

Recording a church is a detailed inventory of the interior fabric of a church.

The church is divided into 9 sections: Memorials; Metalwork; Stonework; Woodwork; Textiles; Paintings etc; Library; Windows; Miscellaneous.

Starting from the East and working round the church, every item in each section is recorded in a specific 1-10 format:

1. Description
2. Material
3. Date
4. Dimensions
5. Artist
6. Maker
7. History
8. Donor
9. Memorial Inscription
10. References

Each section has its own specific terminology and requirements. Heraldry has to be blazoned, Latin translated and hallmarks have to be identified, then all verified by experts. Patterns of brocades are sourced and detailed analysis is essential in windows. Library lists all work in the local Record Office as well as bibles, hymn books, prayer books, sheet music etc. in the church. This section will very often give the answers to dating, makers, donors etc. The church clock and organ are recorded in Miscellaneous and this information forwarded to appropriate national associations for their archives. Photographs for every section are also an essential part of the work.

Once all the sections have been completed they are checked again before the files are sent to a Church Recording Society (CRS) assessor for approval. This may take the form of amendment to the text, rewriting or comments on proof reading – all very much appreciated as the aim is to provide a well-researched and professional document.

It is a very painstaking process which is why it takes several years to complete. The final proof reading is fraught with problems as those aware of 'Word' documents will understand how files can be corrupted after saving. Even the conversion to a PDF format requires a further check.

Once the whole work is put into a number of PDF files, copies are used for the following:

1. The Church's copy of the Record – to be printed and bound – sewn and in hard back to prevent individual pages being removed.
2. V & A – a specially hardened CD of the PDF Record.
3. Church Care Library – a memory stick of the PDF Record to download onto their systems.
4. CRS – a memory stick of the PDF Record and the TIFF photographs (for copyright purposes).
5. Local Record Office – to be ascertained by each group.

We have thus produced a work that will be entered into the local and national archives for future posterity and which could be of great help to social and family historians as well as providing the local parishioners with an insight into the many artefacts of their church that they may otherwise have been unaware of.



Here are some photos of Jo Jordan, a Church Recorder, with a church record document.