



Herefordshire Archaeology
Conservation and Environmental Planning
Planning Services
Environment Directorate
Herefordshire Council

Leintwardine Churchyard: An Archaeological Survey

Herefordshire Archaeology Report No.62
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**Report prepared by
Tim Hoverd**

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Herefordshire Archaeology is Herefordshire Council's county archaeological service. It advises upon the conservation of archaeological and historic landscapes, maintains the county Sites and Monument Record, and carries out conservation and investigative field projects. The County Archaeologist is Dr. Keith Ray.

Leintwardine Churchyard: An Archaeological Survey

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Summary:

An earthwork survey was undertaken in order to provide information concerning the topography of Leintwardine churchyard. The survey is intended to provide a base plan of the area to be used as part of the Leintwardine Caring for God's Acre Project.

The survey recorded all major topographic features within the churchyard and mapped a limited number of monuments and trees to aid the use of the plan for future recording work. The survey was carried out on two occasions to provide alternative opportunities for the training of volunteers concerning the application of different survey techniques.

Results of the survey suggest that the churchyard has been terraced. This may relate to settlement pre-dating the construction of the church or landscaping to provide levelled areas for large family grave plots in the 17th and 18th centuries.

The remains of a circular mound to the north of the church may be the result of modern landscaping or the location of the medieval preaching cross.

Disclaimer: It should not be assumed that land referred to in this document is accessible to the public. Location plans are indicative only. NGR's are accurate to approximately 10m. Measured dimensions are accurate to within 1m at a scale of 1:500, 0.1m at 1:50, and 0.02m at 1:20.

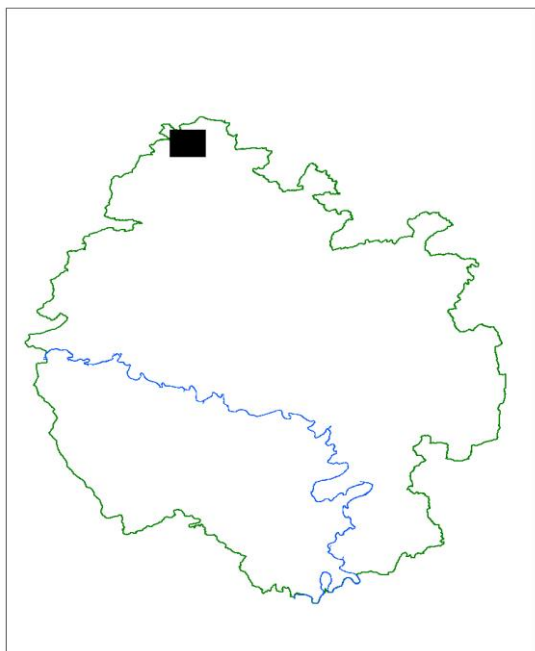
Figure 1 contains material from the Ordnance Survey. The grid in this material is the National Grid taken from the Ordnance Survey map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. This material has been reproduced in order to locate the site in its environs.

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Introduction

Members of the Leintwardine community successfully applied for a grant under the Caring for God's Acre scheme in order to undertake a series of surveys and research into the environmental and historical aspects of Leintwardine churchyard (NGR: SO 4048 7409), (HSM 21078), (see figure 1).

Herefordshire Archaeology, in partnership with the Caring for God's Acre project of the Diocese of Hereford undertook a topographic survey of the churchyard. This was undertaken on 31st January and 22nd March 2002. In addition a guided walk was



conducted by Herefordshire Archaeology around the churchyard and its environs in order to explain the processes involved in producing a plan and how archaeologists 'read' the topography. Basic instruction was given concerning the future preparation of similar plans and the addition of features to the plan produced to aid future management and/or interpretation of various aspects of the churchyard.

The parish church of St. Mary Magdalene, Leintwardine, is located in the village of Leintwardine, Herefordshire (Figure 1 and 2). The church and churchyard lie within the eastern portion of the Roman settlement of *Branogenium*, a roughly rectangular area of approximately 10 acres enclosed by earthen ramparts.

Figure 1: Site location.

The church is constructed of local sandstone, and much of the building dates to the 13th century, with some remnants of a 12th-century church (RCHME, 1935). Additions and reconstruction were undertaken during the 14th century, continuing into the 15th century. The south tower and north chapel were built c. 1320-30. Later in the 14th century the north aisle and adjoining chapel were constructed, the north chapel was heightened and the clearstorey added to the nave. The chancel arch was re-built in the 1860's and the upper portion of the tower was re-built in 1894-6. Further restoration work was carried out on the tower in 1920-25. (RCHME, 1935).

The churchyard is located on the north and south sides of the church, with a narrow strip on the east and west sides. It is bordered on the north, east and west sides by private gardens, and to the south by Church Street.

Aims and Objectives

The aims of the survey were:

- To produce an accurate plan of the churchyard at a scale of 1:500, copies of which were to be made available to Caring for God's Acre community participants.
- To record topographic features of the churchyard and their relationship to the archaeology and geology of the surrounding area.
- To better understand the position of the church in relation to the Roman settlement and its eastern boundary.

Location and Geology

The church of St. Mary Magdalene is located at NGR: SO 4048 7409, close to the centre of the village of Leintwardine, approximately 18km north-west of Leominster. The village lies to the north of the flood plain of the River Teme. The church, and much of the churchyard, is at an elevation of approximately 95m OD, (Ordnance Survey, 1998).

The underlying bedrock of the Leintwardine area is the Lower Whitcliffe Beds of the Whitcliffian Formation comprising yellowish grey, irregularly bedded siltstones to the west of Leintwardine and the Temeside Beds of green to pale red rubbly mudstones under the village. The bedrock is overlain by brown alluvial soils of the Teme Association.

Earthwork Survey Description

The aim of the earthwork survey was to document the surviving earthworks within the churchyard. This record will establish the locations of features and relationships between them.

The earthwork survey was carried out on 31st January 2002 and 22nd March 2002, (HSM 32800). The survey drawing was produced to a scale of 1:250. A Leica TCR110 survey instrument was used to survey features to the south of the church and a plane table survey and basic triangulation methods were used to survey features to the north of the church.

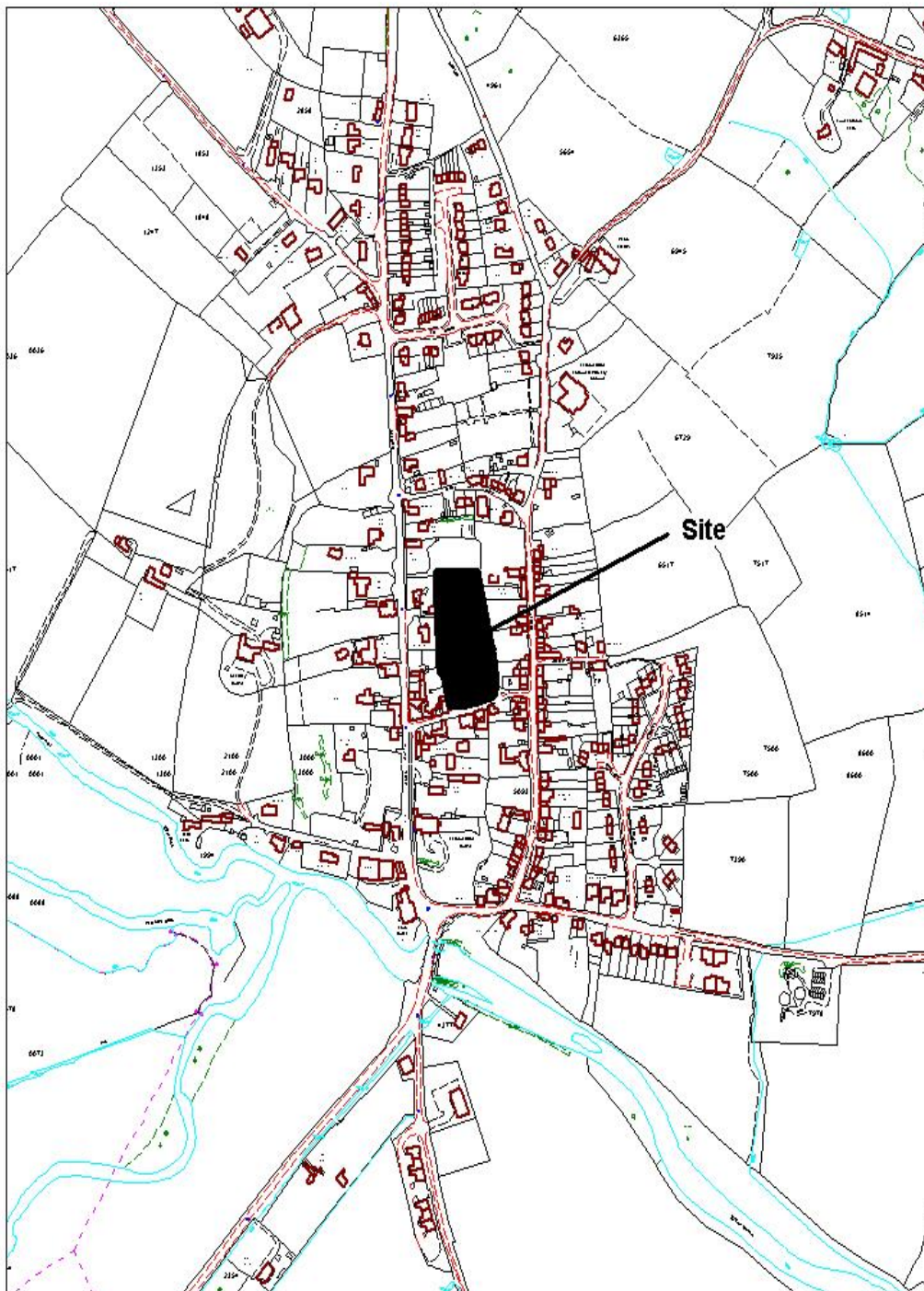


Figure 2: Location of Leintwardine Churchyard



SCALE 1:5000

Herefordshire Council
Planning Services
Town Hall
St Owen Street
Hereford
HR1 2PJ
Tel.: (01432) 260000
Fax.: (01432) 261970

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Discussion of Survey Results (figure 3)

A number of surface features were recorded during the survey. Some are thought to be associated with churchyard layout and modern landscaping while others are associated with possible terracing running across the churchyard on an east/west axis.

Three distinct terraces exist within Leintwardine churchyard. These are aligned east / west and appear to have served to minimise the degree of slope within the churchyard. The lowest terrace takes in the churchyard to the south of the church, the central terrace incorporates the area taken up by the church and the area immediately to the north of the church, whilst the highest terrace covers the northern portion of the churchyard. The terracing has been utilised and in some areas adapted to provide levelled areas on which to construct groups of monumental tombs. This is particularly so in the centre of the churchyard to the north of the church (A) where there is a roughly rectangular scoop into the top terrace to enlarge one portion of the middle terrace.

The area to the south of the church has also been subject to levelling in order to provide a level area. Consequently the present churchyard ground surface is approximately 1.7m higher than the present road surface. It is not known to what extent the ground has been purposefully built up within this area or whether this represents, (at least in part) a further terrace edge relating to former building platforms outside the churchyard.

It is also possible that these large scale but subtle terraces may relate to earlier land divisions. These might be associated either with the layout of the Romano-British settlement or with the Saxon / early medieval settlement rather than the church itself.

The northern boundary of the churchyard is embanked (B). This appears to be a continuation of the bank defining the north-eastern boundary of the churchyard (C). These features have been previously noted during the Central Historic Towns Survey, (HSM 21948). It has been suggested that they may form part of the defences of the Roman town of Leintwardine. The eastern bank is plausibly on the line of the former defensive circuit. However the northern bank is at right angles to this and may well be a later addition built onto an existing Roman rampart in the Saxon or medieval period.

To the north of the church a circular mound (D) was recorded approximately 7m in diameter and 0.75m high with a flat top. This could be the product of relatively modern landscaping and clearance. However its central location may suggest that it holds far more significance and may conceal the plinth of Leintwardine's medieval preaching cross, now no longer evident.

The general shape and size of the churchyard is of interest. It appears that the eastern boundary of the churchyard closely follows the eastern limit of the Roman settlement within its defences. The western boundary appears almost exactly to bisect the eastern half of the Roman settlement. This suggests that the size and shape of the churchyard has changed little since its initial construction.

The siting of the church is also of considerable interest. Its location purposefully within the Roman town suggests either some form of continuation of a religious

centre originating in the Romano-British period, or the presence of remains relating to a substantial Romano-British building onto which the 12th century, (or earlier), church could be founded. This latter scenario may be supported by the presence of a significant quantity of Roman Brick and tile incorporated into much of the 13th and 14th century fabric. This suggests that the remains of a substantial building were at least in part disturbed during various phases of expansion of the church during the medieval period.

Acknowledgements

Herefordshire Archaeology would like to acknowledge the help and co-operation of Sue Cooper, Caring for God's Acre Officer, the Vicar and Church Wardens of Leintwardine Church and the assistance of members of the Leintwardine Caring for God's Acre Group.

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Archive arising from this piece of fieldwork

2 Field drawings
1 inked drawing
This document

Validation

Herefordshire Archaeology operates a validation system for its reports, to provide quality assurance and to comply with Best Value procedures.

This report has been checked for accuracy and clarity of statements of procedure and results.

Dr. K. Ray County Archaeologist.