



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

# **The Churchyard of the Parish Church of St Peter & St Paul's, Eye: A Topographical Survey**

**Herefordshire Archaeology Report No. 204**

Report prepared by  
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**Herefordshire Archaeology** is Herefordshire Council's county archaeology 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.

# **The Churchyard of the Parish Church of St Peter & St Paul's, Eye: A Topographical Survey**

**Herefordshire Archaeology Report No. 204**  
Herefordshire Archaeology, February 2006

## ***Summary***

*This report (EHE43653) describes a topographical survey of the churchyard of the parish church of St Peter & St Paul's, Eye (HSM 6922) was undertaken by Herefordshire Archaeology in collaboration with the Eye Churchyard Group and the Caring for God's Acre project. The aims of the survey were to produce an accurate plan of the churchyard, and to investigate topographical features and their relationship to the archaeology and geology of the churchyard and its environs.*

*A plan of the churchyard was produced at a scale of 1:200. Based on field observations and archival research, an interpretation of topographical features is offered that identifies changes in the boundaries of the churchyard.*

## **Disclaimer**

It should not be assumed that land referred to in this document is accessible to the public. Location plans are indicative only. National Grid References 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.

Figures contain 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***

The parish church of St Peter & St Paul's (SO 4960 6376), is located within the parish of Eye, approximately 4 miles north of Leominster and south of a minor road that runs between the A49 to the east and the B4361 to the west. The village of Eye was built upon a rise in the valley bottom; the surrounding landscape would have been prone to flooding.

The parish church of St Peter & St Paul's, Eye was passed into the ownership of Reading Abbey in 1125. The construction of the current church dates from the late 12<sup>th</sup> century. Since then it has undergone various alterations. In the early 13<sup>th</sup> century the south entrance was blocked. Arcades were constructed in c.1190 along the south side of the church, and between c.1210-20 the north arcade was constructed. Alterations continued into the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. The latest modification seems to have been in 1874 when the church tower was almost entirely rebuilt.

Within the church of St Peter & St Paul's monuments dating to the 16<sup>th</sup> century commemorate members of the Cornewall family, the then owners of Berrington House which lies to the east of Eye next to the present A49. There are further monuments to the three sons of Lord Cawley who perished during the First World War.

To the northwest of the churchyard is the site of Eye Manor. It was bought in 1673 by Ferdinando Gorges a trader in slaves and sugar. The manor holds a plaque above the porch dating to 1680 which would indicate when it was rebuilt, replacing an earlier timber framed structure associated with the Abbots of Reading. By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century Eye Manor was occupied by the vicar of Eye and became known as the Vicarage.

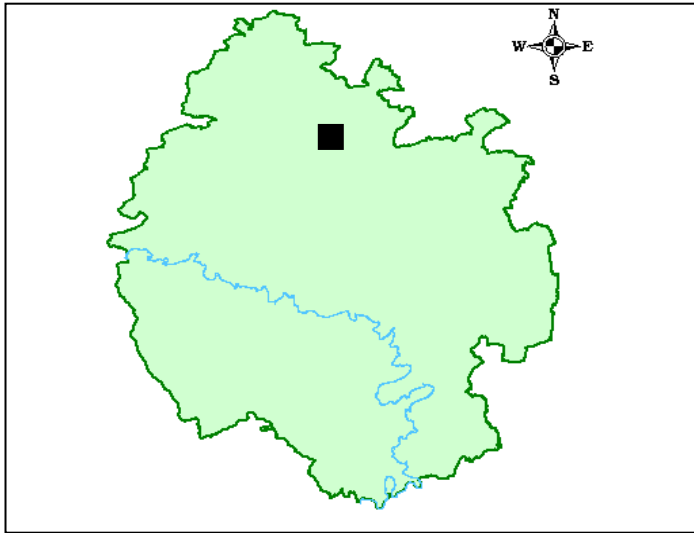
A topographical survey of the churchyard was undertaken on 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> February 2006 by Herefordshire Archaeology staff in collaboration with the Caring for God's Acre project linked by the Eye Churchyard Group.

## ***Aims and Objectives***

The aims of the survey were:

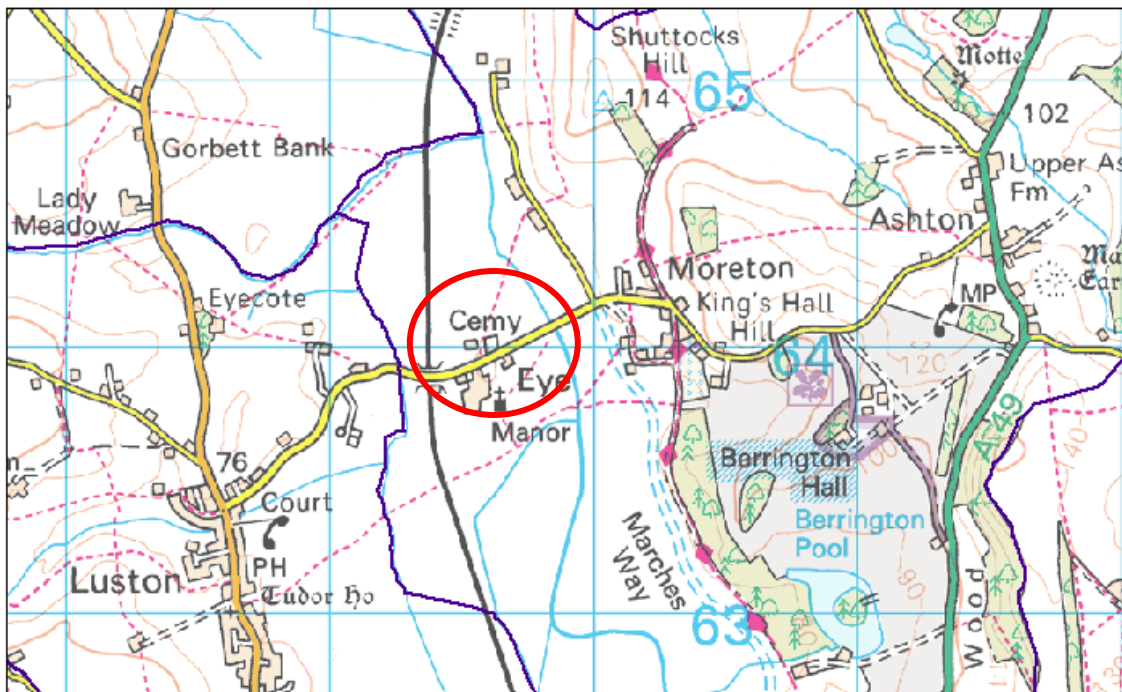
- To produce an accurate plan of the churchyard at a scale of 1:200.
- To record topographical features within and in the immediate environs of the churchyard and their relationship to the archaeology and geology of the surrounding area.
- To interpret significant features and discuss the historical development of the churchyard and its immediate surroundings.

## Location and Geology



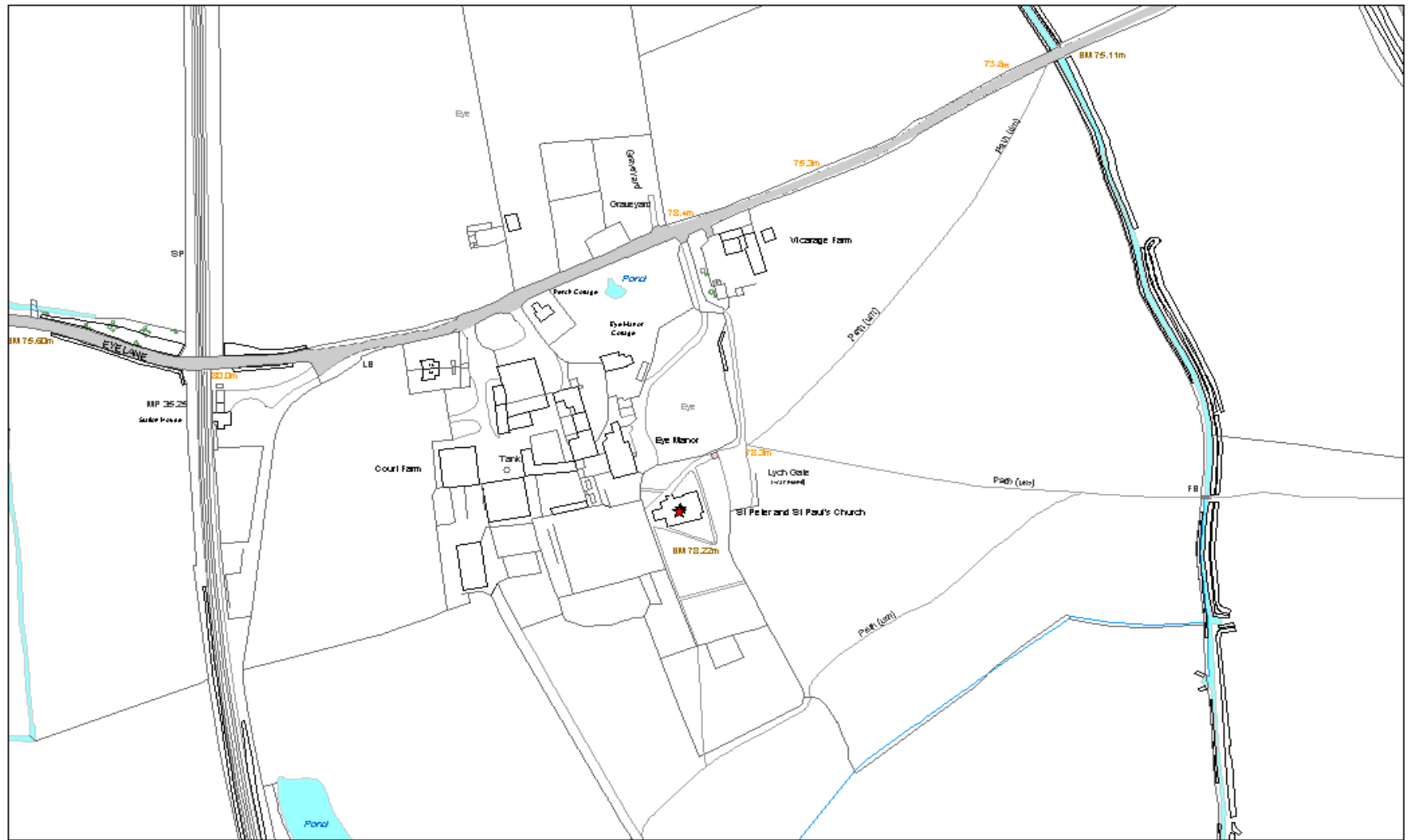
The parish church of St Peter and St Paul, Eye is located at NGR: SO 4960 6376, approximately 4 miles north of Leominster. The church is sited in the valley of Ridgemoor Brook on a rise c.80m above sea level. The churchyard boundary incorporates a total area of 0.41 hectare. The alignment of the churchyard is roughly north south, the church is sited within the northern half of the churchyard.

**Figure 1: Site Location within Herefordshire.**



**Figure 2: Site Location of Eye within the valley of Ridgemoor Brook.**

To the northwest of the churchyard is the site of Eye Manor and its gardens that line the north of the churchyard. These gardens also adjoin the churchyard to the west. The lands to the east and south of the churchyard are open farmland in use for both pasture and arable agriculture.



**Figure 3: 1:4800 Scaled map of Eye, the location of the Church is highlighted.**

The underlying bedrock of the Eye area is of Lower Old Red Sandstone. The bedrock consists of mudstone, red-brown calcareous sandstone. The rise on which the village of Eye is situated consists of glacial till and morainic deposits of sandy clay and gravels. The soils that surround the rise on which the village of Eye is sited were formed by late glacial alluvium made up from clay, silt, sand and gravel (British Geological Survey 2000, Ludlow sheet 181).

### ***Previous Records and Research***

Herefordshire Sites and Monuments Record revealed the following records:

<b>SMR</b>	6922	<b>Site Type</b>	Ridge Furrow
<b>Site Name</b>	St Peter & St Paul's, Eye	<b>Period</b>	Medieval
<b>NGR</b>	SO 5304 2117		
<b>Site Type</b>	Church	<b>SMR</b>	34066
<b>Period</b>	Medieval	<b>Site Name</b>	Eye Manor, Eye
		<b>NGR</b>	SO 4960 6380
<b>SMR</b>	5294	<b>Site Type</b>	Landscape Park/Garden
<b>Site Name</b>	Eye Manor, Eye	<b>Period</b>	Post-Medieval
<b>NGR</b>	SO 4961 6384		
<b>Site Type</b>	Manor	<b>SMR</b>	30233
<b>Period</b>	Medieval	<b>Site Name</b>	Eye
		<b>NGR</b>	SO 34960 6380
<b>SMR</b>	30234	<b>Site Type</b>	Cropmark – Circular enclosure
<b>Site Name</b>	Eye	<b>Period</b>	Unknown
<b>NGR</b>	SO 4900 6300		

A previous study of the churchyard was carried out by:

Caroline Earwood; Historical and Archaeological Assessment Eye Churchyard, Herefordshire, 2004.

### ***Methods***

A topographical survey of the churchyard was undertaken using two separate techniques. The first was by means of an Electronic Distance Meter (EDM) with a reflective prism, (Leica TCR 110). Observations were recorded and a plan was drawn in the field at a scale of 1:200 using a plane table, protractor and scale ruler. The second was by means of triangulation using a measured distance between two points and triangulating with two tape measures. The observations were recorded on a plan in the field at a scale of 1:100 using a plane table, compass and ruler. The 1:100 scale plan was adjusted to fit the overall 1:200 scale plan of the site.

A 'desk-top survey' was undertaken to identify archaeological sites and features recorded in the immediate area of the churchyard, and any previous archaeological research. General aspects of the geology, geomorphology and soils of the Eye area were

investigated by reference to published literature of the British Geological Survey, the Ordnance Survey, and the Soil Survey of England and Wales.

## ***Results***

A plan of the churchyard was drawn at a scale of 1:200, based on data recorded during the survey (see figure 4). The churchyard is then described and the topographical features observed are discussed. Archaeological sites and features are referred to by their unique Herefordshire Sites and Monuments Primary Record Numbers, prefixed by 'HSM'.

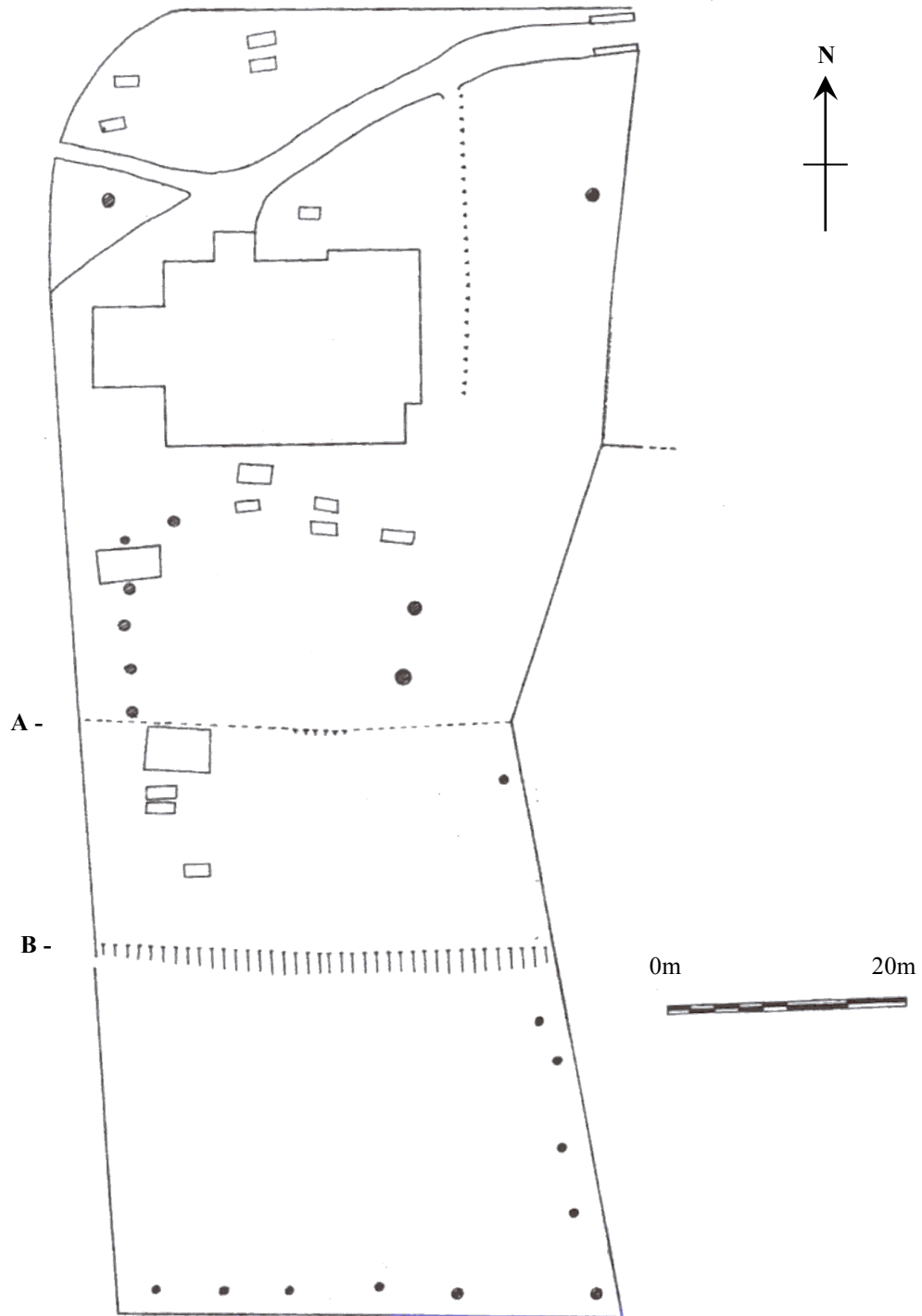
## ***Descriptive Analysis***

The parish church of St Peter & St Paul's, Eye (HSM 6922) is located off-centre to the churchyard. The boundaries of the present churchyard are curvilinear for the northern half, and rectilinear for the southern half of the churchyard. The boundary directly east of the church consists of a low, dry-stone Ha Ha. It aligns from the southern side of the lychgate in a south-southeast direction until it reaches the southeast corner. The Ha Ha continues south from the lychgate and is joined after 33.33m by an overlain iron railing. The iron railing joins the Ha Ha from the east. The railing itself having been constructed to edge the eastern and southern boundaries of a car park associated with the church grounds. From the point the two boundaries meet, the feature forms the eastern churchyard boundary and continues to the southeast corner of the grounds. The iron railing is poorly maintained.

The southeastern corner (SO 49709 63696) of the churchyard curves west to form the southern boundary to the site. The dry-stone Ha Ha continues at this point, though the iron railing does not. On the southern side of the Ha Ha is a parallel running ditch. It is approximately 1m in width and 0.30m deep. The churchyard boundary continues for approximately 69m west until ending at a stile marking the southwest corner of the churchyard and the public footpath that runs through the grounds.

The southwest corner of the churchyard is at NGR SO 49649 63727, at which point the boundary aligns northwest for 94m before it begins to curve to the east forming the northwest corner of the churchyard. The western boundaries consist of a mixed brick and stone wall, ranging between 2m - 2.5m in height. The stone within the wall is visible towards the most northern stretch parallel to the northwest corner of the church, and continues within the boundary forming the northwest corner. The stone forms the base of a brick wall, which forms the majority of the western boundary's construction.

At NGR SO 49623 63834 the northwest corner realigns to form the churchyard's northern boundary. The boundary consists of a low stone built wall running east. The wall is currently obscured from view due to the plantation of yew trees that form a large hedgerow associated to the gardens of Eye Manor. The boundary runs for approximately 39m before it terminates at the northeast corner from where a Ha Ha is aligned southeast for 1.60m before joining the northeast corner of the lychgate at SO 49661 63844.



**Figure 4: 1:200 Scaled plan of St Peter & St Paul's Churchyard, Eye**



The vegetation within the churchyard consists of mixed yew and conifer coverage. The two yew trees recorded during the detailed survey of the churchyard are positioned within the north of the grounds, each with main stems roughly 1m in diameter. The remaining conifers tend to cover the southern areas of the churchyard, the majority of which lined the southern and eastern boundaries.

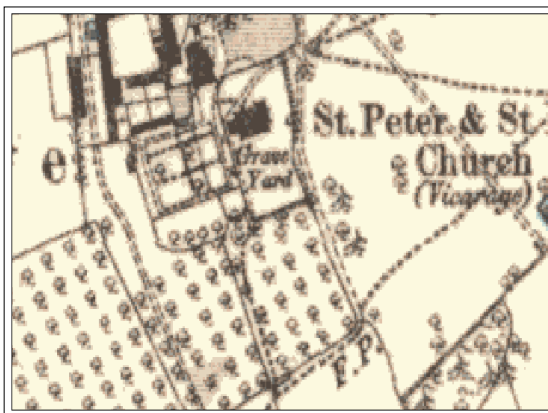
The graves within the churchyard vary in style, consisting of gravestones, family plots and chest tombs.

## Discussion

### Topographical Features

The churchyard is sited upon a gradual north to south slope before the ground falls away to the east and south of the churchyard. The church sits at a height of BM 78.22m though the northern boundary is closer to a height of c.80m.

The survey revealed two areas of interest relating to the sites chronology. The most prominent of which relates to the churchyard extension of 1909. The replaced boundary is visible as a break in slope (see Figure 4, feature B), with a 0.30m drop that forms a terrace within the churchyard. According to the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS (Figure 5) prior to the extension of 1909 the land south of the churchyard consisted of orchards connected to the grounds of Eye Manor. Noticeably the church is not central to its surrounding grounds, even when we take in the account of the 1909 extension the church is still sited north of a central position.



**Figure 6: extract from the 1843 Tithe Map indicating the position of the southern boundary and the church's central position within the churchyard.**

**Figure 5: 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey (1891), Eye Churchyard, before the extension of 1909.**



The second topographical feature recorded indicates an earlier southern boundary (Figure 4, feature A). This would make the original churchyard sub-rectangular in form with the church at its centre (Figure 6). On the ground the original southern boundary is only slightly visible (Figure 4, feature A). Only 4m of its length is visible as an edge running west to east marking the southern end of a terrace. It was only through the recording of a construction break within the western boundary wall and the referral to the 1843 Tithe Map that this 4m long stretch was recognised as the remains of an earlier boundary.

The two topographical features are recorded on the churchyard 1:200 plan. The boundary prior to the extension of 1909 is shown as a hachured bank running the course of the churchyard from west to east (Figure 4, feature B). The original southern boundary has been similarly recorded. Where the boundary was not visible on the ground its predicted course has been dotted in on the plan (Figure 4, feature A).

### **Boundary Changes**

The Tithe Map of 1843 clearly depicts the churchyard boundary as sub-rectangular in shape with the church positioned at its centre (Figure 6). Interestingly the northwest corner of the churchyard appears to have extended out to the west giving the churchyard an 'L' shaped appearance. It should also be noted that the southern half of the eastern boundary curves toward the south forming the southeast corner. The detailed survey recorded the southern extent of the 1843 churchyard boundary. The southwest corner of the churchyard boundary was identified by a construction break within the west boundary wall, whereas the southeast corner was recognised by a kink along the course of the dry-stone Ha Ha. The Tithe Map indicates a slight curve in the eastern boundary before realigning west forming a corner. Although today this corner is no longer visible, the curve in the eastern boundary remains. With the extension of the late 1800's the eastern boundary realigns southeast from the original corner, forming the kink visible today (Figure 4). As noted above the 1843 boundary is visible only as a 4m long earthwork within the centre of the churchyard south of the church.

By 1891 the churchyard boundary had been extended south, though the precise date for this extension is unknown. It is also evident that by the production of the 1<sup>st</sup> Edition map at this date the northwest corner of the churchyard was also altered to fit the profile that survives today (Figure 5). It is probable that this relates to the 1874 alterations recorded within the Vestry Minutes whereby the move was taken "to lower the north corner of the churchyard and refix the tombstones and reform the ground". These alterations led to the removal of the 'L' shaped form noted on the 1843 Tithe Map (Figure 6). During the detailed survey undertaken, it is evident that the northwest corner is sited at the highest point of the churchyard and appears not to be natural but instead connected to the 1874 landscaping works. As has already been noted a construction break was recorded relating to the first extension of the churchyard to the south. Two meters to the north of the break a blocked entrance within the boundary wall was also recorded. With the extension the entrance between the churchyard and orchards to the west was relocated further south at the southern boundary, this replacement gateway remains in use today. These reforms

would appear to relate to the occupancy of Eye Manor by the vicar of Eye in the late 1800's.

In 1909 the churchyard was extended south for a second time to encapsulate the grounds visible today. The late 1800's boundary remains visible as an earthwork within the churchyard forming a terrace effect; the terrace is roughly 0.3m high.

### **The Churchyard, Geology and Associated Settlement**

The parish church of St Peter & St Paul's, Eye (HSM 6922) is sited upon the southern half of a rise within the valley of Ridgemoor Brook approximately 80m above sea level. The rise is formed of glacial till and morainic deposits of sandy clay and gravels. The site of Eye Church is ideal due to the stable, free draining soil provided by the rise on which it stands.

Its unknown where the associated village to the church was sited or if there had ever been a village. The most likely site for settlement would have been within the northern half of the geological rise on the northern side of the Eye-Moreton road that runs east to west approximately 100m north of the churchyard. The 1843 Tithe Map provides no evidence for settlement other than a mix of arable and pasture farm land. On production of the 1<sup>st</sup> Edition OS the land north of the Eye-Moreton road was in use for orchards connected to what was Vicarage Farm. Though there is no archaeological evidence to suggest a village within the area, it is possible that continued land use led to the removal of any pre-existing settlement remains.

A second area for settlement may have been concentrated to the west of the church in what are now the grounds of Eye Manor. Post-medieval landscape reform (SMR 34066) and past agriculture may have destroyed any possible evidence for settlement.

The land to the south and east of the churchyard falls to the valley lowlands formed by glacial alluvium of silt, sand and gravel. The land would have been susceptible to flood and unlikely to have been settled. Currently the land east of the churchyard is in use for pasture. The 1843 Tithe Map records the field as "*Ox Pasture*", though ridge and furrow is visible as earthworks relating to medieval agriculture (SMR 30234).

### ***Conclusion***

The survey has revealed a series of earthworks that can be related to the existing documentary evidence to produce a detailed chronology for the churchyards expansion from the 12<sup>th</sup> through to the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. A relationship between Eye Manor and the churchyard can be established. As the churchyard expanded south within the late 1800's it acquired lands from the manor by which date was the property of the Vicar. The earthworks recorded are the remains of the southern churchyard boundary following extensions within the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The topographical evidence would suggest that any associated settlement to Eye Church would have been ideally suited north of the churchyard.

## ***Archive***

1. Plan of St Peter and St Paul's Churchyard (Scale 1:200)
2. Inked publication plan
3. This Document

## ***References***

### **SMR Records:**

- SMR 6922, St Peter & St Paul's, Eye, SO 5304 2117  
SMR 5294, Eye Manor, Eye SO 4961 6384  
SMR 30234, Ridge & Furrow, SO 4961 6384  
SMR 34066, Eye Manor, Landscape Park/Garden, SO 4960 6380  
SMR 30233, Cropmark – Circular enclosure, SO 34960 6380

### **Herefordshire Record Office:**

Reference number S16/9, Vestry Minutes 1872 (relates to restoration costs).

### **Documents:**

'Historical and Archaeological Assessment Eye Churchyard Herefordshire', 2004, Caroline Earwood PhD MIFA FSA

British Regional Geology (Third Edition 1971). *The Welsh Borderland*. London: HMSO.

British Geological Survey; England & Wales, Ludlow. Solid & Drift Geology, scale 1:50 000. 2004.

## ***Acknowledgements***

I would like to acknowledge the co-operation of the Caring for God's Acre project of the Diocese of Hereford. I would like to also thank; Dr Keith Ray, County Archaeologist, for his editorial role in preparation of this report. And Tim Hoverd, Archaeological Projects Officer, for his advice in the reports preparation.

## **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. Keith Ray, County Archaeologist