

Fig. 2 All Saints Church showing the location of drainage works

observed in the soakaway. The earliest deposit, seen in the base of the drain run, was a mid reddish-brown pebbly sandy silt (1008). Overlying this was a mid, slightly reddish, brown clayey sandy silt (1009). Cut into this was the old drain trench (1010) of uncertain dimensions but probably no more than c.0.35m wide and 0.35m deep. It contained the drain to be replaced which consisted of a ceramic pipe protected in places by horizontal slabs above and below it (1011). The backfill was of mid brown slightly sandy silt (1012). The uppermost deposit, sealing backfill 1011, was a dark brown sandy silt capped by grass (1013). Within the final c.1.3m of the trench towards the church a distinct deposit not recorded elsewhere was observed in the sides of the trench. It was a mixture of stone rubble, pale brown mortar and mid brown silt (1014). This deposit produced a fragment of a detached gritstone shaft c.0.2m in diameter with a surviving length of c.0.4m. This shaft was broadly dated to the period 1100 – 1350. The stratigraphic position of 1014 is uncertain but it appears to have been cut by 1010.

A new section of drain trench was dug at 90° to the north wall of the chancel, c.4m east of the junction of it and the east wall of the north aisle, to meet the drain trench described above at a point c.4m north-east of the north-eastern corner of the north aisle. This trench was also c.0.4m wide and 0.4m deep. The stratigraphy was the same as in the church end of the drain run described above. No other work of archaeological significance was undertaken in this area.

## **5.2 The South-Eastern Soakaway, Drain Run and Gutter Replacement (Figs 2-3)**

This soakaway was located c.9m south of the south-east corner of the south aisle. It was c.2m in diameter and was dug to a maximum depth of c.1.2m. The lowest deposit seen in this soakaway, probably the natural subsoil, was a firm mid – dark reddish-brown sandy silt with occasional pebbles (2000). Above 2000 were the remnants of a skeleton (2018; Fig. 3a) largely removed by later cuts, lying in the centre of the trench. All that remained was the left arm and left leg but if still in-situ, these bones suggested an east-west alignment with the head to the west. Possibly contemporary with 2018 was another incomplete inhumation (2008). The cranium, part of the spine, some of the left ribs and the right arm, crossed over the chest, survived indicating an east-west alignment with the head to the west. At a similar level was a third burial (2016), also badly disturbed. Parts of the spine, ribs, pelvis legs and feet survived although the pelvis had been damaged in the past and all the surviving bone was soft and relatively fragile. Again it was on an east-west alignment with the head originally to the west. Gritty ware pottery of the 11<sup>th</sup> /12<sup>th</sup> century was recovered from the immediate vicinity of this body. All of these skeletons were left in-situ since they were at, or just below, the depth limit for the soakaway.

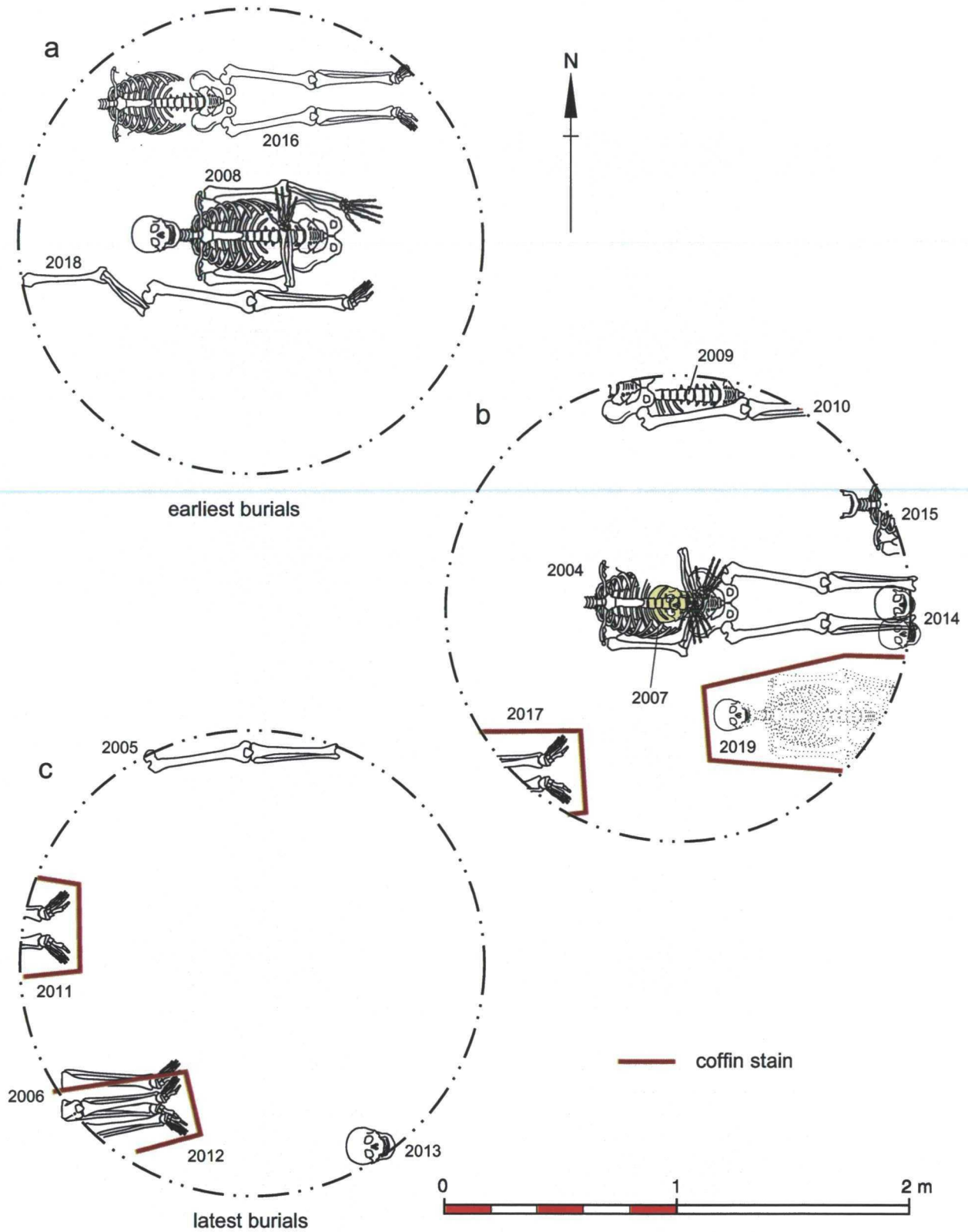


Fig. 3 Burials in the south-eastern soakaway

Later than 2018, and in the south-east part of the trench, were the in-situ remains of a female skeleton (2019; Fig. 3b). Only the cranium was exposed and much of the skeleton lay beyond the limit of the trench. A staining forming a regular pattern around the head, at the west end, seemed to indicate a burial within a coffin. Possibly contemporary with 2019, and lying at the northern limit of the trench, was an articulated right leg and part of a pelvis (2010), possibly part of an east-west burial with the head to the west. At a broadly similar stratigraphic horizon, and lying in the centre of the excavation, was an isolated human cranium (2007). No other bone was found in the vicinity so it would appear that this may have been reburied in this location as the result of the disturbance of an earlier grave. Also at this level, protruding from the eastern edge of the trench, were two skulls (2014) one somewhat crushed and partially over the other. It was not possible to establish if these were formal burials and they may be displaced remains similar to 2007.

Towards the northern edge of the soakaway, and very probably later than 2010, was a short section of articulated spine and a sacrum (2009). No ribs were located around the vertebrae but these may have been disturbed and removed at some time in the past. Possibly roughly contemporary with 2009 was a disturbed burial towards the north-eastern limit of the trench. It consisted of the right shoulder, the mandible and part of the spine (2015). The mandible appeared to belong to a male.

Later than 2009 and 2015 was a nearly complete skeleton (2004; Fig. 3b) from which was missing the head, the left humerus and the left ribs. The arms were crossed over the pelvis. Examination of the pelvis suggested a female burial. This body was aligned east-west and the missing head clearly originally lay to the west. A greenish stain running close to and north and south of 2004 was probably the remains of a coffin. Possibly roughly contemporary with 2004, and protruding a very short distance into the trench, was a dark rectilinear stain, almost certainly a coffin stain. Within the eastern limit of the stain was a single articulated foot (2017), perhaps belonging to a skeleton most of which lay to the west.

Later than 2004, along the northern limit of the soakaway, was an articulated right leg and foot (2005; Fig. 3c). This seemed to indicate an east-west burial with the head to the west but this could not be confirmed since any further remains lay beyond the limit of excavation. Possibly roughly contemporary with 2005 and just within the north-western limit of the soakaway was a pair of articulated feet (2011). A rectilinear stain around the feet probably indicated the remains of a decayed coffin aligned east-west. At a similar level, and protruding from the south-west limit of the soakaway, was a pair of articulated lower legs and feet (2012) within a dark stain also suggesting a coffin. This burial was slightly unusual as it

appeared to be aligned approximately east-north-east to west-south-west whereas most of the other burials were on a more precise east-west alignment. Another burial was found in the south-west of the soakaway just above the level of 2012. It consisted of the lower legs and feet (2006) of a skeleton and was originally in a coffin which had intricate metal handles. Of uncertain stratigraphic location, but considered to be possibly slightly later than 2012, was an isolated male skull (2013) located towards the south-east edge of the soakaway. No other bones were found near, or in association with it, so it would appear to have come from an earlier, disturbed burial.

Sealing the latest burials was a layer of mid reddish-brown sandy silt with moderate pebbles (2001). This was probably natural subsoil which had been redeposited due to grave digging. Overlying 2001 was a modern accumulation deposit of dark greyish-brown sandy silt (2002) capped by grass (2003) forming the current modern ground surface.

A new drain run was dug between the soakaway and the south-eastern corner of the south aisle. This trench was c.0.5 – 0.55m wide and 0.8 – 0.9m deep. In the base of the drain run was a firm, mid reddish-brown sandy silt with moderate pebbles (2020) which was probably the natural subsoil. At intervals along the trench, c.0.6m, c.2m and c.6m from the south aisle wall, were groups of disarticulated human bone (2026 and 2028-9), possibly charnel. Approximately 4m south of the south aisle wall was a possible infant burial (2027) although the excavation method made it difficult to confirm this. Some 7.6m south of the south aisle wall and c.1.4m north of the soakaway was a definite infant burial (2021 = 2025). Although disturbed, the ribs, the spine the pelvis and part of the right leg were noted. it appeared to be aligned east-west with the head to the west. Probably later than 2025 – 29 was a mid reddish-brown sandy silt with occasional pebbles (2022). This was probably natural subsoil which had been redeposited by the digging of graves in the vicinity. Above this was a dark greyish-brown sandy silt (2023) capped by grass (2024) forming the current modern ground surface.

The third component of the work in this part of the churchyard was the replacement of a stone gutter with a more efficient modern drain along the outside of the south aisle wall east of the porch. The trench dug for the replacement drain was approximately 0.85m deep and 0.65m wide.

Although the methodology employed during the excavation made it difficult to see the archaeological features, it was possible to create a chronology for this area of works.

The earliest deposits encountered related to the graveyard soil associated with burials, although it was not possible to define the differences between earlier and later graveyard soil. The level of disturbance gave a homogenous deposit which can be described as a mid to dark reddish-brown sandy silt (2039). This deposit produced some roof tile, with nail holes, of the 14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> century and two fragments of Dutch glazed floor tile dated to the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

Cut into the graveyard soil described above, although no separate cut number was assigned, was the grave cut for a stone coffin (2035; Pl. 2). The grave and coffin were located roughly 2.75m east of the east wall of the porch. They lay immediately to the south of the south aisle wall foundations and extended into the south edge of the new drain trench. No complete dimensions for the coffin could be taken, but it was at least c.0.83m x 0.35m x 0.25m, and it was left in-situ. No lid was noted but the coffin did have a separate niche for the head at the west end of the coffin. No attempt was made to empty the coffin, largely due to time constraints and reluctance to disturb any more than necessary.



**Plate 2** Stone coffin (2035) adjacent to the south wall of the church

The eastern half of this coffin had been completely truncated by a feature backfilled with a mixture of light brown mortar and mid brown sandy silt containing limestone fragments (2036) interpreted as a backfilled robber cut for a buttress. The full dimensions of this cut could not be ascertained but it was around 1.3m across, east-west. Between c.5.45m and