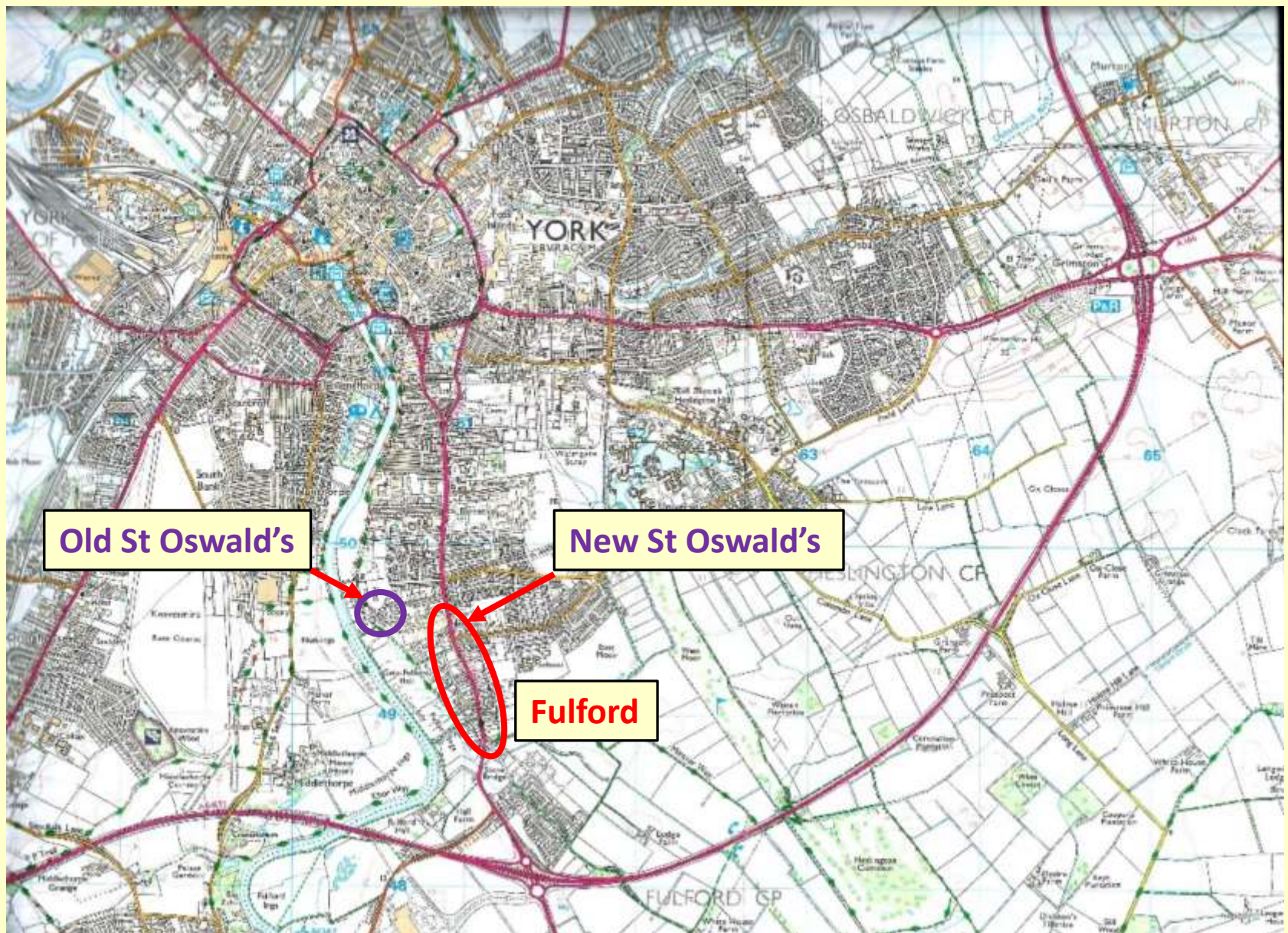


Fishergate, Fulford & Heslington Local History Society

York Festival of Ideas 2017

Old St Oswald's, Fulford An overview of the setting and archaeology

Chris Rainger, Chairman of FFH



Where is the old church of St Oswald's ?



St Oswald's Hall has a Grade II* listing



View from 'Love Lane'
at the southern end of New Walk



Lych Gate &
Information Board





The earliest view of St Oswald's is this delightful drawing on Samuel Parson's 1644 map of Dringhouses. Image: York Art Gallery

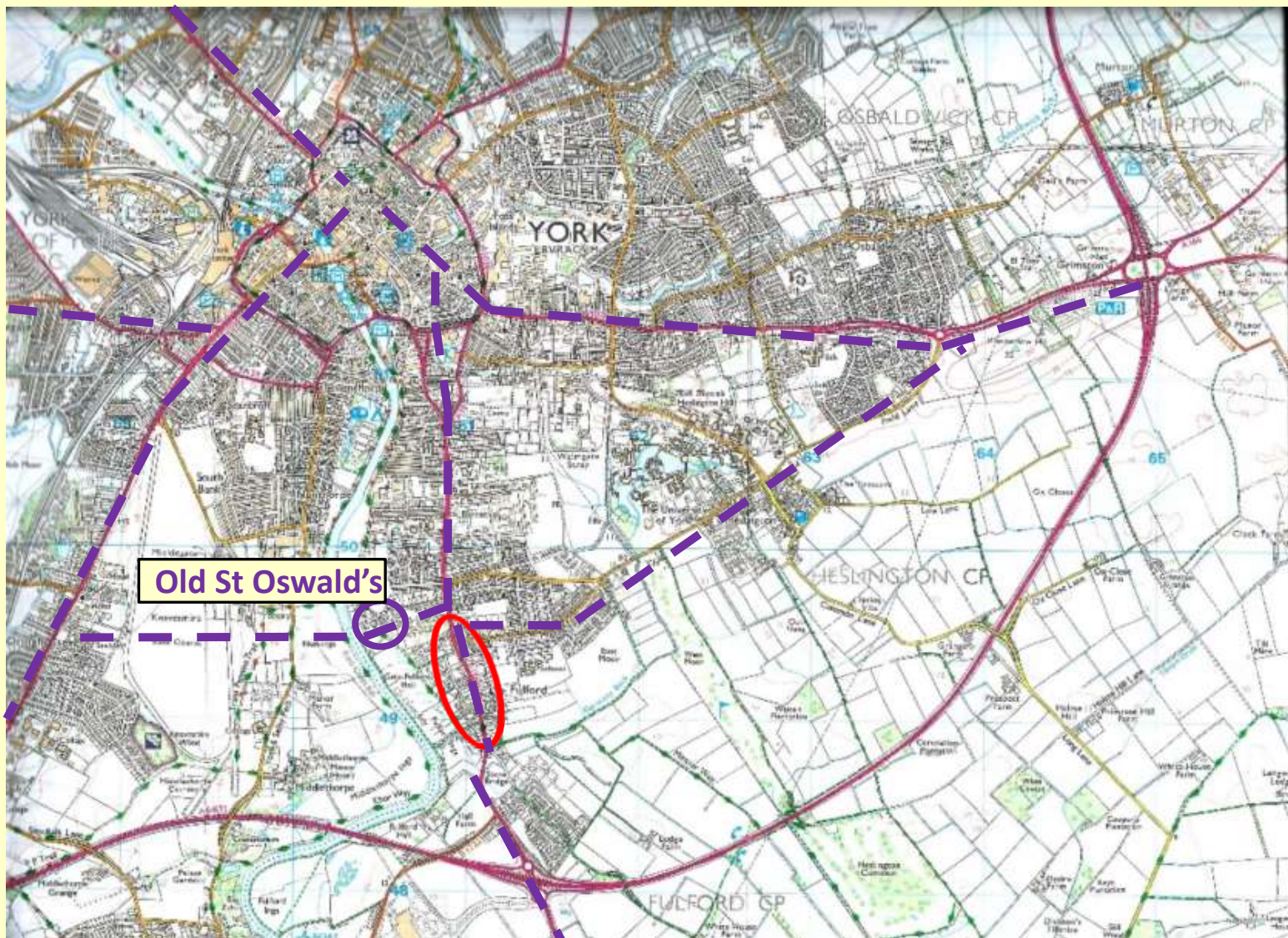
The image has been drawn in a slightly distorted style and shows the west wall with windows and no tower, but a belfry on the nave roof and windows on the north wall of the nave.



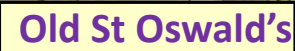
St Oswald's as seen in
 'Looking south towards
 Fulford from
 Clifford's Tower'
 by Francis Place.
 c.1710

(York Art Gallery)





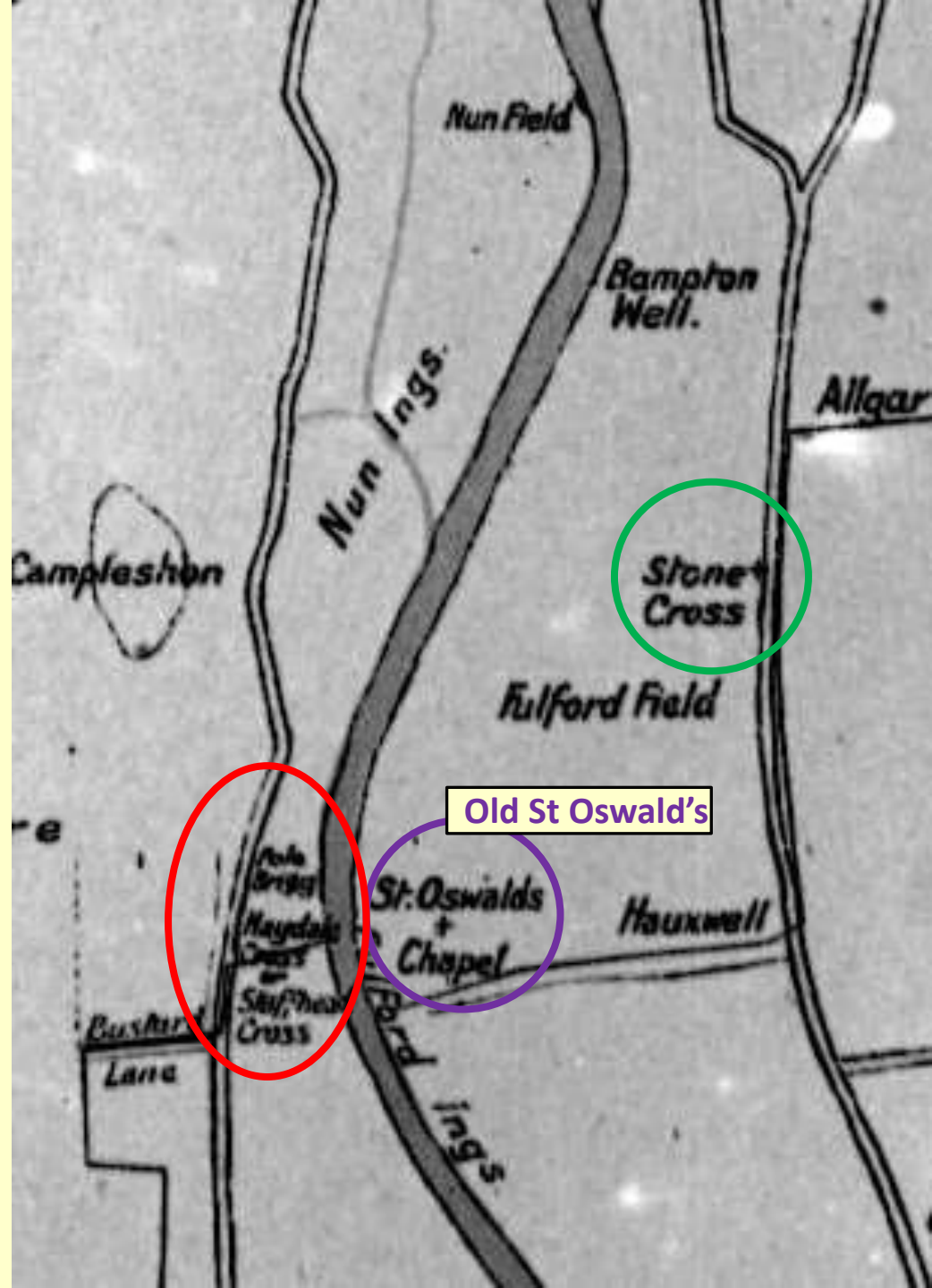
Why is it here? - Could the church be on the site of a river crossing, allowing travellers to by-pass the city?



This 1910 map shows tracks from Dringhouses crossing the Knavesmire to the Ouse.
Both St Oswald and St Edward the Confessor have Pre-Norman origins.

George Benson's map of York as he interpreted it in 1374, shows Bustard Lane on the west side of the Ouse opposite St Oswald's Church.

It also shows boundary crosses named as Haydale Cross and Staffhead Cross





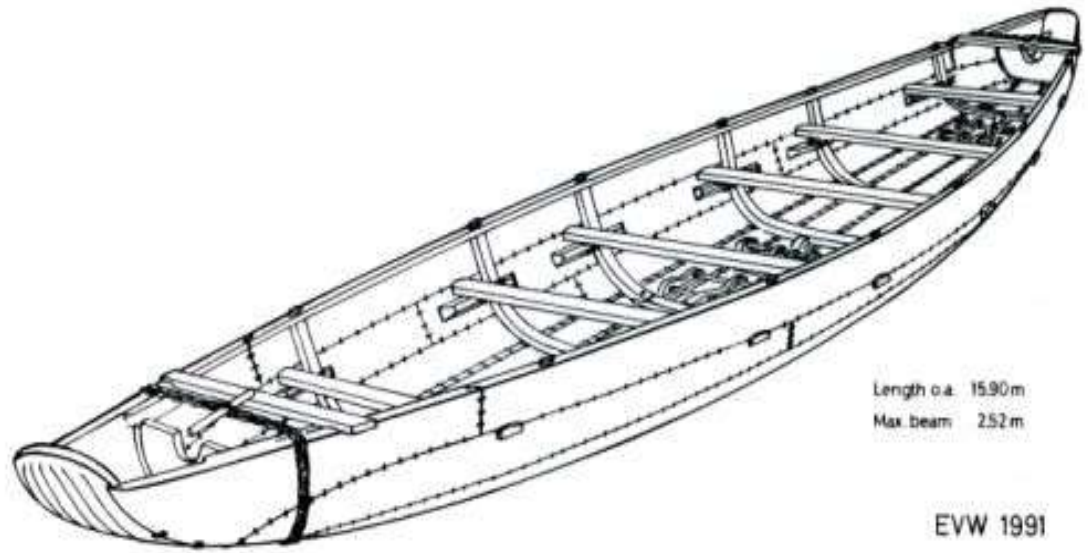
Until the 20th Century there were many ferries across the Ouse and staithes at villages. This precarious ferry is at Howden Dyke



The Ouse was tidal until Naburn Weir was built in 1757. Before then, the tidal range of approx. 1.5m.

A survey in 1699 found only 200mm of water at Fulford at neap tides. This 1910 picture shows York when sluices at Naburn weir had been opened.

Mesolithic arrow heads have been found at St Oswald's and nearby at Connaught Court showing that people have lived near the river since soon after the last Ice Age



Hypothetical reconstruction of a complete Ferriby boat

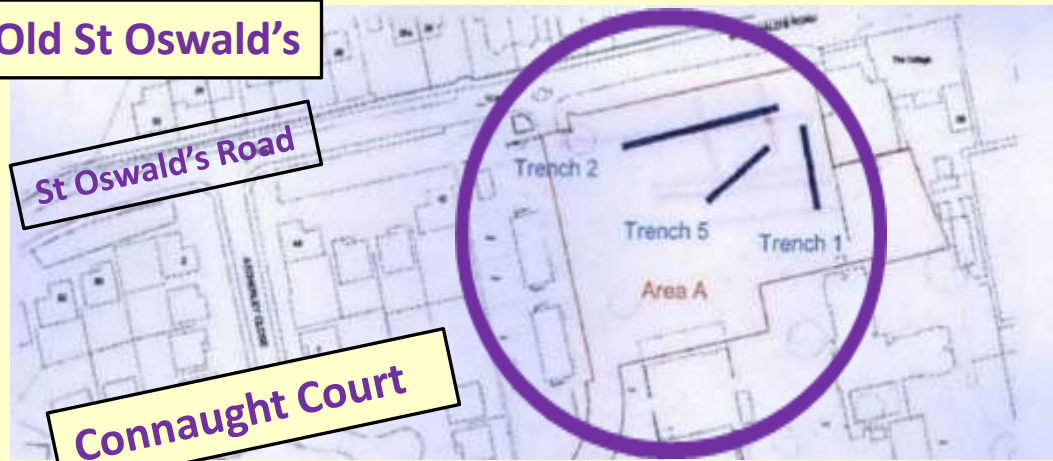


Mesolithic and Romano-British occupation in the area was found nearby in recent excavations, including arrow heads and 1st & 2nd Century ditches, pits and post-holes, indicative of a series of rectangular enclosures. Tiles and other building material were found and an Augustinian gold coin.

Old St Oswald's

St Oswald's Road

Connaught Court



Old St Oswald's

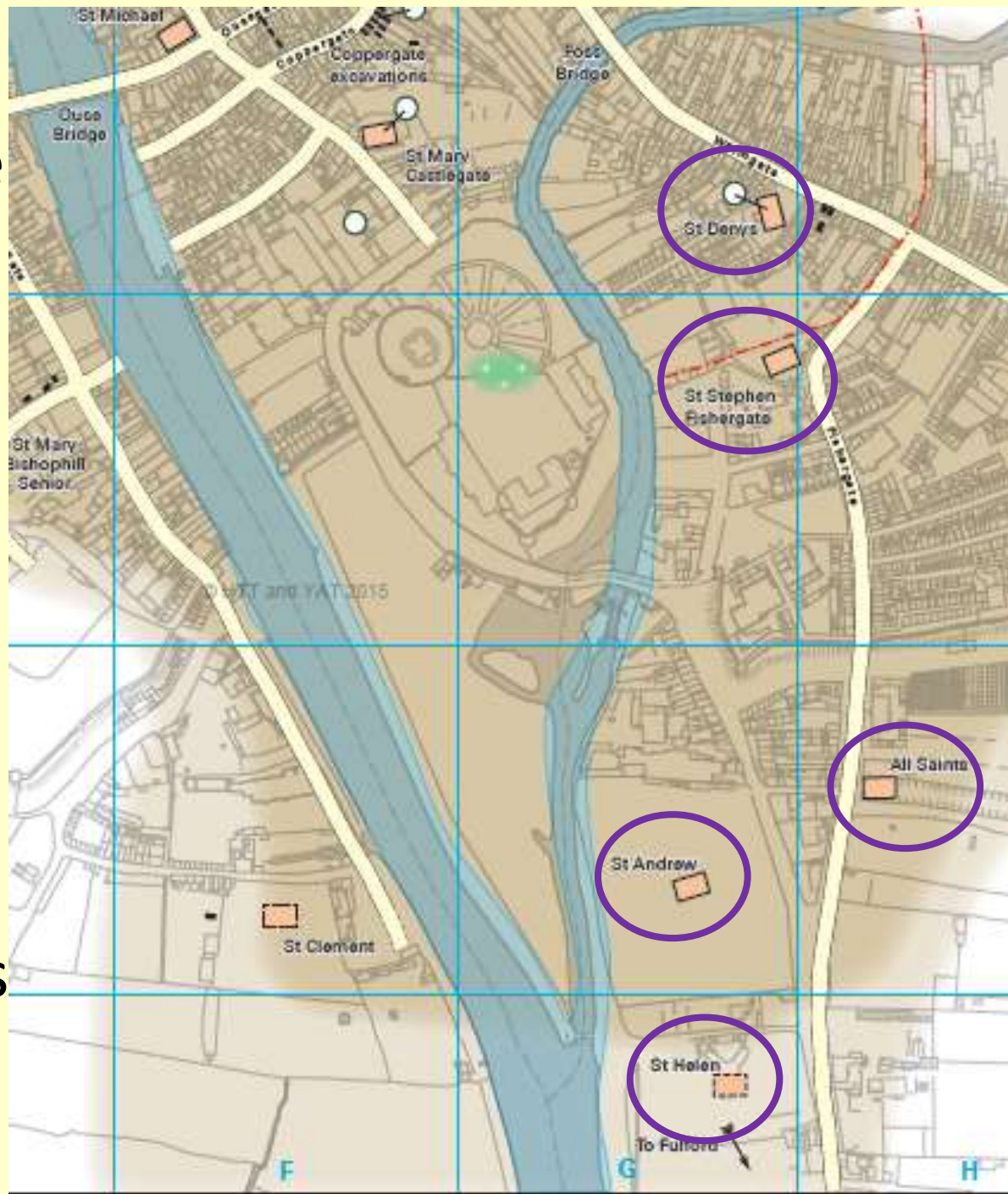
Connaught Court

John Hunt Cottage Homes

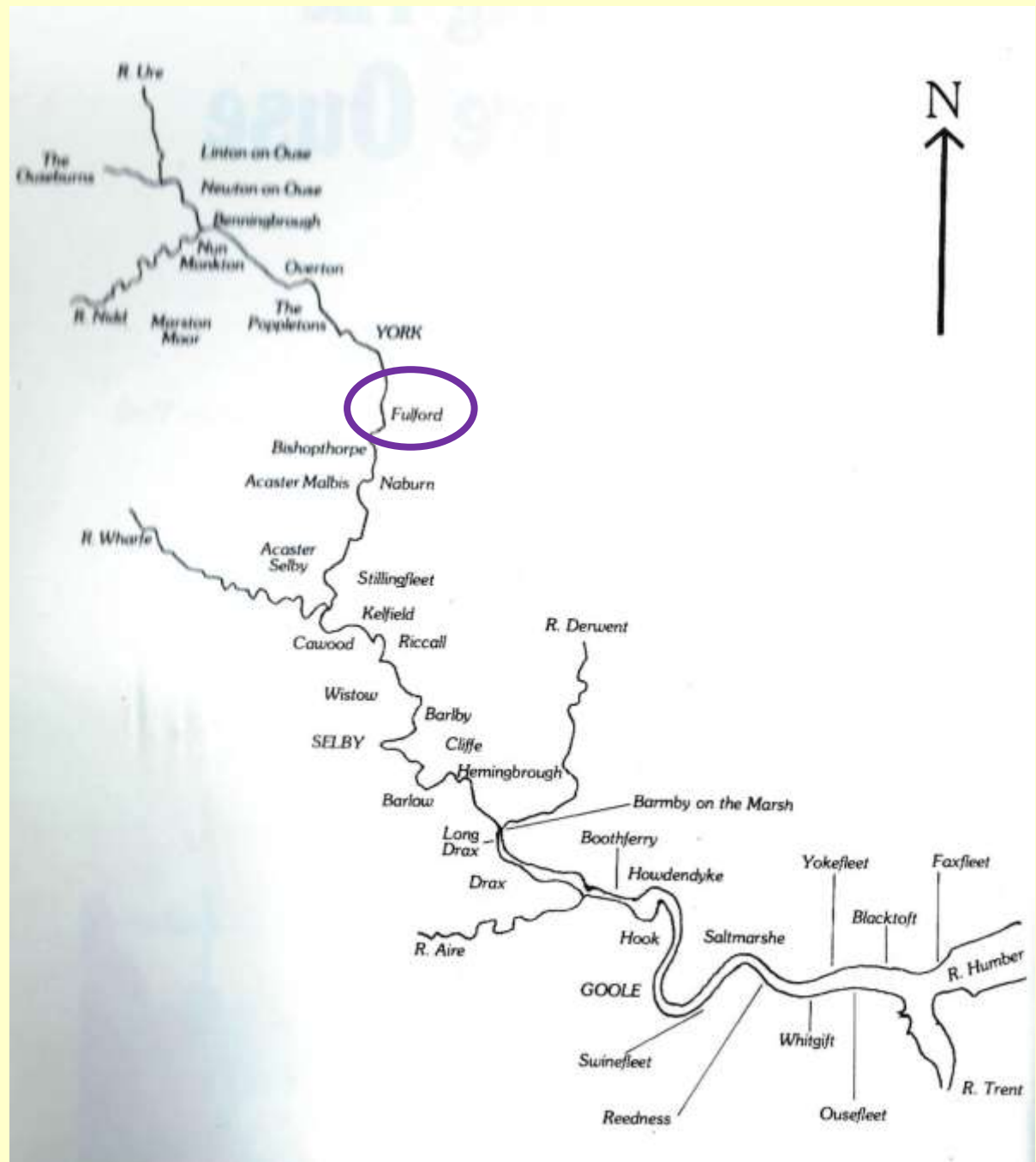
Medieval ridge and furrow was found, but no evidence of medieval village buildings. Ridge and furrow was also found to continue east up to Fulford Road, when FFH undertook a geophysical survey.



The south-eastern suburb of Fishergate was part of a 'Wic', the Anglian trading and manufacturing centre of Eoforwic. It was re-organised in the 10th Century and by the Norman Conquest there were many churches



Until the 19th Century, the river Ouse was the prime route for travellers and traders to reach York from southern England and across the North Sea

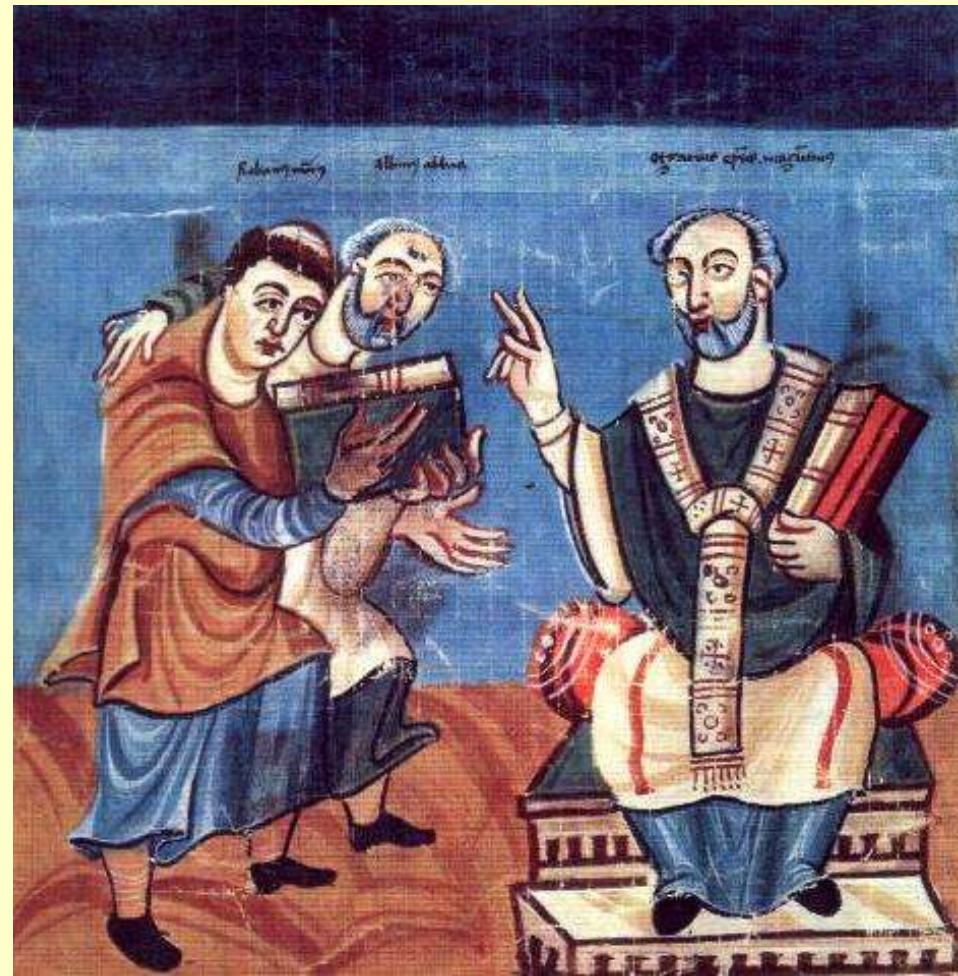


Trading ships, like this model of a Knarr, a Viking-era trading ship, would have travelled past St Oswald's on their way to Eoforwic



The 8/9th Century scholar,
Alcuin, wrote about
York....

*“A haven for the ships
from distant ports
Across the ocean, where
the sailor hastes
To cast his rope ashore
and stay to rest.
The city is watered by the
fish-rich Ouse
Which flows past flowery
plains on every side;....”*



Raban Maur (left), supported by **Alcuin (middle)**, dedicates his work to Archbishop Otgar of Mainz (Right)
Fulda - Manuscript: Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, cod. 652, fol. 2v (Fulda, 2nd quarter of the 9th Century)

Unpowered Humber
Keels and Sloops
were still in use in
the Ouse in the 20th
Century



Hull Maritime Museum



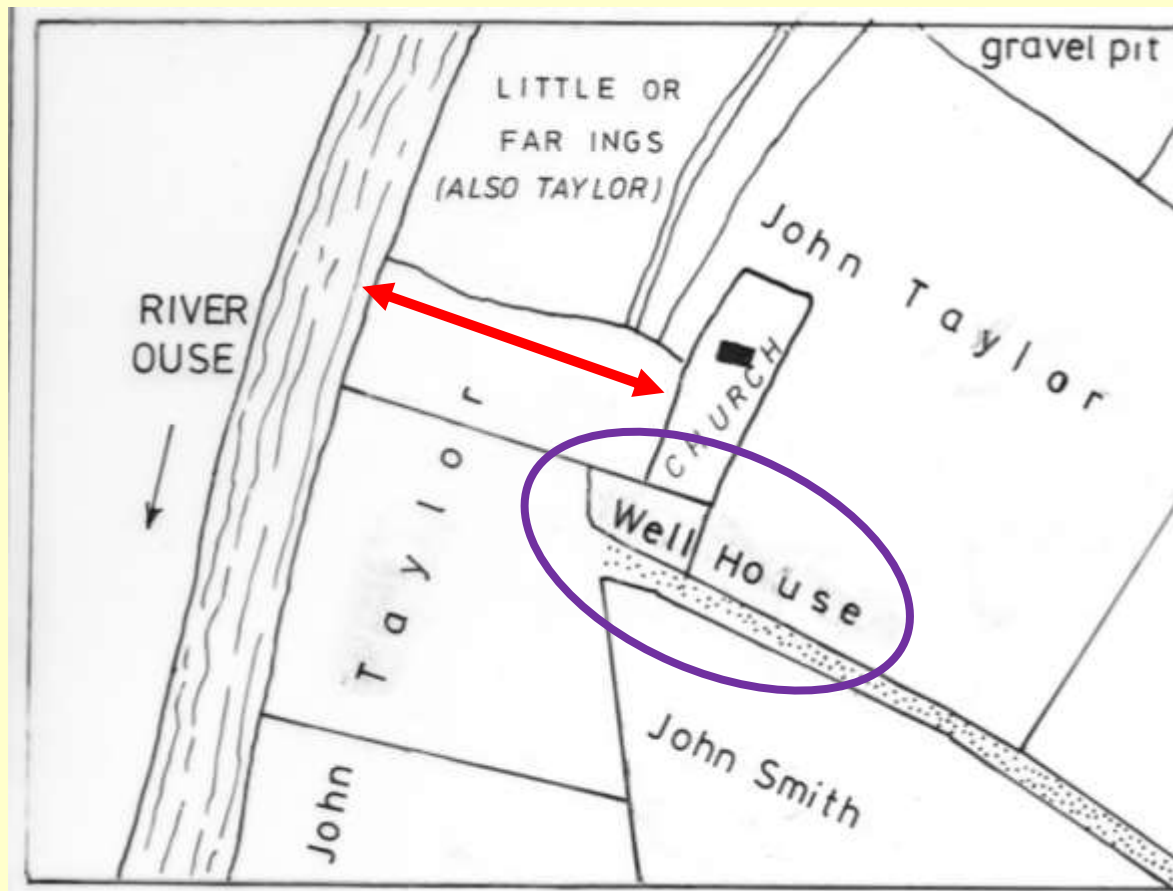
*Keel passing New Walk
in York in 1910*



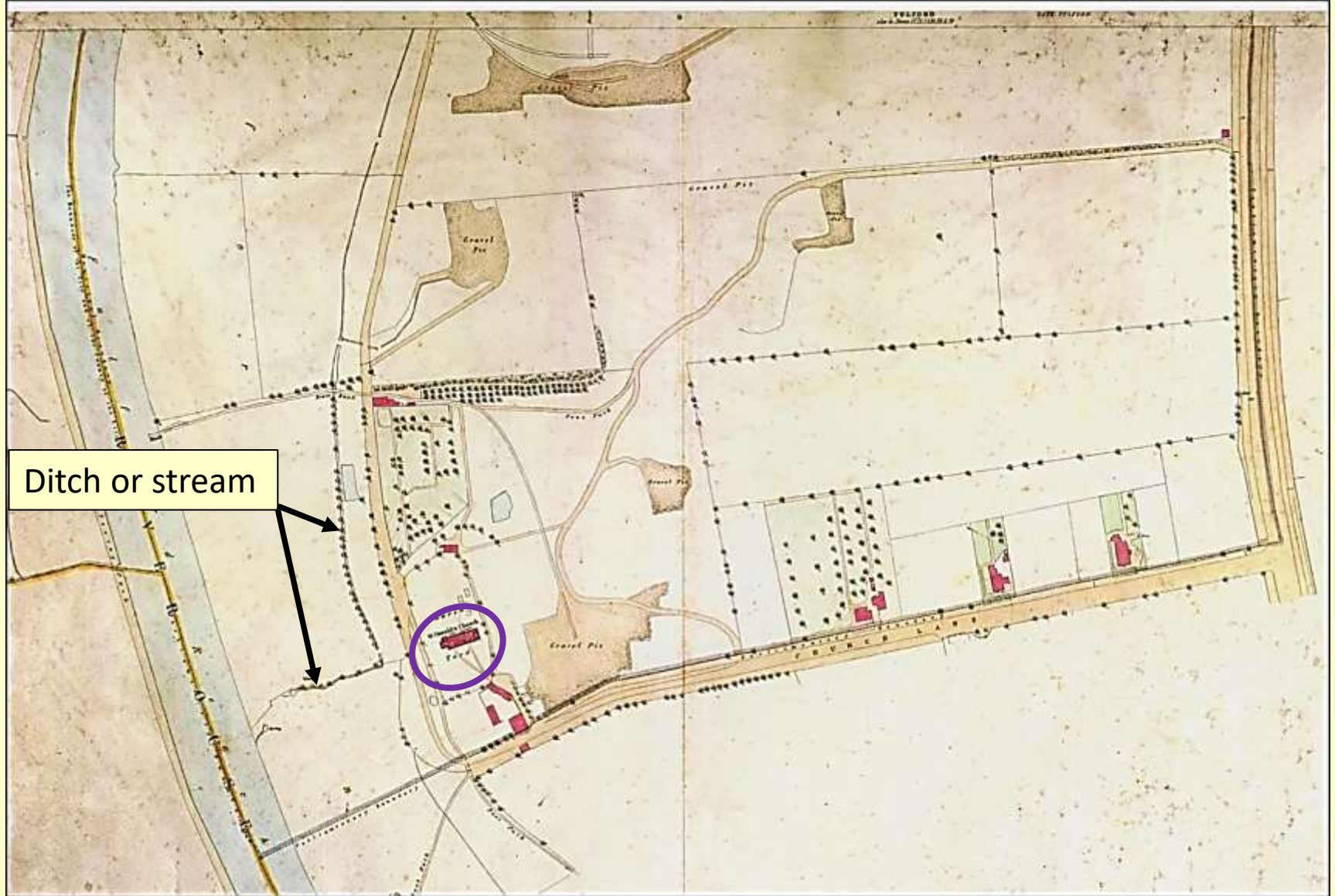
Francis Place's view
gives another possible
clue to the location of
St Oswald's.

Just visible behind the
church is **Well House**



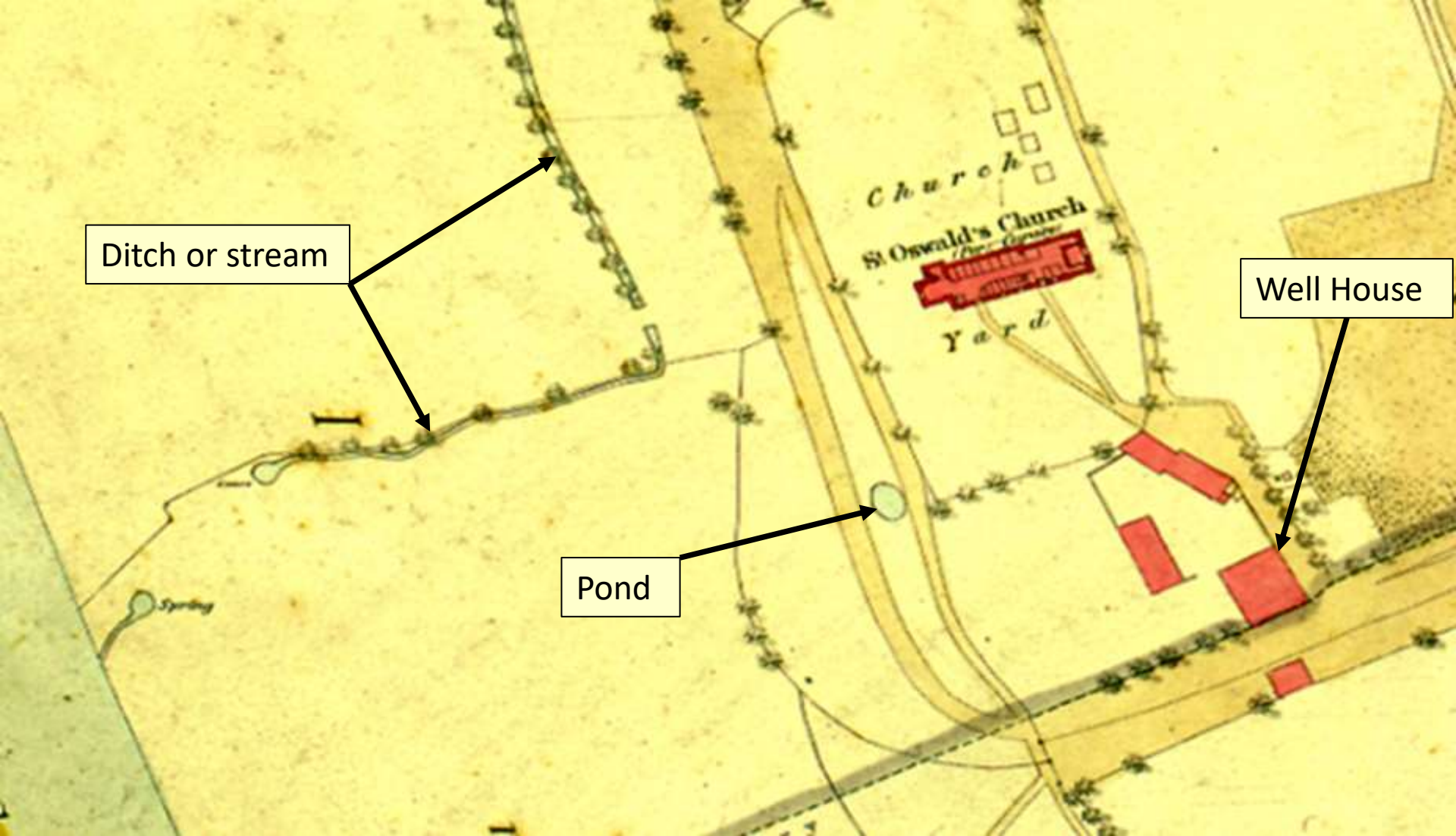


The plot containing Well House is shown on the 1756 enclosure map, on land allocated to the Lord of Fulford Manor, John Taylor. There is an odd plot between the church and river.



Ditch or stream

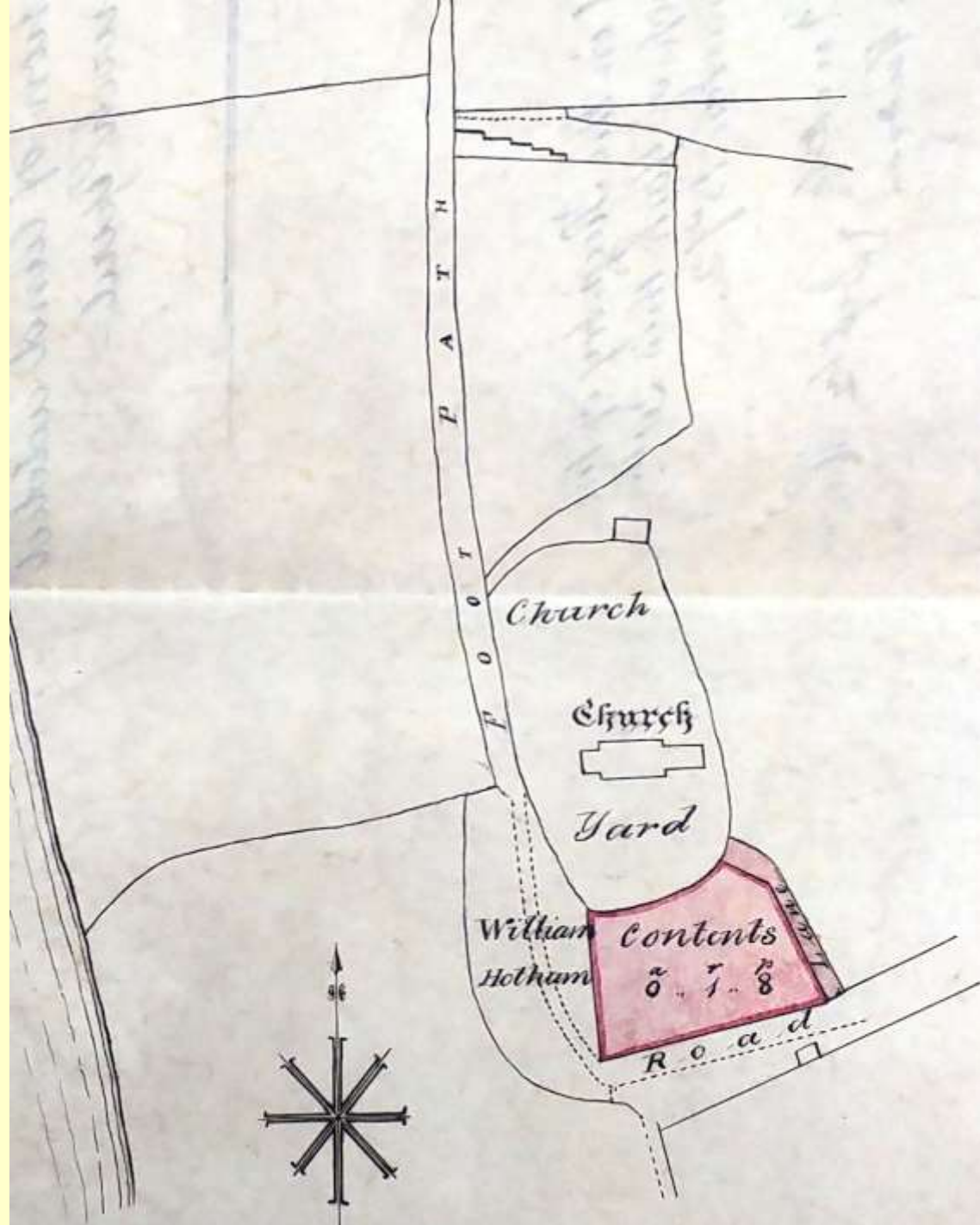
The 1850 OS map shows gravel pits and a ditch/stream running north-south just to the west of the lane



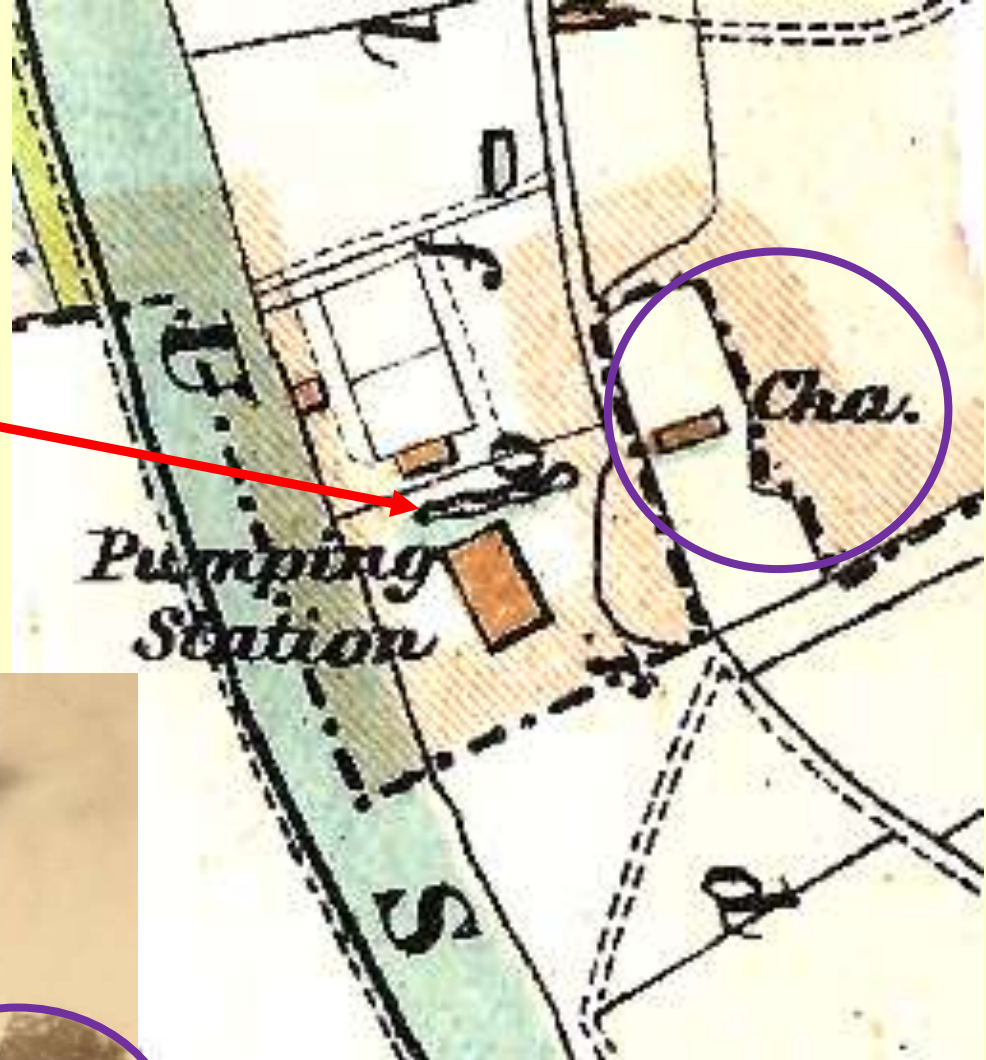
The ditch/stream turns towards the Ouse exactly opposite the church.
Another pond aligns with the churchyard boundary

St Oswald's well was repaired in 1832, with a lion's head added to disgorge water into a tank

Well House was sold in 1870 and demolished to allow expansion of the churchyard



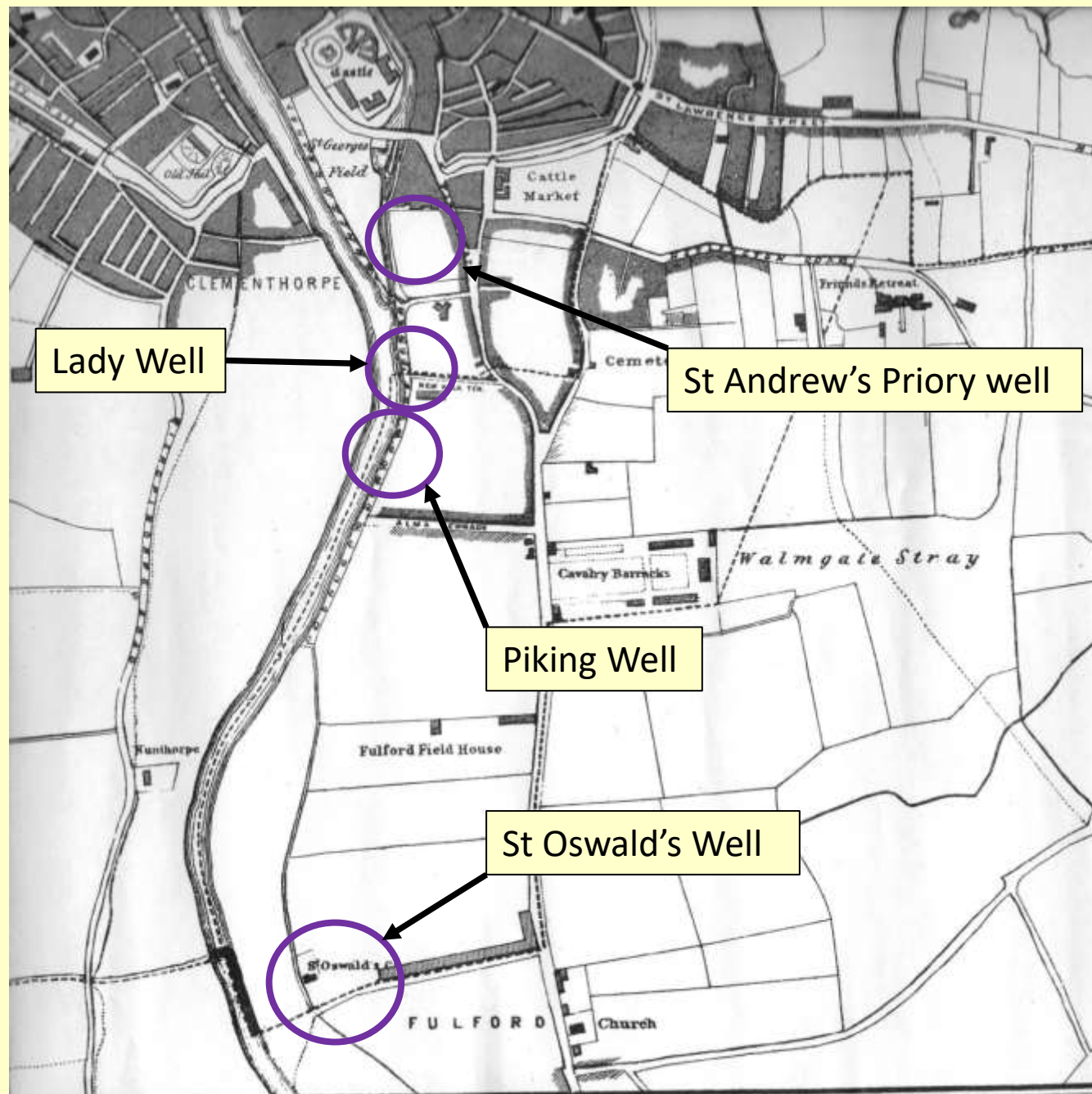
An open watercourse
opposite the church
still existed after
construction of the
sewage pumping
station in 1895



St Oswald's

There are a number of wells along the eastern side of the river Ouse.

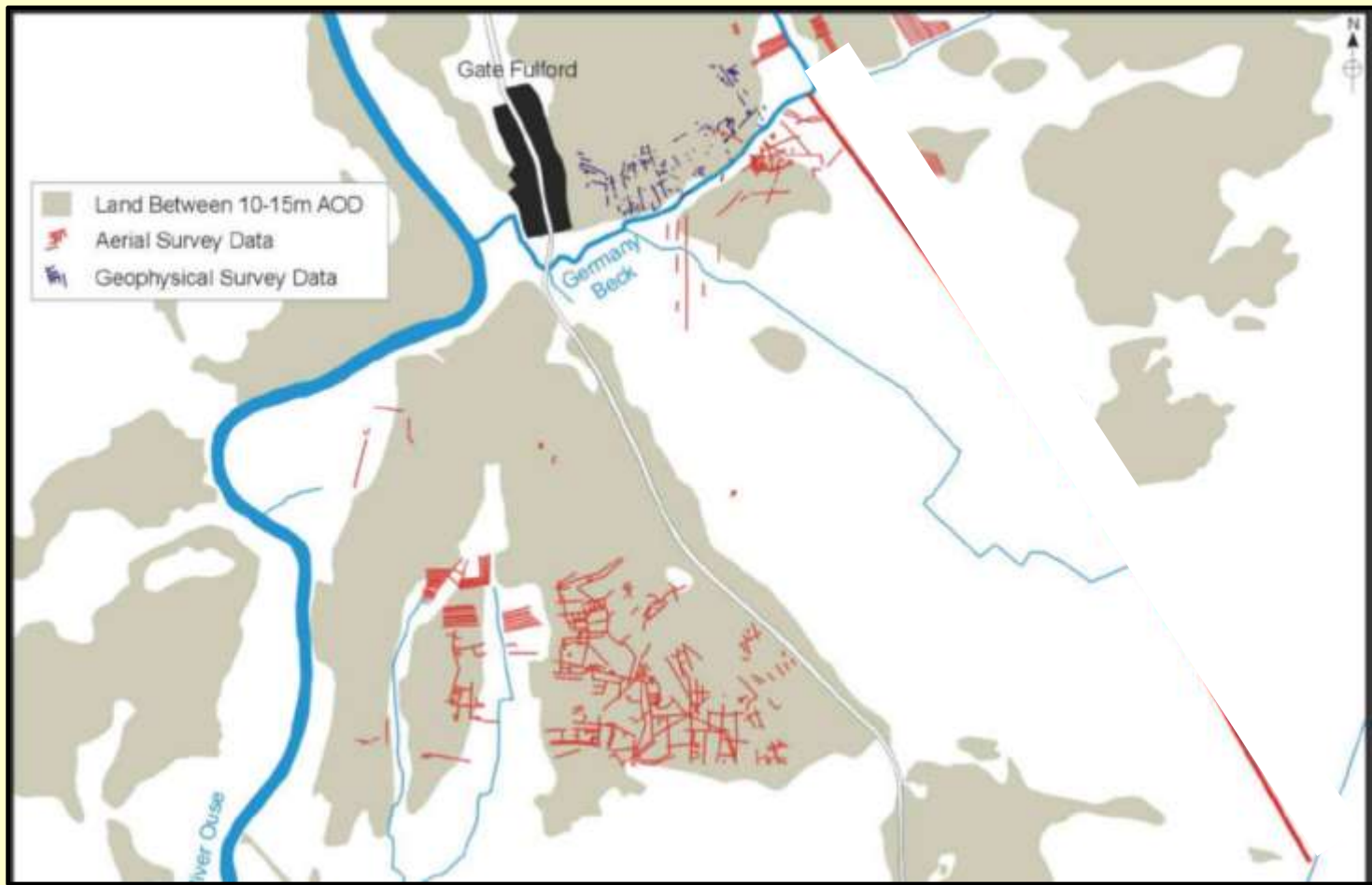
Lady Well, at the end of New Walk Terrace, was probably in the grounds of St Helen's Church



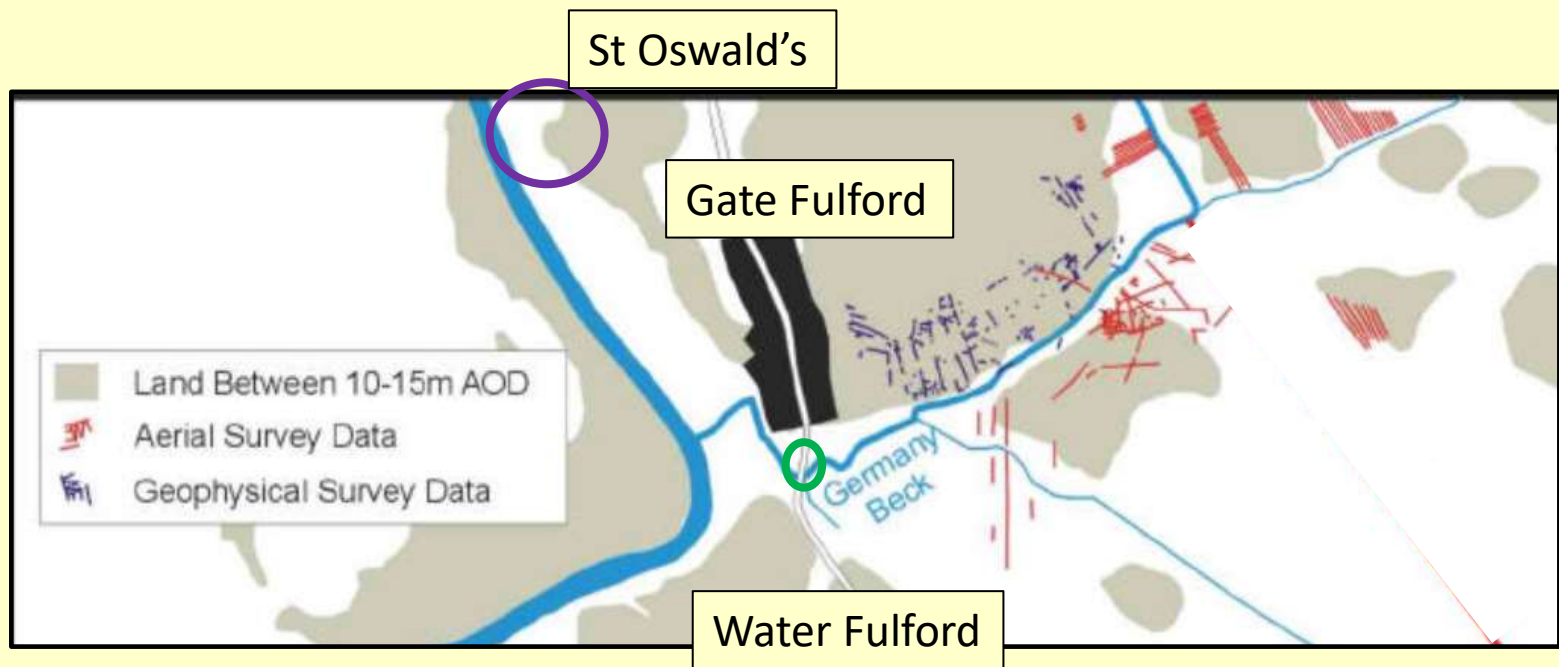
St Oswald is associated with the sites of Holy Wells. The most significant is related to the legend of his death at Oswestry.



Baptism was an important ritual in conversion to Christianity.

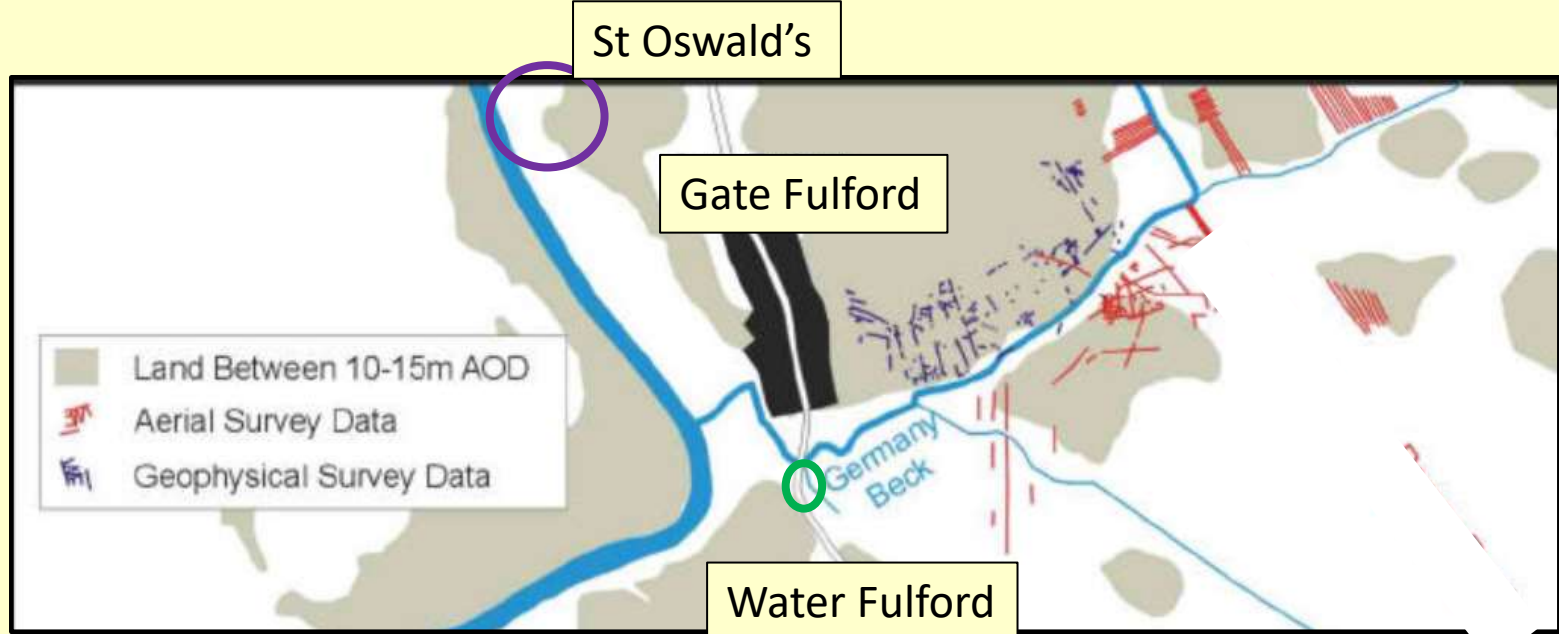


The origins of Fulford – this map shows aerial survey details of Iron age and earlier field systems east and south of Fulford. The grey areas are higher and drier land.



Domesday shows Gate & Water Fulford as separate estates, but the prefix *Water* is not recorded until the C12 and *Gate* in the C16 referring to the road between York and Selby.

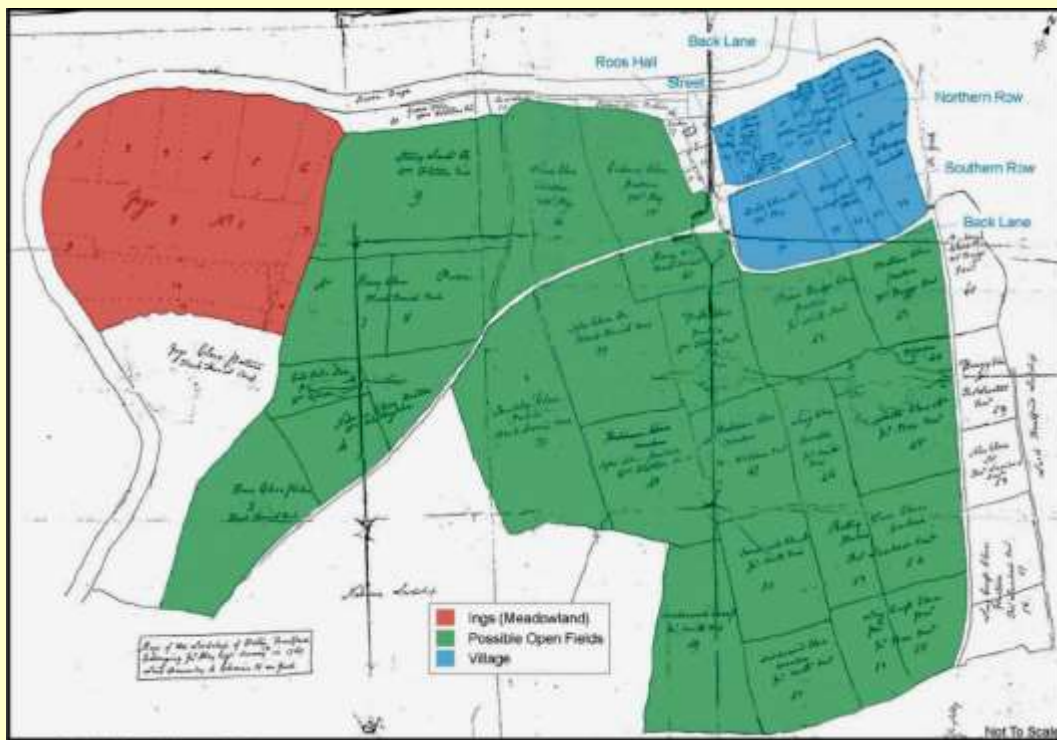
There is a C12 reference to *Ulteriori* (Over Fulford) and again to *Overfolforth* in the 1366 Patent Rolls.



A '*muddy ford*' through Germany Beck is the likely origin of the village name, deriving from *Foleforde*.

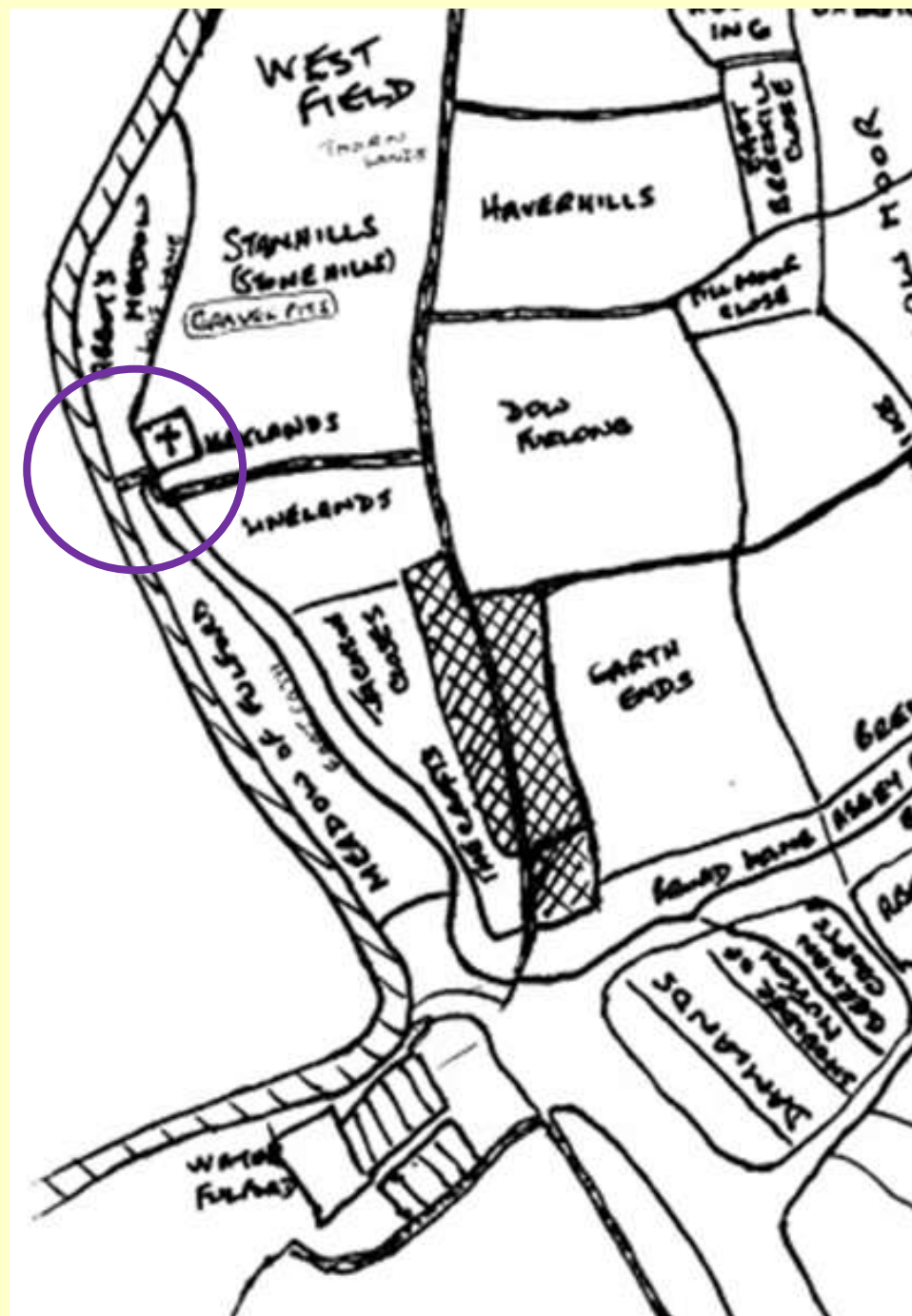
A German de Bretegate is recorded in 1258-70 and a Nicholas de Brettgate is mentioned in the Court Rolls of 1483 as holding a 'toft and croft in Fulford near the bridge, with a garden, meadow and arable land', -- probably giving Germany Beck its name.

These maps show the medieval open fields of Gate Fulford and Water Fulford townships overlaid on the C18 enclosure plans.

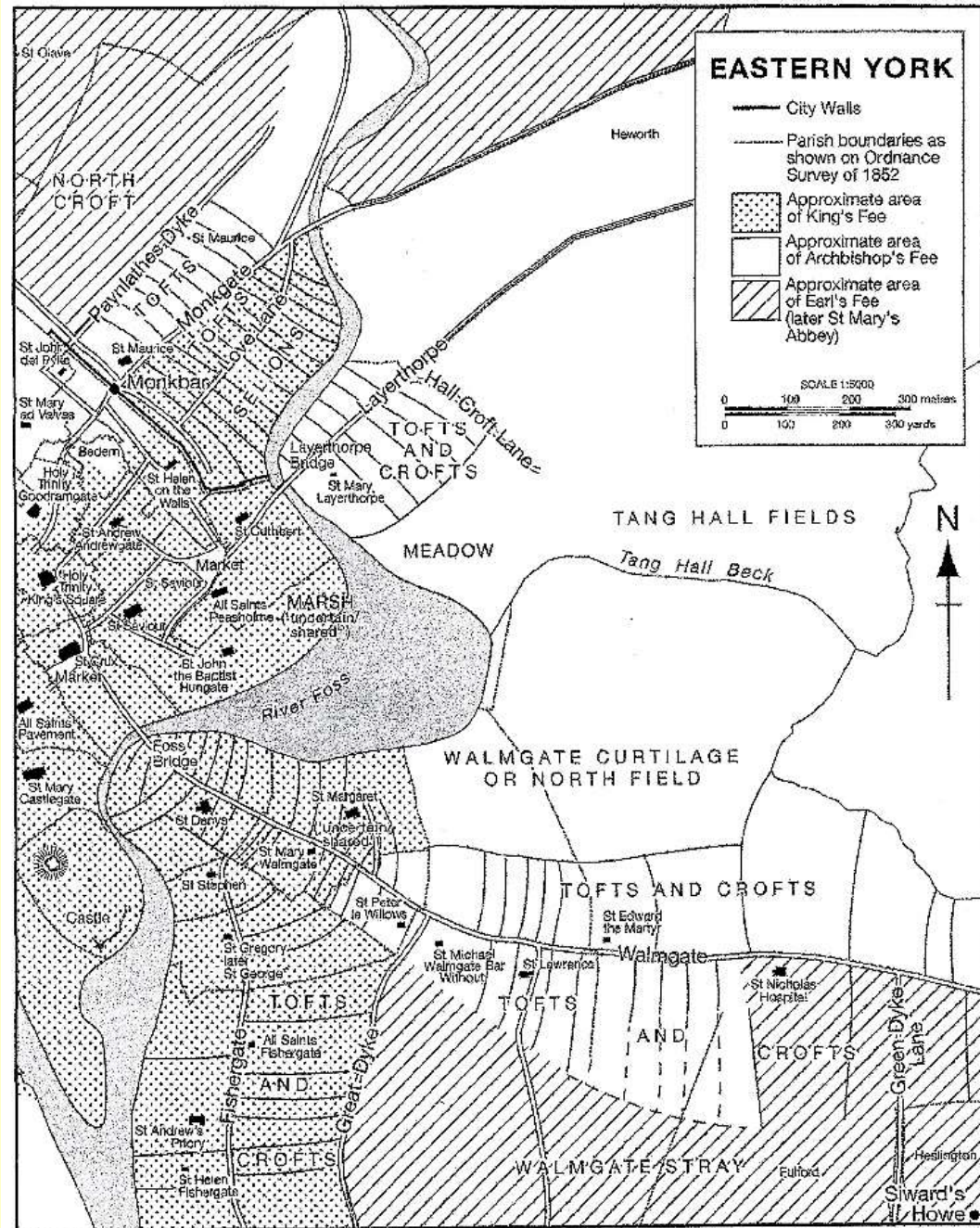


This type of land ownership and open-field agriculture evolved from the scattered Romano-British farms, probably during the Anglo-Scandinavian period.

Estates such as Fulford were managed by local lords to provide rent and food to the courts of the Archbishop and the King/Earl of Northumberland.

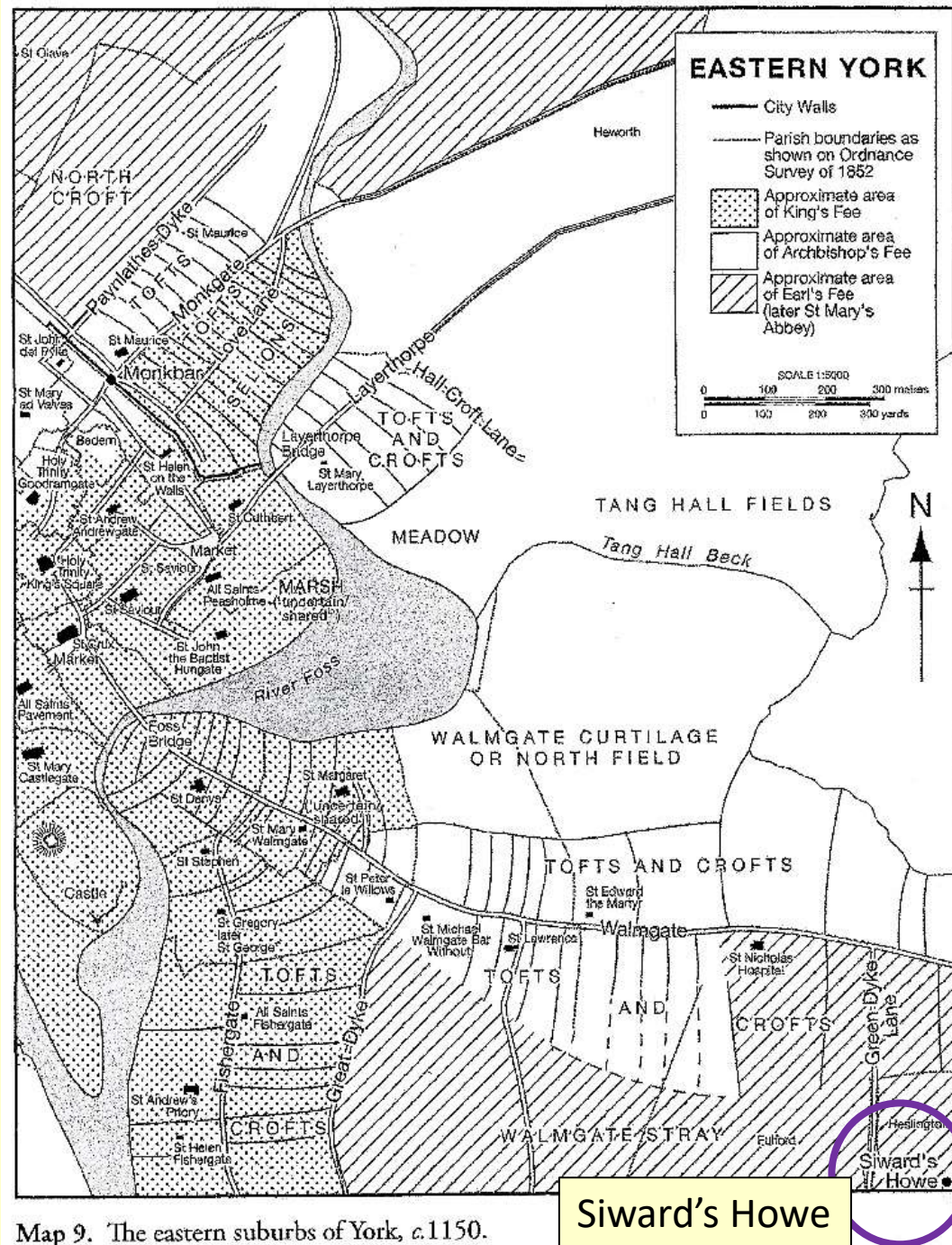


After the defeat of Eric Bloodaxe in 954, the English Kings appointed Earls to rule Northumberland. Fishergate was owned by the King and Fulford, which included Walmgate Stray, was allocated to the Earl.



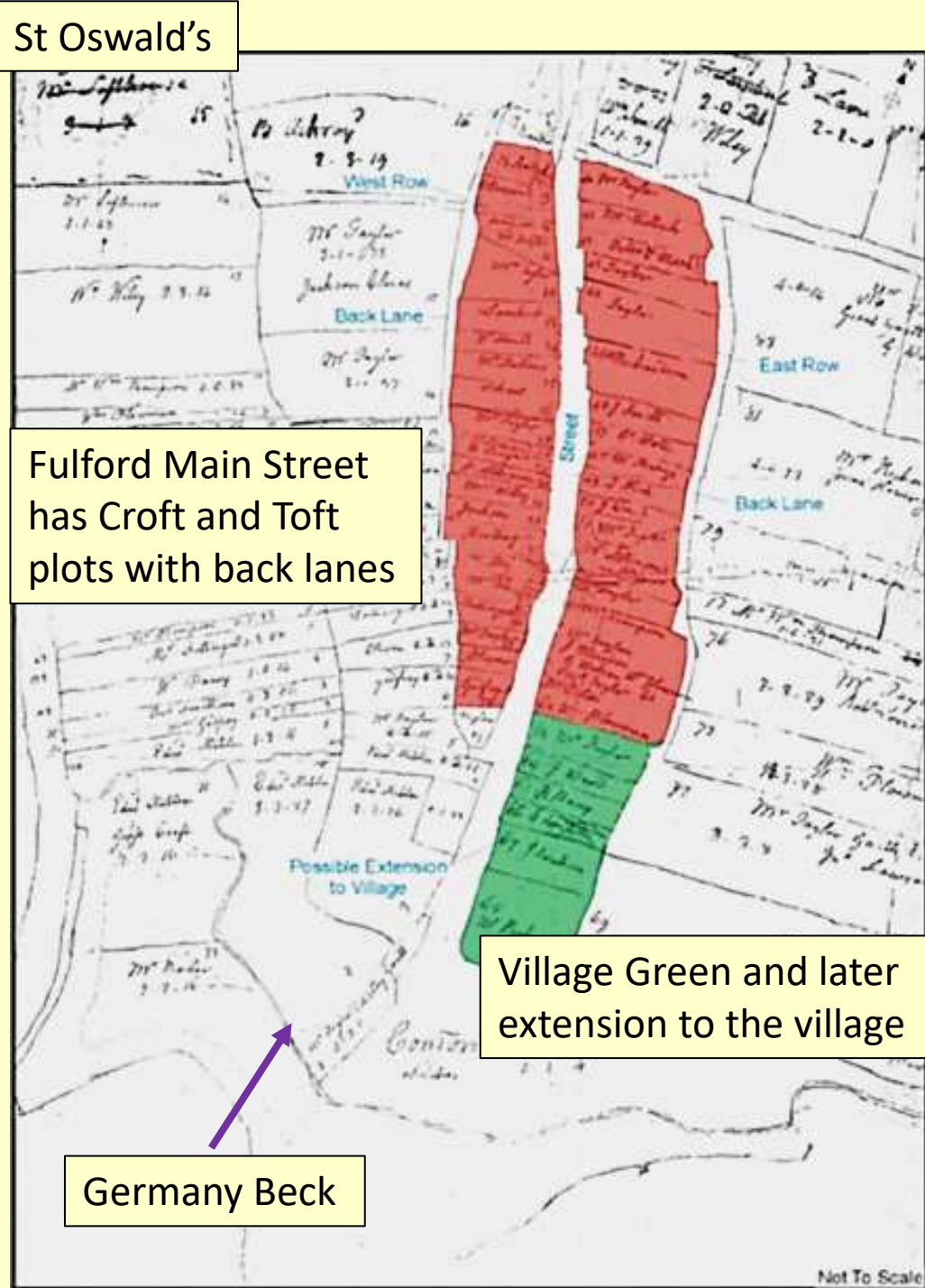
Map 9. The eastern suburbs of York, c.1150.

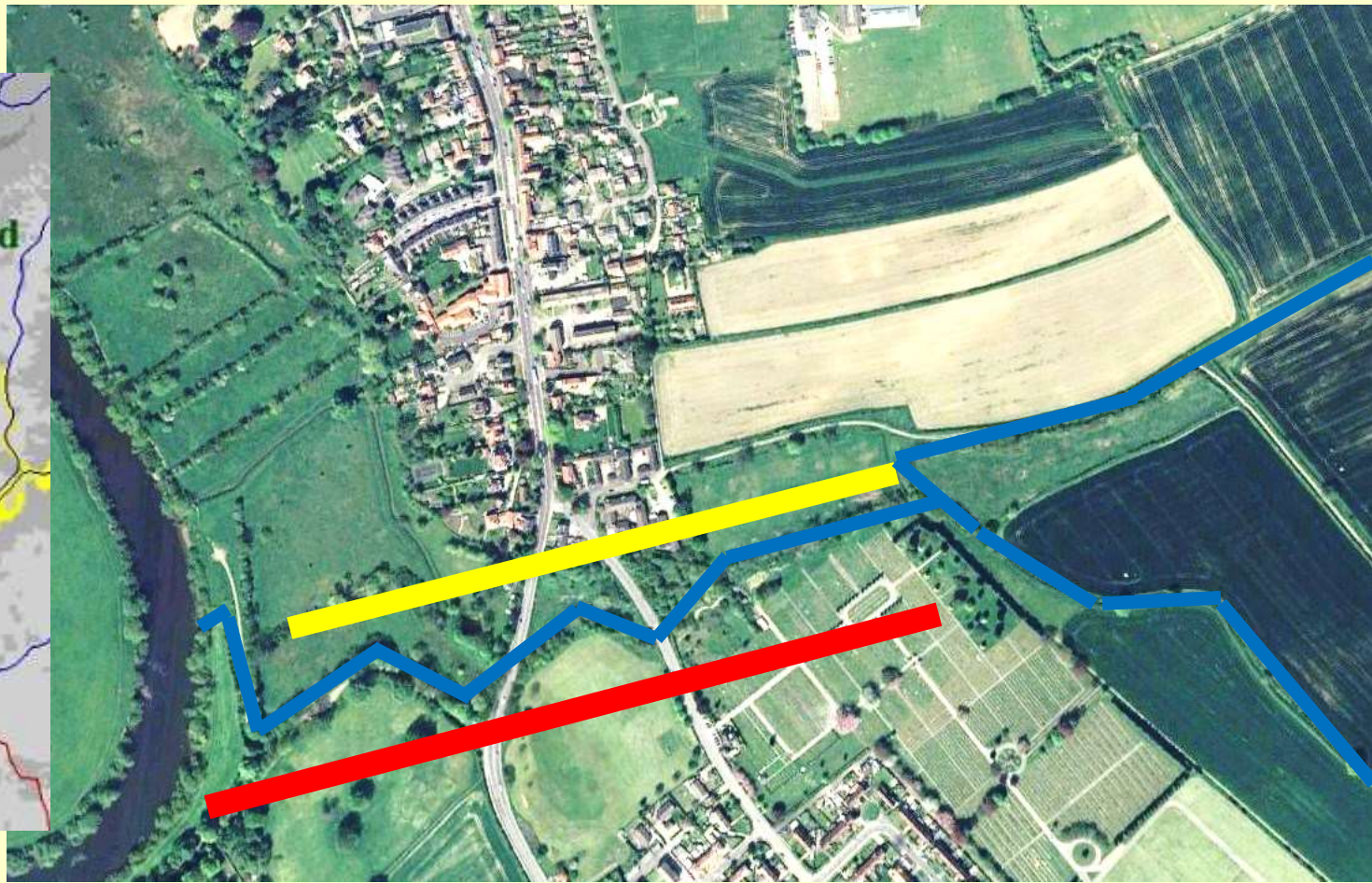
Siward was Earl from 1023 to 1055. He is remembered locally in the name of Heslington Hill, which was possibly used as a meeting place. Siward was buried at St Olaf's church, named the Norwegian warrior king/saint.



Fulford was owned by the Earls and the scattered farmsteads may have been consolidated into a linear village along the Roman Road, before or during the period of Earl Siward.

Perhaps this was also when the first church was built on the sacred site of the cross.





Another reason for Fulford to be along the Roman road, just north of Germany Beck, may have been to use the Beck as an outer defensive point for the city, as used when Tostig and Harald arrived in 1066?

Siward was succeeded by Earl Tostig, who inherited his estates, including Fulford.

After his death in 1066 at the Battle of Stamford Bridge, his wife Judith of Flanders, promoted the cult of St Oswald in western Europe, where it became popular.

*Reliquary 'containing' St
Oswald's head
at Hildesheim, Lower Saxony*



The Domesday survey of 1086 describes Gate Fulford as a single estate of 10 carucates, held by the new Norman earl, Count Alan of Brittany.

The Count's Landlord held 2 ploughs, with 6 villagers also holding 2 ploughs.

There were also 20 acres of meadow.

The estate was 1 league long and $\frac{1}{2}$ league wide, estimated as $1\frac{1}{2}$ mile long and $\frac{3}{4}$ mile wide, from the north end of Walmgate Stray to Germany Beck, with its core at the south end.

The value was 16/- a 20% reduction from Morcar's.

Around 1086, Count Alan's successor, Stephen, gave the Manor of Gate Fulford and land in Water Fulford, to St Mary's Abbey.

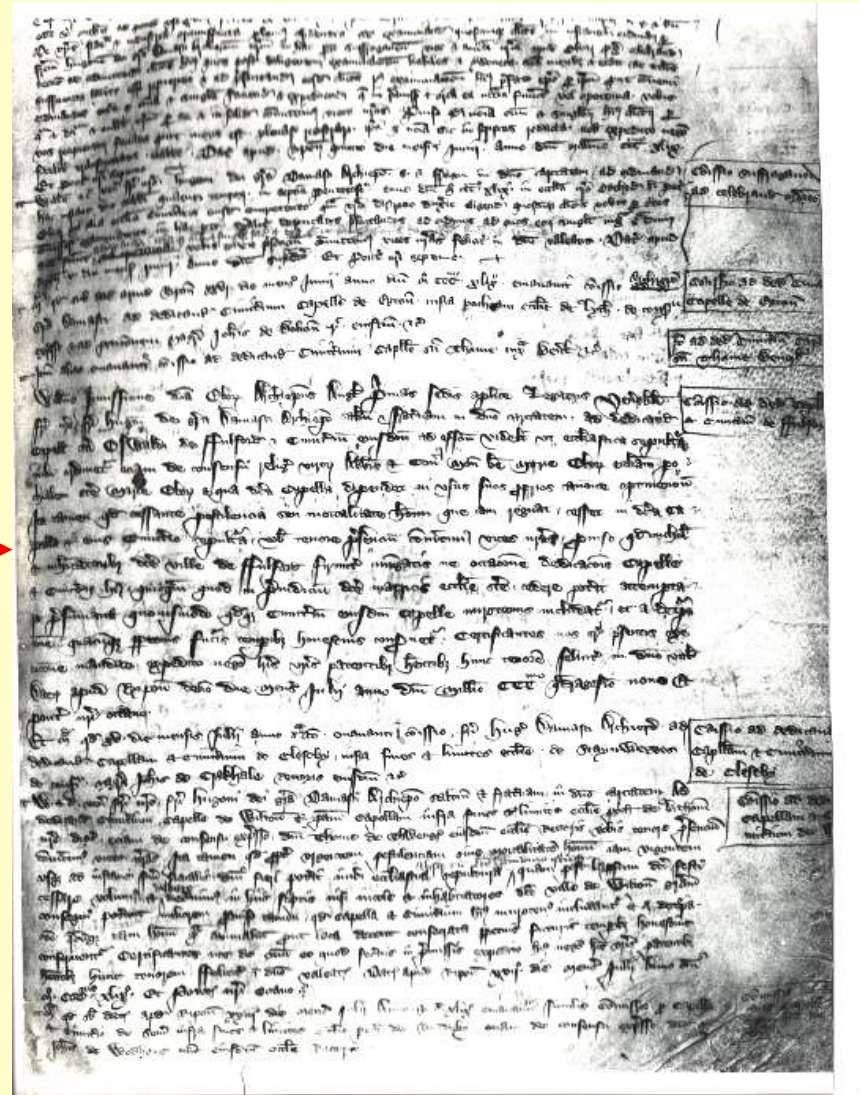


He also granted St Olave's church to the Abbey and St Oswald's became a chapel of ease to the parish of St Olave, also owned by the Abbey.

Burials were not permitted at St Oswald's until after the dissolution.

An exception was made in 1349, due to the Black Death, but this was soon rescinded.

In 1585, John Redman, Lord of Water Fulford, was granted a licence to hear Divine Service, have Sacraments administered and to bury his dead there.



The church became too small to accommodate the 19th Century suburban growth of Fulford, so a new church was constructed in 1866.

The spire was 140ft high!

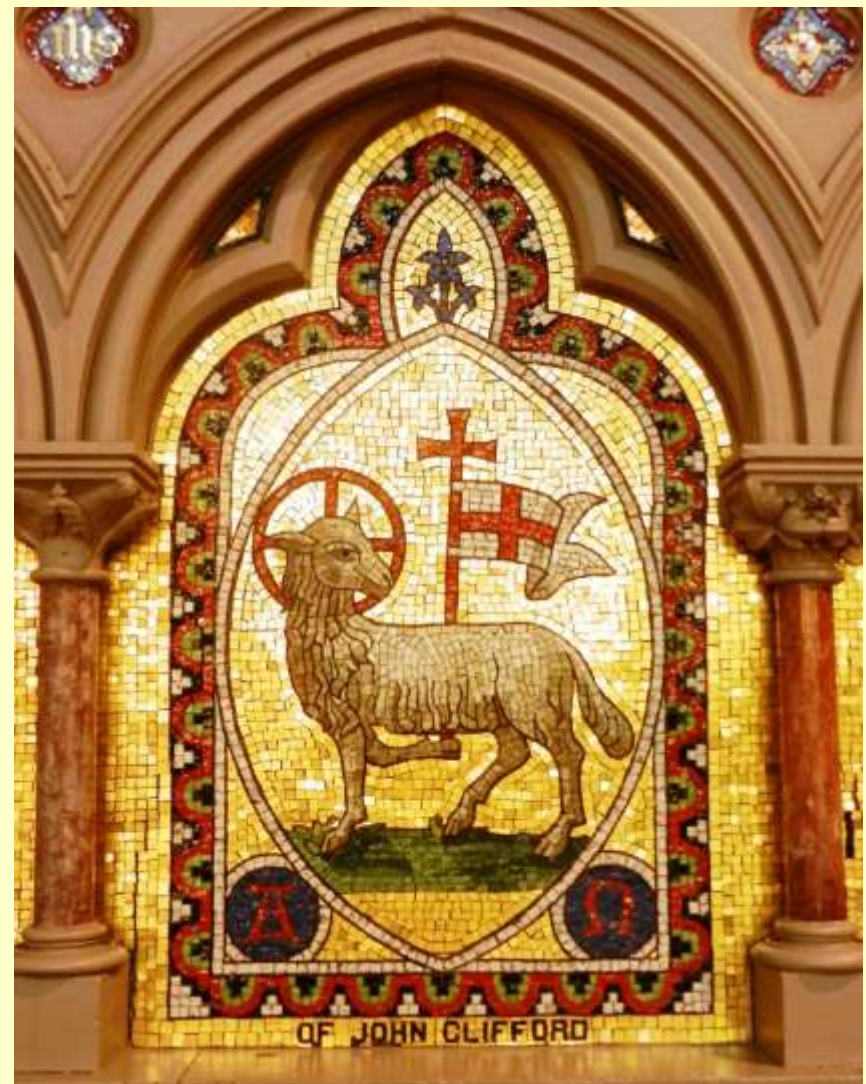




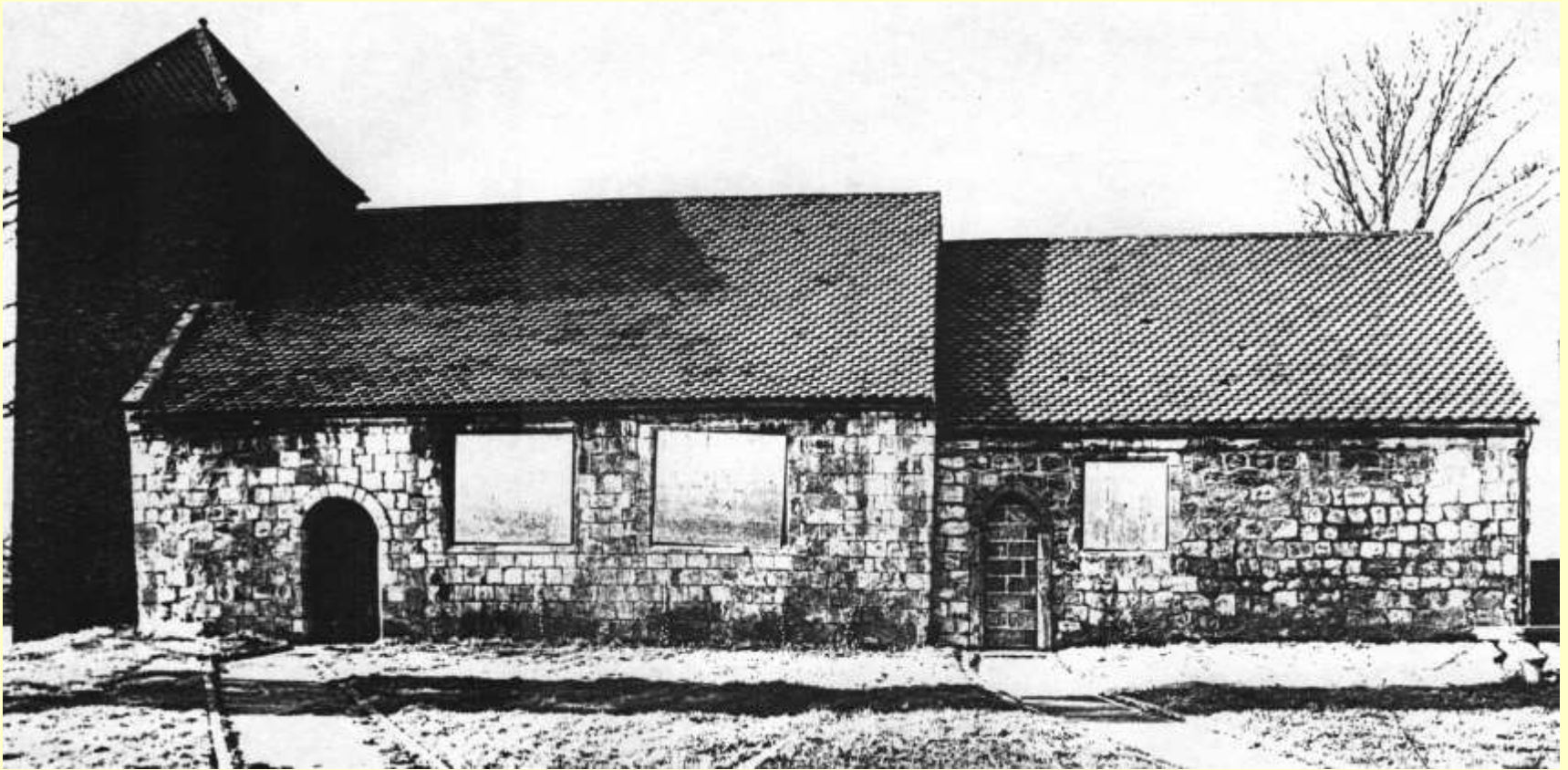
11 years later, the new church was devastated by fire, destroying the interior and William Morris windows.



18th C. font from
the old church



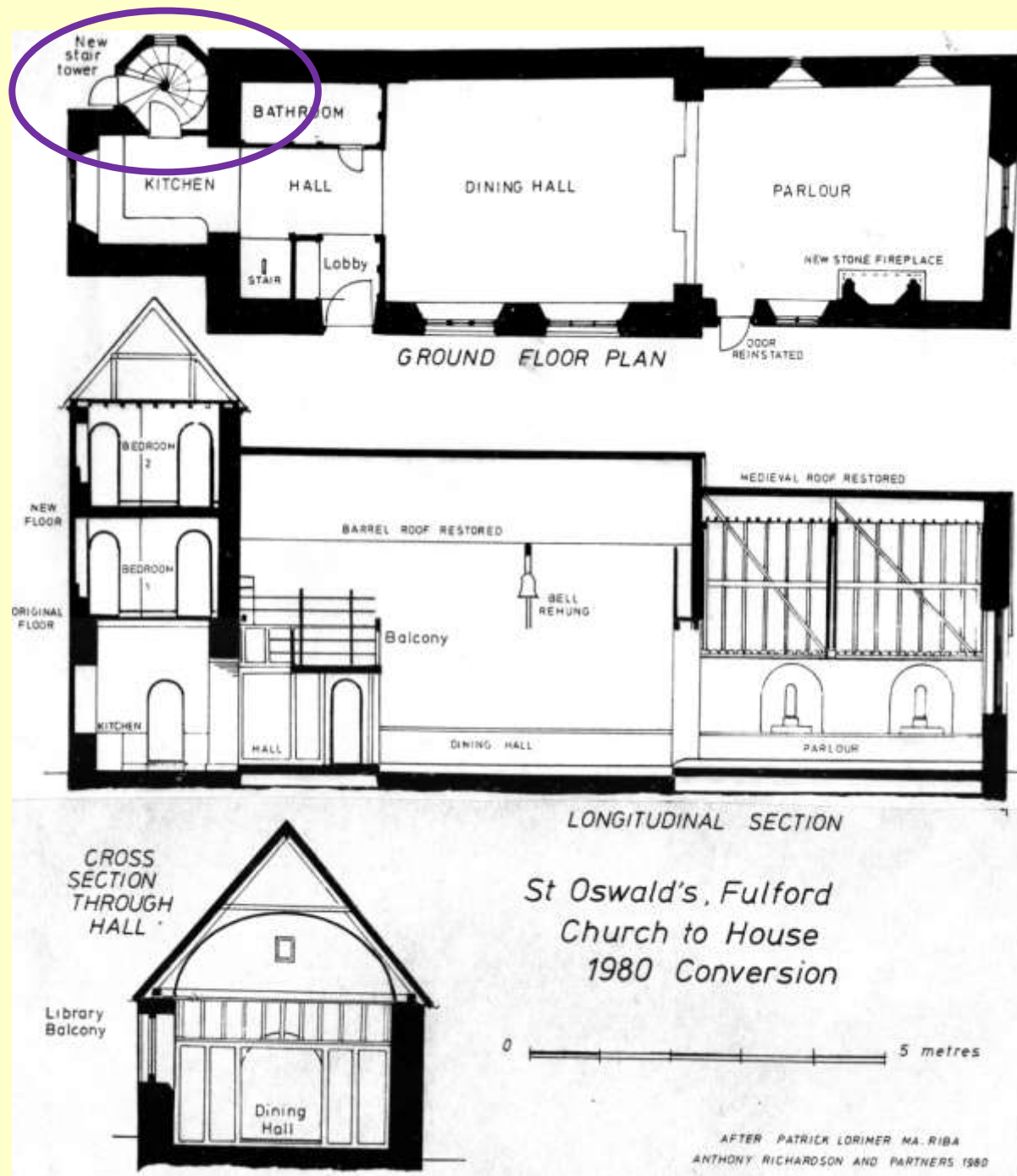
Venetian glass reredos



The old church continued as a mortuary chapel until its sale by the Church Commissioners to Roy Grant in 1980, who converted it into a private house.

The conversion was designed to retain much of the original fabric and external appearance.

A new spiral staircase was built on the north west corner and this was the focus of the archaeological investigations.



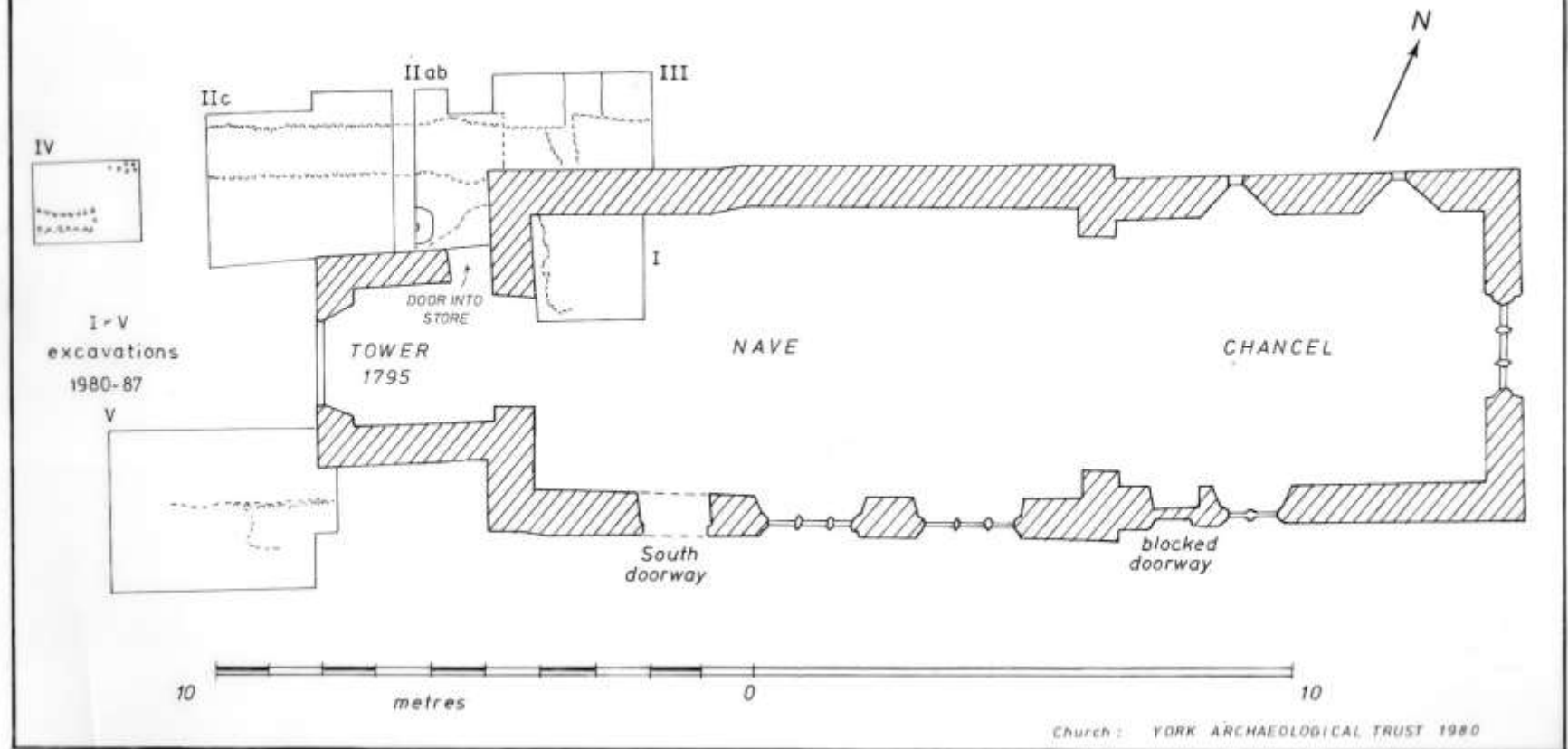
Trenches were excavated next to the tower.

Underlying stonework was carefully examined

Older foundations were discovered and a number of significant finds.

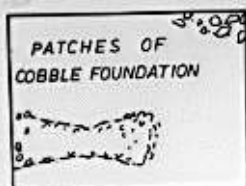


St. Oswald's, Fulford, York 1980



Further excavations were undertaken by YAT and archaeology students to explore the extent of the cobble foundations.

IV



IIc

COBBLE FOUNDATION

IIab

POSTPIT
DEPRESSION

III

COBBLE FOUNDATION

DITCH

I

COBBLE FOUNDATION

TOWER

NAVE

V

COBBLE FOUNDATION

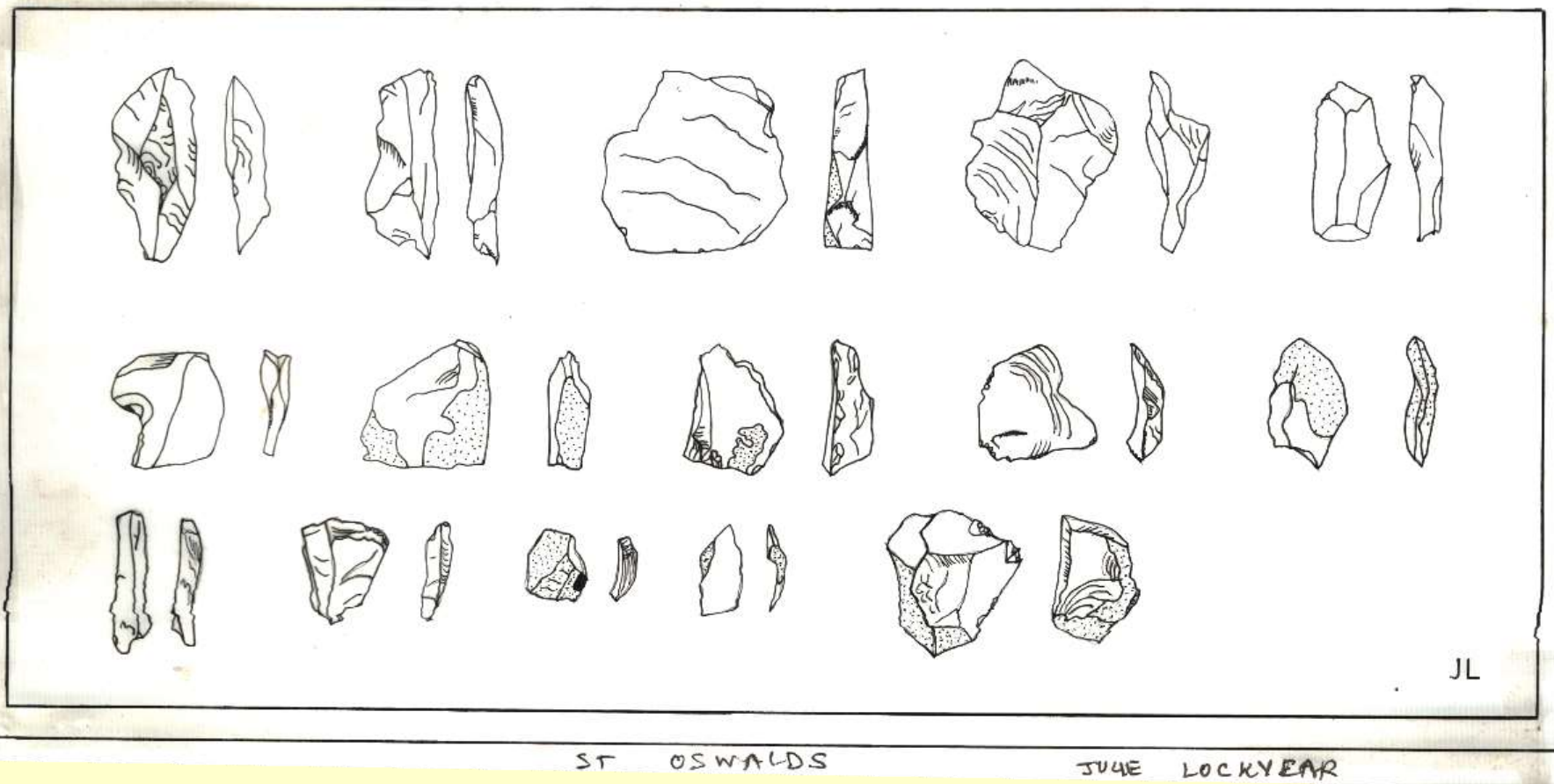
SOUTH
DOORWAY

0 1 2 3 4 5 METRES

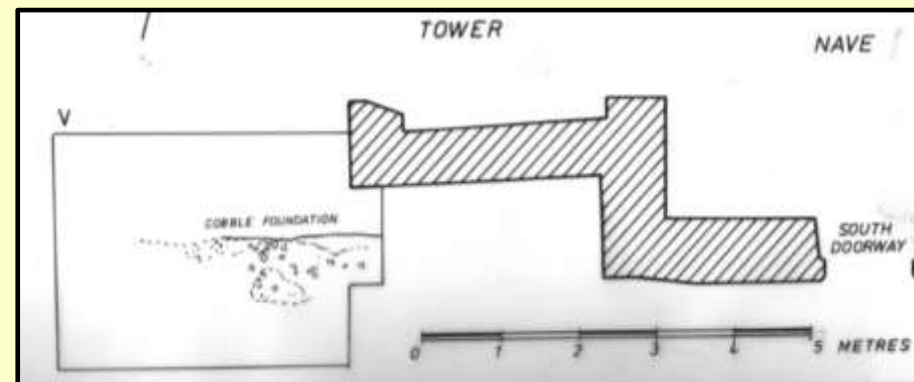
St. Oswald's Fulford

EARLY PHASES AT WEST END

PAR 1999



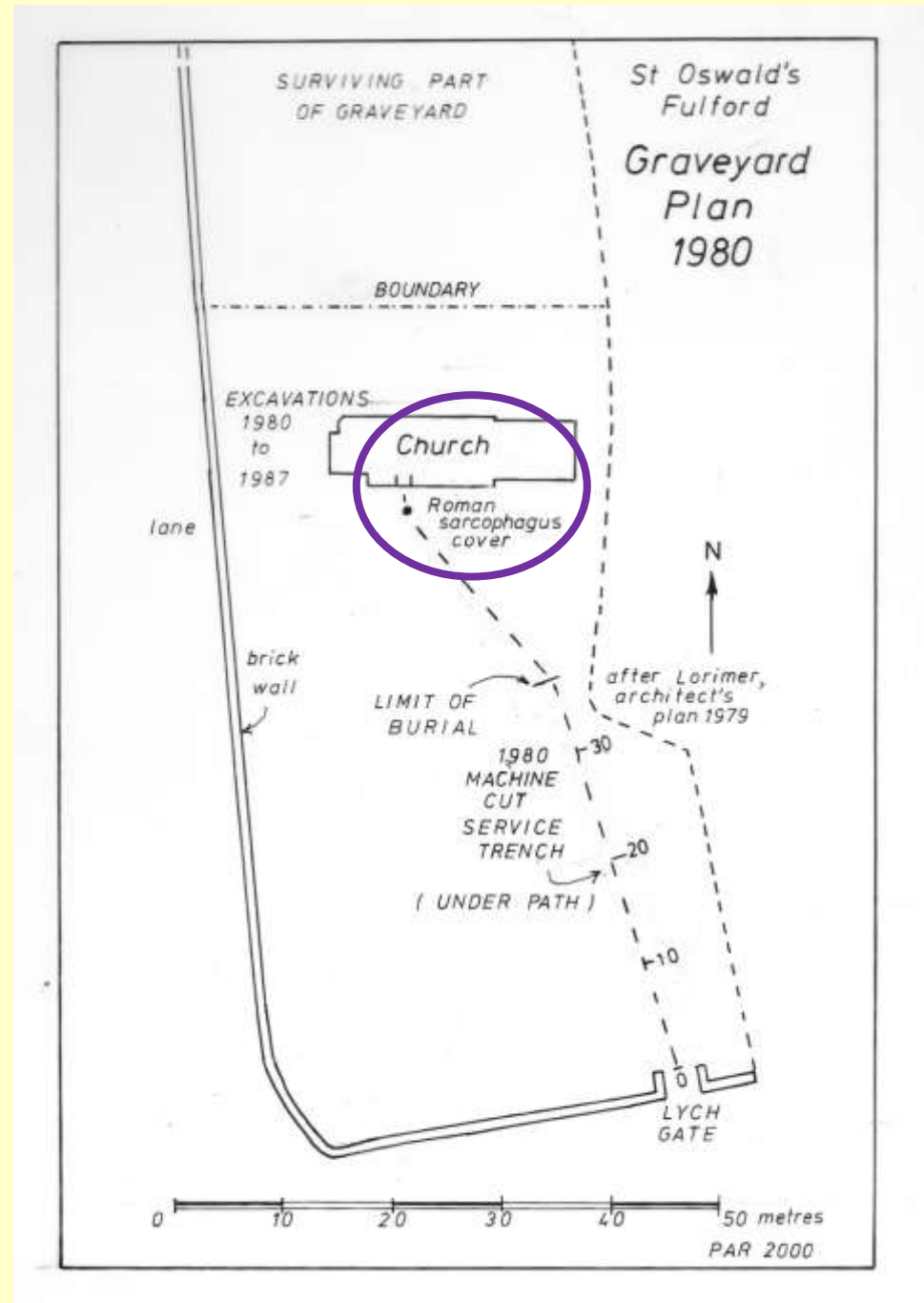
In 1986/7, archaeology student Julie Lockyear recorded these Mesolithic flints in Cutting V



A trench for services was dug from the church door to the Lych Gate.

An upside down Roman sarcophagus cover was found near the church door.

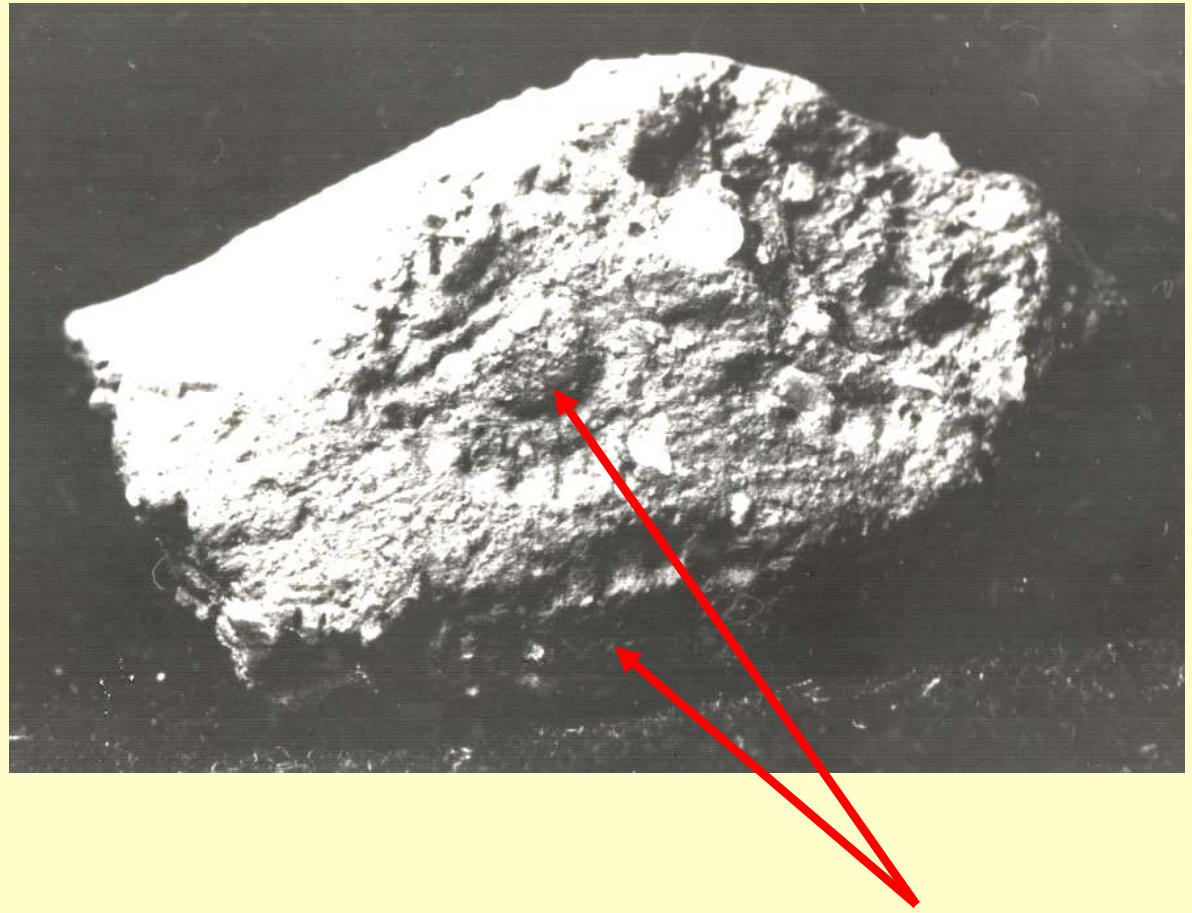
Roman burials were found in the 19th Century at nearby gravel pits.





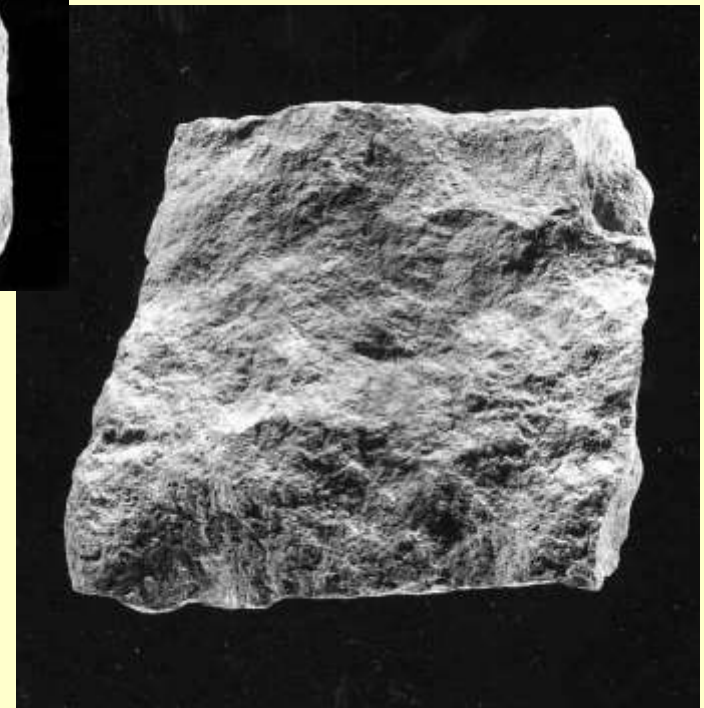
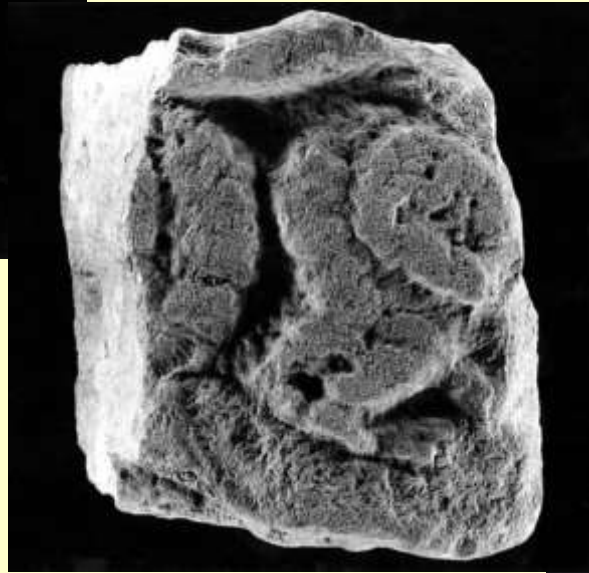
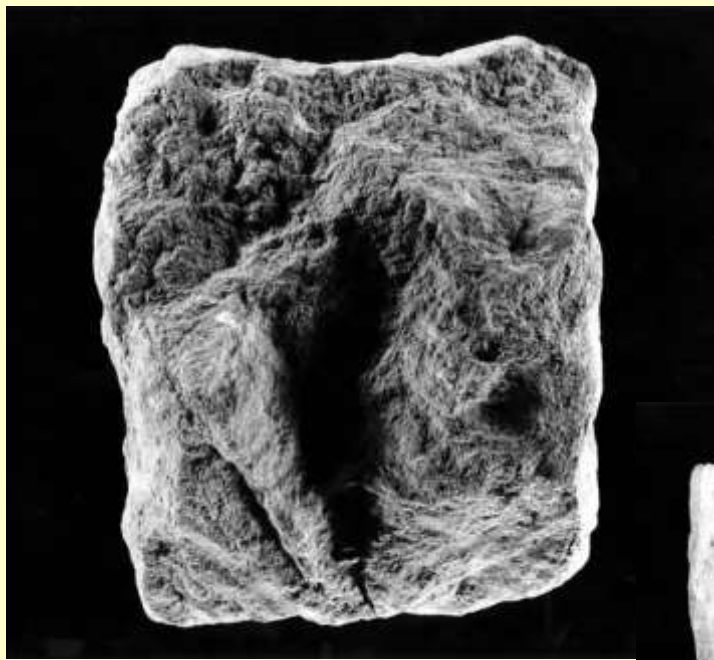
The slab is similar to those in Museum Gardens

A small sherd of pottery was found in the ditch in Cutting II, apparently from a small lug, or part of a swelling towards a spout, boss or handle.



One facet is decorated with parts of three stamps, each of barred semicircle and half rosette.

It could be Post-Roman, AD450-650, but Dr. Catherine Hills suggests it is Middle Saxon, AD650-850.



The fragment
of stone cross
was found in
the north wall
of the nave.

The fragment of stone cross found at St Oswald's is very similar to the 10th Century cross at Stonegrave, but it may be of an earlier date.



date as the good ashlar of the upper part of the wall.



The E. window has a two centred head, chamfered reveals & no label on either side; there are three lobed lights under geometrical tracery. The central light has mullions which have been cut away at the bottom. The reveals show red colouration under coats of whitewash and a dove near the bottom of the S. side shows coarse tooling of 14th century type. To the S. of the window & set in the lowest part of the wall is an oblong recess. (unlabeled)

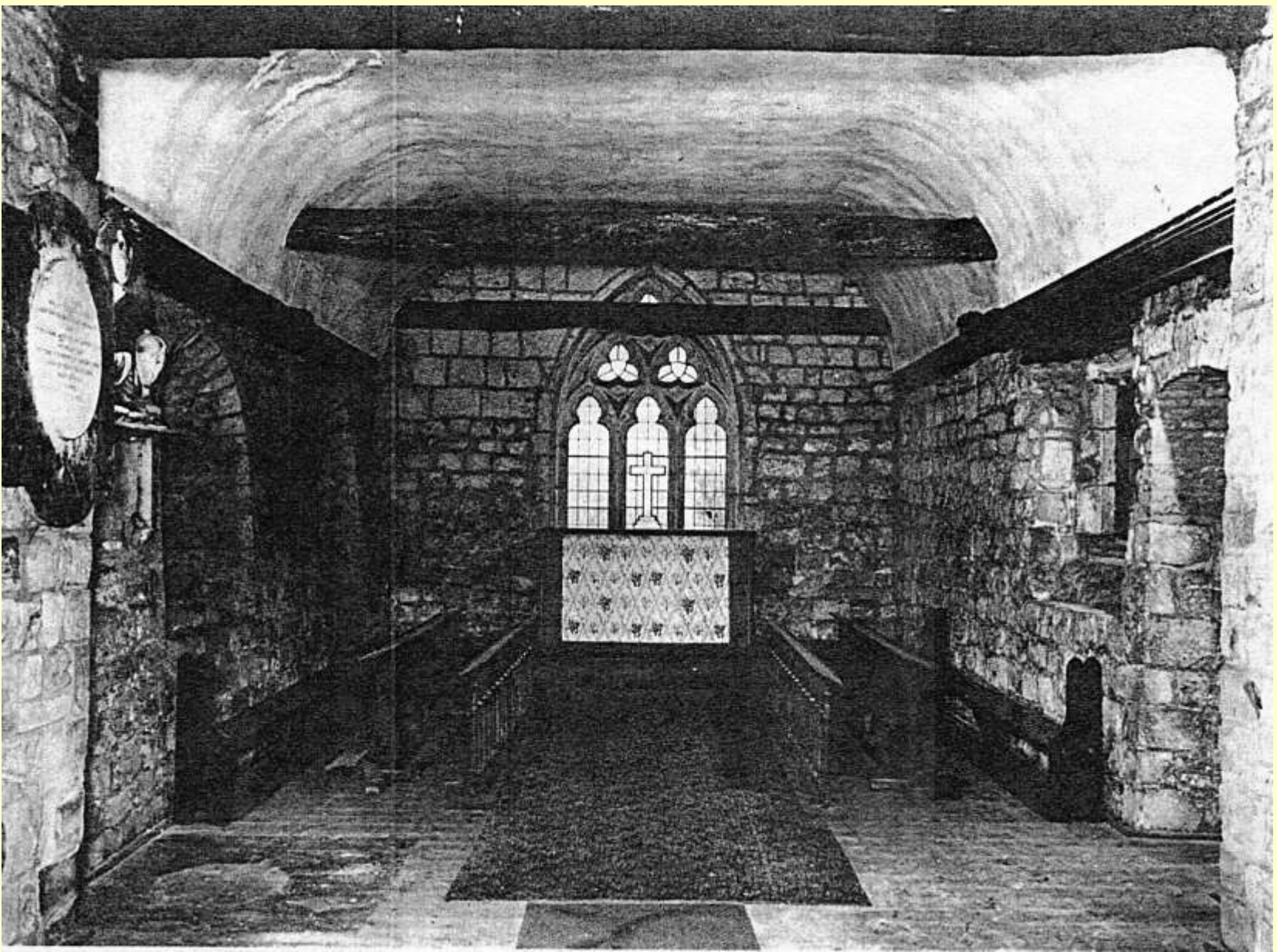
The north wall is of rubble and has a chamfered water table externally, under four courses of seventeenth century brick. Internally there is a straight joint at the N.E. corner representing the line of the original E. wall &

In addition to archaeology, a detailed examination was made of the building by David Brinklow of YAT.

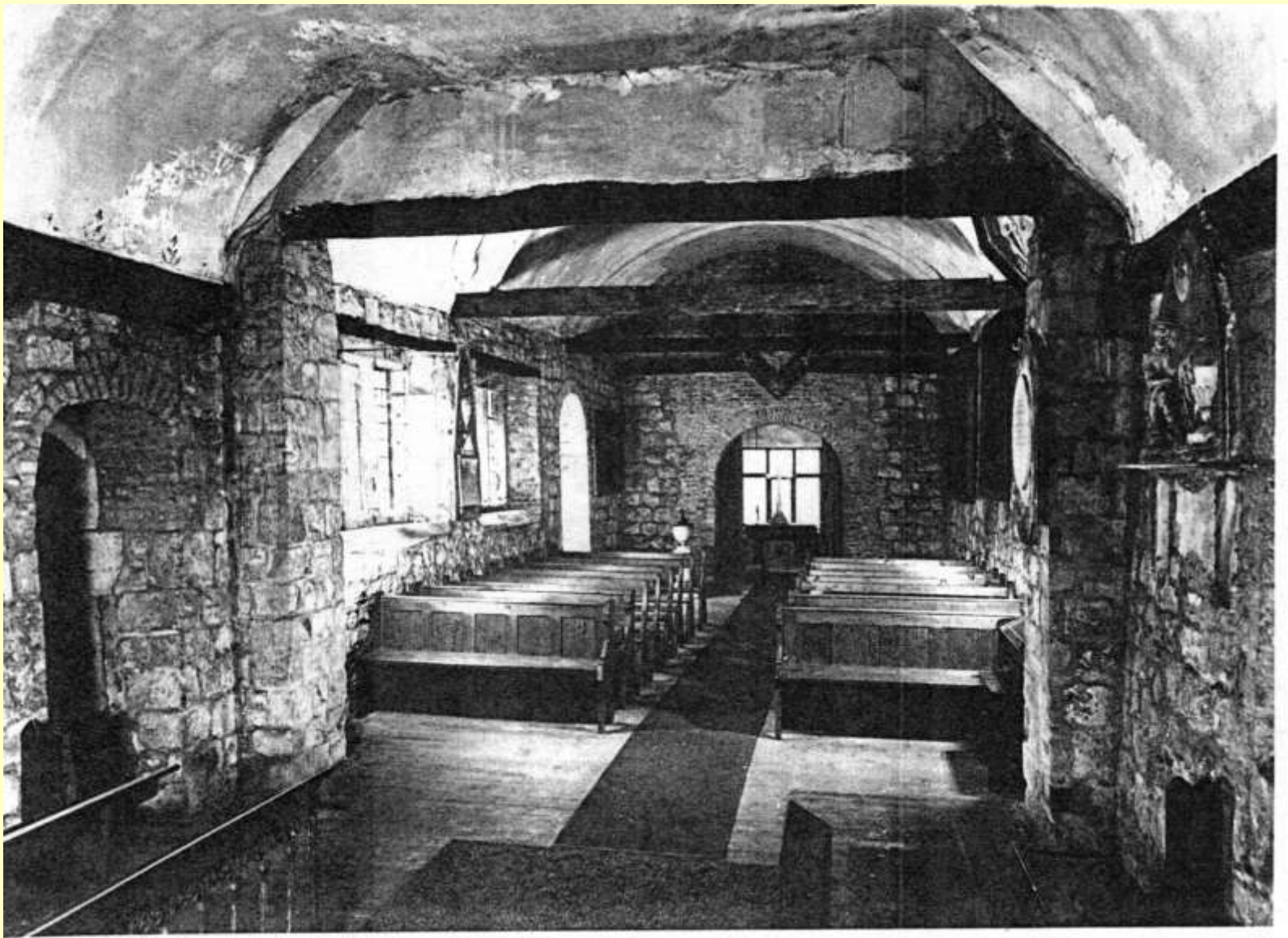
This was based on an earlier survey for RCHM by Dr Eric Gee, whose handwritten notes include nicely detailed sketches.



The nave was built in the 1st half of the 12th Century.



Chancel was built in the 2nd half of the 12th Century.



A barrel roof was installed in the 19th Century, when a gallery was removed.



This sorrowful man looks down on the chancel from the end of a 15th Century hammer-beam



This well-dressed man with wings looks up from the end of a 15th Century chancel hammer-beam



The church was used for funerals and occasional services until closure in the 1970s.



Church interior,
just prior to
conversion





The brick tower probably dates from 1795, built on the foundations of a 13/14th Century masonry tower.



Conversion work in progress



David Brinklow and Ryszard Bartkowiak of YAT

The bell is still at St Oswald's Hall



Many of the Rahtz/Watts papers are available on the FFH website <http://ffhyork.weebly.com/st-oswalds-church.html>

FFH has published an article on the 'Origins and Significance of the Old Church' in the Journal of the Yorkshire Archaeological Society. Copies from FFH.

