

Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

Civil Parish & District: Lapford, Mid-Devon	National Grid Reference SS 73152 0825	Number:
Subject: Archaeological monitoring and recording in the churchyard of St. Thomas of Canterbury during drainage works.		Photo attached? YES
Planning Application no: 0408/16/HHO	Recipient museum: Finds to be returned to church	
OASIS ID: Southwes1-264884	Museum Accession no: N/A	
Contractor's reference number/code: LST16	Dates fieldwork undertaken: 12 th -13 th October 2016	
<p>Description of works.</p> <p>Archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken by South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) at the request of Julian Clayton of Jonathan Rhind Architects during groundworks associated with the replacement and insertion of new drainage runs within the churchyard of St. Thomas of Canterbury, Lapford, Devon. The monitoring was carried out by S. Walls over two days in October 2016. The works were carried out in accordance to a WSI (Boyd 2016) drawn up in consultation with Sasha Chapman (Diocesan Advisory Committee's Archaeological Advisor) and Stephen Reed (Devon County Historic Environment Team).</p> <p>The parish Church of St Thomas is located at a height of approximately 123m (AOD), with the ground rising to the north. The soils of the area are the well-drained fine loamy soils of the Neath Association (SSEW 1983) overlying mudstones, siltstones and sandstones of the Bude Formation (BGS 2016).</p> <p>The Church of St Thomas is located within the centre of the village of Lapford (Figure 1). The village has two historic portions, one centred on the Church and the other to the north at Higher Town. The village was bypassed to the south by the A377 and railway, but both led to the considerable growth during the 19th and 20th centuries, merging the two formerly separate portions. The church was significantly re-ordered and rebuilt in the later 19th century, and the churchyard was extended to the east at around this time.</p> <p>The groundworks comprised the excavation of four short lengths of trench, measuring approximately 20m long in total to replace and instate new rainwater drainage. The trenches were all excavated using a small mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket, some limited hand-excavation occurred in places (see Figures 1-2). The trenches were largely excavated to a depth still within the topsoil c.0.3-0.4m deep. The topsoil comprised a soft mid-brown silt-clay, although the inclusions within the deposit varied considerably between the four trenches (see below), suggesting (unsurprisingly) that it had been considerably disturbed at different times.</p> <p>Trench 1 was approximately 8m long by 0.6m wide and was orientated east-north-east to west-south-west from a downpipe fed from just off the centre of the southern side of the chancel roof, extending to a manhole located adjacent to the churchyard footpath, c.3m east of the south porch. The trench was positioned to replace the existing pipe, and therefore followed the 1950s pipe trench. It was excavated to a depth of 0.25m to the west and 0.5m to the east. The cut to the earlier pipe-trench and its backfill were undistinguishable from the surrounding topsoil. There were a large number of small human bone fragments noted in this trench. The 1950s pipe had been laid running directly across two unmarked tombs to the south of the chancel. Both of these graves were constructed of brick, with Tomb 1 to the north covered with a slate top; and Tomb 2 to the south formerly appearing to have been a barrel vaulted tomb, which had had its former vaulted top removed and replaced with a stone slab at some point in the later 19th or 20th century. One of the slate coverings of Tomb 1 broke during the machining, and so it was possible to glance into the tomb, a.c.1m void, containing the disturbed remains of at least one individual, within a brick built tomb, trapezoidal in plan with slightly curving sides (see Figures 2-3).</p> <p>The stone slab covering Tomb 2 had also broken slightly, but had been largely infilled with topsoil and so nothing was visible. The break did, however, reveal that the top course of bricks which were visible on the west side of the grave, were once part of a barrel roof, and the grave had been altered to have a flat slab top at a later date. The churchwarden mentioned that the nearby grave for a former rector, who was buried in 1980 was moved to its current location as the original grave had discovered an unmarked tomb. From the little bit of Tomb 2 that was visible it would appear likely that it is a much larger than Tomb 1, i.e. double sized or family vault. The fact that a further slate was visible in section to the east, suggests that there may be other graves in the area which were disturbed during the late 19th century (c.1871) rebuild of the chancel and porch. It was presumably at this time that Tomb 2 was partially infilled and re-roofed, and Tomb 1 disturbed, although the 20th century drainage works and small number of burials in the area may have led to some further disturbance. The bricks used for both tombs appeared similar and bonded with lime, and probably</p>		

date to the 18th century.

Trench 2 was approximately 2m long and 1m wide and was located to replace two existing drains running off from the Nave and porch. Trench 2 met Trench 1 at its southern limits, at the manhole adjacent to the footpath. The trench was c.0.25m deep to the north and up to 0.5m deep to the south. The trench was solely within the topsoil deposits, which in this area contained a significant amount of ceramic ridge tile fragments, and several scalloped tile fragments. There were also a larger number of stone and brick fragments noted in this Trench compared to any others, and very few bones were encountered. The tile is likely to have come from the earlier south porch, which was replaced by the current porch in 1871. The present porch includes some fragments of similar looking tile in the fabric of its west wall.

Trench 3 ran parallel to the west wall of the porch, and again replaced an existing drain. The trench was c.2m long and 0.6m wide, it was 0.4m deep at its northern end and 0.6m deep to the south. At the base of the trench, to the south end, was the top of what is presumed to be the wall footing for the earlier porch. The current porches footings are much shallower, which explains, why, probably in the 1950s when the drainage was inserted, an attempt to stabilise the south-west corner was made with a large lump of cement and a couple of stones. There is clear evidence of structural problems in the porch, and future works may be necessary to stabilise the structure. There were few finds from this trench, with common stones and brick, but little in the way of bones.

Trench 4 was c.4m long and 0.6m wide and was the only excavation carried out not following an existing drain run. The trench was positioned for the new drain pipe which will run off the tower, and will connect to the existing runs of drains. The trench was 0.4m deep at the northern end and 0.6m deep to the south, where it met the existing drain. The trench bisected the tarmac footpath, which cut into the topsoil but did not appear to have replaced an earlier path in this location. This trench encountered the largest amount of bone fragments, and a reasonable quantity of stone.

Finds

The assemblage was dominated by 19th century finds, including industrial earthenwares and glazed redware (4 sherds, 47g); 6 fragments (30g) of 19th and 20th century glass; 3 (37g) iron nails, 3 fragments (32g) of lime plaster or mortar; 2 pieces of brick (196g); 1 fragment (132g) of glazed roof tile; 2 pieces of pantile (294g), one of which had a decorative, semi-circular end; a stone with a curved interior edge, possibly architectural in nature; and three floor tiles, one modern, with (H?)OLLINS stamp, one small edge fragment with green and yellow glaze, and one corner piece with sloped edge, green and yellow glaze and stab marks on the underside, the latter two tiles likely late Medieval.

A full list of the finds recovered is held in the site archive. All finds were discarded on site. Any human remains encountered were grouped and buried together in Tomb 1, which was partially backfilled in case of further collapse.

Conclusions

The monitoring identified two unmarked tombs, located close to the Victorian Chancel, probably pre-dating its construction in 1869, when in one instance the tomb was altered and both tombs 'lost' at this time. They are likely to both date from the 18th century, and given their location and form were presumably connected to a prominent local family, perhaps, given the group of moved 18th century and early 19th century gravestone in the eastern churchyard extensions, the Kelland family(?).

References

- Boyd, N. 2016: *St. Thomas of Canterbury, Lapford, Devon. Written Scheme of Investigation*. SWARCH WSI no. LST16WSiv1
- Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983: *Legend for the 1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales (a brief explanation of the constituent soil associations)*.
- British Geological Survey 2016: *Geology of Britain Viewer*. http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer_google/googleviewer.html [accessed 20.10.2016]

Recorder: S. Walls

Date sent to HER: 20/10/2016

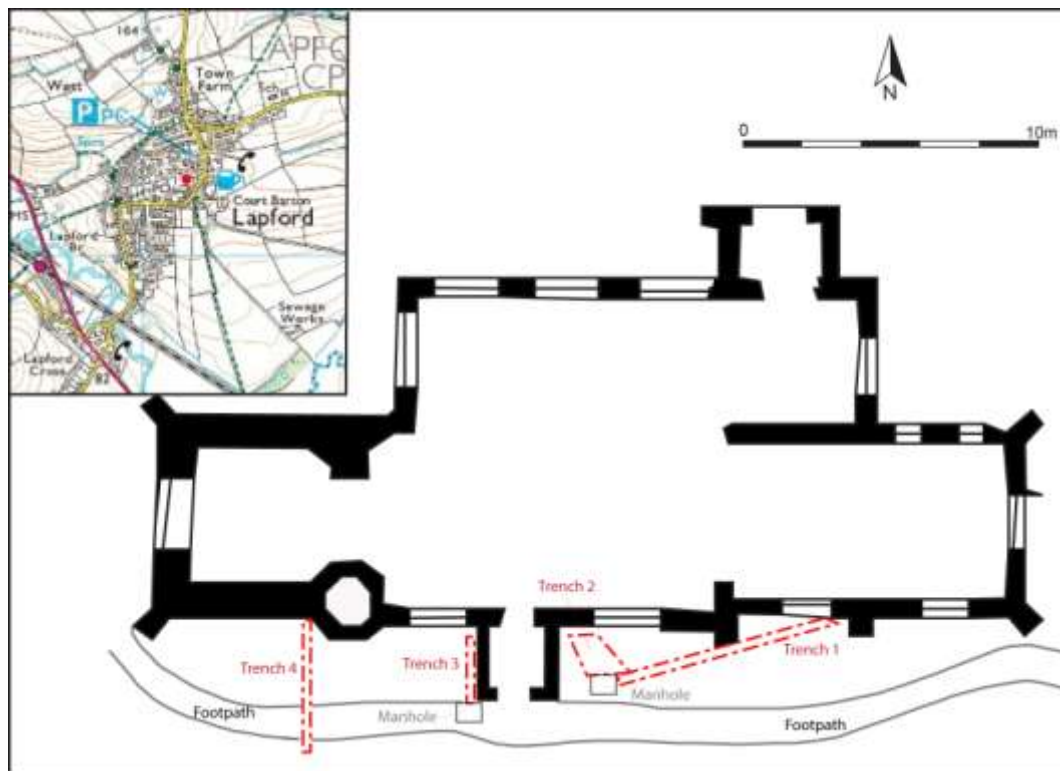


Figure 1: Site location and plan showing the location of the areas of excavation.



Figure 2: Shot of the two tombs exposed in Trench 1 (scale 1m).

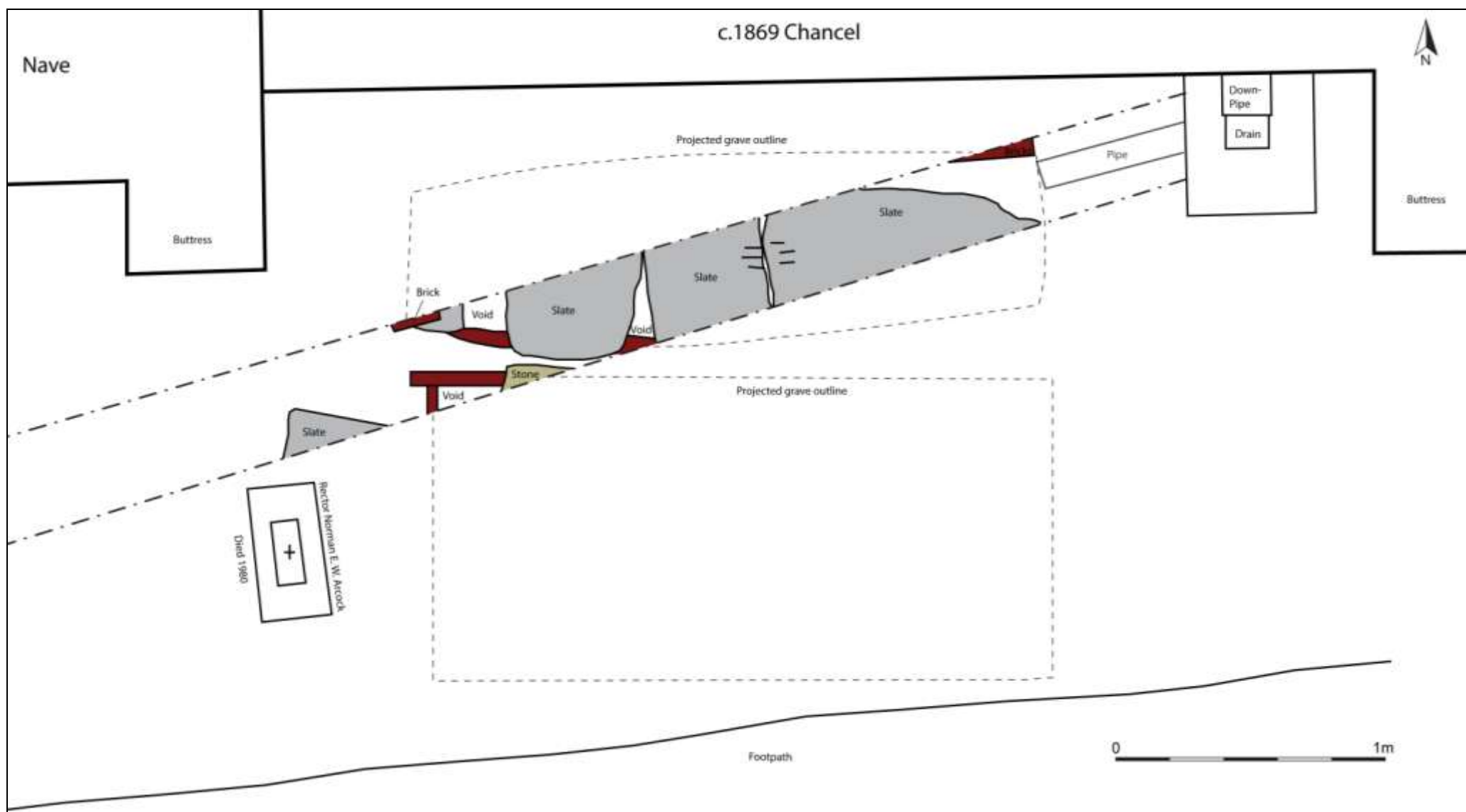


Figure 3: Detailed plan of Trench 1.