



**St. Mary's Church, Broadwater, West Sussex**  
Report on the Archaeological Works  
August 2005

## NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

*Archaeological work carried out within the nave and north transept of St. Mary's Church, Broadwater, during the course of building works has revealed the presence of six brick vaults, two floor slabs and one cross slab. It also indicated that numerous other burials exist under the floor of the transept, but the building works did not necessitate their disturbance. Other features uncovered included traces of at least three post-medieval tiled floor surfaces, and structures relating to the 19<sup>th</sup> century use of the transept.*

**Non-Technical Summary**

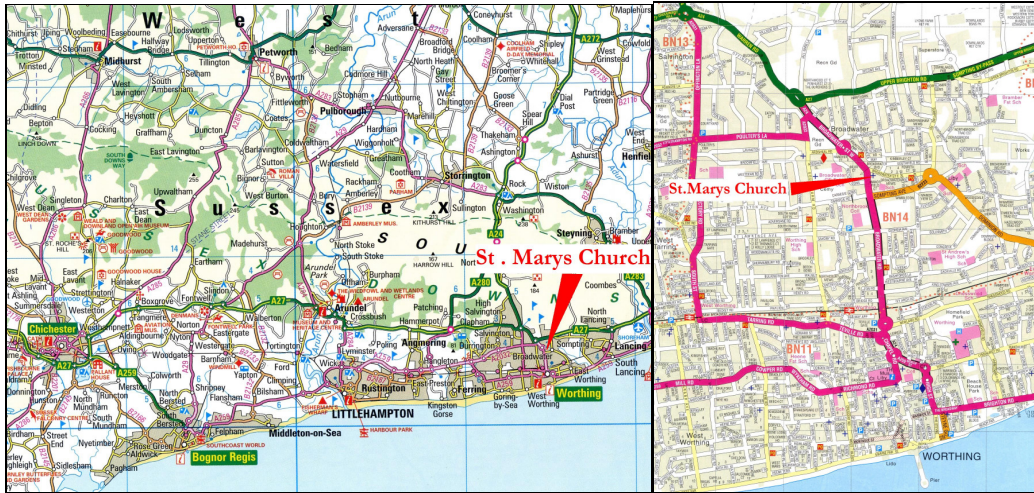
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## 1. BACKGROUND

### 1.1 Topographical Background



**Fig.1** Maps showing the location of the site © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. License no: AL100036068.

1. The church of St. Mary's lies at the centre of the historic village of Broadwater, on the corner of Broadwater Road and Broadwater Street East. Broadwater has since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, been subsumed within the spreading town of Worthing. The church itself lies at NGR SU 1465 0440 and c. 7.5m OD.
2. The geology in the area of the site is Brickearth.

### 1.2 Project Background

1. The PCC of St. Mary's Church is carrying out a programme of works aimed to update and maximise the use of the church. These works are being carried out in a series of phases, permitted by a succession of faculties. These faculties include a requirement for archaeological works where archaeological deposits are likely to be disturbed. This report covers the archaeological work carried out in relation to phases 1 and 2.
2. Phase 1 was mainly concerned with electrical and heating improvements, but included the removal of a cross slab, or ledger stone, from the floor of the nave. These works led to the discovery of two vaults within the nave, which are described below. The cross slab itself, of 15<sup>th</sup> century date, was found to be out of its original position and was relocated to the east wall of the north transept.
3. Phase 2 involved the refurbishment of the north transept to create internal rooms. This necessitated the lowering of the current floor by approximately 0.45m in order to allow for a new floor to be laid. The bulk of this report details the nature of the archaeological remains discovered during this phase. The work was carried out in several stages, the first of which was the excavation of a preliminary trial trench to investigate the depth of archaeological deposits. This revealed that the bulk of the material to be removed consisted of brick sleeper walls for the existing transept floor, and rubble layers associated with its construction. It was decided that all of these features and deposits could be

removed by the groundworkers without archaeological supervision. Following on from this, the upper surface of the layers beneath were recorded by an archaeologist, with the area of the trial trench included. Any necessary further ground reductions were to be carried out under archaeological supervision if necessary. In the event in only two places was this required, both being to allow for two concrete beams. The reduction was so light even for these that only when the top of a vault was broken open was an archaeologist present, to record the contents before it was backfilled.

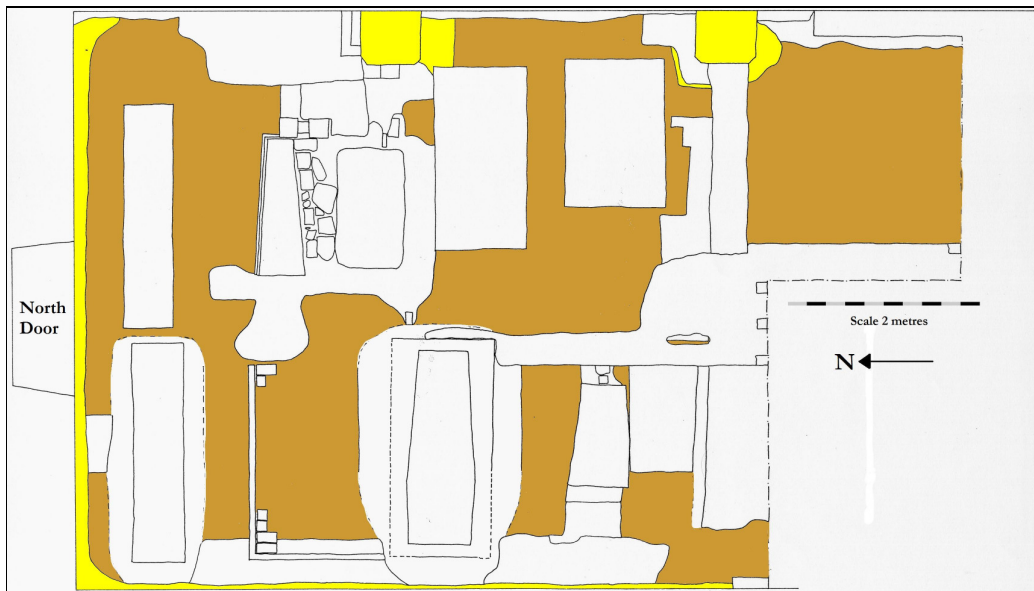
4. The archaeological work described above was carried out on the following dates: the work in the nave on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2004; the trial trench evaluation on the 24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> March 2005; the excavation on the 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> April 2005; and the supervision of the breaking open of the vault on the 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2005.
5. The destination of the archive will be agreed with the PCC. If it is agreed to deposit the archive with a museum, this shall be Worthing Museum. The accession number given to this project will be obtained at this stage.
6. Copies of this report will be given to the PCC, West Sussex County Council's SMR and Worthing Museum.
7. Every effort has been made in the preparation of this document to provide as complete an assessment as possible. All statements and opinions are offered in good faith; but West Sussex Archaeology Ltd. cannot accept responsibility for errors of fact or opinion resulting from data supplied by a third party, or for any loss or other consequence arising from decisions or actions made upon the basis of facts or opinions expressed in this document.

### 1.3 Historical Background

1. The name Broadwater is assumed to originate from the tidal inlets which used to extend inland in the medieval period. Broadwater village stood on higher ground overlooking these inlets, one of which, the Teville stream, separated the settlement from the smaller hamlet of Worthing to the south. The size of the church at Broadwater indicates the relative importance of the village during the medieval period over its immediate neighbours, but the rise of Worthing, once subservient to it, has now led to its being eclipsed and engulfed as a result of the latter's expansion.
2. The present church of St. Mary was begun in the mid-12<sup>th</sup> century, but it must have replaced an earlier structure recorded as existing in AD1086. The original church consisted of a tower, nave and chancel, with the two transepts being added in the late 12<sup>th</sup> century. By the mid 13<sup>th</sup> century the church had reached its present size, with subsequent works being minor in nature.

## 2. RESULTS

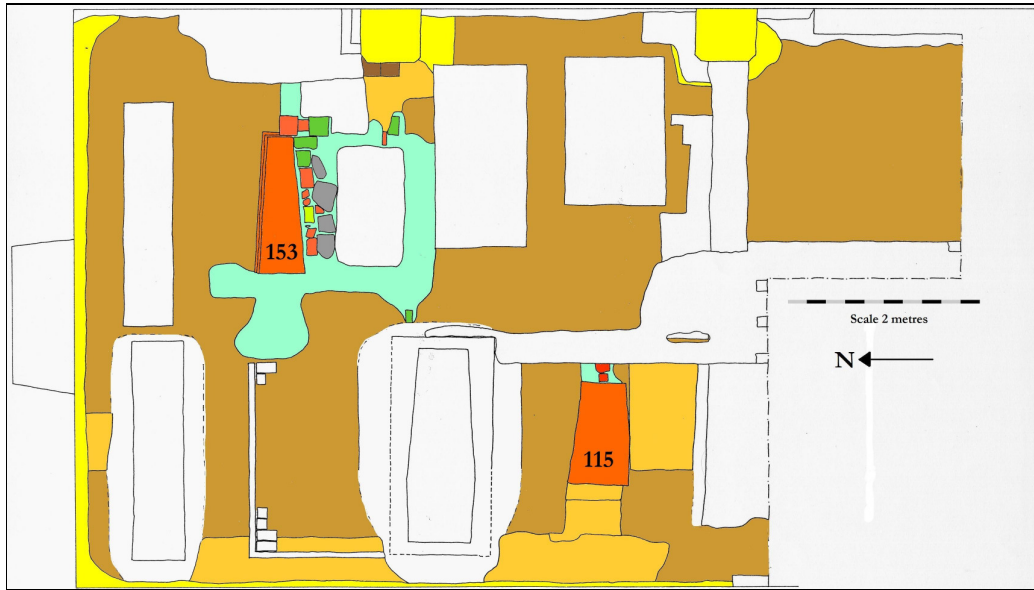
### 2.1 The Late 12<sup>th</sup> Century Transept And The Burial Soils



**Fig. 2** The North Transept. Indicated in yellow are the late 12<sup>th</sup> century foundations and internal buttresses. Indicated in brown is the visible extent of the burial soil which exists throughout the transept.

1. Running around the northern and western edges of the excavated area were the foundations of the late 12<sup>th</sup> century north transept. These were composed of flint rubble set in an orange/yellow mortar. At the north-east corner of the transept the foundations begin to curve round to the south, but do not extend all along the eastern wall. This is due to the presence of three side chapels which were clearly built as part of the original scheme. The curve of foundations in the north-east corner marks the position of the northern base of the arch for the northern of these chapels, while another two bases, with buttresses sitting on them, were located further along the eastern wall of the transept. The north door of the transept is a 19<sup>th</sup> century insertion.
2. Throughout the interior of the transept, and below the surviving floors, there existed a uniform layer of disturbed dark brown soil. It is into this layer that all the features described below were dug, although it is clear that it does not represent one single deposit of soil, but rather the gradual build up of disturbed earth created by centuries of grave-digging and related excavations. The soil contained numerous fragments of human bone, where later burials had been sunk through earlier ones, as well as a collection of floor tiles from earlier floors. Such was the disturbed nature of this layer that it was not possible to identify individual grave cuts in its surface, except where they have been marked by vaults, floor slabs or obvious holes within surviving floors. During the course of this project this layer was left barely disturbed since its surface almost exactly tied in with the depth needed for the new floor foundations. The only exception to this was a small trial hole excavated to determine its extent between graves 115 and 107 (see below), however its base was still not reached at a depth of 0.7m below the top of the surviving brick vaults.

## 2.2 The Early Burials And The Floors



**Fig. 3** The North Transept. Indicated in orange are the brickearth floors and in light green the mortar floor. The tiles are coloured according to their glaze, with those in pink being unglazed. The stone slabs are in grey.

1. The earliest surviving burials visible on the surface of the soil layer were represented by the two floor slabs 153 & 115. The former is a cross slab which, based upon the design of the cross, would appear to be of a late medieval date. It is uncertain whether this lies in its original position since the floor surrounding it is later in date and has been lapped up over its sides. The other grave, 115, is a plain floor slab, again it pre-dates the floors built up around it, but in this case seems to be in its original position, since the trial hole placed against its northern edge indicated an associated grave fill below.



**Fig. 4** Photograph of cross slab 153, looking west.

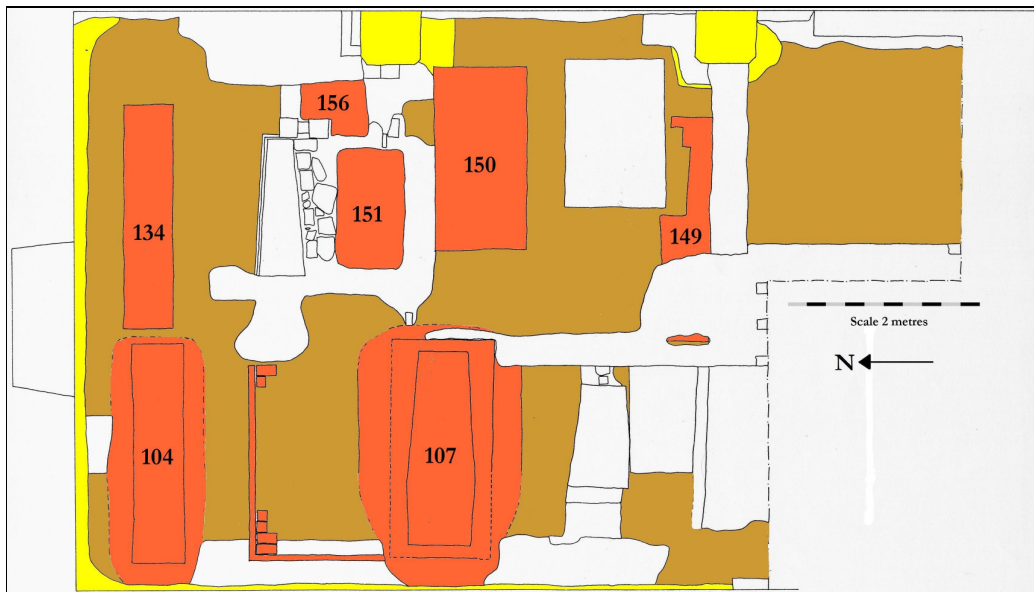


**Fig. 5** Photograph of floor slab 115, looking west



2. The remains of at least three earlier floor surfaces were visible sitting upon the soil layer. All three of which were probably the bases for tiled floors, a few examples of such tiles surviving. The earliest is of compacted brickearth clay and survives in only one patch immediately against the northern of the two arch buttresses. Set into it are two remaining brown glazed floor tiles, 18cm square. The second floor was composed of a coarse white lime mortar and survived to the west and south of the cross slab 153. Set on this floor were a wide variety of different tiles and stone slabs, indicating that the floor had been repeatedly patched; none of the tiles appeared to be obviously original. The latest surviving floor was again composed of compacted brickearth and survived to the west and south of grave slab 115 and along the west and north wall of the transept. No traces of tiles were found on it. It is likely that all of these floors date to the post-medieval period, based upon the glazed tiles found on the earliest brickearth surface

### 2.3 The Later Burials



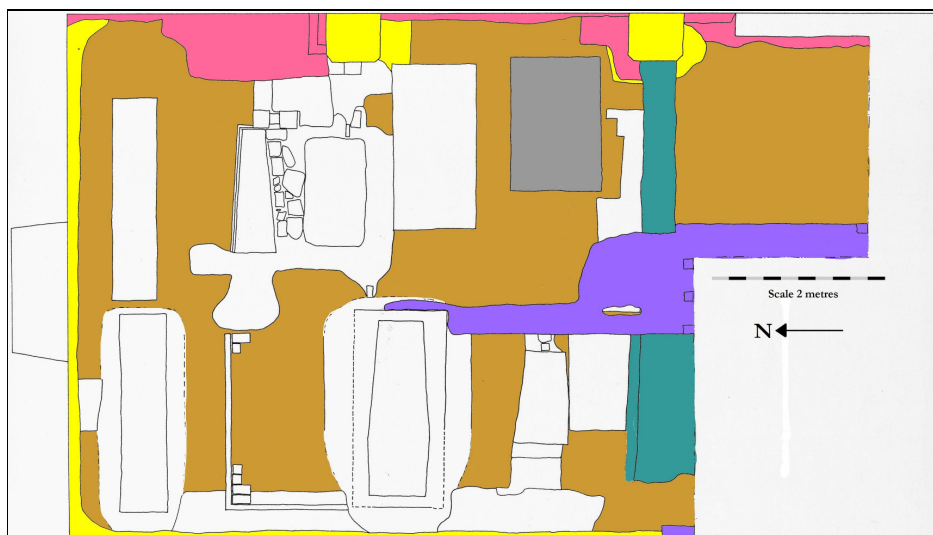
**Fig. 6** The North Transept. Indicated in red are the seven burials and the brick structure. Numbers 134, 104, 107 & 149 are brick vaults. Number 150 a floor slab and 156 & 151 are unmarked.

3. Seven burials were found which had been dug into one or more of these floor surfaces. These included four marked by brick vaults, one by a floor slab and two inferred from holes within the mortar floor.
4. All four of the brick vaults were 2.3m long, but the width of three were only partially revealed, although in the case of 104 its total dimensions can be inferred from the disturbance to the brickearth floor to the north and south. Thus vaults 107 and 104 were 1.05m and c.0.75m wide respectively. 134 contained a lead coffin, visible through hole in its western end where a later heating duct had broken through its top. The top of the arch of 107 was removed during the current building works in order to lay a slab partially over it. This revealed a skeleton within the vault, presumably originally contained within a wooden coffin. The vault itself proved to be 0.9m high. 149 had been already partially

broken up by the construction of an organ pit over its north-eastern corner, but it was not possible to glimpse the original contents due to the amount of rubble backfilling the interior.

5. Floor slab 150 was dated by its own inscription to 1762, and marked the grave of a William Haines, who died aged 61 on the 7<sup>th</sup> March of that year. The inscription also records that his infant son, William, was buried nearby. It does not seem too much to suggest that the hole marked 151 and dug within the mortar floor immediately to the north of this slab, marks the position of this child burial. To east of this burial another hole in the mortar floor was visible (156) which probably indicates the position of another grave.
6. The other feature which belongs to this phase, in that it too is later than the surviving floor surfaces, is the remains of a brick structure of unknown function lying between vaults 104 and 107. All that survives of this are two lines of bricks set on edge at right angles to each other, with a few bricks laid flat lying in within the angle formed. It has been clearly cut by the insertion of vault 107 and must thus pre-date it, but little else can be said about it.
7. In addition to these features in the north transept, the two vaults within the nave of the church fit within this same broad phase. These were revealed during works affecting the heating ducts running along the central aisle of the nave. A small hole in the base of the northern heating duct, c.4.7m from the west door of the church, revealed the presence of a brick vault running east-west, 1.5 m wide and 0.9m high. Within the vault two lead coffins were visible, the one to the north being a child's, and the other an adult's. Further to the east, upon the removal of a floor slab, a second vault was revealed. The western end of this vault lay c.9m from the west door of the church, was 2.3m long and 0.7m wide (internally), with a depth of c.0.9m. A lead coffin was visible within it with a name plate which appeared to record the name Elias Kirke, who died in 1827 aged 18, although the poor light makes this an uncertain reading.

#### 2.4 The School, The Blocking Of The Chapels And The Modern Floor



**Fig. 7** The North Transept. Indicated in green is the possible school wall foundation, in pink the concrete associated with the blocking of the chapels, in grey the organ pit and in blue the remains of the heating ducts and last floor.

1. The final phase within the transept is defined by modern features. The earliest of these is a wall foundation of flint and chalk set in a white lime mortar. This partially rests on top of vault 149 and thus must post-date it, probably putting its construction in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is not unreasonable to suppose that it is related to the conversion of the transept into a school in 1826, and was constructed to separate off the main body of the church. It is likely that the foundations revealed supported a wooden partition, rather than a mortared wall, since no indications are visible on the sides of the transept of scarring associated with a more solid structure, and the foundations themselves, particularly as they sit on a vault, would probably not be capable of supporting a greater load. With the conversion of the transept into a school, the continuous process of grave-digging which had occurred for the previous six centuries would have come to an end, and was never to be resumed, since new legislation in the mid-nineteenth century proscribed the practise.
2. The school within the church was a short-lived venture, moving to other premises by at the latest 1848. It is possibly at this stage, with the departure of the school, that the side chapels off the north transept were demolished and the arches filled in, to match the south transept whose chapels had been removed in 1826. Against the eastern wall of the transept the remains of concrete floors associated with the blocked arches survive in part.
3. The last two significant building events within the north transept were the construction of an organ pit, and then the laying of the heating system and flooring which has survived until the present works.



**Fig. 8** Photograph of the North Transept looking north from the tower.

### 3. SURVIVAL OF DEPOSITS

Little remains of any earlier floor surfaces within the north transept, probably as a result of the construction of the raised floor and heating system which existed there before the current works. Where they did survive it was mainly just the mortar or clay settings into which the surface proper, composed of tiles and stone slabs, had been set. Three other survivals from these early surfaces were the two floor slabs and one cross slab revealed below the existing floor. These have all be left in situ beneath the new floor. In addition to these features the tops of four brick vaults were uncovered, two of which are now broken and back-filled, and two left substantially intact. The probable mass of other burials dug into the brown soils filling the rest of the transept have been left untouched.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

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