

ALL'S WELL AT ST MARY'S PROJECT**ST MARY'S CHURCH****THORNTON IN CRAVEN, NORTH YORKSHIRE****ADDITIONAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

NYCC HER	
SNY	11086
ENY	3205
CNY	4487
Parish	5069
Rec'd	23/08/06

Summary

As a result of an additional phase of work on the area to the immediate south of the well at St Mary's Church (under Planning Application number 69/2005/5255) an archaeological watching brief was carried out on the ground disturbance works. The works required the excavation of two small trenches to allow better drainage in that area. No archaeological finds or features were encountered. The watching brief was carried out on the 2nd June 2006.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This short report presents the results of an additional archaeological watching brief on the excavation of two small trenches to the immediate south of the well in the grounds of St Mary's Church, Thornton in Craven, North Yorkshire (Figure 1) (SD 9701 4835).
- 1.2 The watching brief was conducted by JB Archaeological Services (JBAS) for the All's Well at St Mary's Project, a Local Heritage Initiative (LHI) funded project. The watching brief was carried out on 2nd June 2006.

2.0 BACKGROUND

Historic Background

- 2.1 The Grade I Listed church of St Mary's is located on the northern side of the B6252 between Thornton in Craven and Barnoldswick and is popularly believed to have originated at some time in the 13th century (Anon ND). A later re-build is attested to by an inscription over the east window which dates to the reign of Henry VI (1421-1461) (*Ibid*). However an inscription on the tower dated 1510 is used in the English Heritage (EH) Listed Buildings information as the date of construction for the whole church, though the inscription may only refer to the tower rather than the whole building.
- 2.2 The church is described in architectural detail in the EH listings, given in Appendix I (see also www.imagesofengland.co.uk) using Whitaker's *History and Antiquities of the Deanery of Craven*. In addition to the varied architectural styles of the building the surrounding graveyard also contains a wide range of funerary monuments, predominately from the 19th century. Those currently visible date from at least the 17th century and there is evidence for possible *in situ* medieval grave markers to still be present.
- 2.3 The most obvious feature of the graveyard is the Grade II Listed Wellhouse. This building was erected by Rector Henry Richardson in 1764 in order to protect the water supply that was used by the nearby village. The Wellhouse was a rubble built octagonal structure with a re-used mill stone as a cap over the inscribed stone coping with a stone ball to cover the central hole for the drive shaft of the mill stone. The inscribed reads:

*H RICHARDSON RECTOR Fontem huic salutiferum et perantiquum
tecto munivit Anno Aerae Christianae MDCCL XIV Quod Publicae
Sanitati bene vorcat*

H Richardson Rector furnished this ancient and health-giving spring
with a roof in the year of the Christian Era 1764, to turn it to the
public good

Geology and Soils

- 2.4 The site lies on the southern edge of the Yorkshire Dales in an area of Carboniferous limestones (Butlin, 2003, 10). Overlying this, the quaternary geology is one of glacial

till and moranic drift. The soil weathered from this has been heavily modified over time by both the action of hill wash and the use of the area as a cemetery.

Topography and Land-use

- 2.5 As already mentioned above, the church was located to the north of the B6252 road on the southern side of the valley of Carr Beck. The church itself was built on a platform which had been partially cut out of the hillside at its eastern end whilst the western end has been raised, presumably using the material from the eastern end. The surrounding graveyard slopes, quite steeply in places, from east to west and at the western end there is also steep slope to the north.
- 2.6 The Wellhouse was located at the base of a short steep slope at the western end of the graveyard on the point where the spring naturally wells up from the underlying bedrock (Plate 1). The area is currently in use as a graveyard and the surrounding landscape is given over to lowland arable cultivation.

3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The objective of the watching brief was to identify and record any features of archaeological interest revealed or damaged during the groundworks for the excavation of two drainage trenches to the south of the. The specific aims were to:
- Archaeologically record (graphically and photographically) any archaeological features revealed by the groundworks
 - Recover any archaeological artefacts and environmental material exposed by the groundworks

4.0 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The drainage trenches were hand dug to a depth of c.0.50m and were c.0.75m wide. The work was carried out by contractors and the monitoring archaeologist.
- 4.2 The resulting trenches were inspected for archaeological features and the resulting topsoil stockpiles were monitored for archaeological artefacts.

5.0 RESULTS

- 5.1 No archaeological features were found and the only artefacts encountered were modern (late 19th early 20th century ceramic and glass fragments) and were not retained.
- 5.2 As no features were encountered only the trench against the south side of the well was photographed to show the addition of the late 19th early 20th century brickwork around the base of the Wellhouse. This brickwork is known to have been added in the early 20th century to strengthen the base of the Wellhouse. The brickwork is composed of a wide

variety of brick types including white/cream coloured bricks, red brick and white glazed bricks.

6.0 DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Although no archaeological finds or features were encountered it was noted that the actual well is a rectangular feature whose corners extend beyond the angles of the octagonal Wellhouse above. This would seem to imply that the Wellhouse is a later structure to the original well and there may have been a rectangular building (probably timber) over that. In addition to the differences in shape the presence of the set of steps leading down into the water may have been related to the original well.
- 6.2 The use of many different types of brick around the base of the Wellhouse seems to show either a lack of concern for the work carried out at that time or a lack of funds which meant that any available material had been used.
- 6.3 Although the watching brief did not encounter any archaeological material the 20th century maintenance of the footings of the Wellhouse were noted as was the change in shape between the well and the building indicating a possible earlier structure.

References

Anon (Not Dated) *St Mary's Thornton in Craven*. A4 sheet on the history of the church.

Butlin RA (ed.) (2003) *Historical Atlas of North Yorkshire*. Westbury. Otley.

Westman A (1994) *Archaeological Site Manual*. Museum of London Archaeology Service. London.