

**CHURCH OF THE HOLY ROOD,
BUCKLAND NEWTON, DORSET
Archaeological Watching Brief**



Report No. 53131.1

August 2003

Church of the Holy Rood, Buckland Newton, Dorset

Archaeological Watching Brief, July 2003

CONTENTS

Summary	1
Introduction	1
Aims and Objectives	1
Methods.....	2
Results	2
<i>Trench 1</i>	2
<i>Trench 2</i>	2
<i>Other observations</i>	2
Conclusions	3
Project Archive	3
References	3
Figures	
1 Plan of church.....	4
2 Plan of observations	5
Plates	
1 General view from north	6
2 View of Trench 1 after excavation, from west	6
3 View of Trench 2 after excavation, from west.....	6
4 View of large stone beneath west end of arcading of South Aisle, from north	7
5 View below floor of large stone and sleeper walls built over, from north.....	7
6 View of 19 th century work below floor in west end of nave, from east.....	7

Report written by:

Peter Bellamy BSc (Hons) MIFA

Prepared on behalf of:

Church of the Holy Rood Church Council
Buckland Newton

Church of the Holy Rood, Buckland Newton, Dorset

Archaeological Watching Brief, July 2003

SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was maintained during excavation of two foundation pits for a new gallery at the west end of the nave of the Church of the Holy Rood, Buckland Newton. No deposits earlier than the 19th century were observed.

INTRODUCTION

Terrain Archaeology was commissioned by the Church Council of the Church of the Holy Rood, Buckland Newton, through their agent Allan Harvey.

The works included the construction of a new gallery at the west end of the nave for the organ. This is supported by two supports set on about 2.25 m apart, about two metres from the west end of the nave (Plate 1). The floorboards were removed and a foundation trench 0.7 m by 0.7 m across dug down onto solid ground for the concrete base for the supports. The floorboards were also removed in the southwest corner of the nave for the construction of a new stair access to the gallery.

The Church of the Holy Rood (NGR ST68740525) is situated near the centre of the parish of Buckland Newton (alias Abbas), on the northwestern side of the village of Buckland Newton. The parish has a complex and relatively obscure history and belonged to the abbey of Glastonbury until the Dissolution (Hutchins 1868, 691–3). The church is constructed of rendered rubble walls with ashlar dressings and the roofs are covered in lead. The oldest standing part, the chancel, is 13th century (RCHME 1970, 49–50), though there is some evidence for an earlier structure (Anon 1911, 81). The nave, aisles, south porch and west tower date from the 15th century. The church was extensively restored in the 19th century (Figure 1).

The Church lies on an outcrop of Upper Greensand near the foot of the chalk escarpment, which dominates the southern half of the parish. Immediately to the east and north are Gault and Kimmeridge Clay and Corallian limestones.

The fieldwork was carried out between 24th–25th July 2003 by Peter Bellamy.

Terrain Archaeology would like to acknowledge the following for their help and cooperation during this project: Allan Harvey and the groundwork contractors.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The objective of the archaeological observations was to establish and make available information about the archaeological resource existing on the site.

The archaeological works aimed to observe and record all the *in situ* archaeological deposits and features revealed during the groundworks to an appropriate professional standard.

METHODS

There was no Brief nor Specification produced for this work.

The work was carried out in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists Code of Conduct and *Standard and guidance for archaeological watching briefs*.

The excavation of the foundation pits for the pads supporting the new gallery (Trenches 1 and 2) were observed during hand-excavation by the contractor. All observations were located by taped measurements to the walls of the church.

All archaeological deposits and features exposed during the works were recorded using components of the Terrain Archaeology recording system of complementary written, drawn and photographic records.

The records have been compiled in a stable, cross-referenced and fully indexed archive in accordance with current UKIC guidelines and the requirements of the receiving museum, Dorset County Museum.

RESULTS

Trench 1

This was a hole about 0.7 m by 0.7 m across dug to a depth of about 0.45 m to take the northern support for the new gallery (Figure 2). Below the floorboards of the 19th century suspended floor was a flat hard layer of cemented flint and brick rubble in a brownish yellow lime mortar matrix (100), 0.1 m thick. The sleeper walls supporting the floor were built on top of it. A single piece of 19th century bottle glass was noted in this layer. Layer 100 was laid on top of a compact mixed dark brown/ olive silty clay soil with charcoal flecks, flint nodules and small flint fragments (101), about 0.8 m across. This layer was on top of natural clean olive clay (102).

On the eastern side of the trench was part of a brick-built duct (103) running in a NNW–SSE direction (Plate 2). It was only partially exposed, but appeared to consist of at least five courses of brick set within a vertically-sided cut into the natural clay 102. It was covered with flat stone slabs, including one of polished Purbeck Marble, presumably a reused piece from an earlier church monument, and was sealed by the mortar layer 100. This duct is part of the hot air heating system and appears to be running from a grille in the nave towards the outlet in the west end of the North Aisle.

Trench 2

This was a pit about 0.6 m by 0.7 m across, dug to a depth of about 0.4 m, for the southern support of the new gallery (Figure 2). The surface (200) beneath the suspended floor was part of the same hard cemented layer of flint and brick rubble noted in Trench 1. It was 0.1 m thick and was identical to context 100 in Trench 1. This layer sealed a deposit of mixed brown and olive clay soil with crushed stone, stone fragments, and flint gravel (201). This was about 0.13 m thick in the southern part of the trench but increased in thickness up to over 0.3 m to the north. It lay over clean olive natural clay (202), which in this area had several very large stones over 0.5 m across within it (Plate 3).

Other observations

The lifting of the floorboards made it possible to make a few other observations. The mortar layer encountered in the top of both Trenches 1 and 2 appeared to continue across most of the width of the nave and all the sleeper walls for the suspended floor were built on top of it.

In the area of the new steps to the gallery, a very large stone over 2.2 m by 1.3 m across was encountered (Figure 2). The west end of the arcading of the South Aisle was built over the top of this stone (Plate 4), as were the sleeper walls (Plate 5). This stone appears to be natural.

The stone work at the west end of the nave below floor level appears to be all 19th century in date (Plate 6).

CONCLUSIONS

No traces of earlier phases of the church were observed during these works. It is clear that, in the west end of the nave at least, the 19th century repairs and reconstruction involved a complete removal of all earlier deposits, scarped away to form a level base upon which to lay the sub-floor screed upon which the sleeper walls for the present floor were laid.

PROJECT ARCHIVE

The archive (Terrain Archaeology Project No. 53131) will be deposited with Dorset County Museum, which has agreed in principle to accept the archive, subject to fulfilment of the Museum's requirements of the preparation of archaeological archives. A copy of the microfilmed archive will be deposited with the National Monuments Record.

REFERENCES

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| Anon, 1911 | 'Buckland Newton church, Dorset' <i>Somerset and Dorset Notes and Queries</i> 12 , no. 63, 80–1. |
| Hutchins, J., 1813 | <i>The History and Antiquities of the County of Dorset</i> 3 , 2nd edition. |
| Hutchins, J., 1868 | <i>The History and Antiquities of the County of Dorset</i> 3 , 3rd edition. |
| RCHME 1970 | Royal Commission on the Historic Monuments of England 1970 <i>An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in the County of Dorset</i> 3 Central. |

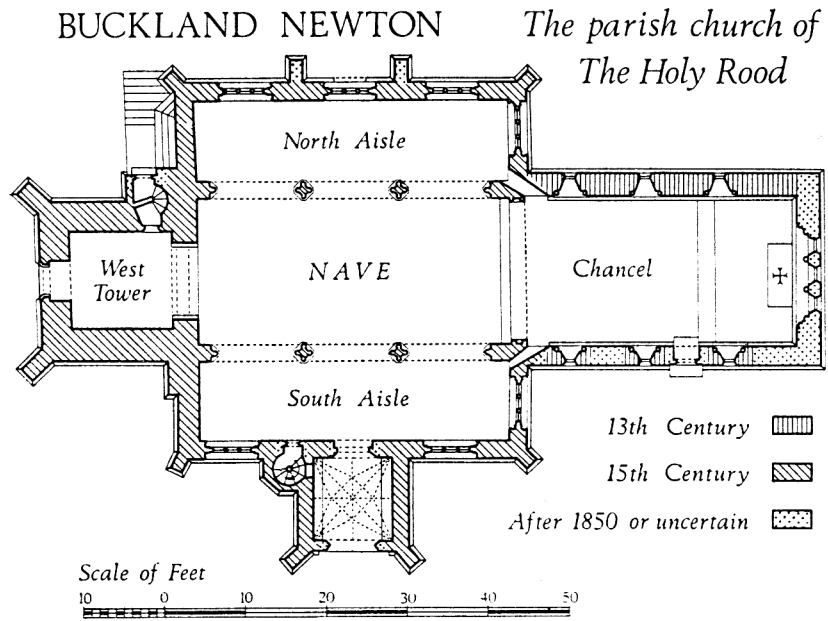


Figure 1: Plan of the Church (from RCHME 1970).

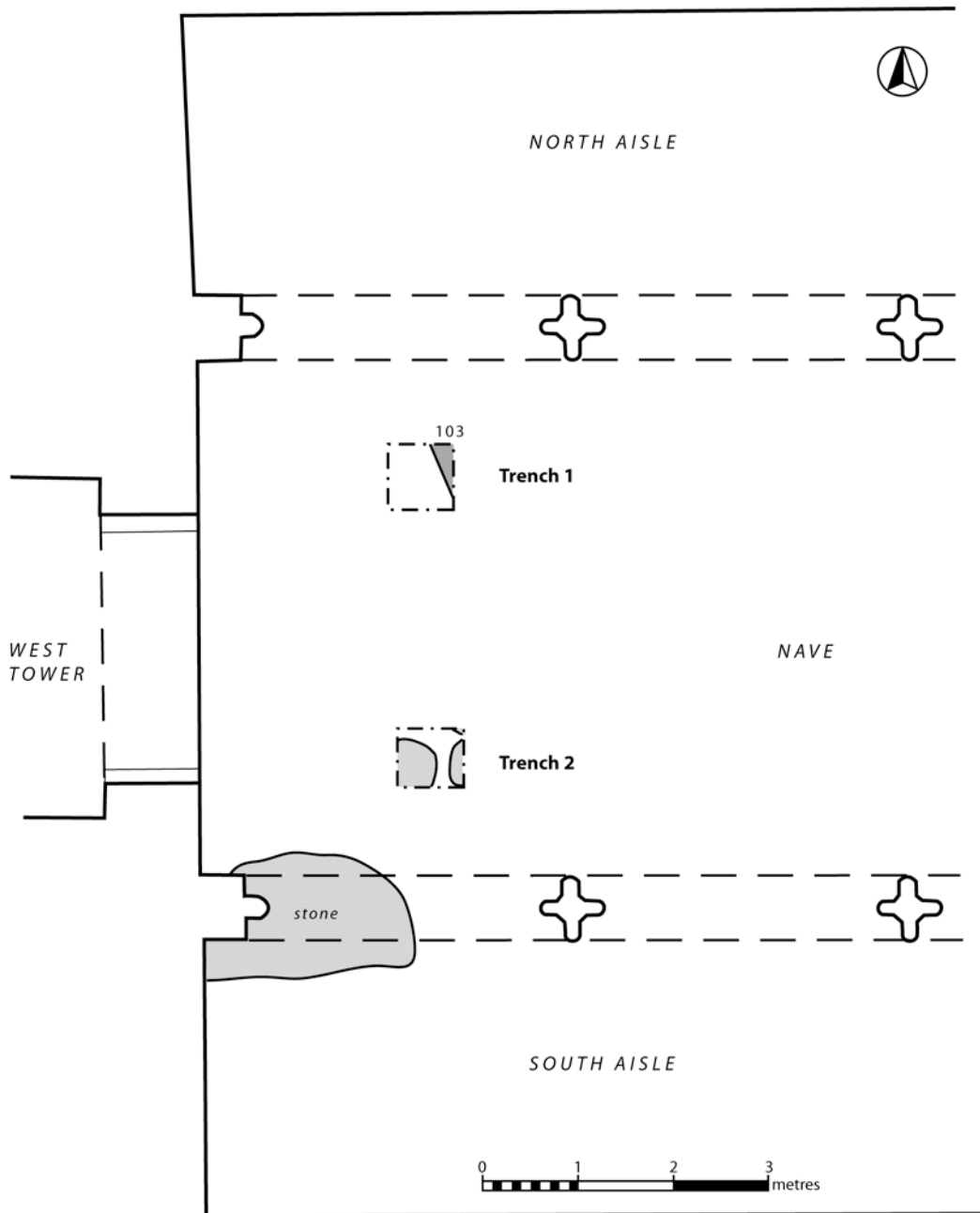


Figure 2: Plan of observations,



Plate 1: General view from north.



Plate 2: View of Trench 1 after excavation, from west.



Plate 3: View of Trench 2 after excavation, from west.



Plate 4: View of large stone beneath west end of arcading of South Aisle, from north.



Plate 5: View below floor of large stone and sleeper walls built over, from north.



Plate 6: View of 19th century work below floor in west end of nave, from east.