

Archaeological Observation



**Church of St Michael and All Angels
Eaton Bishop
Herefordshire**

On behalf of

Eaton Bishop Parochial Church Council

September 2024

GENERAL ENQUIRIES

e: info@borderarchaeology.com **t:** 01568 610101 **w:** borderarchaeology.com

Administration

The Plaza, Owen Way, Leominster Enterprise Park, Leominster, HR6 0LA

Post-Ex Facility – Leominster

t: 01568 610101
e: postex@borderarchaeology.com

Post-Ex Facility – Milton Keynes

t: 01908 533233
e: postexmk@borderarchaeology.com

REGIONAL OFFICES

Milton Keynes

Unit 4, Twizel Close
Stonebridge
Milton Keynes
MK13 0DX

t: 01908 533233

Leeds

No 1 Leeds
26 Whitehall Road
Leeds
LS12 1BE

t: 0113 8187959

London

4-4a Bloomsbury Square
London
WC1A 2RP

t: 0203 301 5670

Newport

Merlin House
No1 Langstone Business Park
Newport
NP18 2HJ

t: 01633 415339

Bristol

First Floor,
Citibase Bristol Aztec West
Aztec Centre, Aztec West
Almondsbury
Bristol
BS32 4TD

t: 0117 9110767

Winchester

Basepoint Business Centre
Winnall Valley Road
Winchester
SO23 0LD

t: 01962 832777



COMPILATION

Katherine Crooks BA

FINAL EDIT & APPROVAL

George Children MA MCIfA

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1 Introduction

Following initial work in May 2024, Border Archaeology was instructed by Mark Newall Director BCHN Architects to undertake the Archaeological Observation of a second phase of engineering groundworks work carried out at the Church of St Michael and All Angels Eaton Bishop Herefordshire by Reynolds Conservation Ltd.

The groundworks involved the completion of a drain run and preparation for connection with the main in the road to the S of the Church and were completed within the day on the 27th August 2024.

This report details the results for submission to BCHN Architects and the Diocese of Hereford.

2 Site Description

The Church of St Michal and All Angels is a Grade I Listed Building (List Entry Number: 1099705) situated at an elevation of 93.5m AOD c.1km to the SW of the River Wye.

The Church was listed on the 26th of January 1967; the following extract is taken from the listing description:

Parish church. C11, C12, C13 and C14 with restorations in 1885 and 1927. Roughly coursed sandstone rubble and sandstone dressings. Tile and shingle roofs. West tower, four-bay nave with north and south aisles and south porch. Two-bay chancel.

Tower is C11 and C12 and was restored in 1927. Three stages and battered plinth. Shingled broach spire with gabled dormer to each face. Ground stage has one low-set round-headed chamfered light set roughly centrally in west and south faces. Similar, but off-centre, light in north face. Above each of the small lights in south and west faces is another larger round-headed window. Second stage has one of the last larger type of round-headed windows to north, south and west faces. Top stage has twin round-headed openings to each face. Each opening is divided by a shaft with cushion capital. North-east and south-east corners of tower are slightly recessed behind main line of north and south walls. North aisle has chamfered lancet in the west wall. North wall has two lancets, one to either side of north doorway which has a flat 2-centred head. To the left side between two buttresses is a 3-light window with a label and trefoil-headed lights set beneath a gable with a cross. C19 stack with octagonal shaft to centre. East end of aisle has scars of lower, earlier and steeper chancel roof. Nave has three recessed clerestory lancets to north and south. Eastern verge with gable cross below which is small gable light with 2-centred head and large window of five stepped trefoil-headed lights under a 2-centred arch with label. Chancel has a pair of traceried 2-light windows each with 2-centred head and label to north and south sides. Each light is trefoil-headed and the earlier window on the south side has a higher cill than the others. Above the windows is a moulded cornice. The east window has a wide 2-centred head with label and five restored lights all with trefoiled heads. Diagonal eastern corner buttresses are capped by pinnacles with crocket and dog-tooth ornament. South aisle has one lancet to east and west ends. South side has a 2-light window, similar to those of south wall of chancel, beneath a gable on the right-hand side. It is flanked by two weathered buttresses. One lancet to each side of late C19 or early C20 south

porch which has two bays and trusses carried on curved angle braces, the collars of which carry V-struts. Chamfered south doorway with 2-centred head.

2.1 Soils & Geology

The bedrock geology is recorded as interbedded siltstone and mudstone of the Raglan Mudstone Formation formed between 423.6 and 419.2 million years ago during the Silurian period. The overlying superficial deposits in the churchyard are composed of Devensian glacial sand and gravel deposits formed between 116,000 and 11,800 years ago during the Quaternary period (British Geological Society 2024).

3 Aims

- To locate and record any human remains or burial features encountered within the groundworks area and to confirm that no impact on any such remains or features occurred without the implementation of this programme of archaeological work.

4 Methodology

Archaeological Observation was carried out according to the *Standard for archaeological monitoring and recording* (ClfA 2023a), *Universal guidance for archaeological monitoring and recording* (ClfA 2023b) and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (ClfA 2020). BA adheres to the *ClfA Code of conduct: professional ethics in archaeology* (2022) and is cognisant of project management advice set out in *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The Project Managers' Guide* (Lee 2015), *Guidance for Best Practice for the Treatment of Human Remains Excavated from Christian Burial Grounds in England* (Mays 2017) and *Updated Guidelines to the Standards for Recording Human Remains* (Mitchell & Brickley 2017).

5 Results

The pit for the connection, adjacent to the churchyard wall measured 1.80m E/W and c. 1m wide. It was excavated to a depth of 1.38mbgl (*Plate 1*).

A single deposit was present throughout, a red-brown silt clay with frequent rounded and subrounded stones, none of which showed evidence for having been worked. Pottery dating to the late 18th to 19th century and bottle glass were recovered from this deposit, together with scraps of brick. Very occasional fragments of disarticulated human bone were also present. These were retained for reburial during backfilling upon completion of works. Despite some evidence for human remains, no grave cuts were seen.

The trench to connect the pit to the existing service run measured 0.60m wide and was excavated to a depth of 0.60mbgl. It was aligned NE/SW and measured 4.60m in length (*Plate 2*). No finds or features of archaeological

significance were present and no human remains were encountered, possibly a result of the shallow depth of the excavation.



Plate 1: Pit adjacent to churchyard wall: view S



Plate 2: Trench connecting pit to the existing drain run: view NE

Further work involved re-excavation of the existing drain a distance of c. 9m. The trench was aligned N/S and was 0.60m wide. Upon excavation it became apparent that the pipe, encountered at a depth of about 0.45mbgl overlay water and gas services. The only finds present in the trench were the remains of salt-glazed drainpipe, suggesting the presence of previous drains or services.



Plate 3: Route of existing drain: view S

6 Conclusion

The depth of 0.45-0.60mbgl attained by the service trenches may have been too shallow to reach any burials that may have been present. The existing drain run appeared to have been in use for some time, with fragments of broken salt-glazed pipe present in the backfill.

Although the pit, at 1.38mbgl deep, encountered some disarticulated remains and lay close to a number of headstones (*Plate 1*), the presence of post-medieval glass and late 18th or 19th century pottery suggested that the area had been disturbed. This may have been associated with maintenance of the wall. Additionally, the position at the limit of the burial ground may have meant that burial was less intense than in positions closer to the church.

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