

SPIRIT OF SUTTERBY PROJECT

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE WEST WALL OF SUTTERBY CHURCH

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The standing west wall of Sutterby church forms the final phase in the building sequence that was established by the excavation at the west end of the church in May 2015. In essence, the excavation demonstrated that the church had been rebuilt or maybe just shortened at its west end, possibly three times. The first rebuild sits almost on top of the original foundation, the second is shorter by c.0.6 metres and the third by c.2.0 metres to the line of the present wall. It was decided that an analysis of the fabric of the standing west wall was an essential element in understanding the final phase.
- 1.2 This final phase of the west wall is thought to be depicted in a drawing of the church (see Figure 1) made by John Claude Nattes in 1790. (Lincs to the Past Nattes/4/79). From examination of this drawing, it seems probable that Nattes drew the church after the final shortening of the west end took place because his proportions seem generally accurate and it would be evident in the drawing if the church was two metres longer than at present. However the wall depicted by Nattes may have been largely rebuilt (except for its lowest courses) in the nineteenth century.
- 1.3 Despite its small size and lack of detail, other elements in the Nattes drawing may be useful in establishing parts of the phasing of the west wall:



Figure 1. Drawing of Sutterby Church in 1790 by John Claude Nattes
Image courtesy of Lincs to the Past, ref Nattes/4/79

- Nattes shows brick repairs in the fabric of the church but does not show the brick levelling course or any other brick repairs in the west wall. It could, therefore, be assumed these were incorporated post 1790, however, the brick course makes little visual impact on the wall and we cannot assume that Nattes would have bothered to show it.
- Nattes shows the church roofed in lead with a shallow pitch. The south nave wall appears higher, and was presumably lowered when the roof pitch was increased and the brick gables constructed. The original west gable and the belfry appear to be clad in boards and are probably constructed of timber. The limestone string course (see Appendix 2) which now levels the top of the stone wall and forms the base of the current brick gable is not evident and thus must have been added post 1790.
- The west window is shown centrally in the west wall, but is significantly higher than the present window (six courses of stone below it; now four courses of stone, c.f. Fig 2). This may indicate a substantial rebuild of the west wall after Nattes's drawing was made, which would be consistent with the appearance of the brick repairs. However,

it may be purely artistic licence - the artist's perspective of the relationship of west to south sides is distorted to maximise the view of the church. There is a hint of moulding visible on the north jamb of the window similar to the current moulding but no mullion is shown.

- Nattes appears to depict a chamfer some five course up from the ground (visible on the NW corner). This is intriguing as there is no chamfer at this level today. There is a chamfer at ground level (see Phase 1 in Figure 9 and Appendix 1) and a fragment/remnant of chamfer on the north west corner some eight courses up and level with the top of the present window. However, this is probably spurious as it is considered that this fabric forms part of a later repair to a collapsed north west corner (see phase 4b below and Fig. 9).

2. SURVEY OF THE WEST WALL

- 2.1 The wall was surveyed by rectified photography in September 2015. The photographs were traced to produce an accurate drawing of the wall at a scale of 1:10. Details of partial masonry courses normally below ground level but exposed during the excavation were added later. Their position is more approximate as they are not derived from rectified photographs. The drawing of the wall is shown at Fig 8.
- 2.2 The fabric and the coursing of the masonry were examined in order to identify different phases of construction, alteration or repair. The suggested interpretation comprises nine possible phases and is given at Fig. 9.
- 2.3 An ordinary (non-rectified) photograph of the wall is shown for reference at Fig. 2 below.



Figure 2. The west wall of Sutterby Church

- 2.4 **Phase 1**, the lowest part of the wall, is characterised by darker sandstone and irregular blocks and is topped by a chamfered course. The chamfered course is much eroded and damaged. It has an average projection of 7.5 cms. The chamfer angle is worn and variable but averages 50° (see Appendix 1). It is probable that this fragment of the wall survives from the final rebuild/shortening of the west end. The blocks are irregular and look reused. It is remarkable (and perplexing) that the chamfer blocks

from the previous remnant foundation - found during excavation, all in eminently reusable condition - were left in situ and not recycled in this rebuild.

- 2.5 **Phase 2** is a rebuild of the main body of the west wall up to and including the sill and lower jambs of the window - the stone is cut in regular blocks with good coursing and is greener than the phase 1 stone. The sill of the window is limestone (two pieces) but the jambs (except for the recently replaced section) are in sandstone. (see Figs 7a/7b).
- 2.6 **Phase 3** begins with a levelling course of hand-made brick and includes brick coursing each side of the window lintel. The stone is similar in form and coursing to that of phase 2. It is possible that phases 3 and 2 are of the same build with the brick used to adjust levels to fit a pre-existing window frame. Phase 3 terminates under the limestone string course.
- 2.7 **Phase 4a** is defined by a vertical track of discontinuity in coursing, irregular block sizes and broken/reset stones. It may be the result of a rebuild of the south west corner of the church. Conversely, it may be contemporary with phases 2 and 3 but be the result of masons trying to incorporate the stub of the standing south wall into a west wall rebuild. The south wall has not yet been surveyed, however a brief examination of the south west corner suggests the rebuild theory is probable (see Fig. 3 below).



Figure 3. The south west corner of Sutterby church. Although this wall has yet to be surveyed and analysed, a brief inspection suggests that the corner may have been rebuilt. However, the complex sequence of construction around the porch and south door is not yet drawn and analysed.

- 2.8 **Phase 4b** is defined by a vertical track of discontinuity in coursing and is thought to represent a collapse and rebuild of the north west corner of the church. A survey of the north wall of the church carried out in 2014 identified a corresponding rebuild phase at the west end of the north wall which would be in accord with this suggestion. See phase 4 of the north wall sequence shown at Fig 4 below.

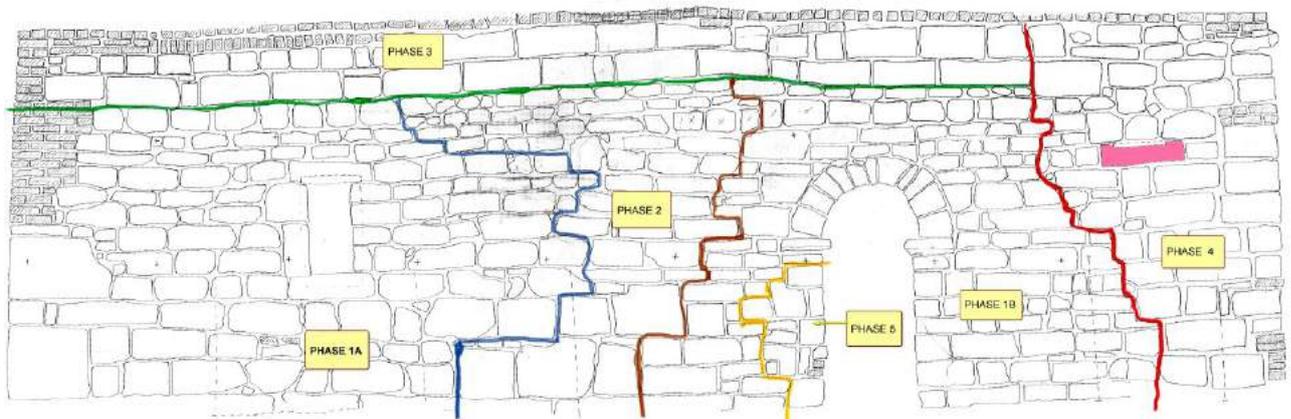


Figure 4. Phasing plan for the north wall of Sutterby Church - note phase 4

- 2.9 **Phase 5** is a line of coursing discontinuity above the window (within phase 3), thought to represent a slump in the masonry due to failure of the lintel (now replaced - see phase 8) sometime in the past. An early repair of this fault utilises machine-made bricks thought to date to the mid-late nineteenth century.
- 2.10 **Phase 6** is the limestone hollow chamfer string course above the stonework of phase 3. (see Appendix 2) This appears to have been added as a levelling course before the gable was replaced in brick (the first time) and the brick gable is presumed to be contemporary with it. It is an odd feature which appears to have been reused. It is much damaged and has been purposely reworked in some areas. There is nothing similar elsewhere in the fabric of Sutterby church and it is most unlikely to have originated from here.

This string course is not shown in Nattes's 1790 drawing of the church (Fig. 1) but at some point after that date, and presumably when Welsh slate had become readily available as a roofing material (probably following the introduction of the railways to Lincolnshire in 1848) the lead roof and timber clad gable depicted by Nattes were replaced with a slated roof and brick gable. This entailed steepening the pitch of the roof by reducing the height of the nave walls, and rebuilding the west and east nave gables. The work incorporates larger format, machine-made bricks which probably date from the mid to late nineteenth century. It would be fair to guess that this re-roofing of Sutterby church took place around the 1870s. The timber belfry was probably replaced by the arched brick bellcote at the same time.

The string course, brick gable and brick bellcote are shown in Fig 5, a Historic England Archive photograph (Ref: 2826/43) of the church from the north west, dated November 1963



Figure 5. Photograph of Sutterby church from the north west taken in November 1963, showing the limestone string course, the first brick gable and the arched brick bellcote at the west end
(Photo from Historic England Archive Ref: 2826/43)

2.11 **Phase 7** is a series (four shown) of areas of stone replacement - at first sight, these are straightforward replacements of perished stone, however, it seems from the detail from the Historic England Archive photograph 2826/44 shown at Fig. 6, that

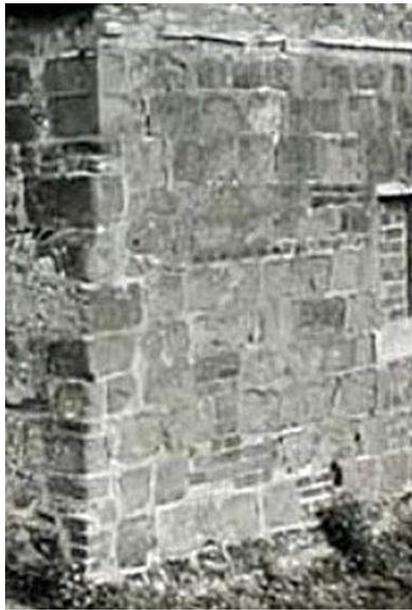


Figure 6. Detail from RCHM photo 2826/44 showing areas of brick repair in west wall - later replaced in stone.
(Photo from Historic England Archive Ref: 2826/44)

in 1956, these areas appear originally repaired in brick. The replacement of the brick was carried out before 1996, when architect Peter MacFarlane (of Bond and Reid in Grantham) comments: ' ...in recent years the walls had been well, and fairly extensively repaired ...'.

MacFarlane's surveys and work specifications show that he designed and supervised the rebuilding of the brick gable at the west end in reproduction hand-made brick, re-slated the roof and replaced/reinstated rainwater goods and drainage systems. The work was carried out by Charles Payne of Nettleton.

2.12 **Phase 8** comprises the replacement of the upper stone of the northerly window jamb, together with the fitting of a new timber lintel and mullion. This work was carried out by Anderson and Glenn (Architects) as part of a larger programme of repairs in 2010/2011. Their condition report on the church (August 2011) shows the west window prior to repair (See Figs 7a and 7b, below)



Figures 7a and 7b. The west window of Sutterby Church before and after repair

This repair programme also made provision for an owl nesting box behind the gable of the west wall, and an appropriate hole was made in the brickwork at the centre of the gable. (visible in Fig. 2).

3. DATING THE PHASES

3.1 There are very few dating reference points for the phases and we have very little information from documentary records. The Faculty Book 1713 - 1995 (LAO Ref: DIOC/FB/1) only notes one Sutterby faculty:

55 Sell 2 Bells and repair church 6 May 1743

The following points emerge from the analysis of the wall:

PHASE	TAQ/TPQ DATES	COMMENTS
1	before 1790	Base of new west wall built when church shortened? (?c.1500)
2	before 1790?	A rebuild of the west wall up to the brick levelling course (?1743)
3	after 1790?	Upwards from the brick levelling course (in 18thC brick?)
4a	after 1790	SW corner repair?
4b	after 1790	NW corner repair
5	after 1790	settlement due to lintel failure
6	mid to late 1800s	Remodelling of roof - string course and brick gable added?
7	after 1956/before 1996	replacement of brick infill of decayed stone
8	2011	Repairs to west window - part of 2010/11 repair programme

3.2 In summary, we are resting most of our dating guesses on the accuracy of the Nattes drawing of 1790. Phase 1 dates to before Nattes's drawing and phase 2 may be before it. But if phases 2 and 3 are contemporary, they probably represent a rebuild before 1790 (possibly the 1743 repairs).

3.3 The bricks used in the west wall levelling course, and around the window lintel, have a depth around 55mm (approx 2¹/₄ inches). These bricks are hand-made and likely to date to the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries, although brick size should not be used as a reliable dating criterion.

3.4 As noted above, phases 2 and 3 could be contemporary, the brick levelling course being merely a device to ensure the correct lintel height for the window. Perhaps the window frame was reused in a substantial rebuild of the west wall, in which case, possibly only it, and the lowest courses of the present wall (phase 1) are shown in the 1790 drawing.

3.5 The question as to why and when the church was shortened (or rebuilt) remains? (i.e. the origin and date of Phase 1 of the wall). This date sequence is considered in detail in the forthcoming report on the excavation at the west end carried out in May 2015.

3.6 It is interesting to speculate that there was considerable wealth around Sutterby following the Restoration of Charles II in 1660. Mr John Dawson, a resident of Sutterby, had inherited "*one messuage, one cottage and forty acres of land , &c. in Sutterby*" on the death of his father Charles Dawson in 1640. John Dawson was a staunch Royalist and raised a Troop of Horse under the command of the Marquis of Newcastle. He was captured, imprisoned and fined several times. At the Restoration, Dawson was rewarded for his loyalty with a grant of land in County Tipperary (Ireland) exceeding 2,900 acres, including the castle of Ballinacourty. Descendants of Dawson (the Massy Dawsons) held land in Sutterby until 1803 when they sold to Charles Burrell Massingberd. Could it be that John Dawson used some of his new found wealth in the 1660s to repair and remodel Sutterby Church? And was he responsible for commissioning the massive (relative to Sutterby church) Royal Arms over the chancel screen?

If there was plenty of money available for the work, it could also explain why the good quality stone of the chamfered plinth was left *in situ* and not recovered for reuse.

Some records survive of the condition of Sutterby church around this time:

Date	Comment	Reference
Aug 1602	The church and chancel of these several parishes are well repaired and kept decently	LRS vol 23, p223
1709	The rectory has fallen into ruin. The chancel needs repair	LRS vol 4, p120
6 May 1743	faculty to sell two bells in order to repair the church	LAO DIOC/FB/1/55

This suggests that the church was in good condition in 1602. It is possible that the vicissitudes of the Civil War and Commonwealth may have altered that status such that John Dawson might have funded major repairs and/or remodelling in the 1660s? But the report of 1709 that the chancel was in need of repair and the subsequent faculty of 1743 which sells two bells to fund repair of the church makes major repair or rebuilding works in the 1660s seem unlikely.

3.7 The 1743 repair of the church is likely to be the point at which the brick buttress on the south wall was introduced and when the south east corner of the nave (and presumably the similar work on the north east corner) were repaired with thin hand-made bricks. It is understood (? Ref) that the porch was constructed at this time, and it too features the thin hand-made brick.

If we choose to mistrust the accuracy of Nattes's drawing, then we might conclude that a rebuild of the west wall, with its hand-made brick repairs, formed part of the 1743 programme.

3.8 Thus, while we have reached no conclusive programme for the alterations to the west wall, we might speculate on a possible sequence:

Phase 1 - original rebuild of west wall in present position	1600s
Phases 2 & 3 - rebuild of west wall from chamfer up	1743
Phase 6 - string course and rebuild of gable in brick (and re-roof)	mid to late 1800s
Phases 4a & 4b - collapse and repairs of corners	mid to late 1800s
Phase 5 - lintel failure	mid to late 1800s
Phase 7 brick repairs replaced in stone	1980
Phase 8 repairs to west window	2011

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FIGURE 8

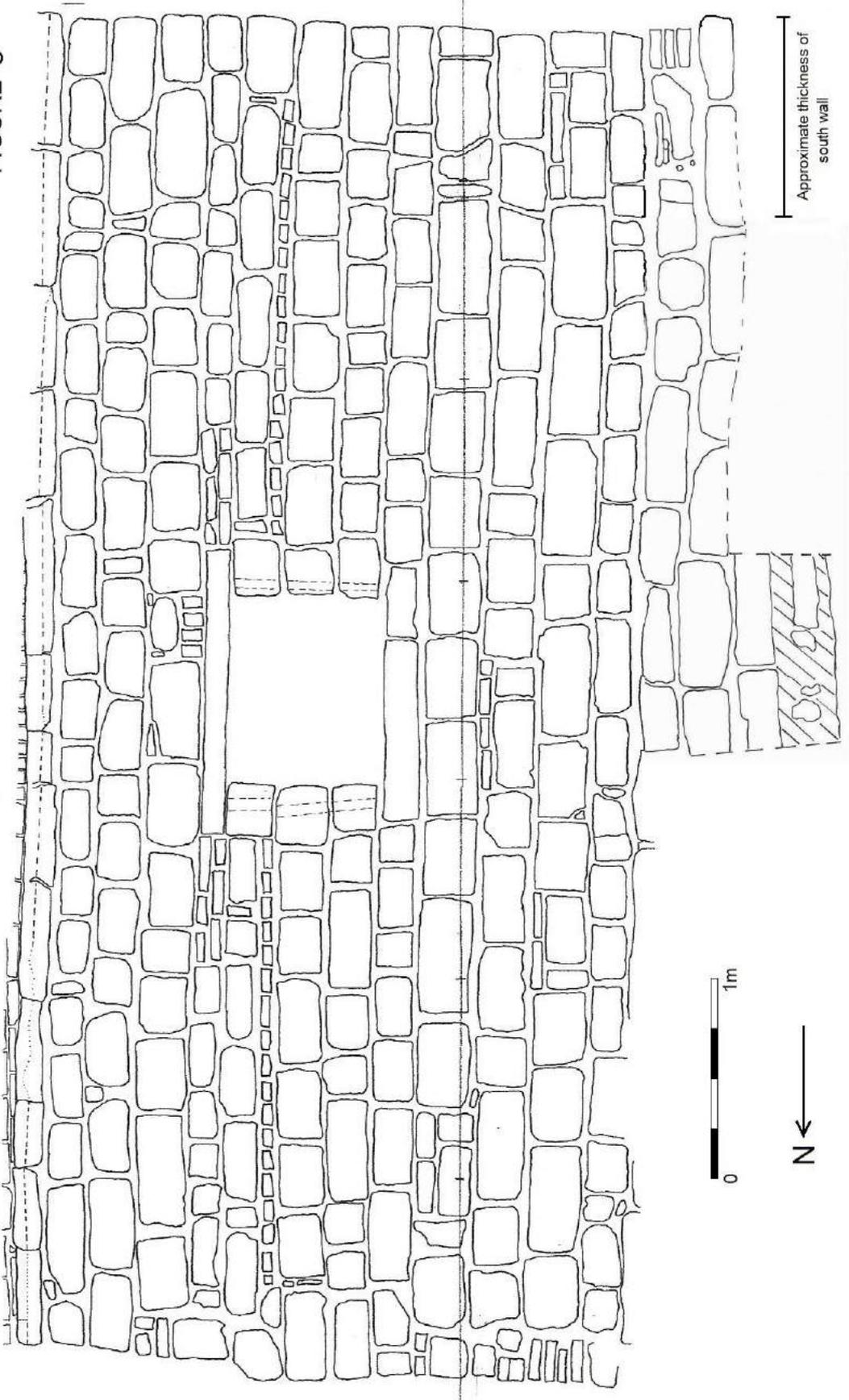
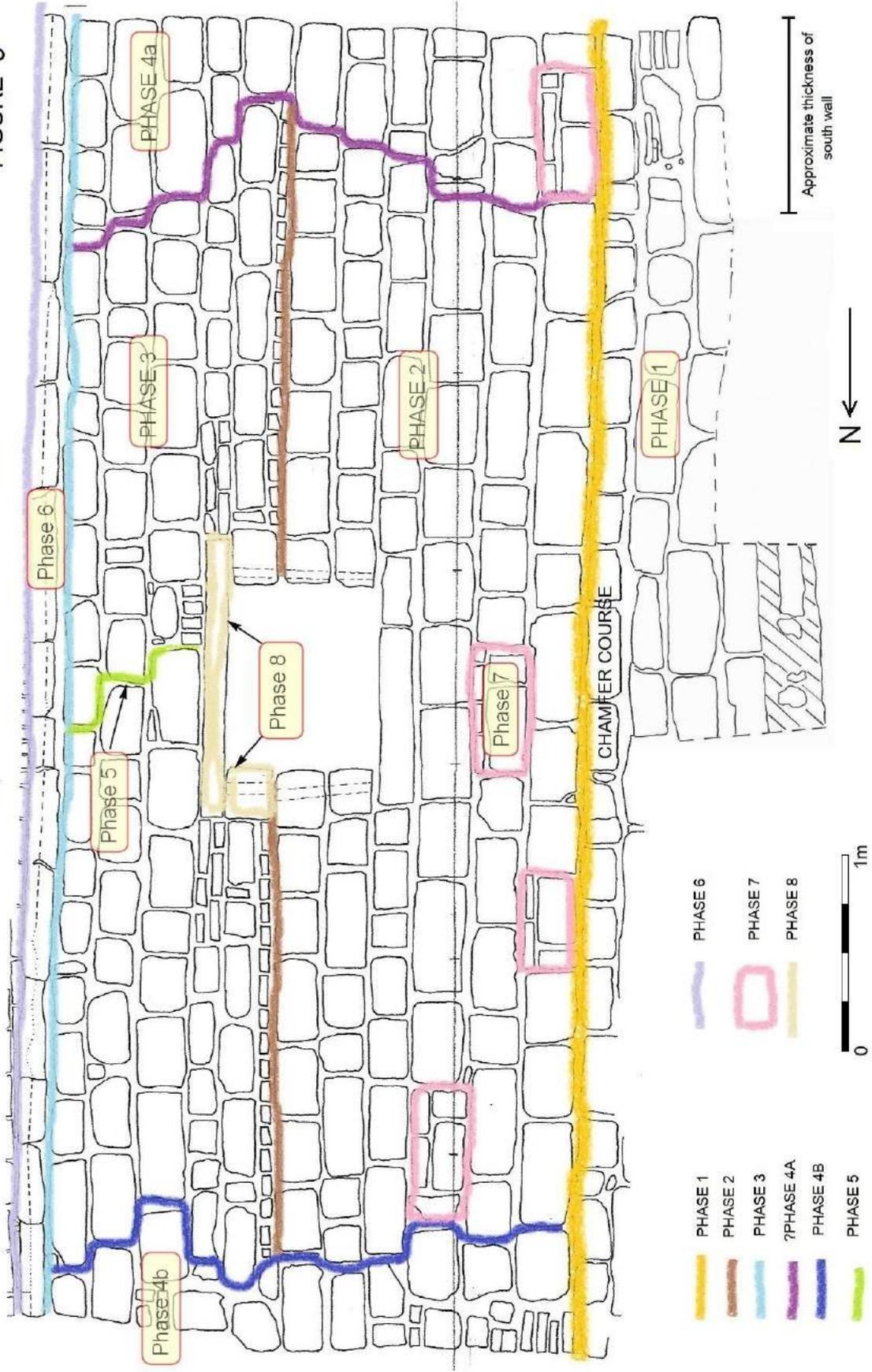
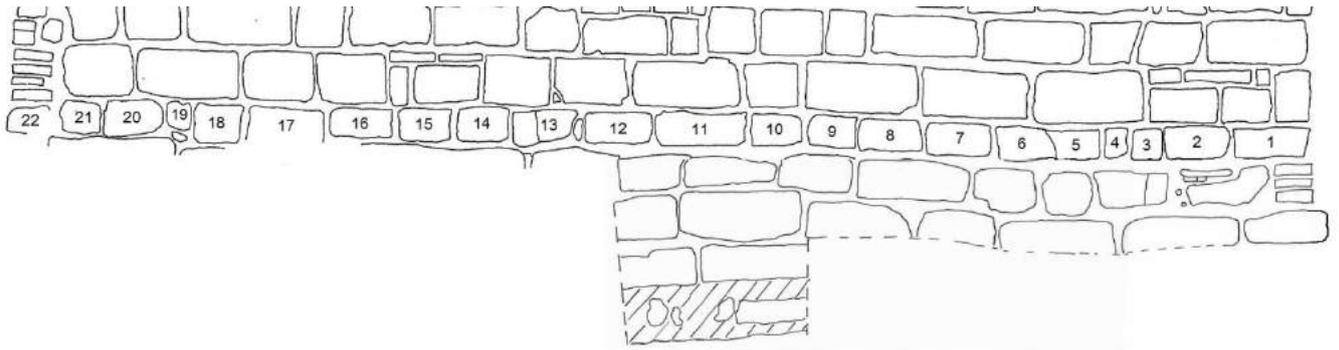


FIGURE 9



SUTTERBY CHURCH WEST WALL CHAMFER COURSE DESCRIPTION



N ^o .	Comment	cms	N ^o .	Comment	cms	N ^o .	Comment	cms
1	worn chamfer	5	9	quite good chamfer	8	17	good chamfer, long	9
2	worn chamfer	5	10	quite good chamfer	10	18	damaged chamfer	4
3	'dropped' worn chamfer	7.5	11	long; worn base	9	19	damaged - no chamfer	-
4	very worn chamfer	4	12	good chamfer - worn below	10	20	damaged chamfer; scored	7
5	all one stone worn	9	13	fragmentary - poss worn chamfer		21	damaged chamfer - scored	7
6			14	quite good chamfer	8	22	damaged, fragmentary. Prob once chamfered	-
7	good chamfer	7	15	good chamfer	8			
8	good chamfer	8	16	good chamfer, base worn	6			

The measurement shown (cms) is the projection of the chamfer from the wall above (i.e. the amount the chamfer course projects beyond the upper courses)

Chamfer Angles measured for four stones:

N ^o .	Angle °
7	52
9	55
14	56
17	45



Photograph of the chamfered course viewed from SW corner of church, looking north (moss covered course).

The chamfer course is much worn. It has an average projection of 7.5 cms. The chamfer angle is worn and variable but averages c. 50°

SUTTERBY CHURCH WEST WALL STRING COURSE DESCRIPTION

The stonework of the west wall is topped with a limestone hollow chamfer string course. It is made from a fine grained oolitic limestone and appears to have been added as a levelling course at the same time as the gable was rebuilt in brick, probably in the mid to late nineteenth century. There is nothing similar elsewhere in the fabric of Sutterby church and it is probable that it has been brought in from elsewhere and reused. The moulding is much damaged and some areas show evidence of reworking, particularly its northernmost stone, which has had an area crudely cut away. The position of the moulding may be seen in Fig 2 of the west wall report. Detailed photographs are shown below:



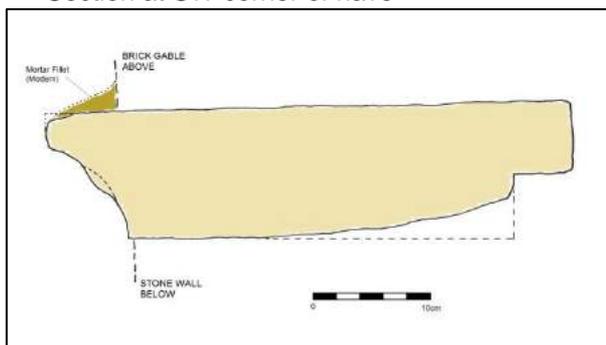
The moulding may be seen in section on the north-west and southwest corners of the nave. Photographs and drawings are shown below



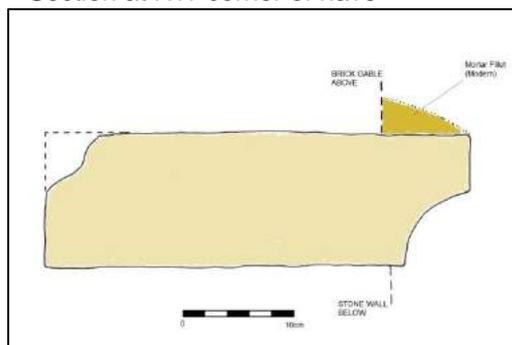
Section at SW corner of nave



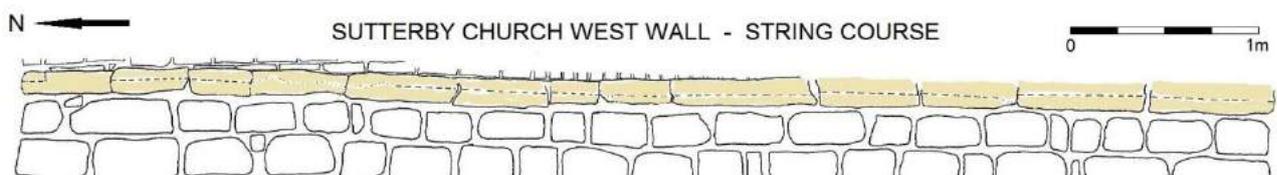
Section at NW corner of nave



Section at SW corner of nave



Section at NW corner of nave



Elevation of the top of the west wall showing string course