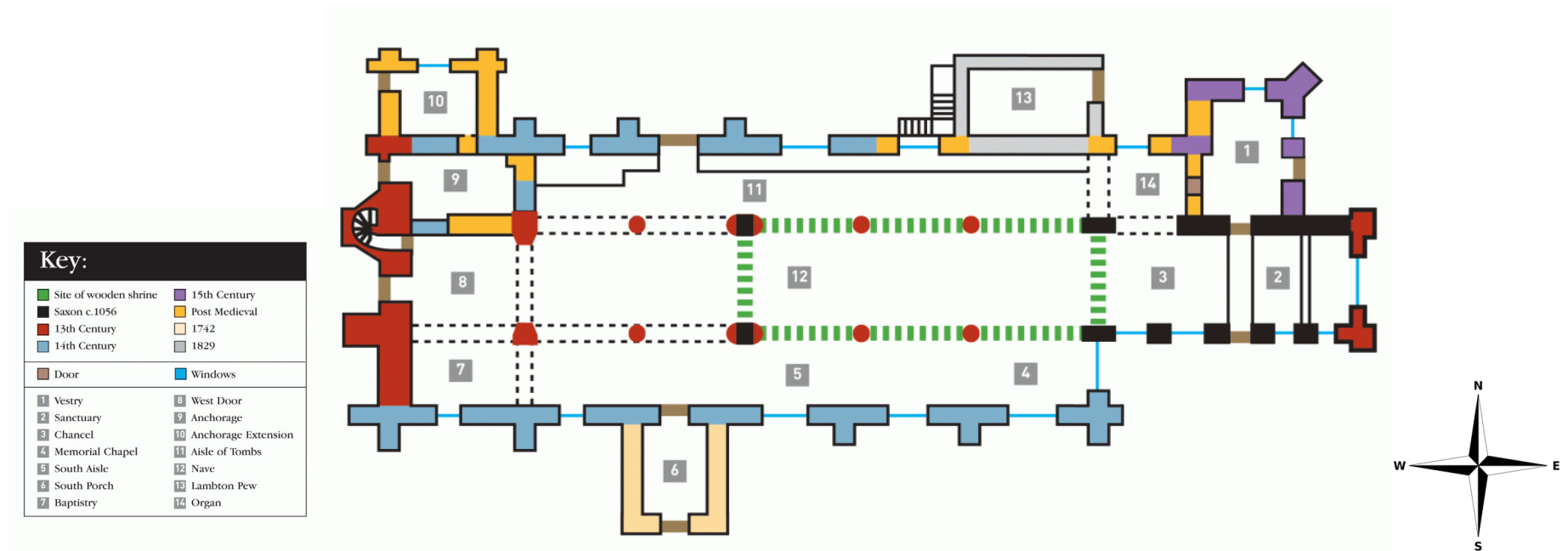


Figure 8: The stages of construction of St. Mary and St. Cuthbert's church of Chester-le-Street, Durham (<https://maryandcuthbert.org.uk/our-history>). Area 9 indicates the location of the anchorite cell.

APPENDIX IX: CELLS SURVEYED FOR THESIS

*See attached separately.

APPENDIX X: MAPS

1. RETTENDON, ESSEX



Rettendon, Surrey (red oval) - Cary's New and English Atlas, 1798 (<https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-471032915/view?partId=nla.obj-474678806#page/n69/mode/1up>)



Map of Rettendon, Essex (indicated in red oval – church in yellow) – First Series Ordnance Survey Map, 1805 (Archi UK Old Maps – https://www.archiuk.com/archi/archi_old_maps.htm)

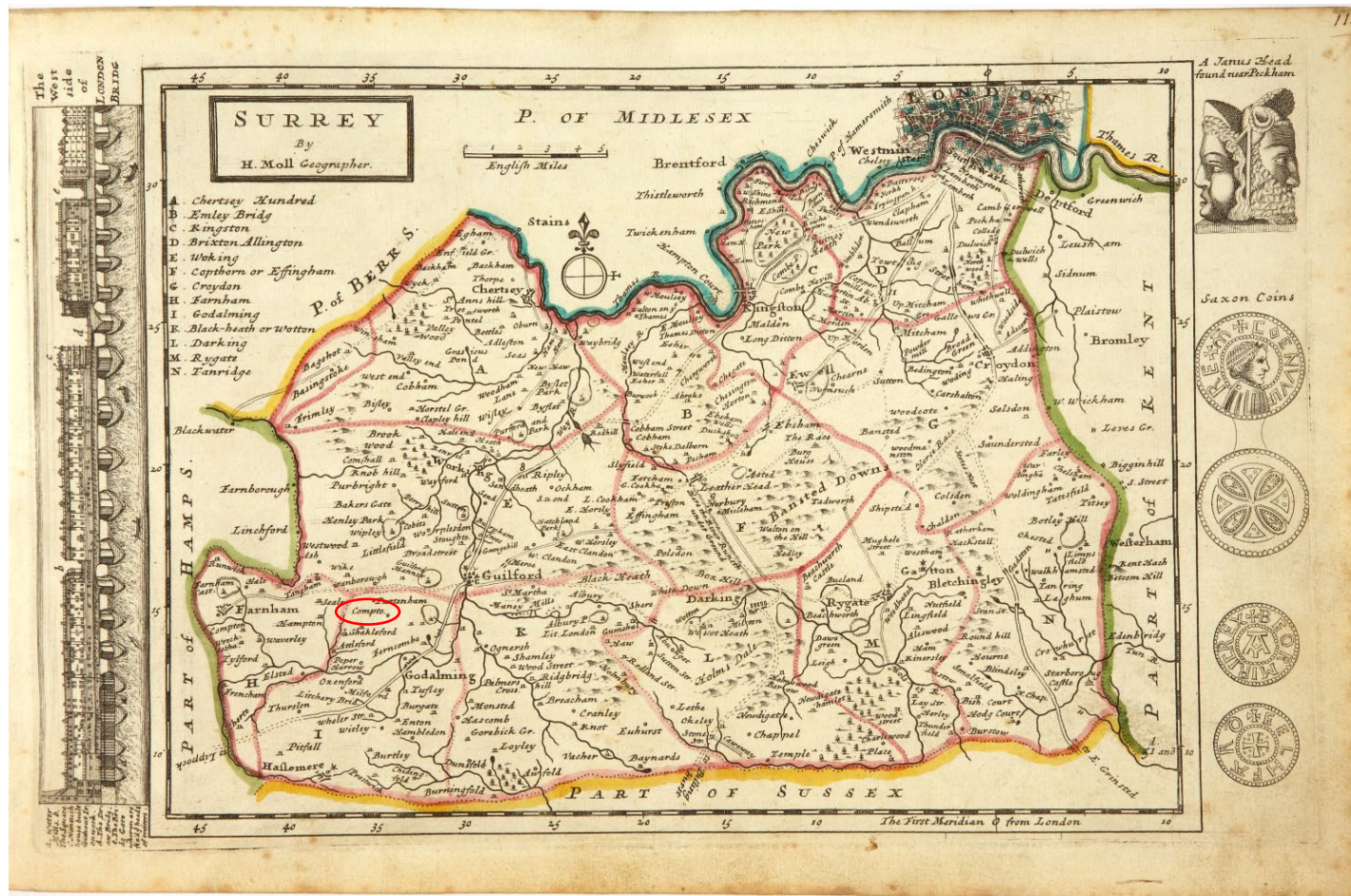


Google Maps: All Saints' Church, Rettendon, Surrey

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/All+Saints+Church,+Rettendon/@51.6354276,0.553061,553m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m5!3m4!1s0x47d8c326013a76ed:0x6088cc45a52da730!8m2!3d51.6350561!4d0.5568097>

Map of UK: World Map Blank <https://worldmapblank.com/blank-map-of-uk/>

2. COMPTON, SURREY

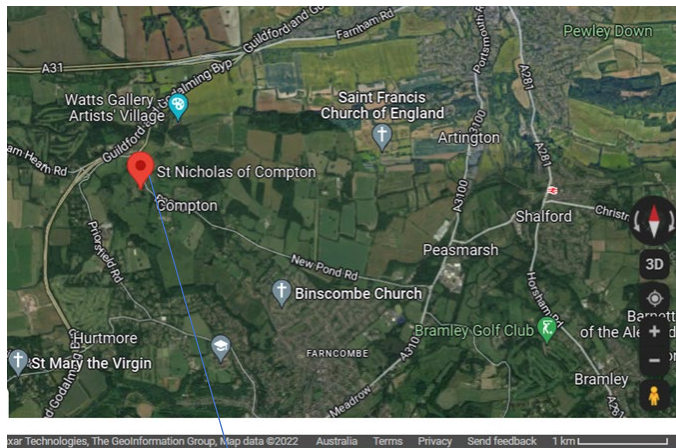


18th Century Old Maps: Surrey 1724 (Compton in red oval), England, United Kingdom (UK) by the German cartographer Herman Moll

(https://www.archiuk.com/archi/archi_old_maps.htm)



Compton, Surrey (indicated in red oval) - Cary's New and English Atlas, 1798 (<https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-471032915/view?partId=nla.obj-474706248#page/n157/mode/1up>)



Google Maps: St Nicholas' Church, Compton, Surrey

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/St+Nicholas+of+Compton/@51.234343,-0.6910379,12667m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m9!1m2!2m1!1sSt+Nicholas+Church+Compton!3m5!1s0x4875d198c9a0bd85:0x6178b632d7fa8be2!8m2!3d51.2143981!4d-0.6349844!15sChpTdCBOaWNob2xhcycBdaHVyY2ggQ29tcHRvbplBBmNodXJjaA>

Map of UK: World Map Blank <https://worldmapblank.com/blank-map-of-uk/>

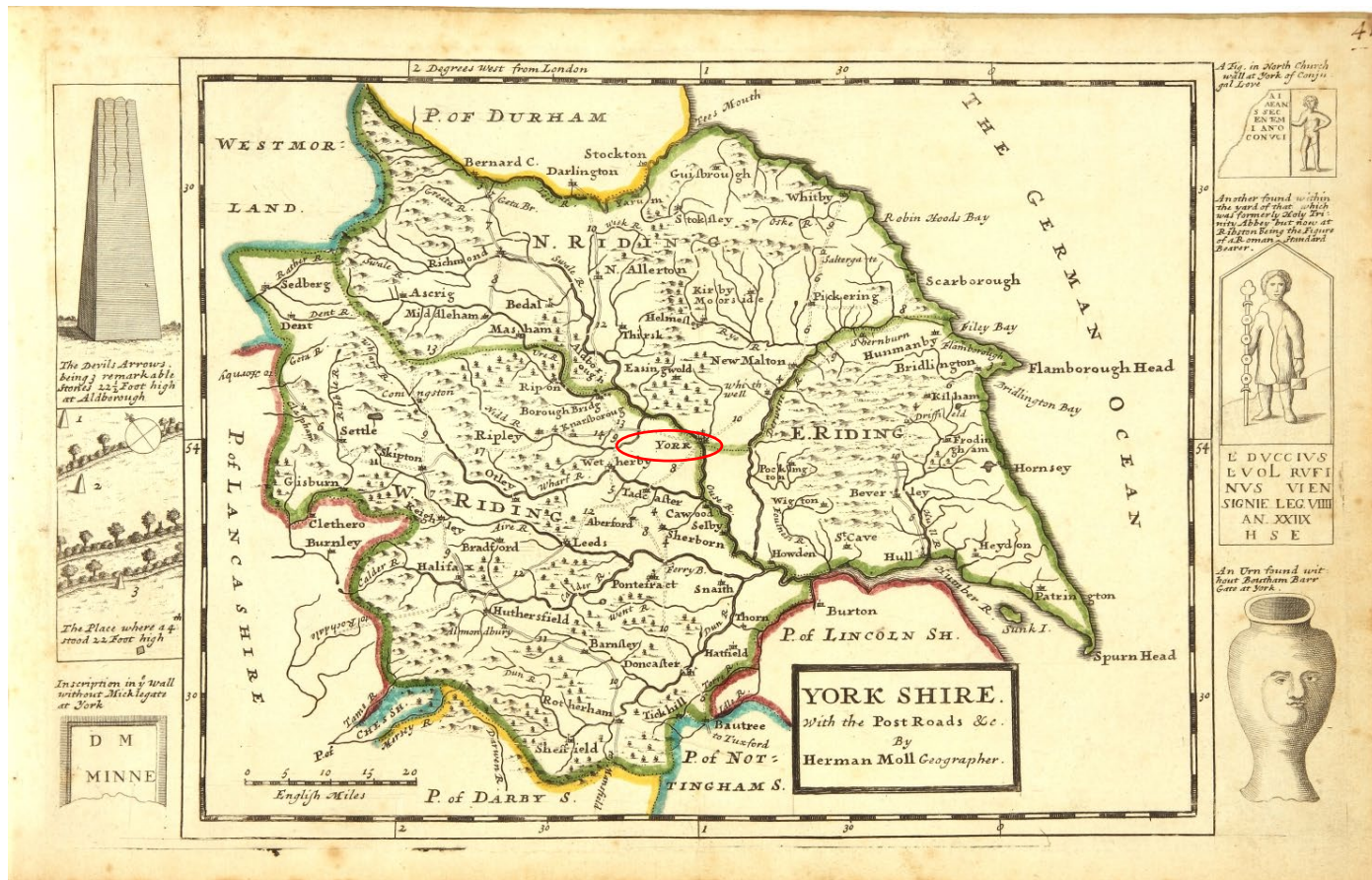


Google Maps: St Mary and St Cuthbert's Church, Chester-le-Street, Durham

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/Redeemer+Church+Chester-le-Street/@54.8560975,-1.5742284,434m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m12!1m6!3m5!1s0x487e7c70a090d625:0x75afec66993b124f!2sSt+Mary+%26+St+Cuthbert's+Church!8m2!3d54.8559469!4d-1.5719035!3m4!1s0x0:0x9aa6ce885bd2574e!8m2!3d54.8559382!4d-1.5698375>

Map of UK: World Map Blank <https://worldmapblank.com/blank-map-of-uk/>

4. YORK, YORKSHIRE

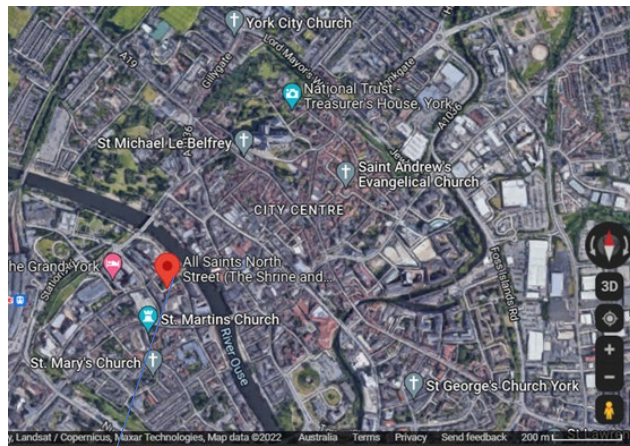


18th Century Old Maps: Yorkshire 1724 (York indicated in red oval), England, United Kingdom (UK) by the German cartographer Herman Moll

(https://www.archiuk.com/archi/archi_old_maps.htm)



York, Yorkshire - Surrey - Cary's New and English Atlas, 1798 (indicate in red oval) (<https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-471032915/view?partId=nla.obj-474713545#page/n181/mode/1up>)

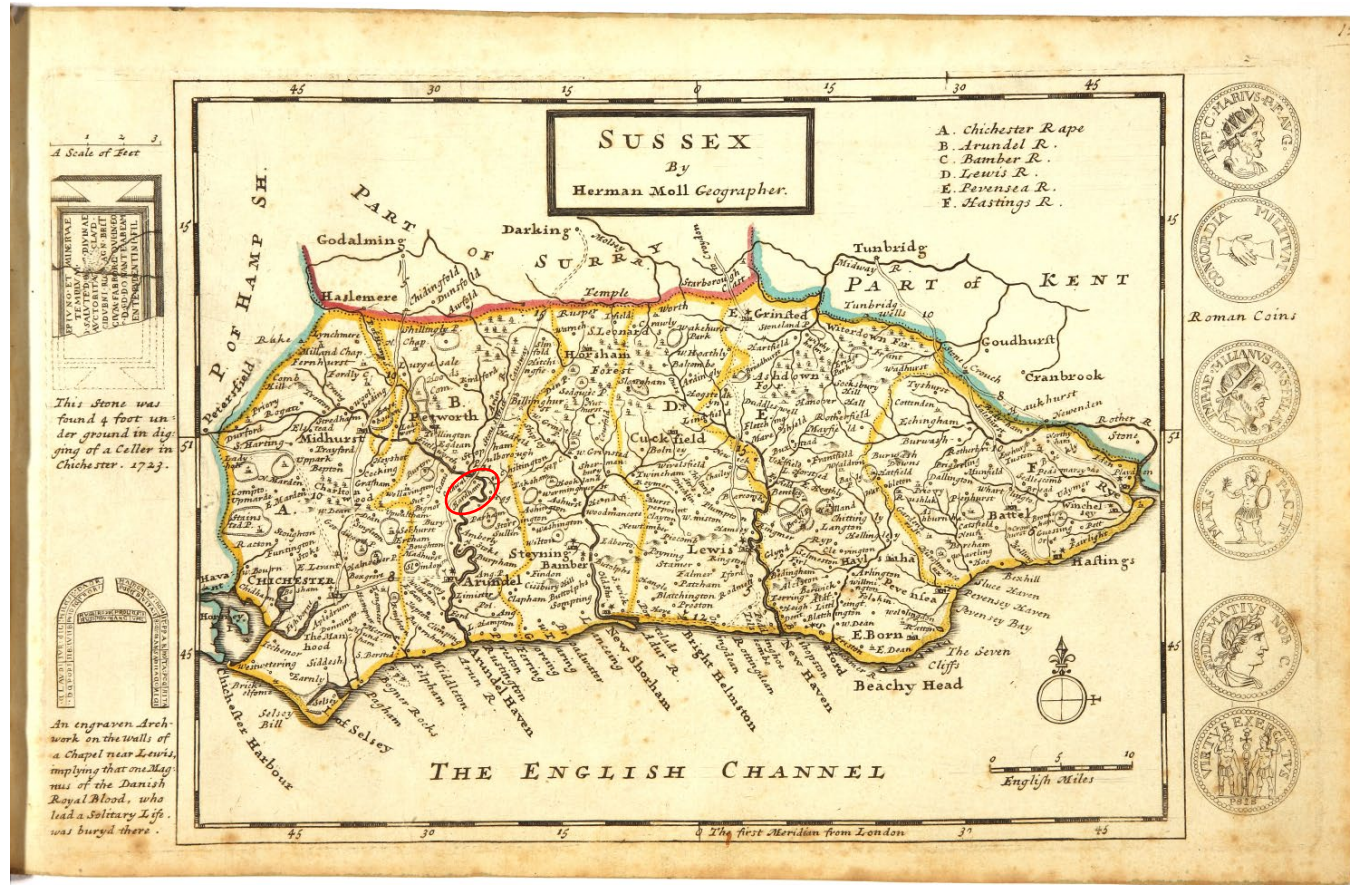


Google Maps: All Saints Church, North Street, York

[https://www.google.com/maps/place/All+Saints+North+Street+\(The+Shrine+and+Parish+Church\)/@53.9639344,1.0990192,2173m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m5!3m4!1s0x487931a83ec8142b:0x89af787a2982bc7a!8m2!3d53.9583249!4d-1.0863448](https://www.google.com/maps/place/All+Saints+North+Street+(The+Shrine+and+Parish+Church)/@53.9639344,1.0990192,2173m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m5!3m4!1s0x487931a83ec8142b:0x89af787a2982bc7a!8m2!3d53.9583249!4d-1.0863448)

Map of UK: World Map Blank <https://worldmapblank.com/blank-map-of-uk/>

5. HARDAM, EAST SUSSEX



18th Century Old Maps: Sussex 1724 (Hardam indicated by red oval), England, United Kingdom (UK) by the German cartographer Herman Moll

https://www.archiuk.com/archi/archi_old_maps.htm

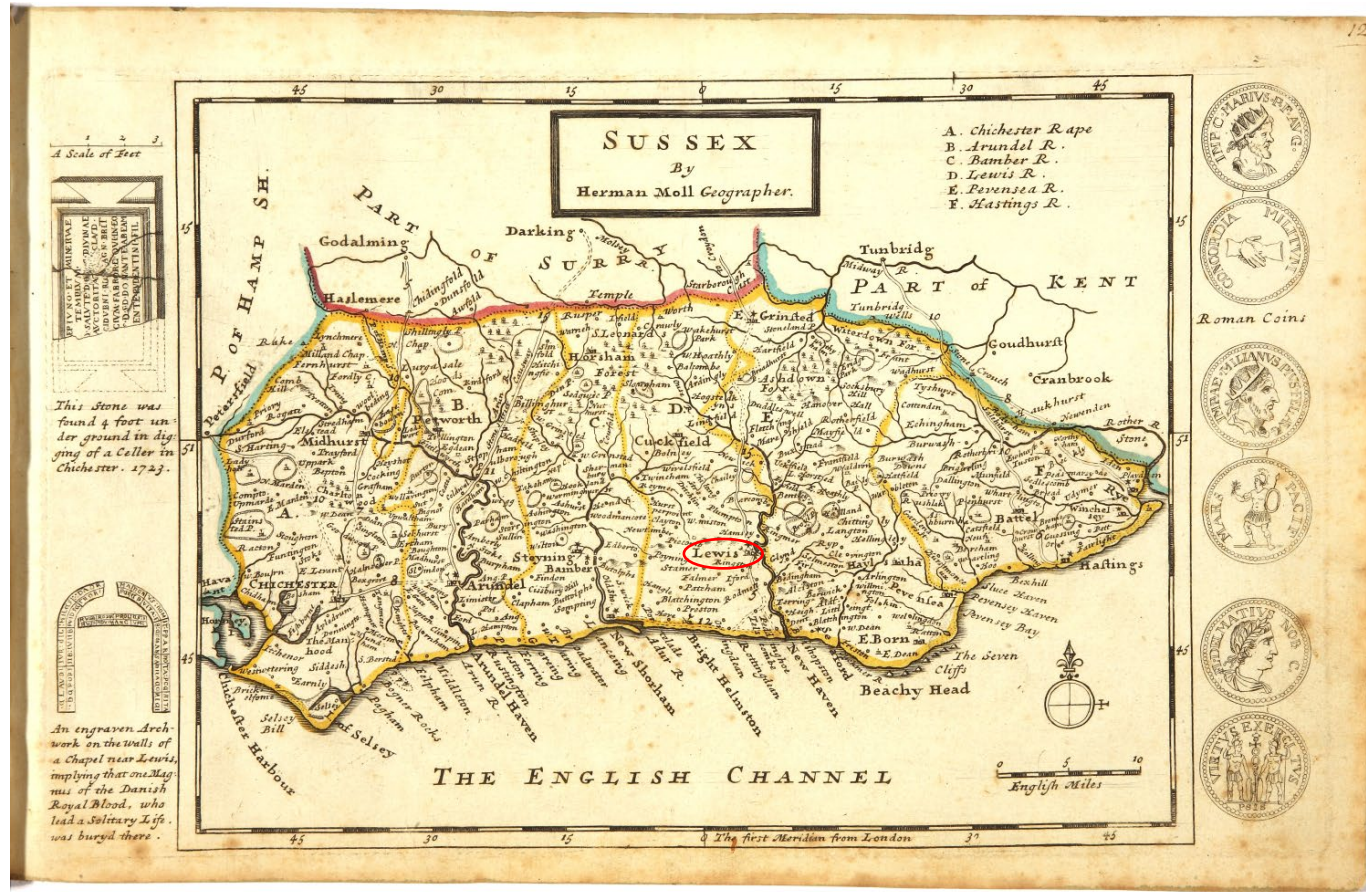


Google Maps: St Botolph's Church, Hardham, Sussex

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/St+Botolph's+Church/@50.9495705,0.52525365m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m5!3m4!1s0x4875b98d7604ea6f:0xe7196f55f9279cd0!8m2!3d50.9485912!4d-0.5227773>

Map of UK: World Map Blank <https://worldmapblank.com/blank-map-of-uk/>

6. LEWES, WEST SUSSEX



18th Century Old Maps: Sussex 1724 (Lewis indicated in red oval), England, United Kingdom (UK) by the German cartographer Herman Moll

(https://www.archiuk.com/archi/archi_old_maps.htm)



Lewes, Surrey (indicated by red oval) - Cary's New and English Atlas, 1798 (<https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-471032915/view?partId=nla.obj-474707439#page/n161/mode/1up>)



Google Maps: St Anne's Church, Lewes, Surrey

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/St+Anne's+Church,+Lewes/@50.8740758,0.000983,653m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m5!3m4!1s0x47df629dcf0275cb:0x7b87065b36df82e4!8m2!3d50.8723714!4d0.0017949>

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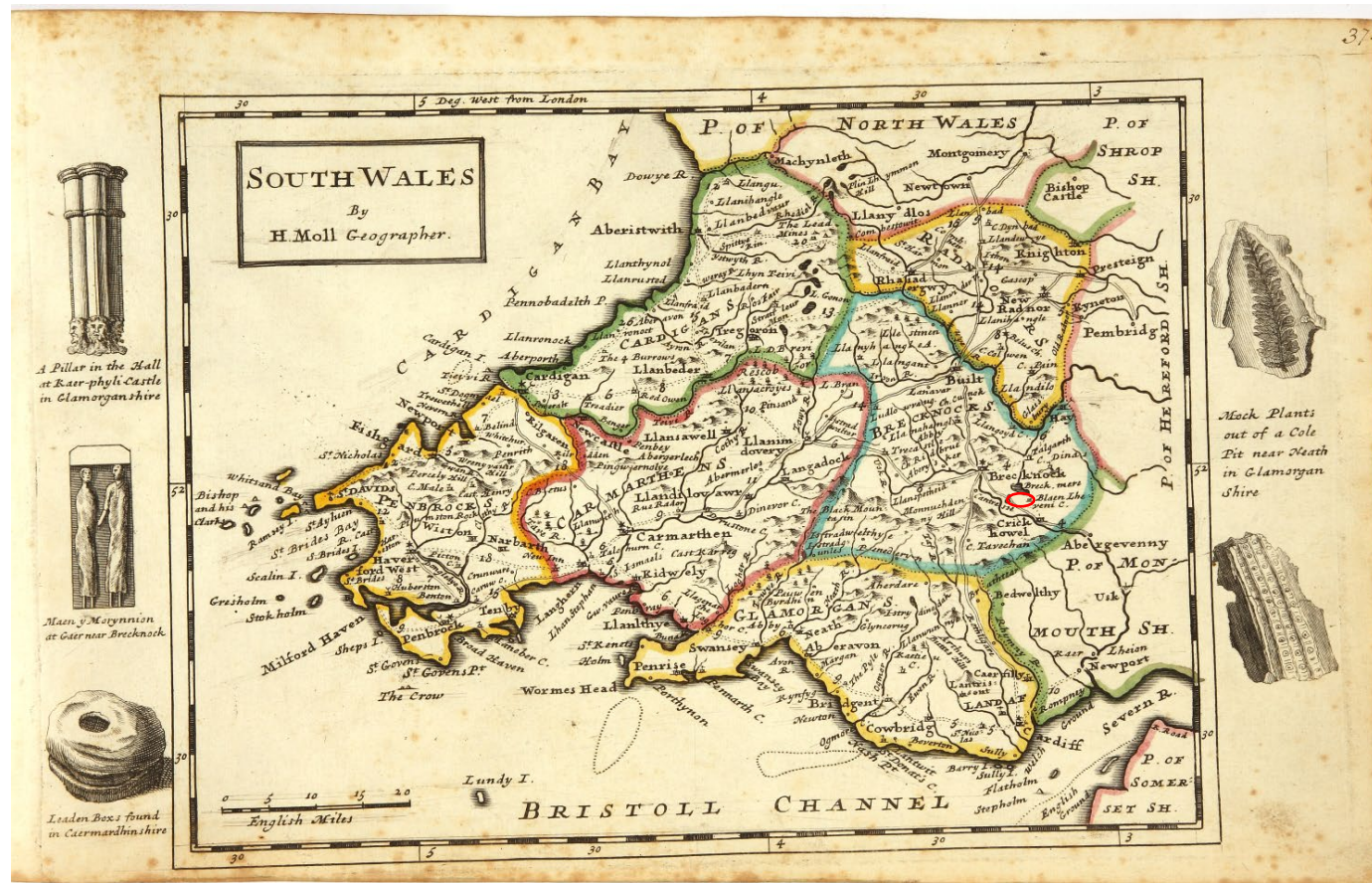


Google Maps: St Materiana's Church, Tintagel

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/St+Materiana's+Church,+Tintagel/@50.6671079,-4.7606151,1907m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m5!3m4!1s0x486b835f2900339f:0xeaf877067bc12f57!8m2!3d50.6630119!4d-4.7598868>

Map of UK: World Map Blank <https://worldmapblank.com/blank-map-of-uk/>

8. ABERGAVENNY, WALES



18th Century Old Maps: South Wales 1724 (approx. located of St Issui Church indicated in red oval), Wales, United Kingdom (UK) by the German cartographer Herman Moll (https://www.archiuk.com/archi/archi_old_maps.htm)



Abergavenny, Wales (approximate located of St Issui Church indicated in red oval) - Cary's New and English Atlas, 1798 (<https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-471032915/view?partId=nla.obj-474719792#page/n201/mode/1up>)



Googlemaps: St Issui's Church, Abergavenny, Wales

[https://www.google.com/maps/place/St+Issui's+Church,+Partrishow/@51.8978425,-](https://www.google.com/maps/place/St+Issui's+Church,+Partrishow/@51.8978425,-3.1156828,11926m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m5!3m4!1s0x0:0xcb5eb7032c889b3b!8m2!3d51.8957708!4d-3.0493133)

[3.1156828,11926m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m5!3m4!1s0x0:0xcb5eb7032c889b3b!8m2!3d51.8957708!4d-3.0493133](https://www.google.com/maps/place/St+Issui's+Church,+Partrishow/@51.8978425,-3.1156828,11926m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m5!3m4!1s0x0:0xcb5eb7032c889b3b!8m2!3d51.8957708!4d-3.0493133)

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