

CHAPEL OF ST. MARY MAGDALEN
RIPON. COUNTY MONUMENT:110

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

FEBRUARY - MAY 1989.

ENGLISH HERIGATE

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KEY TO CONTEXT NUMBERS

CONTEXT

1050	-	BRICK
1051	-	LIGHT BROWN SAND
1052	-	BROWN SANDY SOIL
1053	-	ORANGE BROWN SANDY CLAY
1054	-	GREY BROWN LOAM
1055	-	GRASS TURF AND TOP SOIL
1056	-	BLUE BLACK SANDY LOAM
1057	-	BLUE BLACK CINDER
1058	-	PINK MORTAR
1059	-	WALL PLASTER
1060	-	LIME
1061	-	CHARCOAL
1062	-	PEA GRAVEL
1063	-	MAGNESIUM LIMESTONE
1064	-	WATER WORN/MORANIC COBBLES
1065	-	BONE FRAGMENTS
1066	-	WOOD FRAGMENTS
1067	-	HARDCORE
1068	-	RED SANDSTONE
1069	-	YELLOW SANDSTONE
1070	-	LIGHT GREY CLAY

KEY TO PHOTOGRAPHS

PRINT No.

1. FEATURE I - TRENCH FF
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2. TRENCH A - BRICK BOX TRENCH.
FACING WEST
3. FEATURE III - TRENCH A - VERTICAL
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FACING NORTH.
4. FEATURE VI - TRENCH B - ARRANGED
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FACING NORTH
5. SKELETON A - TRENCH B.
FACING NORTH
6. SKELETON C - SOAKAWAY A.
FACING SOUTH
7. TRENCH J - FEATURE IX, XI
FACING EAST
8. TRENCH J - FEATURE IX, X, XI
FACING WEST.
9. FEATURE X - SINGLE MAGNESIUM LIMESTONE
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10. FEATURE XI - SINGLE MAGNESIUM
LIMESTONE AND ARRANGED BRICKS.
TRENCH J - VERTICAL.
11. SKELETON D AND FEATURE XI
FACING EAST.
12. SKELETON E.
FACING EAST.
13. SKELETON F.
FACING WEST.
14. FEATURE XII - ARRANGED LIMESTONE,
WATER WORN/MORANIC COBBLES.
TRENCH JJ - FACING SOUTH EAST.

CHAPEL OF ST.MARY MAGDALEN
 ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
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LOCATION:

THE CHAPEL OF ST. MARY MAGDALEN IS SITUATED ON THE EASTERN SIDE OF MAGDALENS ROAD WHICH IS THE NORTH-EAST APPROACH TO THE CITY OF RIPON (fig.I).

STRUCTURAL DETAILS:

THE FABRIC	-	SUBSTANTIALLY 15TH CENTURY - HAMMER DRESSED LIMESTONE
THE ROOF	-	LOW PITCHED. FINIAL ON EAST GABLE. BELLCOTE ON WEST GABLE
ENTRANCES	-	SOUTH DOORWAY - 12TH CENTURY SEMI CIRCULAR ARCH. NORTH DOORWAY.
WINDOWS	-	EAST - FOUR LIGHT PERPENDICULAR SOUTH I - PERPENDICULAR SOUTH II - PERPENDICULAR SOUTH II - EARLY ENGLISH - LYCHNOSCOPE WEST - TREFOILED, EARLY ENGLISH. NORTH I - PERPENDICULAR NORTH II - PERPENDICULAR

INTERIOR:

NAVE	-	MEDIEVAL STONE CARVED FONT, 15TH CENTURY.
CHANCEL	-	MEDIEVAL STONE ALTER. TESSELATED PAVEMENT, ROMANO BRITISH. LATE PERPENDICULAR WOODEN SCREEN.
FLOOR	-	CLAMP BRICKS.
WALLS - NAVE	-	RENDERED AND WHITEWASHED.
CHANCEL	-	EXPOSED COURSED MASONRY.

BACKGROUND

THE CHAPEL

Our present understanding of the Chapel of St. Mary Magdalen is unsatisfactory since we are unable to be specific about either the foundation date or the later structural chronology of the building.

The surviving documentary sources related to the hospital of St. Mary Magdalen are predominantly from the later Medieval Period and are preoccupied with the economics of the hospital complex and as such are not directly concerned with the structure under examination.

The earliest surviving reference pertaining to the foundation of the Hospital was made at an Inquisition held in Ripon on the 5th September 1342 ^{*I} at which it was proposed that Archbishop Thurstan had been the Founder of St. Mary Magdalens Hospital. As this statement was reliant on the credibility of a two hundred year old oral tradition one cannot draw any firm conclusions from this other than to note that an Early 12th Century foundation date would correlate with the earliest masonry work identified on the Chapel. Although the fabric of the Chapel is predominantly 15th Century in origin, the Southern doorways semi circular arch is of a later 11th/early 12th Century style. However, to draw conclusions about the foundation date of an Ecclesiastical structure from a doorway would be unwise given that such features can be readily dismantled from one building and rebuilt into another which is often found to be the case. The uncertainty surrounding the chronology of the Chapel structure justifies a detailed analysis of the fabric.

*I Mem. of Ripon (SURT. SOC.) i, 223.

THE HOSPITAL

The Chapel was but one unit of the whole hospital complex, the total extent of which cannot be discerned from the documentary sources, however it is possible to list a number of the hospitals components.

The 1342 Inquiry *II noted that Henry de Shirokes (appointed Master of the Hospital in 1317 *III) had demolished a ruinous building known to have been the former Leper House which was identified as being on the North side of the Hospital.

In 1535 *IV a reference is made to the existence of the Masters House and Orchard, the location of which is not given.

According to an illustration in a pamphlet dated 1854 *V where the Chapel is viewed from the South-West, three additional structures are clearly depicted, namely:-

- I A single storey thatched structure separated from the South-East corner of the Chapel by a hand gate.
- II A single storey lean-to structure between the buttress on the West gable and the South-West corner of the Chapel.
- III A two storey 'cottage' like structure attached to the West gable on the North-West corner with a pantile roof and twin flue stack in the Eastern gable of the same.

Furthermore, from the south-West corner of the Chapel travelling in a Westerly direction is what appears to be a 'drystone' garden wall to the cottage above, through which an opening is shown with three steps up. This would suggest that at the time of the illustration the ground level against the West gable of the Chapel was considerably higher than at the present.

I have been informed by the present occupant of the farm 'The Beeches' that the farm house was originally situated to the North-West of the Chapel and was only removed to its present location at the turn of the century. This may indicate the presence of other Hospital related structures to the North of the Chapel.

Furthermore, the identification of a wall of similar character to that of the Chapel incorporated into the courtyard complex of buildings to the East of the Chapel may suggest the site of further medieval structures.

*II Mem.of Ripon(SURT.SOC.) i,223

*III YORK ARCHIEPS REG.GREENFIELD ii FOC.132

*IV VAZOR ECCL.V,252.

*V ARCHITECTURE,HISTORICAL PICTURESQUE - PUBLISHED BY T.FENTEMAN & SONS
LEEDS 1854.

BURIALS:

No surface evidence suggests that the open area of grassland surrounding the Chapel had ever been used as a cemetery site. The only documentary reference to burials at the Hospital comes from the 1341 ^{*VI} Inquisition at which it was related that those dying at the Hospital were buried at the same establishment by licence of the Chapter of Ripon. It is probable that this refers to the internment of both patients and staff.

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RIPON. COUNTY MONUMENT 110

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CHAPEL INTERIOR

TRENCH E

(See fig. 1:2, 5:1)

LENGTH - 2:0 m.

WIDTH - 23 cm.

DEPTH BELOW PRESENT FLOOR LEVEL - 27 cm.

TRENCH EE

(See fig. 1:2, 5:2)

LENGTH - 2.80 m.

WIDTH - 35 cm.

DEPTH BELOW PRESENT FLOOR LEVEL - 28 cm.

TRENCH F

(See fig. 1:2, 6:1, 6:2)

LENGTH - 2.52 m.

WIDTH - 38 cm.

DEPTH BELOW PRESENT FLOOR LEVEL - 34.5 cm.

TRENCH FF

(See fig. 1:2, 6:3, 6:4)

LENGTH - 3.30 m.

WIDTH - 37 cm.

DEPTH BELOW PRESENT FLOOR LEVEL - 36 cm.

TRENCH G

(See fig. 1:2, 7:1)

LENGTH - 4.87 m.

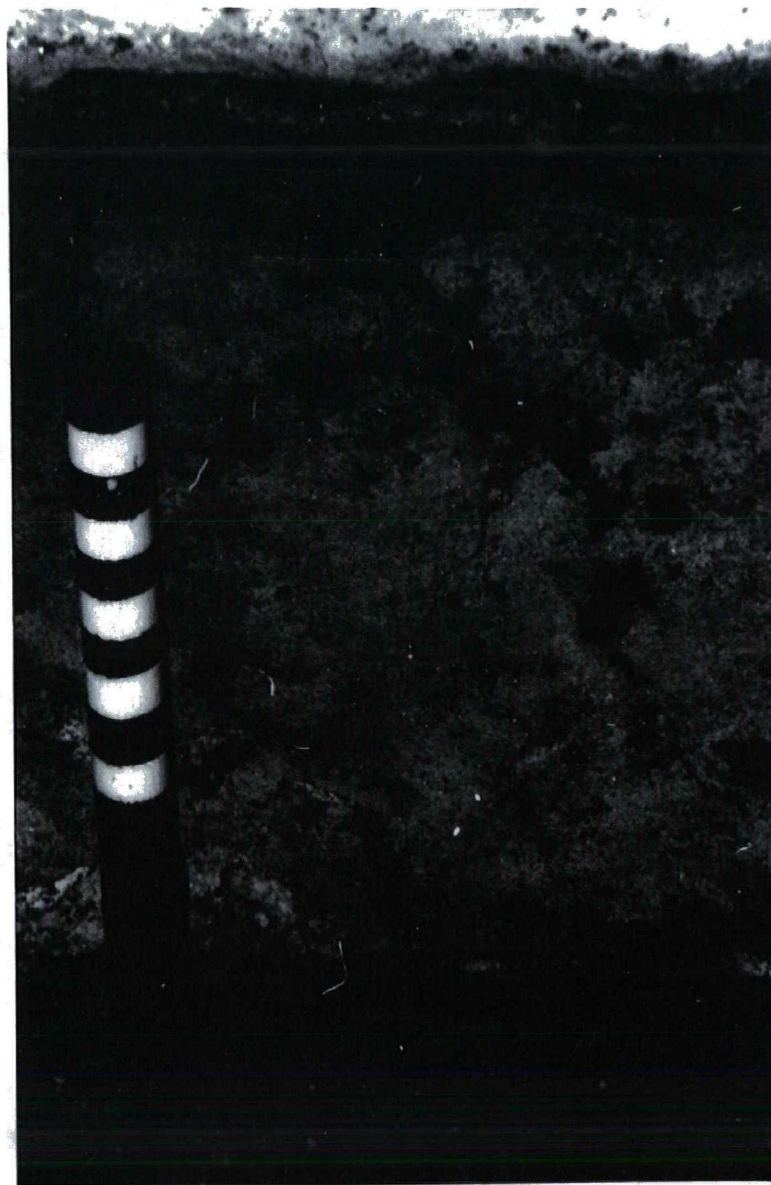
WIDTH - 38 cm.

DEPTH BELOW PRESENT FLOOR LEVEL - 29 cm.

FEATURE I

(See fig. 6:3)

An archaeological feature of note was that in the South facing section of Trench FF (See fig. 6:1), at the existing floor level the rendered surface of the North wall of the Nave gave way to wall plaster of an earlier date that continued to a depth of 20cm. below the existing floor level. This would suggest that an earlier floor level was considerably lower than the present, as the wall plaster would not be taken down below a floor level. However, from the depth of excavation no evidence of this earlier floor finish was identified, although it is possible that the exposed orange brown sandy clay (context no. 1053) had been the bed on which the earlier floor level was layed, as the depth of the same correlates approximately with the depth to which the wall plaster was taken.



1.

CHAPEL EXTERIOR

TRENCH A.

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

LENGTH - 17.10 m.

WIDTH - 39 cm.

DEPTH BELOW PRESENT GROUND LEVEL - MAX. 44 cm.

The brick box trench identified immediately beneath the concrete apron was most probably constructed during the late 19th century to reduce what otherwise would have been a high external ground level in relation to the lower internal floor level, this would have the effect of reducing rising damp in the masonry wall of the Chapel.

From the East gable two clay land drains surrounded in pea grave entered the trench at the same level as the brick box trench. This would have a similar effect of reducing the water table along the Eastern gable. At the Western end of Trench A the brick box drain apparently continued but in a South-Westerly direction. To obtain the required depth of Trench A it was necessary to remove the base of the brick box trench and excavate the bricks sandy bed and then reduce the orange brown sandy clay sub soil in order to achieve a total depth of 42cm. at the Eastern end of the trench and 60cm. at the Western end of Trench A and in so doing a further archaeological feature was exposed.

FEATURE IIA

(See fig. 2:1)

An alignment of Worked Magnesium Limestone blocks protruding from the base of the South-East corner wall of the Chapel.

The stones were all a uniform height of 12cm. and embedded within the orange brown sandy clay. Although the stone blocks were tight fitting and dry jointed they were partially covered with a 1cm. deep coating of pink/red coloured mortar, the function of which had been to bond the bricks of the above drain to this masonry. The fabric of Feature IIA correlates with the 15th century Fabric of Chapel, it is possible that it is of a similar age.

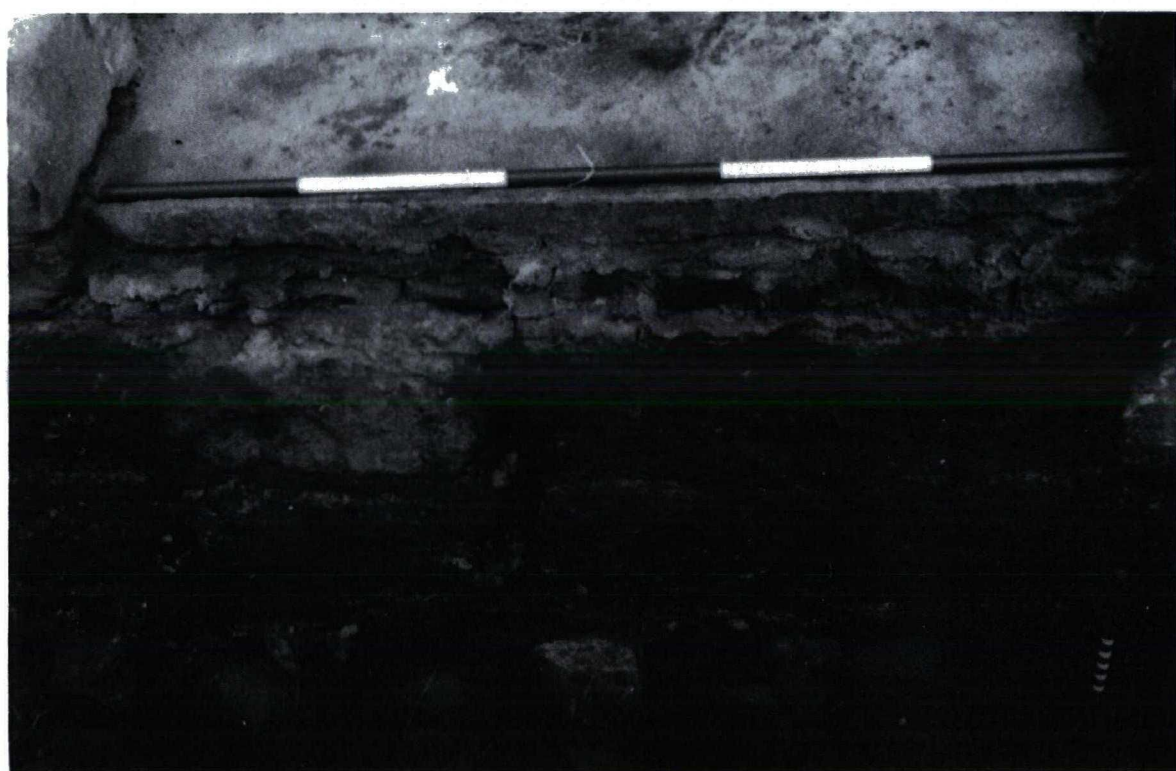
FEATURE IIB

(See fig.2:1)

An alignment of arranged water worn/moranic cobbles protruding from the base of the South wall of the Chapel. the stones were all of a uniform height of 11cm. and as with feature IIA they were bedded within the sub soil.



2.



3.

It is likely that these two features (IIA/B) although differing in form share a common function, i.e. the reinforcement and support of the South wall of the Chapel. The arrangement of these stones within the sandy clay sub soil implies that the Chapel's foundations are to be found at a similar level, however confirmation of this would require the excavation of a trench exceeding the depth of Trench A.

FEATURE III

Following the excavation of Trench A, it was noted that a vertical joint extended below both reveals of the southern entrance, below what is now the stone threshold. This would further suggest that in the past the internal floor level was lower than now exists. (SEE FEATURE I)

TRENCH B.

(See fig. 3:1 - 3:4)

LENGTH - 13.00 m.

WIDTH - MAX. 58 cm.

DEPTH - BELOW PRESENT GROUND LEVEL - 57 cm.

The spoil removed from this trench contained fragments of Victorian and more recent pottery sherds and glass fragments, these were recovered from the blue black sandy loam deposit. (Context No.1056).

FEATURE IV

(See fig. 3:1)

An arrangement of four large water worn/moranic sandstone boulders abutted against the South-Western corner of the Chapel.

The stones were aligned North-West/South-East, i.e. on alignment with the South and North walls of the Chapel. the stones were bedded within the orange brown sandy clay (context no.1053), situated some 13cm. below the present ground level. Although the stones were dry jointed their upper facing surface was covered by a 2cm. deep coating of pink mortar. This arrangement of stones most probably functioned as the foundations to a wall. (SEE FEATURE VI).

Some 2.20m. to the North of Feature IV, Feature V was revealed in Trench B.

FEATURE V

(See fig. 3:1)

An arrangement of worked magnesium limestone and yellow sandstone blocks protruding from the base of the Western Buttress on its South, West and East facing elevations.

These 'Footings' were coursed and stepped, however the form and dimensions of this masonry varied. Feature V was bedded within the orange brown sandy clay sub soil.

The 'Footings' for the buttress were dry jointed and tight fitting, however from within one such joint from the South-East corner of the buttress at the point at which it abutts the West wall of the Chapel, two fragments of 17th Century red brown glazed pottery sherds were recovered. From this evidence it would seem probable that the buttress was constructed sometime during or shortly after the 17th Century, possibly connected with Dr. Richard Hooke's *VI rebuilding programme at the hospital complex in 1674.

Some way to the North of Feature V, Feature VI was revealed in Trench B.

FEATURE VI
(See Fig. 3:1)

An arrangement of three large water worn/moranic sandstone boulders, comparable in arrangement, alignment and form with those previously identified (See Feature IV).

The stones were bonded with pink mortar and had a loosely packed core of fragmented sandstone and river stone.

As with Feature IV the arrangement of stones was bedded within the orange brown sandy clay sub soil and situated some 11cm. below the present ground level. The feature did not pass beneath the Western wall of the Chapel.

Some 93cm. North of the North-West corner of the Chapel, the remains of Skeleton A were identified 48cm. below the present ground level, the remains were contained within the orange brown sandy clay.

SKELETON A
(See fig. 3:2)

ORIENTATION - EAST/WEST, FACING EAST.

DEPTH - BELOW PRESENT GROUND LEVEL - 48 cm.

POSTURE - UNDETERMINED.

AGE - ADULT.

SEX - UNDETERMINED.

COMMENTS

Only the fibular and tibia of the left leg were revealed, recorded and removed, the lower right leg having been disturbed during the trench excavation.

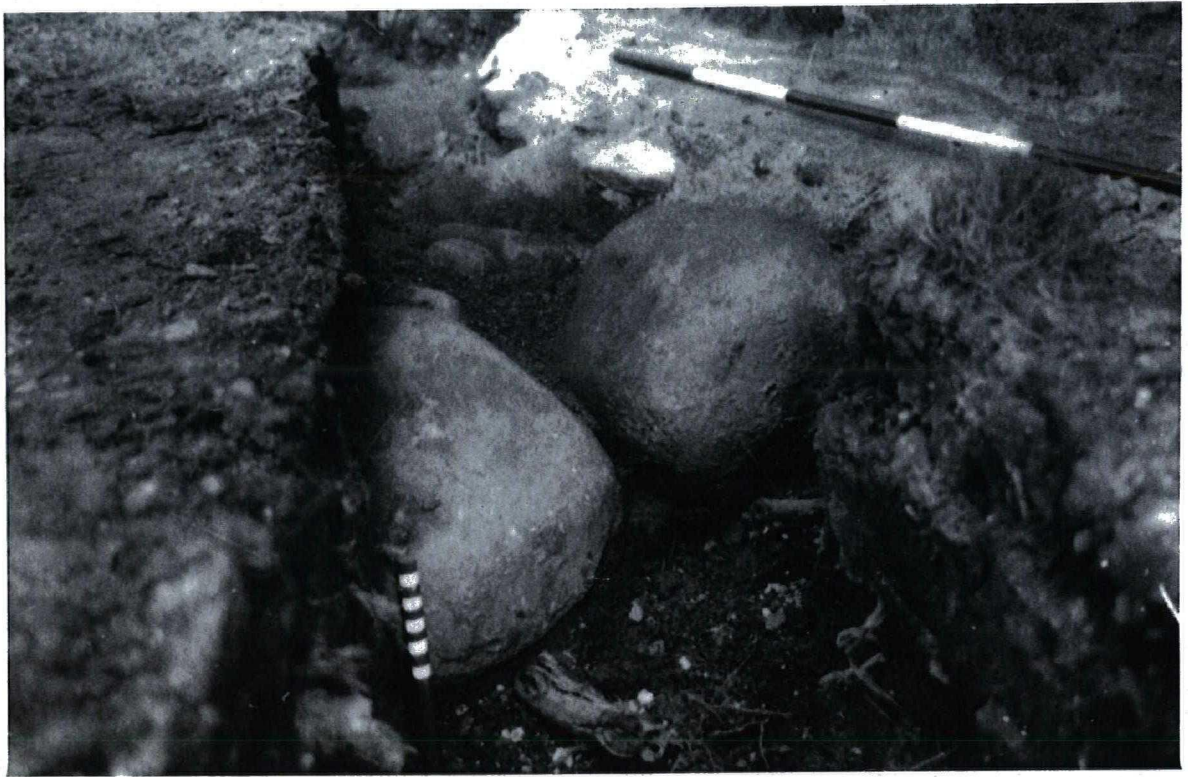
No related ankles or feet were identified, it is possible that they had been previously disturbed/removed when the North-West buttress was constructed.

No grave cut was identified.

No burial container was identified.

No grave goods were found.

*VI Mem.of Ripon (SURT.SOC.)ii 307,308



4.



5.

The excavation of Trench B, extended a further 4.92m. No further features of archaeological interest were identified within Trench B.

The stratigraphy of the Northern end of this trench had been previously disturbed by:

- A. Trench excavations associated with the laying of a glazed earthenware drain (aligned North/South).
- B. The remains of a fire (SEE FIG. 3:3, 3:4). Amongst the burnt earth and charcoal deposits were a large quantity of iron nails and tacks. This area of burning was attributed to the most recent restoration of the Chapel's roof.

SOAKAWAY A.

(See fig. 1:2, 3:5, 3:8)

During the excavation of Soakaway A, the remains of two skeletons were disturbed.

SKELETON B.

(See fig. 3:6)

ORIENTATION - EAST/WEST, FACING EAST.

DEPTH - BELOW PRESENT GROUND LEVEL - 62 cm.

POSTURE - UNDETERMINED.

AGE - ADULT.

SEX - UNDETERMINED.

COMMENTS:

The torso and cranium of the skeleton were disturbed and removed during the excavation of the soakaway. However the pelvis remained in-situ in the West facing section of the soakaway.

Directly beneath this burial a 13th Century pottery sherd was recovered.

Furthermore 8cm. beneath Skeleton B a 3cm. deep deposit of light grey clay (context no.1070) was identified, it is suspected that this interruption in the otherwise consistent stratigraphy indicates the base of the grave cut.

No evidence of a burial container was identified.

No evidence of grave goods was identified.

SKELETON C.

(See fig. 3:5 and 3:6)

ORIENTATION - EAST/WEST, FACING EAST.

DEPTH - BELOW PRESENT GROUND LEVEL - 39 cm.

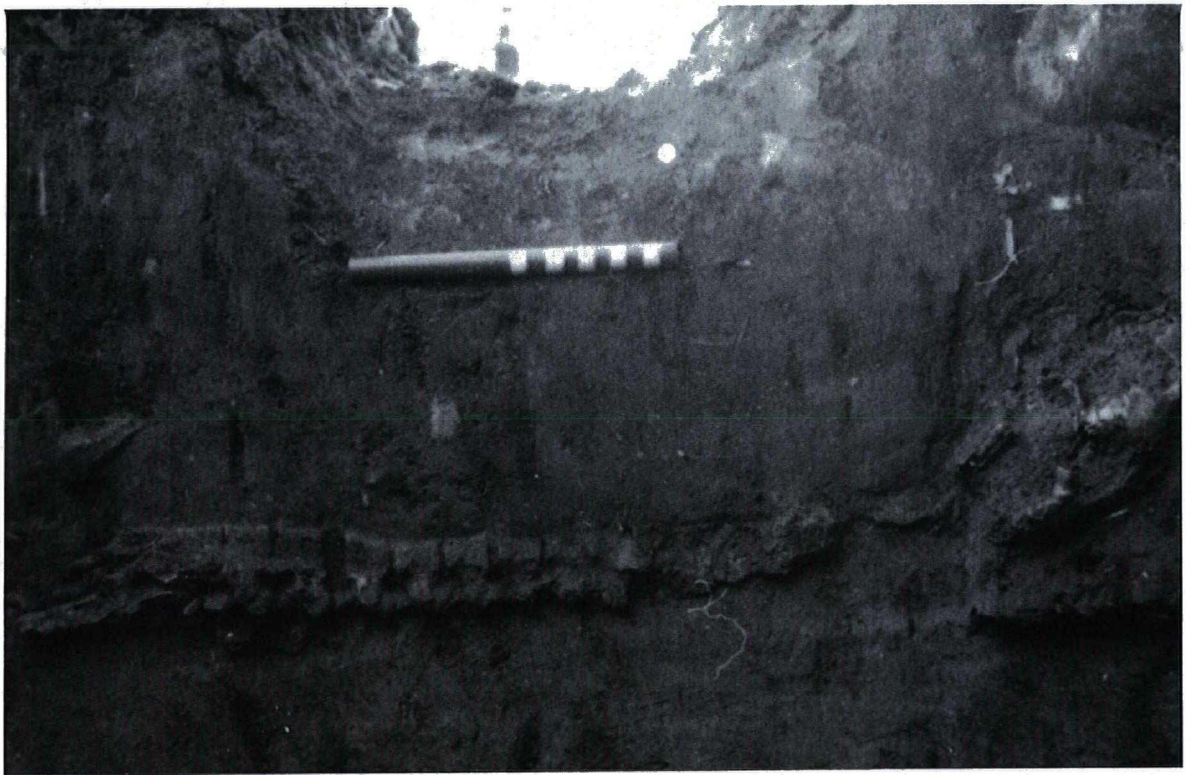
POSTURE - PRONE

AGE - ADULT.

SEX - FEMALE.

COMMENTS:

The right side of the skeleton including the humerus, radius, ulna, ribs, pelvis and femur had been disturbed and removed during trench excavation. The cranium and vertebral column remained in-situ in the North facing section of Soakaway A.



As with Skeleton B, a band of light grey coloured clay was identified 4cm. beneath the skeletal remains, it is suspected that this also indicates the base of the grave cut.

No evidence of a burial container was identified.

No evidence of grave goods was identified.

No further features of archaeological interest were identified within Soakaway A, beneath the deposit of light grey coloured clay there was no change in the orange brown sandy clay sub soil. Soakaway A was excavated to a total depth of approximately 2.40m.

TRENCH C

(See fig. 1:2)

LENGTH - 9.60 m.

WIDTH - MAX. 44 cm.

DEPTH - BELOW PRESENT GROUND LEVEL - 34 cm.

The spoil excavated from Trench C contained recent pottery sherds together with a 13th century 'jug' handle and a complete 15/16th century earthenware floor tile, these were all recovered from the blue black sandy soil.

FEATURE VII A.

(See fig. 4:1)

An alignment of Worked Magnesium Limestone blocks were identified protruding from the base of the North Wall of the Chapel. The stonework was of two courses. The upper course of stones were of a uniform height of 12cm. and consisted of roughly worked magnesium limestone blocks. The lower course of stonework projected 6cm. further North than that above, although the stones were of a regular height of 12cm., they were crudely fashioned and consisted of varying stone types which included Red and Yellow sandstone, together with river worn/moranic cobbles, and magnesium limestone. This lower course of masonry was bedded upon the orange brown sandy clay sub soil. Feature VII continued along the East wall of the Chapel. (SEE TRENCH D FEATURE VIIB).

Within the Western end of Trench C, a similar feature was identified aligned North/South, i.e. the Millstone Grit 'footings' protruding from beneath the North-Eastern buttress, since the fabric of these 'footings' correlates with that of the buttress, it is suspected that they may be of a contemporary date.

TRENCH D

(See fig. 1:2)

LENGTH - 7.40 m.

WIDTH - MAX. 60 cm.

DEPTH - BELOW PRESENT GROUND LEVEL - 33 cm.

The spoil excavated from Trench D contained Victorian and more recent Pottery Sherds together with clay tobacco pipe stems and glass fragments, these were all recovered from the blue black sandy loam.

FEATURE VII B.
(See fig. 4:1)

The alignment of Worked Magnesium Limestone blocks identified as Feature VIIA continued around the North-Eastern corner of the Chapel and along the Eastern wall of the Chapel in a Southerly direction for approximately 1.78m. before terminating, as with Feature VIIA. The stonework was bedded upon the orange brown sandy clay sub soil.

No other features of archaeological significance were identified within Trench D. Along the entire length of Trench D, the stratigraphy had been previously disturbed as a result of trench excavations associated with the laying of a French drain.

TRENCH H
(See fig. 1:2, 8:1, 8:2)
LENGTH - 5.10 m.
WIDTH - 29 cm.
DEPTH - BELOW PRESENT GROUND LEVEL - 45 cm.

The spoil excavated from Trench D contained Victorian and more recent pottery sherds along with animal bone fragments, and clay tobacco pipe stems. These were all recovered from the blue black sandy loam.

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

An arrangement of three large water worn/moranic boulders aligned East/West, approximately 8 cm. below the present ground level, the feature was comparable in arrangement and form with those identified in Trench B (Feature IV and VI) differing only in their defficiency of a bonding agent (pink mortar). The stones were bedded upon the orange brown sandy clay sub soil. The arrangement of this feature suggests it may have functioned as the foundations to an earlier wall.

No Further features of archaeological interest were identified within Trench H, similarly the excavation of Soakaway B (SEE FIG. 1:2 AND 8:3-8:6) revealed no features of any archaeological significance.

TRENCH I
(See fig.1:2, 9:1, 9:2)
LENGTH - 5.40 m.
WIDTH - 34 cm.
DEPTH - BELOW PRESENT GROUND LEVEL - 65 cm.

The spoil excavated from Trench I contained Victorian and more recent pottery sherds, glass, clay tobacco pipe stems, wood and animal bone fragments (Ovis aries), these were all recovered from the blue black sandy loam.

In the North-East facing section of this trench a vertical 'cut' like feature was identified (SEE FIG.9:1), the dimensions and form of this would appear to indicate that this feature had been made by a stake/post (most probably associated with an earlier fence of same description).

To the North-West end of this trench, human bone material was excavated and also identified within the sections of this trench (SEE Fig. 9:1 and 9:2). The random assortment and arrangement of the bone material to the North West end would indicate that this trench had been previously disturbed.

No further features of Archaeological interest were identified within Trench I.

TRENCH J

(See fig. 1:2, 10:1, 10:2, 10:3)

LENGTH - 15.70 m.

WIDTH - 31 cm.

DEPTH BELOW PRESENT GROUND LEVEL - 84 cm.

The excavation of Trench J began against the central buttress on the North side of the Chapel and proceeded in a North-North-Westerly direction.

At 4.20m directly beneath 11 cm of turf and top soil the trench bottomed upon a magnesium limestone 'surface' and only after 3.20m was it possible to excavate Trench J to its required depth.

It was suspected that the magnesium limestone was a wall of some description though its edge and extent could only be speculated from that exposed within the trench excavation. After consulting Mr. Rowe, Architect, of Messrs. Hill and Rowe Partnership, it was decided to conserve the feature by realigning Trench J around what was estimated as the Northern extent of this feature. After this was successfully achieved it became possible to examine this feature in greater detail.

FEATURE IX

(See fig. 10:1, 10:2, 10:3)

A single course of magnesium limestone foundations were revealed aligned North-West/South-East, ie parallel to the South and North walls of the Chapel.

The foundations consisted of an inner and outer skin with a hardcore and lime core, the magnesium limestone blocks were roughly worked, dry jointed and tight fitting, all of which were bedded upon the orange brown sandy clay sub-soil.

It is possible that the abrupt termination of the stonework to the East indicates the position of the North-East corner of the former structure. Although the fabric of this feature compares with the 15th Century stonework of the Chapel, it is suspected that feature IX post dates the Chapel on account of