

# *Marches Archaeology*

## **St Margaret's Church Alderton Gloucestershire**

**A report on an  
archaeological watching brief**

June 2005

*Marches Archaeology Series 385*

**This report is produced by**

## ***Marches Archaeology***

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**St Margaret's Church  
Alderton  
Gloucestershire**

**A report on an  
archaeological watching brief**

**NGR: SP 0020 3311**

**Report by  
Jo Wainwright**

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- Fig. 2 Location of trench and other features

June 2005

*Marches Archaeology Series ???*

**St Margaret's Church  
Alderton  
Gloucestershire**

**A report on an  
archaeological watching brief**

*Summary*

*A watching brief was carried out on drainage and service trenches associated with a new toilet block at St Margaret's Church, Alderton, Gloucestershire. No significant archaeological deposits or features were excavated. The earliest layer encountered was a build up of burial soil.*

## **1 Introduction**

A proposal was submitted to erect a toilet/store building in the churchyard of St Margaret's Church, Alderton, Gloucestershire. The site is situated at NGR: SP 0020 3311 (Fig. 1).

Following an evaluation carried out by Marches Archaeology the Local Planning Authority's Archaeology Advisor advised that in order that the archaeological resource was adequately protected an archaeological watching brief was to be carried out during groundworks associated with the drainage for the toilet/store block. No brief was prepared for the work. Mr. J Roberts (for the client, the Parochial Church Council) commissioned Marches Archaeology to carry out the works.

## **2 Aims and objectives**

The scope of the project was restricted to drainage and service trenches as the foundations of the toilet block were not deep enough to penetrate into any potentially sensitive deposits. The scope of the project was as follows:

- { observation of all topsoil stripping, other earthmoving and trench excavation until natural subsoil was reached
- { the 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 was identified the archaeologist on site should have informed the County Archaeological Officer and Project Engineer immediately in order that appropriate action could 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*

No documentary research was carried out for the project as documentary research had been undertaken as part of the evaluation project (Kenney, 2004).

#### *Fieldwork*

Observations and the appropriate recording was undertaken on all ground breaking activity associated with the drainage and service trenches for the toilet block. An archaeologist was on site for one day on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2005. The trenches were excavated to a maximum of 600mm (Fig. 2). Excavation was by machine and hand.

The recording system included written, drawn and photographic data. The trenches were located on a plan provided by the client’s architects at a scale of 1:200 (Fig. 2). 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 written, drawn and photographic data was catalogued and cross-referenced and a summary produced. The artefactual data was processed, catalogued and cross-referenced and summaries produced.

### **4 Site description**

The site of the new toilet/storage building is close to the northern boundary of the churchyard of the Church of St Margaret of Antioch. The church lies in the south-eastern corner of the village of Alderton (Fig. 1). The village is situated on the lowlands to the north of the Cotswold escarpment. Alderton Hill and Woolstone Hill rise to the north-east and south-west of the village, the latter reaching 223m OD, but the village itself is at an altitude of 50-60m OD on the northern bank of Washbourne Brook. The lowland is composed of Lower Lias clays while the hills are of Upper and Middle Lias. A strip of alluvium has been deposited along the route of the Brook. A patch of Cheltenham sand overlies the clay on the north bank of the Brook and the village is positioned on this more fertile soil produced by the sand (Kenney, 2004). Not all the soil beneath the village is sandy as clay occurs throughout the churchyard (pers. comm. John Roberts, churchwarden).

## 5 The watching brief

The earliest layer excavated was also encountered in the evaluation [103]. This was a dark grey-brown silty clay with occasional small stones containing fragments of bone, some possibly human and resulting from the disturbance of earlier burials. This produced one sherd of late medieval pottery but also a sherd of post-medieval pot. Layer [103] was covered in places by a 0.12m thick layer of yellow-brown clay [102], which was rather uneven and patchy in places. Above [102] and in places [103] was the topsoil [101]. This was a dark grey silty clay with few stones.

## 6 Discussion

No archaeologically significant features or deposits were excavated. The earliest layer excavated [103] represents a general soil build up in the churchyard.

## 7 References

### *Unpublished references*

Kenney, J, 2004, St Margaret's Church, Alderton, Gloucestershire: Report on an archaeological evaluation, *Marches Archaeology Series 336*

## 8 Archive

The site code is SMAG05A. The archive is combined with SMAG04A and consists of in total:

- 8 context sheets
- 1 trench sheet
- 1 drawing index sheet
- 4 field drawings on 1 sheet
- 1 sheet of levels
- 1 sheet of site diary and notes
- 3 finds sheets
- 4 photo record sheets
- 2 films of black and white photographic negatives
- 2 films of colour photographic transparencies
- 2 bags of finds

The archive is currently held by Marches Archaeology awaiting transfer to Cheltenham Museum.