

Church of St John, Escomb, Co. Durham.

All pages pictures are viewed clockwise from top left.

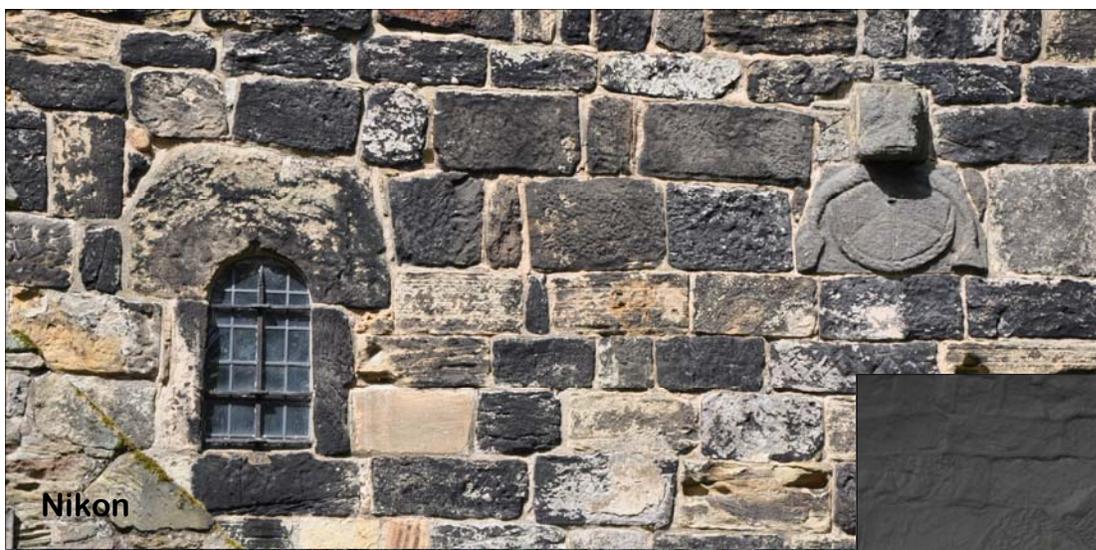
1. General view of the exterior from the south.



H.Taylor gives a date of this church either before Bede's death (735), or after. Bede does not mention this church, and it has been said to date after his death. However, as Taylor points out, Bede only referred to churches where they were linked by an event he was writing about. When Taylor visited the church in the 60's, and I made my first visit in the early 80's, the interior showed the stonework in all its glory. Now, most regrettably, it was been almost entirely lime-washed. This is an exercise in how NOT to treat a church and it illustrates how in supposedly enlightened times a wrong decision can sadly spoil the interior of an ancient and venerable building, a listed and (supposedly) protected building. The stonework and its detail are now very hard to make out, and texture, tooling and colouring has been lost to the eye. I have included the nice black & white photo, by H.Taylor, of the chancel arch as it appeared in his day and how I remember it. Taylor noted how Baldwin Brown pointed out the unusual way the imposts had been treated (and cut), a feature to be found in one of the Roman gateways at Chesters fort (on the wall), and thought the chancel arch probably was removed from the neighbouring Roman fort of Binchester (Vinovia). In the same way as the tower arch at Corbridge church is Roman (moved and reused).

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2. Detail of the left hand window and sundial seen in pic 1. (previous page). The sundial is in its original position.
3. The chancel arch, sadly as it now appears, covered in whitewash. Note the medieval painting on the underside of the arch.
4. Harold Taylor's photo of the chancel arch. Note how the original detail of the Roman stonework is easily seen; simply a delight.



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- 5. The chancel from the south.
- 6. North aspect of church and note Saxon north doorway to nave (that in the chancel is now blocked).
- 7. Massive side-alternate quoins at SW corner of nave.
- 8. A nave window viewed from inside.

