

**ST MARY'S CHURCH,  
CRICKLADE,  
WILTSHIRE.**

**NGR: SU 1012 9386**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

**September 2011**

**Report No. 750**

**Quality Assurance**

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## **SUMMARY**

From the 20<sup>th</sup> to the 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2011 Foundations Archaeology undertook a programme of archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the construction of a disabled WC cabin to the rear of St Mary's Church, Cricklade, Wiltshire (NGR: SU 1012 9386). The work was commissioned by Mr Christopher Mullan of The Falconer Partnership on behalf of St Mary's Church.

The watching brief comprised the monitoring of the excavation of a service trench and reduction of the footprint for the WC cabin. Both were located to the west of St Mary's Church, within the churchyard.

The archaeological monitoring identified the presence of a linear pit or ditch, which was associated with burning and contained a vitrified fill. The feature was partially investigated, but remained undated and its precise function was uncertain.

A small assemblage of Roman, Medieval and Post-medieval pottery was recovered, which indicated activity relating to these periods in the general locale.

## **GLOSSARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

### *Archaeology*

For the purpose of this project archaeology is taken to mean the study of past human societies through their material remains from prehistoric times to the modern era. No rigid upper date limit has been set, but AD 1900 is used as a general cut-off point.

### *CBM*

Ceramic building material.

### *Medieval*

The period between the Norman Conquest (AD 1066) and *circa* AD 1500.

### *Natural*

In archaeological terms this refers to the undisturbed natural geology of a site.

### *NGR*

National Grid Reference from the Ordnance Survey Grid.

### *OD*

Ordnance datum; used to express a given height above sea-level.

### *OS*

Ordnance Survey.

### *Roman*

The period traditionally dated between AD 43 and *circa* AD 410.

### *Saxon*

The period between AD 410 and AD 1066.

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 From the 20<sup>th</sup> to the 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2011 Foundations Archaeology undertook a programme of archaeological watching brief during the construction of a disabled WC cabin to the rear of St Mary's Church, Cricklade, Wiltshire (NGR: SU 1012 9386). The work was commissioned by Mr Christopher Mullan of The Falconer Trust on behalf of St Mary's Church.
- 1.2 The project was undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by Foundations Archaeology (2011), which was prepared in accordance with the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* issued by the Institute for Archaeologists (rev. 2008), *Archaeological Guidance Paper 4: Archaeological Watching Briefs: (guidelines)* issued by English Heritage (London Region) and *Standards for Archaeological Assessment and Field Evaluation in Wiltshire* (County Archaeological Service 1995).
- 1.3 This document presents the findings of the archaeological watching brief.

## **2 PROJECT BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Planning permission (Ref: N/09/01600/FUL) has been granted for the construction of a disabled WC cabin, along with associated drainage, within the churchyard of St Mary's Church, Cricklade. In accordance with the principles of PPS5 (*Planning Policy Statement 5*) and the archaeological policies of Wiltshire County Council, a condition was applied to the planning consent requiring a programme of archaeological works.
- 2.2 The proposed development is located in an area of archaeological potential. There is archaeological evidence for a Roman settlement at Cricklade, although its extent is unknown. Romano-British features and finds have been recorded within 500m of the current study area. Cricklade was also an important local centre in the Saxon period and large parts of the town are designated as a Scheduled Monument. The site itself is situated within the Saxon town walls; however, it is not located within a Scheduled area.
- 2.3 St Mary's Church itself is a Listed Building and is believed to date to the Saxon period, with evidence for refurbishment and alterations throughout the Medieval period.
- 2.4 The study area therefore contained the potential for the presence of archaeological deposits, predominately associated with the Roman, Saxon and Medieval periods. This did not prejudice the watching brief against features and finds relating to other periods.

### **3 AIMS**

3.1 The aims of the archaeological watching brief were to gather high quality data from the direct observation of archaeological deposits in order to provide sufficient information to establish the nature, extent, preservation and potential of any surviving archaeological remains; as well as to make recommendations for management of the resource, including further archaeological works if necessary. In turn this would allow reasonable planning decisions to be taken regarding the archaeological provision for the areas affected by the proposed works.

3.2 These aims were to be achieved by the pursuit of the objectives as stated below.

i) to identify, define and record any archaeological deposits and date these where possible;

ii) to attempt to characterise the nature of the archaeological sequence and recover as much information as possible about the spatial patterning of features present on the site;

iii) where possible, to recover a well dated stratigraphic sequence and recover coherent artefact, ecofact and environmental samples.

### **4 METHODOLOGY**

4.1 All groundwork that had the potential to impact upon buried archaeological deposits was carried out under constant archaeological observation.

4.2 All groundwork was undertaken by hand as the churchyard was inaccessible to a mechanical excavator.

4.3 Investigation of archaeological deposits was conducted manually by an archaeologist. All archaeological deposits and features were subject to appropriate levels of investigation and recording. Spoil tips were scanned for finds. All recovered archaeological artefacts were allocated a context reference number and retained. Modern artefacts were noted and discarded.

## 5 RESULTS

- 5.1 A full stratigraphic description of all contexts identified in the course of the project is presented in Appendix 1, along with a report on the recovered pottery in Appendix 2 and a list of the miscellaneous finds in Appendix 3. A summary discussion is given below.
- 5.2 The stratigraphic sequence was relatively uniform across the investigated area. The earliest deposit comprised an undated dark clay (104), which was overlaid by three successive Post-medieval/Modern soil layers; (103), (102) and (101).
- 5.3 Feature [105] was cut into the top of layer (104) and comprised a northwest-southeast aligned linear pit or ditch, which appeared to terminate at the northwest. The feature contained a mixture of mortar fragments, stones and lumps of vitrified material (106), the upper part of which, (107), had been entirely vitrified and fused, to a maximum depth of 0.08m. Feature [105] was clearly associated with *in-situ* burning and it shared a similar alignment with the church building, however; it remained undated and its precise function was unclear.
- 5.4 Feature [105] was present at the base of the development formation level and, as such, was preserved *in-situ*.
- 5.5 A total of four sherds of residual Roman pottery, present within layers (102) and (103), indicated Roman activity in the general vicinity of the investigation area. A small assemblage of Medieval and Post-medieval wares, present within the same contexts, was entirely consistent with the site's location within Cricklade's Medieval settlement core.

## 6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The archaeological monitoring has identified the presence of a linear pit or ditch, which was associated with burning and contained a vitrified fill. The feature was partially investigated but remained undated and its precise function was uncertain. The feature was recorded and will be preserved *in-situ*.
- 6.2 A small assemblage of Roman, Medieval and Post-medieval pottery indicated activity relating to these periods in the general locale.
- 6.3 The archive is currently held at the offices of Foundations Archaeology, but will be deposited within 12 months with Swindon Museum. A short report will be submitted for publication in the relevant local archaeological journal and an OASIS form will also be submitted to ADS.

## **7 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Foundations Archaeology. 2011. *St Mary's Church, Cricklade, Wiltshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*. Unpublished.

IfA 1999 (rev. 2008). *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*. Institute for Archaeologists.

## **8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Foundations Archaeology would like to thank Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger of Wiltshire County Council and Christopher Mullan of The Falconer Partnership for their help and co-operation.



**APPENDIX 1: Stratigraphic Data**

<b>CXT</b>	<b>L(m)</b>	<b>W(m)</b>	<b>D(m)</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>CUTS/ LATER THAN</b>	<b>CUT BY/ EARLIER THAN</b>
101	3.5	2.6	0.23	Loose dark-brown silt topsoil.	102	na
102	3.5	2.6	0.08	Moderately firm mid-brown silt layer with abundant pea-grit.	103	101
103	3.5	2.6	0.17	Moderately loose dark black-brown silt layer. Occasional small stones/gravel.	107	102
104	3.5	2.6	>0.15	Firm dark orange-brown-black silt clay layer. Frequent sub-angular small stones.	?	[105]
[105]	2.25	0.6	0.18	Northwest-southeast aligned linear cut with steep sides and a flat base. Appeared to terminate at the northwest and extended beyond southeast limit of excavation. Contained fills 106 and 107.	104	106
106	2.25	0.6	0.11	Primary fill of feature [105]; compacted layer of dark grey mortar, which contained frequent stones and vitrified material.	[105]	107
107	2.25	0.6	0.07	Secondary fill of feature [105]; very firm dark purple-black vitrified layer, which contained charcoal and ash.	106	103

## **APPENDIX 2: The Pottery**

by Roy King

The site produced a small pottery assemblage, totalling 23 sherds, with a total weight of 721g. The pottery included material from the Roman period, in the form of local greyware and a single sherd of amphora. Medieval pottery was present, predominantly in the form of Minety ware, as would be expected given the site's location. The assemblage also included sherds typical of the Newbury tradition, as well as a single unprovenanced sherd; all with an approximate date range of 12<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century, except for a single sherd of Newbury C, dating between the mid-13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> century. Post-medieval material included a single unprovenanced sherd and was otherwise made up entirely of Red Glazed Earthenware, probably originating from the Ashton Keynes kilns with a date range of 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century.

### *Pottery Catalogue*

#### Context 102

- 1 sherd Roman greyware; rim; 2g
- 1 sherd Minety ware (12<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup>); body; 4g
- 2 sherds quartz tempered ware, probably Newbury tradition (12<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup>); body + base; 24g

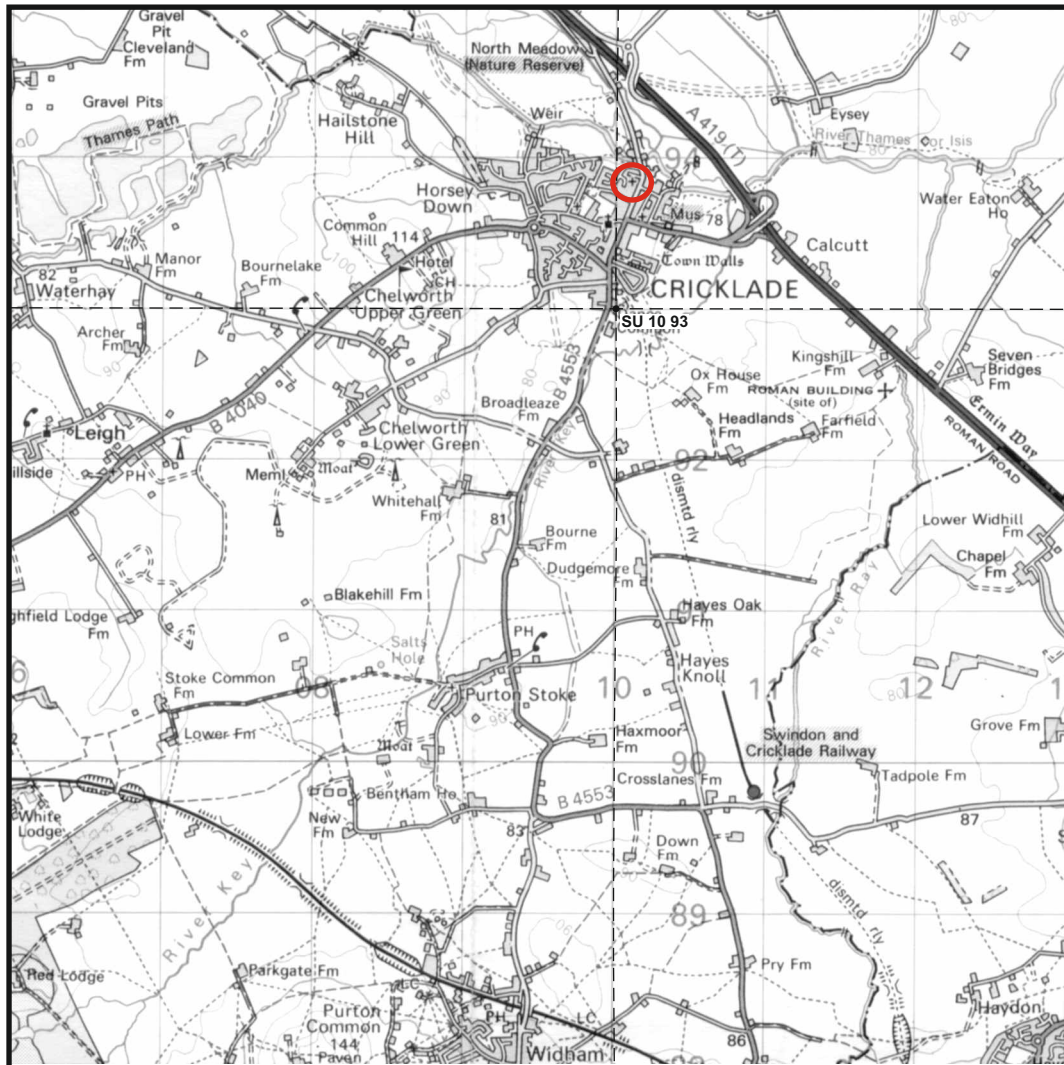
#### Context 103

- 1 sherd Roman Amphora; rim; 351g
- 2 sherds Roman greyware; body; 24g
- 8 sherds Minety ware (12<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup>); 2 rims, 1 strap handle/rim from tripod pitcher, 5 body; 197g
- 1 sherd Newbury C tradition (13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup>); body; 9g
- 1 sherd unknown Medieval; body; 3g
- 1 sherd late Medieval-early Post-medieval; body; 12g
- 5 sherds Red Glazed Earthenware (Ashton Keynes); 1 base, 4 body; 95g

**APPENDIX 3: The Miscellaneous Finds**

CXT (102): 1 small fragment of a copper object;  
1 iron nail;  
1 fragment of an iron object;  
1 shell fragment.

CXT (103): 1 iron object;  
1 17<sup>th</sup> century Tradesman's Token;  
2 shell fragments;  
1 small fragment of an iron object;  
1 glass bottle;  
1 lump of vitrified material.

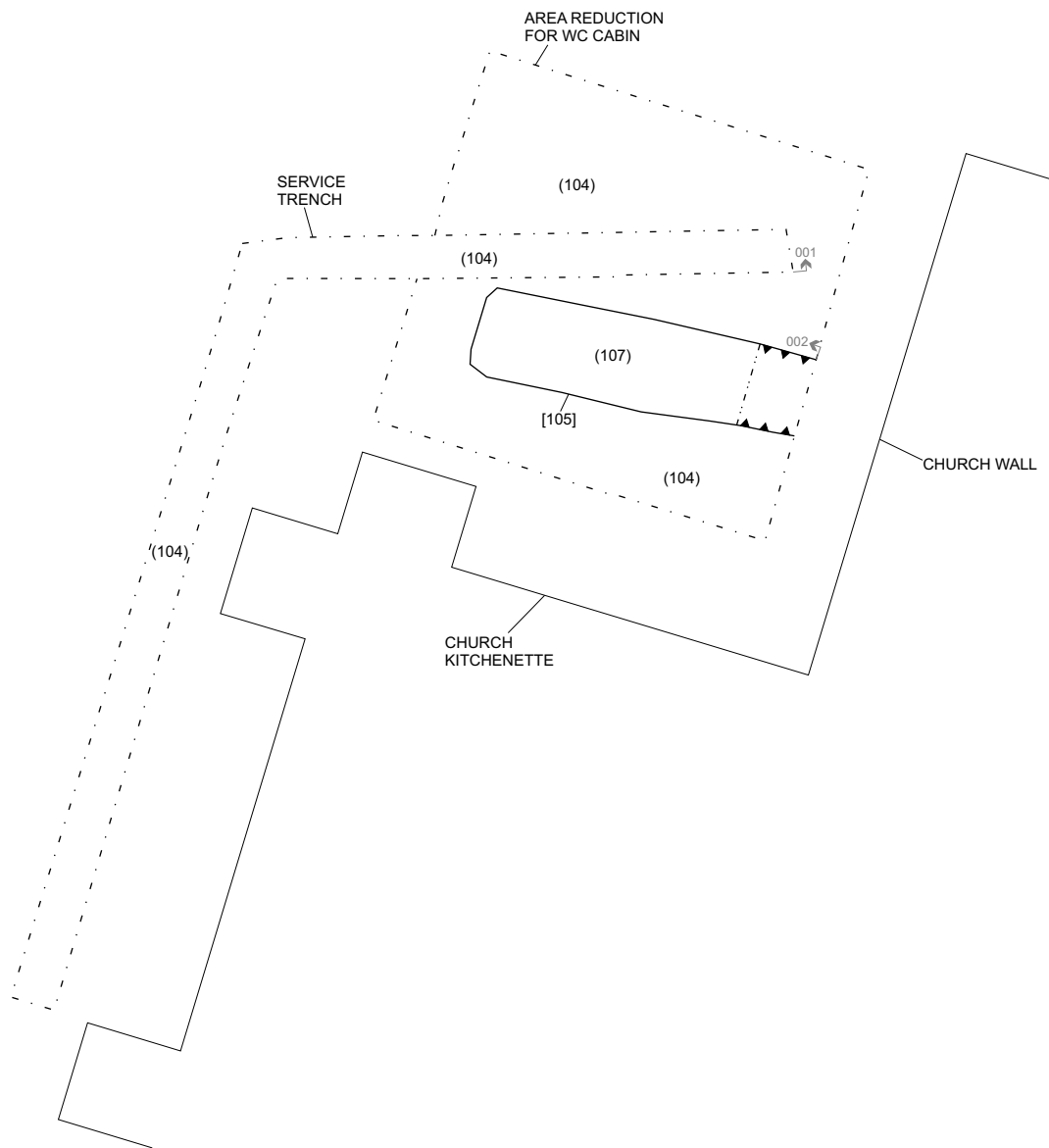


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**Site Code: SMC11**

**Accession Code:**

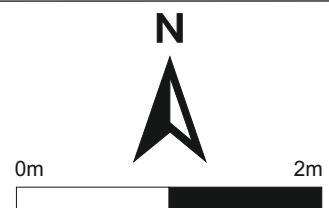
**FIGURE 1: Site Location**



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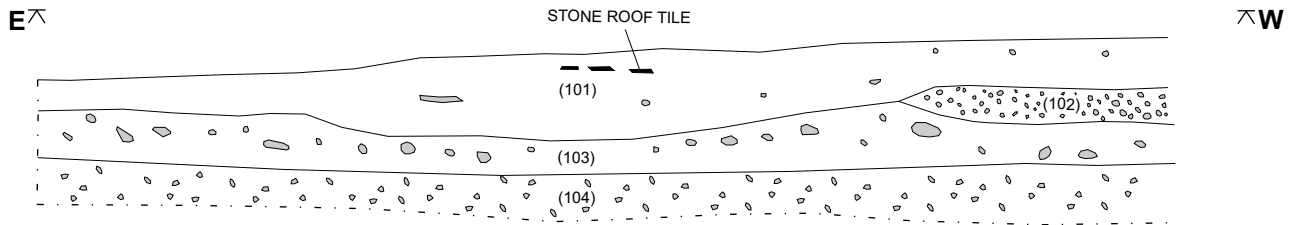
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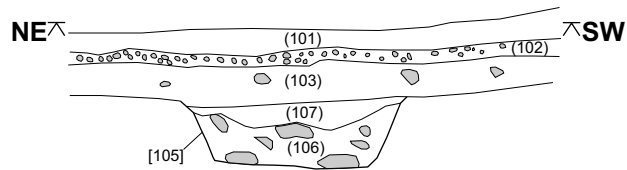


**FIGURE 2: Area Plan**

**SEC 001: NORTH FACING SERVICE TRENCH SECTION (prior to area reduction)**



**SEC 002: NORTHWEST FACING SECTION [105]**



Site Code: SMC11  
Accession Code:



**FIGURE 3: Sections**