aise, either an existing or a new structure usually located on the side of an extant church building, and therefore with extra-mural status; such structures also served the purpose of demonstrating the status of the family (Raeburn 2009, 186).

Burial started afresh in the graveyard in Phase 4, though this may have been limited to members of the laird's family. There are only four dated burials from Phase 4, one of which is the infant burial, SK474, inserted into the walls of Building 4. The others lay either to the east of the building or to the north (Figure 40), presumably because by this late date these were the only areas with space available for burials. Significantly, all the Phase 4 burials are juveniles (Figure 43). Several late burials at Auldhame are recorded (see above) including another juvenile, the infant son of the laird, John Auchmuthie, who was interred there in 1619. Later, in 1638, Margaret Gib, the mother of the laird, and hence the grandmother of this infant, was also buried there.

Shortly after the Reformation the parish was without its own clergy, a situation that continued into the 17th century. It is unlikely that Building 4 would have fallen into disrepair during the lifetimes of Otterburn or his direct descendants. The Otterburns sold Auldhame to the Auchmuthie family in 1599 and the chapel may have been abandoned after this. Without clergy there would have been no official collection of teinds, and thus no money for repairing and maintaining the structure. The chapel was no longer in use when Auldhame was incorporated with Tyningham Parish in 1619. It was certainly derelict by the time the infant burial, SK474 (cal AD 1470–1650) was inserted into the walls. Oram (in Hindmarsh & Oram 2012) notes that population levels in south-east Scotland took several centuries to recover from the environmental and economic stresses of the late medieval period (see above). The abandonment of Auldhame around the Reformation as a functioning parish entity, with its ultimate consolidation with Tyningham, may have been due in large part to the small parish not having population sufficient to maintain its existence.

7.4 A HISTORIAN'S VIEW OF THE EVIDENCE FROM AULDHAME

ALEX WOOLF

The excavations around the site of the former Auldhame parish kirk revealed a cemetery in use from c AD 650 to 1650 with hiatuses in the decades around AD 1000 and around AD 1200. The headland on which the cemetery is located was surrounded by a ditch, which was filled in by the 10th century, presumably forming some sort of vellum though possibly pre-dating the cemetery. The present section seeks to present a historical context for the early medieval material recovered from the site and considers the significance of the 'Viking' burial.

7.4.1 Auldhame and Tyningham

The earliest surviving textual reference to Auldhame appears to be contained within the Northumbrian annals preserved in Historia Regum Anglorum (formerly attributed to Simeon of Durham) in the entry under the year AD 854 (Arnold 1882, II, 101, discussed in Woolf 2007, 82 and 235), which lists an apparent circuit of ecclesiastical settlements claimed by the Church of 'Lindisfarne' including Norham, Carnham, Culterham, the two Jedworths (ie Jedburgh and Old Jedburgh), Melrose, Tysrethingham, Abercorn, Edinburgh, Pefferham, Auldhame, Tyningham, Coldingham, Tillmouth and back to Norham. The sequence here makes it fairly clear that Auldhame in East Lothian is intended and Pefferham is probably the original English name for the Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastical site at Aberlady, which lies on the left bank of the estuary of the Peffer Burn. This may reflect the mid-9th-century date attributed to it since the Historia de Sancto Cuthberto of the 11th century repeats the list but omits Tysrethingham, Abercorn and Edinburgh, and elsewhere marks Inveresk as the limit of Cuthbertine claims, presumably reflecting the Scottish annexation of the Edinburgh region in the mid-10th century. We should not, however, take this for granted. What is perhaps most interesting about Auldhame's appearance in this list is that it is already 'auld'. Alan James (2010) has thoroughly surveyed the use of -ham and -ingham in the place-names of Anglo-Saxon Scotland and made a good case for them primarily indicating ecclesiastical centres, with 'ham' representing the estate dependent upon a minister and 'ingham' the estate of the people dependent upon a minister. Auldhame was thus, it seems, already the 'old minster-estate' by the mid-9th century. Taken together with the evidence from Historia De Sancto Cuthberto that by the 11th century all the lands between Lammermuir and the Esk were dependent upon the Church of St Balthere at Tyningham and the statement in the 16th-century Aberdeen Breviary that, along with Tyningham and Preston, Auldhame
was dedicated to St Baldred (as Balthere had become known by then), the easiest interpretation would be to assume that Auldhame was, in some sense, a precursor to Tyningham.

That Auldhame was Balthere’s ‘original church’ is perhaps supported by the tradition that Balthere spent some of his life as a hermit on the Bass Rock. This tradition is supported by the near-contemporary account of Balthere contained in Alcuin’s poem *On the Bishops, Kings and Saints of York* (Godman 1982, II, 1319–87), which describes his life as a hermit on a cliff-girt island surrounded by sea. Balthere’s death is recorded in the Northumbrian annals, which form a continuation of Bede’s history, under the year AD 756, which link him with Tyningham. The Bass would have provided for Balthere, and perhaps for others of his house, a place for retreat and reflection similar to that provided for the community of Lindisfarne by Inner Farne or the community of Iona by Hinba. The Forth in the late pre-Viking Age may have hosted numerous pairings of island retreats with mainland ecclesiastical houses, May and Kilrenny (connected with Ethernan) and Inchcolm and Aberdour (for the Columbans). St Serf’s Isle in Loch Leven may originally have performed this service for the community of Serf (whether this was based principally at Dunning or Culross).

Associating Auldhame with Balthere, however, raises a number of questions. Firstly, his obituary clearly links him with Tyningham. It might be tempting to think of Auldhame as ‘Old Tyningham’ and to suggest that the centre of the community moved to present day Tyningham at a later date but its location is almost certainly too far to the Tyne for that to be the case. Although cropmarks at Whitekirk have tentatively been identified as the monastic community at Tyningham there has, to date, been no excavation and so we have no sense of the chronology of the site. Secondly, the dates retrieved from Auldhame could push back the beginning of the sequence almost a century before Balthere’s time. The radiocarbon dates, of course, give only an approximate range and if Balthere was very old at the time of his death he might still be counted the founder of the community interested at Auldhame.

We should not, however, assume too readily that Balthere, celebrated as the chief saint of the community by the 11th century, was necessarily its founder. Cuthbert, it will be remembered, was in fact the sixth bishop of Lindisfarne, a house that had been founded at about the time of his birth, and did not even join the community until it had been in existence for about 30 years. Yet Cuthbert is widely regarded as the saint of Lindisfarne and when that community abandoned the island in the 9th century and sought a new home they were known as the Congregation of Cuthbert. In the case of Lindisfarne this may have been in part because the actual founder bishop, the Iona monk Aidan (d. AD 651), was, by Cuthbert’s time regarded as having been potentially schismatic on account of the Easter controversy, which had come to a head in Northumbria after his death in AD 664. Cuthbert, however, was the third bishop to follow the ‘correct’ method of calculating Easter. His immediate predecessor, Eata, however, was translated to the see of Hexham before his death (and thus his body lay there and was not available as a relic for the community on Lindisfarne to revere locally) and the first ‘orthodox’ bishop, the Irishman Tuda, died within a year of his consecration so presumably had little opportunity to make an impression. Cuthbert thus may have been regarded as the first orthodox bishop whose reputation and relics lent themselves easily to the formation of a cult, though it should be recalled that the physical, wooden, church built by Aidan was also one of Lindisfarne’s chief relics and was carried to Norham as such in the 9th century.

By analogy, then, we might hypothesise that, while Balthere was eventually to become regarded as the premier saint and patron of Tyningham and its dependent territories and churches, we are not compelled to imagine him to be the founder of the community. If the indications of the inception of the cemetery are correct, then it would be natural to assume that the early community at Auldhame would have followed the 84-year cycle *computus* in order to calculate the date of Easter and early abbots may even have been Irish (or perhaps even British). Alternatively, like Eata, who was abbot of Melrose and Ripon before becoming first bishop of Lindisfarne and then finally of Hexham, it is also possible that early abbots of Auldhame, and/or Tyningham, had been promoted to more prestigious posts before their deaths and thus left their corporeal relics to other churches. A lack of corporeal relics from the age of foundation may also explain the continued importance of the site at Auldhame after the rise of Tyningham, if the place itself, like Aidan’s wooden church, was regarded as the locus of sanctity rather than a body that could be translated.

The relocation of the community from a circumscribed clifftop promontory site to a fertile and more spacious lowland site, as it grew in size
and importance, reflects a transformation found elsewhere in the Northumbrian Church; compare, for example, the apparent shift in focus from Urbs Coludi (*Coludesburh) on St Abbs Head to Coldingham. Bede describes Lindisfarne in AD 664, at the time that Colmán and the Iona clergy were expelled, thus (HE III.2) 6:

There were very few buildings there except the church, in fact only those without which the life of the community was impossible. They had no wealth (pecunia) except for livestock, if they received pecunia from the rich they promptly gave it to the poor; for they had no need to amass wealth or to provide dwellings for the reception of worldly and powerful men, since these only came to the church to pray and to hear the word of God. The king himself used to come, when the opportunity allowed, with only five or six thegns, and when he had finished his prayers in the church he went away. If they happened to take a meal there, they were content with the simple daily fare of the brothers and asked for nothing more.

Large ecclesiastical endowments extending into scores of hides seem only to have begun during the reign of king Egfrith in the 670s, with his foundations of Hexham, Jarrow and Ripon, and it is from this time onwards that Northumbrian church settlements began to evolve into the major centres of production and consumption that produced most of the material culture we tend to associate with it; sculpture, display manuscripts, metalwork and so forth. This change in the practice of church endowment, from the land that a community of a head of house and 12 companions could farm themselves to extensive estates from which they might draw renders and services of an apparently secular community, seems to have occurred across the English-speaking kingdoms at this time and may reflect the reforms of the English church undertaken under the direction of Archbishop Theodore (AD 668–690). It seems likely that, while the site at Auldhame would have suited a small monastic community of perhaps a dozen brothers in the days of Kings Oswald (AD 634–642) and Oswiu (AD 642–671), the increasing complexity of such communities and settlements in the time of Oswiu’s sons and their successors, which is doubtless connected to the rise of the North Sea emporia network, probably prompted a relocation of the complex to the more spacious and accessible site of Tyninghame across the estuary of the Tyne from the royal burh at Dunbar.

This interpretation of the relationship between Auldhame and Tyninghame, that they were in effect one establishment that was relocated in the decades around AD 700, is complicated by the continued survival of the former as a burial site and settlement, as a named place in the list from HRA, and eventually as a parish kirk. A possible explanation for the continued existence of Auldhame after the growth of Tyninghame may be that the site itself functioned in some ways as an associative (non-corporeal) relic. When Bishop Ecgred (AD 830–845) abandoned Lindisfarne in the second quarter of the 7th century, presumably out of fear of further Viking attacks, and relocated his see initially to Norham on the Tweed, he took with him not only the corporeal relics of Saint Cuthbert and King Ceolwulf (who had spent nearly 30 years in retirement on Lindisfarne) but also, we are told in Historia de Sancto Cuthberto (§9), a certain church built by Bishop Aidan. Here we see the original church building of Lindisfarne being regarded as a relic in its own right. In our corner of East Lothian, the distance between the original and the new site was not so great as to require the actual movement of the church (which might have been difficult if the building itself was not a timber frame building) but it may have become curated as part of a ritual and hagiographical landscape. The presence nearby, in modern times, of a St Baldred’s Well, Cave and Boat, together with the place-name Scoughall, in which the first element is Old English sceaca, a devil or demon, suggests that the narrative of Balthere’s saintly existence could be relived in the physical environment of Auldhame, which also, of course, retained a view of the Bass Rock that was not shared by Tyninghame. Thus both the brothers from the community at Tyninghame and pilgrims and visitors from farther afield could encounter the very landscape the saint had inhabited and reflect upon famous instances in his life and spiritual struggles.

The pre-Reformation parish of Auldhame seems to have comprised only 750 acres and encompassed two settlements; the hamlet of Auldhame and that of Scoughall. This must have been one of the geographically smallest parishes in Scotland. The parish system emerged in the course of the central Middle Ages, primarily it seems in the 12th century, but often adapted pre-existing structures. The small size and peculiar nature of Auldhame parish suggests that it emerged from an attempt to rationalise an existing unit into the new universalising model. It seems likely that Auldhame hamlet and the land that became the parish originated as provision for the residence and maintenance of the curatorial staff of the hagiological landscape described in the last paragraph. This staff
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A number of questions remain regarding the broader context of Auldhame in this period. Some of these remain unanswerable given the limited nature of the surviving evidence, textual and archaeological. The first of these relates to the perennial issue of the early Christian history of the region. Was the church established by the Bernicians inserted into a pre-existing ecclesiastical landscape occupied by British Christians and their churches or not? The evidence is hard to interpret since the date of English settlement is not established, and we cannot be certain that Christianity had necessarily penetrated the region in the pre-English period. Evidence for British Christianity in Scotland south of the Forth is mostly located farther west, i.e. the early Christian monuments at the Catstane (Edinburgh airport), Peebles and on the Yarrow water (Forsyth 2005). The British placename Aberlady appears to be secondary to the name Pefferhame appearing in English texts and may, in origin, simply reflect the name of the location used by the inhabitants of Fife. This is, of course negative evidence, so the jury must remain out in this instance, but it is noticeable that the toponymy of East Lothian remains very English. An exception to this general rule is Dunbar itself, OE Dynbær, the nearest villa regalis that appears to have a British name. Our knowledge of this location as a royal centre comes from the Life of St Wilfrid (VW 38), which states that King Egfrith had Bishop Wilfrid imprisoned in his uhs there, in the charge of his prefect Tydlin. Tydlin’s name may be an Anglo-Saxon spelling of a British or Gaelic name (in Tīod- or Tiath-) but we cannot be certain of this, and even if it were it would not necessarily indicate that the bearer was not English. The continuity of the British name for this uhs may suggest continuity of occupation and perhaps relatively early occupation but although archaeological fieldwork has confirmed Anglo-Saxon occupation of the headland, precise chronology and evidence for pre-English settlement is lacking, at present. The royal centre may originally have drawn tribute from across East Lothian but it is quite likely that after the endowment of Tynghame the river Tyne marked the boundary between two tributary districts, one supplying the uhs and one the monastery. The respective secular and ecclesiastical authority of the two sites, however, may have been coterminous. The large territory ascribed to the monastery of St Baldhere in HSC (§4) is perhaps some of the best evidence for the existence of mother churches with shire-sized parochia in Anglo-Saxon England. There is no suggestion that this was not considered part of
the diocese administered first from Lindisfarne and later from Norham and other places, but Tyningham clearly had a special place amongst the churches of East Lothian, analogous perhaps to that of Coldingham in Berwickshire.

7.4.2 The ‘Viking’ burial

One of the latest burials in Phase 1 of the site, G751, containing SK752, caused some stir following the initial excavations and has become labelled the ‘Viking’ burial. This was a burial of a young adult male wearing a belt set reminiscent of those found in the Irish Sea region in the 9th and 10th centuries, prick spurs, and accompanied by a spearhead, apparently from a spear laid parallel to the body with the head pointed towards the feet (Chapter 4.2). It has to be emphasised that an extended inhumation in a churchyard strongly suggests a Christian burial and it should be noted that there is nothing explicitly non-Christian about dressed bodies or grave goods. The richest Merovingian burials come from within churches. Nonetheless, in the context of Northumbrian ecclesiastical graveyards of this period this is unusual. Historia Regum Anglorum records the sacking of Tyningham by Olaf Guthfrithson, king of Dublin and Northumbria, shortly before his death in AD 941. It is tempting to associate this burial with that expedition, indeed even to speculate that it may be the body of King Olaf himself. This is not impossible but it is hard to see how it could be established beyond doubt. Olaf was probably still young when he died (his father had died as recently as AD 934) but since we have no idea where he was born or raised and have no secure DNA comparanda we are unlikely to be able to confirm or exclude this identification. What we can say is that the equipment accompanying the burial probably signals that the body was that of a man who spent time in the household or retinue of the kings of the Ælfred dynasty, which dominated both sides of the Irish Sea from about AD 917 until at least the middle of the 10th century. The belt, spurs and spear may represent part of an equipment set issued to royal retainers and thus regarded, on one level, as marks of status and honour, which their families may have liked to remind neighbours of at the time of burial. The major question regarding this burial at Auldhame is whether we should imagine the body to be that of a local boy who spent time in service with the kings of Northumbria and Dublin or whether it was a king’s man, or even a king (?), who happened
to die locally and was buried in the burial site most closely associated with Balthere as an act of piety by his companions. Unless the isotope analysis can be refined it is hard to know how we should answer this question.

7.5 SUMMARY

Excavation on the headland at Auldhame has revealed 1,000 years of burial activity and liturgical practice, the nature of which changed over the course of the millennium. It has charted the birth and death of a church, from a monastic settlement established in the 7th century AD, which became a parish church in the 12th century and ended its life in the 17th century AD as the burial aisle/mortuary chapel for its wealthy landowners. That a parish church and graveyard existed at Auldhame from at least the 12th century is documented; Morag Cross has painstakingly identified every reference to Auldhame in existing records to construct a fascinating narrative of one of the smallest parishes in Scotland. The cartographic evidence placed the ‘kirk-town of Aldham’ to the south of the headland so it was assumed that this was also the locus of the church, both village and church having long since disappeared. The excavation has now identified the actual position of the church but, more significantly, the subsequent post-excavation programme has established the early date at which it was founded and the nature of that early foundation. The body of evidence presented in this volume suggests that there was a monastic settlement on the headland, which flourished between the mid-7th and mid-9th centuries AD. Alex Woollf has proposed that this was a ‘para-monastic’ community, a secular but clerical household whose composition would explain the mixed genders and ages displayed by the occupants of the graveyard. The local cult of the Anglo-Saxon St Balthere and the contemporary descriptions of his life make an association with the monastic settlement at Auldhame compelling but whether it was his foundation is another matter. Alex Woollf explores other contemporary examples to show how Balthere may have become the premier saint of the religious community without necessarily being its founder.

The monastic settlement ceased to exist some time towards the end of the 9th century AD, an event that may or may not have been influenced by Viking activity around the coast. The burial in the graveyard of a young man, fully dressed and accompanied by horse equipment and weaponry, has engendered much
attention, not least because his date spans a known Viking raid in the area. Whether or not he was Olaf Guthfrithson, king of Dublin and Northumbria or just a member of his retinue, this brief Viking interlude in south-east Scotland is a reminder that the boundaries of the Viking sphere of influence centred on the Irish Sea, the Isle of Man and northern England extended north into Scotland as well.

After its abandonment as a monastic settlement, Auldhame continued to function as a church and graveyard, presumably because of the sanctity conveyed by its association with Balthere. It served as the parish church for Auldhame for nigh on seven centuries, albeit with periods of disuse. The archaeological evidence consists primarily of the skeletal remains, the hiatus in burial reflecting political and socio-economic events in the wider world, the conquest of the Lothians by the Scots in the mid-10th century AD, and the demographic collapse in the 14th century caused by crop failure, epidemics and epizootics, not to mention the effects of Edward I’s armies rampaging through the region. The daily activities of the medieval population are briefly glimpsed in the small assemblage of ceramics and metalwork found just outside the graveyard boundary. The enduring nature of this boundary throughout the history of the graveyard is notable, burial never extending beyond the line demarcated by the Anglian ditches. The evolution of the church buildings throughout this period are poorly understood and in retrospect, the decision not to fully excavate them was misguided, not only because so few churches of this early date have been investigated but also because the opportunity to trace the development of church architecture over a millennium has been missed.

Without doubt, the most significant element of the evidence from Auldhame is that covering the Anglian period. This is a major contribution to our relatively sparse understanding of Anglian activity in the Lothians, albeit that it is primarily religious and not secular activity. Nonetheless, the political and social landscape of the Lothians is now populated by another site, another focus around which British and Anglian interests must have circled, alongside Tyningham, Dunbar and Doon Hill. The context of Auldhame would be much enriched by investigation of the cropmarks at Whitekirk and Aberlady, and by full excavation of the church buildings that still survive on the headland, but we are moving nearer to being able to write an Anglian archaeology of the Lothians.
Living and dying at Auldhame, East Lothian

The excavation of an Anglian monastic settlement and medieval parish church

ANNE CRONE and ERLEND HINDMARCH

with Alex Woolf

2016
Auldhame sits on the coastal plain of the Midland Valley (Lothian Plain) of Scotland on soils of the Kilmarnock Association, which consist of thick brownish clay loams and clay tills derived from the underlying igneous rocks, mainly basalts, and sedimentary sandstones of Carboniferous age (Brown & Shipley 1982). In terms of Land Use Capability the soils are Class 2, soils that have minor limitations (Ordnance Survey of Scotland 1976). In recent years, the site has been under rotating root crop and arable cultivation. Prior to the excavations the site had been ploughed in readiness for the planting of potatoes.

1.3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES AROUND AULDHAME

The headland at Auldhame has long been thought to be the site of an Iron Age promontory fort. In 1989 a wide cropmark curving across the neck of the promontory from north-west to south-east was identified by aerial photography (NMRS No. NT68SW 30; NGR NT 6016 8473; Figure 3) and was interpreted as a probable ditch forming the defensive perimeter of the fort, although it did not extend across the full width of the headland. The ditch was seen in section in the cliff face during a Coastal Assessment Survey (James 1996; NMRS No. NT68SW 65) and was described as a U-shaped ditch, 2m in depth and 2m wide at the top narrowing to 1m at the bottom. This ditch is a significant feature of the recent excavations at Auldhame.

A number of early archaeological investigations were carried out within the vicinity of Auldhame by G Sligo, the owner of Auldhame during the 19th century. Sand-clearing works in 1831 led to the discovery of Baldred’s Cave (NMRS No. NT68SW 7;