

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
Saint Martins Church, Church Road, Ryarsh,
Kent, ME 19 5LB**

NGR: TQ 567238, 159134

**ASE Project No: 160757
Site Code: RSM 16**

**ASE Report No: 2016436
OASIS id: archaeol6-267624**

By Chris Russel

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**By Chris Russel
Illustrations by Lauren Gibson**

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Abstract

Archaeology South-East (ASE), the contracting division of the Centre for Applied Archaeology (CAA), Institute of Archaeology (IoA), University College London (UCL) was commissioned by Lisa Brooks of Brooks Building Consultants to undertake an archaeological watching brief during excavations at St Martins Church, Ryarsh, Kent.

The works consisted of the hand excavation of four trenches with the aim of locating Victorian drainage pipes. The trenches were located over anomalies identified in the results of a geophysical survey. Trench 3 fed a soakaway capped by a re-used gravestone. A small assemblage of disarticulated bone was recovered from the excavations and retained on site for reburial at the earliest convenient opportunity.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

- 1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE), the contracting division of the Centre for Applied Archaeology (CAA), Institute of Archaeology (IoA), University College London (UCL) was commissioned by Lisa Brooks of Brooks Building Consultants to undertake an archaeological watching brief during excavations at St Martins Church, Ryarsh, Kent.
- 1.1.2 St Martins Church is situated approximately ½ mile south of Ryarsh in a semi-rural setting. The church is bounded to the north and west by arable fields and to the east by woodland. The farm complex of Manor Farm bounds the church yard to the south.
- 1.1.3 Four hand dug trenches were excavated on the 7th of October 2016 in order to locate drainage pipes which are in need of repair or replacement. These works were in advance of a more extensive programme of drainage improvements planned for a later date.

1.2 Geology and Topography

- 1.2.1 St Martins Church is located on Head Deposits of clay, silts sand and gravel. To the south are alluvial deposits and bedrock outcrops of Folkestone Formation Sandstone are recorded to the north, west and east. (BGS. 2016).

1.3 Aims and Objectives

- 1.4.1 The aim of the watching brief was to identify and record any archaeological finds or features revealed by the works as well as to collect any disarticulated human bone for reburial.

1.4 Scope of Report

- 1.5.1 The scope of this report is to detail the findings of the watching brief. The work took place on the 7/10/2016 and the fieldwork was undertaken by Chris Russel, the fieldwork was managed by Paul Mason and the post excavation process was managed by Jim Stevenson and Andy Margetts.

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Prehistoric and Roman

2.1.1 Palaeolithic implements recorded in Harrison's collection are shown within the parish of Ryarsh on Harrison's Map of 1888. The specific types of implements found are unknown as this information was not recorded. The objects were found in an area of Head geology.

2.1.2 Five 2nd century Roman cremation burials were found in 1933 during the construction of a chimney breast in the lounge of Little Petherick, East Street, Ryarsh. Finds included a bronze bracelet, a flagon, two flasks, a jar, a beaker and four Samian dishes. More recently Iron Age and Roman activity has begun to be discovered as a result of developer funded work in the area of Leybourne, West Malling.

2.2 Medieval

2.2.1 The establishment of the Norman church is recorded in 1081. The church was then dedicated to St Lambert and formed part of a manor belonging to Bishop Odo, the half- brother of William the conqueror. The church is re-dedicated to St Martin in 1448 and was extensively rebuilt in the late 15th Century (Bart Combined Benefice). A major restoration of the building took place in 1871 (Kent Past.org).

2.2.2 The presence of a 'deserted' or shrunken medieval village is unconfirmed through excavation in the area of Church Farm, Ryarsh.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

3.1 Fieldwork Methodology

3.1.1 The watching brief at St Martins Church involved the monitoring of four hand dug test pits/trenches for the location of buried services. These trenches were targeted on anomalies noted in a geophysical survey undertaken to locate services prior to excavation. The results of the survey were accurate enough to allow the location of buried services with the minimum of hand excavation. The trenches were recorded using ASE pro-forma context sheets and a photographic record of the works was compiled. Any human bone observed during the excavations was collected and retained for later reburial.

3.1.2 The fieldwork was carried out in accordance with the Kent County Council (2007) Standard Specification for an archaeological watching brief as well as the ClfA (2014) Standards and guidance for an archaeological watching brief

3.2 Fieldwork Constraints

3.2.1 No constraints to the fieldwork were encountered.

3.3 The Site Archive

3.3.1 The site archive is currently held at the offices of ASE and will be deposited at

a suitable local depository in due course. The contents of the archive are tabulated below (Table 1).

Number of Contexts	3
No. of files/paper record	1
Plan and sections sheets	-
Colour photographs	-
B&W photos	-
Digital photos	18
Permatrace sheets	-
Trench Record Forms	-

Table 1: Quantification of site archive

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Trenches monitored on 7.10.16

4.1.1 Trench 1 was excavated from the north east corner of the church to a maximum depth of 0.75m. The trench measured approximately 0.50m wide and 9.0m long. A mixed mid yellow brown fine silt back fill [002] was observed overlying the drainage pipe and excavation ceased once the pipe had been revealed. Topsoil [001] consisting of loose, dark grey brown fine silt and a maximum depth of 0.30m was observed overlying this. Some disarticulated bone was recovered but no articulated remains were encountered.

4.1.2 Trench 2 was excavated to the south of Trench 1 and was situated close to the south-eastern corner of the church. This measured 0.50m wide and was dug to around 0.70m BGL at its maximum depth. Some disarticulated bone was recovered for reburial but no other features of note were observed. As with Trench 1 excavation ceased once the service pipe was encountered. The deposits were as described for Trench 1.

4.1.3 Trench 3 was located along the north wall of the trench and ran north-eastwards for approximately 5m before reaching a soakaway [003] which had been capped with a re-used grave stone and a metal sheet. The maximum depth of the trench was 0.35m and the stratigraphy was as described for Trench 1. A small assemblage of disarticulated bone was collected for reburial.

4.1.4 Trench 4 was excavated in the south-east of the church and encountered the service pipe at around 0.15m BGL. This trench only revealed topsoil [001] which was as described for Trench 1. The pipe in Trench 4 ended at a soakaway capped by a stone slab. No notable finds were observed.

Context	Type	Description	Max. Length m	Max. Width m	Deposit Thickness m
01	Layer	Topsoil	Trench	Trench	0.30
02	Layer	Pipe Trench Backfill	Trench	Trench	0.35-0.40
03	Structure	Soakaway	1.0	1.0	-

Table 2: List of recorded contexts

5.0 THE FINDS

- 5.1 Apart from human bone no archaeological finds were encountered during the watching brief. The small assemblage of disarticulated bone was retained on site for reburial at the earliest convenient opportunity.

6.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The targeted hand excavation successfully located the buried services with the minimum of excavation. Trench 3 revealed a soakaway capped by a reused tombstone and a metal sheet (these were left in-situ). Trench 4 revealed a soakaway capped by a flagstone the original use of which was unclear. A small assemblage of disarticulated bone was recovered from the trenches and retained for reburial at the church.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ClfA 2014. *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief*. Chartered Institute of Field Archaeologists.

Kent County Council 2007. *Standard Specification for an Archaeological Watching Brief/evaluation/excavation*

Online Resources

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Bart Combined Benefice
<http://www.bartcombinedbenefice.org.uk/790783107280.html> Accessed 03/11/16

Kent Past.org
<http://www.kentpast.co.uk/ryarsh.html> Accessed 03/11/16

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

ASE would like to thank Lisa Brooks for commissioning the work and for her assistance throughout the project. The excavations were monitored by Chris Russel and undertaken by Nick Allen. The author would like to thank Lauren Gibson who produced the figures for this report; Paul Mason who project managed the excavations and Jim Stevenson and Andy Margetts who project managed the post-excavation process.

HER Summary Form

Site Code	RSM 16					
Identification Name and Address	St Martins Church, Church Road, Ryarsh, Kent. ME19 5LB					
County, District &/or Borough	Kent, Tonbridge and Malling					
OS Grid Refs.	TQ 567238, 159134					
Geology	Head Deposit (Clay,Silt, Sand+gravel)					
Arch. South-East Project Number	160757					
Type of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	Watching Brief	Standing Structure	Survey	Other
Type of Site	Green Field	Shallow Urban	Deep Urban	Other Churchyard		
Dates of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	WB. 7/10/16	Other		
Sponsor/Client	Lisa Brooks					
Project Manager	Paul Mason					
Project Supervisor	Chris Russel					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED	PM	Other Modern		
<p>Summary</p> <p><i>Archaeology South-East (ASE), University College London (UCL), was commissioned by Lisa Brooks of Brooks Building Consultants to undertake an archaeological watching brief during excavations at St Martins Church, Ryarsh, Kent.</i></p> <p><i>The works consisted of the hand excavation of four trenches with the aim of locating Victorian drainage pipes. The trenches were located over anomalies identified in the results of a geophysical survey. Trench 3 fed a soakaway capped by a re-used gravestone. A small assemblage of disarticulated bone was recovered from the excavations and retained on site for reburial at the earliest convenient opportunity.</i></p>						

OASIS Form

OASIS ID: archaeol6-267624

Project details

Project name St Martins Church Ryarsh Kent

Short description of the project

Archaeology South-East (ASE), the contracting division of the Centre for Applied Archaeology (CAA), Institute of Archaeology (IoA), University College London (UCL) was commissioned by Lisa Brooks of Brooks Building Consultants to undertake an archaeological watching brief during excavations at St Martins Church, Ryarsh, Kent. The works consisted of the hand excavation of four trenches with the aim of locating Victorian drainage pipes. The trenches were located over anomalies identified in the results of a geophysical survey which had taken place sometime earlier. Trench 3 fed a soakaway capped by a re-used gravestone. A small assemblage of disarticulated bone was recovered from the excavations and left on site for reburial at the earliest convenient opportunity.

Project dates Start: 07-10-2016 End: 07-10-2016

Previous/future work Not known / Not known

Any associated project reference codes 160757 - Contracting Unit No.

Any associated project reference codes RSM 16 - Sitecode

Type of project Recording project

Site status None

Current Land use Other 4 - Churchyard

Monument type NONE None

Significant Finds NONE None

Investigation type "Watching Brief"

Prompt Planning condition

Project location

Country England

Site location KENT TONBRIDGE AND MALLING RYARSH St Martins Church Ryarsh

Postcode ME19 5LB

Study area 1 Hectares

Site coordinates TQ 567238 159134 50.920786366635 0.230036708937 50 55 14 N 000 13 48 E Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation Archaeology South-East

Project brief originator	Archaeology South-East
Project design originator	Archaeology South-East
Project supervisor	Chris Russel
Type of sponsor/funding body	Client
Project archives	
Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet"
Project bibliography	
1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
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© Archaeology South-East		St Martins Church, Ryarsh	Fig. 1
Project Ref: 160757	November 2016	Site location	
Report Ref: 2016436	Drawn by: LG		



Trench 1 looking west



Overburden deposits in trench 2



Trench 3 looking north-east



Trench 4 looking south-east

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Project Ref: 160757	November 2016	
Report Ref: 2016436	Drawn by: LG	Selected trench photographs
		Fig.3

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