

**St Andrew's Church
Blunsdon St Andrew
Swindon**

Archaeological Watching Brief

for

The Venerable Caroline Baston

on behalf of

St Andrews Parochial Church Council


CA Project: 4057
CA Report: 12359

November 2012

St Andrew's Church
Blunsdon St Andrew
Swindon

Archaeological Watching Brief

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CA Report: 12359

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date	28 November 2012
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date	28 November 2012
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signed	
date	28 November 2012
issue	01

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SUMMARY

Project Name: St Andrew's Church
Location: Blunsdon St Andrews, Wiltshire
NGR: SU 1362 8969
Type: Watching Brief
Date: 22 Nov 2012
Location of Archive: Swindon Museum
Site Code: SAR 12

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with the installation of a service water pipe at St Andrew's Church, Blunsdon St Andrew, Wiltshire.

The watching brief revealed a subsoil containing disarticulated human bone fragments and a modern pipe trench.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In November 2012 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief for the Venerable Caroline Baston on behalf of St Andrew's Parochial Church Council (PCC) at St Andrew's Church, Blunsdon St Andrew, Wiltshire (centred on NGR SU 1362 8969; Fig. 1). The watching brief was undertaken to fulfil a condition attached to a *faculty* granted by the Diocese of Bristol for the installation of a service water pipe. The objective of the watching brief was to record all archaeological remains exposed during the development.
- 1.2 The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a *faculty* prepared by the Consistory Court of the Diocese of Bristol and with a subsequent detailed *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) produced by CA (2012) and approved by Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger, County Archaeologist, Wiltshire Council. The fieldwork also followed the *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (IfA 2008), the *Statement of Standards and Practices Appropriate for Archaeological Fieldwork in Wiltshire* (Wiltshire County Council 1995), the *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (English Heritage 1991) and the *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MORPHE): Project Manager's Guide* (English Heritage 2006).

The site

- 1.3 The proposed development area encloses an area of approximately 0.1ha, and comprises the church yard of St Andrew's Church. The Church is bordered by Lady Lane to the north, residential properties to the east and west and open fields to the south. The site lies at approximately 135m AOD. The groundworks were located alongside the footpath of the church, in a landscaped depression approximately 0.6m lower than the surrounding churchyard.
- 1.4 The underlying bedrock geology of the area is mapped as Stanford Formation Limestone of the Jurassic Period (BGS 2012). Light yellow clay and limestone were encountered during the watching brief.

Archaeological background

- 1.5 St Andrew's Church is Grade II* Listed. Elements of the church appear to be 13th-century in origin, although it was almost entirely rebuilt in 1868. A settlement at *Bluntesdone* is recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1086 and the place name *Bluntesdon Seynt Andreu* is recorded in 1281 (CA 2010, 12). The village was probably originally centred on St Andrew's Church. Earthworks to the south-east of the church may represent a deserted area of the medieval village. Although a building known as *Blunsdon Abbey* previously lay to the south of the site, there is no evidence for any religious house in the area, and the name appears to have originated with the construction of a large house in 1860. The house itself subsequently burnt down in 1904, although the name remains on a nearby building (ibid.). The Church lies in a wider landscape of prehistoric and Romano-British rural settlement in north Wiltshire. A number of significant Iron Age settlements to the south and south-east of the Church indicate that it lies within a wider landscape of settlement and agriculture. The Church also lies around 1km west of Ermin Street, the Roman road connecting the civitas capital of Cirencester and the settlement at Wanborough (op. cit., 2) and an excavated Roman ritual centre, now a Scheduled Ancient Monument, is located less than 0.5km to the south-east.

Methodology

- 1.6 The fieldwork followed the methodology set out within the WSI (CA 2012). An archaeologist was present during all intrusive groundworks within the churchyard comprising the excavation of a 0.3m wide trench prior to the installation of a service water pipe (Fig. 2).
- 1.7 Written, graphic and photographic records were compiled in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual* (2007).
- 1.8 The archive from the evaluation is currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble and will be deposited with Swindon Museum. A summary of information from this project, set out within Appendix B, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

2. RESULTS (FIGS 2 AND 3)

- 2.1 The natural geological substrate 106, consisting of light yellow clay and limestone, was revealed at an average depth of 0.45m below present ground level. This was overlain by a subsoil, 105, averaging 0.27m in thickness and containing occasional disarticulated human bone, which was in turn sealed by 0.18m of topsoil, 100. To the east, the trench partially ran through the church footpath and revealed that the footpath consists of 0.1m of gravel surface sealing 0.15m of compacted made ground, which slightly truncated the subsoil. At the southern end of the trench an area of modern disturbance 104 was identified, probably associated with the installation of a ceramic drainage pipe. Due to its modern date no artefactual material has been retained; disarticulated human bone was immediately reinterred on site, in accordance with provisions made within the WSI.

3. DISCUSSION

- 3.1 Despite the archaeological potential of the application area (see archaeological background above), the watching brief identified only fragmentary and re-deposited human bone and a modern pipe trench. The absence of *in situ* archaeological deposits may indicate that structural remains associated with either the 13th-century church, the medieval settlement of Blunsdon or with earlier prehistoric and Roman activity in the area, either do not extend as far as, or were not exposed by, the development. It is also possible that landscaping of the churchyard to create a depression for the footpath may have truncated earlier features. The presence of charnel bone in subsoil layer 105 may indicate that this is a layer of graveyard soils deposited during landscaping, rather than an *in situ* soil formation.

4. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Christopher Leonard. The report was written by Christopher Leonard. The illustrations were prepared by Ian Atkins. The archive has been compiled by Christopher Leonard, and prepared for deposition by James Johnson. The project was managed for CA by Richard Young.

5. REFERENCES

BGS (British Geological Survey) <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>
accessed 23 November 2012

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2010 *Land at Tadpole Lane, Swindon, Wiltshire: Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment*, CA report No. **08204**

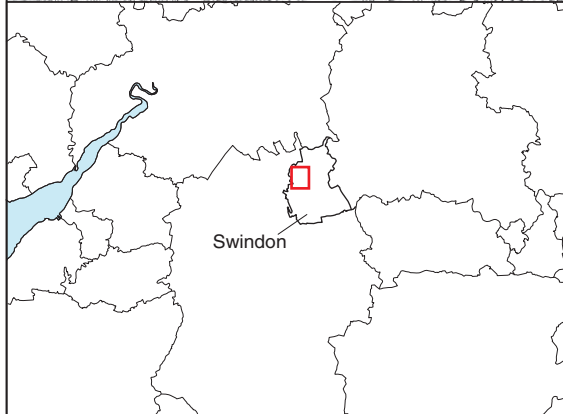
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2012 *St Andrew's Church, Blunsdon St Andrew, Wiltshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*

APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Context No.	Type	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	Depth /thickness (m)	Spot-date
100	Layer		Topsoil	Dark greyish brown sandy silt.	14.5	0.25	0.18	modern
101	Layer		Path surface	Gravel	14.5	0.05	0.1	
102	Layer		Made ground	Compacted dark brown sandy silt levelling layer for (101)	14.5	0.05	0.15	
103	Fill	104	Fill of area of modern disturbance	Dark greyish brown sandy silt with frequent large limestone boulders. Modern pottery and CBM.	1.5	>0.3	0.6	modern
104	Cut		Area of modern disturbance	Steep sides. Only seen at northern extent.	1.5	>0.3	0.6	Modern
105	Layer		Subsoil	Dark brownish grey sandy silt. Moderately frequent small stones and gravel. Occasional human charnel bone.	13	0.3	0.27	
106	Layer		Natural geology	Light yellow clay and limestone.	14.5	0.3	>0.46	

APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project Name	St Andrew's Church, Blunsdon St Andrew, Wiltshire	
Short description	An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with installation of a service water pipe at St Andrew's Church, Blunsdon St Andrew, Wiltshire. No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during groundworks, and no artefactual material pre-dating the modern period was recovered.	
Project dates	22 November 2012	
Project type	Watching Brief	
Previous work	None	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site Location	St Andrew's Church, Blunsdon St Andrews, Wiltshire	
Study area (M ² /ha)	0.1ha	
Site co-ordinates	SU 1362 8969	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator	n/a	
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Richard Young	
Project Supervisor	Christopher Leonard	
MONUMENT TYPE		
	None	
SIGNIFICANT FINDS		
	None	
PROJECT ARCHIVES		
	Intended final location of archive	Content
Paper	Swindon Museum	Context sheets, registers etc
Digital	Swindon Museum	Database, digital photos etc
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2012 <i>St Andrew's Church, Blunsdon St Andrew, Wiltshire: Archaeological Watching Brief</i> . CA typescript report 12359		



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PROJECT TITLE

St Andrew's Church, Blunsdon St Andrew Swindon

FIGURE TITLE

Site location plan



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PROJECT NO. 4057 DATE 27-11-2012
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 APPROVED BY PJM SCALE@A4 1:25,000

FIGURE NO.

1

1362



T1

modern disturbance
104

St Andrew's
Church

8970

SU

-  water pipe trench
-  footpath



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PROJECT TITLE
 St Andrew's Church, Blunsdon St Andrew Swindon

FIGURE TITLE
 The site showing the location of groundworks



PROJECT NO.	4057	DATE	27-11-2012	FIGURE NO.
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APPROVED BY	PJM	SCALE@A4	1:100	

P:\4057 St Andrew's Church Lady Lane Tadpole Lane Blunsdon St Andrew Wilts Wiltshire\Illustration\Drafts\4057 St Andrew's Church Blunsdon St Andy Fig 2.dwg



3

3 View of the excavated trench, looking south



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PROJECT TITLE

St Andrew's Church, Blunsdon St Andrew Swindon

FIGURE TITLE

Photograph

PROJECT NO. 4057 DATE 27-11-2012
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FIGURE NO.

3