KOPC15/03

KINFAUNS OLD PARISH CHURCH

Report on Test Pit Evaluation

Client: Tay Landscape Partnership

KOPC15 - 03 summary sheet

Client: Tay Landscape Partnership

National Grid Reference: NO 1667 2226 Parish: Kinfauns

Council Perth and Kinross

Planning Application No NA

NMRS No NO12SE 13 SMR No MPK5428

OASIS No headland1-220039
Project Manager Alistair Robertson
Text Magnar Dalland
Illustrations Rafael Maya-Torcelly

Fieldwork Magnar Dalland, Rafael Maya-Torcelly, Steven Roe

Schedule:

Fieldwork July 2015 Report August 2015

List of Illustrations

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N

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Summary

Three test pits were excavated inside Kinfauns Old Parish Church, near Perth to inform and mitigate proposed consolidation and repair works.

The evaluation established that the floor had been removed leaving a layer of mortar and stone rubble. This had subsequently been covered by dumped deposits of soil possibly deriving from the digging of graves in the graveyard to the west of the church.

The foundations exposed below the floor level in the test pits at the east end of the church had a flush surface in line with the wall above. This may indicate that a basement feature, such as a burial crypt, was located here that was subsequently infilled.

Temporary lifting of floor slabs in the burial aisle to the south revealed the underlying crypt which comprises a barrel vault. It contains a lead coffin inside an outer wooden coffin set into a subrectangular shaft built into the crypt floor.

INTRODUCTION

Headland Archaeology has been appointed by the Tay Landscape Partnership to undertake a programme of archaeological work at Kinfauns Old Parish Church, near Perth. The work will inform and mitigate proposed consolidation and repair works, and comprises a desk based assessment (van Wessel 2015a), historic building recording (van Wessel 2015b), test pit evaluation (this document) and a watching brief, if required.

The Tay Landscape Partnership is a joint scheme managed and funded by Perth & Kinross Heritage Trust, Perth & Kinross Countryside Trust and The Heritage Lottery Fund. This four year landscape project will work closely with statutory and community stakeholders with an active interest in the local landscape.

The test pitting took place on the 29th July 2015.

SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The church is located in Kinfauns (NGR: NO 1667 2226; Illus 1), a small village in the Tay valley to the north of the A90, approximately three miles east of Perth.

The 'old' church was constructed in the early 15th century, most likely on the site of an earlier chapel of Scone Abbey. The building has seen considerable alteration, particularly during The Reformation with a square southern aisle added in 1598 according to an inscribed mural tablet. The church is depicted as roofed on the mid-19th century Ordnance Survey map (25-inch 1860) but was abandoned following the construction of the adjacent new church in 1868. It was later damaged by fire and the 1901 Ordnance Survey 25-inch map shows the old church in ruins.

The building is a Scheduled Monument (Index Number: 5642) and is included on the Statutory List of Buildings of Architectural or Historic Interest as Category B (Reference: 13796). It is also included in the National Monuments Record for Scotland (site number: NO12SE 13) and the Perth and Kinross Historic Environment Record (ID: MPK5428). At present, the rectangular body of the church is roofless, surviving to a maximum height of 3.5m and generally below the wall-head. The projecting south aisle is roofed but is no longer watertight.

The interior of the church is covered in lush vegetation growing on what appears to be mounds of dumped soil heaped up against the interior walls.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of archaeological works were:

- To establish if the church had been extended to the west by looking for the foundations of the original west wall.
- To identify the original floor level within the church and assess it state of its preservation.

METHODOLOGY

Site works

Turf and topsoil was removed by hand and stored next to the test pits on sheets of terram. Excavation continued until significant archaeological deposits were encountered. Small sondages were excavated to further investigate these deposits. The stratigraphy of each test pit was recorded in full.

Recording

All recording followed the CIFA Standards and Guidance for Conducting Archaeological Excavations. Archaeological features and deposits were hand excavated and recorded using standard archaeological methods and pro-forma record sheets. A complete record of the contexts can be found in the Context Register (Appendix 1.1).

A site plan including the location of all test pits was recorded digitally using a dGPS and related to the National Grid.

A series of digital images were taken for illustrative purposes. In addition Test Pit 1 was recorded in 3D using photogrammetry.

Reporting and Archives

The results of the works are presented below. A summary report has been prepared for submission to Discovery & Excavation in Scotland (Appendix 3) and the OASIS database (headland1-220039).

The complete project archive will be deposited with the National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS) within six months of the completion of the project. The records (paper and digital) will be archived according to best practice guidelines set out by the Archaeological Archiving Forum.

RESULTS

Three test pits were excavated within the church (Illus 1).

Test Pit 1

Test Pit 1 measured 1.2m by 1m and was located against the north wall at the west end of a semi-circular-headed recess that is located in the north chancel wall. The pit was excavated to establish the original floor level within the church and expose any sub-surface features such as burials or decorated masonry.

The upper deposit (001) comprised dark brown loose silty sand containing occasional sub-angular stones and rare fragments of human bone. It was up to 0.4m deep. This deposit extended across the entirety of the church interior. It formed an undulating surface interpreted as mounds of dumped soil. Below (001) was a deposit of loose stone and mortar rubble (002), up to 0.15m deep and possibly derived from building decay. Underlying (002) was a deposit comprising lumps of mortar and occasional stones (003) up to 0.1m deep. The

level of this deposit coincided with the base of the recess and appears to indicate the position of the floor level within the church.

In order to investigate the deposits below the proposed floor level, a sondage 0.6m by 0.5m by 0.4m deep was excavated at the north-east corner of the pit. Below (003) was a band of loose yellowish brown sand (004) over brown silty sand containing occasional stones (005). A large skull fragment was exposed at the base of the sondage at which point excavations ceased. It could not be established whether the fragment was redeposited or part of an in situ grave.

The wall foundations below the assumed floor level were laid in a way that formed a flushed face in line with the wall above, possibly indicating that the original floor was at a lower level. However, the floor level was indicated by plaster remnants still adhering to the wall to the west of the recess. The plaster only extended down to the proposed floor level and was not seen on the flushed wall face further down (Illus 2).

Test Pit 2

Test Pit 2 measured 1.4m by 0.7m and was located against the south wall opposite Test pit 1 (Illus 1). It was positioned at the point where the north-east corner of the late 16th century burial aisle meets the south wall of the nave.

The stratigraphy in Test pit 2 was similar to that in Test Pit 1. The upper deposit (009) was analogous to deposit (001) in Test Pit 1. It was 0.2m to 0.4m deep and had clearly been dumped against the south wall. It overlay a deposit of stone and mortar rubble up to 0.2m deep (010), similar to (002) in Test Pit 1. Below the rubble was a deposit of partly crushed light grey mortar (011) 0.1m deep. This was similar to (003) in Test Pit 1 and thought to indicate the position of the floor level. This deposit appeared to be demolition rubble, mostly wall plaster including several large pieces of what looked like a moulded dado rail.

A small sondage pit 0.6m by 0.5 m by 0.35m deep was excavated at the south-west corner of the pit. Below (011) was a narrow band of brown organic soil (012) up to 0.05m thick over a thin layer of mortar (013). This in turn overlay grey brown sandy soil that contained fist-sized stones and specs of mortar (014), similar to (005) in Test Pit 1.

The junction between the south wall of the nave and the north wall of the aisle was exposed within the pit. The junction was a butt joint and there was no evidence of the two walls being keyed into each other (Illus 3).

As seen in Test Pit 1 the wall foundations below the assumed floor level formed a flushed face in line with the wall above (Illus 3).

Test Pit 3

Test Pit 3 measured 1.4m by 1m and was located against the north wall, 8m to the west of Test Pit 1 (Illus 1). The stratigraphy was similar to the two test pits to the east; dark brown silty sand (006) 0.25m to 0.45m deep over stone and mortar rubble (007). The upper layer corresponds to (001)/ (009) in Test Pits 1 and 2. The underlying rubble contained roof slates, brick and fragments of a plaster dado rail very similar to those found in (011) indicating that these are contemporary deposits.

The pit was excavated to a level fully exposing the base of the north wall (Illus 4). Remnants of wall plaster still adhering to the wall were recorded on the lower parts of the wall behind the upper dumped deposit (006). The remnants had probably been protected from weathering by the soil. The upper part of the foundations were exposed below the base of the wall comprising a couple of rounded boulder protruding beyond the wall face (Illus 4).

No surviving remnants of the floor were seen at the base of the wall. However the rubble deposit (007) coincided with the original floor level as defined by the wall base.

The burial aisle

As part of the works, it is anticipated that the burial aisle will need some restoration work due to problems relating to damp and ivy. In order to investigate the sub-surface features, one of the concrete floor slabs covering the burial crypt was temporarily lifted to explore the space below.

The floor of the crypt lay some 1m below the floor of the aisle. It was covered by a barrel vault springing from east to west (Illus 5). A sub-rectangular shaft aligned east to west and some 1m by 2.2m by about 1m deep was built into the floor of the crypt. It contained a lead coffin inside an outer wooden coffin. The lid of the wooden coffin had been displace to the side, exposing the inner lead coffin with a collapsed lid (Illus 6). The shaft was covered by stone slabs bearing the name of Margaret Baroness Gray of Fray & Kinfauns who died in May 1878, according to a commemorative plaque set above the north door inside the burial aisle (Illus 7).

FINDS ASSESSMENT

by Julie Franklin

The assemblage is made up almost entirely of building remains including moulded lime plaster, roof slates and bricks. The most distinctive pieces are sherds from a moulded plaster dado rail, whitewashed and with a decorative black strip painted on the wall immediately to either side of the moulding. This must have formed part of the interior of the church and probably dates to the 18th or 19th centuries. The roof slates were the only roofing materials found. Two of the three slates are of distinctive Perthshire slate with iron pyrites crystals. The brick sherds are small. One is certainly stock moulded and as such is likely to be of 18th or early 19th century date, though this is by no means certain.

The only find not related to the building fabric was a single sherd from a stoneware bottle of 19th or early 20th century date.

Table 1: Finds catalogue

Trench	Context	Quantity	Weight (g)	Material	Object	Description	Spot Date
1	U/S	5	1361	Plaster	Sherds	plain sherds of lime plaster, unfinished, some rough and possibly lumps of mortar	PM-Mod
1	U/S	1	690	Stone	1	complete slate, iron pyrites crystals, oval peg/nail hole, L216, W153mm	PM-Mod

Trench	Context	Uniantity	Weight (g)	Material	Object	Description	Spot Date
2	9	1	12	Pottery (Mod)	Stoneware	grey bottle sherd	19th-20th
2	9	1	261	СВМ	Brick	large corner sherd, stock moulded brick	PM-Mod
2	11	6	1378	Plaster	Dado Rail	four sherds from same style dado rail as seen in (007). Two other sherds with slight concave curve, possibly part of wall either side of moulding	PM-Mod
2	11	1	221	СВМ	Brick	large fragment, abraded	PM-Mod
3	6	3	435	Plaster	Sherds	two large plain piece unfinished, one with part of black strip, possibly associated with dado rail	PM-Mod
3	6	2	1421	Stone	Roof Slate	complete slate, iron pyrites crystals, small round nail hole, possibly remains of earlier hole at top, L226, W194; part of finer dark grey slate, small nail hole, no complete dimensions.	PM-Mod
3	7	3	897	Plaster	Dado Rail	sherds joining to form 290mm length of moulded dado rail with some of. Whitewashed and decorative black strip painted along wall directly to either side of moulding. Moulding 75mm high, 30mm deep.	PM-Mod

DISCUSSION

The programme of test pit evaluation would seem to have successfully met the objective to establish the original floor level within the church and its state of preservation.

The floor level was interpreted in Pit 1 as the base of the chancel recess and the corresponding base of wall plaster to the north. In Pit 3 some 8m to the west, the floor level was taken to be the base of the wall. Analysis of absolute heights indicates this interpretation to be correct as in both cases that level was almost identical; between 56.20-56.26m OD (003)/ (007). The exposed wall in Pit 2 did not offer any clues to the level of the floor as no wall plaster survived at this location. However it is very likely that deposit (011) comprising mortar rubble and containing dado rail fragments corresponds to (007) at floor level in Pit 3. This is supported by an absolute height of 56.18-56.22 m OD.

Based on this it is assumed that the floor within the church was around 56.25m OD.

There were no evidence of the fire that damaged the church in the late 19th century and it is possible that the fire debris had been cleared out at some stage.

The base of the north wall was clearly exposed in Test Pit 3, where a stone from the foundations was exposed protruding beyond the internal wall face. However the foundations exposed in Pit 1 were of different construction, built with a flush inner face in line with the wall face above and not displaying any clear transition from foundations to the overlying wall. Similar straight foundations were found in Pit 2. Due to the find of skeletal remains the full depth of the foundations were not exposed. It is therefore not clear if the straight face of the foundations below floor level would indicate that there had been a crypt under the chancel that later has been infilled.

The evidence from Test Pit 2 shows that there is a butt joint between the nave wall and the southern aisle added in 1598. The masonry on either side of the joint is uneven and comprises small stones; possibly indicating that the wall had been entirely truncated when the aisle was added.

The previous phases of work (van Wessel 2015) speculated that the church had at one stage been extended towards the west and Test Pit 3 was excavated to look for evidence of a possible earlier gable wall. Although the pit was excavated down to the level of the foundations, there were no evidence of an earlier west wall.

The interior of the church is covered in mounds of soil heaped up against the interior walls up to 0.7m deep. It is not a deposit that has been gradually accumulating over time, but appears to represent episodic dumping. The deposits contains occasional fragments of human bone and is therefore likely t be surplus soil from the digging of new graves in the active churchyard to the north of the old church.

In order to assist the future clearance of these deposits, an approximate volume was established by recording in 3D a series of spot heights (Illus 8). Assuming that the floor level is at 56.25m OD across the interior of the church, the volume of dumped deposits inside the church amounts to some 35m^3 .

REFERENCES

van Wessel, J 2015a *Kinfauns Old Parish Church – Desk Based Assessment* Headland Archaeology unpublished client report

van Wessel, J 2015b Kinfauns Old Parish Church – Historic Building Recording Headland Archaeology unpublished client report

Appendix1.1:Context Register

Context no	Area	Under	Description
			Dark brown loose silty sand containing occasional sub angular stones and
			rare fragments of human bone, 0.2m to 0.4m deep. The area is covered in
			rich vegetation indicating that the soil is rich in phosphate. Dumped
			material, covering the entire interior of the church. Possibly excess soil
001	Trench 1		from the excavation of graves.
			Deposit of loose stone and mortar rubble, up to 0.15m deep. Most likely
002	Trench 1	001	to be rubble from building decay, with larger stones removed.
			Deposit of mortar and stones, up tom 0.1m deep. Corresponds to base of
003	Trench 1	002	rendered wall, therefore likely to indicate the level of the removed floor.
004	Trench 1	003	Yellowish brown loose sand up to 0.05m deep.
			Medium brown silty sand. Contains occasional fist size stones and a
005	Trench 1	004	fragment of human scull.
			Dark brown loose silty sand containing occasional sub angular stones and
			fragments of glass, pottery, nails animal and human bone as well as pieces
			of brick and roofing slate. Up to 0.45m deep. The area is covered in rich
			vegetation indicating that the soil is rich in phosphate. Dumped material,
			possibly excess soil from the excavation of graves. Same as (001) in Trench
006	Trench 3		1.
			Deposit of loose stone and mortar rubble. Contains fragments of plaster
007	Trench 3	006	mouldings, slate and brick. Same as (003) in Trench 1.
008	Trench 3	007	Yellowish brown loose sand. Same as (004) in Trench 1.
			Dark brown loose silty sand containing occasional sub angular stones and
			fragments of human bone, 0.2m to 0.4m deep. Piled up against the S wall
			of the church. The area is covered in rich vegetation indicating that the soil
			is rich in phosphate. Dumped material, covering the entire interior of the
000			church. Possibly excess soil from the excavation of graves. Same as (001)
009	Trench 2		and (004) in Trenches 1 and 3.
010	Tuon sh 3	000	Loose stone and mortar rubble in a matrix of grey sandy soil, up to 0.2m
010	Trench 2	009	deep. Same as (002) in Trench 1.
			Deposit of partly crushed light grey mortar containing fragments of
			painted plaster mouldings identical to those retrieved from (007) in
			Trench 3. Demolition deposit indicating the floor level within the church.
011	Trench 2	010	Same as (003) in Trench 1 and (007) in Trench 3.
011	THETICIT Z	010	Jame as (005) in Hench I and (007) in Hench 3.



Context no	Area	Under	Description
			Band of homogenous brown organic soil, 2cm to 5cm thick, exposed in
012	Trench 2	011	sondage pit.
013	Trench 2	012	Band of mortar, 2cm thick, exposed in sondage pit.
			Stone rubble in greybrown sandy soil martix. Very similar to (004) in
014	Trench 2	013	Trench 1.

HA Site Registers

Appendix 1.2: Photo Register

Picture no.	Digital file name	Facing	Description
101	KOPC-03-101.JPG	NE	View across nave towards location of Trench 1 in front of recess, prior to excavation
102	KOPC-03-102.JPG	NNE	View towards location of Trench 1 in front of recess, prior to excavation
103	KOPC-03-103.JPG	NNE	View towards location of Trench 1 in front of recess, prior to excavation
104	KOPC-03-104.JPG	S	View towards location of Trench 2, prior to excavation
105	KOPC-03-105.JPG	S	View towards location of Trench 2, prior to excavation
106	KOPC-03-106.JPG	ENE	View towards location of Trench 3, prior to excavation
107	KOPC-03-107.JPG	N	Trench 1 laid out, prior to excavation
108	KOPC-03-108.JPG	NW	Trench 1 laid out, prior to excavation
109	KOPC-03-109.JPG	N	Trench 1. Stone rubble (002) exposed after removal of dumped soil (001)
110	KOPC-03-110.JPG	N	Trench 1. General view of trench in relation to the north wall and recess
111	KOPC-03-111.JPG	E	Trench 1. Detail of the stone rubble layer (002)
112	KOPC-03-112.JPG	W	Trench 1. General shot of (002)
113	KOPC-03-113.JPG	S	Trench 2. Mortar and stone rubble (010) exposed after removal of dumped soil (009)
114	KOPC-03-114.JPG	S	Trench 2. Floor horizon defined by layer of crumbly mortar (011)
115	KOPC-03-115.JPG	W	Trench 2. Floor horizon defined by layer of crumbly mortar (011)
116	KOPC-03-116.JPG	W	Trench 2. Section at E end of trench showing layers (009) and (010) on top of floor horizon
117	KOPC-03-117.JPG	NE	Trench 1. General view of trench and recess, after completing sondage into (002) and (003)
118	KOPC-03-118.JPG	Е	Trench 1. Mortar exposed beneath stone rubble (002) and sondage with skull fragment
119	KOPC-03-119.JPG	NE	Trench 1. View of the trench and the exposed floor level of recess
120	KOPC-03-120.JPG	N	Trench 1. Context (003) in relation to north wall and recess floor level exposed
121	KOPC-03-121.JPG	N	Trench 1. The west side of the semicircular recess once finished the trench
122	KOPC-03-122.JPG	N	Trench 1. Detail of the exposed part of west side of recess
123	KOPC-03-123.JPG	N	Trench 3. Stone and mortar rubble at base of N wall.
124	KOPC-03-124.JPG	Е	Trench 3. Stone and mortar rubble at base of N wall.
125	KOPC-03-125.JPG	WNW	Trench 3. Stone and mortar rubble at base of N wall.
126	KOPC-03-126.JPG	S	Trench 2. Slot cut through mortar deposit (011)
			Trench 2. Section at E end of slot showing deposit (012), band of mortar (013) and (014) brown soil
127	KOPC-03-127.JPG	E	with rubble below floor horizon (011).
			Trench 2. Section at W end of slot showing deposit (012), band of mortar (013) and (014) brown soil
128	KOPC-03-128.JPG	W	with rubble below floor horizon (011).
129	KOPC-03-129.JPG	S	Trench 2. Junction beween S nave wall and burial aisle.
130	KOPC-03-130.JPG	NW	Burial aisle seen from the SE.
131	KOPC-03-131.JPG	NE	Burial aisle seen from the SW.
132	KOPC-03-132.JPG	N	Memorial on internal N wall of burial aisle.

133	KOPC-03-133.JPG	S	Floor slab removed exposing burial crypt
134	KOPC-03-134.JPG	S	Inscription on slab spanning across burial chamber
135	KOPC-03-135.JPG	S	Inscription on slab spanning across burial chamber
136	KOPC-03-136.JPG	S	Inscription on slab spanning across burial chamber
137	KOPC-03-137.JPG	S	Inscription on slab spanning across burial chamber
138	KOPC-03-138.JPG	SW	W end of burial chamber containing lead coffin
139	KOPC-03-139.JPG	SW	W side of burial vault
140	KOPC-03-140.JPG	W	W side of burial vault
141	KOPC-03-141.JPG	S	View towards S end of burial vault
142	KOPC-03-142.JPG	S	View towards S end of burial vault
143	KOPC-03-143.JPG	SSE	View towards S end of burial vault
144	KOPC-03-144.JPG	SE	Grafitti on E side of burial vault.
145	KOPC-03-145.JPG	W	W end of lead coffin within burial crypt.
146	KOPC-03-146.JPG	Е	W end of lead coffin within burial crypt.

Appendix 2: Discovery and Excavation in Scotland Entry

LOCAL AUTHORITY: Perth and Kinross

PROJECT TITLE/SITE

NAMF:

Kinfauns Old Parish Church

PROJECT CODE: KOPC15

PARISH: Kinfauns

NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR: Magnar Dalland

NAME OF ORGANISATION: Headland Archaeology

TYPE(S) OF PROJECT: Desk based assessment, building recording, trial trenching

NO12SE 13 NMRS NO(S):

SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S): Church

SIGNIFICANT FINDS: none

NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10

figures)

NO 1667 2226

START DATE (this season) March 2015

END DATE (this season) July 2015

PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES Morris, P 2007 'Kinfauns Churchyard, Perth and Kinross (Kinfauns parish), geophysical survey' in Discovery and Excavation in Scotland,

Volume 8, Cathedral Communications, 163.

MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION:

(May include information from other fields)

A programme of archaeological work was undertaken at Kinfauns Old Parish Church, near Perth. The work was carried out to inform and mitigate proposed consolidation and repair works, and comprised a desk based assessment, historic building recording and a test pit

The desk based assessment identified four main phases: the establishment of a dependant chapel to Scone Abbey at Kinfauns in the 12th century; the achievement of parochial status and the construction of the core of the extant building in the 15th century; substantial modification post-reformation; and finally continued use and some further modifications until abandonment the mid-19th century.

The building recording detected elements of three phases of the building dating to the 15th, 16th and 17th- 19th century identified during the desk based assessment.

The test pit evaluation established that the floor had been removed leaving a layer mortar and stone rubble. This had subsequently been covered by dumped deposits possibly excess soil from the digging of graves in the gravevard to the west of the church. A flush wall face exposed below the floor level in test pits at the east end of the church may indicate that there might have been a burial crypt at this end that later has been infilled.

The crypt below the floor in the burial aisle to the south, has a barrel vault. It contains a lead coffin inside an outer wooden coffin set into a sub-rectangular shaft built into the crypt floor.

PROPOSED FUTURE

WORK:

Not known

CAPTION(S) FOR **ILLUSTRS:**

None

SPONSOR OR FUNDING

BODY:

Tay Landscape Partnership

ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:

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ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)

RCAHMS



ILLUS 1 Site location



ILLUS 2
Wall face and lower part of recess exposed in Test Pit 1. From S

ILLUS 3

Wall face showing butt joint between nave and south aisle exposed in Test Pit 2. From N $\,$

ILLUS 4

Base of wall with remains of wall plaster. From ${\sf S}$

ILLUS 5

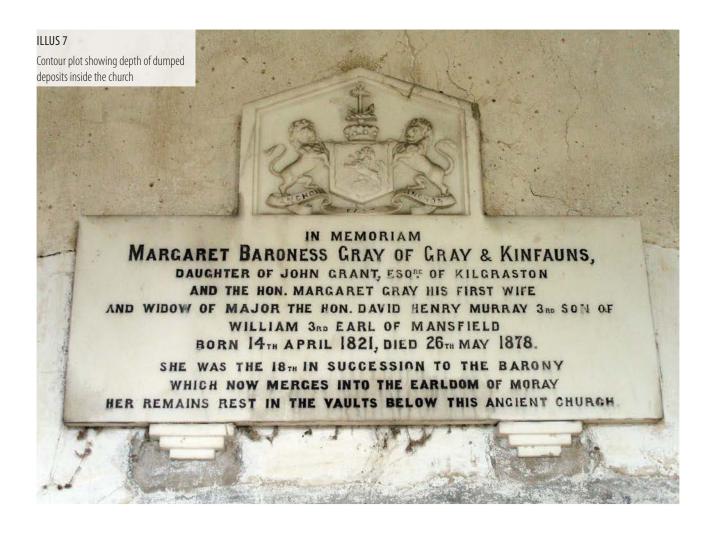
Barrel vault in burial crypt. From N

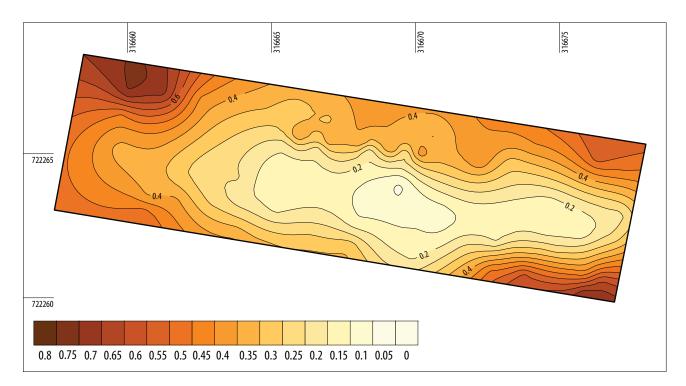
ILLUS 6











ILLUS 8
Contour plot showing thickness (m) of dumped deposits inside the church