

Conservation
Services

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Highways & Planning
Directorate

Witham Archaeology

A Report To Mr K Lawry
December 2005



INSTALLATION OF NEW GAS PIPE, CHURCH OF ST MARY AND ST PETER, HARLAXTON, LINCOLNSHIRE

Archaeological Watching Brief

R Trimble

acknowledged receipt 2/1/06

CHURCH OF ST MARY AND ST PETER HARLAXTON, LINCOLNSHIRE

Site Code: SMPH05
LCCM Accession No.: 2005.184
Faculty No.: 1722
NGR: SK 88130 32320

Archaeological Watching Brief

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CHURCH OF ST MARY AND ST PETER, HARLAXTON, LINCOLNSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

SUMMARY

This report describes the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken by Witham Archaeology during groundworks relating to the installation of a new heating system at the Church of St Mary and St Peter, Harlaxton, Lincolnshire. The work, involving the excavation of a 600mm deep pipe trench to connect the new heater to LPG tanks sited near the southern edge of the churchyard, was commissioned by the Churchwarden, Mr K Lawry, in response to a faculty issued by the Consistory Court of the Diocese of Lincoln. All recording took place on 17 October 2005.

The watching brief did not locate any remains relating to earlier church building. However, a concentration of stone at the northwestern corner of the west tower might relate to an earlier phase of construction or alteration. Only one in situ burial was encountered within the line of the pipe trench, together with a small quantity of disarticulated human bone.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report describes the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken by Witham Archaeology during groundworks relating to the installation of a new heating system at the Church of St Mary and St Peter, Harlaxton, Lincolnshire. The work - commissioned by Mr K Lawry, Churchwarden, in response to a faculty (No. 1722) issued by the Consistory Court of the Diocese of Lincoln - was carried out on 17 October 2005.

Installation of the heating system involved the excavation of a trench, c. 300mm wide x 600mm deep, to receive a 32mm supply pipe connecting LPG tanks sited close to the southern boundary of the churchyard, with the replacement heating unit located against the north wall of the church.

The information in this document is presented with the proviso that further data may yet emerge. Witham Archaeology cannot, therefore, be held responsible for any loss, delay or damage, material or otherwise, arising out of this report. The document has been prepared in accordance with the Code of Conduct of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.

2.0 SITE LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY & GEOLOGY (See Fig. 1)

The village of Harlaxton lies c. 4km southwest of Grantham town centre, in the administrative district of South Kesteven. The Church of St Mary and St Peter is located in the western part of the village, at NGR SK 88130 32320.

The topography of the area is one of gently undulating hills. The church lies on a geology of Middle Lias Marlstone Rock Bed over silt and silty clay (Geological Survey of Great Britain, Solid and Drift, Sheet 143).

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The place-name Harlaxton appears to derive from a combination of the the Old Norse personal name *Hiorleifr* and the Old English *tun*, meaning 'Hiorleif's farmstead or village' (Cameron 1998). In the Domesday book of 1086 Harlaxton appears as *Herelevestune* and is recorded as belonging to the king,

with 10 villagers, 2 smallholders and 58 freemen in residence. In addition to arable land the king held 2 mills, 60 acres of meadow and a spinney of 60 acres.

With the exception of the lower part of the west tower (Decorated – c. AD 1290 - 1350) the exterior of the Church of St Mary and St Peter is mostly Perpendicular (c. AD 1335/50 – 1530). Internally, the north arcade is Early English (c. AD 1190 – 1250), and there are Decorated and Perpendicular elements. The Church was heavily restored during the 19th century (Pevsner and Harris 1989).

The site of the original Harlaxton manor, a substantial early 17th century house, lies c. 150 yards SSE of the church; the only surviving element is an Elizabethan archway. The existing manor and much of the architectural detail visible in the village is attributable to Gregory Gregory and was mostly completed during the 1830's (Pevsner & Harris 1989).

4.0 AIMS & OBJECTIVES

The principal objectives of the project were to:

- *produce an archive record of any surviving deposits, remains and artefacts exposed by the development groundwork, within the constraints of the contractor's working methods and programme.*
- *produce a project archive for deposition with the appropriate museum together with a client report.*
- *provide information for accession to the County Sites and Monuments Record.*

5.0 METHODOLOGY

Excavation was carried out by small, tracked excavator fitted with a c. 300mm wide bucket. Excavation of the trench progressed northwest from the site of the new LPG tanks and then north, to follow a north-south alignment of gravestones. At the east-west path passing the south side of the church the trench turned to west before turning north to follow the west and north walls of the church. The work was subject to continuous archaeological monitoring, with all sections inspected for archaeologically significant features/deposits.

The archaeological record comprises a written description of the general stratigraphic sequence together with a set of colour print photographs documenting the main phases of work. A series of digital photographs detailing the progress groundworks is to be included in the archive.

Disarticulated human bone encountered during the excavations was collected and then returned to Mr Lawry for reburial.

6.0 RESULTS (See Fig. 2)

Deposits revealed in the southeast-northwest part of the trench, nearest to the LPG tanks, were generally loose/friable, dark grey sandy silts, with occasional patches of clayey material occurring at lower levels. Deposits became less uniform in the north-south section leading up to the line of the east-west path. Here, generally mid brown sand/silt deposits were interspersed with more mixed material, including a clay component apparently derived from the underling 'natural'. This may be taken to indicate the presence of backfilled graves. Orange-brown silty clay and ironstone, visible in patches across the trench base, probably represents the undisturbed geology.

Deposits in the area adjacent to the east-west path were noticeably drier (probably due to nearby trees and shrubs), comprising predominantly reddish brown silty sand containing frequent ironstone

fragments. Similar material extended around the church tower, to a point *c.* 2m south of its northwest corner, where stone fragments – irregular in shape and up to 200mm in size – became increasingly frequent. The stone, which occurred in a mid reddish-brown sand sealed beneath a *c.* 200mm depth of grey topsoil, did not appear to relate to a specific structure and may be interpreted as debris originating from a phase of rebuilding. The quantity of stone gradually decreased along the northern side of the church.

The only evidence for *in-situ* inhumation comprised a skull - probably belonging to an adolescent – found to the south of the church, close to the footpath at the northern end of the north-south section of the pipe-trench. The skull, which was displaced and damaged during the works, was recovered and then reburied where found. Disarticulated human bone occurred in small quantities (*c.* 20–30 fragments altogether), becoming more frequent with proximity to the church building.

Only one fragment of worked stone was recovered - from the area immediately west of the church. Measuring 230mm x 220mm x 75mm, the stone had one roughly dressed face (mostly eroded) and two flat edges. The remaining edges were broken, indicating that the fragment may have derived from a larger piece of stonework, possibly a grave-marker.

7.0 CONCLUSION

The results of the watching brief indicate the absence of substantial structural remains on the route followed by the pipe-trench. However, a concentration of stone at the northwest corner of the western tower might relate to a phase of alteration/rebuilding. Human bone was surprisingly infrequent, with articulated remains being limited to an individual (probably an adolescent) found in the area south of the church. An unmarked but squared fragment of stone found to the west of the tower could represent part of a grave-marker.

8.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author of this report would like to thank Mr Kevin Lawry for his interest in the project and assistance in locating relevant information. Thanks are also due to the groundwork contractors for their cooperation in ensuring a successful conclusion to the watching brief.

9.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Cameron, K & Insley, J 1998 *A Dictionary of Lincolnshire Place-Names*. English Place-Name Society
- Pevsner, N & Harris, J 1989 *The Buildings of England. Lincolnshire*. Penguin (2nd Ed., Revised by N Antram)

10.0 PROJECT/ ARCHIVE DETAILS

10.1 LHA NOTE DETAILS

SITE CODE: SPMH05

FACULTY No.: 1722

FIELD OFFICER: R Trimble

NGR: SK 88130 32320

CIVIL PARISH: Harlaxton

SMR No.:

DATE OF INTERVENTION: 17th October 2005

TYPE OF INTERVENTION: Watching Brief

UNDERTAKEN FOR: Mr K Lawry (Churchwarden) Church of St Mary and St Peter, Harlaxton

10.2 ARCHIVE DETAILS

PRESENT LOCATION: Witham Archaeology, 65 Grantham Road, Sleaford, Lincolnshire, NG34 7NG

FINAL LOCATION: The City and County Museum, Friars Lane, Lincoln

MUSEUM ACCESSION No.: 2005.184

ACCESSION DATE: -

The Site Archive Comprises:

Context Records	-
Plans at Scale 1:20	-
Section Drawings at Scale 1:50	-
Colour Print Photographs	4
Set of Site Notes	1
Set of digital photos	1

It is intended that transfer of the archive in accordance with current published requirements will be undertaken following completion of this project.

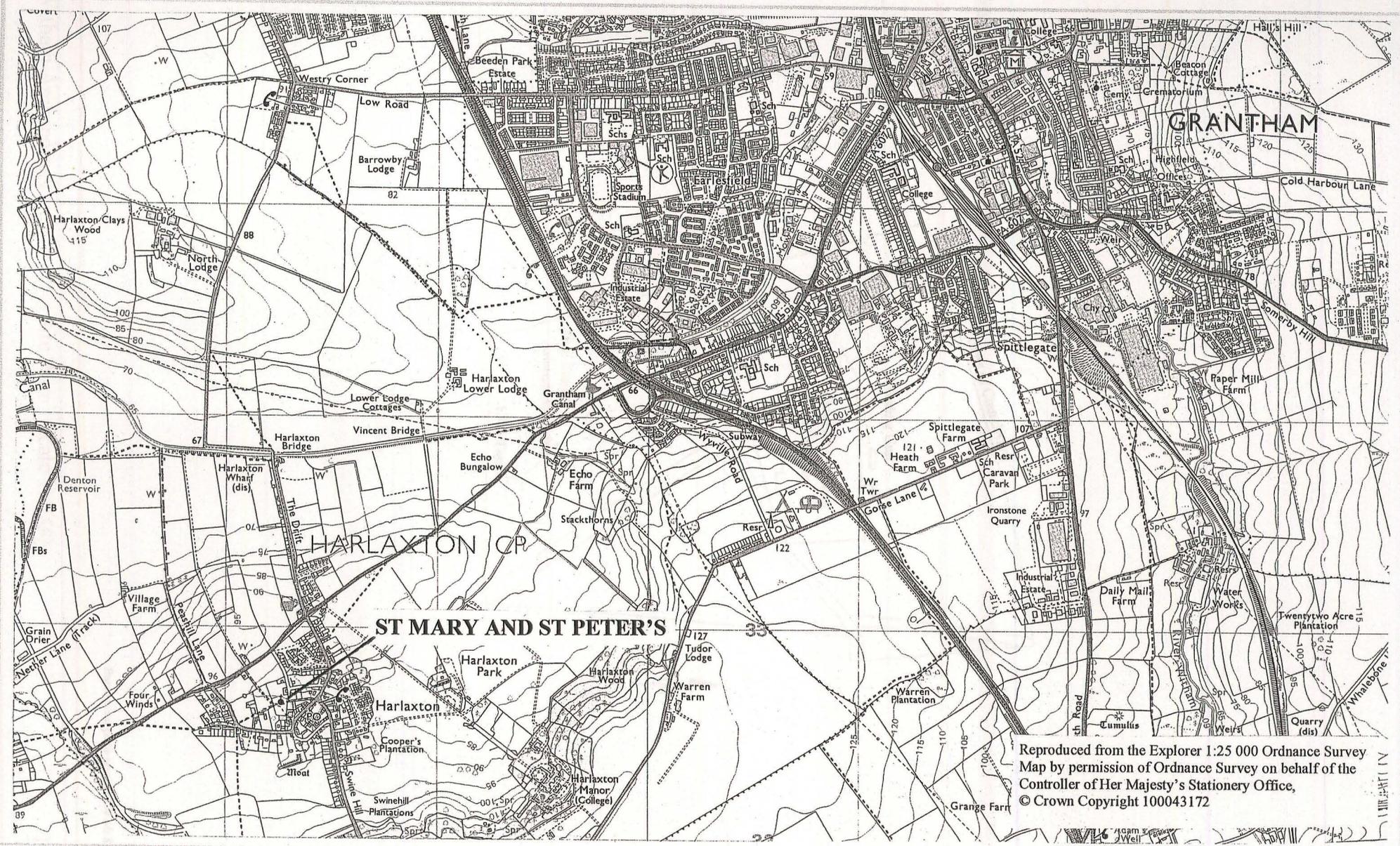
COLOUR PLATES



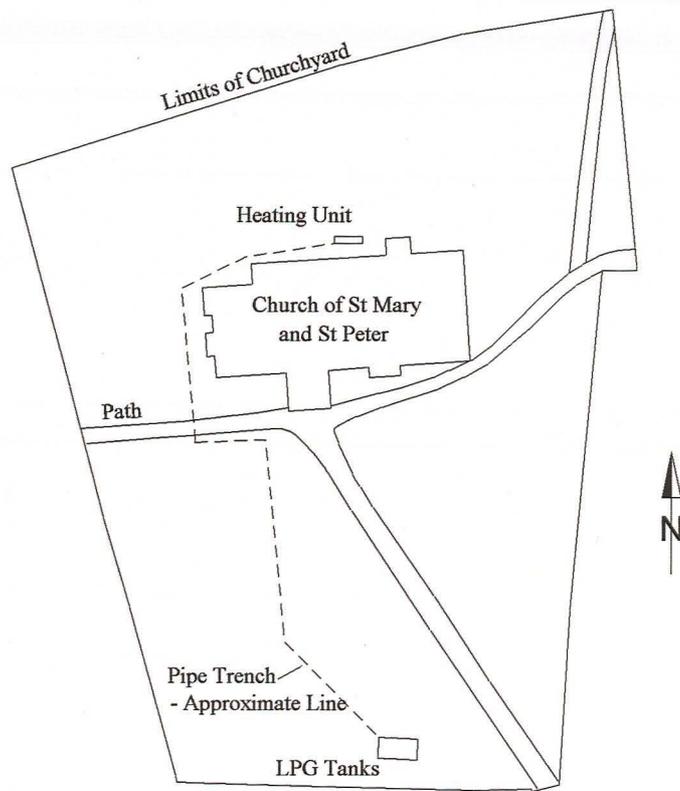
Plate 1 - View showing work in progress – south side of church, looking north.



Plate 2 – View showing work in progress- west of the west tower, looking north



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Based upon plans provided by Mr K Lawry