

## NOTES

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- Author:* D. A. Hinton, Department of Archaeology, University of Southampton.

## A NOTE ON THE ANGLO-SAXON CHURCH AT BOARHUNT

By MICHAEL HARE

BOARHUNT church (Grid Ref. SU 603083) stands about two miles north-east of Fareham. It is a simple two-cell building, consisting of a nave and square-ended chancel (Fig. 3). The chancel measures 15 ft 3 in. (4.65 m) long by 14 ft 9 in. (4.50 m) wide internally, while the nave is 41 ft. (12.50 m) long by 19 ft. (5.79 m) wide. The late Saxon date of the major part of the fabric is demonstrated by the stripwork round the chancel-arch, the double-splayed window in the N wall of the chancel and the pilaster-strip in the E wall of the chancel.

A full account of the church was published in the last century by J. T. Irvine (Irvine 1877; see also Taylor and Taylor 1965, 76-8). Irvine drew attention to the scars visible in the N and S walls of the nave indicating the former existence of a cross-wall 12 ft. (3.66 m) from the W end of the nave. He argued for the existence of a W chamber of Anglo-Saxon date occupying the W third of the nave, and suggested that the cross-wall was subsequently pulled down and the chamber opened up to the body of the nave. It is difficult to find parallels for this W structure, but Boarhunt is usually grouped with several other churches thought to have had a W chamber of Anglo-Saxon date such as Dagingworth (Gloucs), South Elmham (Suffolk)

and Northchurch (Herts) (Baldwin Brown 1925, 341-5). On close examination these churches do not prove to bear any close resemblance to one another; their principal similarity is that they are each thought to have had some form of W structure of the same width as the nave. In each case the form and function of the annexes is open to dispute, and these parallels are of dubious value. The evidence for any W structure of this kind should therefore be subjected to careful examination. It is the contention of the present writer that Irvine was mistaken in his interpretation of Boarhunt church, and that the cross-wall was in fact the original W wall of a nave measuring 27 ft. (8.23 m) in internal length. At a later date, probably in the thirteenth century, the nave was extended westwards and the original W wall was removed.

The principal evidence is that provided by the internal quoining. Internal quoining is the technique used mainly in flint buildings of constructing not only the external but also the internal angles in dressed stone. This technique is common in Hampshire and Sussex from the eleventh century onwards. At Boarhunt internal quoining occurs in the four internal angles of the chancel, in the external re-entrant angles between the nave and chancel, and in the E angles of the

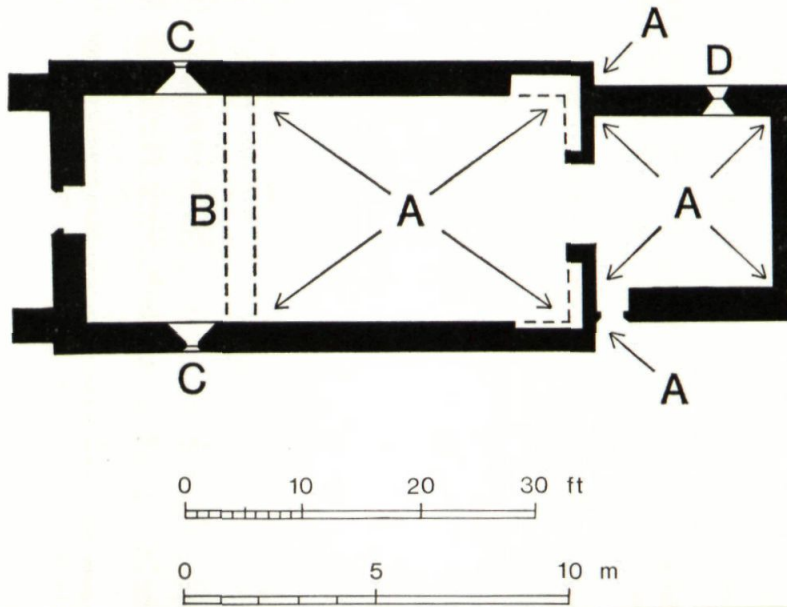


Fig. 3. Boarhunt Church, plan. A, Internal quoining, B, Site of cross-wall, C, Lancet windows, D, Double-splayed window.

nave. Remains of internal quoining can also be seen on the E face of the scars left by the cross-wall. The internal walling of the church is plastered, but these internal quoins can be seen distinctly beneath the plaster. By contrast internal quoining is not to be seen either in the W angles of the nave or on the W face of the cross-wall.

Irvine explained this difficulty by suggesting (1877, 370) that the interior of the W chamber was 'not intended to be exposed to view in like manner to those of the nave and chancel'. However internal quoining is a structural not a decorative feature, and it is found in many places where it was not intended to be seen. Internal quoining of roughly contemporary date may for instance be seen throughout the height of the tower at Singleton and in the top stage of the tower at Bosham (both in W Sussex). Its absence from the W parts of Boarhunt church suggests not a different function, but a different constructional period. It is therefore argued

that the W part of the nave is not contemporary with the original fabric and that it is a subsequent addition. In the side-walls of the W part of the nave, there are two thirteenth-century lancet windows, and these windows probably indicate the date of the westward extension.

One further piece of evidence may be noted in favour of the suggestion put forward above. The W third of the S wall of the nave is noticeably out of alignment with the E part of the wall. This break in alignment is sufficiently slight to be barely perceptible on the plan (Fig. 1), but is an unmistakable feature if a careful visual examination of the wall is made.

The external walls of the church are partly rendered and partly refaced, so no conclusions can be drawn from a study of the walling. The W quoins of the nave are similar to the E quoins of the nave and chancel. However, in an area lacking good building-stone, it is likely that the original W quoins

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of the nave would be re-used in the westward extension.

The W chamber proposed by Irvine presents two difficulties. First of all only a few parallels can be advanced for a structure of this kind, and these parallels are of doubtful value. Secondly Irvine does not satisfactorily account for the absence of internal quoining from the W part of the church. The alternative suggestion put forward in this note provides a simple account of the development

of the church and explains both these difficulties. If the opportunity should arise, the issue could probably be settled by an external examination of the foundations at the point where the cross-wall meets the side-walls of the nave. A limited excavation either on the north or on the south side should reveal whether the nave walls are continuous, as argued by Irvine, or whether the western third of the nave is a later extension, as argued in this note.

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*Author:* Michael Hare, 113 Paygrove Lane, Longlevens, Gloucester, GL2 0BQ.