

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING
AT THE CHURCHYARD OF ST MARY'S CHURCH,
TEDBURN ST MARY, DEVON**

**Prepared on behalf of
Teignbridge District Council**

by
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with
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Archaeological monitoring was carried out by Exeter Archaeology in the churchyard of St Mary's, Tedburn St Mary, Devon (SX 8062 9446), between January and March 2009. The work comprised the monitoring of construction works associated with the collapsed churchyard wall.

Groundworks exposed the remains of an 18th century grave and an infilled path along the inside edge of the churchyard wall. This was infilled by modern deposits.

Monitoring of the demolition of the collapsed churchyard wall recovered 27 architectural fragments associated with the late medieval windows of the church of St Mary's. Study of the collection has shown that some components were carved from pieces of Beer stone originally intended for late medieval panelling.

The pieces also throw light on the subsequent history of these windows.

1. INTRODUCTION

Archaeological monitoring was carried out by Exeter Archaeology (EA) at St Mary's churchyard, Tedburn St Mary, Devon (SX 8062 9446), between January and March 2009. The work was commissioned by Teignbridge District Council as part of remedial works to the south boundary wall. .

1.1 The site

The site of St Mary church lies to the northwest of Tedburn St Mary (Fig. 1). It lies between 110m and 112m AOD, on high ground overlooking the River Ted. The geology of the area is natural bedrock of yellow-grey, Carboniferous shale.

1.2 Archaeological and historical background

The site lies immediately to the southwest of the medieval parish church of St Mary. This is a Grade II* Listed Building and contains fabric of probably late 13th century date, although the building was heavily altered during the 19th century.

Tedburn St Mary is referred to in the Domesday Survey (1086) and the church appears to have been the focus of the early settlement. The farm of Town Barton lies immediately north-east of the churchyard. It is a medieval farmstead and formed part of the Domesday manor of 'Teteborna'.

The Tithe Map shows several probable cottages and a larger dwelling, possibly a farmstead, to the south of the road, which had gone by the OS 1889 map. The present main settlement lies on the Exeter to Okehampton road.

2. METHODOLOGY

The project was undertaken in accordance with a Method statement prepared by Teignbridge District Council (2008), submitted to and approved by the Devon County Historic Environment Service Archaeology Officer prior to commencement on site.

The works entailed the complete removal of the collapsed section of graveyard wall and the excavation of a safe working area to allow work on the new foundations. This impacted on an area within the graveyard approximately 10m x 3.5m and was battered

back at a 45 degree angle. The initial removal of the collapsed section of wall was monitored by an archaeologist for any architectural fragments that might have been re-used in the construction of the wall, while all soil stripping was carried out using a toothless grading bucket under the direct supervision of the archaeologist.

All features and deposits were recorded using the standard EA recording system, comprising context record sheets and individual trench recording forms. Sections and plans for each trench were drawn at 1:10, 1:20 or 1:50. A detailed black and white print and colour digital photographic record was made. Registers were maintained for photographs, drawings and context sheets on *pro forma* sheets. Finds and samples were labelled and bagged on site and taken to the EA offices for processing and cataloguing.

3. WATCHING BRIEF

Relevant detailed plan is included as Fig 2. A generally uniform overlying layer sequence of topsoil, mixed graveyard soil, onto weathered natural subsoil was encountered. The depth of the overlying deposits was on average 1.2m.

3.1 The results

The safe working area was stripped of dark brown silty loam topsoil, which was between 0.1-0.2m thick. This exposed a mixed mid yellow brown silty clay graveyard soil. This contained patches of naturally occurring degraded shale.

Inspection of the area showed very little evidence of archaeological features. It contained the remains of an E-W aligned grave, measuring 2.6m in length and 0.6m in width. This was overlain by a gravestone. An infilled path was observed along the inside edge of the churchyard wall. This was approximately 1.9m wide and 0.8m deep. No finds were recovered from the modern infill.

4. THE FINDS

by John Allan

4.1 Architectural fragments

All the architectural fragments were recovered from the churchyard wall. They are made of Beer stone, a chalk from Beer in south-east Devon.

Window jamb (Fig. 3)

Thick layers of limewash are on the exposed surfaces. The fragment is reused from late medieval panelling in Perpendicular-style with two adjacent spandrels, fragments of the spring below them and the projecting frame rising between them and extending into the panel above. The design of the two adjacent arched heads can be reconstructed as in Fig. 3, with two ogival arches with cinquefoil heads. The carved panelling on the rear of this block appears to have been abandoned and the stone reused as a jamb.

Window mullions (Fig. 4)

Four of the 27 architectural fragments are examples of Perpendicular-style window mullions (upright). The complete design consists of large king mullions (Fig. 4.3) and smaller common mullions (Fig. 4.4-4.5). The external profile has hollow chamfers;

the internal profile is more complicated with an additional moulding. Limewash was subsequently applied to the internal face. The position of window glass is indicated by a glazing groove from which glazing bars would have held glazing. The outer half of several of these fragments were subsequently cut back to the line of the glazing and a lead plug inserted to fix some external feature.

The window jamb with a flat back illustrated in Fig 4.2 is probably from the same window as the mullions shown on Figs. 4.3-4.5. Fig. 4.3 also shows the manner in which the profile of two common mullions would be accommodated within a King mullion.

Inspection of the parish church shows that these pieces have come from the north aisle windows, which are now heavily repaired. The fragments show that the original form of the windows was later cut about perhaps because the external moulding had become very weathered. The fragments show that there was a phase of window repairs, perhaps of 18th century date, prior to their restoration in the 19th or 20th century.

5. CONCLUSION

The recovered architectural stonework provides fairly conclusive evidence for some remodelling of the windows in the north aisle during the late 15th or early 16th century. The most likely objective of this was to increase the amount of glazing in the north wall. This may have been part of a more general remodelling of the church during this period.

SITE ARCHIVE

The site records have been compiled into a fully integrated site archive which is currently held at Exeter Archaeology's offices under project number 6654, pending deposition at Royal Albert Memorial Museum (20/2009). Details of the monitoring, including a pdf copy of this report have been submitted to the on-line archaeological database OASIS (exeterar1-57962).

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