

Conclusion

The oval form and curvilinear boundaries of Letton churchyard, including the earthwork terrace, suggest at least a medieval origin. Similar features have also been associated with churchyards and burial grounds dated to the first millennium (see, e.g., Ray, 2001). Limited evidence of boundary change was observed in the form of the linear west wall and the angular south-west corner. These changes appear to have made between 1840 (parish tithe map) and 1891 (Ordnance Survey 1st edition map), and may be associated with reconstruction work undertaken by the Rev. Henry Blisset.

The presence of a priest at Letton during the 11th century is recorded by the Domesday survey. The continuing presence of priests at Letton is attested by a sequence of rectories, or parsonages, dating from the 17th century to at least 1870.

The earliest structural fabric of the existing church, the north wall of the nave, has been dated to the late 11th or early 12th century (RCHME, 1934). Two architectural features that form part of the early fabric, tufa stone blocks and counter-pitched masonry (producing a herring-bone effect) may be indicative of the former existence of a pre-Norman structure (see Ray, 2001 for discussion of architectural features associated with 1st millennium churches).

A long history of continuity and change from the 11th century is recognised at Letton. Moreover, topographic features of the churchyard and architectural features of the oldest structural fabric of the parish church suggest the possibility of a first millennium origin for the earliest church and churchyard at Letton.

Archive

1. Plan of Letton Churchyard (Scale 1:200)
2. This Document

References

British Geological Survey (1989) *Geology of the country between Hereford and Leominster*. London: HMSO.

Ordnance Survey (1891) *Ordnance Survey 6" to 1 mile Map (1st edition)*. Southampton: Ordnance Survey Office.

Ordnance Survey (1999) *Explorer 201, Knighton and Presteign, Scale 1:25 000*. Southampton: Ordnance Survey.