

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at  
St. James Church, Twycross, Leicestershire.  
(SK 338 049).**

**Gavin Speed**

**For: Twycross District Church Council**

**Checked by Project Manager**

**Signed: .....Date:.....**

**Name:**

**University of Leicester  
Archaeological Services**

University Rd., Leicester, LE1 7RH  
Tel: (0116) 2522848 Fax: (0116) 2522614  
Website: <http://www.le.ac.uk/ulas/>

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# **An Archaeological Watching Brief at St James Church, Twycross, Leicestershire. (SK 338 049).**

**Gavin Speed**

University of Leicester Archaeological Services  
Report No. 2004/015

## **Summary**

*An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during ground works for the construction of a water main at St. James Church, Twycross, Leicestershire (SK 338 049) by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS).*

*No significant archaeological finds or deposits were observed during this work. The site archive will be deposited with Leicestershire County Council, Heritage Services Accession No. X.A 8 2004.*

## **1. Introduction**

Twycross lies in east Leicestershire, c.14km to the northwest of Hinckley (fig. 1). The site for a new water main at St. James's Church, Twycross, Leicestershire (NGR SK 338 049) is located in an area of archaeological importance in the historic core of Twycross.

In view of this an archaeological watching brief during the ground works was required by Leicester Diocesan Advisory Committee and detailed in their certificate under Archaeological Considerations (Appendix 2).

The University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) was then commissioned to carry out the watching brief on behalf of the client Twycross District Church Council. The archaeological watching brief was undertaken by ULAS on the 12th and 17th December 2003.

## **2. Location and Geology**

The development area is located to the east of Church Street in Twycross, Leicestershire (SK 338 049), at a height of c. 126m OD. The Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain Sheet 155, indicates that the underlying geology is likely to consist of sand and gravel.

## **3. Archaeological Objectives**

The aims of the watching brief were:

- To identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits.
- To establish the character, extent and date range of any archaeological deposits to be affected by the proposed ground works.
- To excavate and record any archaeological deposits to be affected by the ground works.
- To assess the local, regional and national importance of any deposits.
- To define an appropriate mitigation strategy if necessary.
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

#### **4. Archaeological and Historical Background**

The development area is situated within the medieval village of Twycross (LE8423). St. James's Church (LE3283) is a Grade 1 listed building of medieval date (14th to 15th century) and lies within a Conservation Area. It has 19th century restorations, and installed 13th century glass in the east window of French origin. The trench goes through the churchyard, therefore there was potential for burials or footings of earlier buildings. There is also potential for Saxon remains relating to the settlement before the Norman conquest.

No known archaeological work has been previously undertaken within the application area. However, ULAS has recently undertaken archaeological work close to the area at 17/19 Church Street (Warren 2001, Browning 2003).

The area closest to the church grounds (trench 1) revealed a number of features, demonstrating earlier activity in this area. However, all but one of the archaeological features in this area proved either to be a tree root hole, or of post-medieval date. No human remains were located. A single unstratified sherd of Roman pottery was recovered from the trench. A large posthole located in the centre of the trench, contained a sherd of 12th-13th century pottery. This feature remains the only indication of early activity in this area (Browning 2003).

#### **5. Methodology**

The watching brief involved supervision of the machine excavation of a service trench. This was carried out using a JCB 3CX with a toothed bucket. Following the machine excavation, the entire trench was examined and recorded by written record and photographs.

The work followed the Institute of Field Archaeologists' (IFA) *Code of Conduct* and the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological watching briefs*.

## 6. Results

The topsoil overburden consisted of dark brown sandy-clay, with some modern brick; this generally went to a depth of c. 0.2m. The subsoil also consisted of a light greyish-brown silty-sand. The natural substratum was not reached.

A concrete roof of the church boiler room was located at the northeast corner of the trench; therefore any archaeological deposits in this area will have been disturbed. Two sherds of post-medieval pottery (either 18th or 19th century) were recovered from an unstratified context within the topsoil. No archaeological deposits were located during the excavation of the service trench.

## 7. Conclusion

No significant archaeological deposits or artefacts were encountered during the watching brief.

## 8. Site Archive

The archive will be deposited with Leicester Museums, Arts and Records Service with the Accession No. X.A 8.2004. It consists of watching brief sheets, two sherds of unstratified pottery, colour transparency slides and monochrome negatives.

## 9. Publication

A summary of the work will be submitted for inclusion in the *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* in due course.

## 10. Acknowledgements

ULAS would like to thank Severn Trent Water for their help and cooperation during the watching brief. This archaeological watching brief was carried out by Gavin Speed and Leon Hunt, the project manager was Richard Buckley.

## 11. Bibliography

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Gavin Speed  
University of Leicester Archaeological Services  
University Road,  
Leicester, LE1 7RH

gs50@leicester.ac.uk  
Tel:0116 252 2848  
Fax: 0116 252 2614

03.02.2004

## 12. Illustrations

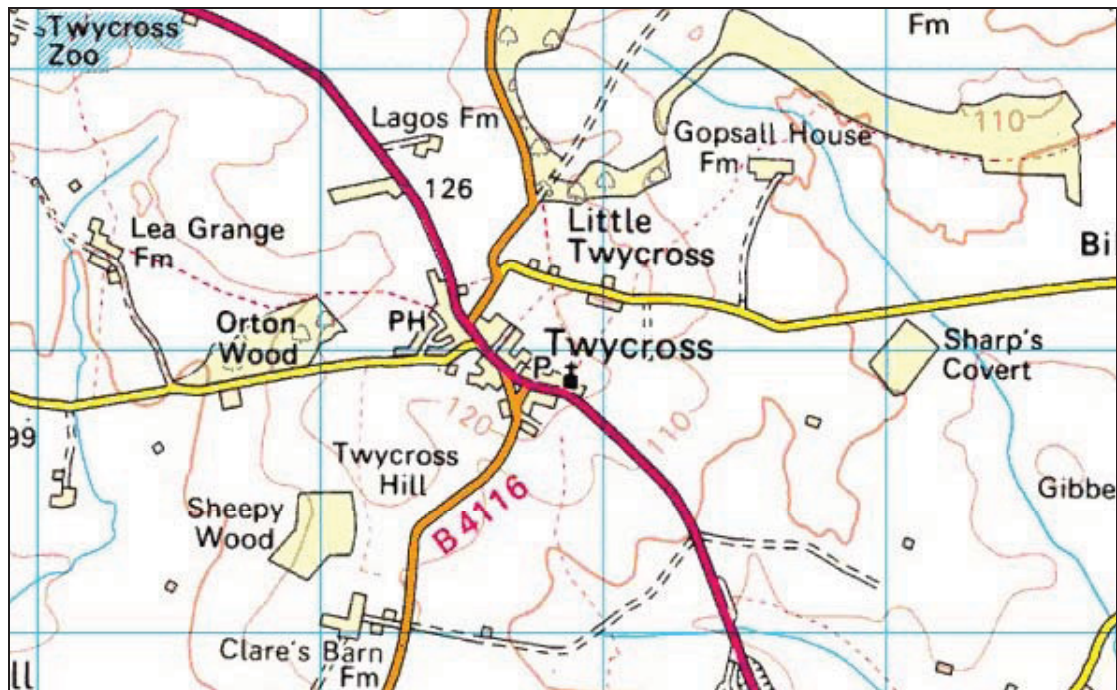


Figure 1: Site location. Reproduced from Landranger® 1:50 000 scale by permission of Ordnance Survey® on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Licence number AL 100021187.

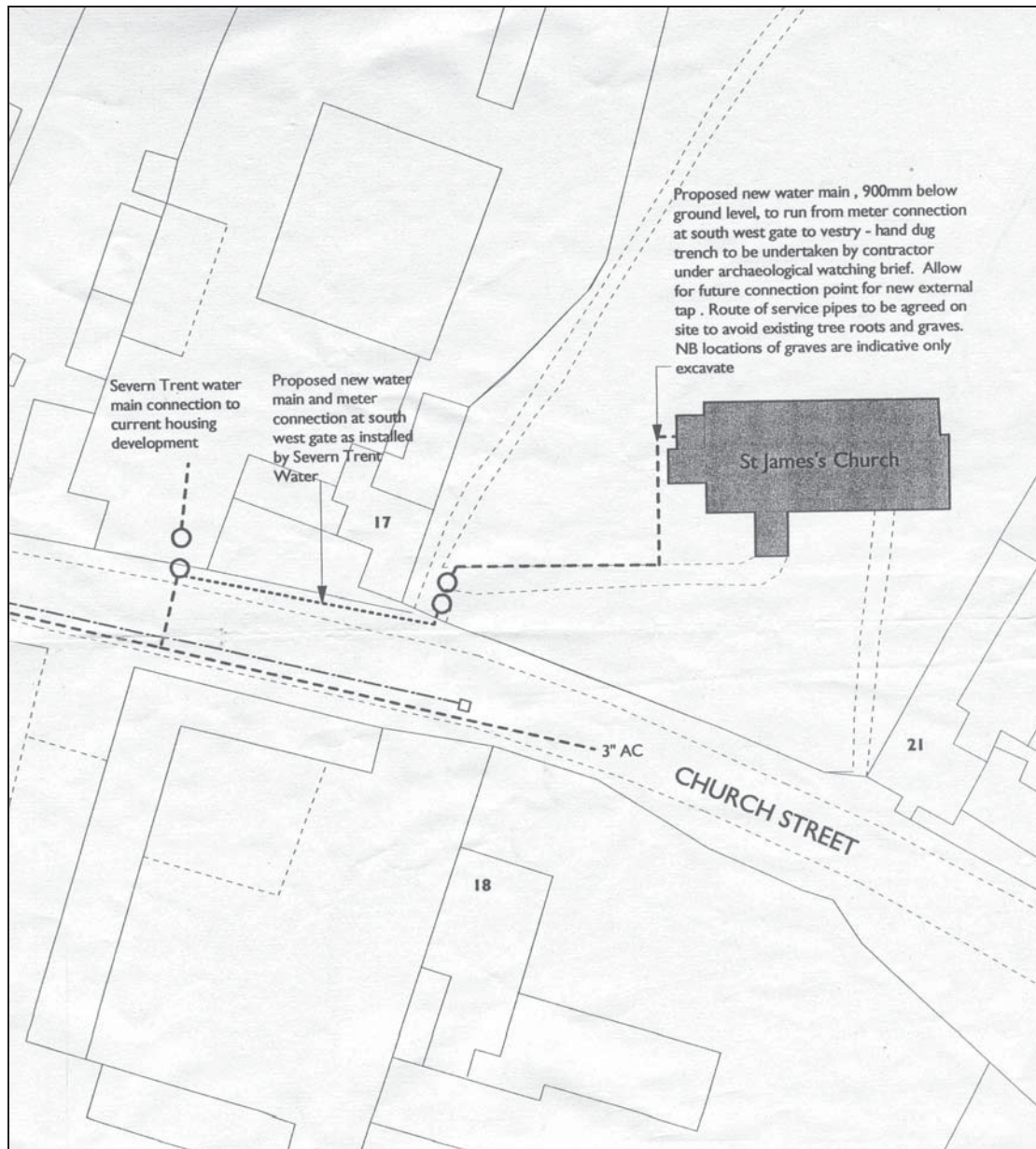


Figure 2: Location plan showing water main route.



Figure 3: Site pre-excitation.



Figure 4: Excavated service trench. Looking north.





Figure 5: The concrete roof of the church boiler room, looking south.

**Appendix 2:** The pottery and miscellaneous finds from a watching brief at the church of Saint James, Twycross, Leicestershire.

D. Sawday

The two pottery sherds, weighing thirty-five grams, which were recovered during the watching brief, were examined under a binocular microscope and catalogued with reference to the ULAS fabric series (Davies and Sawday 1999). Both fragments are in a coarse post medieval earthenware, fabric EA2, which is dated generally from the post medieval to the modern period, (*ibid.* 197). However, these two examples are in a relatively fine fabric and quite thin walled - one is internally glazed and probably from an upright bowl or jar – and they may both date from the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries.

**Bibliography**

Davies, S., and Sawday, D., 1999. 'The Post Roman Pottery and Tile' in A. Connor and R. Buckley, *Roman and Medieval Occupation in Causeway Lane, Leicester*, Leicester Archaeology Mon. **5**, 165-213.

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Site/Parish: Church of St James, Twycross, Leics Accession No/ Doc Ref: XA8 2004 Material: pottery Site Type: church grounds/village	Submitter: G. Speed Identifier: D. Sawday Date of Id: 3.02.04 Method of Recovery: watching brief
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context	fabric/ware	sherd nos.	weight grams	comments
U/S topsoil	EA2 - Earthenware 2	2	37	One sherd is glazed internally and probably from a jar or upright bowl.