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The Rooms over the Porches of Bishop’s Cleeve and Bredon Parish Churches: a question of dating

By J. PHILIP McALEER

Both the parish church of St. Michael and All Angels at Bishop’s Cleeve (Gloucestershire) and that of St. Giles at Bredon (Worcestershire) have strongly projecting porches, at Bishop’s Cleeve on the south side of its aisled nave, at Bredon on the north side of its aisleless nave. In each case the porch appears to be part of the original Romanesque church. Bishop’s Cleeve has been conventionally dated c. 1170 or, more broadly, c. 1160–90, while Bredon has been dated slightly later, c. 1180–90. The existence of side porches is in itself remarkable at this time, and it may be even more remarkable that the porches are associated with parish churches. What is of yet greater interest is that at each there is a room over the porch. Furthermore, the upper rooms have been dated either to the period of the initial construction (Bredon) or shortly thereafter (Bishop’s Cleeve). A detailed examination, however, yields strong reasons to doubt that the upper rooms belong to the late 12th century. Rather, it can be suggested that they were created at a date most probably no earlier than the 14th century in each case.

The Porches

Bishop’s Cleeve. The church at Bishop’s Cleeve was much larger than that at Bredon (Fig. 1). There is no evidence for the shape of the original chancel that was rebuilt in the early 14th

![Fig. 1. Bishop’s Cleeve. Plan of the church (reproduced from the Victoria County History of Gloucestershire 8, 21, by permission of the General Editor).]
Fig. 2. Bishop's Cleeve, St. Michael and All Angels. View of south porch from the south-west (photograph by the author).
century (Decorated), but there are substantial remains of a transept (the crossing tower was rebuilt c. 1700) and a nave of six bays (now remodelled to three) accompanied by narrow side aisles with a single west portal. A stair vice was located within each of the deep west responds of the nave arcade. In addition to the south portal, there may also have been a north portal but, as the north aisle was doubled in width, probably shortly before c. 1300, the evidence for one has disappeared.

The south portal and its porch (Fig. 2) were placed opposite the original second bay of the nave from the west (Fig. 1). The porch is nearly square in plan (internal dimensions: 3,695 mm wide × 3,665 mm deep) and is constructed of ashlar. It is higher than the original aisle of which a short section remains to the west, capped by a 15th-century crenellated parapet. (The space between the porch and the south arm of the transept—which are of about equal projection—was appropriated for an aisle-like chantry chapel in the early 14th century: see Fig. 1.) Pilaster buttresses, wrapped around each angle, rise to a roll moulded string course placed at a level about two thirds the height of the porch; the buttresses terminate just under the string. A corbel table is found at the top of the west wall and there are also two small narrow, oblong windows towards the north end of the wall, the smaller one actually placed right at the angle with the aisle wall. On the south face, above the entrance arch, there is a pointed arch embracing two rectangular lights. The latter arch breaks through a second string course—this one chamfered—which defines the base of the south gable. In the gable there is a small narrow window with a trefoil arch carved out of a single piece of stone.

The entrance arch of the porch consists of two orders of coursed shafts with stiff-leaf capitals and a continuous inner quarter-round jamb (the bases have been restored). The outer order is characterized by thin rolls, while the inner has two syncopated rows of spaced chevron overlapping a thin angle roll. On the interior (Fig. 3), the side walls have five bays of intersecting arcading with trefoil subarches. The shafts of the arcading are en délit and the capitals are a mixture of trumpet scallop forms and stiff-leaf foliage. There is also a rib vault—the diagonal ribs are semicircular arches in the form of a roll with flanking zigzag. They spring from keeled angle-shafts with stiff-leaf capitals. The thin wall ribs are continuous with their equally thin shafts. The inner doorway (Fig. 3), which is rather narrow (width: 1,285 mm), is of two orders, the outer again with en délit shafts but with asymmetrical foliage capitals. The inner order of the arch bears a fret, the outer a rich chevron, while the label, a large roll, terminates in animal heads.

The intersecting arcading on the side walls of the porch has generally been considered to be Transitional (the period c. 1175–1200) in character, as well as the ribbed vault, which, like the outer doorway, is decorated with chevron. In slight contrast, the large south window above the outer doorway (Fig. 2), which consists of a pair of rectangular lights framed with a roll moulding placed under a triple roll moulded pointed arch (similar to the outer order of the archway below) and a roll moulded label with stiff-leaf foliage stops, the jamb shafts with plain double-scallop trumpet capitals, has been dated a little later, to the early 13th century.

**Bredon.** The smaller and simpler church at Bredon probably originally consisted of a chancel (for the shape of which there is now no evidence) and a long and wide aisleless nave. Of that building, what remains is the western half of the nave—standing to its full original height—and the arch at its east end (Fig. 4). The west half of the nave still retains a window toward the west end of each side wall and, more remarkably, three large portals: a west portal and one of equal size in each of the side walls, positioned opposite each other. It is the north portal that is covered by a deeply projecting (3,240 mm) porch of nearly square plan (internal dimensions: 2,790 mm wide × 2,910 mm deep) as at Bishop’s Cleeve.
Fig. 3. Bishop's Cleeve. Interior of porch, detail: north-west corner showing junction of west wall with original south exterior wall of church (photograph by the author).
On the exterior the tall porch appears to be of one build, its height seemingly determined by the height of the nave which it equals (Fig. 5). Its three exterior walls are solid and plain; the east one is now visible only from inside the later north aisle, which exceeds the projection of the porch in width. The porch is covered by a steeply pitched roof. Its west wall is of rubble construction, thus matching that of the adjoining north wall of the nave; in contrast, the north face is of ashlar. A string course in the form of a large roll continues onto the west wall from its position on the nave wall—halfway up, under the window—as does the corbel table of the nave, the corbels with a distinctive double roll form. Another string course, decorated with zigzag, crosses the north face a short distance above the entrance arch and hence at a higher level than that on the west wall and nave north wall. The corbel table of the west wall is continued onto the north face where it serves as a base for the gable wall. The rubble gable wall is certainly ‘modern’ and has a small, narrow oblong window with a chamfered frame. The only decorative detail beside the entrance arch is a single keeled angle-shaft at the north-west corner that rises the full height of the porch, and ends with a tiny multi-scallop trumpet capital; only the top of the corresponding shaft at the north-east corner and its similar capital are visible above the roof of the (later) north aisle. The entrance arch is of three exterior orders; the inner two are continuous rolls, while the outer has a pair of keeled jamb shafts, ribbed foliage capitals, and an arch moulded with diagonally positioned (‘shark tooth’) chevron; the label is also chevron decorated.

On the interior the porch is covered by a rib vault, the diagonal ribs (a hollow between two rolls) of which spring from angle-shafts with capitals of four different designs. In addition, very thin wall ribs spring from tiny pencil point corbels. The north portal is of two orders; the inner continuous quarter-round order is plain and undecorated, while the outer has a pair of keeled shafts, with water-holding bases and foliage capitals, and an arch with three rows of concentric chevron decoration. All of these details form the basis for the suggested date of c. 1180–90. The side benches in the porch are a later insertion.
Fig. 5. Bredon, St. Giles. View of north porch from the north-west (photograph by the author).
The Upper Rooms

Bishop’s Cleeve. Access to the upper room at Bishop’s Cleeve is convenient and direct, but none the less peculiar. It is reached by the 12th-century south-west stair vice and a flat vault which has been placed over the west end of the aisle to form a kind of bridge between the vice and the west side of the room (Fig. 6), a distance equal to two bays of the original nave arcade (Figs. 1 and 7).10 The flat vault or ceiling appears to belong to the Perpendicular period: it bears a tracery roundel with diagonal and ridge ribs to east and west.11

The most distinctive feature of the room are nine corbels on its north wall (Fig. 8).12 A projecting flashing, seemingly for the abutment of a sloping roof, is present two courses below them. Otherwise, the room lacks any architectural detail, for its floor and ceiling are completely modern and even the inner jambs of the windows are unmoulded. On the east wall, there is a large and partially blocked window (aperture 420 mm wide, jambs 1,075 mm wide) that now looks onto the roof of the chantry chapel. A similar rectangular window (aperture 410 mm wide,
jambs 1,070 mm wide) is placed in the middle of the west wall, and a smaller, narrower rectangular window (aperture 305 mm wide, jambs 510 mm wide) at the north end of the same wall (Fig. 9); both windows have widely splayed jambs. These three windows have spanning lintels covered by plaster. Finally, the window in the south wall above the entrance arch, which is so prominent on the exterior, proves to be of a quite different shape and appearance on the interior (Fig. 9). Like the other three windows, it has widely splayed embrasures that, in this case, are spanned by a segmental arch.

It is this last feature which has played a leading role in forming the conclusion that the upper room was added to the porch shortly after the construction of the church was completed.13 This determination was primarily based upon the detail of the south window, especially when it was compared with the south portal and the entrance arch to the porch, as well as the west portal, and seemingly confirmed by the presence of the corbel table, which has been accepted as being in situ, an indication that this wall above the level of the arcade was originally an exterior wall. The oddity of this room—as its history has been reconstructed—is that initially it was free standing, rising much higher than the lean-to roof (which remained in place) over the narrow (south) aisle. It has been considered that it was only at a much later date that the north gable wall of the room was removed, as well as the roof over the aisle, and a vault (Fig. 6) constructed over the aisle in order to permit access to the room by way of the stair vice—which was broken through at this time—at the west end of the south arcade.14
Fig. 8. Bishop's Cleeve. Interior of upper room: the north wall and purported in-situ Romanesque corbel table (photograph by the author).

Fig. 9. Bishop's Cleeve. Interior of upper room: the south and west walls (photograph by the author).
It might be observed that, if the corbel table is in situ, and the chamfered projection has been correctly interpreted as the weather course for the abutment of the 12th-century aisle roof, the eaves of the nave roof would have been but slightly above the aisle roof. This would mean that the 12th-century church certainly did not have a clerestory.\textsuperscript{15}

\textit{Bredon.} Nothing could present more of a contrast with the upper room at Bishop's Cleeve than the room at Bredon of which there is no external sign such as a window. It is reached in a much less convenient fashion, up a ladder and through a flat linteled doorway high up in the north nave wall, directly above the north portal (Fig. 10). The room is much smaller in size (2,900 mm wide $\times$ 2,750 mm long $\times$ 2,300 mm high [of walls]), and it is a surprise to discover the remains of three large windows that have been blocked up, as they are not evident on the exterior. In the north wall (Fig. 11) is a broad opening (970 mm) with widely splayed jambs (total width 1,540 mm) spanned by a segmental arch; above it, in the gable (Fig. 12), is a window, now square in shape, with splayed jambs and a wooden lintel. The north window still retains a lintel formed by one large stone with a straight bottom surface and a rebated lower edge (Fig. 11). Placed towards the exterior, the location and form of the lintel suggests that the actual window opening was rectangular and could have been closed by wooden shutters. The centre of the west wall is occupied by a narrower window (680 mm wide), again with widely splayed jambs (total width 1,020 mm) and a spanning segmental arch (Fig. 13); a similar window once existed in the east wall but only the jambs are presently visible (total width 1,060 mm), the arch having been destroyed (Fig. 14). In each case, the jambs of the window begin at the present floor level of the room. The entrance doorway is rectangular (760 mm wide $\times$ 1,900 mm high) with ashlars inner jambs and a single slab of stone for a lintel (Fig. 15). Above it six equally-spaced corbels, each consisting of a double roll form, support eave blocks profiled with a roll over a cavetto.

What is more surprising than the existence of the windows is the presence—and remarkable number—of cupboards which are built into all four walls. Cupboards, both rebated and with a groove for a shelf, flank the doorway (Fig. 15). Each side wall has a small cupboard, unrebated, to the south of its window and a larger one, with a rebate, to the north (Figs. 13 and 14). Each of these northern cupboards includes a small ‘tank’ in its north inner jamb, which is rebated as if for a lid (Fig. 16). The north window is flanked by a horizontally oblong cupboard (Fig. 11).\textsuperscript{16} It is difficult to believe that all of these cupboards, a total of eight, actually functioned as aumbries in the strict sense, as repositories for sacred vessels, relics or books.

In addition to the cupboards there are a number of smaller rectangular ‘recesses’. Above each cupboard on the north wall (Fig. 11), is a small recess, roughly finished inside; it could have been a socket for a joist but there is no matching recess in the south wall. Below each of these cupboards there is also a smaller square recess which is matched by one below the east cupboard in the south wall (Fig. 15). Similar oblong recesses are also found below the north cupboards in the east and west walls (Figs. 13 and 14). The purpose of these ‘sockets’, which vary in size and depth (they are in the vicinity of +/- 200 mm square), is not at all clear.

The stone used for the window jambs and for the top, bottom and sides of the various cupboards is a greyish colour, distinctly different from the exterior fabric of the church. The floor of the room is now of concrete,\textsuperscript{17} and there is merely a wooden roof to keep out the elements.

In the case of Bredon, the existence of a corbel table along the top of the north face of the south wall of the room, which clearly continues from the north wall of the nave (cf. Figs. 5 and 15) and is thus in a similar position to the one at Bishop's Cleeve, has not resulted in any questions being raised regarding the contemporaneity of porch and room. Nor, however, has any explanation been given for the presence of the corbel table.
Archaeological and Historical Analysis

At both Bishop’s Cleeve and Bredon, the apparent stylistic unity of the exterior of the porches (Figs. 2 and 5), suggesting a date in the late Romanesque or Transitional periods, has prevented a more critical assessment of the upper rooms themselves. In particular, the interior features of the rooms, notably the windows and the cupboards, have been ignored. The shape of the windows at both is sufficient to suggest that the upper rooms might be later additions to the porches; the rectangular entrance doorway at Bredon also suggests the same possibility. But it is the
obviously makeshift mode of access in each case that raises the strongest doubts, and suggests that another interpretation of the features—early and late—of the porches and their rooms is possible.

Furthermore, many of the later changes have been dated only in a vague way, not as a result of archaeological analysis or comparison and without regard for any plausible sequence. This is especially true of Bishop’s Cleeve. Thus the flat vault, as well as the enlargement of the porch room, has been dated to the 15th or 16th century and the removal of every other pier in the nave to the 16th or 17th century, perhaps as late as c. 1700. This last, latest, date is the result of associating the alterations in the nave with the rebuilding of the central tower, following the collapse of a ‘spire’, in 1696. (Yet little—if any—damage seems to have been done to nave, transept or chancel at that time: for a description and analysis of the fabric of these areas see Appendices 1 and 2). However, it is possible that some of the alterations may be assigned to earlier centuries and thus relate to, or provide explanations for, certain features of the upper room. A closer look, therefore, needs to be taken with regard to the archaeology of both structures, including possible evidence of restoration work in the 18th or 19th century.

What has not been observed before is that the porch at Bishop’s Cleeve is not part of the original construction: rather it is a somewhat later addition. This is evident not only in the stylistic contrast between the inner portal on the one hand and the side walls and outer portal of the porch proper on the other, but also in the joints of the masonry to either side of the inner portal (Fig. 3). The insertion of the porch’s side walls was neatly carried out, as is evidenced by the first five courses maintaining the levels of those of the portal jambs; nevertheless, the joint
Fig. 13. Bredon. Interior of upper room: the west wall (photograph by P. Howell/Dog Rose, Ludlow).

Fig. 14. Bredon. Interior of upper room: the east wall (photograph by P. Howell/Dog Rose, Ludlow).

Fig. 15. Bredon. Interior of upper room: the south (entrance) wall (photograph by P. Howell/Dog Rose, Ludlow).

Fig. 16. Bredon. Interior of upper room: detail of the aumbry at north end of west wall ('tank' at right) (photograph by P. Howell/Dog Rose, Ludlow).
is obvious. The masonry above these courses, between the portal shafts and the label and the wall rib, has been clearly disturbed and reset, although fitted in with relative care.

The style of the inner portal is described and defined by the thin, coursed shafts forming the inner order that lack capitals; by the quarter-round profile of the abacus with its odd, simple leaf pattern, as if a substitute for proper capitals; by the non-standard capitals of the en délit shafts, one of which is decorated with broad flat ‘cobra-shaped’ leaves, the other with a spear-shaped leaf on each face flanked by tendrils terminating in curling ridged scalloped leaves; by the continuation of the abacus decorated with undulating rinceaux; by the fret motif; \textsuperscript{20} by the roll/hollow (with pellets)/roll form of the chevron of the portal arch; and, most of all, by the terminals of the label with the motif of a long-snouted beast head engorging a beak head. These features are all distinctly different from those of the outer archway (Fig. 2), with its thinner shafts and orders, and the trefoil arcading of the side walls, both with the mixture of trumpet scallop or stiff-leaf capitals. The presence of the latter form particularly indicates the later date of the porch, which may be closer to c. 1200 than to c. 1160/70, whilst the main body of the church could date from the 1150s or 1160s. Since it is very likely that the porch at Bishop’s Cleeve is slightly later than that at Bredon, the archaeology and history of the porch and room at Bredon will be considered first.

\textit{Bredon: The Porch and its Room.} At Bredon, the external appearance of the porch (Fig. 5), with its apparent uniformity of construction, must be due to the hands of restorers. With the knowledge of the existence of the windows on the interior, one can interpret the presence of certain stones of a somewhat different colour on the exterior as corresponding to an ashlar or rubble refacing which has otherwise eliminated all trace of the exterior jambs of the windows. That the windows are barely discernible on the exterior suggests that at some time they were carefully blocked in a manner intended to create the impression of unaltered uniformity with the character of the original structure. This careful ‘restoration’ of the porch must have occurred sometime before the earliest published view of the porch that dates to 1851 and shows it in its present state.\textsuperscript{21} Indeed, it must have been done before 1840/1 when sepia pen and wash sketches of the church were executed by H.E. Relton.\textsuperscript{22} Except for the fact that the porch (and the church walls) were then rendered, the form of the porch appears as it does today (Fig. 17). No trace of the windows evident on the north and west faces of the porch as recorded by Relton. However, an account of 1854 or 1855 mentions that a restoration had been carried out some twelve years earlier (c. 1842 or 43: possibly just after Relton’s visit?).\textsuperscript{23} It has thus far not proved possible to find any documents relating to the restoration at that time, but two unpublished drawings indicate that the windows had already been blocked at an even earlier date. One drawing, a view of the church from the north-west, dated September 4, 1818,\textsuperscript{24} reveals no evidence of the north or west windows of the porch, while the other, made in October 1810 after a view depicting the north elevation of the church which must have been executed sometime between 1780 and 1800,\textsuperscript{25} shows no window in the north face of the porch. Thus, it would therefore seem that, at a period well before 1842/3, a skilful restoration of the porch was carried out. As part of the work prior to 1780/1800, it would seem that the ‘original’ character of the Romanesque porch was reinstated by the careful blocking of the windows; the later restoration of c. 1842/3 may have reinforced the results of the earlier one.\textsuperscript{26}

Alternatively, it is possible that the earlier restoration was the occasion when the upper storey of the porch—if it had been added in a later style—was brought into conformity with the lower part. Several factors, however, may argue against this latter scenario. First, the masonry of the north-west corner of the porch, including the slender ashlar buttress and the angle-shaft, appears uniform and consistent for its total extant height. Second, at the north-east corner of the porch,
Fig. 17. H.E. Relton, ‘Bredon Church, Worcestershire (North Porch)’, c. 1840 (Worcestershire Record Office, BA 4035).
which is embraced by the Gothic north aisle (as noted earlier), the corresponding shaft with its capital emerges above the aisle roof: it seems unlikely that any restorer would go so far as to include this detail in order to achieve ‘authenticity’.

The history of the mode of access to the upper room at Bredon during the last two centuries is somewhat confused. In 1851 it was reported that ‘[t]he window over the entrance has been blocked up, and the parvis is altogether inaccessible; indeed it is difficult now to determine how the ascent to it was managed’, but it would seem that prior to the pre-1840 restoration the room was entered through the doorway in the wall of the nave. Nevertheless, a few years later, c. 1854/5, it was stated, rather contradictorily, that there were ‘formerly two entrances, one from the aisle on the east side, the other from the church yard on the west’. These ‘entrances’ must actually have been the (blocked) windows in the east and west walls, visible since before 1840 only from inside the room. To add to the confusion, it is later claimed that, in the early part of the 20th century, shortly before 1913, the west window was opened up in order to gain access to the room. The ‘original’ entrance—the doorway in the nave wall, which had been blocked at the time of the pre-1840 restoration—was apparently returned to use only more recently, but possibly before 1933, at which time it would have to be assumed that the west window/entrance was once again blocked up. Unfortunately, the current condition of the porch does not support the record that this window was opened up and then reblocked.

Returning to the interior, there is no evidence to suggest that the rectangular doorway to the room dates to the Romanesque church. The inner jambs are built up against the rubble core of the wall and are covered with a slab lintel (Fig. 15). Although the interior surface of the nave wall is now heavily plastered, a halo of disturbed masonry visibly surrounds the doorway suggesting that initially a larger opening had been made (Fig. 10). As the finished doorway is rather narrow, a large opening could have facilitated the transport of the large stones being used to line the walls and to form the cupboards. In the course of construction, the opening was reduced to its present size, perhaps in order to accommodate a cupboard (or aumbry) on either side of it. Thus, all of the foregoing observations strongly indicate that the room itself is not contemporary with the porch.

In order to reconcile the disparate appearance and dates of the exterior and interior of the porch, it is possible to suggest the following history. The north porch at Bredon is part of the original fabric of the church (i.e. late 12th century, perhaps c. 1190?). The presence of the corbel table—if it is indeed in situ—on the south wall of the room (the north wall of the nave) suggests that initially the Romanesque builders did not intend to carry the porch up to a height equal to that of the nave walls. Subsequently, it was decided to make it equal to the height of the side wall of the aisleless nave. However, the porch vault was placed at a more comfortable level, one which reflected the height of the inner and outer portal arches. As a result, a dead roof space or an inaccessible room was created that was unused for several centuries. A parallel for such a ‘useless’ space would seem to be the porch before the north portal of the great transept at Lincoln Cathedral, c. 1216/20 (Fig. 29). That porch, which is covered by a sexpartite vault, is two bays deep. Although the space between the vault and the pitched roof over it was lighted by a single lancet window in the gable, there is no means of access to it—other than by a ladder from the exterior.

In the later Middle Ages it was decided to put the space over the porch at Bredon to some good use. The wall above the north portal was breached and a rectangular opening made; the walls were lined with the extraordinary number of cupboards or aumbries which have been described, and three windows with broadly splayed jambs were pierced in the three exterior walls. While the room was hardly a secret, since the windows and the door high up in the nave wall were clearly visible, it was difficult of access, unless a wooden stair had been built against
the interior of the north wall of the nave. Unfortunately, if it indeed was built and then removed in modern times, any evidence for it is presently covered by the heavy plaster and whitewash of the interior walls of the church.

A date for the construction of the room seems to be suggested by the existence of the window in the east wall. It would, if open, look into the space of the north aisle (Fig. 4). Thus it seems likely that the room was created before the aisle was built, for if the aisle was in existence, a window probably would not have been made in the east wall. The aisle (like the chancel) is dated to the first half of the 14th century, so the room may also have been created early in that century.

*Bishop's Cleeve: The Room.* With the recognition that the porch was an addition to the main body of the church, perhaps three, even four, decades after its completion, the focus now shifts to the room above it. Was it constructed at the same time as the porch or was it a later addition? This is a question easier to pose than to answer, for the history of the room, as will become apparent, is entwined with that of the nave. Unfortunately, the archaeology of the nave of the church, particularly of its entire south side, is exceedingly complex, much more so than in the case of Bredon. Successive alterations and remouldings have had an impact on the porch, affecting its form, while gaps in the narrative, as well as uncertainties about the sequence of events, affect its history. The following descriptive analysis of the fabric begins with the exterior and the west end of the south side of the nave, and then proceeds to the interior; it provides the material for an attempted chronology, some aspects of which will remain hypothetical.

On the exterior, the west bay of the aisle—on both its west and south faces—and the west wall of the porch have undergone extensive rebuilding which has left a somewhat confused picture (Figs. 18 and 19). The aisle’s west wall has been heightened, thus eliminating the slope of the original aisle roof. The original height of the aisle and the eaves line of its roof are indicated by the glacis (formed by one course; the Romanesque buttresses of the north and south faces of the transept have glacis formed by two courses) now terminating the Romanesque pilaster buttresses at the south-west angle of the west front. Changes in coursing along a stepped diagonal line rising to the north suggest that the aisle roof may have abutted the nave wall five courses above the level of the upper chamfered string course of the broad buttress at the end of the nave arcade. (A small piece of chamfered moulding remains at this level on the north face of the north arcade buttress, whilst on the interior a sloping setback of the north face of the west respond seems designed to accommodate the slope of the 12th-century aisle roof.)

The south wall of the west end of the aisle has been almost completely rebuilt (Fig. 19). The lower (chamfered and quirked) string course of the west front is not continued across the wall; nor is there any trace of a former aisle window similar to that at the west end of the aisle. For the most part, the south-west angle buttress, which originally probably did not terminate in a glacis (cf. the west angle buttresses of the transept), does not course with the wall to its east; only the two lowest courses of four blocks each may be original; the chamfered base course is certainly renewed. The upper three courses of masonry under the monolithic sill of the later (Perpendicular style) window—but not the bottom two—do course across the angle with the porch’s west wall. Thereafter, to either side and above the window, although the coursing is rather variable in height and contrasts with the relatively uniform height of the courses on the west front, it appears to be of one build (Fig. 19). Above the window, the masonry to the east of and below some diagonally jointed blocks in the aisle wall also courses across the angle with the porch wall. The tiny narrow window with a pointed arch at the top of the aisle wall, the slightly larger rectangular window one course higher at the north end of the porch wall, and the larger window to the south, like the large two-light rectangular window, all therefore belong
to this same phase of rebuilding. On the upper part of the aisle wall some diagonally-jointed blocks suggest (perhaps falsely, as will be discussed below) the line of a sloping roof. The eight courses of masonry west of this diagonal ‘line’ course with the blocks forming the corner above the Romanesque angle buttresses.

On the west wall of the porch (Fig. 19), a vertical strip a metre or so wide at the north end courses with the south wall of the aisle (as already noted above). The width of the strip is defined by the termination of the upper string (roll-moulded in contrast to the chamfered forms on the west front), and by a ragged line created by a break in the coursing of the masonry below it. The wall below the string has undergone restoration; the chamfered base course, especially, and the following three courses have been completely renewed. The angle buttresses of the porch slope back (Fig. 2)—there is a steep glacis of two courses a little above the level of the (one course) glacis of the angle buttresses of the aisle—before rising flat for two courses to terminate below the roll-moulded string. The upper course of the glacis corresponds to a change in the height of the masonry courses on the wall. Below this level they had been rather uniform, but now a high course of rather squarish stones appears, followed by two lower courses which are similar in height and size of blocks to the masonry above the string. It becomes evident that the third course below the string marks the level at which a new phase of construction begins. It included the strange narrow two-course upward extension of the clamping angle buttress that, when seen from the west, has the appearance of an anta, and the upper of the two courses
forming the glacis. This building phase extends to but does not include the larger rectangular window in the west wall.

This analysis identifies at least four different periods of masonry implying four different phases of construction. Sequentially, they consist of: (a) the west end wall of the aisle, including its semicircular-arched window and the angle buttresses, with an indication of the slope of the original roof; (b) the west wall of the porch, including its south-west clashing angle buttress, to a height three courses below the roll-moulded string, that is a height approximately equal to the Romanesque aisle; (c) the west wall of the porch from three courses below the string up to the corbelled eaves; and (d) the south wall of the aisle from the south-west Romanesque angle buttress to angle with the porch wall, and the north end of that wall, including four windows. A possible sub phase may consist of the ten courses forming the corner of the aisle above the Romanesque angle buttresses and the masonry on either side of them which is of differing character, coursing more regularly for eight courses on the aisle's south wall. This work was a necessary precursor to the construction of the existing parapets.

Before an examination of the interior spaces of aisle, newel stair and room can follow, the south and east walls of the porch must be briefly studied. From the analysis of the porch's west wall, it would be expected that the south and east walls would also show evidence of two major phases (b and c). As will be seen, this is the case.

The same change in the general character of the masonry in the three courses below the string as on the west wall is apparent on the south wall (Fig. 2). Although the masonry in the area between the jambs of the entrance arch and the angle buttresses has been renewed in its lowest three courses and the coursing is irregular above that, from the level of the impost the coursing to either side of the arch is regular and courses with the buttresses up to a level three courses above the arch where the expected change in character occurs (with the fourth course)—that is, at the same level as on the west wall. The west face of each buttress terminates in a glacis of four courses rising to the string. The masonry between the lower roll-moulded string course and that at the base of the gable is regular and appears undisturbed, being similar in character to the three courses below the lower string. In both areas, blocked putlog holes are present. Regarding the window itself, although the coursing of the jambs is regular, the coursing to the side of the capital blocks and the springing of the arch is not. Within the gable, despite the diagonal edges having been renewed, the masonry in the centre of the wall around the tiny trefoil-headed window appears uniform and probably original. The only peculiarity is the asymmetrical pattern of the large stones forming the jambs between the monolithic sill and arch.

The east face of the east wall of the porch is visible from inside the early 14th-century chantry chapel (Fig. 20). Once again, the wall appears to be of uniform build up to the three courses below the roll-moulded string course. These three courses, characterized by their higher and wider blocks, the string course and the courses visible under the chapel's roof (the sill of the east window of the upper room is just visible) are similar to the upper courses of the west and south walls of the porch. At the north end of the wall, there is a vertical seam a short distance from the junction with the arcade wall of the chapel. The seam is 'perfectly' straight, except for two courses in which a block projects north of the seam (Fig. 20, fourth and sixth courses above the pew). The seam disappears in the two courses immediately below the change in masonry to larger blocks, and is absent in the three courses immediately below the string course, as well as those above the string. (It is just in this area that a curious narrow, projecting, diagonally positioned 'bar' of masonry appears, about which more will be said later.) Thus, as on the west and south walls, two main building phases can be distinguished, marked by a similar change in masonry style at the same level.
Above the existing roof of the south chapel we find thirteen Romanesque corbels of seven different designs. They have been clearly reset as the lintels joining them have been pieced together and are of three different profiles (Fig. 21). The work is rather crudely done, as the joint between any two lintels often does not fall over a corbel. They contrast with the corbels still in situ on the west wall of the north and south arms of the transept (in the latter case, they now support a series of later, larger corbels).

Having completed the examination of the exterior walls, attention can now be turned to the interior. In the west end of the aisle (Fig. 22) there are no preserved Romanesque details except for the end wall and its window. The chamfered string course under the window is also preserved immediately west (and east) of the south portal but is missing from the stretch of wall in between. Not unexpectedly, the west end of the aisle south wall does not course across the south-west angle with the west wall of the aisle, and there is an irregular joint east of the south window. East of the south door, just above the string, there is an area of masonry that could be construed as the blocking of a window as a result of the construction of the porch—but no arch is visible (Fig. 23).

Except for the indubitably original Romanesque work, all the other features of the west end of the aisle appear to belong to two much later phases. The first initially might appear to be somewhat marginal to the discussion, as it relates to the nave arcade, yet, as will be seen, it is a determinant factor in the shaping of the most unusual aspect of the second phase.
The first phase, unexpectedly negative in character, was a drastic alteration: the removal of every other pier and the remodelling/rebuilding of the nave arcades, thereby reducing both from six bays to three very broad ones. The 'new' arcade arches are segmental curves of two broadly chamfered orders (Fig. 7). The original chevron decoration, which survives at the east end, was removed from the lower voussoirs of the alternate bays that were retained as the springers for the rebuilt central sections. Traces of the outer labels of the original arcade arches are still visible in the spandrels over the remaining piers where the projecting portions were cut back flush with the wall surface. If the Romanesque church possessed a clerestory, it presumably would have been removed at this time; there is, however, no sign of one.

A decidedly enigmatic feature is found on the aisle face of the widened westernmost arcade arch, presently visible from inside the porch room. There is a voussoir at each end that does not conform to the chamfer of the outer order. Instead, it projects slightly, and has a vertical surface as if for the abutment of additional voussoirs forming an arch that spanned the aisle (visible in Fig. 8, just above the corner of the table top). Enough remains to indicate a profile consisting of flat sides and opposing chamfers forming a broad 'V' underneath. A similar feature is found at the west end of the middle arch. There are no similar projections on the south face of the easternmost arch of the south arcade nor anywhere on the north face of the north arcade.

The alterations to the nave arcade set the stage and were determining factors for what can be fairly considered as the most unusual aspect of the west end of the south aisle, one that appears to constitute a (second) separate phase. This is the flat vault, to which the rebuilding of the exterior south wall of the aisle and the adaptive use of the stair vice (for access to the room) are seemingly related.

As a result of the removal of every other pier, the end of the aisle west of the portal, which had been equal to two bays of the nave arcade, was now equal to one bay (Figs. 1 and 7). This space is covered by a most peculiar 'ribbed' vault (Fig. 6). The centre section is flat and forms a square containing a tracery wheel of eight pointed foils with a pair of cusps radiating from a central quatrefoil. The two end sections, if brought together, would form a shallow quadripartite
Fig. 22. Bishop’s Cleeve. Interior of south aisle, west end (photograph by the author).

Fig. 23. Bishop’s Cleeve. Interior of south aisle, detail: wall east of the south portal (photograph by the author).

Fig. 24. Bishop’s Cleeve. Interior of south-west stair vice, detail: exit to the upper room (photograph by the author).

Fig. 25. Bishop’s Cleeve. Interior of upper room: exit to the stair vice (photograph by the author).
vault with a pattern of diagonal and ridge 'ribs'. Genuine transverse ribs at either end spring from corbels inserted in the wall at points opposite the deep west respond and the former second arcade pier (Figs. 22 and 23). The tracery and the ribs both have the same simple 'V'-shaped profile. It should be noted that the vault does not extend to the west wall, only to the line of the west jamb of the south window where a corbel is placed; the remaining short section of the aisle, which is equal to the depth of the Romanesque west respond (containing the stair vice), is covered by flat slabs of stone.

One of the chief considerations behind the construction of the vault seems to have been the desire to use the 12th-century stair vice contained in the respond at the end of the south arcade as a means of access to the upper room (Fig. 1). The improvised nature of this appropriation is evident in the upper wall of the vice where it has been broken through and five steps lead up to the floor level provided by the vault over the aisle (Fig. 24). The work is crudely done, although the core of the walls has been refaced with roughly shaped ashlar. An irregularly shaped depressed arch spans the opening through the vice, with the passage through the wall covered by a large flat slab that, towards the room, forms the lintel of the rectangular door frame (Fig. 25). The section over the west end of the aisle (supported by part of the flat vault) serves as a vestibule to the main part of the room (Fig. 26). It is lit by the tiny slit window already noted on the exterior (visible in Fig. 19) with a pointed arch; the very broadly splayed jambs to the interior support a straight lintel. The area of the vestibule west of the window, which is above the flat slabs, is partitioned off by a crude wooden framework and door. There is evidence that another light weight wall, running north-south, once separated the vestibule from the main space of the room, thus explaining the presence of the tiny slit window.) The walls of the vestibule (and main room) are covered by plaster in places and whitewash. The masonry seems for the most part to be a rough ashlar.

As previously mentioned, the vault forms a bridge between the vice and the west side of the room, but it also forms the floor of the section of the upper room that oversails the aisle. However, the vault does not extend the full width of the porch and room. Following after the rib at the east end of the vault, there are two more massive ribs which spring from successively higher points on the aisle wall in order to gain a corresponding footing on the opposite wall at levels above the arcade arch (visible in Fig. 23, at top centre). They thus rise higher than the floor of the room above and intrude into it at the north-east corner where they are enclosed in a bunker-like box of masonry (visible in Fig. 8, at right). Their purpose, ultimately, is to support the section of the east wall of the room above the aisle, against which wall the lean-to roof of the remainder of the aisle to the east formerly abutted.

Of the three phases of alterations visible on the exterior of the aisle, only the last, the alteration of the means of access to the room, is evident on the interior and easily co-ordinated with it. The first phase visible on the exterior, the addition of the porch, is not reflected on the interior. Conversely, the relationship between the first phase recognized on the interior—the alteration to the nave arcades—and the second phase on the exterior—the addition of the room—is more problematic.

The inescapable conclusion of the above analysis of the masonry and other features of this area, none the less, seems to be that the porch and the upper room, including the mode of access to the latter, are the result of three or more phases of building which also affected the west end of the aisle, and which reflected or were affected by alterations in the nave and additions such as the chantry chapel. The latest date for these changes can be roughly 'fixed' by the south window of the aisle to the west of the porch that matches the two western straight-headed Perpendicular windows in the south wall of the chantry chapel to the east of the porch, and by the over-scaled battlemented parapet rising above a deep cavetto punctuated by gargoyles added
to it (as well as to the chapel, west front and north aisle): window and parapet probably belong to the mid to late 15th century (or even to the early 16th century?). The date of the earlier set of alterations, succeeding the addition of the porch, is more difficult to fix as stylistic factors are less evident. Its determination is, therefore, more dependant upon archaeological sequencing.

A history of the south porch and its room, taking into consideration the several later building phases of the church, might be constructed thus:

**Phase One: the construction of the porch.** Three or four decades after the main body of the church had been completed, a sheltering porch was added in front of the south portal. The evidence for this is not only the stylistic contrast between the inner portal on the one hand and the side walls and outer arch of the porch on the other, but, primarily, the disturbed masonry joints around the inner portal marking the insertion of the side walls (Fig. 3). Moreover, the vertical joint visible at the north end of the east face of the east wall of the porch (Fig. 20) is surely the result of butting that wall of the porch against the exterior face of the south aisle wall (the latter later replaced by the thinner arcade wall of the chantry chapel). The presence of this seam appears to confirm that the porch wall abutted the original aisle wall and was not built with it.

Several other minor stylistic differences between the porch and the main body of the church may also be noted. The lower chamfered string course of the west front, which turns onto the
south facing angle buttress, is not found on the porch side walls (Figs. 18 and 19), while the clasp ing angle buttresses of the porch are different from the arrangement of the buttresses at the south-west corner of the aisle (and the exterior corners of the transept) where they are set back from the angle, being expressed individually.

The porch appears to have been equal to the height of the aisle. The evidence for this is the fact that the angle buttresses of the porch are, in their present form, less than one course higher than the pilaster buttresses at the south-west corner of the aisle (not including the glacis in either case). In addition, the change in the masonry style, to higher courses, occurs just one course higher, and is at the same level, on all three walls of the porch (Figs. 19, 2 and 20). Consequently, it can be suggested that either the roof of the porch was at the same level as the aisle roof and, therefore, overlapped or intersected it, or there was a north gable wall, the entire roof structure of the porch therefore being separate from the aisle roof, 'free standing', in a manner approximated by the small vaulted Perpendicular porch at St. Mary's, West Winch (Norfolk).

**Phase Two: the addition of the room.** The addition of a room over the vaulted porch would have been a simple process involving only the removal of the pitched roof and any corbel table forming its eaves before extending its walls upwards. The evidence that such an upward extension did take place is the change in masonry style evident in the three courses below the thin roll-moulded string course (Figs. 2, 19 and 20), and the fact that the vertical joint that marks the former junction of the east wall of the porch and the south face of the aisle wall stops two courses below this zone (five courses below the string) (Fig. 20). The lack of the vertical seam in the upper two courses of the original wall of the porch may be taken as an indication of the presence of the corbel table of the aisle eaves at this point. The presence of a rectangular window in the east wall of the room (Fig. 20, at top) suggests that the room was added before the chantry chapel was built since otherwise it would have looked into the chapel (that part of the window below the nearly flat, double pitched ceiling of uncertain date is blocked).

Since there is no evidence that the room as first erected extended over the aisle, access to it must have been located in the angle between the west wall of the porch and the south wall of the aisle, the area which was rebuilt at a later date, in the form of a staircase or a vice, in stone or wood, most likely entered from the aisle rather than from the exterior. The loss of the north end of the porch's (and room's) west wall, as well as the partial destruction of the south aisle wall west of the portal, is perhaps more easily explained by the removal of a stone vice than a wooden staircase; whether of stone or wood, a staircase would have been very steep. The suggestion of a diagonal joint rising to the east from the top of the buttress at the west end of the south aisle wall (Fig. 19), which could be construed as reflecting the roof of a staircase, can be no such thing, as the wall below it replaced any such staircase and the wall above it could not have remained *in situ* while such a process was being carried out. Just how to explain the presence of diagonally jointed stones and a break in coursing is less clear.

**Phase Three: the enlargement of the room and the adaptation of the south-west stair vice to provide access to it.** It may be suggested that the third phase consisted of the removal of the exterior stair(case or vice) and the creation of a new access to the upper room by using the existing 12th-century stair vice at the end of the nave arcade and constructing the flat vault over the west end of the aisle. This work also resulted in the enlargement of the room. Indeed, the desire for a larger room may have been the primary motive for changing the means of access and the insertion of the vault. The length of the vault was obviously planned in relationship to the altered arcade bay (Fig. 7), and therefore the vault must date from *after* the removal of every other pier. The removal of the exterior stair necessitated the repair of the north end of the west wall of the
porch and room, as well as of the south wall of the aisle between the porch and the south-west angle buttress of the west front. This work included the creation of two small windows, one in the wall over the aisle which must have been intended to light a vestibule area created by a wooden partition running north-south, and the other at the north end of the west wall of the porch room proper. The proximity of the latter to the larger window (created or just rebuilt at this time?) just to the south suggests that there must have been an additional east-west cross wall a little to the south of the line of the aisle wall, thus creating a large anteroom (only a little wider than the space over the aisle) to the main room, the original room over the porch, lighted by one of its original two windows.

The final, existing form of the upper room and the means of access to it may perhaps be associated with alterations made to the south side of the nave in the 15th century. It was probably at this time that the south chapel’s windows were replaced by new, possibly larger, three-light openings. Although the eastern window has a segmentally curved arch and the western two are straight-headed, the tracery in all three is basically the same, as are also the profiles of the lateral jambs. The south window in the west end of the aisle appears to be a reduced and simplified version of the chapel windows, especially the western ones (Fig. 2, visible to right of porch), because of its straight head. It was probably at the same time that the south chapel, the west end of the south aisle and the north aisle all received a massive crenellated parapet. The parapet is supported by a large cavetto moulding which is punctuated at intervals by grotesque gargoyles. Thus, the rearrangement of the access to the upper room allowed the west end of the aisle to be brought into stylistic conformity with the chapel’s south wall.

This hypothetical sequence of events focussing on the porch and the room above it still leaves a number of questions regarding various details unanswered.

Question 1: Why was the south aisle roof raised twice (Fig. 27)?

Below the existing aisle roof (of nearly flat pitch, which spans aisle and chantry chapel in one go), there are three flashings: the original projecting (and slightly curving) flashing is succeeded by two cuttings, the upper one straighter than the lower one which parallels the slight curving line of the original. (None of these flashings appears on the west face of the transept wall visible south of the chapel arcade wall owing, it would seem, to the refacing of this area; further to the south, the north jamb of the blocked Romanesque west window of the transept arm is, however, still evident.)

The first slight increase in the height of the aisle roof, which replicated the slope of the original, corresponds in level to the projecting flashing now visible above the nave arcades that, significantly, is at the same level as the projecting flashing under the corbels on the north wall of the porch room. The latter observation provides the major argument against the corbels being in situ. It is very likely that the alterations to the nave arcade, which were so extensive, would have been the occasion for the reconstruction of the aisle roof. It could be postulated that the corbels for the nave eaves were reset at the same time.

It should be noted that the lower ends of the original flashing as well as the grooved cutting slightly above it rise from a level that is below the apex of the chantry chapel’s arcade arches (and the flat, slightly projecting string above them). Therefore, both flashings related to the original wall of the aisle. This further implies that the nave arcade was altered before the chantry chapel was built.

The upper grooved flashing, indicating a roof of a flatter pitch, may relate to the later reroofing of the aisle after the construction of the chapel rather than to a single sloping roof covering aisle and chapel as has been suggested; as noted, it is not visible on the portion of the west face of the transept forming the east wall of the chapel, nor on the east face of the
south porch's east wall. (There are four courses of 'new' masonry above the narrow, flat, slightly projecting string over the chantry arcade which must relate to the construction of the existing single roof covering both aisle and chapel.)

**Question 2:** What is the significance of the projecting flashing on the east wall of the porch (Fig. 20)?

It may be noted that the location of the segment of purported flashing projecting from the east wall of the porch/room corresponds to the three courses of masonry below the roll-moulded string course which have been identified as showing a change in masonry style and thus indicating a separate phase of construction. Therefore, its identification as the remains of the original flashing of the first steeply sloping aisle roof must be rejected. Furthermore, unlike the projecting flashings preserved on the transept walls at the east end of both aisles (Fig. 27)—the projecting portion of the flashing over the north aisle arch has been cut off—this segment of purported flashing does not consist of a diagonal course of bar-like lengths of stone set into horizontally coursed ashlar, but rather is cut from the same pieces of stone as the (three) horizontally coursed blocks which it crosses: its joints are horizontal, not 'diagonal' (the joints of the flashing at the ends of the aisles are, of course, vertical, that is perpendicular to the upper and lower planes of the [diagonally positioned] bars).

More significantly, if all of the east wall of the porch/room is no later than c. 1200, it should reveal, especially at this upper level, that the south aisle roof was later twice altered, as is evidenced on the west face of the west wall of the south transept arm above the arches which opened from the original narrow aisle (Fig. 27).

The projection of this piece of 'weathering' is rectangular in section, i.e. its upper surface is not downward sloping and it shows no sign of being weathered. Nevertheless, considering that it is integral to the masonry of the east wall of the added room, the best explanation for the presence of this diagonal projection would seem to be that it was a response to the (second) aisle roof by the builders of the room. If this was indeed the case, its presence provides another argument for the precedence of the construction of the room over that of the chapel.

**Question 3:** When was the room added?

The fabric analysis of the east wall of the porch established that the room over the porch was added before the south chapel was erected. It will be recalled that the (four visible) courses, including the string, which have been identified as a phase subsequent to the porch proper, do not bond with the arcade wall of the chapel, in contrast to the narrow strip of wall below, between the vertical seam (owing to the porch wall having been butted against the original aisle wall) and the plane of the arcade wall (Fig. 20). Another argument may be advanced.

If the chantry chapel had been built before the room was added to the porch, it would have been necessary to extend the east wall of the porch upwards in order to form a west gable wall for the taller chapel. That extension would subsequently have had to have been torn down to create the present east wall of the room, which shows no evidence of enlargement from a gable form. In addition, as in the case of Bredon, it seems unlikely that a window would have been let into the east wall of the room if the chapel was already in existence, unless, of course, it was to serve some sort of liturgical function relating room and chapel.

The foregoing analysis suggests, therefore, that the room was added to the porch in the early 14th century. This date seems to be confirmed by the shape of the often mentioned string course found on all three exterior walls of the porch. The projecting roll flows continuously into the hollow under it without any articulation: the lack of articulation distinguishes it from the 13th-century manner and places it in the 14th century.
Question 4: How does the addition of the upper room fit into the history of major alterations to the church in the first half of the 14th century?

The addition of the room above the porch apparently belongs to a period, the first half of the 14th century, when many other changes were made to the church fabric: a new wider north aisle was built; the south chantry chapel was added; the east and part of the south walls of the south transept arm were rebuilt; and a new longer chancel was constructed. All this work has usually been dated to the early decades of the century, some of it as early as c. 1310. These four projects, however, seem to be the product of separate campaigns, as the form of the buttresses and the tracery patterns vary from unit to unit (for a description, see below, Appendix 1). The reasons for some of the extensive alterations or rebuilding in the 14th century might be considered, for some evidence suggests that not all of these projects were motivated either by new liturgical needs or fashions or by private devotion or display. Of these projects, it is the construction of the chantry chapel which is most relevant for determining an approximate period for the addition of the room. To this list one other, which has not previously been dated to this period, needs to be included: the near total rebuilding of the nave arcades.

(a) The first major alteration to the Romanesque fabric, after the addition of the porch, was most probably the rebuilding of the north aisle to twice its original width, that is, to a width equal to the length of the north arm of the transept (see Fig. 1 and Appendix 1a). Because the windows are east of the centre of each of its three bays (as marked by the external buttresses) rather than on the axis of each bay, it appears that the aisle was planned in relationship to the arcades of the six-bayed Romanesque nave, and therefore preceded its alteration. Since there is only a slight suggestion of the ogee curve in the window tracery, the unvaulted north aisle could date from the late 13th century. The resulting space is actually larger than the nave and therefore could have accommodated an even larger congregation in attendance upon an altar placed against the west wall of the transept arm.

(b) The second major alteration may have been the elimination of every other pier and the reforming of the arcade arches. Here it is necessary to ask what were the reasons for this drastic change. Surely it was for reasons other than 'in the interests of space'.

Evidence of instability within the main body of the church is very visible in the north nave arcade, which leans outward, and in the north end of the west front, which leans westwards: indeed, a massive and strongly projecting buttress has been added on the exterior against the end of the north arcade and stair vice; it is usually dated to the 14th or 15th century. (The lean-to roof of the widened north aisle would not have provided any significant counterthrust to the arcade wall.)

That there were problems at the east end of the nave, with the stability of the presumably late 12th-century crossing tower, may be inferred from a large stone inserted at the end of each aisle, in the angle formed by the junction of the nave arcade wall and the west wall of the transept. In both aisles it is found just under the projecting flashing of the early aisle roof (Fig. 27). The section of these two stones is identical, being roughly triangular with a short projecting 'stem' at the top. This suggests, along with their location, that they belonged to arches which formed 'flying buttresses' that diagonally spanned the aisles (the 'stem' would have formed a broad fillet on the back of the arch). The only purpose such arches could have had was to reinforce the western piers of the crossing tower.

The deconstruction of the nave arcade by eliminating every other pier, the spandrel over each, and half of each adjoining arch, must certainly have involved the removal of the wall supported by the arcade and therefore the dismantling of the entire nave roof. In the process, it appears that the Romanesque ashlar had been carefully preserved in order to use it in the rebuilding of the upper walls. Although on the nave side the line of the extrados of the label
of the 12th-century arches remains in the spandrel over each of the surviving piers, there is no trace of the 12th-century arches on the aisle sides of the nave arcades, nor any indication of the abutment of the 12th-century aisle roof which should appear under the existing roofs (the projecting flashing at the east end of the north aisle abuts the nave wall two courses below the roof).

Consequently, it might be asked if the response to instability in the nave arcades was the removal of a clerestory with the result that every other pier was removed in order to admit more light into the central space from the aisle windows and thus to compensate for the loss of the clerestory. However, there is some evidence that contradicts these logical suppositions, for a projecting stone flashing is preserved against the east side of the north-west façade turret that reveals the former existence of a nave roof of the same slope as the existing one at a slightly higher level (Fig. 28). It therefore may be doubted that there was sufficient height between the nave arcade arches and the roof for a clerestory. The new segmental arches rise only slightly higher than the original ones, for they intrude into the course immediately above a narrow one that appears to have been a string course, now trimmed back, which remains in each spandrel area. The wall above the trimmed-back string course, now, and probably originally, of eight

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**Fig. 28.** Bishop’s Cleeve. North-west façade turret viewed from east, with projecting flashing for original roof (photograph by the author).
courses of masonry, could have accommodated, it would seem, at most, rather small clerestory windows that would have admitted little light even if broadly splayed. Yet, it should be noted, the window at the west end of the south aisle requires only six courses of masonry externally (Fig. 18).

The simple chamfered forms of the new orders of the arcade do not offer any precise guide to their date. However, the timbers of the nave roof have been dated to the 14th century, which seems plausible considering that the latest changes in the south aisle (which are dependant upon the altered arcade) most likely are no earlier than the mid 15th century. If a 14th-century date for the roof is correct, it suggests that it may have been in that century that significant alterations to the nave—and to the porch—were carried out.

On the south side, the alterations to the nave arcade seem to have resulted in the rebuilding of the aisle roof at a slightly higher level but similar pitch, and the related introduction of a projecting flashing the length of the aisle. The lack of similar features on the north side reinforces the suggestion that the widening of the north aisle preceded the alteration of the arcades.

The precise reasons for the extensive alterations in the nave remains elusive. The east end of the nave, particularly its roof, might have been damaged by the fall of a central tower; as we have seen, the nave roof has been dated to the 14th century. However, as the south chapel appears to postdate the first alteration in the height of the south aisle roof, which has been explained by the alteration of the nave elevation, and, at the same time, appears stylistically earlier than the chancel, the collapse of the central tower, if such there was at this time, was not a major factor in determining the alterations to the nave arcades. Was rebuilding occasioned by the instability of the north nave arcade? Why was every other pier removed?

(c) The erection of the south chantry chapel may constitute the third major alteration and the second major addition (see Fig. 1 and Appendix 1b). Unfortunately, since its three south windows have all been replaced in the Perpendicular style, the dating depends upon the meagre decorative details of the arcade and the tomb above. The appearance of the ball flower suggests a date c. 1315–30. In order to create the chapel, the eastern four bays of the aisle wall were demolished and replaced by a tall arcade of three bays with deep responds at east and west; an exterior wall was built, extending from the west corner of the south arm of the transept to the east corner of the porch.

The building of the chapel seems to have followed after the first alteration in the height of the aisle roof because its arcade wall rises at least one course, possibly two, higher than the lower end of the grooved cutting representing the flashing of that roof. Its construction probably resulted in the rebuilding of the aisle roof yet again, this time to a much reduced slope, represented by the highest grooved cutting, against the transept face (Fig. 27).

Presumably, the original roof of the chapel was of a double pitch, although how it then would have related to the flanking roofs of transept and porch/room is not clear as gable walls would be required unless the roof ran into the adjoining ones. A steeply pitched roof would have allowed the east window to open fully into the chapel. Large unused corbels in the south wall may have related to this earlier roof. It is most likely that it was at the time of the construction of the existing parapets (15th century) that the roof was reduced to its present slope, a double pitched ceiling inserted over the chapel (causing the lower part of the east window of the room to be blocked up) and the arcade wall above the string course rebuilt and heightened.

(d) The rebuilding of part of the south arm of the transept was perhaps the fourth medieval phase of work on the church (see Appendix 1c). The rebuilding of a large part of the south transept raises the possibility that such work could have been occasioned by the collapse of a Romanesque crossing tower which fell towards the south-east. As noted above, the insertion of
‘flying’ buttresses at the east ends of the aisles suggest problems with the stability of the central tower.

(e) The last of the numerous 14th-century alterations may have been the chancel (see Appendix 1d). Although it is not remarkable that a Romanesque sanctuary, whether apsidal or flat-ended, would have been rebuilt (enlarged) in a succeeding period, the collapse of a crossing tower that primarily fell towards the south-east could also—possibly but not necessarily—explain the rebuilding of the chancel. No trace of the Romanesque chancel survives. On the exterior, the side walls of the chancel directly abut the east walls of the transept arms. On the interior, owing to the complete rebuilding of the crossing c. 1700 (see Appendix 2), any evidence for the history of the central tower prior to that date has been eliminated.

**Question 5:** When were the Romanesque corbels placed in their present position in the porch room (Fig. 8)?

As has been described above, the projecting flashing located two courses below the corbels does not correspond with the original aisle roof, but rather with the second (Fig. 27), which, it has been suggested, probably resulted from the rebuilding of the nave elevation. Thus, the corbels could have been inserted when the wall above the arcade was rebuilt; they may have extended to the west end of the aisle before the room was enlarged and provided with a new means of access, at which time they disappeared; if they had continued east of the room, to the east end of the aisle, they may have been eliminated when the roofs over the aisle and chapel were modified to one of a single slope (and reset at the top of the east wall of the porch room?). Alternatively, they may have been inserted in the 15th century when the room was enlarged and the nave arcade wall became the north wall of the room, but this possibility seems less likely.

There is no evidence concerning the original location of the corbels. *In-situ* corbels remain on the east and west sides of the north arm of the transept and on the west side of the south arm; they must have been used for the nave eaves, if not also for the aisle eaves. Unlike the reset corbels of the east wall of the porch room, those now visible within the room are regularly spaced and joined by uniform lintels.

Is it of any significance that the corbels show little sign of weathering? Rather surprisingly, comparison with the reset corbels of the east wall of the room as well as those of the west wall of the south arm of the transept suggest not. Although those corbels are blackened by pollution, they are not really weathered, as their surfaces and angles are crisp under the soot.

**Question 6:** When was the south window of the upper room (Fig. 2) set into the wall and where did it come from?

Accounting for the one feature that has seemingly been ignored in this discussion, the window in the south wall of the porch, is perhaps the most difficult task. On the interior (Fig. 9), owing to its widely splayed jambs and despite its depressed arch, it appears to be of the same period as the other windows. On the outside, the detailing (as described earlier) suggests an early 13th-century date. Its date is, therefore, in conflict with the evidence that suggests that the room was constructed after the nave arcade had been altered, that is sometime in the early 14th century, a period which also seems to best suit the profile of the external string course. How can this dichotomy be explained? A restoration carried out by an over-zealous advocate of historical consistency comes to mind as a possibility.

Restoration at Bishop’s Cleeve occurred much later than it did at Bredon and it is somewhat better documented. About 1879 it was reported that ‘[t]he present condition of the church generally is one of neglect ... the antiquary will be thankful that as yet the church has been spared that sweeping and destructive so-called “Restoration” ...’"41 When restoration work was
finally carried out, it was under the direction of Henry Allen Prothero (1848–1906) and took place at various times beginning in 1891 and extending into the first decade of the 20th century.

A description of the room prior to the restoration states that the ‘end window of the room is the original one, it was rebated inside for a wooden shutter, the present splayed jambs are modern’. The exterior form of the south window was not described in any particular detail beyond noting that it had ‘square-headed lights of a thoroughly domestic character’. Nor was it illustrated, but, curiously, a window at Oakham Castle (Rutland) was. The parallel is not exact for the two-light windows at Oakham are not framed by a superordinate arch and are separated only by a centre shaft; there is no moulded frame and each light is surmounted by a tympanum. On the interior, semicircular-arched recesses have unplayed side walls extending to the floor.

Unfortunately, the south window is not the result of Prothero’s restoration in the 1890s for it appears in its present form in an engraving a century earlier, a view of ‘Cleeve Church’ from the south-west, published by T. Cadell (Strand), 1 November 1793. Therefore, if the existing form of the window is not the product of 19th-century restoration, the alternative to accepting it as being in situ is to consider if the outer frame might have been reset. Several possible occasions present themselves: when the room was initially constructed; slightly later, during some phase of the numerous other alterations to the church in the 14th century; at the time the existing central tower was constructed; or when the room was adapted for new uses in the mid 18th century. There is, admittedly, no obvious sign that the window has been inserted, except for the fact that the string course abuts the label/arch of the window in a rather unusual manner. However, at some time the gable has been partially rebuilt so that it forms a pendant to that of the south arm of the transept.

If the window was altered to its present form in the mid 18th century, a difficult question is raised: from where was the window frame relocated? No obvious answer is forthcoming. If the window was salvaged from the collapsed crossing tower in 1696—if that was indeed the case and it could be proved—it would eliminate the hypothesis that an early medieval tower collapsed in the 14th century. If the window was inserted at an earlier date, the question in part then becomes (again): from where was it relocated? A similar answer can be postulated. If a tower fell in the 14th century, then that early crossing tower becomes a possible source. The somewhat more ‘advanced’ style of the window, when compared to other details of the added porch, could further suggest that the original central tower was completed (raised above the level of the adjoining roofs) shortly after the porch was added. The final possibility is that the window is original to the porch, but gave light only to a low roof-space above the vault of the porch, a space that was reached—if used at all—only by a ladder through this very window (as hypothesized for Bredon with the cited parallel of Lincoln); the window was reused when the actual room was built. The penultimate possibility sketched above, the reuse of earlier material in the 14th century, may gain some plausibility when it is recalled that 12th-century corbels were reused to top off the east wall of the porch room, perhaps following the precedent of the reconstructed nave elevation.

This attempt to reconstruct the history of the porch and room has of necessity expanded into a new hypothesis regarding the building sequence of the many parts which constitute the unity of this deceptively simple looking structure. If the history of the porch and room have been correctly outlined, there are, nonetheless, a number of nagging details which seem to defy satisfactory explanation. What was the purpose of the three arches—if, indeed, that is the correct interpretation of the ‘eccentric’ voussoirs on the south face of the west half of the south nave arcade—which spanned the south aisle? Why was the nave elevation so drastically rebuilt?
there a clerestory originally? Why was the east half of the south arm of the transept rebuilt? Did a Romanesque crossing tower fall in the 14th century? After the fall of a ‘spire’, why was the central tower and, especially, the entire crossing rebuilt c. 1700?

Conclusions

If the upper rooms at Bredon and Bishop’s Cleeve date to the late 12th century they would be unique, for no other parish churches before the Perpendicular period are known to have had porches with rooms over them. From the 12th century only three other such porches are known and they are associated with major churches. The earliest of these is at nearby Tewkesbury Abbey and thus, admittedly, could have served as a model for the porches at Bredon and Bishop’s Cleeve (Fig. 30). The north porch at Tewkesbury must date from the very late 11th or early 12th century. The room over the barrel vault of the porch proper is reached by a passage-way contained in the thickness of the west and north walls of the north aisle. Internally, in its present state, it is devoid of any architectural features except for a possible window in its north (gable) wall. There is no sign of any aumbries.

The two other extant porches date from the end of the 12th century and are therefore roughly contemporary with those at Bishop’s Cleeve and Bredon, although they are found in other, relatively distant, parts of the country. The earlier of the two is at Southwell Minster (Nottinghamshire), located in the fifth bay from the east (fourth bay from the west) of the north aisle (Fig. 31); the later is at Selby Abbey (Yorkshire), also placed in the fifth bay from the east (fourth bay from the west) of the north aisle (Fig. 32). Both upper rooms are reached in a simpler, if not necessarily more convenient, way than the one at Tewkesbury. Access in each case is provided by a large opening from the roof-space over the north aisle vaults, which in turn is reached by way of the stair vice in the north-west tower. Thus, if there originally was a room over the added porch at Bishop’s Cleeve, access to it would have had to have been improvised in some way at that time. Judging from the few other 12th-century examples at major buildings, such as Tewkesbury, Selby and Southwell, it could not be expected that a newel stair would have been built in the thickness of the wall or in an angle. Clearly one was not.

If the hypotheses put forward here are correct, the anomaly of two parish churches of the second half of the 12th century having rooms over porches is eliminated. The construction of rooms or usable spaces over the porches at some date in the 14th century would accord with a period when such upper rooms were becoming a common feature of parish churches all over the country. Of the two rooms the smaller, that at Bredon, is the more extraordinary by virtue of the amazing number of cupboards or aumbries that it contains and, even more, by the provision of two of them with the curious feature of a ‘tank’ or caddy in one side. The tanks are a unique feature, but so too is the number of aumbries which exceeds by far the number of aumbries found occasionally in any of the porch rooms of major buildings; these include Southwell and the very late example at Hereford Cathedral. What was stored in all these cupboards and, especially, why were so many cupboards necessary here at this small parish church?

In the case of Bredon, it has been variously suggested that the room (despite the uncertainties of how it was reached) was the domicile for a recluse or a muniment room or that it was actually never functional. The architect J. H. Middleton thought that the extension of the room at Bishop’s Cleeve was probably to accommodate a priest or clerk. Given the size of the space, compared to that at Bredon, its use as an ‘office’ is more plausible but, none the less, there is no remaining documentary or physical evidence to determine any use of the room before the Reformation.
The exact reasons for the appearance and proliferation of rooms over porches at parish churches during the 14th and 15th centuries has never been systematically investigated. It is probably only in the context of, or as a result of, such a study that a plausible explanation might be advanced for the conversion and use of these spaces at Bredon and Bishop’s Cleeve. Nevertheless, it is very clear that the function of these two rooms must have been very different. Certainly its small size and the presence of the cupboards as well as the means of access indicates that the primary purpose of the room at Bredon was storage. In contrast, the larger room at Bishop’s Cleeve, lacking any sign of cupboards, must have been intended, especially after its enlargement and improved accessibility, for frequent use by one or more persons. In fact, its apparent subdivision by light-weight walls into several chambers suggests a somewhat domestic apartment and perhaps argues for a very late date for this phase, possibly even post Reformation.57

APPENDIX 1

Acknowledged alterations and additions of the 14th century at Bishop’s Cleeve

(a) North aisle: the four slender buttresses of the north aisle wall, which do not rise the full height of the wall, divide it into three nearly equal bays (‘nearly’ because the west bay is wider owing to the depth of the Romanesque west respond containing the stair vice) that correspond to the existing three bays of the (altered Romanesque) nave arcade. This might initially suggest a terminus ante quem for the alteration of the nave arcade. However, the three-light windows are placed off centre to the east in relation to each of the enlarged arcade bays; thus, they would have been almost opposite the second and on the axes of the fourth and sixth bays of the original nave arcade. This therefore suggests that the north aisle wall was designed in relationship to the still complete five pier arcade. The reason that the aisle was not divided into six bays was perhaps a desire for three wide windows rather than six narrow (?) single lights. The tracery is essentially simple intersecting ‘Y’ tracery with daggers formed between the three lights that each have two sets of cusps. As the ogee curve is not exploited, the windows and, therefore, the aisle could date to the late 13th century. (The four-light window at the west end of the aisle is late unimaginative Perpendicular in style.) The buttresses have two articulated setbacks of two courses each; a broad chamfer forms a continuous plinth for the wall while the cyma below the first setback forms a continuous string.

(b) South chapel: like the north aisle, the chapel’s south wall also received four buttresses dividing it into three bays. The buttresses have two setbacks with a continuous plinth formed by a broad rolled chamfer rising above an inverted cavetto. The three original south windows have been replaced. The chapel opens into the south aisle of the nave through three moulded arches springing from octagonal piers—without base mouldings—that stand on high plinths of roughly tooled masonry (the diagonal facets originate in three different ways: straight up from a flat surface; with a flaring chamfer; or with a kind of knob). Ball flower also occurs sporadically on the cavetto of the simply moulded capitals of the piers and responds. A tomb recess between the east and middle bays of the south wall has two rows of ball flower ornament. A ceiling of low double pitch covers the chapel (chapel and adjacent aisle are covered by a single roof of slight slope) just two narrow courses above the arcade arch; four figurated corbels (lion’s head; figure; lion’s head; and dragon?) in the south wall are not used to support the ceiling beams.
Fig. 29. Lincoln Cathedral. North portal of great transept (so-called Dean’s Portal), c. 1216/20 (photograph by the author).

Fig. 30. Tewkesbury Abbey. North porch viewed from the north-east (photograph by the author).

Fig. 31. Southwell Minster. North porch viewed from the north-east (photograph by the author).

Fig. 32. Selby Abbey. North porch viewed from the north-east (photograph by the author).
(c) South transept arm: the east wall of the south arm of the transept, including its base moulding, has been completely rebuilt, along with the south wall from sill level east of the inserted three-light Decorated window. On the exterior, it does not bond with the south wall of the chancel; nor is there any sign of repairs which might be attributable to the collapse of the central tower in 1696. The profile of the diagonally positioned buttress inserted at the south-east corner of the arm does not match that of the chancel buttresses: there are three setbacks with only a narrow chamfer at the base.

The east wall is built of small blocks of ashlar, the tooling on the interior surface rather coarse and variable: it might contain reused Romanesque masonry, and it appears to bond with the south wall of the tower only in courses one and two and eight to fifteen. The north end of the 12th-century west wall of the transept may have been repaired (blocks reset) but even then it courses only irregularly with the south wall of the tower.

The tracery of the new south window is similar to that inserted in the north wall of the north arm, no doubt at the same time: within a frame work essentially of 'Y'-pattern tracery, trefoil subheads support inverted daggers in the steeply pointed head of each light with an additional three inverted daggers between and above. The jamb mouldings of the window are similar to those of the chancel windows, although the label, which has a fillet, is different (the chancel labels have a hollow); head stops, however, are used on both transept and chancel labels. In contrast to the chantry chapel and the chancel, the ball flower motif is absent from the south arm.

(d) Chancel: the Decorated chancel appears to be slightly wider than the Romanesque one was, as its north wall overlaps the south jamb of a small portal at the south end of the east wall of the surviving Romanesque north arm of the transept. Slender buttresses also divide the long chancel into three bays. (On the north side, a buttress west of the westernmost window has been removed; the projecting plinth remains: it had no counterpart on the south.) Tall buttresses, with three sets of setbacks, are distinguished by a plinth band consisting of a large pointed roll moulding above a broad hollow chamfer (in contrast to the simple wide chamfer of the north aisle buttresses). The cavetto cornice of the eaves is decorated with large ball pellets. The five-light east window has been restored; ball flower ornament appears on its exterior frame and on the exterior jamb and arch of the 'priest's door' in the south wall. A two-light window is placed in each bay but it is only in the middle bay that the windows are centred; in the east and west bays the windows are off-axis to the west. The eastern and middle pairs have identical tracery (the lights have cusped ogee heads with a cinquefoil formed by pointed ogee lobes in between); that the western pair differs has been attributed to its being 'damaged and rebuilt by local masons after the collapse of the tower', and the work has been described as 'crude in comparison with the work of the earlier masons'. There is, however, no sign of damage to or rebuilding of the walls of the west bay, especially in the areas adjacent to the windows. In fact, there is no evidence of any damage to the chancel as a result of the fall of the central tower in 1696. The masonry of the south wall does not course across the angle with the east wall of the south arm of the transept.

The tooling of the interior surfaces of the side walls of the chancel is very varied; indeed, it is often quite rough and crude, suggesting that the walls were originally plastered. The side walls do not bond with the east wall of the tower.

(e) West window: the tracery of the large three-light window of the west front uses the ogee curve in a simple reticulated or net pattern: ogee-headed lights of the same height with three ogee daggers (the lower two inverted) above.
APPENDIX 2

The crossing and central tower at Bishop’s Cleeve

According to S. Rudder, ‘In the year 1696, the spire fell down, and the present tower was rebuilt, without a steeple, in the year 1700 at the expense of 770l’. The collapse of the tower, however, seems not to have caused any apparent damage to the chancel, transept arms, or nave, despite the statements of several 18th-century writers that the chancel was greatly damaged or even effectively destroyed. Neither the piers nor the east wall of the tower to either side of and above the arch courses with the side walls of the chancel, which are of uniform build. These features argue against the west end of the chancel having been damaged and rebuilt as a consequence of the fall of the tower. In the south arm of the transept, the south face of the tower appears to course irregularly with the west wall, the end of which seems to have been repaired, but with the east wall only in its lowest two courses and in courses eight to fourteen. The north face of the north wall of the tower does not course with either the east or west walls of the north arm of the transept. The upper part of the wall, from two courses above the apex of the arch resembles the exterior masonry of the tower due to the use of large blocks. The west face of the west wall does not course with the north or south nave arcade responds. Inside the crossing, the masonry of the tower arches and the walls appears uniform and consistent, and is clearly the product of post-medieval rebuilding.

All of the foregoing factors reinforce the suggestion that the collapse of the central tower did not cause a great deal of damage to the main—medieval—fabric of the church. Richard Furney, writing in 1718/19, recorded that he was told that the ‘foundation of the steeple was defective & for some time before its fall the neighbors conceiv’d by the moving of the stones that twould not long continue’. As it is the tower piers and arches which have been most certainly rebuilt, it might be suggested that the fall was occasioned by the piers giving away and that the tower descended vertically into the crossing area (more or less as the central tower and spire of Chichester Cathedral did on 21 February 1861). Perhaps more masonry fell on the chancel roof, than on the transepts or nave roofs, causing its collapse and consequent destruction of the chancel furnishings, which resulted in the later (exaggerated) reports of ‘great damage’ or ‘dilapidation’.

Whatever remained of the crossing piers after the collapse was demolished in such a way that the ends of each pair of medieval walls appear, from the interior, to be neatly abutted by the new supports for the tower consisting of the four ‘L’-plan piers joined by pointed arches (Fig. 2).

The piers, with chamfered angles, and a single shaft, coursed with the piers, in each angle, are of large blocks of ashlar, smoothly finished (Fig. 33). The base moulding, only visible at the west, has the form of a simple broad chamfer. Their most sophisticated feature is a continuous moulding, consisting of a wide cyma between a narrow roll (bottom) and fillet (top) of equal width, at impost level. Each of the angle-shafts has a moulded capital composed of a wide ovolo with an abacus consisting of a hollow chamfer, topped by a fillet and a roll, and necking ring formed by an cyma with a fillet above. The steeply pointed arches that rise from the piers are constructed of two rows of voussoirs and, like the piers, are simply chamfered.

The south-west shaft now lacks a capital, whilst most of the continuous moulding of the reentrant angle and the face under the west arch of the pier has been ripped away or cut back (Fig. 34). Middleton implied that the capitals were made of plaster: was the south-west one damaged, then repaired in plaster (in the early 19th century?), and the plaster removed during the late 19th-century restoration? The ‘damage’ might be explained by the insertion of a sounding board for a high pulpit which apparently stood in the crossing; upon its removal, plaster might have been used to fill in the scar.
But what did this work replace? Had the Romanesque crossing and tower been affected by the instability evident in the nave? Were there attempts to buttress it from the west (the stumps of the ‘flying’ buttresses still remaining at the end of the aisles)? Had the tower even collapsed—thus explaining, if not necessarily the rebuilding of the chancel, the rebuilding of the east cull of the south arm of the transept? Whether the tower that collapsed was the original Romanesque one, or whether that original tower had earlier collapsed and been replaced by a 14th-century one or, indeed, whether the Romanesque tower had been increased in height by the addition of stages or a spire/steeple is now impossible to know.

The bell ringers’ room is reached by means of a crude wooden ‘staircase-ladder’ placed against the west wall of the north arm of the transept; it is generally dated to the 15th century; the upper and lower rails of the balustrade are reused. The Romanesque tower may have been reached via a stair vice in the north-east angle of the transept.

The exterior of the tower is rather plain and there is no spire. The angles are not buttressed. Just above a string course at the level of the apices of the adjacent roofs there is a small single pointed light with chamfered jambs in the middle of each face. The openings of the bell-chamber are halfway up the height of the tower and consist of a semicircularly arched window divided into two lights by vertical central mullion; the semicircular arch of each sub-light is cusped, and
the area between the arches is pierced. A second string course runs around the tower at the level of the spinging of the window arches and forms a hood mould over them. A third string course, with gargoyles at the angles, forms the base for the parapet edged with a moulding and sporting angle pinnacles with a rectangular panel in each face. The pinnacles terminate in short spires with crockets and finials.

Acknowledgements

At Bredon, I would like to express my gratitude to Canon C.J. Ridout, the then rector, and to Mrs. Sally Deakin, then a churchwarden, for aiding and abetting my ascent into the upper room in 1996 and again in 1997. At Bishop’s Cleeve, where access to the upper room is more routine, I am, nonetheless, much obliged to Miss Eunice Powell for her assistance and interest on a number of occasions, and to the former rector, Canon John Mead, for granting me permission to gain access to the aisle roofs in 2000.

Notes
3. Anon. (‘Parish Church of St. Michael and All Angels’) got it right: ‘Norman porches are rare; double-storey Norman porches are very few’. Also see below, note 51.
5. Middleton, ‘Church of St. Michael’, 263, assigned the rather precise date of c. 1310, for which he advanced no evidence, to the chapel; it was accepted by M. Tomlinson in *V.C.H. Glos.* 8, 22, without comment (plan of church on p. 21). The date was apparently based on style, for there is no documentary evidence: scanty ball flower on the arcade capitals does at least suggest a date some time in the early 14th century.
8. A chapel (Mitton Chapel) was opened off the east half of the south side of the nave c. 1230. This extension was balanced by the addition of a north aisle in the 14th century.
10. As will be discussed below, every other pier of the 12th-century arcade was removed at a later date.
11. Middleton, ‘Church of St. Michael’, 266, dated it to the late 15th or early 16th century; accepted by Tomlinson, see *V.C.H. Glos.* 8, 22.
12. Five corbels have a simple pattern of back-to-back scallops; two have billets; one is a bearded head; the last is a cat-like face.
13. The following ‘history’ was first constructed by Middleton, ‘Church of St. Michael’, 253, 266–7, and accepted by later writers such as Verey, *Glos.* 105 (‘It is thus clear that the upper portion of the porch was detached from the main building prior to Perp. times’).
14. Middleton, ‘Church of St. Michael’, 261, dated the ‘extension’ to the late 15th or early 16th century, the date he assigned (p. 266) to the vault over the aisle. As will be seen, his (broad) dating is correct in this respect.
15. None of the authorities cited above has remarked that there is no evidence of a clerestory, a phenomenon which, in a large aisled church of the late 12th century, would have been unusual. Generally, one finds that aisled Romanesque parish churches have had their clerestories enlarged, although, admittedly, not in all cases has the evidence of the earlier clerestory been preserved.

16. **South (entrance) wall**: eastern cupboard, 920 mm high × 570 mm wide and 550 mm deep, set at 790 mm from present floor; western cupboard, 850 mm high × 560 mm wide and 560 mm deep, set at 820 mm from the present floor: rebate, in each case, of 35 × 35 mm; groove (40 × 40 mm) for a shelf set at a height of 460 mm in the east cupboard and of 440 mm in the western one.

   **East wall**: small cupboard south of window, 360 mm wide × 410 mm high × 340 mm deep, unrebated; larger one north of window, 420 mm wide × 580 mm high × 430 mm deep: ‘tank’, 280 mm high × 440 mm long, with rebate of 20 mm.

   **West wall**: south cupboard, 390 mm wide × 370 mm high × 400 mm deep, unrebated; larger cupboard, 400 mm wide × 570 mm high × 460 mm deep, with rebate 40 × 40 mm; ‘tank’, 280 mm high × 430 mm long, with rebate of 20 mm.

   **North wall**: east cupboard, 290 mm high × 390 mm wide × 330 mm deep; west cupboard, 290 mm high × 350 mm wide × 310 mm deep.

I am greatly indebted to Peter Howell for help in taking these measurements (that is to say, he took them and I recorded them).

17. *V.C.H. Worcs.* 3, 289: ‘There is no made floor, a fact which seems to indicate that, whatever its intended use, it was abandoned soon after its construction’.


20. The fret pattern also appears on the arches that open from the transept into the aisles.


23. Walker, ‘Bredon Church’, 338: ‘The extensive restorations which were effected about twelve years ago appear to have been conducted so as to preserve uninjured the character of the original work ...’; Brandon, *Parish Churches* 2, 51 n.*, referred to ‘alterations ... (in themselves most excellent and judicious)’.

24. Society of Antiquaries of London, Prattinton Collections of Worcestershire History (Box I [16*]). The very fine drawing is signed ‘JJ’, probably to be identified as John Instan, an artist employed by Peter Prattinton (1776–1840). I am grateful to an anonymous reader for reminding me of the Prattinton material and its relevance to this study.

25. Soc. of Antiquaries, Prattinton Collections (Box I [16*]). This ink drawing, one of three elevations (the west elevation did not include the porch), is identified as being ‘from a Drawing in Mr Goughs Copy of Nash’. Nash is to be identified as Treadway R. Nash (1725–1811), author of *Collections for the History of Worcestershire*, 2 vols. (London, 1781–2) (Bredon: 1, 128–36); Gough is Richard Gough (1735–1800), the author of *British Topography* or an *Historical Account of what has been done for illustrating the Topographical Antiquities of Great Britain and Ireland*, 2 vols. (London, 1780). As neither Bredon nor Bishop’s Cleeve are mentioned in this work, it would seem no earlier engraved views of either church had been published.

26. A search through the material in the relevant boxes in the care of the diocesan registrar and those placed on deposit by the parish in Worcestershire Record Office has generally confirmed the experience of the (former) rector of Bredon, Canon C.J. Ridout: ‘We have been frustrated several times by the realization that archives have not been preserved, and the matter of the porch room seems to be an additional case ... Records of births [sic], marriages and deaths in the care of the [County] Archivist
go back to the 16th century in respect of Bredon, but there is nothing about the history of either the church or the Rectory' (pers. comm.: letter 23 May 1996). The relevant box (2983/182) in the care of the diocesan registrar contains no faculties for any work prior to the restoration of the Mitton Chapel in the 1930s. In the boxes of material deposited by the parish (in particular 6256.5), there are only a few titbits: an appeal for funds dated 19 March 1870 for 'the necessary repairs of the Tower, Spire & Porch of Bredon Church, which had been for some time in a dangerously dilapidated state' and a bill from John Wilkes, builder, wheelwright, blacksmith and undertaker, of 25 March 1904, which includes an item for '2 men repairing wall on west side of Porch' on 27 February at a cost of £1 2s. I am indebted to M.G. Huskinson, the Diocesan Registrar, for permission to search the boxes in his care; to Robin Whittaker, Senior Assistant County Archivist, for his search of the boxes prior to my visit; and to Mrs. Shirley Hewlett for sending me a very helpful list of the deposits made by the parish.

27. Brandon, Parish Churches 2, 51; in n.* he added 'We are informed by the old clerk that before the alterations were effected ... the access to the parvisse was by means of a ladder internally'.


29. V.C.H. Worcs. 3, 289: 'The room has been recently opened up through the west [sic] wall. On the south side, in the north wall of the nave, is a blocked doorway with staples for the hinges of a door. From this it is evident that the room was entered by stairs from the inside of the nave'.

30. W.H. Knowles, 'Proceedings of the Annual General Meeting held at Evesham, 11–13 July 1933: report of itinerary' Bredon, Trans. B.G.A.S. 55 (1933), 24–5: 'There is a door from the chamber above the north porch, but no apparent means of access to it'.

31. Middleton, 'Church of St. Michael', 264, thought that it was probably reconstructed in the 16th century reusing old timbers; Prothero, 'Church of St. Michael', 35, dated it to the 15th century; neither gave any reasons for their dates. The roof is not mentioned by either Tomlinson (V.C.H. Glos.) or Verey (Gloucs.).

32. E. Powell, The Parish Church of St. Michael and All Angels, Bishop's Cleeve (1994), 19: '... when a new roof for the south chapel, erected in the 15th century, cut across it. The earlier roof covered both nave [sic; chapel] and aisle, as can be seen from the weathering above the south transept doorway [sic; arch]'.


34. Powell, Parish Church, 16: 'The original six-bay arcade was altered, in the interests of space, to three bays in the 16th or 17th century, by removing alternate piers from either side of the arcade' [emphasis added by J.P.M.].

35. See Middleton, 'Church of St. Michael', 250.

36. The surfaces of the nave walls have been pricked to facilitate plastering. Before the 19th-century restoration, the walls were whitewashed along with the plaster and lath tunnel vault which had been inserted under the roof: see the photograph in Powell, Parish Church, 28–9.

37. At the end of each arcade, the springing of the outer order remains, the chevron decoration of the five voussoirs cut back, and no doubt once filled in with plaster, in order to conform to the plane of the chamfer of the outer order of the new arches.

38. The lean-to roofs of slight slope over the north aisle and over the south aisle and chantry chapel were no doubt rebuilt during the 19th-century restoration, but probably reflect the form given to them at the time the battlemented parapets were added.

39. According to Powell, Parish Church, 6, the 'trussed rafter roof of the nave' is 14th century. The nave roof was not mentioned by Middleton or Prothero in their accounts; it is only mentioned by Tomlinson, V.C.H. Glos. 8, 22, who speculated that it may be 14th century. The structure of the roof is the same as that over each arm of the transept; the timbers of the frame look old, while the boarding is 'new'.

40. As it is, the open upper part of the window provides the only access onto the aisle chapel roof other than by a ladder.


42. According to obituaries in The Builder 93 (1 December 1907), 637, and Royal Institute of British Architects Jnl. 14 (1907), 124, Prothero worked in partnership with John Henry Middleton (1846–96) and George Henry Phillott (fl. 1891–6) between 1885 and 1896. He had been articled to Middleton's
father, John Middleton (?–1885), between 1875 and 1878, and then was in partnership with the younger Middleton and Phillott until the former’s death. J.H. Middleton was the author of the first architectural history of the church: see above, note 4.

43. According to T. Jesson, ‘St. Michael and All Angels, Bishop’s Cleeve’, The Gloucester Diocesan Magazine 5 (1910), 151–3, 154, much work was done between 1891 and 1894 and again in 1900; the restoration was attributed to Prothero in Trans. B.G.A.S. 46 (1924), 58, but no dates for the restoration were given; Tomlinson, V.C.H. Glos. 8, 22, stated that the restoration were carried out in 1886, 1896, and 1900, without citing any authority for the 1886 date.

44. Several appeals (Gloucestershire Collection, Gloucester Library, [H] E.3.45, 55, and 87) regarding the restoration document its extended, indeed even protracted, campaigns. One of January 1896 states that repairs began in 1891 and continued to February 1895; an appeal of May 1900 states that the roofs of the nave and transept still remained to be done; a final appeal of March 1908 indicated that the transept roof had yet to be done. Prothero is mentioned as architect in all three appeals.


46. Ibid. 253.

47. Ibid. figs. 10 and 11 (facing p. 253). On the exterior, this window had two rectangular lights under a pair of roll-moulded pointed arches with foliage decorated tympana and (three) jamb shafts—with torus/scotia/torus bases and scallop/trumpet capitals—flanked by dogtooth. On the interior, the two continuous lights were placed under a deep niche-like semicircular arch decorated with dogtooth. This window was one of six surviving in the aisle of the late 12th-century hall: see R.A. Brown, English Castles (London, 1976), fig. 44; N. Pevsner (and E. Williamson, rev.), The Buildings of England. Leicestershire and Rutland (Harmondsworth, 1984), 495; T.H.McK. Clough, Oakham Castle: A Guide and History (Rutland, 1999), esp. 11–14, 30–7 (hall dated 1180–90).

48. Gloucestershire Collection, print no. 39.3b; a similar view was published in S. Lyons, A Collection of Gloucestershire Antiquities, 2 vols. (London, 1803), 2, pl. LXIX below (pl. LVIII above is a view of the crossing from the north-west).

49. According to Anon., ‘Parish Church of St. Michael and All Angels’, it served as the ‘PCC’ [sic: vestry] room from 1755. As noted above, Middleton considered the splayed interior jambs to be ‘modern’, by which he presumably meant post-medieval, although he also described the fireplace and flue (which were inserted shortly after 1793: see below, note 56) as ‘modern’.

50. On the interior, the south gable wall is rubble (covered by plaster).

51. Even simple porches without rooms over them were rare at parish churches. At present, the only other example from the late 12th century known to me is at St. Mary, Witney, in Oxfordshire; N. Pevsner, The Buildings of England. Oxfordshire (Harmondsworth, 1974), 43–4, called it a ‘rare survival’; a room was built over it in the 15th century. I have the impression that, among parish churches, porches which date from the 13th century are also uncommon. St. Mary, Warmington (Northamptonshire), remarkably, has two, both rib vaulted; Pevsner, The Buildings of England. Northamptonshire (Harmondsworth, 1961), 446.

52. At Southwell the entrance doorway is flanked by two deep cupboards that, although their lintels and jambs are rebated for wooden doors (with three sets of bolt holes in each jamb), show no evidence of interior shelves. The cupboards measure (west) 37½ inches wide by 38¼ high by 27 deep (946.1 × 971.55 × 685.8 mm) and (east) 50 inches wide by 36½ high by 31 deep (1,270 × 927.1 × 787.4 mm).

53. At Hereford a 16th-century addition to an earlier 14th-century north porch seems to have resulted in the creation of two cupboards; they flank a former window that presently provides communication between the two rooms. The west cupboard is 11 inches deep by 19 wide and 58 high (279.4 × 482.6 × 1,473.2 mm). The east one has been partially blocked up and reduced to a smaller, shallower cupboard.

54. Walker, ‘Bredon Church’, 335: ‘These lofts over porches are considered by Mr Bloxam to have been inhabited by lay recluse, male or female’; Keyser, ‘Architectural Account of Bredon’, 93: ‘There is the usual legend of a recluse having resided there, but there is no evidence to sustain it’; J. Noake, The Rambler in Worcestershire or Stray Notes on Churches and Congregations (Worcester, 1848), 152, considered it ‘the ancient muniment room’. Because of the unfinished floor, the author of V.C.H. Wors.
3, 289, thought that the room, ‘whatever its intended use,... was abandoned soon after construction’.


56. After serving as the parish meeting room, it was used as a schoolroom until 1846 (wall painting of c. 1818 by schoolmaster Sperry remains). Apparently connected with this usage was a doorway (with a pointed arch) inserted in the west end of the south aisle, and a fireplace visible on the exterior by its chimney rising through the west slope of the porch’s roof. Neither are present in the Cadell engraving of 1793 (see above, note 48) or an unfinished pencil sketch of the porch by J. Buckler which may be dated to 1820 (British Library Add. MS. 36362, fol. 185) but both appear in a later undated lithograph of ‘Cleeve Church’ drawn, printed and published by G. Rowe of Cheltenham, and in several pre-restoration photographs in possession of the church (e.g. Powell, Parish Church, 7; photograph dated 1888). The fireplace, chimney and doorway were removed in the restoration of the 1890s.

57. Middleton, ‘Church of St. Michael’, 261, had dated the room to the late 15th or early 16th century.

58. Powell, Parish Church, 20.

59. This despite the fact that Richard Furney (d. 1753) was told in 1718/19 by one Sam Cooper, steward of the manor of Ashley, that ‘within 20 years or thereabout the steeple of Cleve (sic) church fell down and did great damage to the church especially the chancel’ (Oxford, Bodleian Library MS. Top. Glouc. e.1, f. 40v. [February 2]—my thanks to the anonymous reader for this reference). By the end of the century the extent of the damage had become even more exaggerated: ‘In 1696 the Spire fell on the Chancel, and caused such Dilapidation as to leave us ignorant of their (sic) original Form’ (R. Bigland, Historical, Monumental and Genealogical Collections Relative to the County of Gloucester 1 (1791), 376).

60. A New History of Gloucestershire (Cirencester, 1779), 372: does his wording imply that there had been a ‘steeple’ on the medieval tower? The churchwardens’ accounts (Gloucestershire Record Office, P 46/VE 1/1) do not support Rudder’s statement of the cost. On 28 January 1699 it was ordered at a parish meeting ‘That there be a Levy made & collected amounting to the Sum of Two Hundred & fifty pounds Towards the Repair of the Parish Church’, and on 12 June 1702 ‘yt a Levy of four score & sixteen ponds be made & collected for the farther defraying of the Charges due for the building of the Tower and for other necessary repairs’. Further levies on 13 April 1705, 7 March 1706, 20 June 1708 and 30 June 1710 of £24, £12, £12 and £12 respectively, for repairs, seem to be for matters of routine maintenance. Otherwise, there is only a payment of 16s. made to James Hill (d. 1734) in 1699 ‘for a draught of ye tower’. I am grateful to Richard K. Morris for having drawn my attention to this reference, which is cited in H. Colvin, A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600–1840 (New Haven and London, 1995), 494.

61. See above, note 58.

62. See above, note 58.

63. Rudder, New History, recorded several pre-1696 memorials in the chancel: Robert Stubbe (d. 1665); Maria Chetwind (d. 1674); and Edmund Bedingfield (d. 1695). To these Bigland, Collections, added Johannis Reed (d. 1630) and, on flat stones, John Weston (d. 1632) and Timothy Gates (d. 1660).

64. Richard Morris kindly assures me that none of this work can belong to the 14th century, but must be of c. 1700.

65. Middleton, ‘Church of St. Michael’, 258, ‘... four arches of central tower a sort of spurious Norman, done partly in stucco, probably a rude copy of what was there before’. Their design bears no relationship to Romanesque (Norman) forms; they might be considered as mock-14th century.