

**Archaeological
Impact Assessment**
of the proposed works
at
St Peter's Church
Hereford

NGR SO 51156 40014

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1. Executive Summary

Our assessment of the proposed works has reached the following conclusions:

The overall impact of the proposed works at St Peter's Church in archaeological terms is minimal.

The proposed construction of two service boxes in the North Aisle and the installation of a raised oak floor in the Nave and Aisles will have no direct physical impact on the fabric of the building, although it will have a moderate impact in visual terms.

A general photographic record of the existing appearance of the North Aisle (built in the late 13th-early 14th century) prior to the installation of the proposed two storey service boxes is recommended.

However, the installation of a kitchen and WCs in the two proposed service boxes in the North Aisle may require the **excavation of trenching to install services**. This trenching should be excavated archaeologically, particularly in view of the fact that buried human remains were identified following excavations for the installation of a boiler at the east end of the North Aisle in 1886.

A photographic record of the carved quatrefoil bases of the piers in the north and south arcades should also be undertaken following the removal of the existing pews and radiators, together with a limited photographic record of the existing Victorian encaustic tiled floor and heating grilles prior to installation of the proposed new floor and underfloor heating system.

A drawn and photographic record of the external window tracery in the window at the west end of the North Aisle should also be undertaken prior to the construction of a balcony above the proposed service boxes in the North Aisle and the provision of access via the window to Close House.

A photographic record is also recommended following the removal of the Rood Screen (erected in 1910) and the first row of pews in the Chancel obscuring the 15th century choir stalls reputedly brought from St Guthlac's Priory.

Nota Bene

It should be noted that these mitigatory measures with the singular exception of any service trenching are specifically intended as a "light touch" with recording (mainly photographic) being minimal and quick to complete with a commensurate modest cost.

Neil Shurety.

2. Introduction

Border Archaeology was instructed by B. E. Payne, Esq. to undertake an Archaeological Assessment (Impact) in regard of the proposed alterations to the parish church of St Peter's Hereford.

Alex Coppock of Communion Ltd provided a set of detailed drawings outlining the changes envisaged.

The terms of reference of this Impact Assessment, as determined by Border Archaeology, were informed by guidance set out in the Association of Diocesan and Cathedral Archaeologists Guidance Note 1: *Archaeological requirements for works on churches and churchyards* (ADAC 2004).

2.1 Site Location

The study area consists of the parish church of St Peter's, Hereford, prominently situated within St Peter's Square, the historic market square of the City of Hereford.

2.2 Soils & Geology

The site lies within an unsurveyed urban area and there is thus no general description of soils available (Soil Survey of England & Wales, 1983).

3. Methodology

3.1 Archaeological Assessment

3.1.1 Research Aims

The purpose of this archaeological impact assessment is to assess the specific impact of the proposed works on the interior of the church.

3.1.2 Research Methods

The research carried out for this impact assessment consisted of the following elements:

3.1.2.1 *Evaluation and study of archaeological databases*

The Herefordshire Archaeology Sites and Monuments Record was consulted and all relevant information (including listed building records) relating to the parish church was obtained.

3.1.2.2 *Evaluation and study of secondary sources*

Secondary sources relating to the parish church of St Peter were consulted at the Herefordshire Archaeology Sites and Monuments Record and the Herefordshire Record Office.

3.1.2.3 *Evaluation and study of cartographic and other pictorial evidence*

Parish records of St Peter's Hereford were consulted at the Herefordshire Record Office, including Vestry accounts and minute books dating back to the 18th century and records of faculties granted for repairs and alterations to St Peter's dating back to 1775.

3.1.2.4 *Building & Grounds Site Survey*

A survey was undertaken on 29 August 2008 by three Border Archaeology employees (using the criteria determined by Neil Shurety and used extensively in other Church related Assessments, notably St Peter's Peterchurch) to assess those specific areas within the church to be affected by the proposed works. A detailed photographic record of those aspects of the church fabric was undertaken.

4. Site Specific Historical Assessment

It should be noted that this SSHA is not intended as a detailed or summative history of St Peter's but as a specific historical analysis of those relevant areas of the church to be affected by the proposed works.

The parish church of St Peter's Hereford was founded in the early 1080s by Walter de Lacy, lord of Weobley, who is recorded as having fallen to his death from the tower during its construction. The churches of St Peter and St Owen, together with the Saxon minster church of St Guthlac, were subsequently granted by Walter's son Hugh I de Lacy to the Benedictine Abbey of St Peter's Gloucester. The earliest surviving fabric of the church consists of the Chancel, which is of late 12th or early 13th century date.

The majority of the church, however, dates from the late 13th-early 14th century (albeit heavily restored in 1880-86) comprising the unusually wide Nave and North and South Aisles, the South Chapel, Tower and octagonal Spire (Pevsner, 1963, 176-77). The series of finely carved wooden choir stalls with misericords in the Chancel dates from the mid 15th century and was apparently brought from the church of St Guthlac's Priory following its dissolution in 1536.

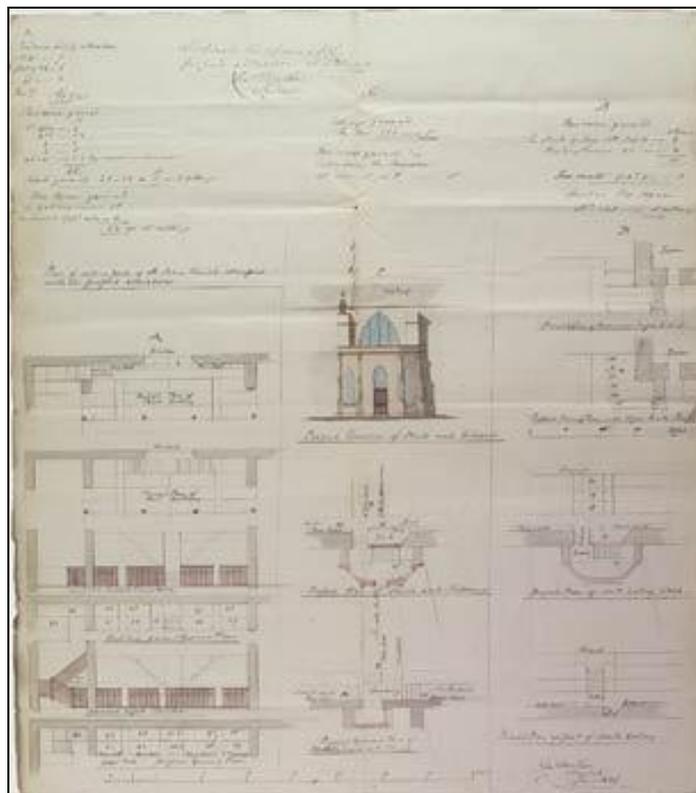


Plate 1: Extract from 1827 plan of proposed alterations to St Peter's Church, Hereford including the erection of a North Porch and a gallery in the North Aisle

(Reproduced by courtesy of Lambeth Palace Library)

From the late 18th century, the fabric of the church underwent several extensive phases of alteration and rebuilding which are detailed in the Vestry minutes and records of faculties granted to the church. The earliest dates from 1775, when a faculty was obtained for removing certain seats and erecting new ones, described as being situated 'severally in the Middle Isle or Nave of the Church and the North Part thereof' (HRO Ref. AR 77/11).

A more substantial programme of repairs to St Peter's was implemented following the collapse of the West Tower of Hereford Cathedral in 1788, when a survey was carried out of the fabric of the church, described as being generally in a poor state, with specific recommendations for repairs to the Tower, Spire and the roof of the Nave. These repairs were subsequently carried out between 1789-91 under the supervision of a local builder, one Mr Richard Goodman, at an approximate cost of £2000 (Eisel, 1994, 18-20).

Further extensive alterations to the church were carried out during the late 1820s-1830s, commencing with the erection of galleries in the north and south aisles and against the west wall of the Nave and the construction of the existing North Porch (**Plate 1**). The work was supervised by a local architect, Charles Heather (d.1845), who was responsible for several other church restorations in Herefordshire during the 1820s-30s. Although a faculty for these works was obtained in 1827, they appear not to have been completed until the late 1830s.

Major repairs to the Tower and Spire were carried out in 1862-3 under the supervision of Sir George Gilbert Scott; and, in 1873, the Chancel was extensively restored and rearranged (**Plate 2**). Between 1880 and 1886, a large-scale programme of restoration and rebuilding was carried out in the Nave and Aisles by the prominent church architect Thomas Nicholson, removing much of the work carried out during the restoration of 1827-37 and essentially establishing the present appearance and internal arrangements of the church.

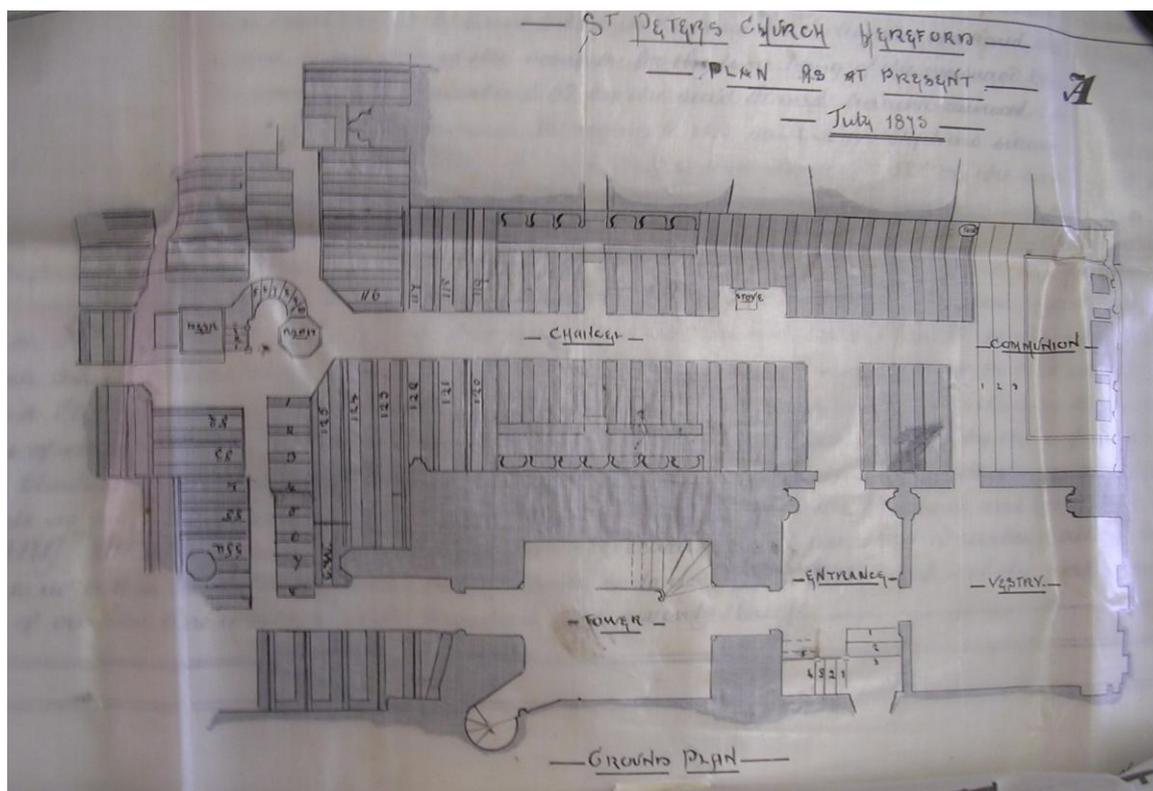


Plate 2: Plan of Chancel of St Peter's Church prior to the restoration carried out in 1873
(Reproduced by courtesy of the Herefordshire Record Office)

These extensive works involved taking down and partially rebuilding the South Aisle and the south arcade of the Nave, demolishing and rebuilding the South Porch, remodelling the West Front of the Nave and South Aisle, restoring the mullions of the windows in the North Aisle, putting new roofs over the Nave and South Aisle and restoring the roof of the North Aisle, removing the whitewash and plaster from the interior walls of the Nave

and Aisles and taking down and removing the whole of the Galleries, removing the existing pews and seating and re-flooring and re-seating the whole of the church.

The existing encaustic tiled floor in the Chancel, Nave and Aisles dates from this period and was donated in 1885 by William Godwin of Lugwardine, a prolific manufacturer of tiled floors for numerous churches in Herefordshire during the late 19th century (**Plate 3**). The tiles were manufactured to designs supplied by the architect, T. Nicholson (Gill, 2003, 24-34).

An underfloor heating system was installed in 1886 as part of this restoration programme; during excavations beneath the east end of the North Aisle for the construction of a boiler room, the remains of a single inhumation were found (SMR Ref. 44620), which presumably represent the remains of the founder of one of the two chantry chapels known to have been in existence in the North Aisle of the church by the early 15th century, dedicated to St John the Baptist and St Mary Magdalene, respectively.

More recent additions to the interior of the church include the present Rood Screen, being added in 1910, and the installation of a second row of wooden stalls in front of the 15th century stalls in the Chancel, erected in 1961.

5. Impact Assessment

5.1 Installation of Raised Oak Floor in Nave and Aisles

The proposed works involve installing a new suspended oak floor in the Nave and Aisles, raised some 380mm above the existing floor surface, with integral underfloor heating and insulation. The existing oak and encaustic tiled flooring will remain untouched. The carved quatrefoil bases of the piers in the north and south arcades of the Nave, which are currently concealed by the existing pews and standing radiators, will be partially obscured by the proposed raised flooring. The existing fabric of the north arcade dates from the late 13th-early 14th century while the south arcade was completely rebuilt by Nicholson in the mid 1880s (although remaining largely faithful to the original late 13th century design).

*Recommendation: A photographic record of the carved quatrefoil bases of the piers in the north and south arcades should be undertaken following the removal of the existing pews and radiators and before the installation of the new flooring. A limited photographic record of the existing Victorian encaustic tiled floor (**Plate 3**) and heating grilles should be undertaken prior to installation of the proposed new floor and underfloor heating system.*



Plate 3: View looking north showing Victorian encaustic tiled flooring in North Aisle with florid geometrical designs in Gothic style (installed in 1885 by W. Godwin to designs by T. Nicholson)

5.2 Installation of Service Boxes in North Aisle

The proposed works will involve the installation of two service boxes in the North Aisle, to provide kitchen, toilet and storage facilities. One of the boxes is to be located at the west end of the North Aisle, containing a kitchen and a lift and stairs leading to a balcony at first-floor level, while the other box, containing WCs and storage cabinets, will be situated immediately east of the doorway leading to the North Porch.



Plate 4: View looking northeast showing North Arcade of Nave (with quatrefoil piers partially obscured by existing pews) and North Aisle with original late 13th-early 14th century window tracery

Both service boxes are two storeys in height and will be freestanding structures, placed on top of the proposed raised oak flooring and will therefore have no structural impact on the existing fabric. However, the structures will have a moderate visual impact on the appearance of the North Aisle (**Plate 4**), which, in its present form, essentially dates from Nicholson's restoration of the church in 1880-86, when the North Gallery and box pews previously occupying the North Aisle (erected in the late 1820s-1830s) were removed and plaster removed from the North Aisle wall and arcade piers.

Recommendation: A photographic record of the existing appearance of the North Aisle should be undertaken, with particular attention to the windows in the Aisle, which will be partially obscured by the service boxes

5.3 Construction of Balcony providing access to Close House

The proposed works involve the construction of a balcony at first-floor level to provide access from the church to Close House. Access to the balcony would be either via a lift installed in the service box at the west end of the North Aisle, or a flight of stairs located against the west wall of the Aisle. Access from the Balcony to the first floor of Close House would be provided by means of the window at the west end of the North Aisle, which was blocked in recent years (**Plate 5**), although the original external tracery of the window has remained intact and is visible from Close House (**Plate 6**). The proposed works will involve making a doorway through this window, although the surviving window tracery will be retained.



Plate 5: View looking northwest showing blocked up window at west end of North Aisle

Recommendation: A photographic record of the internal wall of the North Aisle and a full drawn and photographic record of the external tracery of the window visible in Close House is recommended.



Plate 6: View looking south showing surviving external window tracery in window at west end of North Aisle

5.4 Installation of service runs for Kitchen and WCs in North Aisle

The proposed installation of the kitchen in the service box at the west end of the North Aisle will require service trenching to be excavated. The nature and extent of the service runs will be confirmed with the architect prior to the commencement of works. Additionally, three WCs will be installed in the service box immediately east of the door leading to the North Porch. Service trenching will therefore be required to carry waste into the existing sewerage system. The exact specifications of the service runs are yet to be decided. The nature and extent of the service runs will have to be confirmed with the architect prior to the commencement of works.

It should be noted that buried human remains were revealed at the east end of the North Aisle during excavations for the installation of a boiler room in 1886; consequently, the possibility that further evidence of burials might be encountered within the North Aisle cannot entirely be discounted.

Recommendation: All service trenching should be excavated archaeologically with all spoil being sieved for disarticulated human remains. In the event of fully articulated

human remains being uncovered, a full photographic record of remains 'in situ' will be required.

5.5 Removal of Rood Screen

The proposed works involve the removal of the existing Rood Screen, dividing the Nave and Chancel (**Plate 7**), which will be moved from its present location to a position against the west wall providing storage space behind. The screen, designed in an ornate Perpendicular style, is a fairly recent addition, being erected in 1910. The removal of the Rood Screen should reveal further evidence of the Chancel arch and the Rood-Loft staircase situated on the north side of the Chancel arch, which have been concealed by the Rood Screen.

Recommendation: A photographic record of the Rood Screen in its existing position is recommended, together with a photographic record of any features relating to the Chancel arch or the Rood-Loft staircase revealed after the removal of the screen.



Plate 7: View looking east showing rood screen erected in 1910 with Rood-Loft staircase to left of Chancel arch

5.6 Removal of First Row of Pews in Chancel

The first row of oak pews in the Chancel (installed in 1961) are to be removed, which will fully reveal the ornate late medieval choir stalls, dating from c.1430-50, which were removed from St Guthlac's Priory, and the decorated stone base (with pierced quatrefoil roundels) upon which the stalls stand (**Plate 8**). It is unclear whether the stone base was also brought from St Guthlac's Priory together with the choir stalls; the moulding of the quatrefoils suggests a slightly earlier date (possibly late 14th-early 15th century),

which could imply that the base might have been in place prior to the installation of the choir stalls from St Guthlac's.

Recommendation: The pews in front of the choir stalls are modern installations and therefore a photographic record is not required in this instance; however, it is recommended that a photographic record should be taken after their removal, both of the medieval choir stalls and the ornate stone base on which the stalls rest.



Plate 8: View looking northeast showing first road of oak pews (erected in 1961) partially obscuring the late medieval choir stalls and ornate stone base with quatrefoil roundels

5.7 Relocation of Font at east end of South Aisle

The existing Font (**Plate 9**), located at the east end of the South Aisle and contemporary with Nicholson's restoration of the church in the 1880s, will be moved from its current position to the Nave.

Recommendation: No foreseeable impact on buried archaeological deposits or features is anticipated. A limited photographic survey of the Font in its present position is recommended.



Plate 9: View looking southeast showing existing Font at east end of South Aisle installed during the restoration of the church in the 1880s

5.8 Construction of Ramp and Glass Door for Access from St Peters Square

To facilitate access from St Peter's Square, a ramp will be installed to the height of the new floor level and a glass door will be installed in the south entrance.

Recommendation: No foreseeable impact on buried archaeological deposits or features is anticipated. A limited photographic survey of the current appearance of the South Aisle is recommended.

6. Conclusion

This Archaeological Impact Assessment of proposed works at St Peter's Church, Hereford, a Grade II* Listed Building, based on a detailed review of readily available documentary, pictorial evidence and a site survey of those areas that will be affected by the proposed internal alterations and external groundworks, has identified the following issues:

The proposed construction of two service boxes in the North Aisle and the installation of a raised oak floor in the Nave and Aisles will have no direct physical impact on the fabric of the building, although it will have a moderate impact in visual terms.

A general photographic record of the existing appearance of the North Aisle (built in the late 13th-early 14th century) prior to the installation of the proposed two-storey service boxes is recommended.

However, the installation of a kitchen and WCs in the two proposed service boxes in the North Aisle may require the excavation of trenching to install services. This trenching should be excavated archaeologically, particularly in view of the fact that buried human remains were identified following excavations for the installation of a boiler at the east end of the North Aisle in 1886.

A photographic record of the carved quatrefoil bases of the piers in the north and south arcades should also be undertaken following the removal of the existing pews and radiators, together with a limited photographic record of the existing Victorian encaustic tiled floor and heating grilles prior to installation of the proposed new floor and underfloor heating system.

A drawn and photographic record of the external window tracery in the window at the west end of the North Aisle should also be undertaken prior to the construction of a balcony above the proposed service boxes in the North Aisle and the provision of access via the window to Close House.

A photographic record is also recommended following the removal of the Rood Screen (erected in 1910) and the first row of pews in the Chancel obscuring the 15th century choir stalls reputedly brought from St Guthlac's Priory.

7. Copyright

Border Archaeology shall retain full copyright of any commissioned reports, tender documents or other project documents, under the Copyright, Designs & Patents Act 1988 with all rights reserved; excepting that it hereby provides an exclusive licence to the client for the use of the report in all matters directly relating to the project as described in the Project Specification.

8. Bibliography

8.1 Primary Sources

8.1.1 Lambeth Palace Library

Records of the Incorporated Church Building Society (ICBS) File 00976 ff.22
Faculties for repairs and erection of galleries in St Peter's Church, Hereford – 1827-37

8.1.2 Herefordshire Record Office

8.1.2.1 Vestry Records

AR 77/20 St Peter's Hereford: Vestry Minutes - 1796-1813

AR 71/2 St Peter's Hereford: Vestry Minutes - 1820-1860

AR 77/21 St Peter's Hereford: Vestry Minutes – 1860-1920

AG 71/3 St Peter's Hereford: Church Restoration Book – 1884-86

8.1.2.2 Faculties

AR 77/11 Faculty for taking down seats and erecting new ones, with plan - 1775

AR77/10/1 Faculty for erecting gallery & reading desk & altering seats, with plan - 1829

AR77/10/2 Faculty for making alterations & erecting new seats, with plan - 1830

AR77/10/3 Faculty for erecting new gallery & making new arrangements for certain pews -1835

AR77/10/4 Faculty for removal and erection of certain seats, with plan & schedule - 1837

AR77/10/5 Faculty for rearrangement of seats in Chancel, two coloured plans showing existing and proposed arrangements - 1873

AR77/10/6 Faculty for taking down galleries in Nave and Aisles restoring and re seating - 1886

8.2 Secondary Sources

Herefordshire Archaeology Sites and Monuments Record: SMR Printout

National Monuments Record Centre, Swindon: NMR Printout

Eisel, J.C., 1994, 'Spires', *Transactions of the Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club*, Volume 48 pt.1, 13-22.

Evans, C., 1954, *A Short History of St Peter's Church, Hereford*, London

Gill, M.A., 2003, 'A Munificent Benefaction: Godwin tiles in St Peter's Church, Hereford', *Journal of the Tiles and Architectural Ceramics Society*, Vol. 9., 24-34

Pevsner, N., 1963, *The Buildings of England: Herefordshire*, London

9. Statement of Competency and Experience

Church archaeology has been a key focus of Border Archaeology's activities since the company's launch a decade ago.

A series of investigations at St Mary's Parish Church, Abergavenny, began in 1998 and continued over several years, forming part of an extensive programme of restoration undertaken by the PCC. These investigations were carried out in the Lewis Chapel, around the medieval Choir Stalls and in the central aisle of the nave.

The Lewis Chapel investigations revealed articulated and disarticulated human remains, totalling some 40,000 finds, and an extensive funerary assemblage, including coffin-lid studding, coffin grips and coffin plates. Human remains were also revealed at the rear of the 15th century Choir Stalls and these were removed archaeologically prior to the construction of a supporting wall. The nave excavation at St Mary's Church revealed 14 articulated burials dating to between 1750 and 1815 and a shroud burial of c. 1500-1600. All floor tiles were removed, each tile being uniquely numbered and recorded both as a drawn record and photographically.

In 2002, the company was commissioned by Leominster Priory Church Parochial Church Council to excavate approximately 200m of service trenching for electricity cabling, together with pits for lampposts and light fittings. Several structures were revealed during the course of the groundworks, including the remains of an unbonded masonry wall, a burial vault containing human remains and an assemblage of medieval glazed tiles. The company also undertook a series of trial-hole investigations to locate evidence of monastic activity in an area that had not previously been archaeologically investigated.

In 2004, field staff excavated drainage trenching and soak-aways within the southern area of the churchyard of St Mary's Church, Linton, near Ross-on-Wye, extending from the southwest corner of the external façade of the chancel. Five inhumations were revealed forming a series of burials of 18th and early 19th century date, together with disarticulated remains. The *in situ* remains were protected before the drains were inserted and reburial of one individual was subsequently undertaken. The same year, staff hand excavated two receptor pits and a drainage trench at St Sampson's Church, Cricklade. Subsequent programmes of work have been undertaken at St Peter's Church, Worfield, Shropshire, Pudleston Church, Herefordshire, and St Leonard's Church, Ludlow.

The company's General Manager, George Children MA AIFA, has overall technical responsibility for all such projects. He studied at Cambridge and has an extensive record of published work. He worked as Planning Supervisor on the 'Mappa Mundi' excavation at Hereford Cathedral in 1993-4, which revealed 1,129 burials.

Border Archaeology's Research Manager, Stephen Priestley MA, studied history at Cambridge before working as a research assistant for Historic Royal Palaces at the Tower of London. He subsequently worked as a researcher for English Heritage on the Windsor Castle Fire Evaluation Project for three years. From 2000 to 2003, he worked as a research consultant for Cadw undertaking extensive documentary research on the history of various historic properties in Wales. Stephen's responsibilities include researching and writing desk-based assessments, multi-stage assessments and historic landscape assessments.



The Company was formed in 1997 by Neil Shurety Dip.M.GM.Inst.M who studied business at Wolverhampton Polytechnic and whose role encompasses both the setting & maintenance of standards in conjunction with colleagues and specific issues such as Health & Safety & operational arrangements.

Document Control

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