

ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
MONITORING  
OF WINDOW SAMPLING  
AT  
ST MARY'S CHURCH,  
DOVERDALE, WORCESTERSHIRE

Graham Arnold

Illustrated by Carolyn Hunt  
Revision 1

19 June 2012

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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Project P3872  
Report 1922  
WSM 46473



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## Archaeological monitoring of window sampling at St Mary's Church, Doverdale, Worcestershire

**Graham Arnold**

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### Background information

<i>Client</i>	John Robinson, Archaeological Consultant, WSP Environment & Energy
<i>Site address</i>	St. Mary's Church, Doverdale, Worcestershire
<i>National Grid reference</i>	S0 38601 26602
<i>Historic Environment reference</i>	WSM 46473
<i>Planning authority</i>	Wychavon District Council
<i>Brief</i>	N/A
<i>Project design</i>	WAAS 2012
<i>Project parameters</i>	IfA 2008

Remedial works are being carried out at St Mary's Church, Doverdale to combat subsidence on the southeast wall (see plates 2 & 3). As part of these works four window samples were excavated within the churchyard, to test the underlying reason for the subsidence. At the request of the client an archaeological watching brief was carried out on these works and this report presents the results of that exercise.

An archaeological licence for the removal of human bone was obtained from the Ministry of Justice.

The window samples were hand dug to a depth of 1.2m to test for services and to ensure that burials were not being disturbed. Fragments of human bone were left in situ or re-interred in the same location when each window sample was backfilled.

### Archaeological background

St. Mary's Church (WSM04762) was probably founded in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century with fabric in the nave surviving from this date. The nave has renewed 17<sup>th</sup> Century windows and panelling and the rest of the building is almost entirely dated to 1858-9 including the chancel, a western timber turret and leaded brooch spiralet (Brooks & Pevsner 2007 pp 260). The buried remains of a moated site (WSM08061) lie immediately to the west of the church. The moat was scheduled in 1999 (SAM31952) but associated medieval settlement remains (WSM08062) were considered too degraded to be included in the schedule.

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### Aims

The aim of the archaeological monitoring was to:

- prevent disturbance and advise of locations clear of archaeological features including human remains
- to record archaeological deposits, where exposed and to determine their extent, state of preservation, date and type, as far as reasonably possible.

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### Methods

General specification for fieldwork	HEAS 2012, IfA 2008
Sources consulted	Brooks & Pevsner 2007
Date of fieldwork	25/05/2012
Area of site	c 2067m <sup>2</sup>
Sampling	area sampled c 1.2m <sup>2</sup> . Indicated on Fig 2
Dimensions of excavated areas observed:	Window sample 1 diameter 0.30m

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depth 3.70m

Window sample 2

diameter 0.30m

depth 3.90m

Window sample 3

diameter 0.30m

depth 4.00m

Window sample 4

diameter 0.30m

depth 3.20m

*Access to or visibility of deposits*

Observation was carried out both on hand excavation to a depth of 1.20m and further window sampling to a depth of over 3m. The window sample cores were removed one metre at a time and examined for archaeological evidence. The drilled window samples cores were sufficiently clean to observe well-differentiated archaeological or geological deposits. The window samples were backfilled as soon as a maximum depth was reached in stratigraphic order. The turf was then replaced and tamped down.

*Statement of confidence*

Access to, and visibility of, deposits allowed a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved.

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**Deposit description**

**Window Sample 1**

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Topsoil	Dark brown friable clayey silt with occasional small sub-rounded stones and roots, covered by turf	0.00m – 0.25m
101	Mixed subsoil and redeposited natural	Moderately compact reddish brown cohesive silty clay with frequent rounded gravels and occasional small fragments (1-5mm) of disarticulated human bone	0.25m – 1.00m
102	Natural	Gravelly red cohesive sandy clay with frequent large rounded river gravels and patches of blue grey silts	1.00m – 2.20m
103	Natural	Cohesive red clay and degraded Mercian mudstone geology	2.20m – 3.70m

**Window Sample 2**

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
200	Topsoil	Dark brown friable clayey silt with occasional small sub-rounded stones and roots, covered by turf	0.00m – 0.10m
201	Subsoil	Moderately compact mid reddish brown cohesive silty clay with frequent tree roots and moderate rounded gravels	0.10m – 0.50m
202	Natural	Compact mid reddish brown cohesive silty clay with frequent large rounded gravels	0.50m - 1.20m
203	Natural	Gravelly dark reddish brown clay with frequent large rounded gravels	1.20m – 2.70m
204	Natural	Blue grey silty marl	2.70m – 3.00m
205	Natural	Cohesive firm dark red clay and degraded Mercian mudstone geology	3.00m – 3.90m

**Window Sample 3**

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
300	Topsoil	Dark brown friable clayey silt with occasional small sub-rounded stones and roots, covered by turf	0.00m – 0.10m
301	Subsoil Redeposited natural	Moderately compact mid reddish brown cohesive silty clay with frequent tree roots and small roots at 0.40 -0.50m below ground level and moderate rounded gravels	0.10m – 0.50m
302	Natural	Compact mid reddish brown cohesive silty clay with frequent large rounded gravels	0.50m – 1.20m
303	Natural	Cohesive firm dark red clay and degraded Mercian mudstone geology	1.20m – 1.75m 1.80m – 2.85m 3.00m – 4.00m
304	tree root	Organic wood deposit	1.75m – 1.80m
305	Natural	Blue grey silt marl deposit within degraded Mercian mudstone	2.85m – 3.00m

### Window Sample 4

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
400	Topsoil	Dark brown friable clayey silt with occasional small sub-rounded stones and roots, covered by turf	0.00m – 0.10m
401	Subsoil	Moderately compact reddish brown cohesive silty clay with frequent rounded gravels and occasional small fragments (1-5mm) of disarticulated human bone	0.10m – 0.50m
402	Natural	Gravelly red cohesive sandy clay with frequent large rounded river gravels and patches of blue grey silts	0.50m – 1.20m
403	Natural	Cohesive firm dark red clay and degraded Mercian mudstone geology	1.20m – 2.00m
404	Natural	Blue grey silt marl mottling within degraded Mercian mudstone	2.00m – 2.50m
405	Natural	Cohesive firm dark red clay and degraded Mercian mudstone geology	2.50m – 3.20m

### Discussion

No archaeologically significant deposits were encountered during the works. Small fragments of disarticulated human bone within window sample 1 (plate 5) were carefully replaced when the window sample was backfilled. No human bone was recovered from any of the other window samples. Within Window Sample 3 a wood deposit (304) was found at between 1.75m – 1.85m (see plates 12 & 13). This was part of a root from one of the silver birch trees that were close by (Alan Clapham pers.com). Only natural soils and geology were present consisting of clay marl with blue grey silt mottling and degraded Mercian mudstone.

### Conclusions

Apart from disarticulated fragments of human bone, no archaeologically significant deposits were encountered during the works.

### Publication summary

The Service has a professional obligation to publish the results of archaeological projects within a reasonable period of time. To this end, the Service intends to use this summary as the basis for publication through local or regional journals. The client is requested to consider the content of this section as being acceptable for such publication.

*Remedial works are being carried out at St Mary's Church, Doverdale to combat subsidence on the southeast wall. As part of these works preliminary testing by window sample was undertaken in the churchyard around the eastern end of the church. At the request of John Robinson, Archaeological Consultant, WSP Environment & Energy these works were subject to an archaeological watching brief (HER ref WSM 46473). Four window samples were excavated. Apart from fragments of disarticulated human bone, which were replaced, no significant archaeological finds, features or deposits were observed. No graves were disturbed due to the locations chosen for testing.*

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### Acknowledgements

The Service would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Lucy Keegans-Wood and John Robinson, WSP Environment & Energy, Rekha Gohil, Ministry of Justice and Mike Glyde, Worcestershire County Council.

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### Bibliography

Brooks, A & Pevsner, N 2007 *The Buildings of England: Worcestershire*, Yale University Press

HEAS 2008 *Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire*, Historic Environment and Archaeology Service, Worcestershire County Council, unpublished document dated November 2008

HEAS 2012 *Manual of Service Practice: recording manual*, Worcestershire Archaeology, Worcestershire County Council, unpublished report, **1842**

WAAS 2012 *Proposal for an archaeological watching brief at Doverdale Church, Doverdale, Worcestershire*, Worcestershire Archaeology, Worcestershire County Council, unpublished document dated 22 May 2012, **P3872**

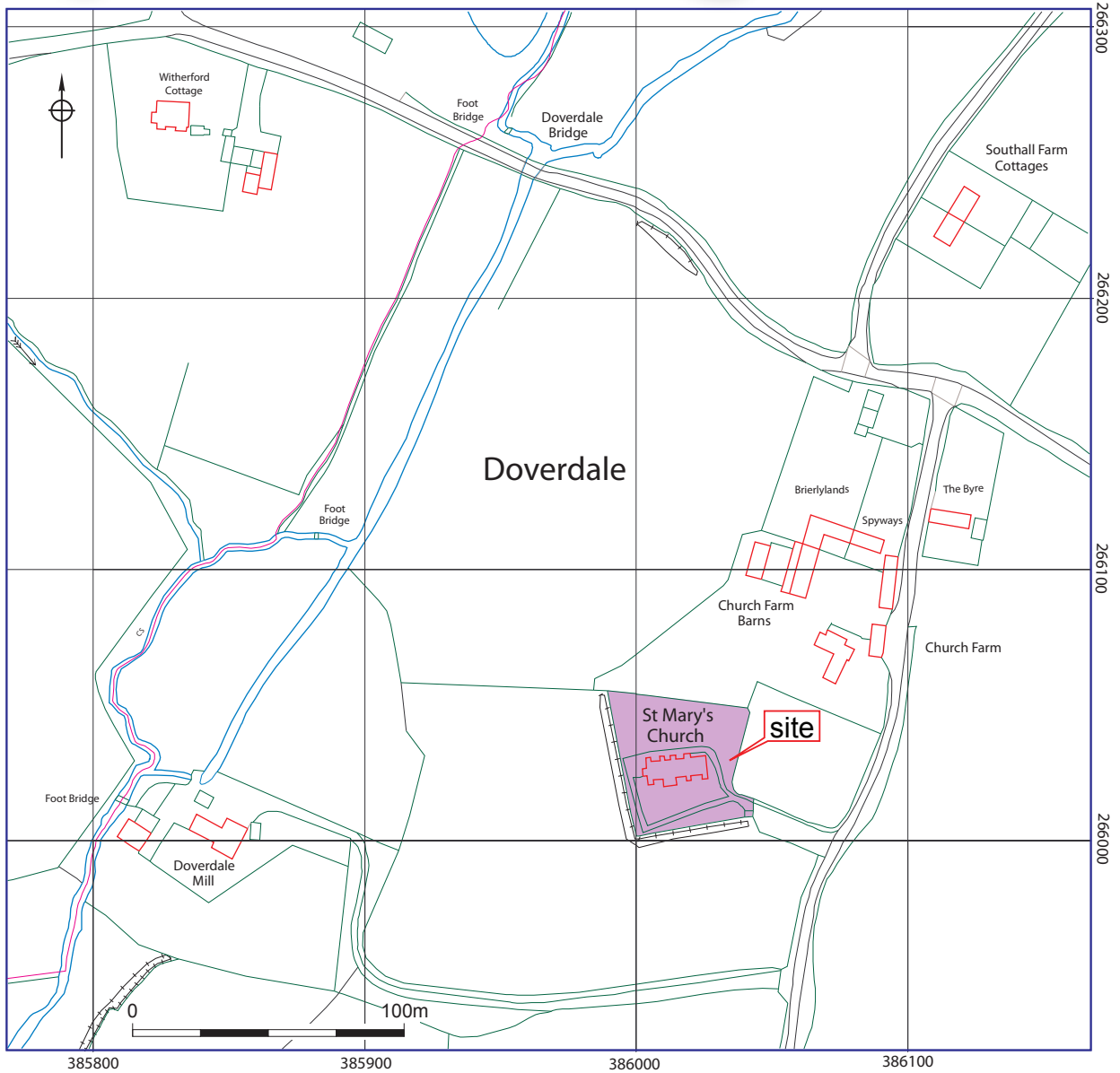
IfA 2008 *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief*, Institute for Archaeologists

Ministry of Justice, 2012 *Licence for the removal of human remains*, Licence number 12-0074, File Number OPR/072/88 dated 28<sup>th</sup> May 2012

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## Figures

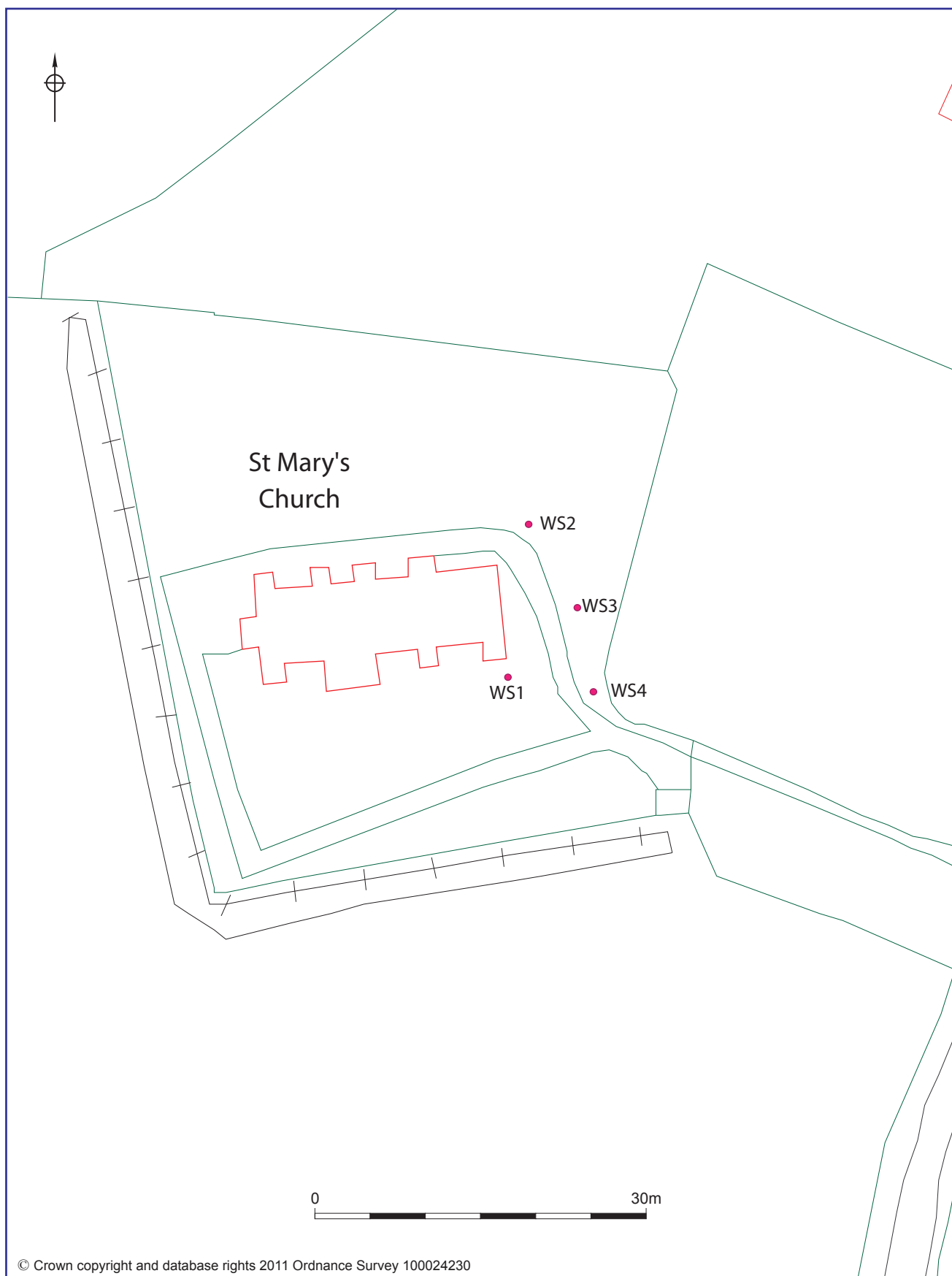




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### Location of the site

Figure 1

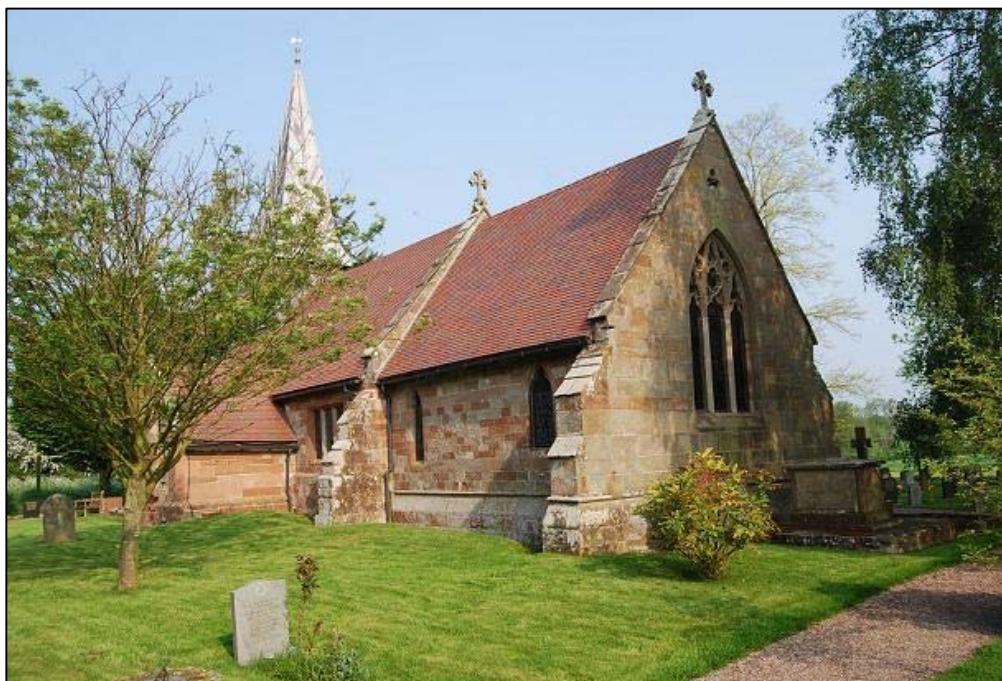


*Location of window samples*

*Figure 2*

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## Plates

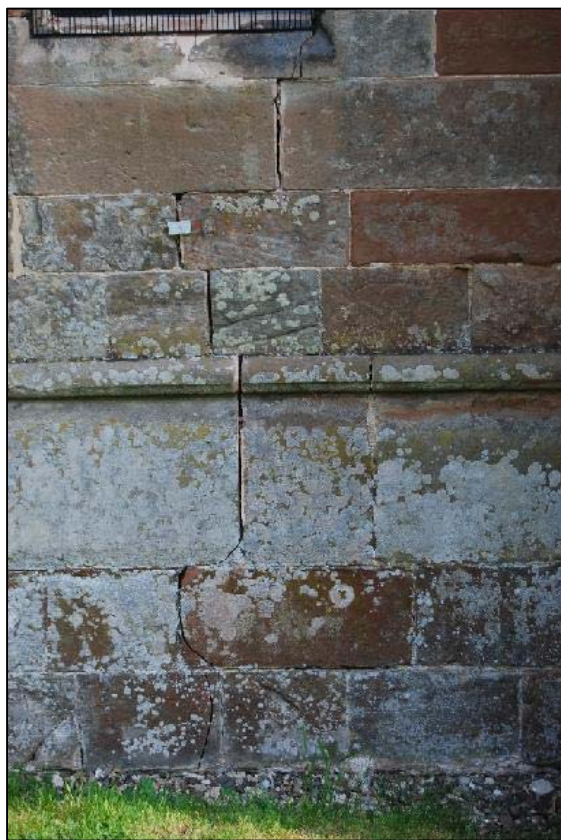


*Plate 1 St Mary's Church looking Northwest*



*Plate 2 Cracks in the southeast wall due to subsidence*





*Plate 3 Base of southeast wall showing cracking and measuring implement*



*Plate 4 Location of window sample 1 being hand excavated*





*Plate 5 Fragments of human bone from (101) put to one side and reburied in situ.*



*Plate 6 Drilling rig taking cores from Window Sample 1, looking north*





*Plate 7 Location of Window Sample 2 drilling rig starting after hand excavation to 1.20m*



*Plate 8 Drilling rig at Window Sample 3 close to silver birch trees.*





*Plate 9 Location of Window Sample 4*



*Plate 10 Core showing natural clay and degraded mudstone from Window Sample 1*





*Plate 11 The cores from Window Sample 2 showing natural stratigraphy*



*Plate 12 Tree root within Window Sample 3 core*





*Plate 13 Wood deposit taken as sample identified as tree root of silver birch*

## **Appendix 1 Technical information**

### **The archive (site code: WSM 46473)**

The archive consists of:

1	Field progress reports AS2
1	Photographic records AS3
29	Digital photographs
1	Drawing number catalogues AS4
1	Scale drawings
4	Trench record sheets AS41
1	Computer disk
1	Copy of this report (bound hard copy)

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

Worcestershire County Museum  
Museums Worcestershire  
Hartlebury Castle  
Hartlebury  
Near Kidderminster  
Worcestershire DY11 7XZ  
Tel Hartlebury (01299) 250416