

July 2026

Feeling drained

When the lime mortar repointing was being done in the Undercroft, a rising damp issue was identified, where roots were carrying moisture into the base of the walls, which have no damp course. We always suspected there might be a damp problem, but it was only on inspection after cement mortar removal that the full extent became apparent. The north, west and south walls all showed persistent dampness up to 1 metre. A field drain was then dug along the north and west walls. This is a trench over 1m deep, filled with gravel and a drainage pipe along its length. This work has now been completed and should address the problem. The Bank project have been asked to address drainage adjoining the Library's south wall.



Find during excavation of the trench



We have identified this as a good quality earthenware shard, probably Minton. Transfer printed enamelled black glaze dessert ware c 1855-1870.

Colin Renwick has commented that that in those days Manses had Minton, now it's IKEA!

Next stage

Some additional work has been instructed - revision of the design of two new timber doors, to include rainwater deflection and stonework alterations to the underside of a stone arch to remove a lintel and rubble fill, replacement of defective stones and introduction of a steel support if required. We will also put in a dado around the interior, behind which the electrical and data services can be installed. Again, this is not straightforward, given the unevenness of the walls. All of this will necessarily incur additional cost, which the Trustees have recently approved.

Whilst we are now at the limit of our budget, these works should provide a usable simple exhibition/interpretation space, which we could develop further, subject to additional fundraising.