

## Standing Building Report

Holy Cross Church  
Avening

### **Project Data**

Site:	Holy Cross
Parish:	Avening
County:	Gloucestershire
NGR:	ST 879 980
Diocese:	Diocese of Gloucester
Archdeaconry:	Cheltenham
Deanery:	Cirencester
Revd:	Celia Cater
Benefice:	Avening with Cherington
Landowner:	Church of England
Contact:	D. Pierce
	70 Sandford Leaze
	Avening
	Gloucestershire
	GL8 8PB
Survey Method:	Photographic survey
Date of Survey:	Drawn January 2008, updated April 2012
Survey team:	Emma Slater
	Georgina Mansell
Photographs:	Antony Slater – Slater4Ltd.

## List of Contents

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>Project Data</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>List of Contents</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>List of Figures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1.0 Introduction</b>	<b>6</b>
1.1 Location	6
1.2 Geology and Topography	8
1.3 Aims and Objectives	8
<b>2.0 Archaeological and Historical Background</b>	<b>9</b>
2.1 History of the Area	9
2.1.1 Prehistory	9
2.1.2 Roman	9
2.1.3 Early Medieval, Medieval and Post Medieval	10
2.1.4 Modern	10
2.2 Previous Archaeological Investigations	10
2.3 Site Visits	11
2.4 Tax Records and Historical Documents	11
2.5 Map Regression	13
2.6 History of Holy Cross	14
<b>3.0 Results</b>	<b>16</b>
3.1 Tax Records and Historical Documents	16
3.2 Holy Cross Building Survey	18
3.3 Summary of Results	23
<b>Discussion</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Appendix</b>	<b>26</b>

### **List of Figures**

<b>Figures</b>	<b>Page</b>
Figure 1 – Location of Avening	7
Figure 299 – south transept exterior	26
Figure 300 – south side of tower.	26
Figure 301 - south wall of the nave	19
Figure 302 - West wall of south transept.	27
Figure 303 – Decorated Gothic window	27
Figure 304 - detail of 19 <sup>th</sup> C blocked window	27
Figure 306 - west face of tower.	28
Figure 307 - East gable end of gable with Decorated Gothic window.	20
Figure 308 - North wall of chancel	28
Figure 309 - – decorated Gothic window	29
Figure 310 - east end of north chancel showing building lifts	29
Figure 311 - North wall of north transept with fine decorated window.	29
Figure 312 - North porch.	18
Figure 314 - North interior door; originally exterior.	30
Figure 315 – Romanesque upper doorway	30
Figure 316 - Norman decorated capital of doorway.	31
Figure 317 - Naïve timber roof.	31
Figure 319 – Sections from Norman font.	31
Figure 320 – Sculptural Norman font bowl.	32
Figure 324 - Groined chancel roof	32
Figure 325 - North wall of chancel	33
Figure 326 - West chancel arch into tower.	33
Figure 327 – South wall of tower	33
Figure 328 – East wall of nave into tower.	22
Figure 330 - South wall of naïve decorated windows.	34
Figure 331 - Norman north aisle arcade	34
Figure 3442 - filled in perpendicular window.	35
Figure 3430 - filled in door	35
Figure 3405 - the filled in door on the west wall of the nave.	35

Figure 3432 - showing the kerb stones. 36

### **Maps**

Map 1 – OS Maps Pull out 3

### **Tables**

Table 1 – Overview of the village of Avenings population. 17

Table 2 – Modifications of Holy Cross. 23

### **Plans**

Plan 100 – Scale drawing of Holy Cross 2012. Pull out 1

Plan 200 – Holy Cross in 1827 37

Plan 201 – Holy Cross in 1829 38

Plan 203 – Location of all images on the Holy Cross Pull out 2

### **Summary**

This reports has been produced as part of the Standing Buildings unit of the MA degree in Landscape Archaeology in the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology department at Bristol University. This reports has been written to develop a full understanding of the history of the 12<sup>th</sup> Century Church of the Holy Cross, Avening in Gloucestershire. Due to its complicated history and successive changes in architectural styles, many reports have been written but not pulled everything together. Holy Cross has been altered numerous times since its consecration on 14<sup>th</sup> of September 1080 by Queen Matilda for the nuns of Caen. It still has its Norman features which have had both slight and drastic modifications in the following centuries. Since the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the church has been maintained rather than altered and now stands as a mark of what has happened in the village of Avening. The information for this report has come from several different locations including; tax records, historical documents, previous reports of the Holy Cross and documented research, primary data and oral histories of the local congregation.

### **Acknowledgements**

This standing building report would not have been possible without the permission of Revd. C Carter, therefore I would like to thank her for allowing me assess into all areas of the church and being so understanding when it came to drawing the church and finding out its history. I would so like to thank the members of the local congregation who have helped me telling me the histories that they know and informing me on aspects which I would not have been able to find out. The number of photographs in this report are down to the dedicated work of Antony Slater from Slater4 Ltd who I would like to thank for spending his time taking such good photographs to make this report come to life. Finally I would not have been able to draw the Church of the Holy Cross without Georgina Mansell so a big thank you goes to her for helping me.

## **1.0 Introduction**

This Standing Building Report has been produced for the main assessments of the Standing Building unit as part of the Landscape Archaeology Masters at Bristol University. This report presents the results of a detailed survey of the 12<sup>th</sup> Century Holy Cross church, Avening. It is elaborating on a previous study of the Church which was produced in 2008 by Emma Slater. Sections of this report are currently being used on the Holy Cross website.

Permission was kindly granted for this report to take place and the survey to be undertaken by Revd C. Cater. In 2008 Holy Cross was drawn to scale and it was updated and amended in April 2012.

There have been numerous reports done on Holy Cross but each highlights different aspects of the church's long complicated history. This report tries to tie all of these together and come up with a complete history, analysing when the church was altered and why.

## **1.1 Location**

Holy Cross, Avening is in the Diocese of Gloucester and sits on the Southern side of the valley, which the village of Avening is situated within. The church is towards south west of the village, and is set back from the main high street (B4014). Avening is a picturesque village situated in the Cotswolds, South West of Gloucestershire South West England. The village is placed at the bottom of a valley which has Nailsworth 5 km to the North West and Tetbury 5.6 km to the South East (figure 1). The medieval village has a population of c.1000 making it one of the largest in the southern Cotswolds. The rolling hills surrounding the village attract people from afar, and constant stream of ramblers and visitors frequently occupy the local public houses and wondering throughout the village.



Figure 1 – Top: Location of Gloucestershire within England  
Bottom: Location of Avening (red dot) in Gloucestershire

## **1.2 Geology and Topography**

The village of Avening is spread along the bottom of a large limestone valley which runs from the west of the village all the way to the closest town, Nailsworth to the North West.

## **1.3 Aims and Objectives**

The department of Archaeology and Anthropology at Bristol University runs a Masters degree in Landscape Archaeology for which this Standing Building Report has been produced for the Standing Building unit. This assignment has been designed to help students gain an understanding of how Standing Building reports are produced and what is required to produce a high standard report on different buildings.

The secondary aim is to compile a full history for the Holy Cross. This is, as stated previously, because many reports have been produced on the church highlighting different aspects of its complicated history. Understanding Holy Cross history is important to both the church and the local residents of Avening as the church is still at the heart of the community. Putting all of these histories together will help identify the story of the building, and how it has been adapted to changing needs over the centuries.



## **2.0 Archaeological and Historical Background**

Holy Cross is an important part of the community of Avening and most Sundays the church is well attended, especially for at special occasions in the Christian calendar such as Easter and Christmas.

### **2.1 History of the Area**

Despite Avening being a small village in the Cotswolds, it has a lot of history. People have occupied Avening from Prehistory. It is possible to trace the growth of Avening's modern population through many different historical sources. Holy Cross has grown in size and been altered with the growth of the local population. The following information was gained from sources provided by Gloucestershire Archives and through investigation of previous tax records and other historical documents.

#### **2.1.1 Prehistory**

There is clear evidence that Avening was occupied throughout Later Prehistory. There is no evidence for occupation in the Palaeolithic, although a small microlith has been found which can be dated to the Mesolithic.

Surrounding Avening there are 3 Neolithic Long Barrows, one of which contains 11 skeletons in 3 different chambers, was excavated in 1806. Several flint fragments from a hand axe have also been found when fields have been ploughed. There are several potential Bronze Age round barrows, many of which have trees growing on top. An Iron Age enclosure can be found in crop marks but it has yet been excavated.

#### **2.1.2 Roman**

Despite Avening only being 9 miles away from Cirencester, one of the largest Roman towns, there is very little evidence of Roman occupation. Only one coin has been found. A fragment of Samian ware, apparently found in association with a human skeleton by workmen making up the road near Old Hill, was taken to Gloucester City Museum for identification by Canon Cooper, rector of Avening. The skull and the 2 bones were once kept in the Holy Cross but have been moved into storage.

### **2.1.3 Early Medieval, Medieval and Post Medieval**

Apart from the Anglo- Saxon cemetery that was found while the local primary school was expanding their play ground, and the 12<sup>th</sup> Century church (Holy Cross), most of the evidence comes from Post Medieval times. Within this Anglo- Saxon cemetery, seven skeletons were found quite close to the surface. One of these skeletons was in an excellent sate of preservation, and again like the Roman burial it was for a while held inside Holy Cross in a glass case - its current location it not known. The note with the skeleton stated that it is that of a young woman, and dates to c.500-600AD. The skeleton was found edged with stones which can also be seen in the church - they were originally arranged around the body in a single line.

Surrounding Avening there are ten Hollow Ways which can be dated to Post Medieval. Several of these are still used today as local footpaths. There are earthwork remains of a Post Medieval quarry and four square dew ponds. Due to the amount of modern ploughing and the reuse of the same fields only a single block of ridge and furrow remains.

### **2.1.4 Modern**

There are many different modern elements to Avening, including several houses numbered 14, 16 &18 on Woodstock lane which can be dated to the 17<sup>th</sup> century; an 18<sup>th</sup> century mile stones, and a 19<sup>th</sup> century Baptist church which built in 1805 and altered in 1821. The site of an old corn mill dating to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century can still be seen. There are remains of many 19<sup>th</sup> century quarries scattered around the village. Avening as a village grew with the growth of the wool trade in the Cotswolds in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is possible to see this growth from looking at many historical records that are available for public access and through map regression. The wool trade brought with it modern changes to the village - the main alteration was the mill built in the early 19<sup>th</sup> centaury. With that came more houses as the population grew. There is still evidence of the World War II defence system which was put in place during June 1945 as part of Line green that was put in place to defend Bristol.

## **2.2 Previous Archaeological Investigations**

As stated previously, Holy cross has had numerous investigations and reports carried out on it but none have brought all its history together, which this report aims

to do, bringing the history together to explain the changes in the church. The project completed in 2008 By Emma Slater started the task of identifying these alterations which occurred to the church but due to inexperience was not successful in identifying all of the changes and their dates.

### **2.3 Site visits**

Site visits were very important to this standing building report, as Holy cross has been altered so much since the 12<sup>th</sup> Century. Despite being a member of the Holy Cross choir; I was unable to see the church and its full archaeology potential until I started attending services on a regular basic as a member of the congregation. Being a member of the local community I have grown up knowing about different parts of the church, but being able to talk to the other members of the congregation and getting their observations on how the church as changed over time was important to this report and vital in trying to understand the relationship between the community and how the church was altered.

### **2.4 Tax Records and Historical Documents**

There are several tax records and historical documents that are available for Avening and its population, but it was necessary to know more local history and name changes put the data into context and to use them to their full potential. The following list shows the documents used to gain a further understanding of Avening to help identify when the church was altered and more important why.

- The Domesday Book
- National Tax Return records
- Poll Tax records
- Hearth Tax records
- Longtree Hundred tax records
- “Men and Armour in Gloucestershire” – historical document
- Census Records
- Victorian County History (VCH)

I started looking at the Domesday Book (1086) to establish if there was any relevant information. It revealed a great deal of information, which helped me develop

my question and start looking at the economic and social factors of the village. Looking at the Domesday Book I first found out that Avening was part of the Longtree Hundred. Because I did not really understand what this meant I researched the term, and established the county was divided up into 'Hundreds', and that each Hundred leader came to Chavenage Green every 4 months to talk about political events – this is how Chavenage house developed. At the time, Brictric owned Avening, which was in Longtree Hundred. From the Domesday Book I also found out that Avening must have been a valuable manor because of the number of slaves that they had. It also shows that Avening was a centre of agriculture, as they had 16 ploughs and a large area for ploughing; 4 mills; and also lots of woodland for the sheep. Once I understood how the Longtree fitted into the local political scene it was much easier to place together more information about Holy Cross and the village.

The National Tax Return (1327) gives the population of the whole of Longtree Hundred, but from that I was able to confirm the population for, what are now different villages, but were once all in Avening. It also gives surnames. The only problem with the National Tax Return is that only the rich people were taxed. About ¼ of the population was not counted because they did not have an income high enough to be taxed..

The Poll Tax (1381) taxes every individual, so in this way it is more accurate than the National Tax Return. It is also helpful that it is after the Black Death, because this meant I was able to compare it with the National Tax Return and see how the Black Death affected the population of Avening. After comparison of the various records, I was able to establish the population of Avening

The 'Men in Armour for Gloucestershire' (1608) gives the names of the adult males who are able to fight. It also gives their surnames, and with this it was possible to identify their occupations, as their surnames reflect this. It gives this both for Avening and Nailsworth which was originally part of Avening.

The Compton Census of 1676 gives the number of Conformists (Church of England) and Papists (Roman Catholics) and Non-Conformists. This was probably

taken on an Easter Sunday when everyone would have been at church. This also shows that the church and people's denominations are starting to change.

Kelly's Directory of the County of Gloucestershire of 1879 and 1927 gives a detailed location of Avening. From this article it was possible to see that the prominence of certain areas had altered slightly because of the transport links, which changed due to the developments in transport, which in turn changed due to the transformation in industry.

The Victoria County History (VCH) is a very important secondary source because it provided me with the first map of the parish boundaries. From this I was able to produce a more detailed plan. It also lists the names of the manors and other estates, and who owned them. It talks about the economic history and how it changed. It also gives the first information on the church. It says that it was given to Queen Matilda by the nuns of Caen. It also gives a basic floor plan, and explains what happened to the Non-Conformists.

The final source I looked at was the History of the Parishes of Minchinhampton and Avening. It gives detailed characteristics but from reading both of the VCH and this, I came to the conclusion that this was basically written from the VCH. However, it did come up with some interesting conclusions. The population details gained from researching these historical documents can be seen in the Results section (page 16).

## **2.5 Map Regression**

Despite the fact when looking at map regression of Avening, it is not possible to see the changes to the church; it is possible to view the changes in the village which have led to these changes.

When looking at a series of maps of Avening in the 1800's through to the present day, there is a clear sign that Avening's population has increased despite the parish increasing in size. This is due to Nailsworth and Forest Green becoming their own towns, leaving Avening annexed between these towns and Tetbury. The size of

the original village can be seen in map 1, which has maps of Avening at four different times. From these it is possible to view the changes in population in Avening. Looking at these figures it is clear to see why Holy cross had to increase in size and certain alterations have occurred.

## **2.6 History of Holy Cross**

The Church of the Holy Cross is more commonly known as Holy Cross. In 1050 Brittric of Avening (the Lord of Gloucester), was sent by Edward the Confessor to be his ambassador to Baldin, Count of Flanders. Whilst he was there, he met a woman called Matilda, who later became the wife of William the Conqueror. Matilda was enamoured with Brittric, but he rejected her advances. As a consequence when William became King of England, she persuaded him Brittric should be dispossessed of the manor of Avening, and Brittric was thrown into prison at Worcester – where he later died. Matilda and William then took over Avening court for themselves. And whilst they were in residence, superintend the building of a church, which was consecrated 14<sup>th</sup> September 1080 (day of the Holy Rood or Cross). On the consecration the queen gave a feast to the builders, of boar's head, shot in the forest, and the Avening Feast is still celebrated on 'Pig Face Day'.

A charter records that in 1082 'William and Matilda endowed the Abbey of holy Trinity, Caen, with the manors of Avening, Nailsworth and other lands, for the good of their souls'. They had already built and endowed two religious communities at Caen, and of the one, the 'Abbey aux Dames', Matilda's daughter was the first nun and second abbess. Caen retained the Avening endowments for 333 years, during which time the church was served by French priests sent here from Caen. The church is dedicated to the Holy Rood or Cross. St Mary the Virgin being the patron saint (<http://www.aveningchurch.info/guide.html> April 2012).

Many features still survive from the Church's Norman Origins – the North aisle, one channel arch and the main north door, with the vaulting of the chancel and the roof of the nave also being worthily of note (Website 1).

In 1902-06 the church was under restoration by J. Micklethwaite, during these restrictions a most unfortunate accident happened. The foundations of the tower and of the south wall of the Nave, together with the buttresses had been excavated and securely underpinned, and the workmen were engaged in making equally secure the centre pillar of the north aisle, when, without warning the pillar slid into an open vault

beneath the floor of the aisle, and fell down, bringing with it a great part of the Nave and the north aisle, the workmen being barely able to escape without injury. It was fortunate that so much under pinning had been done, otherwise the tower would have fallen and the church would have become a heap of ruins. It cost an extra £500 to repair the damage (Playne 1978).

The church is very proud of its Norman heritage and it tries to keep it in a good condition certain features have been built into the walls during its restoration in 1902-1906 following its partial collapse. It is thought that there was a Saxon church in the village, but its official location is unknown, although it is deliberated that Holy Cross was built on its foundations.

Holy Cross has been altered to suit the changing fashions; these can be identified in the results section.

### **3.0 Results**

When looking at Holy Cross it is important to note the changes in population in the village of Avening which appear to affect the changes in the church and centuries in successive architectural styles.

#### **3.1 Tax Records and Historical Documents**

Listed below are the population figures of Avening which has been obtained from tax records and historical documents:

The Domesday Book 1086 breaks down who is in the village so it was a simple sum to get the total population for 1086.

$$24 + 5 + 30 + 1 = 60 \text{ adult males} \times 4.5 \text{ (multiplier)}$$
$$= \text{c.}270 \text{ inhabitants in Avening.}$$

The National Tax return 1327 gives several names of places which all came under Avening so I added all of them together to get the estimated population for 1327.

$$11 \times 4.5 = 49.5$$

$$28 \times 4.5 = 126$$

$$11 \times 4.5 = 49.5$$

$$= 49.5 + 126 + 49.5 = 225.$$

This is lower than the Domesday Book because very poor people were not taxed, which could have been up to a quarter of the population. A guesstimate of the population would be  $225 + 56.25 = 281.25$  people, which increases it to a good population for a village of this time and size.

The Poll Taxes of 1381 gives a population of c.204 inhabitants.

$$58 \text{ adult males} = 64 \text{ but } 8 \text{ not married so } 56 \times 3.5 = 196 + 8 = \text{c.}204.$$

This population is much lower than the national tax return population in 1327 because of the Black Death in 1348, which had a major effect on the population, not only in Avening but throughout England.

Men and Armour of 1608 identifies the number of adult males who are able to fight.



Avening =  $75 \times 4.5 = 337 + 15 = 352$  inhabitants

Nailsworth =  $58 \times 4.5 = 126 + 2 = 128$  inhabitants

Which gives a totally population of c.480.

The Census in 1676 gives a population of c.612.5

=  $340 / 2 = 175 \times 3.5 = c.612.5$ .

This information is important when applied to the development of the church.

In C 17<sup>th</sup> the wool trade is starting to develop which means the population can start to develop – and this is seen to be happening. Because of the increasing population in C 18<sup>th</sup> the galleries are added to the church making room for 40 more people in the church. In 1892 Nailsworth became its own village so the population of Avening fell.

Between 1831 and 1841 there was a decline in the wool trade and many people migrated to Australia.

Table 1 below gives an overview of the population;

<b>Date</b>	<b>Population</b>
1086 (doomsday book)	c.270
1327 (national tax return)	c. 281.25
1381 (poll taxes)	c.204
1608 (men in armour)	c.480
1676 (census)	c.612.5

After looking at the population, I needed to understand why the population had increased.

There are records for the Holy Cross which have information on Baptisms between 1557 – 1875; Marrages between 1557 – 1893 and burials between 1557 – 1992. These are available at Gloucester Archives. Other church records available past these date

but are kept within the church its self. It is possible to trace rectors of Avening, starting with William De Montfort who began in 1291 to Edgor William Edwards 1897. There were 35 including these.

### 3.2 Holy Cross Building Survey

These are the results from a detailed photographic study of Holy Cross. Starting at the entrance porch; this was added as a school house in the C 16th. It is clearly identifiable as the Tudor period because of the square window (fig 312). It was used as a small museum in 1972.

Fig 312 - North porch.  
Decorated doorway set in  
rubble walling; upper porch  
freestone with Tudor window -  
C 16th



At the Western end of the Nave there is a blocked off door. There is no evidence to identify what it was used for, but there is evidence internally and externally for the door (figs 3430 and fig 3405) (Bird 1928).

The whole west wall was rebuilt in the C18th following its collapse. On the west wall there is also evidence that the trench around the outside of the church was deepened in C20th, as there are kerb stones at the original level (fig 3432). This could have been done to improve protection against dampness.

On the South side of the church there is a filled in door to the C19th galleries. There would have been a platform across the drainage trench and into the galleries (fig 304).

As well as the filled in door, there is also dating evidence in the windows. There are 3 Decorated Gothic windows which date to the early C14th (figure 301, 303

& 306); the middle window is later than the other two. The stonework is freestone coursing, especially below the eastern most window. The darker stone suggests that it was below ground until C20th (fig 301) when the trench around the church was deepened.

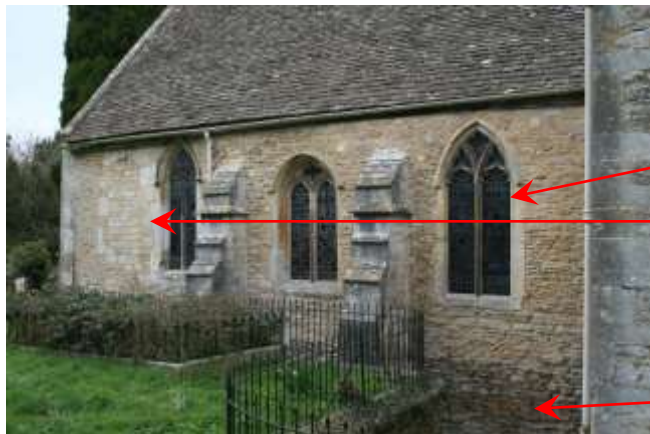


Fig 301 - south wall of the nave. Buttresses to support south wall. 3 Decorated Gothic windows early C 14<sup>th</sup>. Blocked window at west end, possible external entrance to 19<sup>th</sup> C gallery. The stonework is freestone coursing especially below eastern most window. Darker stone suggests it was level below ground until C20<sup>th</sup>.

The tower has six bells incorporated into it. It was originally built with five, but in 1830 the people of Avening stole the treble bell from St Nicholas Church in Cherington and added to this tower to make it a ring of six. One is by Abraham Rudhall, inscribed 'Prosperity to this Parish, 1756'. Three are dated Anno Domini 1628 and one with no date. In 1902 part of the tower collapsed, destroying the east end of the nave roof and part of the north aisle. When the repairs were done, they incorporated much of the original material. Most of the tower is built with free stone. Figures 299 and 300 indicated different levels on the Tower that shows the rebuild.

On the west wall of south transept there is clear evidence for it being partly rebuilt - this shown in fig 302. On the same transept, again in the restoration, you can see that they have used the same stones from both this part of the church and others. In fig 3442 you can see the blocked-in perpendicular window. Opposite this window is the newest part of the church, the vestry. Around it you can clearly see how this side of the church looked before the vestry was added. The exact date is not known, but with reference to the plans which were produced in 1827-1829 (plan 200 and plan 201) you can see that it was already there.

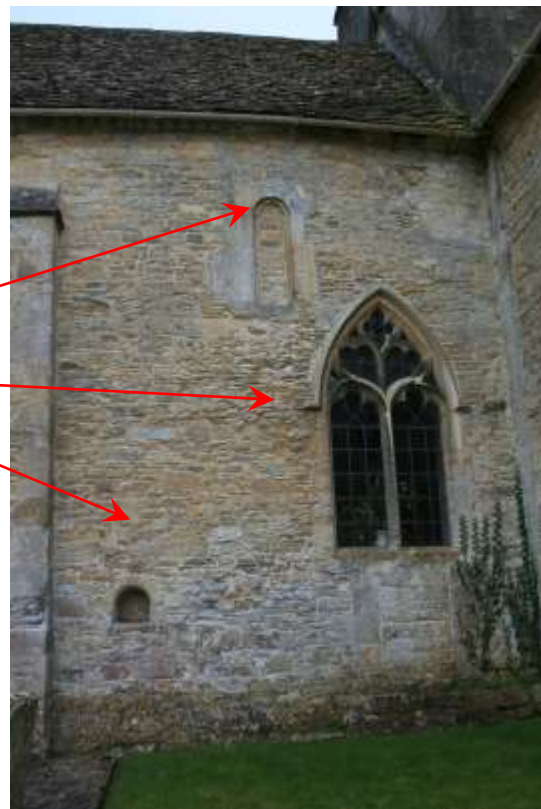
On the eastern end of the church, the window is a decorated gothic shape dating from C 14<sup>th</sup> (fig 311). This can be identified by the original carvings and the stops (fig 307). When measuring this side of the church you can see that the floor level outside is different to that of the inside. Talking to people and looking in the inside, I think that it would have been used as a grave. There are grave stones set into the floor on the inside, which would clarify this because there are no burials outside of the church before the 1700's.



Fig 307 - East gable end of gable with Decorated Gothic window. More regular building layer at top to better support the roof.

On the north side of the Chancel there is some evidence that in the early C 13th a small chapel existed, perhaps a Lady chapel. The evidence is the door jams which are very visible and there is also a 'step' which would have been used to enter the chapel, as the floor level would have been lower than that of the other parts of the church (Fig309). There is also a piscine which still exists outside the northern wall of the chancel; the eastern foundations of this chapel can still be traced. Some tiles and other relics were found on the spot, and a piece of molten metal, from which it is inferred that the chapel was possibly destroyed by fire (Playne 1978:91). There is a possible door in the Chancel which may have once lead into the Lady Chapel (figure 330). Just above the evidence for the extra chapel there is a blocked in Norman window. This can be identified by its shape - it has an oval curve at the top, and the outside of the window is much smaller than the inside because they did not have glass. The windows were small on the outside and panned out inside to let more light in (fig 309 and fig 325). There is also clear evidence of lifts, each between 1½ - 2 ft which are finished off with the bigger stones (fig 308 & 310)

Fig 309 - decorated Gothic window;  
small blocked Norman window above  
12<sup>th</sup> C; piscina below. If not  
repositioned suggesting lost north  
chapel. More evidence of building lift



The church retains Norman features including the door into the nave (fig 314) of the church and the chancel walls and ceiling (fig 324). I identified this not just from the wall thickness (identified in plan 203) but also from the style and shape of the windows. The door going into the nave is the original Norman arch that was created by the nuns of Caen who built the church for Queen Matilda, this is very important because the door is very high status.

As you enter the church through the Tudor porch, you pass through the original Norman door. The door is of a high status for a church door (fig 315). This is due to Avening being owned by Bricitc who once owned the estate which was taken by William and Queen Matilda who built the church for the nuns of Caen. As she was a very important person the door way was build for her standards. Figure 316 indicates more of wealth of the village of Avening.

As you look to the right (north porch doorway) when entering, there is a Norman sculptural stone set in to the wall. It is believed that they are from the Norman font (fig 319).

There are also sculptural stones set into the west wall of the north aisle, which are stones from the original font bowl that was demolished and placed into the wall (fig 320), the bowl would have originally been 2 ¾ feet in length. The timber roof was put up during the 14<sup>th</sup> Century, but has since been replaced to the same style (figure 317).

On the East wall of the nave into the tower there is a Norman archway with decorated capitals; the upper section was rebuilt in early English style (Fig 328 & 326). This also shows the social changes. Removing the top of the rounded Norman arch and replacing it with a pointed English style top was more fashionable at the time, but because only one of the arches was reshaped, this may not have been considered successful; otherwise they would have changed the other arches in the same way. Possibly it was a financial issue? Just beyond that on the south wall of the tower the original Norman widow will exist, this can be seen in figure 327. The Norman aisle arcade can again still be seen on the north face of the nave (figure 331).



Fig 328 - East wall of naïve into tower. Norman archway with decorated capitals; upper section rebuilt in early English style

### 3.3 Summary of Results

The following table (table 2) is designed to display the modifications of Holy Cross church and when they happened.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Church</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>Recourse</u>
C11 <sup>th</sup> - 12 <sup>th</sup>	Main body of the church was built.	Very large in size, mainly reliant on agriculture.	VCH and Domesday Book.
C13 <sup>th</sup> -14 <sup>th</sup>	Decorated Gothic Windows were put in and changed.	Black Death Textile industry coming in.	National Tax Return, Poll Taxes, VCH and dating evidence from windows.
C15 <sup>th</sup> – 16 <sup>th</sup>	Tudor porch added, along with the North and South transects.	Textile industry growing – still growing in size. Agriculture to agriculture and Textile industries	VCH and dating evidence from the windows.
C17 <sup>th</sup> – 18 <sup>th</sup>	Rebuild of areas of collapse.	Expansion of the 5 valleys textile trades. Split of the Village, Nailsworth becomes own town.	Men in Armour for Gloucestershire, History of Minchinhampton and Avening, Census and VCH.
C19 <sup>th</sup> – 20 <sup>th</sup>	Little restoration, expansion of south wall.	Population of village continues to grow.	Kelly's Directory of the county of Gloucestershire.

#### **4.0 Discussion**

The church of the Holy Cross which had its consecration on September 14<sup>th</sup> 1080, it was build my Queen Matilda for the nuns on Caen, one of whom was Matilda's daughter. The church as undergone many alterations over the centuries of successive architectural styles, most of these can be seen with the changes in population of the village of Avening which Holy Cross is located. The population changes can be identified from several tax records and historical documents. During the restoration of Holy Cross past had to be rebuilt due to a collapse of a pillar in the north aisle, but Norman features were placed into the walls during the rebuild and as much of the original fabric was used.

The church can be dated using several techniques, prominently using written records, but where not available there are numerous features of the church which can be used including the wall thickness, windows, architectural styles and monuments within the church. Holy Cross withholds its Norman origins, with a large percentage of it still standing despite modifications. These alterations have made the church into what is it today. There are not many other Norman church's within Gloucestershire that have been altered to this extent and still have original features standing and incorporated into the building its self. The changes to the church make is personality, it is one of a kind, which the congregation are very proud of.



## **References**

- Bird. W. H. 1928. *Old Gloucestershire Churches*. J Burrow. London.
- Playne A. T. 1978. *A History if the Parishes of Minchinhampton and Avening*. Alan Sutton. Trowbridge.
- *Doomsday Book Gloucestershire' ed. J.S. Moore (Pillimore, Chichester 1982).*
  
- 'Tax Payers of Medieval Gloucestershire'.
  
- 'The Poll Taxes of 1377, 1379 and 1381' *ed. C.C. Fenwick.*
  
- 'Men and Armour for Gloucestershire in 1608' *John Smith (repr. Alan Sutton, Stroud 1980).*
  
- 'The Compton Census of 1676. A Critical Edition' *ed. Anne Whiteman*
  
- *Kelly's Directory of the County of Gloucestershire' 1879, London*
  
- 'Gloucestershire Woollen Mills' *J. John (David and Charles, Newton Abbott 1967)*
  
- 'A History of the Parishes of Minchinhampton and Avening' *A.T. Playne (1915)*
  
- 'Victoria County History of the County of Gloucestershire vol II' *ed. N.M. Herbert 1976)*
  
- <http://www.geocities.com/elizajan.yearth/avening.html?200817>
  
- <http://www.aveningchurch.info/guide.html> April 2012

**Appendix**

Fig 299 - South transept exterior – Rubble main wall, free stone roof gable = roof later build. note blocked perpendicular window late C15<sup>th</sup>.

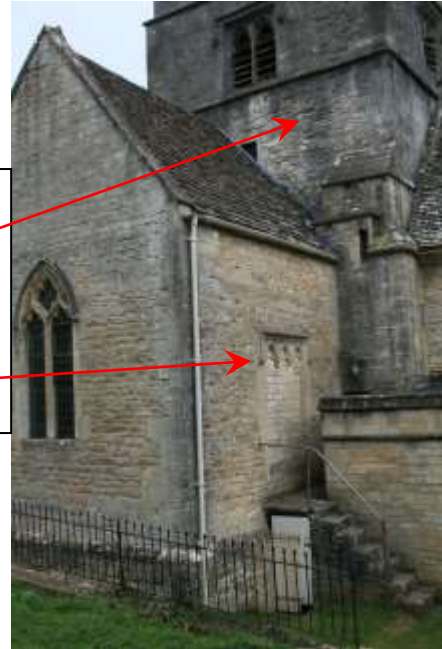


Fig 300 – South side of tower. Free stone top layer with crenellations above. Middle storey part rubble, part free stone with late perpendicular/Tudor bell openings. Lower level rubble built. Demonstrates top 1 ½ storeys rebuilt probably in late 15<sup>th</sup>/early 16<sup>th</sup> C. Blocked window in lower stage of tower shows south transept built later. South wall of naïve shows butting joint between 13<sup>th</sup> C nave stonework & 12<sup>th</sup> C tower stonework.

Fig 301 – south wall of the nave. Buttresses to support south wall. 3 Decorated Gothic windows (early C14<sup>th</sup>). Note blocked window at west end (see internal photo) (possible external entrance to 19<sup>th</sup> C gallery). Note stonework – freestone coursing especially below eastern most window. Darker stone suggests it was level below ground until C20<sup>th</sup>.



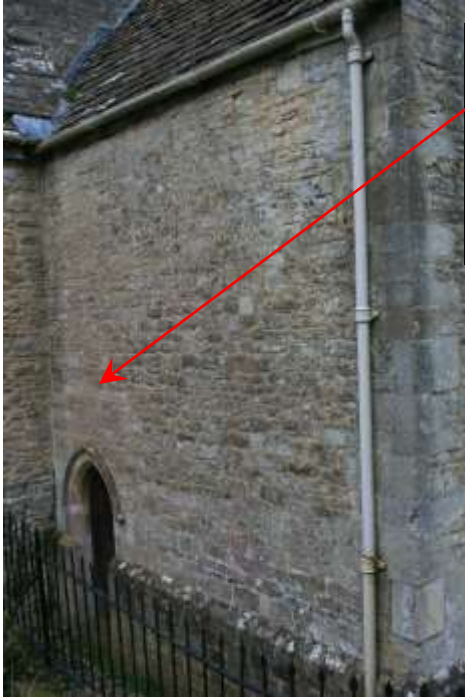


Fig 302 – West wall of south transept. Note squared stone in lower courses and over door suggesting 19<sup>th</sup> C restoration. Door frame C19<sup>th</sup> .



Fig 303 – Decorated Gothic window restored in 19<sup>th</sup> C. Note door post column below window (no other evidence of door). Bedded on a large protruding stone block (doorstep?).

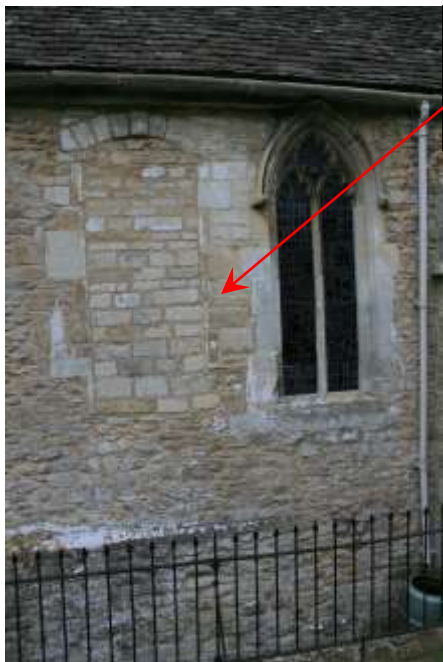


Fig 304 – detail of 19<sup>th</sup> C blocked window/balcony entrance on the south wall of the nave.



Fig 306 – west face of tower.  
Note 2 Norman C12<sup>th</sup> in second  
stage of tower suggesting that  
west 2<sup>nd</sup> storey did not need  
rebuilding in C15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> .



Fig 308 – North wall of chancel.  
Shows successive building lifts in  
the stonework with shallow  
buttress. Possible crypt below?



Fig 309 – decorated Gothic window; small blocked Norman window above 12<sup>th</sup> C; piscina below. If not repositioned suggesting lost north chapel. More evidence of building lift.

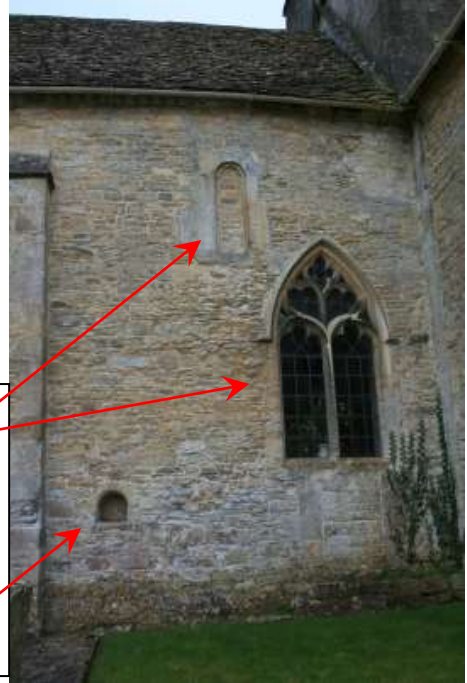


Fig 310 – east end of north chancel showing building lifts.

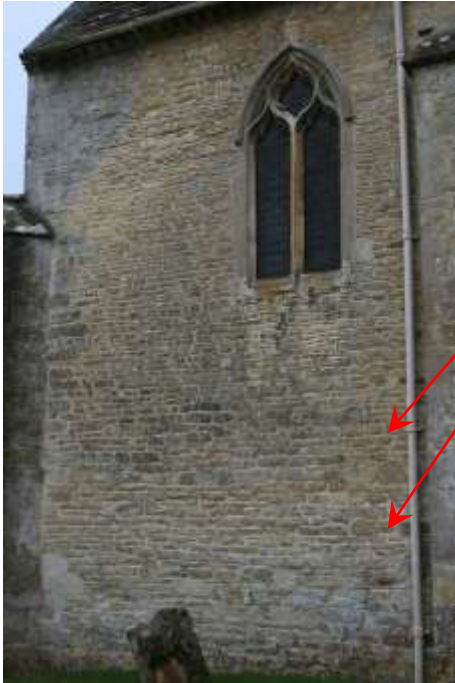


Fig 311 North wall of north transept with fine decorated window. Larger stone again to support roof.

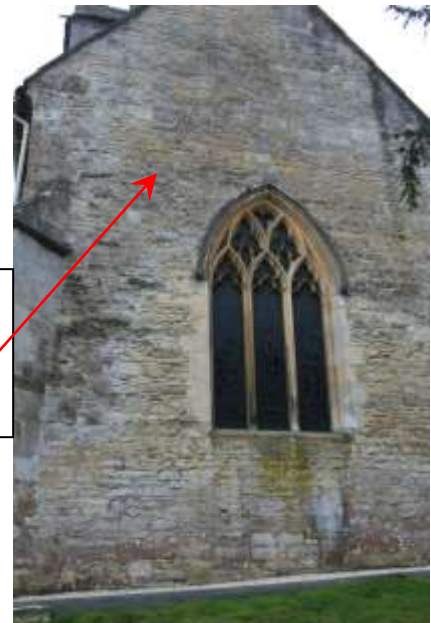




Fig 314 – North interior door;  
originally exterior.  
Romanesque columns &  
decorated capitals with plain  
round head and 15<sup>th</sup>/16thC  
inset doorway.



Fig 315 – Romanesque upper  
doorway with 2 layers of zigzag  
decoration & sculptural capitals.  
Plain inner arch.



Fig 316 – Norman decorated capital of doorway. Horseman.

Fig 317 – Nave timber roof possibly C14th. Wagon roof.



Fig 319 – Norman sculptural stone set in north porch doorway. Part of the Norman Font.





Fig 320 – Sculptural stones and some from the original Norman font, set into west wall of the north aisle.

Fig 324 – Groined chancel roof with exposed rubble inbuilt (late 19<sup>th</sup> early 20<sup>th</sup>C ‘scraping’ ref SPAB [society for the protection of ancient buildings – scrape/anti scrape controversy]).





Fig 325 – North wall of chancel decorated window with large blocked Romanesque window above. Note exterior has small blocked Norman window.

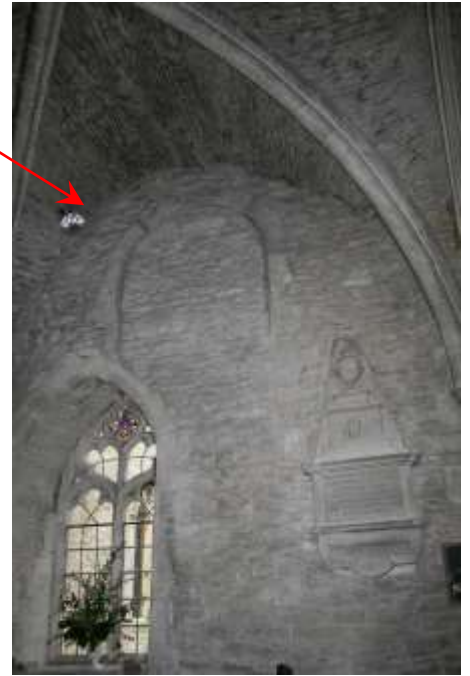


Fig 326 – West chancel arch into tower. Norman with decorated capitals on pillars.

Fig 327 – South wall of tower crossing with upper Norman window and later arch into south transept. Late C12<sup>th</sup> groined ceiling on Romanesque capitals.





Fig 330 – South wall of naïve decorated windows with blocked Norman doorway.



Fig 331 – Norman north aisle arcade.

Fig 3442 – filled in  
perpendicular  
window.



Fig 3430 – filled in door.

Fig 3405 – the filled in  
door on the west wall of  
the nave.

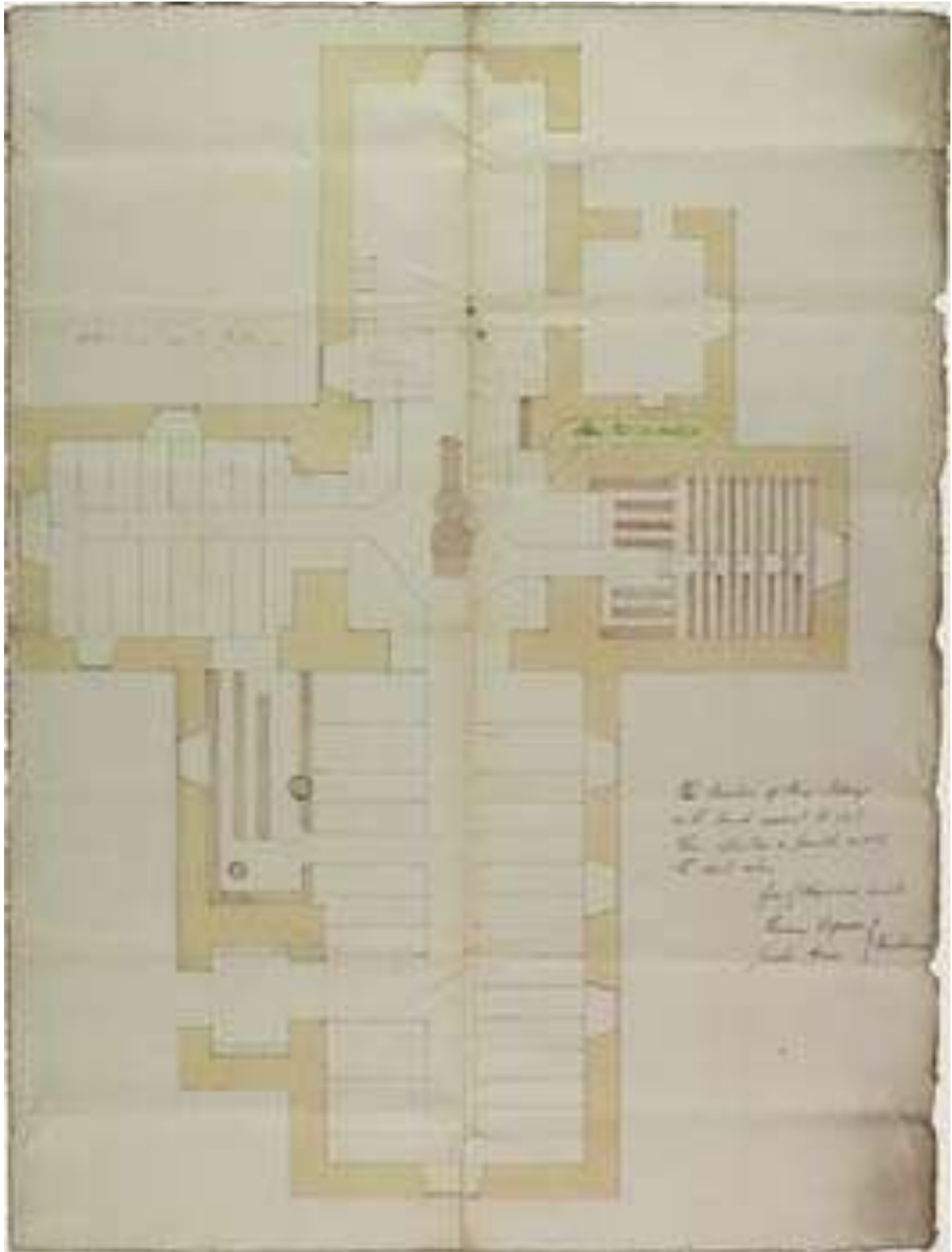




Fig 3432 – showing the kerb stones before the deepening of the trench.



Plan 200 – Avening Holy Cross Church (1829)  
Ground plan created by William MONGER  
(Plan Held at Society of Antiquaries of  
London)



Plan 201 – Avening Holy Cross Church (1827-  
1829)

Ground plan created by William MONGER  
(Plan Held at Society of Antiquaries of London)

