

St. Boniface church, Nursling, Hampshire.

Graffiti Survey summary

A team from Southampton Archaeology Society visited the church on 8th February 2019. The team consisted of Karen Wardley, Sarah Hanna, Joan & Brian Webb.



Fig 1: Outside of church showing South Porch & Tower Fig 2: Nave

St. Boniface church is situated close to the banks of the River Test on the west side of Southampton. An existing Saxon church on this site was included in the Domesday survey of 1086. It is possible this was the church of the Benedictine monastery where St. Boniface spent his early life. He left here to convert the Germans to Christianity, became Archbishop of Mainz, Germany, was martyred in 755 and later canonised.

The Saxon building was demolished in the mid-13th century and its replacement was considerably altered about 1330 to become the existing church.

A small amount of interesting graffiti was found, especially around the inner door of the south porch (Figs 3-5) and on the upper level of the tower (Figs 7-8).



Fig 3: Initials TL on door surround



Fig 4: Etched cross on door surround



Fig 5: Spoked wheel on door surround



Fig 6: Church Wardens beam of 1675



Fig 7: 14th/15th Century ladder to tower (with modern ladder over)



Fig 8: AD, 1411 scratched on tower framework

Some of the pews also had graffiti scratched into them (Figs 9-10). Many are indistinct, but two faint caricatures were found, with some names and initials.



Fig 9: Caricature on a pew shelf



Fig 10: Initials AP with faint modification to AB

For further interest: the church also contains a spectacular monument to the Mill family, Medieval wall paintings (now sadly degraded) in the splay of a north window, a choir stall bearing the archiepiscopal arms of Mainz and there is a late Elizabethan carved pulpit. The beam above the south door (Fig 6) records two church wardens of 1675 and is believed to have been formerly positioned in the nave.

In the churchyard is the grave of OGS Crawford, the celebrated archaeologist.