



**WATCHING BRIEF ON THE REMOVAL OF STONE FLAGS FROM
TOWER AND NAVE FLOORS AT ST JOHN'S CHURCH, KINGSCOTE**

October 2022

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Status of report: Final

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Revised and issued:	Dr George Nash	(28/10/2022)

Cover imager: View of the church, looking north

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Dr George Nash was commissioned by Arnold Bartosch Ltd. (Contact: Harvey Faulkner-Aston) on behalf of the PCC of St John the Baptist Parish Church, Kingscote, Gloucestershire (NGR: ST 81844 96217) to undertake an archaeological watching brief on a proposed floor consolidation scheme within the tower ground floor and the eastern section of the nave. The scheme included the removal of six [floor] flagstones and the excavation of subbase deposits beneath each stone to a depth of no more than 10 cm below the existing floor level.

St John the Baptist Church has been designated a Grade II* Listed Building and as such¹: *The Ecclesiastical Exemption (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) England Order 2010 makes it clear that the expression extends to church buildings, their contents and anything fixed thereto as well as to anything situated within the curtilage of a church building (which includes the churchyard - i.e., the curtilage of the church).*

The village of Kingscote stands within south Gloucestershire. The church is within the Gloucester Diocese. This fieldwork is in response to a condition requested by the DAC archaeologist. Detailed specifications concerning the scheme was included in *The Church of St John the Baptist: Proposed work to the Nave and Tower West. Pre-Contract Meeting Notes 13th June 2022*, issued by Arnold Bartosch.



Figure 1. Location of the church and village

Dr Nash is a full Member of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA). Dr Nash's work is undertaken to the highest professional standards. This document has been prepared with reference to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologist's *Standard and Guidance for Watching Briefs 2014* (Updated June 2020).

¹ See Appendix 1

2.0 LOCATION

The Parish Church of St John the Baptist is a Grade II* listed building and located within the southern [central] part of the village of Kingscote, standing around 203m AOD (at NGR ST 81844 96217). The principal approach to the church is from the north, via Windmill Lane. The main section of the churchyard is to the NW and south. The church stands within the historic core of the village. The church and village are within the Kingscote Conservation Area (designated June 3rd 1980 [reviewed 23rd May 1990]).

3.0 HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE FLOOR

The village of Kingscote has its origins in the medieval period, if not earlier (Parker 1979). The age of the church is unknown, but it is probably of Norman origin. The church and its churchyard are located south of Windmill Lane which is the main east-west thoroughfare through the village (**Figure 1**). Based on the historic mapping, the church has undergone a number of significant changes, especially over the past 170 years (**Figure 2**). The church was fully restored in 1851 by the architect S.S. Teulon, resulting in much of the interior medieval fabric being removed and replaced with a pastiche of 19th-century Gothic Revival fixtures and fittings. The original floor of the nave and tower (based on archaeological observations) has been replaced with a light creamy-yellow dry sandy substrate. Overlying the substrate is a tightly bonded flagstone floor.

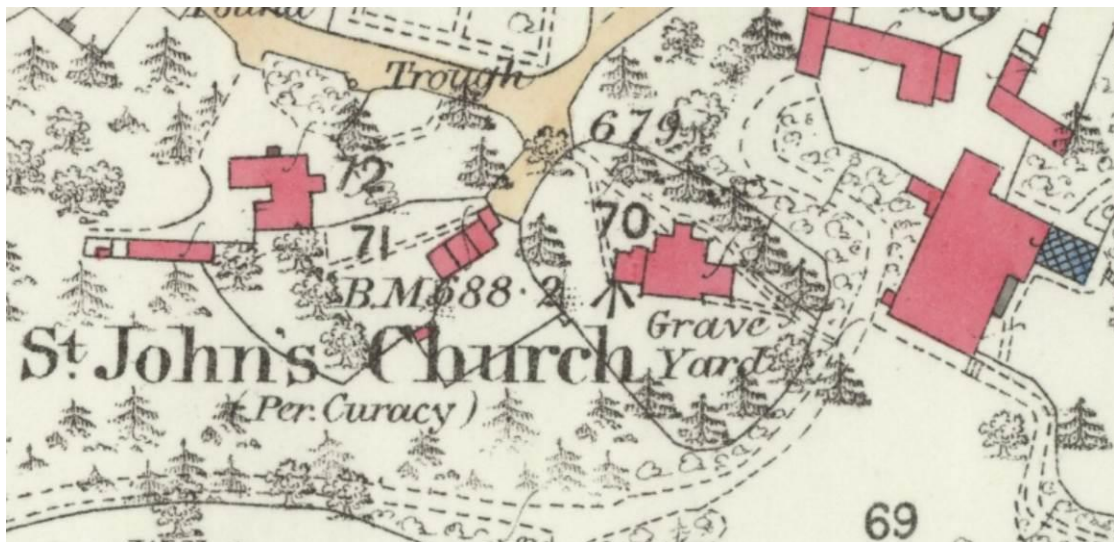


Figure 2. OS map of 1882 showing the church and churchyard

In 1849 and just prior to the S.S. Teulon restoration, workmen uncovered a large stone coffin. This structure, with its base upturned, was allegedly three inches below the surface of the nave floor (Parker 1979). *Beneath the stone coffin was an intact skeleton that was 'scarcely at all decomposed though somewhat disarranged by the overthrowing of the coffin at some earlier time. From the dimensions of the bones and skull, the teeth of which 32 in number were of the most beautiful and perfect character (ibid. 1979. 2)...and from the size of the coffin which measured internally only 5 feet 6 inches, it was considered that the remains were those of a full-grown but young woman. There was no top to the coffin and nothing to indicate the name of the occupant or the date of the interment, but it seems to be probable that only a person of distinction would have been buried there and particularly in a stone coffin – a custom that prevailed in this country for only a short period. The incumbent at the time [of excavation], the Reverend Alan Gardner Cornwall MA*

considered that the remains must have been those of Aldeva (Ealdgifu) who married Nigel Fitz Arthur, a Saxon of Coombe and the founder of the family of Kingscote. The remains were carefully collected and replaced and the coffin was re-interred about two feet below the surface in the aisle with a new masonry top fitted (ibid. 1979, 3).

It is more than probable that much of the floor spaces in the nave and neighbouring tower were disturbed during the 1851 restoration. Removed from the pre-1851 floor was a deposit representing the medieval subbase floor and replaced with a fine sandy screed substrate that currently supports the stone flag floor.

4.0 PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORK

As far as the author of this report is aware (and based on online information) there has been no archaeological events recorded within the church or the curtilage of the churchyard. However, it should be noted that the watching brief did expose evidence of relatively recent subbase material, the result of the 1851 restoration programme.

4.1 Timetable for archaeological work

The watching brief was undertaken on the 10th October 2022 and was completed that day.

5.0 FIELDWORK METHODOLOGY

The archaeological watching brief was concerned with the removal and limited excavation of the substrate that lay immediately beneath each stone flag. A total of nine stones were lifted from three sections of the floor (two areas in the western section of the nave, and one section within the floor of the tower) (**Figure 3**). Throughout the process of removal and excavation, guidance set within the ClfA's *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (June 2020) was strictly adhered to.

The aims of the Watching Brief were:

To assess the archaeological resource in a proportionate way, and to understand the nature, character and preservation of any surviving archaeological remains that may be present within the proposed development area. The watching brief and subsequent report/publication should lead to a revised understanding of the archaeological significance of the site and result in the deposition of a suitable archaeological archive.

Where applicable, the watching brief will also determine the relationship of any above-ground structures (i.e., the stone floor) to potential surviving archaeological deposits below ground. Where such a relationship is demonstrable, the watching brief will encompass the character, condition, significance and quality of the above ground remains on the same basis as those below.



REVISIONS

SCHEDULE OF WORKS (Specification Extract Sections 3.04, 05)

3.04 MAINTENANCE AND REPAIRS (General)

Allow for providing to the contractor a schedule of work to be completed by the contractor. The contractor shall be responsible for providing to the contractor a schedule of work to be completed by the contractor. The contractor shall be responsible for providing to the contractor a schedule of work to be completed by the contractor.

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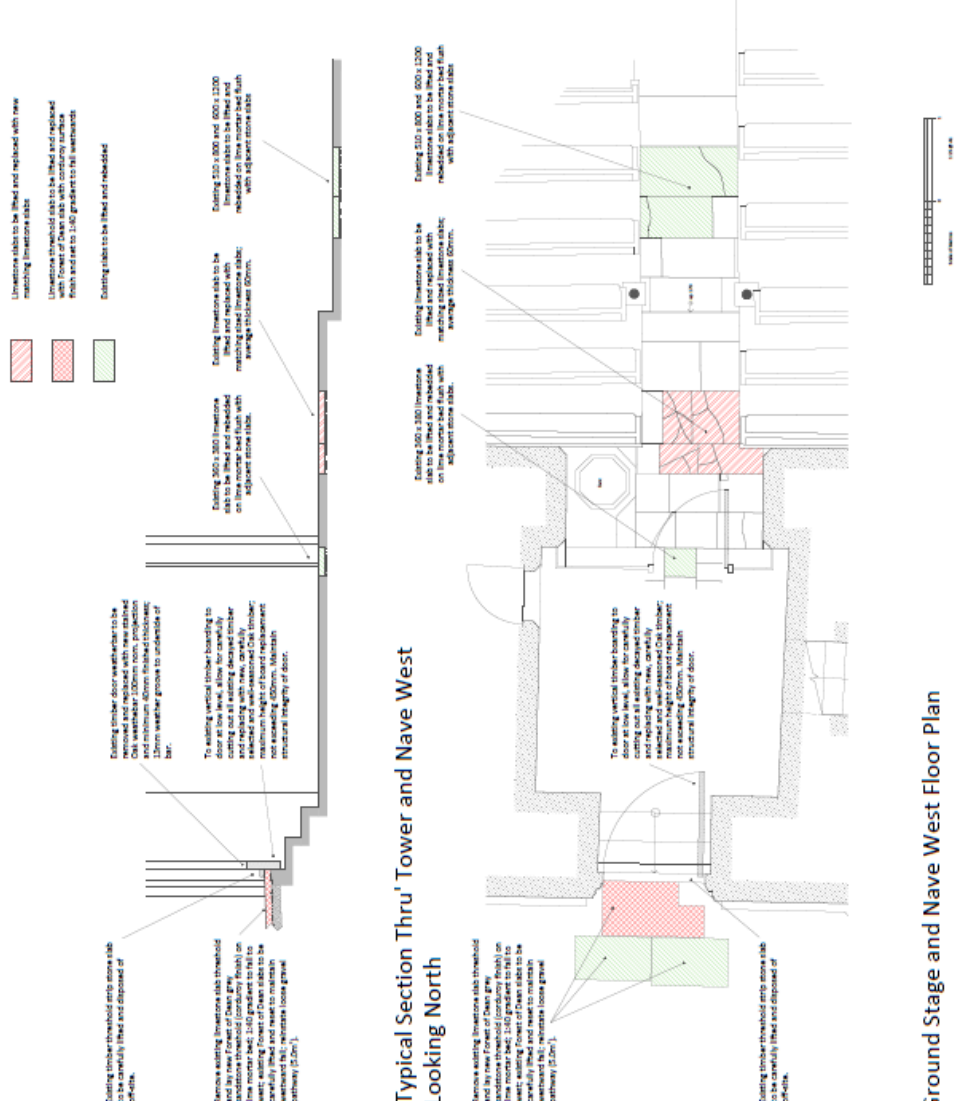
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Typical Section Thru' Tower and Nave West Looking North

Ground Stage and Nave West Floor Plan

WEST TOWER AND NAVE WEST FLOOR : PROPOSED DETAILS
ST JOHN'S CHURCH, KINGSCOTE, GLOUCESTER DIOCESE

To be read in conjunction with Arnold Bartosch Ltd's Spec. No. 2534/NOVEMBER/FLOOR/2021 and associated drawings

ARNOLD BARTOSCH LTD
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Job: St John's Church, Kingscote, Gloucester Diocese
Client: PCC
Drawing: West Tower and Nave West Floor Details
As Proposed
Scale: 1:20 @ A1
Date: November 2021

2534_05

5.1 The west door threshold within the Tower

A large limestone block occupies the threshold immediately west of the west door of the tower (**Plates 2 & 3**). The stone measures c. 1.2 x 0.85m and is split into two pieces. The eastern end of the stone has been cut to run flush with the door jamb and is over a course of red brick, probably installed during or after the 1851 restoration (**Plate 3**). The stone originates locally and is made from an oolitic limestone. Beneath the stone is a single course of brickwork, which itself sits on a screed deposit. No significant archaeological deposits, features, structures or artifacts were recorded.

5.2 The Church Tower Floor

Within the tower floor, just one flagstone was removed (**Plates 4 & 5**) Trench 1. The flagstone measured 0.47 x 0.38m and was excavated to a depth of c. 0.10m below the existing floor level. Exposed beneath the flagstone was a loosely compacted dry sandy substrate which extended to the base of the trench, c. 0.10 m below the existing floor level. No significant archaeological deposits, features, structures or artifacts were recorded.

5.3 The Nave Floor

Within the nave floor and extending to where the nave and tower floors converge, six flagstones was removed (**Plates 6 & 7**) Trench 2. The trench area measured 1.05 x 1.08 m and was excavated to a depth of c. 0.10m below the existing floor level. A section of the trench on its southern flank extended underneath a floor that supports the pews. Exposed beneath the flagstone floor was a loosely compacted dry sandy substrate which extended to the base of the trench, c. 0.10 m below the existing floor level. No significant archaeological deposits, features, structures or artifacts were recorded.

To the east of Trench 2, along the aisle was a small trench that measured 0.50 x 0.45m (**Plates 8 & 9**) – Trench 3. A section of this trench extended underneath the pews on its southern flank. Exposed beneath the flagstone was a loosely compacted dry sandy substrate which extended to the base of the trench, c. 0.10 m below the existing floor level. No significant archaeological deposits, features, structures or artifacts were recorded.

6.0 DISCUSSION

The parish church of St John the Baptist in the village of Kingscote constitutes a significant cultural heritage asset, designated a Grade II* Listed Building (LB 130418). The church also stands within the Kingscote Conservation Area.

It is known that much of the interior of the church was completely renovated in 1851 by the architect S.S. Teulon. The renovation included the removal of the medieval floor (and its subbase material) and was replaced with a homogenous dry sandy subbase substrate on which a flagstone floor was laid. The flagstones were bonded using a lime mortar mix. The depth of the subbase is unknown. However, the excavation in each of the areas (tower and nave) did not exceed 10cm below the existing floor level.

The limestone threshold stone lying immediately west of the west door of the tower did not reveal any archaeological deposits, features, structures, or artefacts (**Plates 2 and 3**).

As a result of the watching brief, no significant archaeological deposits, features, structures, or artifacts were uncovered. The excavation underneath each flagstone extended no further

than 0.10m below the existing floor level. The subbase material (substrate) comprised of dry yellow to brown sandy soil was continuous to the base of each trench. This subbase material probably dates to the 1851 restoration when much of the original medieval fabric (including the internal floor space) was completely removed.

7.0 REFERENCES CONSULTED

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA), December 2014 [updated June 2020]. *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*.

Friar, S. 1996. *A Companion to the English Parish Church*. Frome: Bramley Books.

Historic England 2015. *Management of Research Projects for the Historic Environment*. London, Historic England.

Mytum, H., 2000. *Recording and Analysing Graveyards*. CBA, Practical Handbook Series 15.

Parker, N., 1979. *The Church of Saint John at Kingscote: A brief history and description*. Kingscote Press.

PLATES



Plate 1. General view of the church and churchyard, looking SE



Plate 2. The threshold of the west door leading into the tower



Plate 3. The threshold stone, looking westwards into the churchyard



Plate 4. Trench 1. Exposed subbase material within the tower floor, following removal of flagstone



Plate 5. Trench 1. Excavated subbase material within tower floor to desired depth, looking north



Plate 6. Trench 2 (western Nave) Exposed subbase material within the Nave floor



Plate 7. Trench 2. (Western Nave area) Excavated subbase to the desired depth, looking east



Plate 8. Trench 3 (central Nave). Small trench revealing the subbase material
Plate 9. Trench 3 (central Nave). Excavated subbase material to the desired depth

Appendix 1:

Listing description for the Church of St John the Baptist

Coordinates:

OS Eastings: 381844

OS Northings: 196217

Entry Name: Church of St John the Baptist

Listing Date: 6 September 1954

Grade: II*

Source ID: 1089708

English Heritage Legacy ID: 130418

Civil Parish: Kingscote

KINGSCOTE KINGSCOTE VILLAGE

12/103 Church of St. John the Baptist

GV II*

Anglican parish church. Early English origin, with tower of Perpendicular period, completely restored 1851 by S.S. Teulon. Random coursed stone with coursed stone transept of C19 and ashlar west tower, stone slate roof with chamfered stone eaves to nave and chancel and coped gable ends with saddle stones and cross finials. West tower, nave with north porch and transept, chancel with north vestry. Tower of 3 stages with a plinth and stringcourses, stepped angle buttresses up to the second stage, square stair vice on the north side, embattled parapet with a turret to the stair vice, ogee-headed perforated belfry lights to the top stage. West face has 2-light pointed arch window over the segmental pointed arch with square hoodmould. Plain gabled north porch, blind arcading to the parapet of the transept and lower vestry, with crocketed corner pinnacles to shallow gable of the transept. C19 two-light windows to nave and 3-light to east with research. INTERIOR retains plain double chamfered chancel and tower arches and north doorway. C19 rafter roof with cross-braced principals, and a west gallery with blind arcading, and C19 fittings. Chancel screen is inscribed "Anthony Kingscote 1615", and chancel has many fine wall monuments to the Kingscote family.

SOURCE: Verey, D., 1979. *Buildings of England: Gloucestershire - the Cotswolds*

Listing NGR: ST 81844 96217