

**Church of St Mary the Virgin, Harlington, Bedfordshire.**

HN1126

Report No.849

<b>Site name and address:</b>	Church of St Mary the Virgin, Harlington, Bedfordshire, LU5 6LE		
<b>County:</b>	Bedfordshire	<b>District:</b>	Central Bedfordshire
<b>Village/town:</b>	Harlington	<b>Parish:</b>	Harlington
<b>Planning reference:</b>	n/a	<b>NGR:</b>	TL 03683 30606
<b>Client name and address:</b>	The Diocese of St Albans, Holywell Lodge, 41 Holywell Hill, St Albans, AL1 1HE		
<b>Nature of work:</b>	Buttress repair	<b>Present land use:</b>	Churchyard
<b>Site Status:</b>	Listed Building	<b>Reason for investigation:</b>	Diocesan Faculty
<b>Position in planning process:</b>	N/A	<b>Project brief originator:</b>	None
<b>Size of affected area:</b>	2.31m <sup>2</sup>	<b>Size of area investigated:</b>	2.31m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Site Code:</b>	HN1126	<b>Other reference:</b>	n/a
<b>Organisation:</b>	Heritage Network	<b>Site Director:</b>	David Hillelson
<b>Project type, methods etc.</b>	Monitoring and Recording	<b>Archive Recipient:</b>	Luton Museum
<b>Start of work</b>	03/03/2014	<b>Finish of work</b>	03/03/2014
<b>Related HER Nos:</b>	HER 4794	<b>Periods represented:</b>	None
<b>Oasis UID:</b>	heritage1-173683	<b>Significant finds:</b>	None
<b>Monument types:</b>	Church		
<b>Physical archive:</b>	None		
<b>Previous summaries/reports:</b>	No		

**Narrative:**

As part of the faculty requirements for the repair of two existing buttresses supporting the north-western corner of the north aisle at the Church of St Mary the Virgin, Harlington, Bedfordshire, the Heritage Network was commissioned to undertake a watching brief on the groundworks.

The Church of St Mary the Virgin is located on the southern edge of the village, on the southern side of Church Road, centred at NGR TL 03653 30451 (Figure 1, Plate 1).

The groundwork involved the excavation of two small footing trenches against the northern and western elevations of the north aisle to accommodate wooden braces. These are designed to support the external wall of the north aisle while the buttress repair is undertaken (Plate 2).

Trench 1 was located to the west of the western buttress and measured 1.60m in length, 0.70m in width and approximately 0.80m in depth (Figure 2). Trench 2 was located to the north of the eastern buttress and measured 1.70m in length, 0.70m in width and approximately 0.90m in depth. A modern service pipe was noted in Trench 2, at a depth of 0.20m below the present ground surface. The trench sections revealed a layer of dark grey (10YR 4/1) silty clay with moderate small pebbles. This has been interpreted as a cemetery soil. Significant root activity was observed in the upper 0.20m.

**Discussion:**

The Church of St Mary the Virgin dates predominately to the 14<sup>th</sup> century, with some 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century additions. The existing building is constructed of coursed ironstone rubble. Apart from the tower and vestry the church is coated in a cement render. The churchyard has been extended to the south, towards the village green, in recent years. A number of finds of archaeological significance have been made in the churchyard, including three sherds of medieval pottery, found in a flower bed to the south west of the 15th century tower, and a Mesolithic opposed platform bladelet core, which was found near the tower porch.

Both trenches had been excavated and the braces fixed in place by the contractor prior to the commissioning of the Heritage Network (Plate 3 and 4). This made detailed observation and recording of the trenches impossible. However, a thorough investigation of the spoil from both trenches demonstrated no disarticulated human bone or other significant archaeological finds. Trench 2 had also been previously disturbed by the insertion of a

modern service pipe. It can, therefore, be suggested that there is a 75% probability that both trenches were empty and that no significant archaeological finds, features or deposits were damaged during the works.

### **Illustrations:**

Figure 1 Site location

Figure 2 Site layout

Plate 1 Church of St Mary the Virgin, looking north

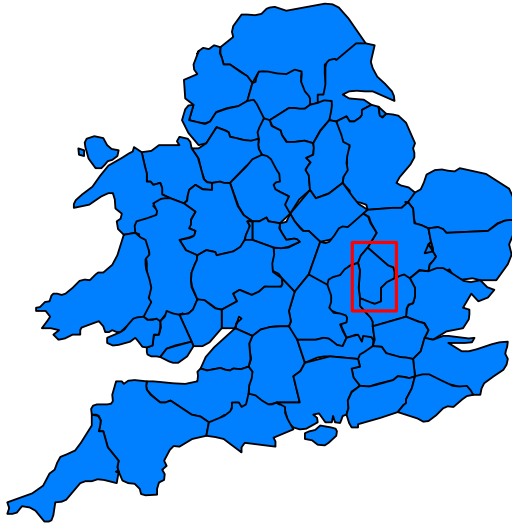
Plate 2 Buttresses, with wooden revetment in place, looking south-east

Plate 3 Trench 1, showing wooden revetment in place, looking north-east

Plate 4 Trench 2, showing wooden revetment in place, looking north-west

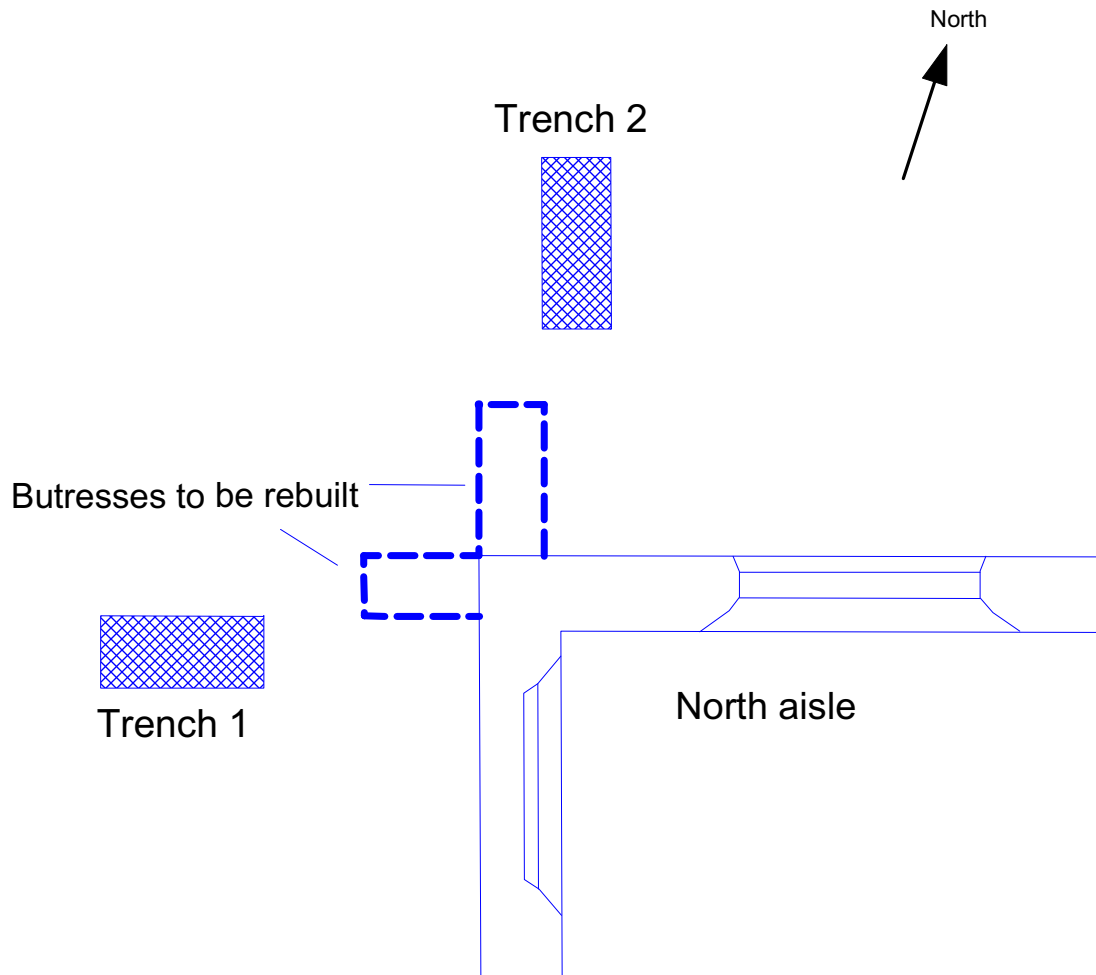
Daniel Phillips

March 2014



Site Location

Scale 1:15000



0 2m

Site layout

Scale 1:75

Figure 2





Plate 1: The Church of St Mary the Virgin, looking north



Plate 2: Buttresses with wooden braces in place, looking southeast.





Plate 3: Trench 1, showing wooden brace in place, looking northeast



Plate 4: Trench 2, showing wooden brace in place, looking northwest