

# Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

<b>Civil Parish &amp; District:</b> South Brent, South Hams, Devon	<b>National Grid Reference</b> SX 69622 60257	<b>Number:</b>
<b>Subject:</b> Archaeological monitoring and recording at St. Petroc's Church, South Brent, Devon		<b>Photo attached?</b> YES
<b>Planning Application no:</b> N/A	<b>Recipient museum:</b> N/A	
<b>OASIS ID:</b> southwes1-196893	<b>Museum Accession no:</b> N/A	
<b>Contractor's reference number/code:</b> SBS16	<b>Dates fieldwork undertaken:</b> 5 <sup>th</sup> & 14 <sup>th</sup> December 2016; 11 <sup>th</sup> January 2017	
<p><b>Description of works.</b></p> <p>St. Petroc's church is located on the western edge of South Brent, on the eastern bank of the River Avon at a height of approximately 125m AOD. The local bedrock comprises slates of the Middle Devonian Slates with superficial Head deposits of clay, silt, sand and gravel (BGS 2015). The soils are well drained fine loamy soils of Trusham Association (SSEW 1983). The Church of St Petroc is a substantial building with a complex history. The rather squat tower at the west end appears to represent the remainder of a Norman cruciform church built in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. It is thought that the Norman work represents the rebuilding of a Saxon church, lower courses of Saxon masonry remaining (it is claimed) at the base of the tower. Local belief has it that the earliest church was founded by Saint Petrock himself, but it is more likely to have been begun when the manor of South Brent was granted by King Canute to the newly founded Abbey of Buckfast in 1018.</p> <p>Historic building recording and archaeological monitoring were undertaken within St. Petroc's Church, South Hams, Devon, during restoration work to the tower. This work was carried out by South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) on behalf of Greg Wall, Church Warden (the Client). The monitoring and recording was carried out by Emily Wapshott in December 2016 and January 2017. This work was undertaken in accordance with a Project Design (Boyd 2014) and ClfA best practice.</p> <p>During works the top of the tower has been rebuilt, with the west and south sides and the north-east corner carefully deconstructed; each stone numbered and then replaced exactly. The heavy cement mortar was removed and repointed in a lime mix. The upper part of the merlons, rebuilt in the 19<sup>th</sup> century required restoration. The 19<sup>th</sup> century roof behind the crenellations was exposed by the works, constructed of massive pine scantling, but rotten. This was replaced like for like. The 19<sup>th</sup> century shale infill of the crenels was recreated by the builders to seal the 19<sup>th</sup> century raised roof level. The bells are supported on a 19<sup>th</sup> century iron/steel frame and the floors are all of 19<sup>th</sup> century timber. Some large, angled sockets at the upper level suggest a more complex bracing timber structure occupied this tower (a spire?) before the 19<sup>th</sup> century works, which created the present flat roof.</p> <p>During works to consolidate the stonework of the arch in the tower and repoint the stonework some of the outer, 14<sup>th</sup> century blocking came loose and had to be reset (see Figure 2). In the clay bond of this stonework a fragment of human maxilla, with one tooth remaining, a number of loose teeth, fragments of skull and some other, unidentified human bone were revealed. These were recorded (Figure 3) and returned to the wall, having most likely been inclusions in the material from the churchyard used in previous repairs. In the west wall of the tower the mortar was replaced with lime mortar, which exposed a blocked doorway with relieving segmental arch which would once have led into the south transept.</p> <p><b>References</b></p> <p>Boyd, N. 2014: <i>St. Petroc's Church, South Brent, Devon: Project Design</i>.</p> <p>British Geological Survey 2014: <i>Geology of Britain Viewer</i>. <a href="http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer_google/googleviewer.html">http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer_google/googleviewer.html</a> [accessed 25.1.2017].</p> <p>Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983: <i>Legend for the 1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales</i>.</p>		
<b>Recorder:</b> N. Boyd		<b>Date sent to HER:</b> 26/01/2017



Figure 1: The top of the tower during consolidation works.



Figure 2: The blocked doorway formerly leading to the south transept; from the south west.



Figure 3: Fragments of human bone recovered from tower wall.