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LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

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**All Saints Church, Tealby
Churchyard Wall Reconstruction**

*NGR: TF 1572 9086
Site Code: TASC 00
LCNCC Museum Accn No.: 2000.229*

Archaeological Watching Brief

Report for Tealby PCC

by G. Tann

LAS Report No. 505

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Summary

Excavation of a trench cut into the steep hillside beside the parish churchyard revealed part of an undated feature assumed to be a ditch, interpreted as a former land boundary, probably defining the southern churchyard limit. A few pieces of post-medieval pottery were found close to Caistor Lane. It is suggested that Rasen Road is a medieval bypass, using a cutting terraced into the natural hillside. A broad 2m deep north-south aligned feature beside Caistor Lane may be a glacially filled channel, into the softer material of which Caistor Lane has hollowed.

Introduction

Lindsey Archaeological Services (LAS) was commissioned by Tealby Parochial Church Council in September 2000 to conduct an archaeological watching brief during excavation of a trench and cutting for a replacement churchyard retaining wall. The watching brief was conducted in accordance with the faculty (dated 13th January 1999), and the general requirements set out in the *Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook* (Lincolnshire County Council Archaeology Section, 1998). The purpose of the Watching Brief was to record any archaeological deposits disturbed during groundworks.

The dry-stone walls of the churchyard are currently being rebuilt. Part of the work has been completed by volunteers, but the southern wall is adjacent to Rasen Road and the Caistor Lane road junction, and the works needed specialist input for engineering and safety grounds.

The monitored groundworks comprised the mechanical excavation of a trench alongside Rasen Road, around part of the churchyard, in order to construct a retaining wall (Pls. 1 and 2). At the same time, tree stumps close to the new wall line were removed to reduce damage by tree roots.

Site Location

The village of Tealby lies at the foot of the Lincolnshire Wolds, 5km NE of Market Rasen. All Saints Church lies at the junction of roads to Market Rasen, Kirmond le Mire, and Caistor.

The churchyard is separated from the village by three roads. The ground around the churchyard falls away to the south and east, with the roads terraced onto the slopes. The resulting impression is of the church set high above most of the village, and this is exacerbated by the naturally steep slope to the south down to the River Rase; much of the village is on the flatter ground midway between the church and the stream.

The slope is only partly developed, and most lies within a large field under rough grass (Pl. 3). A north-south aligned hollow crosses the field, and although this could be a watercourse, it could equally represent a medieval lane. At the NW corner of the field, the slope alters and this area may have been terraced with the importation of soil. Where Rasen Road passes beside the churchyard, there is a retaining wall at the field boundary. On the north side of Rasen Road is a level plot NW of the church, used as a car park.

Archaeological and Historical Background

The settlement at Tealby may have its origins in the early fifth century AD, when groups of the East Germanic tribe of the *Taifali* are recorded in Britain (*A Dictionary of Lincolnshire Place-Names* Cameron, K. 1998, 123). Although that is conjecture, the settlement is recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1086 and was certainly extant by the late Saxon period. The church guide leaflet notes that a church has occupied the present site since the late Norman period.

The church and churchyard occupy a site at a road junction, and may lie close to the early settlement core. The prominent site means that there is some potential for the church to be on the site of an earlier feature.

Within the churchyard, any pre-medieval archaeological features are likely to have been severely damaged by generations of intercutting graves. The graves were expected to extend to the churchyard boundary wall unless the churchyard had been extended in the past century, and may have extended beyond the existing boundary wall if a previous churchyard area was reduced in size for road widening.

The Watching Brief

Works for the new wall began beside the churchyard steps beside the junction with Caistor Lane, where the height difference between the churchyard and the road below is least (Pl. 4). A JCB was used to clear the remains of the existing drystone wall from the foot of the scarp, and to remove vegetation surviving from a former hedge on the north side of the wall. A trench was then cut into the hillside to give sufficient room for a concrete retaining wall beside the new drystone wall.

1. Immediately to the west of the churchyard steps, the revealed ground was a mixed material incorporating clay, gravel, sand, and either limestone or chalk chips, with sandstone at the level of Rasen Road. The clay material extended for about 8m, sloping up at a uniform angle of about 35° to the west (Pls. 5 and 6). 1.75m below the modern ground surface was a horizontal band of limestone or chalk chips up to 0.2m thick, and revealed for a length of 3m. This appeared to have been a surface, but it is unclear whether it was laid naturally or artificially. The local Wolds are chalk, and limestone would represent a deliberate import. The former churchyard wall was of limestone, and conceivably the layer of chips could be associated with it, perhaps in soil tipped into a construction trench behind it. Without knowing the extent to the north of the mixed clayey material, interpretation of

this feature is impossible, but if the deposit extends further north it could be either the western side of a glacially filled channel, or a medieval hollow way (the precursor of Caistor Lane) reclaimed to allow extension of the churchyard. The glacial channel seems the probable explanation.

2. 29m west of the churchyard steps, a feature containing dark brown loam was observed at the top of the new cutting (Fig. 3; Pls. 7 and 8). The base of the feature was about 1.5m below the churchyard level, and 1.3m above the road level. Tree roots and other vegetation obscured the lateral extent of the feature, but it seemed to be about 6m wide. It was interpreted as part of a ditch aligned at about 90° to Caistor Lane, and revealed at an oblique angle. This could have been a boundary feature defining the churchyard limit.

Three human ribs were found amongst the roots in the feature, but for safety reasons the loose soil could not be investigated. The skeletal remains were removed under the authority of the Faculty, and passed to a churchwarden pending eventual reburial.

3. The groundworks were monitored for a distance of about 100m from the churchyard steps along Rasen Road. No further features were revealed west of 2, and nothing but loose topsoil and sandstone was seen in the scarp face. In the absence of a subsoil developed between the topsoil and rock, it was suspected that any archaeological deposits had already been removed.

Discussion and Conclusion

The present road south of the churchyard may not be part of the medieval layout of this part of Tealby; the medieval road is probably represented by the lane passing north of the church, and Caistor Lane, passing east of the churchyard. The existing road to the south is probably later than those two, and the complete absence of any property frontages along this section is noticeable and probably relevant. Rasen Road is in existence by the time of parliamentary Enclosure in 1792, so any bypassing occurred before then.

One suggested sequence is that the Market Rasen to Wolds road was upgraded as a drove road during the medieval period, producing the broad verges of the modern road. As part of this improvement, a road was constructed on the hillside south of the church, necessitating cutting into the hillside to the north and terracing the slope with the excavated material. The level plot NW of the church may have been a sandstone quarry from which additional material was excavated.

An interpretation from this watching brief is that the monitored works were within a medieval road cutting, possibly doubling as a stone quarry in places. The upper edge of this cutting lay above and beyond the new wall trench, at the limit of the churchyard turf; all the present vegetation and topsoil south of the turf has slipped from the graveyard over the lip of the cutting. The previous hedges and retaining wall were needed because of the abrupt artificial slope, not because of the natural topography around the churchyard. Without investigating the edge of the graveyard turf, beyond the

extent of these works, it is unclear whether the road cut across a more extensive burial ground.

The trench for the new churchyard retaining wall only revealed features close to the junction with Caistor Lane. This may have been at the western side of the north-south aligned medieval thoroughfare, hollowed by traffic. The remainder of the trench cut into the sides of an artificial scarp produced by a later road cut into the hillside to avoid the hollowed lanes. In these circumstances, no archaeological features would be expected except close to original ground level, which was above the height of the new trench.

Acknowledgements

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Illustrations were prepared by Mick McDaid, and the report was collated and produced by Jane Frost.

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14th February 2001

Archive Summary

Field notes

Correspondence

Colour photographs, LAS film nos. 00/87/12-19; 00/88/2-5; 00/93/0-9; 01/9/00-5

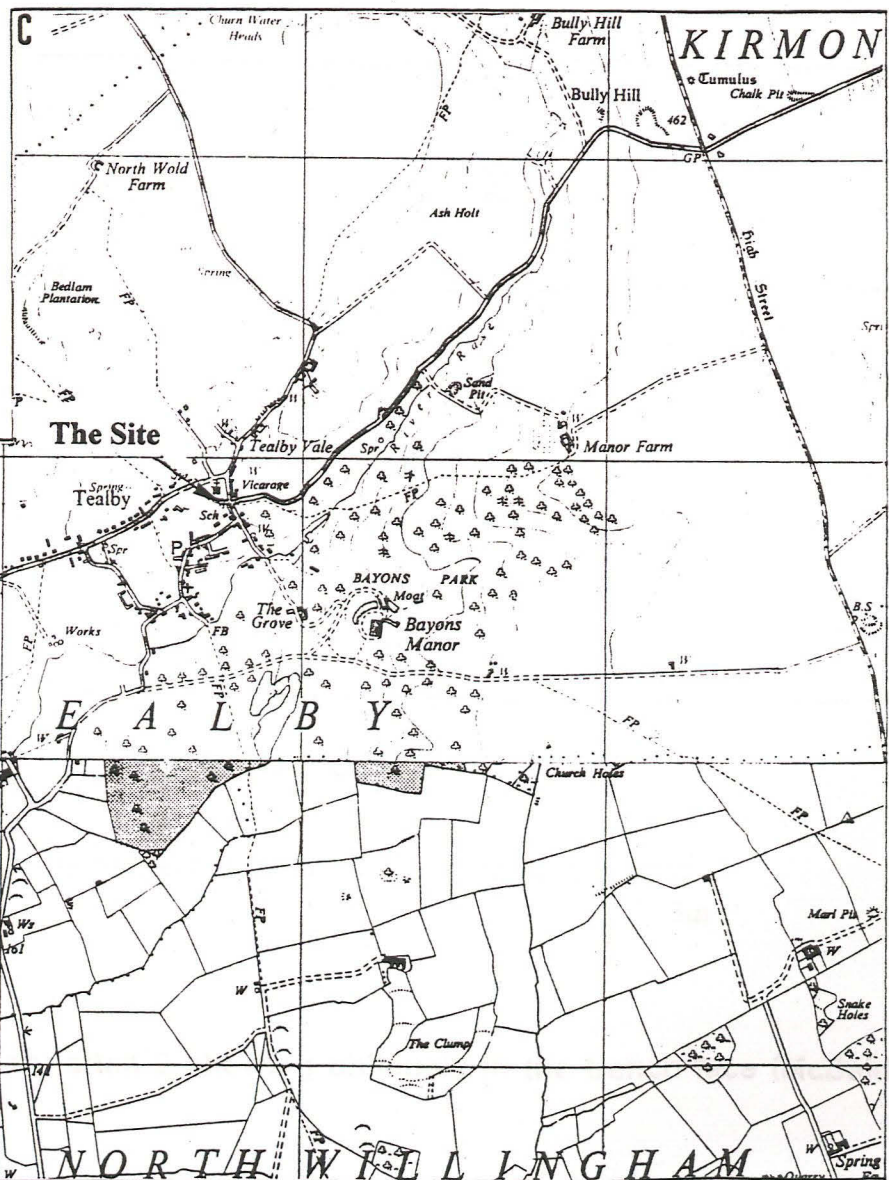
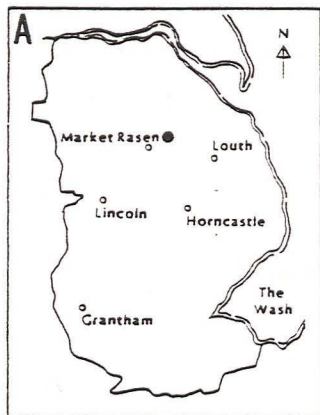
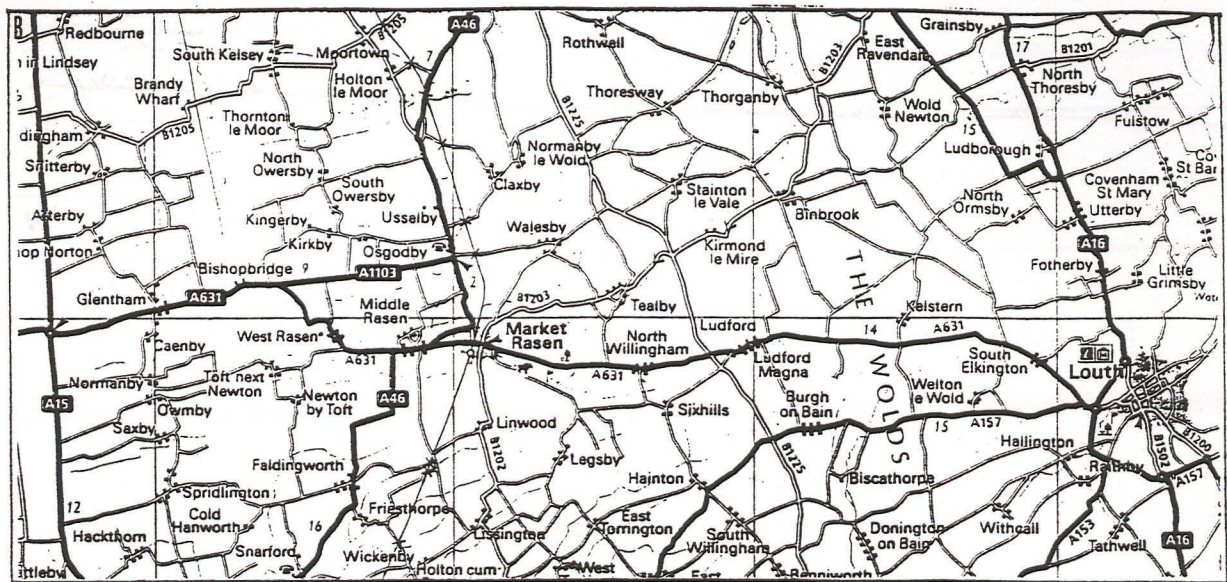


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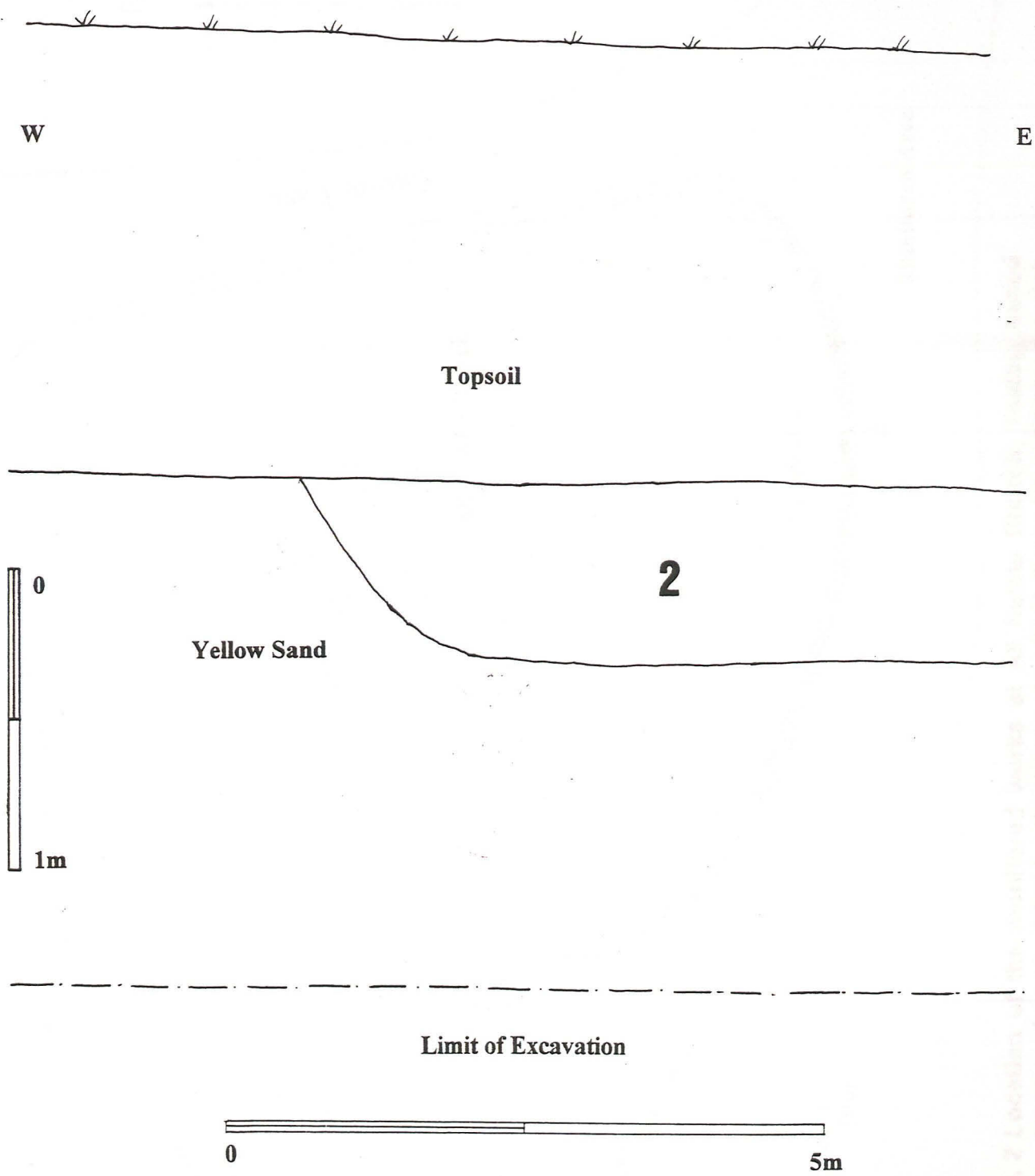


Fig. 3 Fill of boundary ditch 2 showing obliquely in the trench face (McDaid, after Tann).

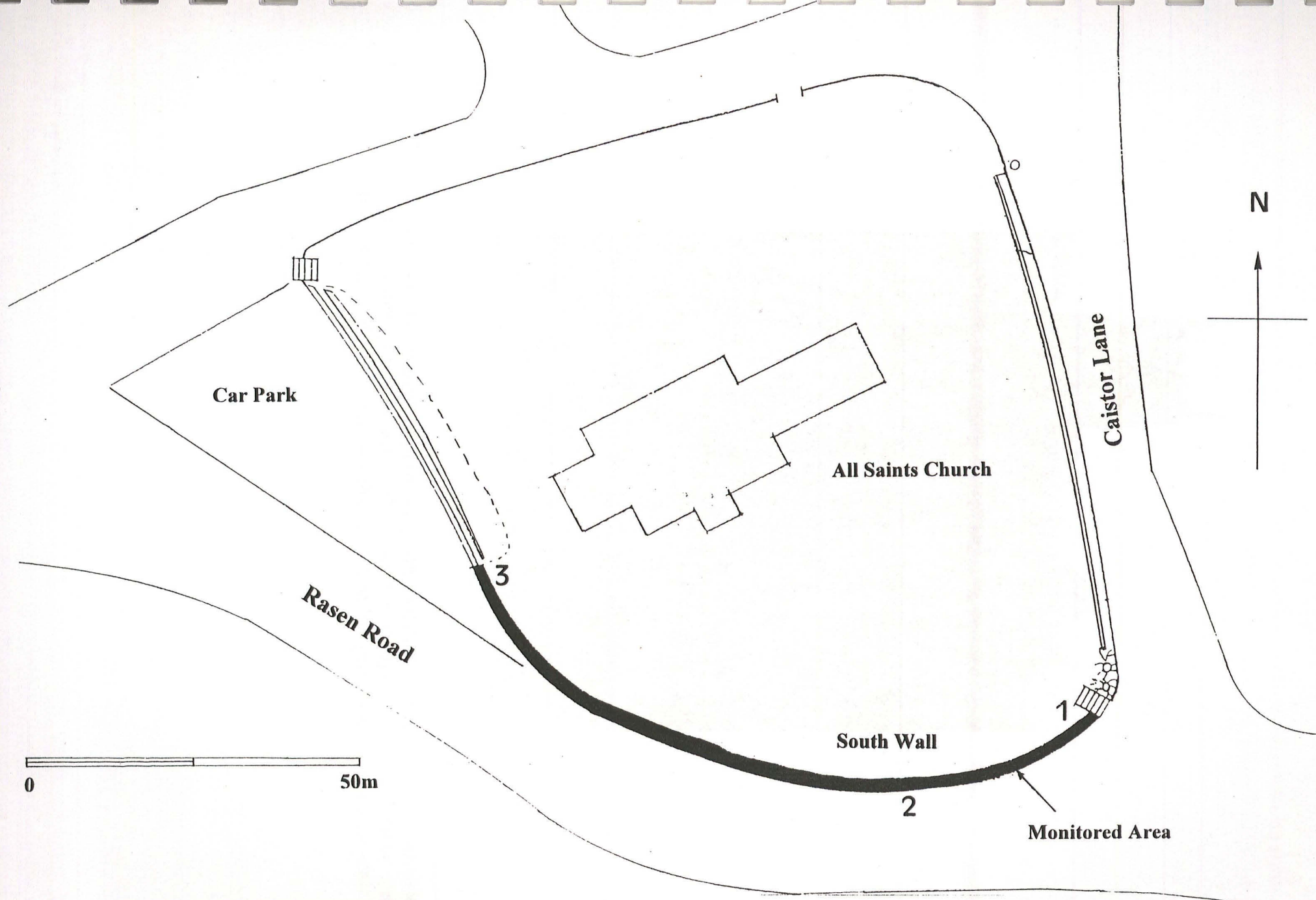


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Pl. 2 Construction of the replacement retaining wall alongside Rasen Road (looking NE).



Pl. 4 Location of the groundworks at the junction of Rasen Road and Caistor Lane (right). Looking west.



Pl. 3 Ground levels to the south and west of Tealby Church (looking west along Rasen Road). The car park area (right of the blue van) may be a former quarry. Rasen Road has been terraced into the natural slope.



Pl. 6 View of the mixed clay material 1 overlying sandstone bedrock at the SE corner of the churchyard (looking east).

Pl. 7 Location of boundary ditch 2 behind roots in the new wall trench (looking east).





Pl. 5 Mixed clay fill 1 exposed in the new wall trench at the SE corner of the churchyard (looking north).



Pl. 8 Dark fill of boundary ditch 2 cut into sandstone, near the top of the scarp beside Rasen Road (looking north).