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**Archaeological monitoring at the churchyard of St
Peter's Church, Lewtrenchard,
Devon**



on behalf of
Lewtrenchard PCC

Report No. 12-06

Project No. 1000

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OAKFORD ARCHAEOLOGY

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Summary

Archaeological monitoring was carried out by Oakford Archaeology in the churchyard of St Peter's, Lewtrenchard, Devon (SX 4568 8611), between July and September 2012. The work comprised the monitoring of construction works associated with a new vestry and disabled access.

Groundworks exposed the remains of seven 19th century graves and a single, possibly early, grave in the area immediately to the north of the church tower and north aisle. A number of 18th-19th century gravestones were recorded prior to being moved and the dismantling of a 20th century building was also monitored.

1. INTRODUCTION

Archaeological monitoring and recording was carried out by Oakford Archaeology (OA) at St Peter's churchyard, Lewtrenchard, Devon (SX 4568 8611), between July and December 2011. The work was commissioned by Lewtrenchard Parochial Church Council. The fieldwork was undertaken in accordance with a 'written scheme of investigation (WSI) prepared by Oakford Archaeology (Steinmetzer 2011) in response to a condition attached to the Faculty (31/11).

1.1 The site

The site (Fig. 1) lies immediately to the north of the medieval Parish church of St Peter. It lies at a height of 129m AOD, on a south facing slope overlooking the River Lew. The underlying solid geology of the area is part of the Teign Valley Group; sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 327 to 354 million years ago in the Carboniferous Period (BGS Sheet 326).

1.2 Archaeological and historical background

The Church of St Peter (Fig. 1) is located in Lewtrenchard, Devon. The Manor is first mentioned in the Domesday survey of 1086 when it was held by Roger de Moles. The estate passed into the hands of the Trenchard family during the reign of Henri III (1207-1272), and later passed to the Monks of Potheridge. In 1626 Thomas Monk sold the estate to Henry Gould. In the 19th century Sabine Baring Gould, author and poet who famously wrote the hymn 'Onward Christian Soldier', inherited the property.

Originally dedicated to St Petroc the church is a grade I listed building and contains fabric of probably 13th century date, although the building was heavily altered during the 15th-16th centuries. The interior of the church was substantially altered during the late 19th and early 20th century by the Reverend Sabine Baring-Gould.

In view of the possible early medieval date of the church very little previous archaeological work has been undertaken. In December 2009 Exeter Archaeology undertook a small watching brief (Steinmetzer 2009) following groundworks associated with a new car park undertaken in March 2009 without an archaeological presence. The archaeological works included the recording of a hedge breach, previously undertaken by the Baring-Gould Trust. No features, deposits or dating evidence were found to indicate archaeological activity within the area of the development pre-dating the layout of the church in the medieval period.

2. METHODOLOGY

The work originally comprised the machine excavation of an area 28m in length, 15m wide and approximately 0.8-1.9m deep immediately to the north of the tower in an area of known

burial activity. Removal of the topsoil exposed the top of seven 19th century burials. Following consultation with the client it was decided to abandon the proposed works in this area. The positions of the excavations are shown on Fig 2.

Machine excavation was undertaken under archaeological control using a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless grading bucket. Topsoil and underlying deposits were removed to the level of either natural subsoil, or the top of archaeological deposits (whichever was higher). Areas of archaeological survival were then cleaned by hand, investigated and recorded.

The standard OA recording system was employed. Stratigraphic information was recorded on *pro-forma* context record sheets, plans and sections for each trench were drawn at a scale of 1:10, 1:20 or 1:50 as appropriate and a detailed black and white print and colour (digital) photographic record was made. Registers were maintained for photographs, drawings and context sheets on *pro forma* sheets.

Building recording observations were recorded by means of a written description on watching brief record sheets, annotation of existing architect's plans, and black and white print and colour digital photographs. Detailed scale drawings were made of any architectural features or exposed details of particular significance that could not be recorded by the above means.

Gravestones were recorded using standard OA recording system. Information was recorded on *pro-forma* gravestone record sheets and a detailed black and white print and colour (digital) photographic record made.

3. RESULTS

Relevant detailed plans and elevations are included as Figs 2-6. A generally uniform overlying layer sequence of topsoil, colluvium, onto weathered natural subsoil was encountered. The depth of the overlying deposits was on average 0.8-1.9m.

3.1 Graveyard works

The working area was stripped of dark brown silty loam topsoil, which was approximately 0.25m thick. This exposed a mixed mid brownish yellow silty clay graveyard soil. This contained naturally occurring shale.

Inspection of the area showed evidence of at least eight archaeological features. Two rows, totalling seven burials were exposed in the graveyard. Grave 1007 was located immediately to the northwest of the tower. Slightly shorter than the other graves it was aligned E-W, it measured approximately 0.75m in length and 0.65m in width. The fill 1008 consisted of mid brownish yellow silty clay with occasional shale fragments. Grave 1009 was aligned E-W. Located immediately to the north of grave 000 it was 1.57m long and 0.77m wide. The fill (1010) consisted of mid yellowish brown silty clay containing frequent shale inclusions. Located north of Grave 1009 was Grave 1012. Aligned E-W, it measured approximately 1.62m in length and 0.65m in width. The fill 1013 consisted of mid brownish yellow silty clay with occasional shale fragments. Grave 1014 was aligned E-W. Located at the northern edge of the graveyard it was 1.72m long and 0.65m wide. The fill (1015) consisted of mid yellowish brown silty clay containing frequent shale inclusions.

A second row of graves was located immediately to the east of these. Grave 1023 was located immediately to the north of the vestry, aligned E-W, it measured approximately 1.65m in length and 0.78m in width. The fill 1024 consisted of mid brownish yellow silty clay with occasional shale fragments. Grave 1020 was aligned E-W. Located immediately to the north of grave 1023 it was 1.71m long and 0.75m wide. The fill (1021) consisted of mid yellowish brown silty clay containing frequent shale inclusions. These were truncated at the eastern end by a small, probably late 19th century, path. Grave 1017 was located at the northern edge of the graveyard. It was 1.78m long and 0.76m wide. The fill (1018) consisted of mid brownish yellow silty clay containing frequent shale inclusions.

Located approximately 3.25m to the east of the graveyard, in an area immediately to the north of the north aisle, Grave 1026 was aligned NW-SE. It measured approximately 1.9m in length and 0.5m in width. This contained partially articulated human remains (SK1027) in an extended supine position. It is possible that the body would have been in a coffin, although very little evidence survived due to the poor condition of the grave. This was heavily truncated by the 1930's building and the late 19th century Victorian drainage, with only the bottom 0.10m surviving. The grave was cut into the underlying geology and no finds were recovered from the excavation.

3.2 Further works

To accommodate the new disabled access and parking a large area was stripped to the north and east of the graveyard into the existing hill slope. Measuring approximately 25m long, 13m wide and excavated to a maximum depth of 3.6m. Inspection of the exposed area showed no evidence of archaeological activity. It contained a 0.3m thick mid to dark brown silty loam topsoil (1000), overlying a 0.45m thick mid reddish brown silty loam deposit (1001). This sealed a 0.65m thick mid brown silty loam colluvial subsoil (1002). A mid yellow silty clay natural (1003) with very frequent shale inclusions was encountered at a depth of 1.4m below current ground level.

3.3 Building recording

Groundworks for the new disabled access involved the removal of an existing 20th century lean-to building. The removal of the modern fabric offered an opportunity to examine a further area of the north aisle wall.

This exposed a section of the north aisle wall approximately 2.2m wide and 2.85m high (Fig. 4). The end section was composed of broad and narrow granite quoins with stone rubble used for the wall. This was composed mainly of fine grained sandstone, although some limestone and an unidentified volcanic stone were also present. The stones were set in a light grey lime and fine, sand mortar. A 2-light square-headed window is located immediately to the east of the elevation with the masonry coming up to the window surround.

3.4 The gravestones

13 gravestones, located at the eastern end of the church, were going to be used to line the new disabled access. These dated to between the 18th-19th centuries and were in a very good state of preservation. It was therefore felt that a full and comprehensive survey of these should be undertaken prior to them being moved. For a full listing of the inscriptions see Appendix 1.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The works exposed the remains of a single individual immediately to the northwest of the north aisle, beyond the current extent of the graveyard. The human remains, which would otherwise have been destroyed by the development were recorded in plan and archaeologically excavated in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation, under a Ministry of Justice licence (12-0125) and following consultation with the PCC representative. Before post-excavation analysis could take place the PCC requested that the remains be returned. On a different alignment to the regularly laid out 19th century graves in the graveyard, the base of the grave was further truncated by the late Victorian drainage and the 1930's lean-to building. Since there were no associated artefacts with the remains it is impossible to say whether they were post-medieval in date or indeed associated with the early medieval origins of the Church of St Peter.

5. PROJECT ARCHIVE

The site records have been compiled into a fully integrated site archive currently being held by Oakford Archaeology (project no. 1000) pending deposition at the Plymouth Museum. Details of the investigations, including a copy of this report have been submitted to the on-line archaeological database OASIS (oakforda1-137351).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This work was commissioned by Kirsty Curnow Bailey (Living Space Architects) on behalf of the Lewtrenchard Parochial Church Council. Thanks are due to the Revd. Martin Fletcher (DAC) and Cressida Whitton (DCHET) for their input and advice throughout. Further thanks are due to Bob Westlake. The illustrations for this report were prepared by Marc Steinmetzer. The fieldwork was carried out by Marc Steinmetzer assisted by Ben Pears and Will Smith.

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APPENDIX 1: GRAVESTONE INSCRIPTIONS

OA1000-1

Memento Mori

Here lieth the body of
William Williams of Bitch-
coombe in this Parish who was
Buried the 16th day of October
Anno Domini 1746 aged 77

My Glass is run my time is spent
Long was the time to me god sent
To travel on this mortal Stage.
But now my Soul is gone his voyage
I hope to the bless place above.
Where's nothing but great joy and love
What pleasures there tongue can't express
Which they enjoy who with Christ rest.

OA1000-2

Memory of
John Bary
of Coryton

who departed this Life the 21
day of November 1800, Aged
87 Years

Prepare to meet thy God

OA1000-3

Here lieth the Body of Susanna
the Daughter of John Hearn and
Also his wife of Holstrome in this
Parish who departed this life the
13th day of February Anno Domini
1752 Aiat's Suce 28. Memento Mori

Why should not tender parents Cease to grive
And my departure teach them how to live
Or why should brother lament and sisters Cry
Tis gods decree all that are born must die
That you with me may halalujahs sing
Sorrows a dieu blest be our glorious king.

Make his most holy lands your Chiefest care
And for a blest Eternity prepare.

OA1000-4

John Boase
of Down House in
this Parish, Was Buri-
ed the 6th Day of June:
Anno Dom. 1732. Aged 69.

With Cries, Our mortal Life Begins.

The Longer 'tis, the More our Sins;
All we Possess, but Vain appears
Then Dying, Leave our Friends in Tears.

OA1000-5

SACRED
TO THE MEMORY OF
JOHN PERKIN
SON OF
JOHN & MARY ANN PERKIN
OF THIS PARISH
WHO DIED THE 13th DAY OF OCTR.
1849
AGED 2 YEARS
ALSO THE MEMORY OF
ELIZABETH ANN PERKIN
their Daughter
WHO DIED THE 24th DAY OF MAY 1857
AGED 12 MONTHS
ALSO TO THE MEMORY OF
JOHN PERKIN
their Son
WHO DIED THE 13th DAY OF SEPR 1857
AGED 7 YEARS

How sweet to hear Christ say at last
Ye blessed Children come
Your sorrows are forever past
And Heaven is now your home.

OA1000-6

IN

Memory of THOMASIN
the Wife of JOHN GILL of this
Parish: who departed this Life
the 24th of Sepr 1795. In the 69
Year of her Age

Weep not for me my Children dear:
I am not lost but sleeping here:
Grieve not for me but think of this
That I am crowned with happiness

OA1000-7

SACRED
TO
THE MEMORY OF
MARY Wife of JOHN
NORTHEY

OF THE PARISH OF GERMANSWEEK:
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE
THE 17th DAY OF DECEMBER
1840
AGED 53 YEARS

My Children dear weep not for me,
That I was gone so suddenly,
I had not time to see you all
As Death on me so quickly did call.
Mourn not for me 'tis all in vain
In Heaven I hope to meet again.

OA1000-8

SACRED
TO
THE MEMORY OF
JOHN ADAMS
OF THIS PARISH
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE
THE 15TH DAY OF DECR 1858
AGED 65 YEARS

'Into thy hands I commend my spirit

for thou hast redeemed me O Lord,
thou God of truth'

Also in memory of JOHN
SON OF THE ABOVE
WHO DIED THE 13TH DAY OF JANUARY 1846
AGED 2 YEARS AND 6 MONTHS

OA1000-9

SACRED
TO THE MEMORY OF
JANE
WIFE OF
JOHN TAYLOR
OF THIS PARISH
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE
THE 21ST DAY OF JUNE 1854
AGED 59 YEARS

As I am now, so must you be,
Prepare therefore to follow me.

OA1000-10

Here lieth the Body of Richard
Williams of Bitchcoombe in this
Parish. Who was Buried the 12th day
of June Anno Domini 1759 aged 37
Memento Mori. Vita Brevis

All you my friends that here pass by
Upon these lines but Cast your eye,
And think how soon the time may be
You in the dust be laid with me
Improve your time while time you have
There's no repenting in the grave.
Our lives uncertain here you see
Prepare my friends to follow me.

OA1000-11

[...] the bodies of Mariam
[...] the Daughters of Wil
[...]s and Mary his wife
Mariam was buried
of October 1725
[...]s buried the 1st day of

[...] in the year 1744

Here in the dust our bodies do remain
We hope our souls with Christ [...]
Where blessed souls do anthems sing so sweet

Then live to hear that lastly e may meet
In heaven a place of endless peace and joy
And there to dwell with Christ eternally.

OA1000-12

IN MEMORY OF
WILLIAM EDWIN
the beloved son of
WILLIAM & ANN RATTENBURY
of this Parish
WHO DIED JUNE 11TH 1879
AGED 23 YEARS

ALSO OF EDWIN

WHO DIED NOVR 5TH 1855
AGED 1 YEAR & 8 MONTHS

‘Here let me wait with Patience,
Wait till the Night is o’er;
Wait till I see the Morning
Break on the Golden Shore’

OA1000-13

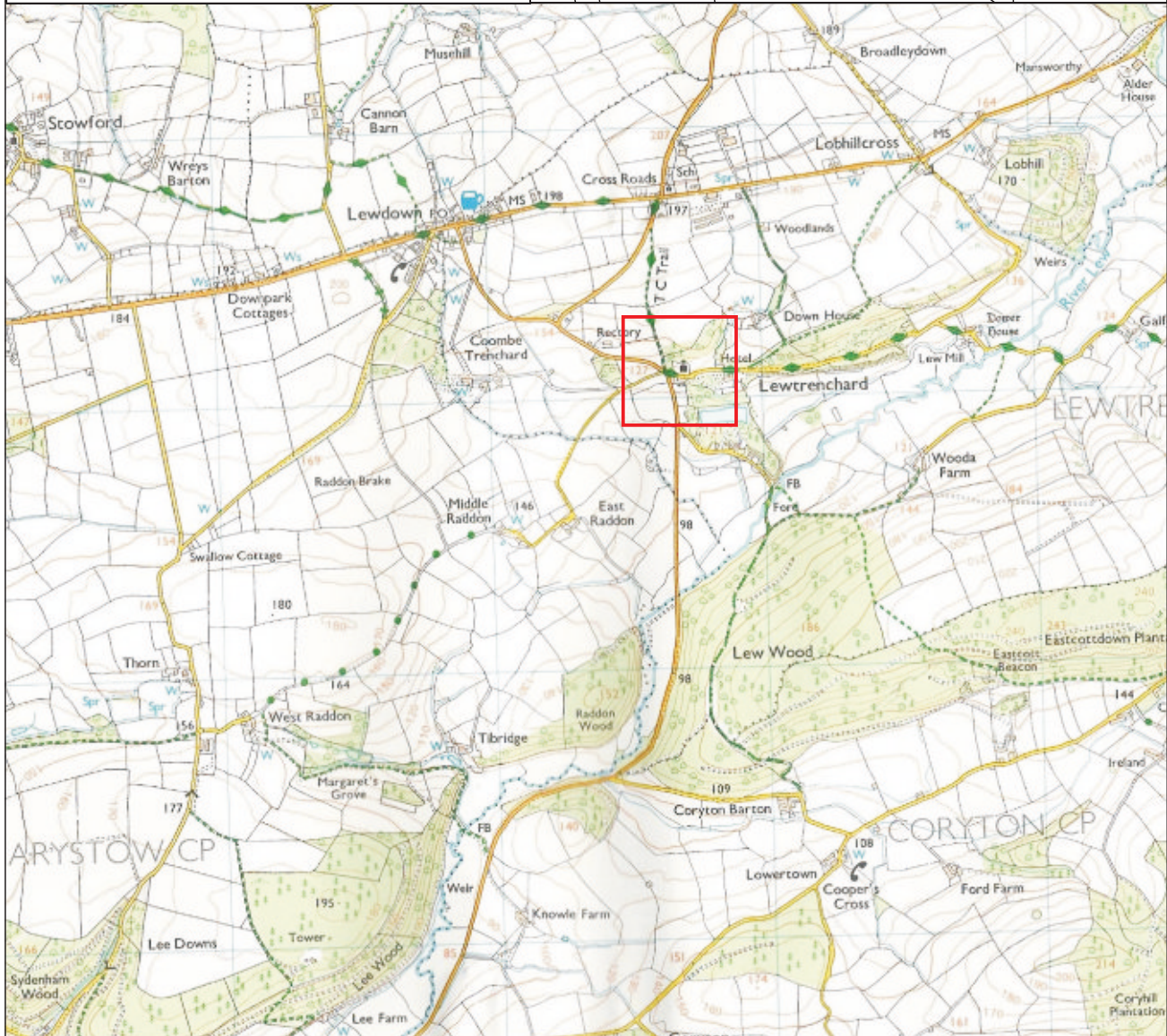
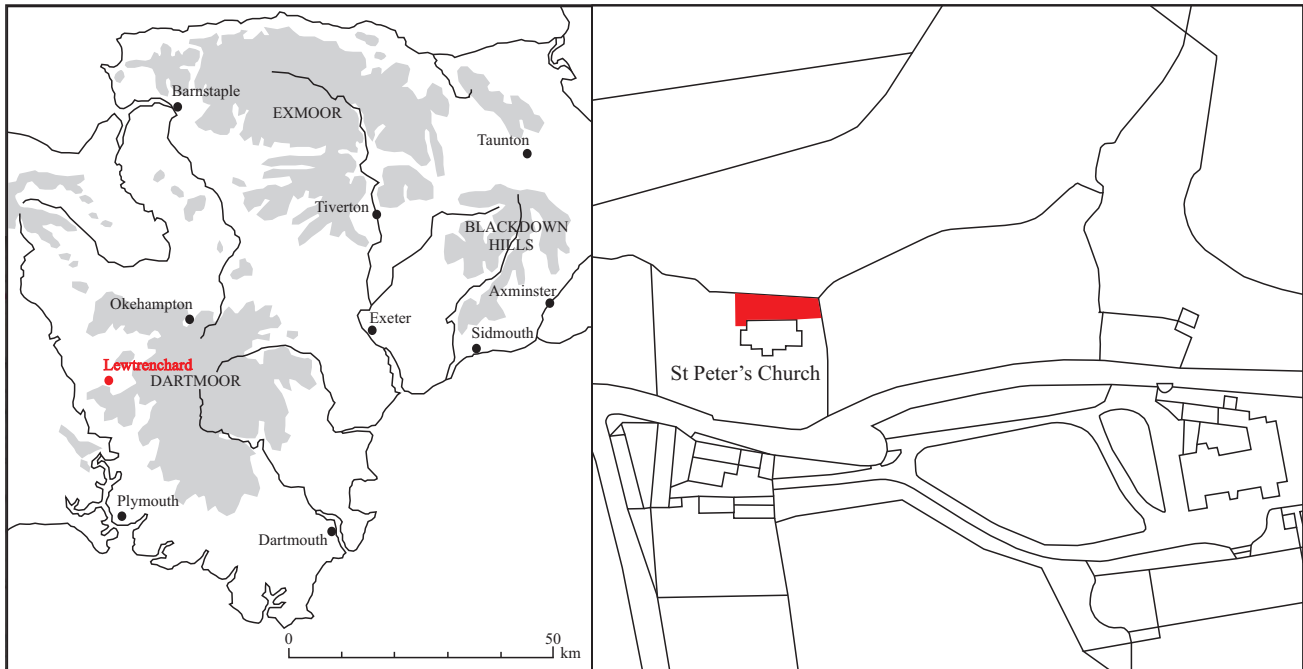
SACRED
TO THE MEMORY OF
SAMUEL JOHNS
OF THIS PARISH
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE
THE 30TH DAY OF MARCH 1852
AGED 52 YEARS

[...]earth. But he comes and the soul hastes away
And vain is entreaty or prayer
The summons he brings we all must obey
Then, OH for that summons prepare.

ALSO OF MARY
WIFE OF THE ABOVE
DIED SEPT 20TH 1885
AGED 88 YEARS

OA1000-14

IN
LOVING MEMORY
OF
ELIZABETH
THE BELOVED WIFE OF
FRANCIS ALLEN
WHO DIED MAY 24TH 1897
AGED 46 YEARS



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Fig. 1 Location of site.

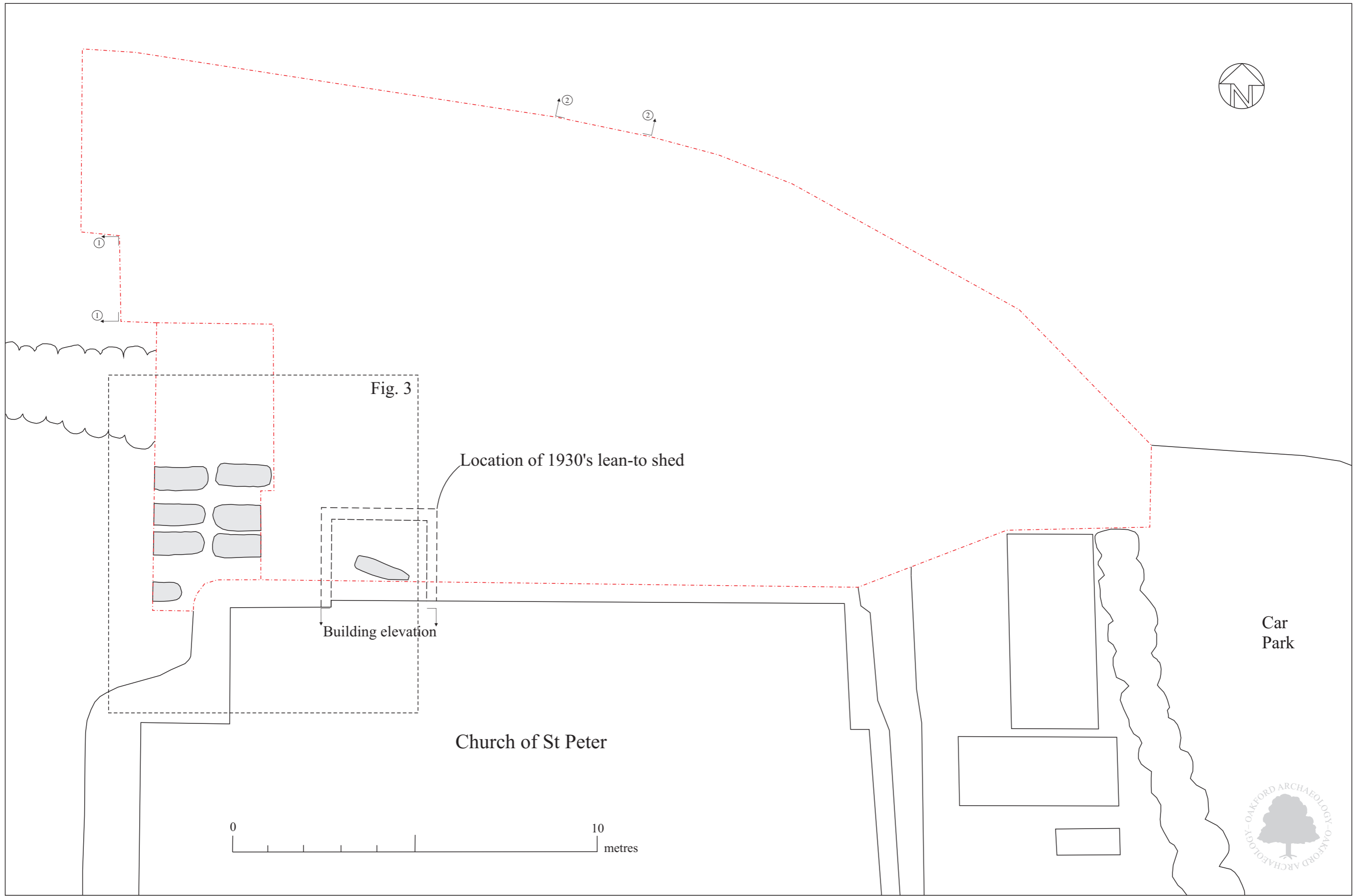


Fig. 2 Plan of development area showing location of observations.

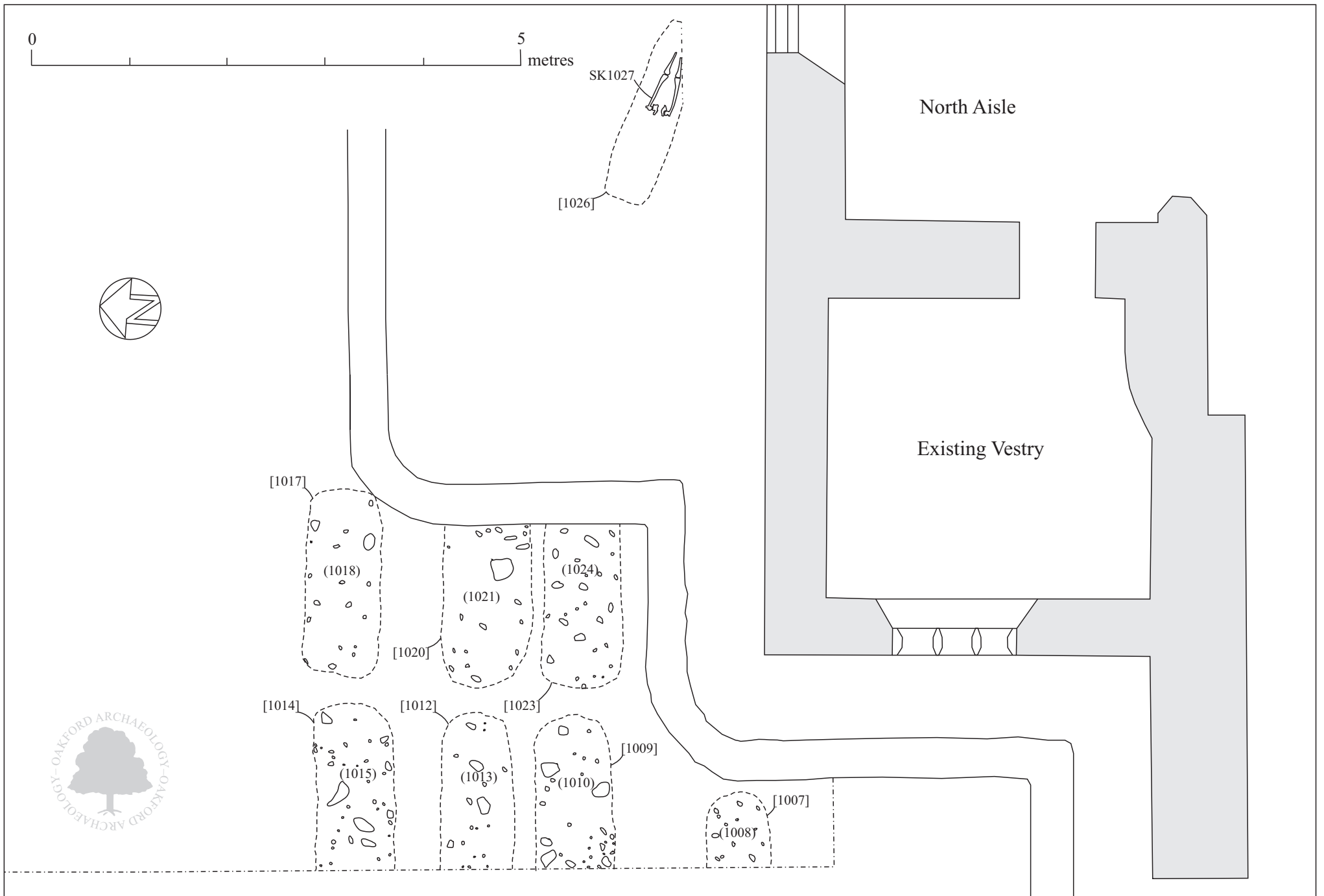
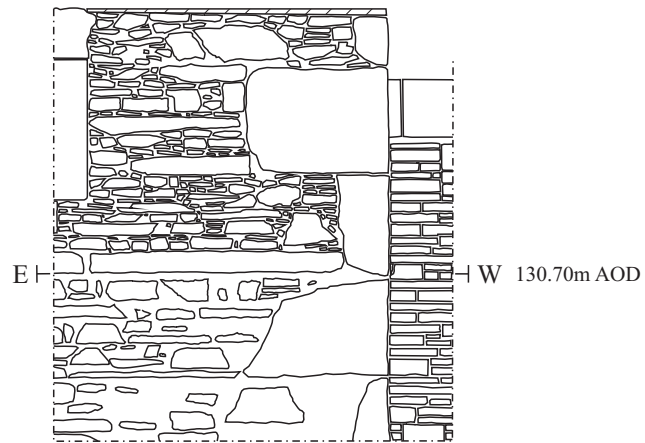


Fig. 3 Plan of area outside existing vestry showing location of observations.



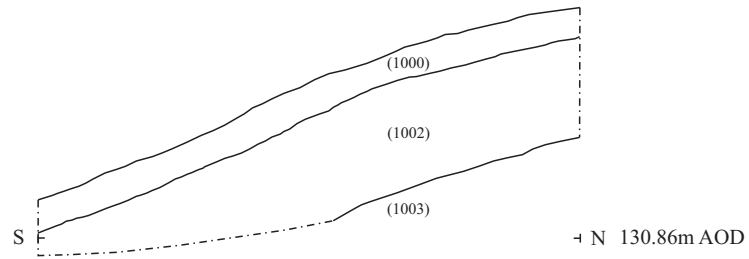
0 2 metres



Fig. 4 General view of exposed external north aisle church fabric.

Section

1



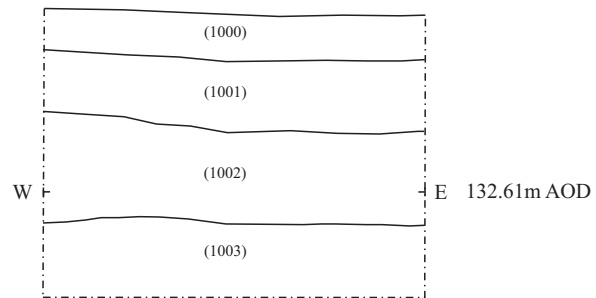
0 2 metres



Fig. 5 Section through soil sequence to north of graveyard.

Section

2



0 2 metres



Fig. 6 Section through soil sequence to the north of St Peter's church.



Pl. 1 General view of graveyard area. 2m scale.
Looking south.



Pl. 2 General view of 19th century graves in
graveyard area. 1m scales. Looking north.



Pl. 3 General view of SK 1027. 1m scale. Looking northwest.



Pl. 4 General view of exposed church fabric. 2m scale. Looking southeast.



Pl. 5 General view of gravestones. Looking south.



Pl. 6 Close-up view of gravestone OA1000-1.



Pl. 7 Close-up view of gravestone OA1000-2.



Pl. 8 Close-up view of gravestone OA1000-3.



Pl. 9 Close-up view of gravestone OA1000-4.



Pl. 10 Close-up view of gravestone OA1000-5.



Pl. 11 Close-up view of gravestone OA1000-6.



Pl. 12 Close-up view of gravestone OA1000-7.



Pl. 13 Close-up view of gravestone OA1000-8.



Pl. 14 Close-up view of gravestone OA1000-9.



Pl. 15 Close-up view of gravestone OA1000-10.



Pl. 16 Close-up view of gravestone OA1000-11.



Pl. 17 Close-up view of gravestone OA1000-12.



Pl. 18 Close-up view of gravestone OA1000-13.



Pl. 19 Close-up view of gravestone OA1000-14.