

The excavation of Trench F had resulted in the fracturing and removal of fragments of the right and left femur, fibula and tibia.

As a result of this the bone material of Skeleton XX remaining in-situ included the feet and fractured (lower) fibula and tibia.

No grave goods were found.

No burial container was found.

No grave cut was identified.

Within Area IV, Trench A was further reduced and in so doing the cranium of SKELETON XXI was disturbed.

SKELETON No. XXI

(See fig. 7:4)

ALIGNMENT - EAST/WEST, FACING EAST

DEPTH - BELOW PRESENT GROUND LEVEL - 42 cm.

POSTURE - LYING ON BACK

AGE - INFANT (RECENTLY BORN)

COMMENTS:

The bones of Skeleton XXI were both small and gracile, both factors will have contributed to the advanced state of decay of the bone material.

The irregularities in the posture of the legs, rather than indicating anything significant about burial practice it would seem merely to confirm the susceptibility of bone material of this size to become disturbed after burial by worm action and the like.

It would appear that this infant was buried alongside Skeleton XIX, possibly contemporary burials.

Both skeletons were resting upon the orange sandy clay.

No evidence of grave goods were found.

No evidence of a burial container was found.

No evidence of a grave cut was identified.

Trench F was eventually reduced to its required depth and in so doing previously disturbed human skeleton material was recovered.

TRENCH G

(See fig. 1:2, 8:1, 8:2)

LENGTH - 1.43 m.

WIDTH - 35 cm.

DEPTH - MAX. 52 cm.

During trench excavation bone material initially thought to be that belonging to a human skeleton was identified within the dark brown sandy loam deposits of Trench G.

Area V (See fig. 8:3) was excavated to reveal, record and remove the skeleton.



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It soon became clear that the bone material was not human but the fragmentary remains, vertebrae and cranium of Sus Scrofa (the domestic Pig). No Archaeological features were identified within Trench G.

#### TRENCH H

(See fig. 1:2, 9:1, 9:2, 9:3)

LENGTH - 2.70 m.

WIDTH - 29 cm.

DEPTH - MAX. 74 cm.

During the excavation of Trench H human bone fragments were removed from the North-Eastern end of the trench, these included fragments of Ulna and Radius together with a complete mandible.

Further excavation revealed a cranium (Skeleton No. XXIV) (with mandible absent) and to its West a left femur. In an attempt to confirm that the above cranium was attached to a skeleton Area VI was excavated. No such skeleton was identified, instead to the immediate East of the cranium a large red sandstone was revealed, and to the South of which fragments of ribs were identified. It would seem likely that the femur previously mentioned also belongs to the same skeleton.

The de-articulation and scattering of skeletal material in this way indicates that this area had been previously disturbed, though it is unclear at what time and for what reason this was done.

The continued excavation of Trench H revealed a second cranium (skeleton XXII) in response to which Area VI (See fig. 9:4, 9:5, 9:6) was enlarged and excavated in order to reveal this skeleton. However, in so doing skeleton XXIII was identified.

#### SKELETON No. XXIII (Secondary burial)

(See fig. 9:4, 9:5)

ALIGNMENT - EAST/WEST, FACING EAST

DEPTH - BELOW PRESENT GROUND LEVEL - 46 cm.

POSTURE - PRONE

AGE - INFANT

COMMENTS: Skeleton XXIII was relatively complete although the bone material was in an advanced state of decay.  
No grave goods were found.  
No burial container was identified.  
No grave cut was identified.

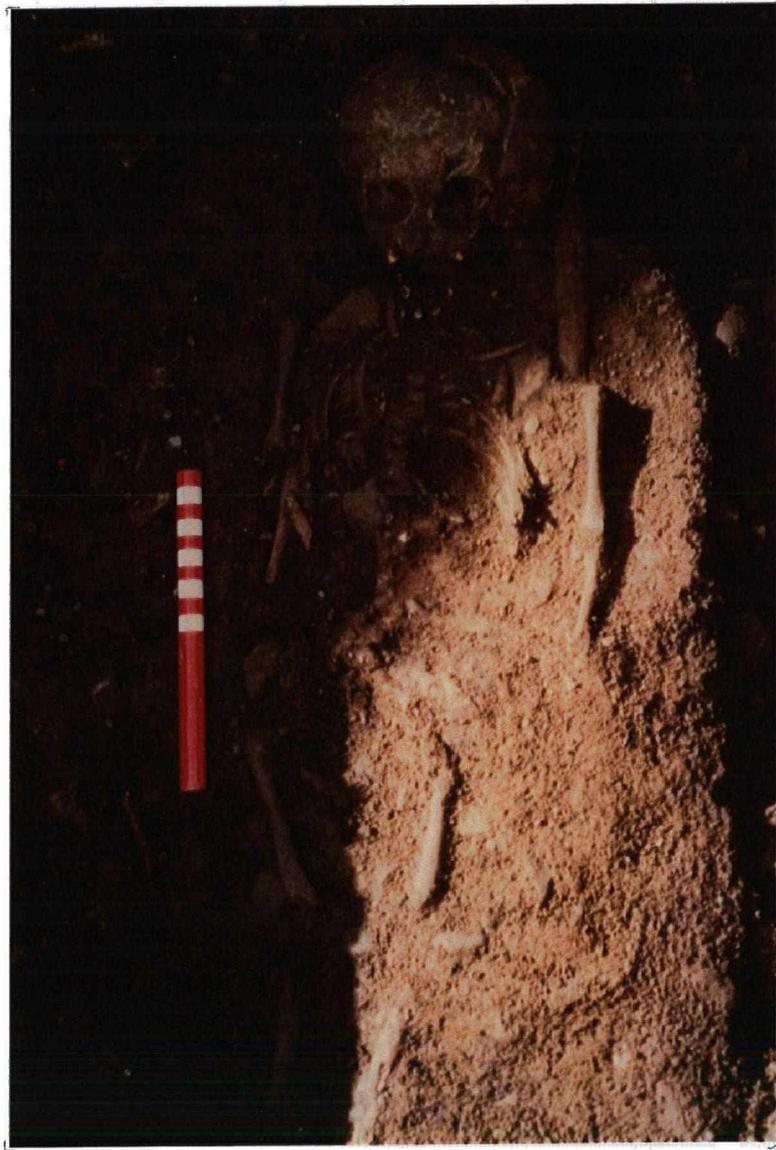
To the immediate North of this burial and on an East/West alignment the de-articulated right femur of an adult skeleton (unidentified) lay alongside skeleton XXIII passing beneath the parietal bone of the cranium and the right humerus.



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Other adult leg bones and a single clavicle were revealed further North at a similar level of approximately 50cm and overlying skeleton XXII beneath.

This scatter of bone was interposed by a random assortment of sandstone and polished river stone. (See fig. 9:5).

SKELETON No. XXII

(See fig. 9:5, 9:6)

ALIGNMENT - EAST/WEST, FACING EAST

DEPTH - BELOW PRESENT GROUND LEVEL - 61cm.

POSTURE - PRONE

AGE - ADULT

COMMENTS: Skeleton XXII was relatively complete and found resting upon the orange brown sandy clay. However, previous trench excavation associated with the laying of a cast iron service pipe (north/south alignment) had cut both femurs above the patella and both fibula and tibia were absent. The right humerus had been dislocated from the scapula and was resting over the sternum. Both clavicles had been dislocated and aligned East/West. The cranium had been badly fractured and the maxilla was absent, the mandible though present had been dislocated from the cranium. As with the accompanying skeletal material in Area VI, skeleton XXII had been subject to post interment disturbance. The cause of this disarrangement was not identified. However examination of the sections of Trench H and those of Area VI revealed no interruption in the upper stratigraphy.

TRENCH I

(See fig. 1:2)

LENGTH - 1.38 m.

WIDTH - 92 cm.

DEPTH - 84 cm.

No human skeletons were identified.

No features of Archaeological interest were identified within this trench.

The trench was excavated to reveal the mains (water) pipe.

Trench I had therefore been previously disturbed.

## SUMMARY

During 1989 an archaeological watching brief on trench excavations associated with a mainlaying scheme in Masham was carried out on behalf of Yorkshire Water from 6th March - 29th April 1989.

The results of this work confirmed that the 'Dixon Keld' burial ground extended in a Southerly direction into the town of Masham.

In total the remains of 24 skeletons were recovered - the burials were of men, women and children.

The bones were removed under a burial licence obtained from the Home Office in 1988 by Mrs. M. Kershaw of Harrogate Museums and Art Gallery Service, and as a result of which the skeletons are to receive the same post excavation treatment.

The remains are presently being washed by volunteers in Harrogate, after which it is hoped that they will be sent for pathological examination and then hopefully (and subject to funding) on for Carbon 14 dating.

All the human skeletal remains are to be returned into the care of Masham Church for Christian re-burial. Since we do not know the extent of the burial ground I suggest that all further ground disturbance to the immediate East, South and West of Dixon Keld should in future be monitored by an archaeologist.

APPENDIX I

POTTERY

The pottery sherds recovered from the excavation of Trench A included:

QUANTITY	FABRIC	TPOLOGY	DATE
SIX	DARK GREY WITH QUARTZ LIKE INCLUSIONS. OLIVE GREEN/BROWN BUFF EXTERIOR GLAZE.	JUG LIKE VESSEL	14/15th CENTURY
FIVE	DARK GREY WITH QUARTZ INCLUSIONS. TUDOR GREEN GLAZE.	JUG LIKE VESSEL	15th CENTURY
THREE	GREY. OLIVE GREEN/RED BROWN EXTERIOR GLAZE.	JUG LIKE VESSEL	14/15th CENTURY
ONE	GREY. ORANGE BUFF EXTERIOR SLIP. GREEN/GREY EXTERIOR GLAZE.	JUG LIKE VESSEL	13th CENTURY
ONE	BISCUIT COLOURED FABRIC WITH A HIGH PERCENTAGE OF GRIT AND QUARTZ INCLUSIONS.	JUG HANDLE	13th CENTURY
ONE	LIGHT GREY. OLIVE GREEN EXTERIOR GLAZE. INCISED DECORATION.	JUG LIKE VESSEL	14th CENTURY

QUANTITY	FABRIC	TPOLOGY	DATE
ONE	DARK GREY. 'SAP' GREEN EXTERIOR GLAZE. ORANGE/BROWN INTERIOR SLIP. EXTERIOR RELIEF DECORATION.	JUG LIKE VESSEL	14th CENTURY
ONE	ORANGE COLOURED FABRIC. ORANGE/BROWN EXTERIOR GLAZE. SANDY/BUFF INTERIOR SLIP.	JUG LIKE VESSEL	13/14th CENTURY
ONE	LIGHT GREY COURSE FABRIC. PINK/ORANGE EXTERIOR/ INTERIOR SLIP.	UNKNOWN	13th CENTURY

CONCLUSION

Although the pottery was late Medieval in origin, it was recovered from stratigraphy that had been previously disturbed, however, since this overlaid undisturbed human skeletal material it most probably post dates the burials.

The pottery will be placed in the care of Harrogate Museums and Art Gallery Service.

WATCHING BRIEF  
AND REPORT BY

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