



**University of
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Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Watching Brief on
drainage works at St John the Baptist, Belton,
Leicestershire
NGR: SK44773 20819**

Jon Coward



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drainage works at St John the Baptist, Belton,
Leicestershire
NGR: SK44773 20819**

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For: Midland Stonemasonry Limited

Checked by:

Signed:



Date: 10th February 2014

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X.A10 2014

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Summary

An archaeological watching brief was carried out by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) on St John the Baptist Church, Belton, Leicestershire, on behalf of Midland Stonemasonry Ltd. Apart from charnel, no finds of archaeological significance were noted during the work.

The site archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council Heritage Services Section, accession no. XA.10.2014.

1. Introduction

This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out in January 2014 by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS). The work was undertaken on the request of the Diocesan Archaeological Advisor.

2. Site Description, Topography and Geology

The church lies within the village of Belton to the north-west of Shepshed, on a slight rise in the landscape (Fig. 1). The British Geological Survey shows the underlying Bedrock as Gunthorpe Mudstone overlain with Diamicton and Glaciofluvial superficial Deposits. During the course of the work only silty sand was encountered, and no definite natural deposits were reached.

3. Archaeological Background

The Parish church of St John the Baptist is a Grade II* listed building of mostly 14th century date with a later perpendicular tower, clerestory and roof. It contains the recumbent effigy tomb of Lady Roesia de Verdun, foundress of the nearby Grace Dieu Priory, and Frances Beaumont, Justice of the Common Pleas, was also buried in the church on 22nd April 1598. The registers go back to 1538.

4. Aims and Methods

All archaeological work adhered to the Institute for Archaeologist's (IfA) *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations* and the *Guidelines for Archaeological Work in Leicestershire and Rutland* (LMARS).

The work involved the removal of topsoil and the excavation of drainage trenches and two soak ways by hand. All work was monitored and recorded by archaeologists.



Figure 1 Belton, Leicestershire.

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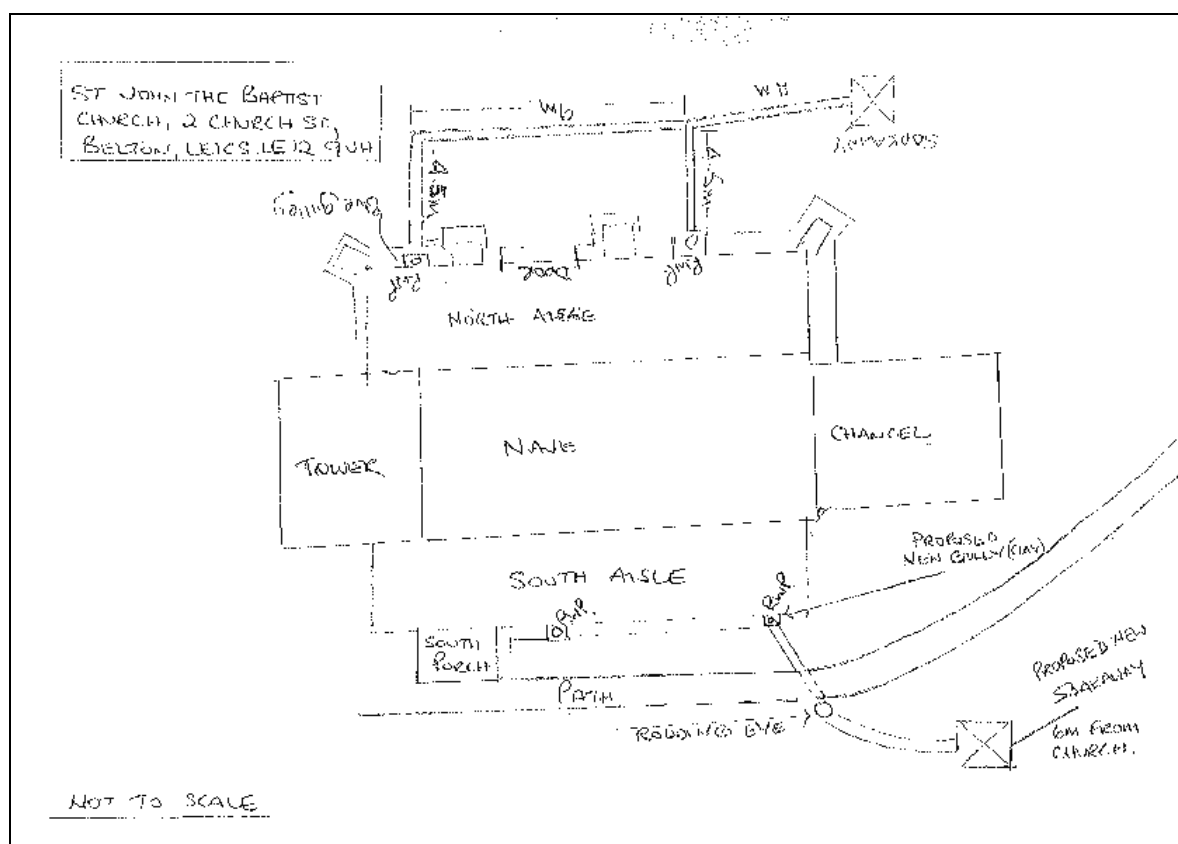


Figure 2 Drainage works in relation to the church. North to top.
Plan provided by Midland Stonemasonry Ltd

5. Results

The drainage works were carried out by hand, rather than using a mechanical excavator. One trench came off the south-east corner of the south aisle, diagonally out to a soakaway south east of the church. On the north side two trenches came perpendicularly off the north aisle, these were joined by a cross trench which fed into a soakaway to the north east of the building (Fig. 2). Both soakaways were 1m square and over 1m deep. The trenches were much shallower at c. 0.40m depth by c.0.30m width.

The topsoil was a dark grey sandy loam, overlying an orangey-brown silty sand subsoil with some pebbles. This subsoil became more orange and sandy with depth, but no definite undisturbed natural was reached by 1.30m, the depth of the deepest north-east soakaway. The south soakaway was slightly shallower at c.1.10m. The sandy soil was unstable at depth leading to collapses into the base.

As would be expected, there was an amount of charnel in the subsoil, and one potentially articulated skeleton was partially truncated during the work, but apart from this, no features or finds of archaeological significance were noted during the course of the works. All human bone disturbed was gathered up for re-interment in the churchyard.



Figure 3 The south trench and soakaway (to the rear), looking south-east



Figure 4 North trench and cross-trench, west side. Looking south



Figure 5 North trench, cross-trench, and soakaway under construction, east side. Looking south-west



Figure 6 South soakaway and trench under construction, looking north-east



Figure 7 Northern soakaway, looking north-west

6. Archive

The archive will be deposited with Leicestershire County Council, Heritage Services, under accession number X.A10.2014

The archive contains:

- One *pro-forma* watching brief record sheet
- 9 digital images of the works undertaken
- This report

The report is listed on the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) held by the Archaeological Data Service at the University of York. Available at: <http://oasis.ac.uk/>

Project Name	St John the Baptist, Belton, Leicestershire
Project Type	Watching brief
Project Manager	Vicki Score
Project Supervisor	Jon Coward
Previous/Future work	No/unknown
Current Land Use	Burial ground, still in use
Development Type	Surface drainage
Reason for Investigation	Request of Diocesan Archaeological Advisor
Position in the Planning Process	Condition
Site Co ordinates	SK44773 20819
Start/end dates of field work	Jan 2014
Archive Recipient	LMARS
Study Area	c. 1 ha

7. Acknowledgements

Fieldwork was carried out by Jon Coward. Vicki Score managed the project. ULAS would like to thank the staff of Midlands Masonry Ltd for their assistance.

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