



Iain Soden Heritage Services Ltd

Modern living in an historic environment

**Archaeological monitoring at the Church of
St Michael and All Angels, Winwick, Northamptonshire,
March 2018**

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Winwick Parish Church

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Summary

Reduction of the tower floors for a new WC in Winwick Church revealed no significant archaeology. Much of the area had been disturbed in relation to 19th-century heating. In the churchyard a related new drain was sufficiently shallow not to disturb the burial environment.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Stimpson Walton and Bond, Architects, acting for the Vicar and PCC of Winwick, for their commission.

Introduction and Historical Background

Works have taken place in relation to drainage, kitchenette and WC facilities at St Michael and All Angels Church, Church Lane, Winwick, Northamptonshire, NN6 7PD.

St Michael and All Angels is the Parish Church of Winwick, Northamptonshire and has its origins in the late Saxon period. An architectural description may be found in Pevsner (1990, 463-4). The church is Grade II* listed (List no 1229677) and lies at NGR: SP 62559 73868 (Fig 1).

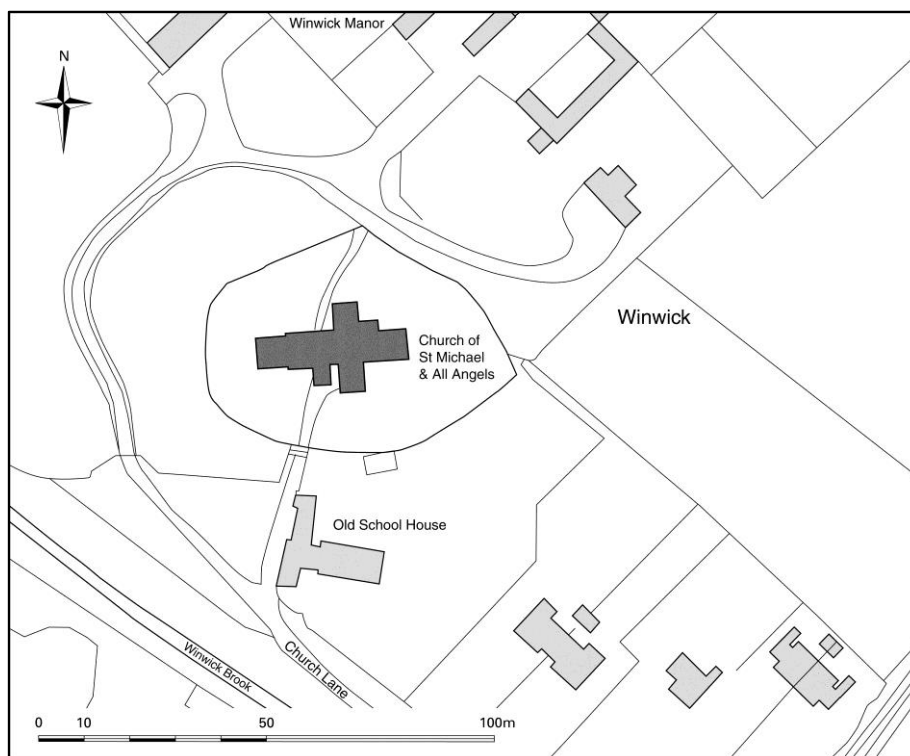


Fig 1: Site location. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown Copyright and database right 2018

Winwick Parish Church

The church was in the 1043 gift of Earl Leofric of Mercia to the late Saxon St Osburg's Nunnery, later re-founded in the Norman period as St Mary's Benedictine Priory, with Winwick confirmed as a foundation endowment (see Coss 2013, 247ff for full text of charters). At that time the church and village were part and parcel of the same endowment and it became part of the new Norman diocese of Coventry and Lichfield, administered first from Chester and then (after 1102) from Coventry.

The church was alienated towards the end of the 12th century first of all to Ranulph de Bayn (or de Ranys) and then Stephen and John Mallory of Monks Kirby (Warwickshire) by St Mary's Prior Lawrence (c1150) in return for military service (Coss, op cit 48b.1 and 49.6).

From the 1150s Winwick Church had rights over the churches of West Haddon and Cold Ashby which fell under the jurisdiction of Daventry's Cluniac Priory (Franklin 1988, 697). As late as 1424, Winwick church may have had to accept burials from Cold Ashby as the chapel of St Denis there had no cemetery (ibid, 984). This was irksome to Cold Ashby (since it kept mortuary fees from them) and was the subject of a Papal Bull of Martin V (Calendar of Papal Registers relating to the English Province, Papal Letters Vol VII (1417-31), 362). The outcome of the inquisition is not known but since Daventry Priory (Cluniac -but often called Benedictine-) had a long-standing special understanding with Coventry (Benedictine) Priory, it was presumably effected without serious argument. Following the Dissolution of the Monasteries, and the suppression of both Coventry's and Daventry's Priors, responsibility for Winwick Church passed to the newly created Diocese of Peterborough in 1541.

The church lies upon a pronounced mound at the north-western end of the current village, which is characterised by large areas of recorded medieval earthworks of platforms and ditched enclosures (RCHME 1981, 199-201).

Fieldwork

Works to insert a new servery/kitchenette in the south transept disturbed no historic fabric and involved no archaeological input. However, works to insert a WC in the west tower and its drain involved lowering the tower floor and connecting pipework through the churchyard to the west.

Tower and churchyard

A 19th-century timber screen across the tower entrance from the nave was removed and set aside for re-use. Beneath this the stone flags and a huge stone step between the nave and tower were taken up to begin the process of unifying nave and tower floor levels.

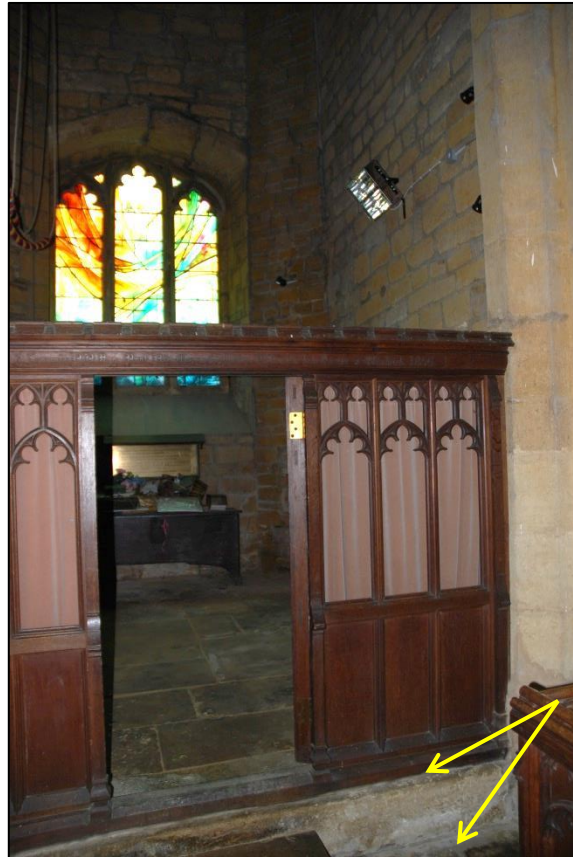


Fig 2: The screen between tower and nave. Note the 400mm step up (arrowed)-material dug out.

Thereafter about 400mm of sub-floor was hand-dug out from across the tower with a constant archaeological presence.

This process uncovered and reduced a brick culvert containing a cast iron pipe which formerly served a stove placed in a corner fireplace in the north-western corner of the tower. Built against the culvert on the south side was an irregularly-shaped former brick-lined pit in which had once been stored fuel for the stove. With the stove's disuse, the pit had long been back-filled.

The material removed comprised a very mixed matrix of sand, ironstone, clay and bricks, with occasional unstratified and very-worn medieval (14th-15th century) clay floor tiles. These were set aside to be replaced rather than being retained as finds or discarded. There was no other dating material and no grave-cuts or other archaeological features were present. No articulated human remains were disturbed or grave-cuts present.

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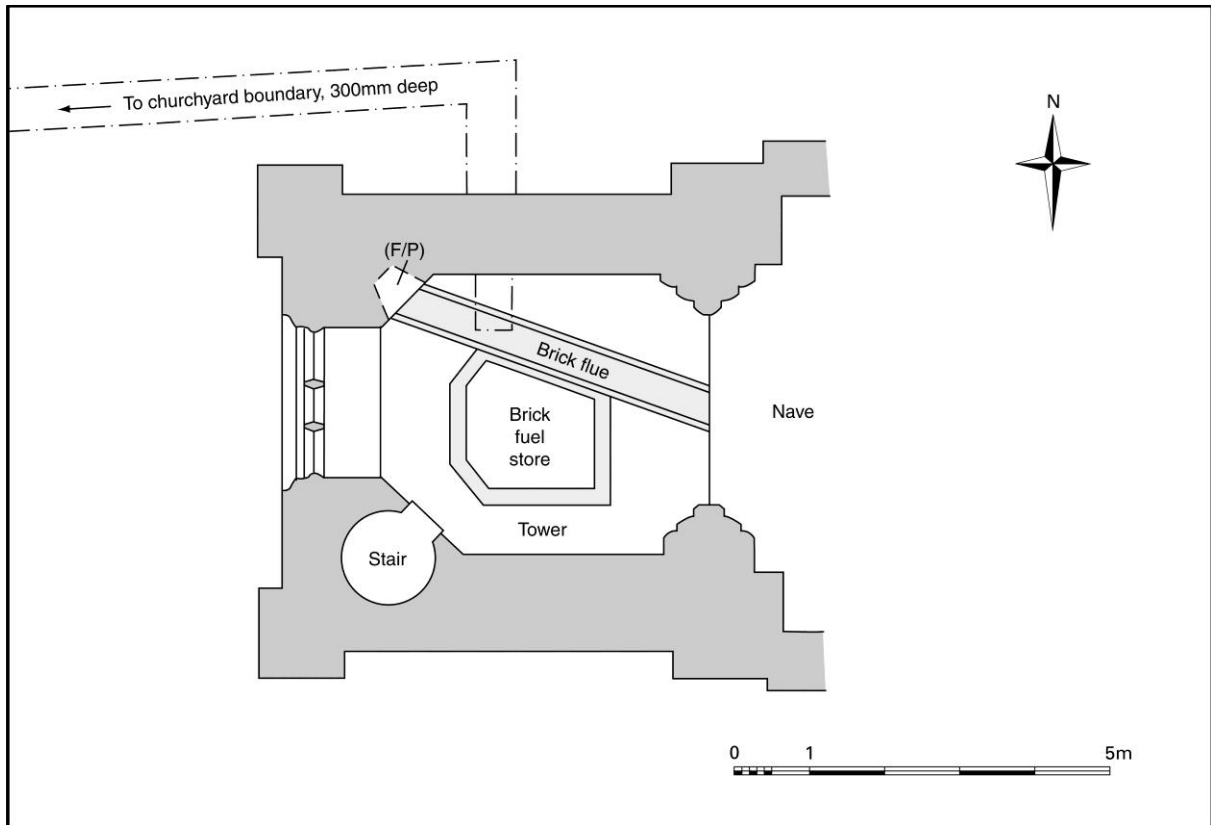


Fig 2: The church west tower with features exposed and location of drain (Andy Isham)

The floor reduction showed that in the south-western corner of the tower the doorway at the foot of the spiral stair to the ringing floor and bell-frame once related to a floor at the same level as the new one now is. A step had been put into it when the tower floor had clearly been raised, probably during the 19th-century (Fig 3)



Fig 3: The west tower reduced and features exposed, looking west; scale 1m. Note the spiral stair doorway and the levels there at left, and the blocked fireplace at far right.

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A further localised reduction against the north wall of the tower (to connect a drain through) showed that at least a further 400mm of fill lies within the tower. Natural geology was not exposed.

Within the churchyard the new drain was laid in a shallow, hand-dug trench. This was entirely within homogenous grave-earth and no graves were disturbed.

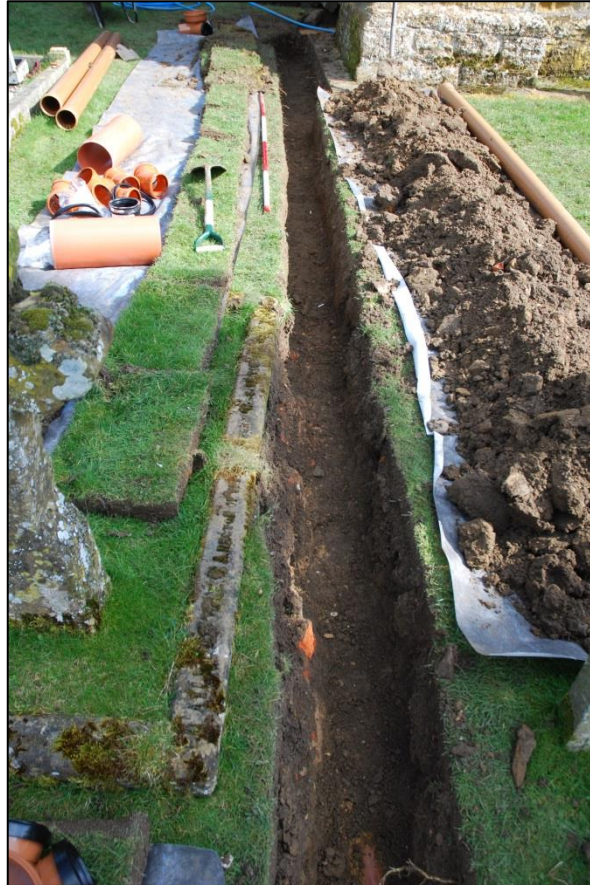


Fig 4: The external drain run, looking east towards the tower; scale 2m

Conclusions

The present works confined to the tower and churchyard have reduced the tower floor by c400mm, unifying the floor level with that of the nave and transepts. No significant archaeology was exposed. The work also suggested that the tower interior contains at least a further 400mm of fill. Unstratified finds suggest that the tower (Perpendicular and therefore probably late 14th- to 15th-century) may originally have been floored with ceramic tiles although no tiles have been found *in situ*.

In the graveyard, new pipework was laid deliberately shallow and no graves were disturbed as a result.

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Appendix

OASIS data

Project Name	St Michael and All Angels, Winwick
OASIS ID	iainside1-315422
Project Type	Watching Brief
Originator	Iain Soden Heritage Services Ltd
Project Manager	Iain Soden
Previous/future work	No
Current land use	Parish church and churchyard
Development type	Alterations
Reason for investigation	Ecclesiastical Faculty
National grid reference	SP 62559 73868
Start/end dates of fieldwork	8-12 March 2018
Archive recipient	Northamptonshire Archive
Study area	c50 sq m



Iain Soden Heritage Services Ltd

25 April 2018