

# Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

<b>Civil Parish &amp; District:</b> Instow, North Devon	<b>National Grid Reference</b> SS 4797 3097	<b>Number:</b>
<b>Subject:</b> Replacement of the floor in the south transept.		<b>Photo attached?</b> YES
<b>Planning Application no:</b> N/A	<b>Recipient museum:</b> NDDMS	
<b>OASIS ID:</b> southwes1-183301	<b>Museum Accession no:</b> no physical archive	
<b>Contractor's reference number/code:</b> ISJ14	<b>Dates fieldwork undertaken:</b> 25 <sup>th</sup> & 26 <sup>th</sup> March 2014	
<p><b>Description of works.</b></p> <p>Archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken by South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) at the request of Jonathan Rhind, Architects Ltd. (The Agent) on behalf of the PCC of St. John (The Client), during the excavation of the floor of the south transept in advance of the new floor being laid in St John's Church, Instow, North Devon. This work was undertaken by N. Boyd and J. Bampton on the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> of March 2014 in accordance with a schedule of works drawn up by the client and with reference to IFA guidelines.</p> <p>The works subject to archaeological monitoring entailed the excavation of an area of the floor of the south transept where human skeletal remains had been exposed during the floor level reduction in preparation for the installation of the new floor.</p> <p>The stratigraphic sequence demonstrated that below the (re-lain) 19<sup>th</sup> century wooden flooring of the south transept was a layer of concrete underneath which lay a layer of builders rubble, made up primarily of lime mortar fragments, slate and stone. Human bones were revealed below this at a depth of only 0.15m below the previous wooden floor level.</p> <p>There were the remains of at least eight individuals within the rubble, indicated by the number of skulls and skull fragments. These were in two groups, one at either end of an area of disturbed soil located between two grave-cuts. The bones were disarticulated, with the skulls and accompanying bones all deposited apparently unsystematically. One group was larger than the other, with the group at the eastern end of the feature containing remnants of at least six skulls and a large number of other bones; the second group, to the west of the feature comprised 2 skulls and several longbones. The apparently random deposition of the bones would suggest that they were re-deposited from earlier burials, perhaps during the excavation of the two later grave cuts. The characteristics of the skulls, coupled with the size and length of the longbones suggests that they were all adults, with a single female and the rest male.</p> <p>Along the northern and southern bounds of the area containing these disarticulated remains were rough stone walls with lime mortar capping. These at first appeared to be the walls of a single grave containing the bones which had been revealed, but many of the bones were above the stone walls and only the western group was entirely below the top of these walls. Further excavation revealed that the opposing edges of these two walls were apparently rendered with lime mortar. This would suggest that these walls are the stone lining of two graves and the bones recovered were in fact deposited in an area of disturbance between two later graves. As the intended works would not disturb these graves they were not examined further.</p> <p>A test pit was dug in the south west corner of the transept to establish if the necessary works in this corner were likely to reveal further burials. Modern, curved, brick foundations were revealed in this corner, supporting the corner of the transept. No further burials or any datable finds were recovered. Roof slates, wall plaster, some iron fragments and what appear to be fragments of paper were recovered, within the rubble overlying the skeletal remains and do not provide dating evidence for the skeletal remains themselves. The Verger, Tony Garrett, told us that records for the church indicate that the floor in the south transept was laid in 1820, so the bones would have been buried either at this time or earlier.</p> <p>All of the bones were retained by St. John the Baptist Church for reburial. Other finds are to be donated as part of a local school project by the church.</p>		
<p><b>A plan as well as any other relevant drawings must be attached showing the location and extent of site, areas investigated and features exposed.</b></p>		
<b>Recorder:</b> N. Boyd		<b>Date sent to HER:</b> 04/07/2014

Please email completed form to: [archaeol@devon.gov.uk](mailto:archaeol@devon.gov.uk) or post to County Archaeology Service, Environment Directorate, Matford Lane Offices, County Hall, Topsham Road, Exeter EX2 4QW. Information recorded on this form will be added to the Historic Environment Record, and made available to all researchers.

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Figure 1: External view of south transept, taken during 2013 monitoring work (2m scale).



Figure 2: View of the first bones revealed, eastern group; from the north-east.



Figure 3: View of the Skull 1, in situ (no scale).



Figure 4: Eastern group of bones (2m scale).



Figure 5: As above (2m scale).



Figure 6: As above (no scale).



Figure 7: As above (no scale).



Figure 8: As above (2m scale).





Figure 9: View of bones and one of the rendered stone walls located below (2m scale).



Figure 10: Test pit in south west corner, showing the brick foundations (1m scale).



Figure 11: Western group of bones (1m scale).



Figure 12: As figure 11, showing Skull 8 in-situ (1m scale).



Figure 13: View of the stone walls of the adjacent graves from the east (1+2m scales).



Figure 14: The western end of the trench; from the east (2m scale).





Figure 15: The eastern end of the trench; from the west (2m scale).



Figure 16: View of the trench from the north, the wooden floor is visible to bottom right (2m scale).



Figure 17: Skull number 1, from eastern group.



Figure 18: Skull number 2, from eastern group.



Figure 19: Mandible, from eastern group.



Figure 20: Skull number 3, from eastern group.



Figure 21: Skull number 7, damaged during excavation, from western group.



Figure 22: Skull number 8, from western group.





Figure 23: Skull number 4, from eastern group.



Figure 24: Skull number 5, as discovered, from east group.



Figure 25: As above with contents removed, revealing fragment of skull 6.



Figure 26: Longbones from eastern group.



Figure 27: As above.



Figure 28: Bones from western group.



Figure 29: Pelvis fragments from eastern group.



Figure 30: Bone fragments from eastern group.





Figure 31: As above, including vertebrae and ribs.



Figure 32: Bone fragments as above.



Figure 33: As above.



Figure 34: South transept following excavation; from the North (no scale).

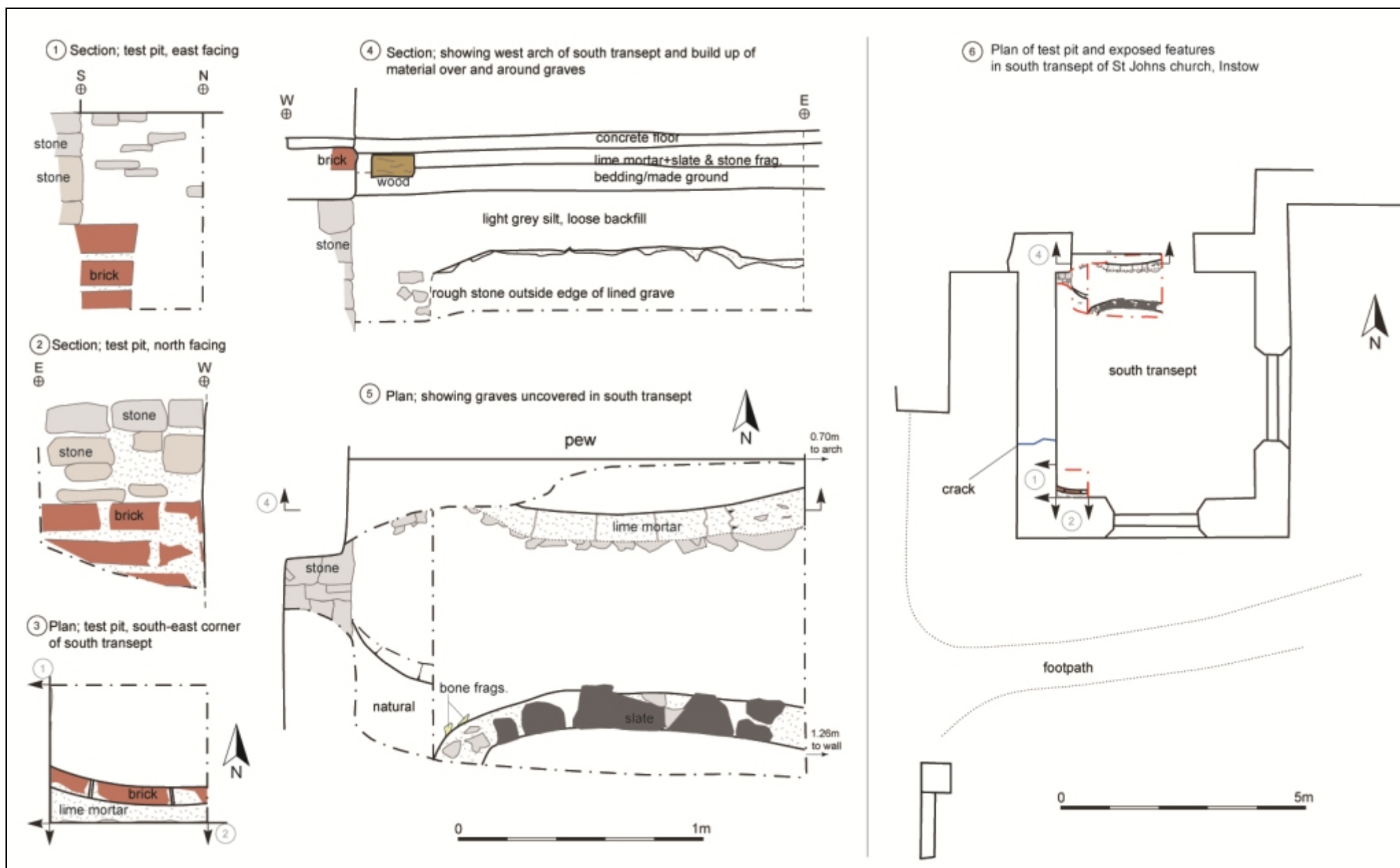


Figure 35: Site drawings; plan and sections. Section drawing numbers (1, 2 & 4) correspond to grey-scale numbers on plans (3, 5&6).