

Marches Archaeology

St Michael's Church Sollers Hope Herefordshire

SMR: 41537

**A report on an
archaeological watching brief**

March 2005

Marches Archaeology Series 372

This report is produced by

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**St Michael's Church
Sollers Hope
Herefordshire**

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NGR: SO 613 331

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**Report by
Jo Wainwright**

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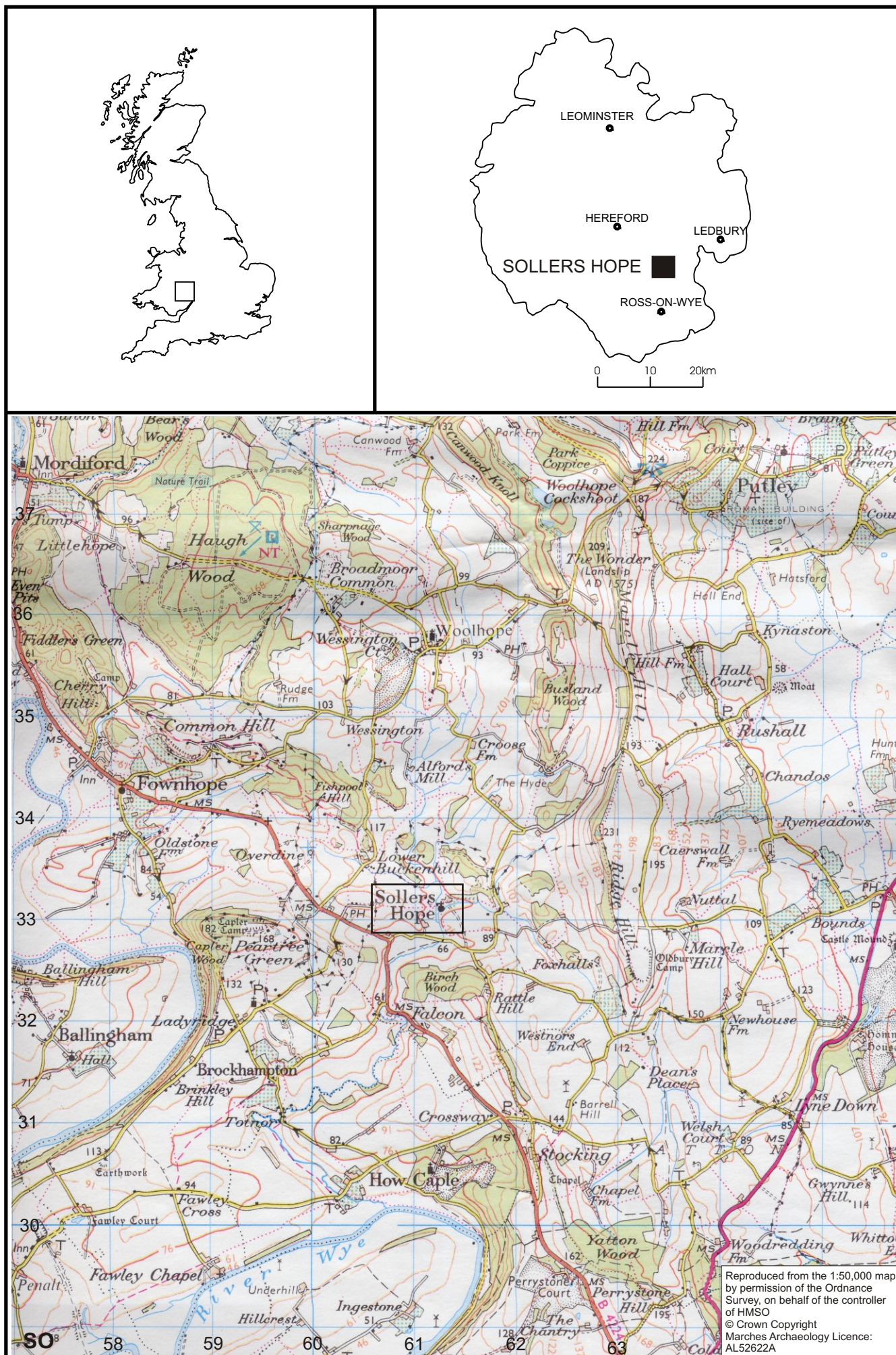


Fig. 1 Location of the site

**St Michael's Church
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Summary

A watching brief on a drainage trench at St Michael's Church, Sollers Hope, Herefordshire revealed no features or deposits of archaeological significance.

1 Introduction

A programme of drainage works was carried out at St Michael's Church, Sollers Hope, Herefordshire (Fig. 1). In order that the archaeological resource was protected during these works Stainburn Taylor Architects on behalf of the Parochial Church Council, (the client) commissioned Marches Archaeology to provide the archaeological services needed. There was no brief for these works.

2 Aims and objectives

The scope of the project was defined as:

- ◆ observation of all topsoil stripping, other earthmoving and trench excavation until natural subsoil was reached
- ◆ recording of the sequence of soil deposits present and all archaeological deposits and features
- ◆ the collection identification and cataloguing of all artefacts
- ◆ if significant archaeology had been identified the archaeologist on site would have informed the County Archaeological Officer and Project Engineer immediately in order that the appropriate action may have been taken to minimise the damage to such deposits and to record them appropriately.

The purpose of an archaeological watching brief is defined by the Institute of Field Archaeologists as:

‘to allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of development or other potentially disruptive works’

and:

‘to provide an opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support a treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard’.

3 Methodology

Documentary research

Because no significant archaeological features or deposits were excavated no documentary research for the project was carried out.

Fieldwork

Observations and appropriate recording was undertaken of all ground breaking activity in association with the development. An archaeologist made two site visits, one in December 2004 and one in January 2005.

The recording system included written, drawn and photographic data. The primary written record was by means of site notes, accompanied by an annotated architects plan. Context numbers were allocated and a trench record sheet was completed. The photographic record was made using black and white negative and colour transparency film.

Office work

On completion of fieldwork a site archive was prepared. The photographic data was catalogued.

4 Site description

The church lies in a valley on a flat area of land surrounded by a sub-rectangular churchyard. Gravestones are visible on the south and east sides of the church.

5 Archaeological and historical background

The church was rebuilt in the 14th century and is thought to have been dedicated to St Michael in c. 1390. The valley of Sollers Hope belonged to the Whittington family for over 200 years from c. 1300 to 1546. The church is believed to have been financed by Robert Whittington.

6 The watching brief (Fig. 2)

The drainage trench was excavated to a maximum 450mm deep and was about 250mm wide. The natural clean stiff orangey brown silty clay was seen in the base of the trench [2]. Above

this was a layer of pale orangey brown silty clay with occasional charcoal and brick fragments [1].

7 Discussion

No features or deposits of archaeological significance were excavated. Layer [1] is probably the re-deposited natural subsoil.

8 Acknowledgements

Thanks go to George Hanscombe from the on site contractors and Ian Stainburn of Stainburn Taylor Architects for their co-operation during the project. The archaeological site work was carried out by Susan Fielding of Marches Archaeology.

9 References

Published references

RCHME, 1932, *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in Herefordshire, Vol. II - east*

10 Archive

The site code is SHCH04A. The archive consists of:

- 1 trench sheet
- 1 annotated architects drawing
- 2 photo record sheets
- 1 film of black and white photographic negatives
- 1 film of colour photographic transparencies

The archive is currently held by Marches Archaeology awaiting transfer to Hereford Heritage Services.

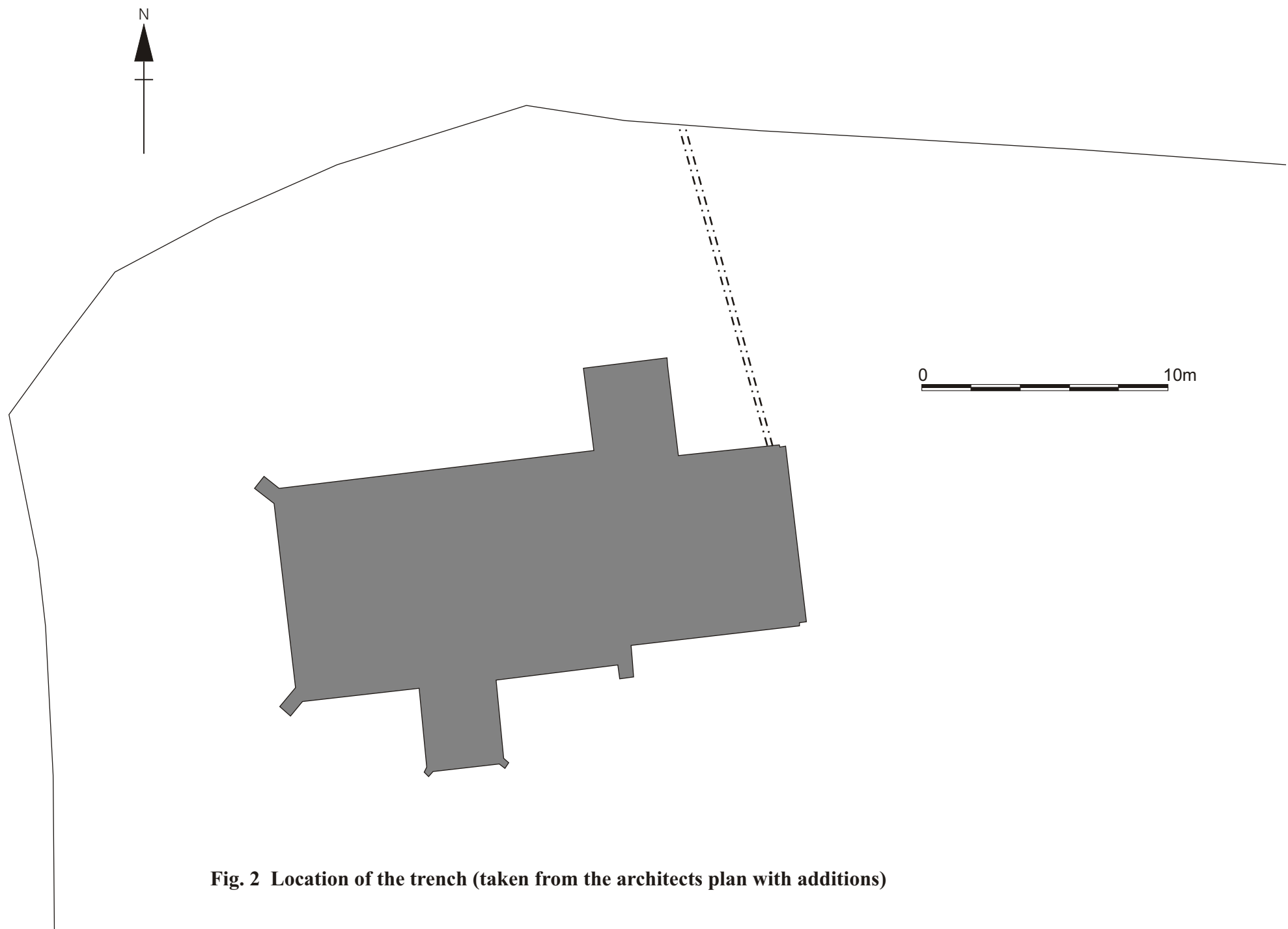


Fig. 2 Location of the trench (taken from the architects plan with additions)