

ST KATHERINE'S CHURCH, HOLT, WILTSHIRE:

Results of an archaeological watching brief

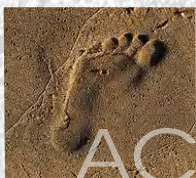
NGR ST86066161

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Document No: ACW1219/1/0

Date: September 2019



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Results of an Archaeological Watching Brief

Introduction

This report describes the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken August 20th during the installation of new a drain along the north side of St Katherine's Church, Holt, Wiltshire. The works comprised the mechanical excavation of a 0.2m wide east-west trench for a distance of 11m adjacent to the north wall of the nave and two short north-south trenches to connect with existing drains. The east-west trench was 0.3m deep at the west end and 0.45m at the east. Following removal of the turf (Plate 1) the excavation of the trench was monitored by the archaeologist in attendance.

Background

The church of St Katherine was originally a chapel within the large medieval parish of Bradford on Avon and is first mentioned in the early twelfth century. Apart from a twelfth century font, the earliest surviving church fabric is the fifteenth century tower. In 1846 Holt became a separate ecclesiastical parish linked as a united benefice with Broughton Gifford and Great Chalfield. Apart from the tower the church was completely rebuilt in 1889 by the Marlborough architect Charles Ponting. The churchyard ceased to be used for burials in 1894.

Results

Following the removal of turf and topsoil the subsoil, comprising orange/brown clay, was removed to the required depths (Plate 2). The clay contained fragments of limestone, brick and breeze block indicating prior disturbance and episodes of re-deposition. Excavation of a new pipe junction against the north wall of the nave exposed the foundations of the 1889 rebuild (Plate 3).

A single discrete group of poorly preserved dis-articulated human remains comprising a skull (lacking the mandible) with a fragmentary femur and ribs placed above it was exposed. These were carefully removed, stored, and re-interred prior to the installation of the plastic drain-pipe. The fragmentary nature of the deposit indicates that the human remains had been subject to prior disturbance, possibly during the rebuilding of the church in 1889 or later. No features or artefacts of archaeological significance were noted or recovered.



Plate 1. View to the east following removal of the turf



Plate 2. View to the west following excavation of the trench



Plate 3. Exposed footings of the 1889 rebuild of the north wall of the nave. View from the north-west

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