



# Church of St John the Baptist, Woodsford, Dorset

## Archaeological Observations and Recording of Works to Churchyard Wall



Report No. 53445/3/1

December 2016



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**Client:** The Parochial Church Council of Woodsford with Crossways

**Agent:** John Stark and Crickmay Partnership

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### Document Quality Control

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1	Report 53445/3/1	P Bellamy		19/12/2016
2				
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# Table of Contents

## Part 1: Introduction

1.1	Project Introduction.....	1
1.2	Brief.....	1
1.3	Site Location.....	1
1.4	Geology.....	1
1.5	Archaeological and Historical Background.....	1
1.6	Previous Archaeological Fieldwork.....	2
1.7	Aims and Objectives.....	2
1.8	Groundworks.....	2
1.9	Methods.....	2
1.10	Archive and Dissemination.....	2

## Part 2: Results

2.1	Introduction.....	2
2.2	Natural Deposits.....	2
2.3	Churchyard Wall.....	3
2.4	Soils.....	3

## Part 3: Finds

3.1	Finds assemblage.....	3
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## Part 4: Discussion and Conclusions

4.1	Discussion.....	3
4.2	Conclusions.....	3

<b>Part 5: References</b> .....	3
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## Figures

1	Site Location.....	4
2	Location of dismantled length of Churchyard Wall.....	5

## Plates

1	General view of site after removal of churchyard wall, viewed from west.....	6
2	View of east part of area after removal of churchyard wall.....	6
3	View east along site after battering of churchyard soil, prior to erecting fence.....	6
4	View west along trench during battering of churchyard soils.....	7
5	end of trench showing straight joint at end of surviving churchyard wall.....	7
6	Fence post hole against churchyard wall showing deposits below wall.....	7

<b>Appendix 1: Context List</b> .....	8
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## Project Report Summary Page

Project Details			
<b>OASIS Reference</b>	terraina1-271684		
<b>Project Title</b>	Churchyard wall, Church of St John the Baptist, Woodsford		
<b>Short Description of Project</b>	Terrain Archaeology undertook archaeological observations and recording during the removal of an unsafe stretch of the churchyard wall of St John the Baptist Church, Woodsford and the erection of a temporary fence. The wall was nineteenth century in date and probably relates to the rebuilding of the church in 1862–3. No archaeologically significant features or deposits were found.		
<b>Project Dates</b>	Start: 06-12-2016	End: 08-12-2016	
<b>Previous/Future Work</b>	No/Not Known		
<b>Project Code</b>	53445		
<b>Monument Type and Period</b>	Churchyard Wall (Post-medieval)		
<b>Significant Finds</b>	None		
Project Location			
<b>County/District/Parish</b>	Dorset/ West Dorset/ Woodsford		
<b>Site Address</b>	Church of St John the Baptist, Woodsford, Dorset DT2 8AT		
<b>Site Coordinates</b>	SY 7620 9058		
<b>Site Area</b>	16 m <sup>2</sup>		
<b>Height OD</b>	c. 43 m		
Project Creators			
<b>Organisation</b>	Terrain Archaeology		
<b>Project Brief Originator</b>	None		
<b>Project Design Originator</b>	Terrain Archaeology		
<b>Project Supervisor</b>	Peter Bellamy		
<b>Project Manager</b>	Peter Bellamy		
<b>Sponsor or Funding Body</b>	PCC of Woodsford with Crossways		
Project Archive			
<b>Archive Type</b>	<b>Physical</b>	<b>Digital</b>	<b>Paper</b>
<b>Location/Accession No</b>	No physical archive	No digital archive	No paper archive
<b>Contents</b>			

# Church of St John the Baptist, Woodsford, Dorset

## Archaeological Observations and Recording of Works to Churchyard Wall, December 2016

### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1 Project introduction

Terrain Archaeology was commissioned by the PCC of Woodsford with Crossways, through their Agents John Stark and Crickmay Partnership, to undertake Archaeological Observations and Recording during works on the churchyard boundary wall of the Church of St John the Baptist, Woodsford.

The northern boundary wall of the churchyard was unsafe and a planning application (WD/D/15/000269) was submitted for dismantling and rebuilding part of this wall. Permission was granted on 21 May 2015. There was no specific archaeological condition attached to this permission. The rebuilding works proved too costly for the PCC and an alternative scheme for the dismantling the wall and the erection of a temporary wooden fence was submitted to the Local Planning Authority (Application No. WD/D/16/000753). Permission was granted on 17 August 2016. There was no specific archaeological condition attached to this permission.

The fieldwork was carried out between the 6th – 8th December 2016 by Peter Bellamy.

#### 1.2 Brief

No written brief for the works was produced by or on behalf of the Client.

#### 1.3 Site Location

The Church of St John the Baptist lies within the small settlement of East Woodsford, at Ordnance Survey NGR SY 762 905. It is set back from the road, immediately west of Woodsford Farm and the remains of the manor house (Figure 1). The churchyard wall runs along the northern side of the church dividing the church from Glebe Cottage to the north (Figure 2).

#### 1.4 Geology

Bedrock geology is mapped as Sand of the Poole Formation, with no recorded superficial deposits (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).

#### 1.5 Archaeological and Historical Background

Little is known about the prehistoric archaeology of Woodsford. There are a sparsely scattered number of ring ditches and round barrows of probable Bronze Age date and aerial photo evidence and recent work in Woodsford Quarry has indicated an extensive landscape of probable Late Iron Age and Roman enclosures, trackways and other features.

The current settlement of Woodsford probably has its origins as a small Saxon settlement. Domesday records two entries for Woodsford, which can be identified with Woodsford Castle to the west and the area of the church and manor house to the east. East Woodsford was owned by Cerne Abbey in 1066. The much denuded earthwork remains of the medieval settlement of West Woodsford or Woodsford Strangways survive in the area between Woodsford Castle (the manor house of West Woodsford) and East Woodsford (RCHME 1970).

*Est Werdesford* is mentioned in 1268, and Woodsford Farm is probably on the site of its manor house. The church of St John the Baptist, which is sited next to the manor house, contains some early-thirteenth century fabric in the south and west walls of the nave and west tower, but was substantially rebuilt in 1862-3 by T. H. Wyatt. The boundary wall may have been rebuilt at the same time.

## 1.6 Previous Archaeological fieldwork

There is no previous archaeological fieldwork recorded within the churchyard or the area immediately adjacent.

## 1.7 Aims and Objectives

The aim of the Archaeological Observations and Recording was to establish and make available information about the archaeological resource existing on the site.

Its objectives were:

- To observe and record all the *in situ* archaeological deposits and features revealed during the groundworks to an appropriate professional standard.
- To present the results in a report to the appropriate standard.

## 1.8 Groundworks

The works included taking down the existing collapsing section of the north churchyard boundary wall up to a straight joint about 16 metres west of the east end. The reusable bricks are stored in the corner of the churchyard grounds for future use. The churchyard turf was removed from a 0.5 – 0.6 m wide strip behind the wall and the soils battered back to form a stabilized edge behind the new timber post and rail fence erected along the line of the wall.

## 1.9 Methods

All archaeological works were undertaken in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (CIfA 2014) and the Written Scheme of Investigation produced by Terrain Archaeology in November 2016 (Terrain Archaeology 2016).

Intermittent observations were recorded during the groundworks using components of the Terrain Archaeology recording system of complementary written, drawn and photographic records.

## 1.10 Archive and Dissemination

No project archive, other than this report, has been curated for this project.

A copy of this report will be lodged with Dorset County Council's Historic Environment Record (HER). The HER is a publicly funded and accessible resource, and deposition of the report will place it, and the project results, in the public domain.

A digital summary of the archive will be placed with the OASIS project ([www.oasis.ac.uk](http://www.oasis.ac.uk)) under the reference code *terrains1-271684*. A digital copy of this report will be uploaded for inclusion in the Archaeological Data Service (ADS) online 'grey literature' library.

A brief report of the project will be published by Terrain Archaeology in the *Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society*.

## 2. Results

### 2.1 Introduction

The observations commenced after the dismantling of the churchyard wall and intermittent visits were made during the cutting back of the churchyard soils and the digging of the fence postholes. The contexts revealed are described in detail in Appendix 1.

### 2.2 Natural Deposits

The top of a dark yellow brown sandy clay natural deposit (104) was exposed at the base of the new fence post holes at a depth of about 0.75 m below the churchyard ground level.



## 2.3 Churchyard Wall

The section of the churchyard boundary wall removed during this project was a 0.24 m wide Broadmayne brick wall laid in common bond with a chamfered brick coping and bonded with lime mortar. It was up to about 1.4 m high and was founded on a layer of large stone rubble up to 500mm across, just below ground level to the north of the churchyard. It was butted against the boundary wall with Woodsford Farm to the east and had a straight joint to the churchyard wall to the west.

## 2.4 Soils

Overlying the natural sand 104 was a 0.25 m thick layer of dark brown very slightly sandy clay soil (103), which lay beneath wall 105. It was very similar to a 0.15 m thick layer of dark brown slightly sandy clay (102) with moderate flint gravel at the base of the exposed sequence of churchyard soils. Both 102 and 103 may be part of the same deposit. Overlying this was an intermittent layer containing some mortar, brick and stone debris (101), which may be a localised deposit, disturbed by the construction of wall 105. It was sealed by a 0.2 m thick layer of turf and topsoil (100), which forms the current surface of the churchyard.

## 3. Finds

### 3.1 Finds Assemblage

No finds were retained from the observations. A small quantity of nineteenth century local coarseware pottery was found in the churchyard soils immediately behind the churchyard wall. This was not quantified or collected. Occasional small fragments of bone were also noted.

## 4. Discussion and Conclusions

### 4.1 Discussion

No significant archaeological finds or features were found during the works and no graves were disturbed by the works. The dismantled part of the churchyard wall was butted against the boundary wall with Woodsford Manor (Woodsford Farm) to the east. This boundary wall appears nineteenth century in character. The churchyard wall is probably related to the rebuilding of the church in 1862–3. It was not securely founded as its basal course was sitting on a soil layer rather than natural ground. The ground level to the north of the churchyard was lower than in the churchyard and the base of the wall was just below the ground level. It seems likely that the ground level to the north was reduced to form a level surface for the construction of the modern garage that lies immediately north of the wall in the grounds of Glebe Cottage.

### 4.2 Conclusions

The churchyard wall is probably nineteenth century in date and related to the rebuilding of the church in 1862-3. No significant archaeology was observed.

## 5. References

- |                     |       |  |
|---------------------|-------|--|
| ClfA,               | 2014a | <i>Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief. December 2014. Chartered Institute for Archaeologists.</i>  |
| RCHME               | 1970  | <i>An Inventory of Historical Monuments in the County of Dorset. Volume Two, South East. London; HMSO.</i>   |
| Terrain Archaeology | 2016  | Church of St John the Baptist, Woodsford, Dorset: Written Scheme of Investigation for a Programme of Archaeological Work during Churchyard Wall repairs. Terrain Archaeology Document No. 3445/0/1, November 2016. |

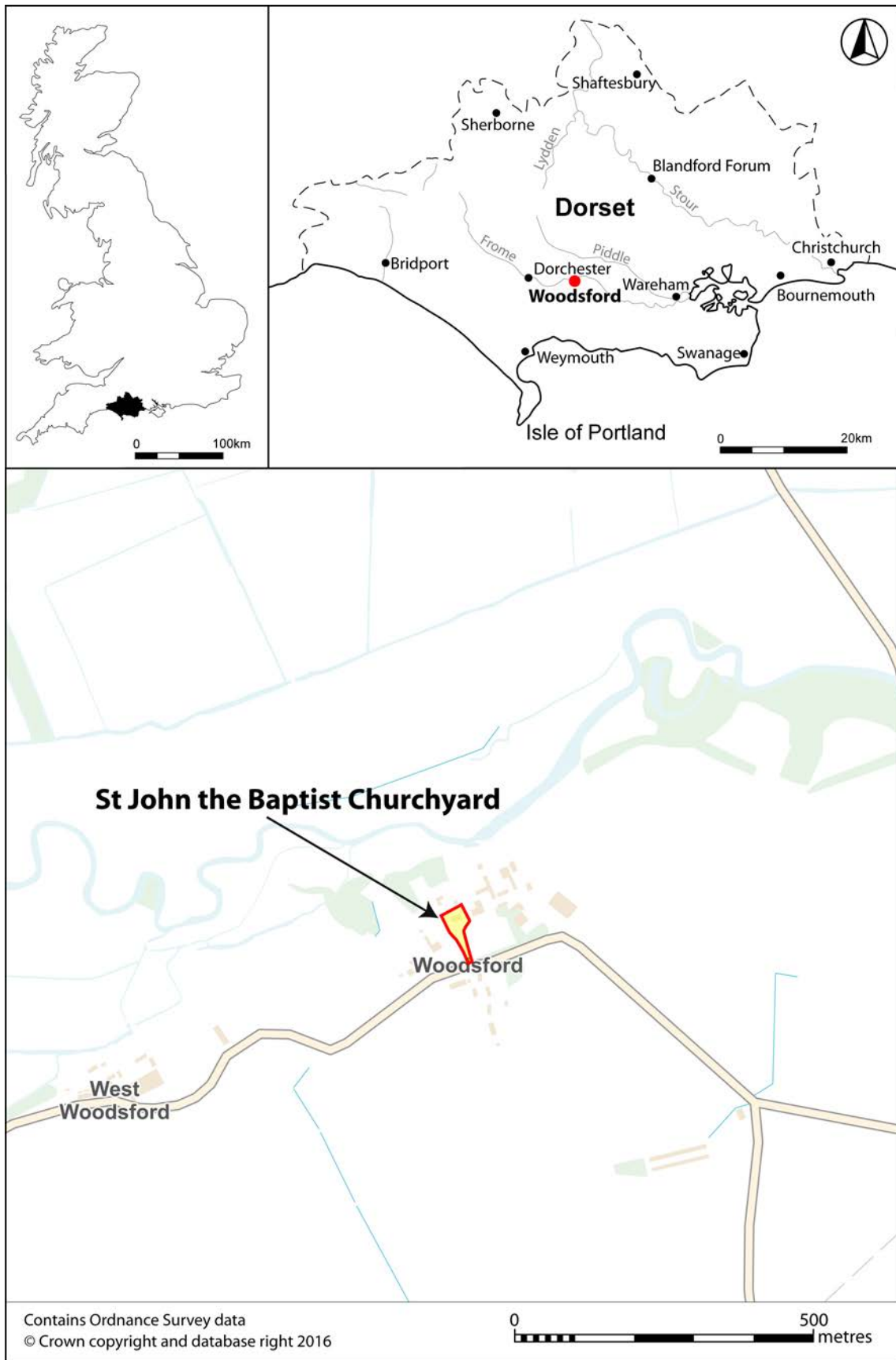


Figure 1: Site Location.

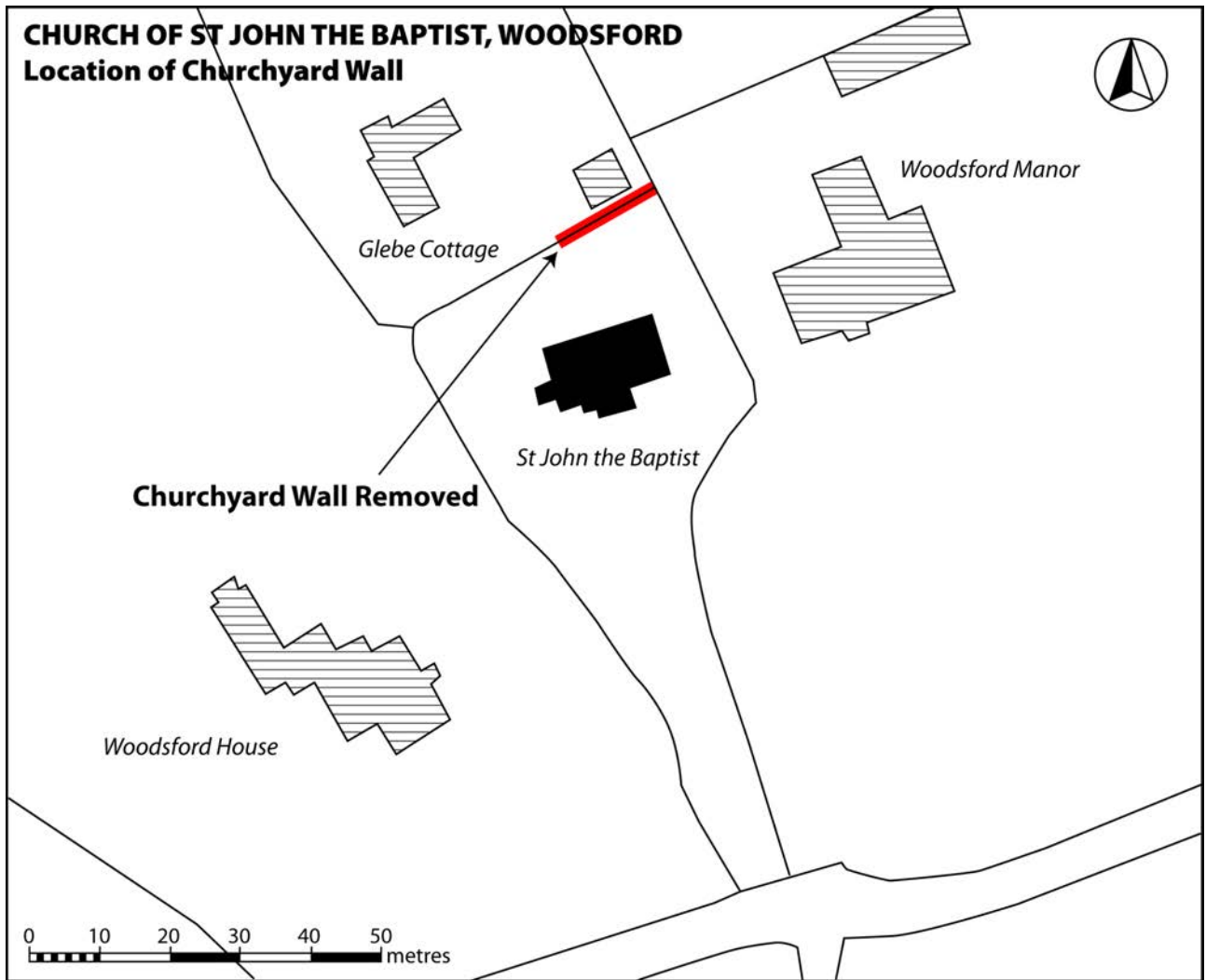


Figure 2: Location of dismantled length of Churchyard Wall.



*Plate 1: General view of site after removal of churchyard wall, viewed from west.*



*Plate 2: View of east part of area after removal of churchyard wall.*



*Plate 3: View east along site after battering of churchyard soil, prior to erecting fence.*



*Plate 4: View west along trench during battering of churchyard soils.*



*Plate 5: West end of trench showing straight joint at end of surviving churchyard wall.*



*Plate 6: Fence posthole against churchyard wall showing deposits below wall.*

## Appendix 1: Context List

Depth measurements are below churchyard ground level

Context	Description and Interpretation	Depth (m) below ground level
100	<b>Topsoil:</b> Dark greyish-brown humic loam and turf with moderate small flint gravel and occasional limestone fragment up to 50mm across.	0.00 – 0.20m
101	<b>Disturbed Churchyard Soil:</b> Intermittent layer of dark brown clay loam with frequent mortar debris, some brick fragments and small stone pieces.	0.20 – 0.43m
102	<b>Churchyard Soil:</b> Dark brown very slightly sandy clay with moderate flint gravel.	0.43 – 0.60m
103	<b>Buried Soil:</b> Compact dark brown very slightly sandy clay below wall 105.	0.60 – 0.75m
104	<b>Natural:</b> Compact dark yellowish-brown sandy clay.	0.75m +
105	<b>Churchyard Wall:</b>	Base at 0.60m