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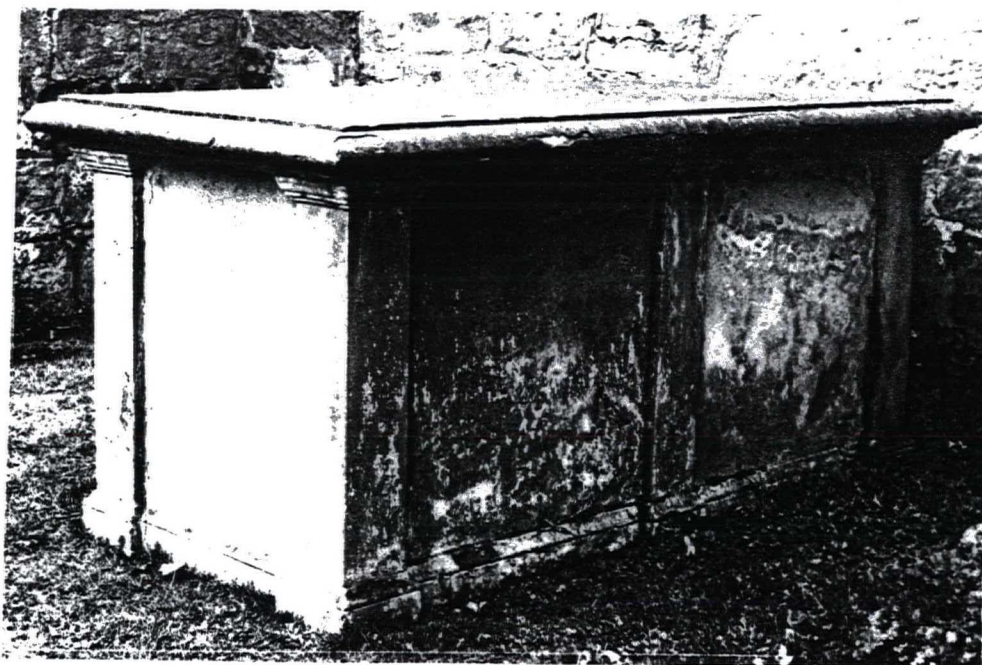
**ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING at
St PETER'S CHURCH, CROFT on TEES**

1/96/1196/PA

(NZ 2888 0984)

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A report to the Environment Agency



26,x,1999

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING at
S^t PETER'S CHURCH, CROFT on TEES
(NZ 2888 0984)

SUMMARY

1. A programme of archaeological recording was carried out on behalf of the Environment Agency in advance of the construction of new flood defences at the east end of St Peter's churchyard, Croft on Tees. Standing burial monuments in the area were recorded, and the footprint of the proposed flood-bank excavated, cleaned and recorded. Apart from a number of grave cuts, probably of relatively modern date, nothing of archaeological significance was encountered.

BACKGROUND

2. Instructions were received from the Environment Agency for the implementation of a programme of archaeological recording in advance of contractors' works at the eastern end of the churchyard of S^t Peter's, Croft on Tees. These works involved the construction of a length of flood defence bank between the east end of the church chancel and the eastern boundary of the churchyard.

3. A specification for archaeological work was provided by the client, having been prepared by the County Archaeologist for North Yorkshire. A copy of the specification and of other relevant documentation will be kept with the archive copy of this report, which will be deposited with the North Yorkshire Sites and Monuments Record.

ref plan app 1/96/119B/PA/F

THE SITE

4. The village of Croft is first recorded in the Domesday survey of 1086. The earliest parts of the surviving church fabric are generally considered to be of the twelfth century: there are, however, fragments of pre-Conquest sculpture which suggest a longer history of ecclesiastical use of the site, if not necessarily the existence of an earlier church structure. Some of the masonry of which the church is built (particularly visible at the west end) also appears to be re-used Roman material: the large, squared blocks of sandstone with remains of Lewis holes have a distinctly Severan look: a rather mutilated sculpture inside the church also best makes sense in a Romano-British context. There is, however, no indication of whence this Roman material might have come.

5. There is no direct evidence for the origin of the churchyard. Given, however, that burial monuments date back to the seventeenth century (the time at which they came into general use), there is every probability that the churchyard, within more-or-less its present boundaries, is at least as old as the church. The presence of Anglian and Anglo-Scandinavian sculptural fragments (now preserved in the church) suggests that it might be earlier.

6. St Peter's church is a Grade I Listed Building, a statutory protection which extends to the whole of its curtilage. Croft Bridge, which incorporates the structure of the mediaeval bridge, is scheduled as an Ancient Monument: it lies adjacent to the churchyard to the south-east, and is not affected by the present engineering works.

7. The east end of the chancel is only 13 metres from the eastern boundary of the churchyard (understanding the boundary to be represented by a rather dilapidated fence of chestnut paling), beyond which lie the existing flood bank and the steep slope down to the river: on topographical grounds, it seems very unlikely that the churchyard had at any time extended any further in this direction.

8. A preliminary inspection of the site showed that no marked grave was directly affected by the works, and that there was no surface indication of unmarked grave mounds or of structural remains which might be related to the development of the church building. No grave memorial of a date earlier than 1861 lay within 5 metres of the area to be excavated.

MONUMENT RECORDING

9. All existing burial monuments at the east end of the chancel, within the vicinity of the area to be excavated, were recorded to the standard defined in J. Jones (1979) *How to Record Graveyards* (pub. Council for British Archaeology & Rescue). A total of 10 monuments was recorded in this way, their dates ranging from 1861 to 1947. Basic information about all of the monuments in the churchyard had already been compiled as *Memorials of St Peter's Church, Croft on Tees* (Richmond Library Local Collection), but it should be noted that the present recording exercise detected a number of errors in that record. Records of the standing monuments are included as an appendix to this report.

EXCAVATIONS

10. Turf and topsoil were initially stripped by hand from the whole of the area to be affected by the works, as far as the chestnut paling fence which represents the churchyard boundary: the eastern end of the area, in an area colonised by alders and other woody plants, had no turf covering and was found to be thickly matted with roots and small animal holes. All material removed was piled close at hand for subsequent reuse. The depth of topsoil removed varied from 10 to 15 centimetres. The surface was then cleaned by trowelling, and all features planned at a scale of 1:20. The natural subsoil, where visible, was a weathered, reddish-brown clay. No trace was found of any feature or structure which was not clearly concerned with burial activity or which might have represented any building or other structure. Features observed were as follow:

(a) The south-east corner of a square, brick vault, visible at the extreme western end of the excavated area. This appears to be connected with the nineteenth-century chest-tomb adjacent to it (N^o 3 in the appendix). The top course of bricks on the corner of the vault (three bricks in all) was removed in the course of excavation.

(b) The corner of a grave slab on the southern edge of the excavation. This was the lower part of the monument described as N^o 5 in the appendix.

(c) A number of grave-cuts, filled with disturbed clay soil, all aligned east to west. None appears to be associated with a standing monument. A total of six or seven individual cuts could be recognised. There was considerable inter-cutting of graves, indicating use over sufficient a period of time to allow surface traces of one inhumation (apparently without a durable marker) to have been obliterated before the next was inserted. Most of the cuts are remarkably short (about a metre in length) and it is probable that they represent the burials of infants: this would be consistent with the absence of grave markers or monuments, and it is worth noting that the adjacent burial to the north (N^o 7) and to the south (N^o 6) are of a seven-month infant and a six-year-old child respectively. There is nothing to suggest that these burials are early in date, and the probability is that this small area was given over in the nineteenth century to the burial of infants, perhaps of the families commemorated by the adjoining monuments.

(d) The western part of the excavated area was thoroughly disturbed by the actions of roots and of small animal burrows. There was nothing to suggest the presence of further burials and, given the proximity to the margin of the churchyard (itself rather ill-defined) it is likely that this was outside the area used for burial.

11. One grave-cut contained a quantity of loose sandstone rubble in its upper fill: this feature proved to contain a considerable quantity of lime in its fill, and it is likely that the lime was deliberately added to the grave, perhaps in consequence of apprehension of the risk of contamination from a victim of smallpox or of a similarly infectious disease.

12. After recording of the cleaned surface of the excavated area, a trench was dug by hand, corresponding to that required for the foundation of the new flood bank. This trench ran from east to west for the full length of the excavated area, and measured 50 cm. wide by 40 cm. deep. No further feature was encountered in this trench.

FINDS

13. No dateable object of a period later than the nineteenth century was encountered during excavation. A quantity of pottery (presumably from grave vases), two fragments of clay pipe stem and some pieces of window glass were found in the topsoil: all were of modern date.

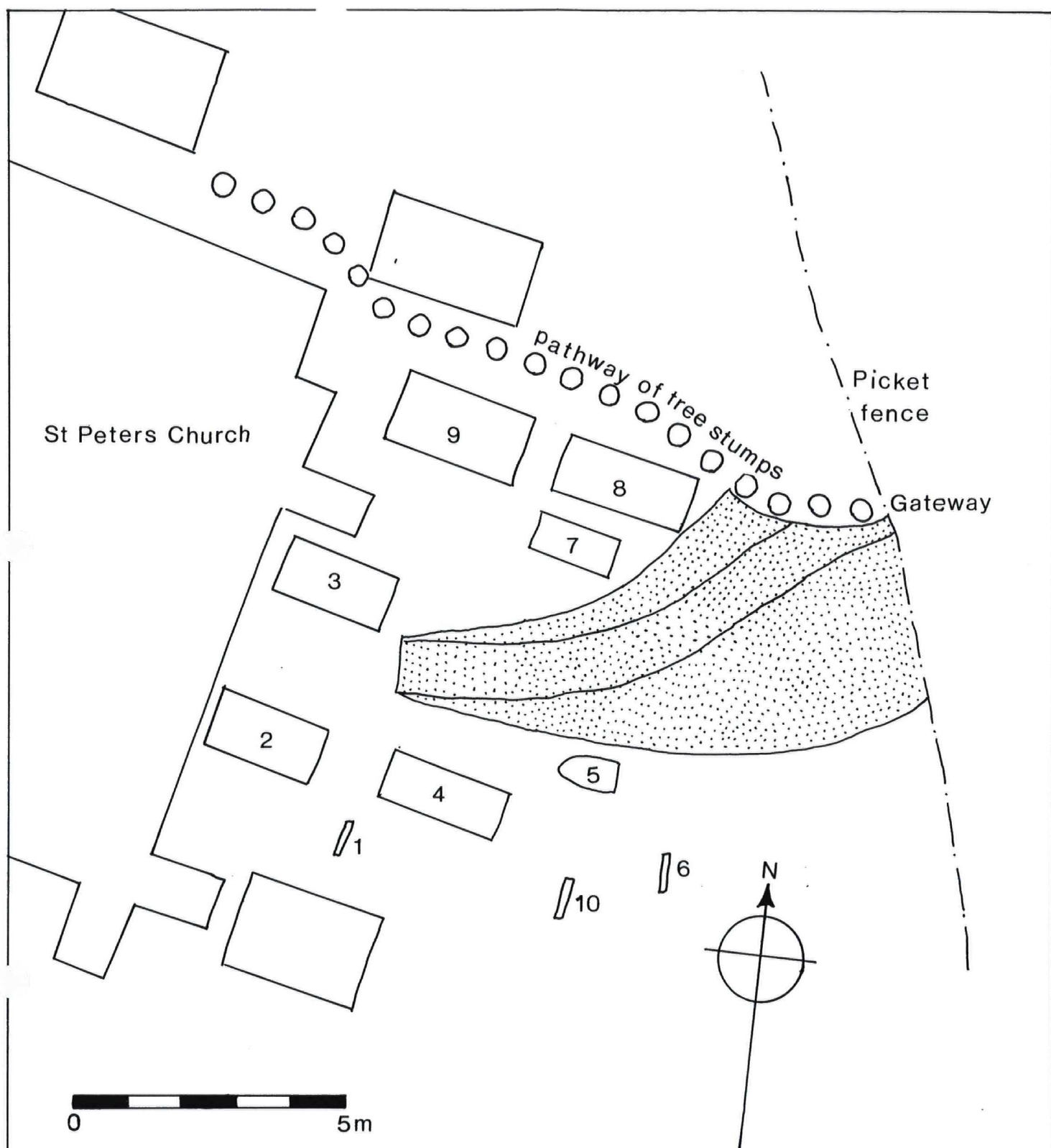
14. No articulated human remains were recovered. There were, however, numerous small disarticulated fragments of bone, all apparently human, all small and broken, and all from the topsoil and from cleaning of the trench. This material has no archaeological significance or potential: it is undatable and without associations, and represents no more than should be expected from the surface deposits of a graveyard

presumed to have been in use for several centuries. Arrangements have been made with the incumbent clergyman for its reburial on a convenient occasion.

CONCLUSIONS

15. Nothing of significant archaeological interest has been revealed by this investigation, and it is clear that the construction of the new flood bank will not be detrimental to the archaeology of this church and churchyard,

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Deborah Walsh
26,x,1999



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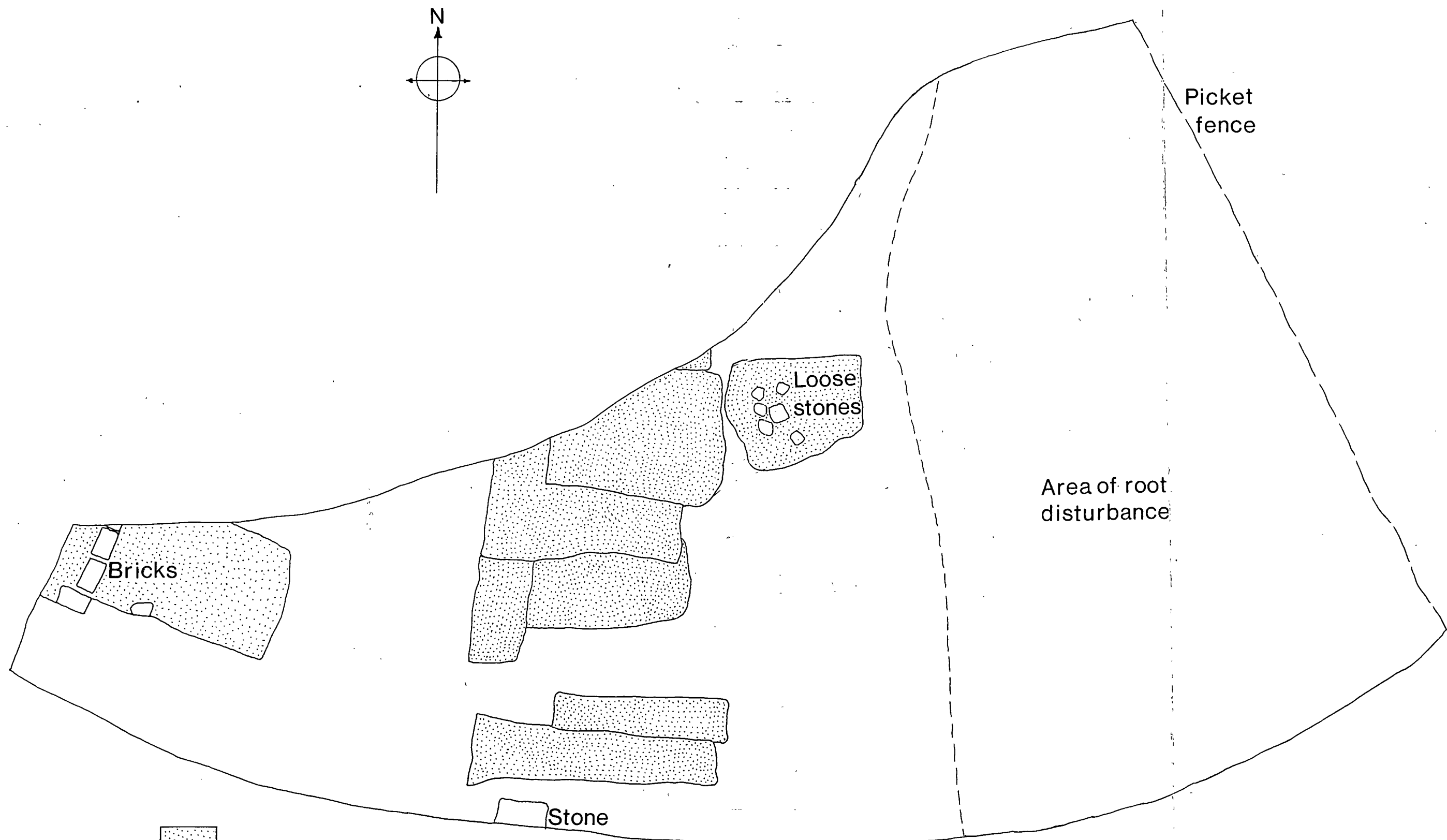
Excavated Area

The Brigantia Archaeological Practice

Fig1 Location Plan

St Peters Churchyard, Croft on Tees

Scale 1:100



Grave cuts

0 3m

The Brigantia Archaeological Practice

Fig.2 Surface Features

St. Peters Churchyard, Croft on Tees

APPENDIX

BURLAL MONUMENTS AT THE EAST END OF THE CHANCEL.

GRAVE MONUMENT RECORD. ST. PETER'S CHURCH, CROFT ON TEES.

Monument identification no.1.

Photograph negative no.20

Description

A plain upright headstone of pink polished granite (probably Shap) with rough cut edges secured within a grey concrete base. It is orientated to face east and has dimensions of 52cm high by 58cm wide and 17cm deep. The lettering is in a modern plain style, leaded and situated on the upper half of the stone. The monument remains in good condition however the lettering is showing signs of deterioration.

Inscription:

ESTHER MARY FRANCES DIED 7TH SEPT. 1947 BELOVED WIFE OF REV.
HARRY JAMES TOMPKINS RECTOR OF CROFT 1929-1949. WHO DIED 15TH
FEB. 1953.



GRAVE MONUMENT RECORD. ST.PETER'S CHURCH, CROFT ON TEES.

Grave monument identification number. 2

Photographic negative no. 21. 30.

Description.

A well preserved chest tomb of yellow sandstone in a classical style with square pilasters. The tomb is orientated east-west with two polished slate plaques on the long south facing side bearing the inscriptions. The lettering is incised and the overall condition of the tomb is very good. The dimensions of the tomb are 211cm by 107cm and 100cm high.

Inscriptions:

IN MEMORY OF THE REV. JAMES DALTON FOR 37 YEARS RECTOR OF THIS PARISH WHO DIED THE 2ND OF JAN 1843 AGED 78 YEARS.

MARIA DALTON WIDOW OF THE REV. JAMES DALTON DIED MAR 11TH 1858 AGED 84 YEARS.



GRAVE MONUMENT RECORD. ST. PETER'S CHURCH, CROFT ON TEES.

Monument identification no. 3

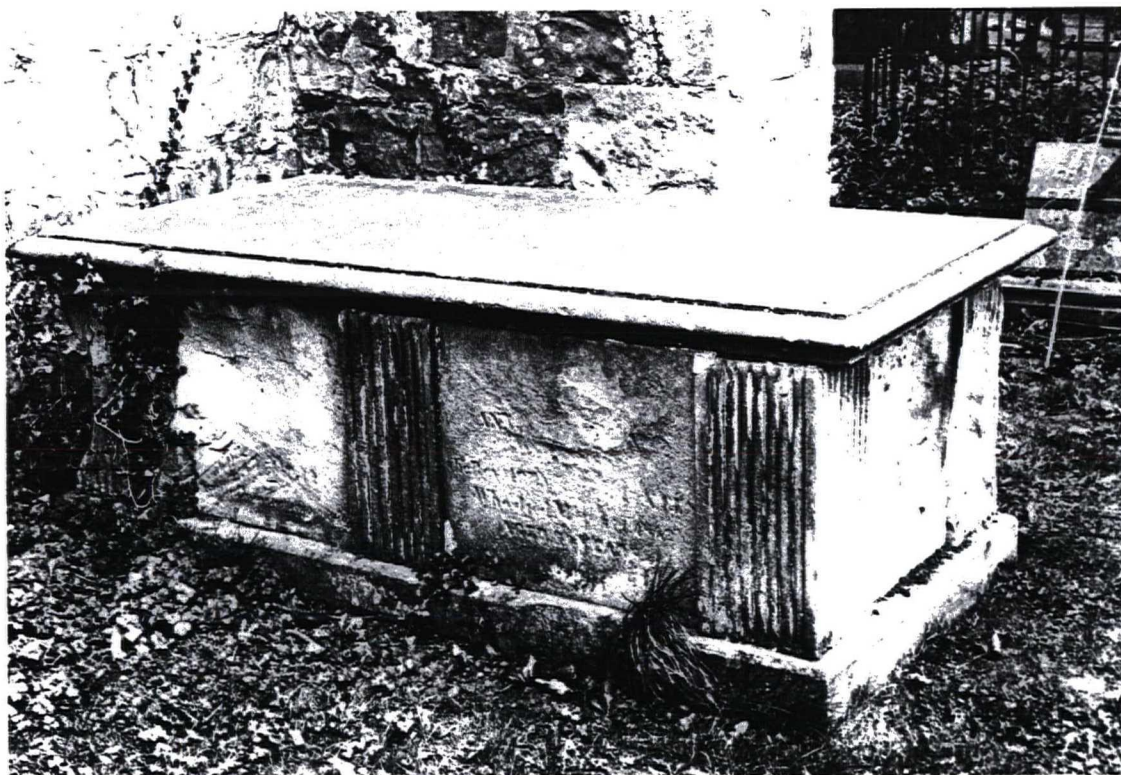
Photographic negative no. 22. 31.

Description.

A much eroded yellow sandstone chest tomb in a classical style with square flutes pilasters. It is orientated east to west and has dimensions of 210cm by 108cm and a height of 73cm. The lettering is incised and situated on the two panels of the south side. This side of the tomb is particularly eroded and the inscription is therefore extremely indistinct.

Inscription.

...AGED 74 YEARS. ANN...THE REV.(JOHN?)...WHO DIED MAR (..) 18(6?)2
AGED (879?)YEARS.



GRAVE MONUMENT RECORD. ST. PETER'S, CROFT ON TEES.

Monument identification no. 4

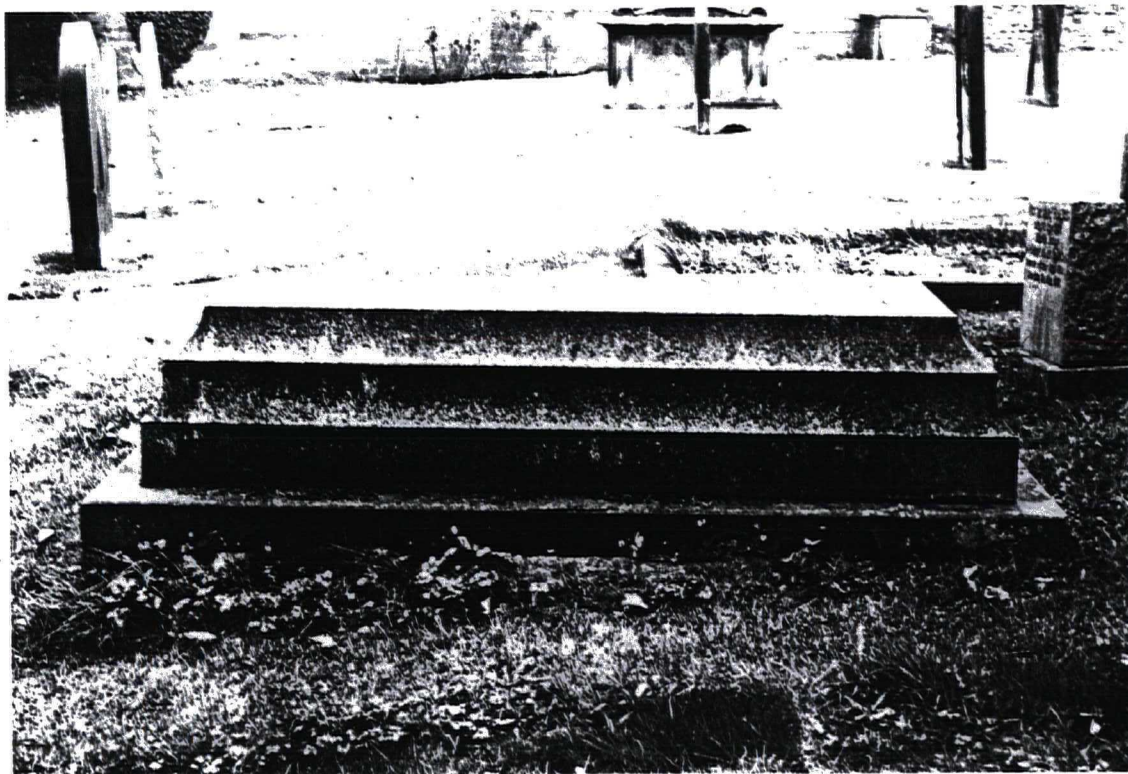
Photographic negative no. 23. 32.

Description.

A stepped coffin shaped monument of polished granite on a yellow sandstone base. It is orientated east-west with dimensions of 198cm by 75cm and 43cm high. It signed by the masons Priestman and Sons in leaded script at the base of the north face. The lettering of the inscription is leaded and situated on the upper surface of the monument. The condition of both the stonework and the leaded lettering is very good.

Inscription.

IN MEMORY OF ELIZABETH DALTON DAUGHTER OF THE REV. JAMES DALTON. SHE DEPARTED THIS LIFE 29TH JAN 1876 AGED 66 YEARS. ALSO HER SISTER ISABELLA WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE JUN 25TH 1877 AGED 74 YEARS AND MARY ANN SISTER OF THE ABOVE WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE MAR 12TH 1887 AGED 88 YEARS.



GRAVE MONUMENTS RECORD. ST. PETER'S CHURCH, CROFT ON TEES.

Monument identification no. 5

Photographic negative no. 24.

Description.

A fallen and partially overgrown headstone, probably of limestone, the upper section of which curves to a point. The upper edges bear the incised and much eroded inscription 'IN AFFECTIONATE REMEMBRANCE'. Below this is a carved representation in relief, probably of the dove of peace, in a round cartouche. The stone has been broken into two sections with the incised and seriously eroded lettering on the upper section. The dimensions of the stone are 105cm by 51cm.

Inscription.

IN AFFECTIONATE REMEMBRANCE OF THOMAS JOHNSON OF ... WHO
DIED JUN (5?) 18(..) AGED.. YEARS. ALSO OF CELIA JOHNSON WIFE OF
THE ABOVE WHO DIED .. 187(..) AGED (7?)0 YEARS.



GRAVE MONUMENT RECORD. ST.PETER'S CHURCH, CROFT ON TEES.

Monument identification no. 6.

Photographic negative no. 25.

Description.

A limestone rectangular upright stone pointed at the apex and with chamfered edges on the east facing front. It is set into a sandstone tiered socket stone. The incised lettering of the inscription covers the upper two-thirds of the stone. The monument has dimensions of 125cm high by 53cm wide and 8cm deep. Both the stonework and lettering survive in good condition.

Inscription.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF EDWARD SON OF EDWARD AND MARY WILKIN
WHO DIED JUL 5TH 1879 AGED 6 YEARS. 'WEEP NOT'. ALSO OF LYDIA
WILKIN DAUGHTER OF EDWARD AND MARY WILKIN WHO DIED APRIL
26TH 1958 AGED 82 YEARS



GRAVE MONUMENT RECORD. ST. PETER'S CHURCH, CROFT ON TEES.

Monument identification no. 7

Photographic negative no. 26. 35.

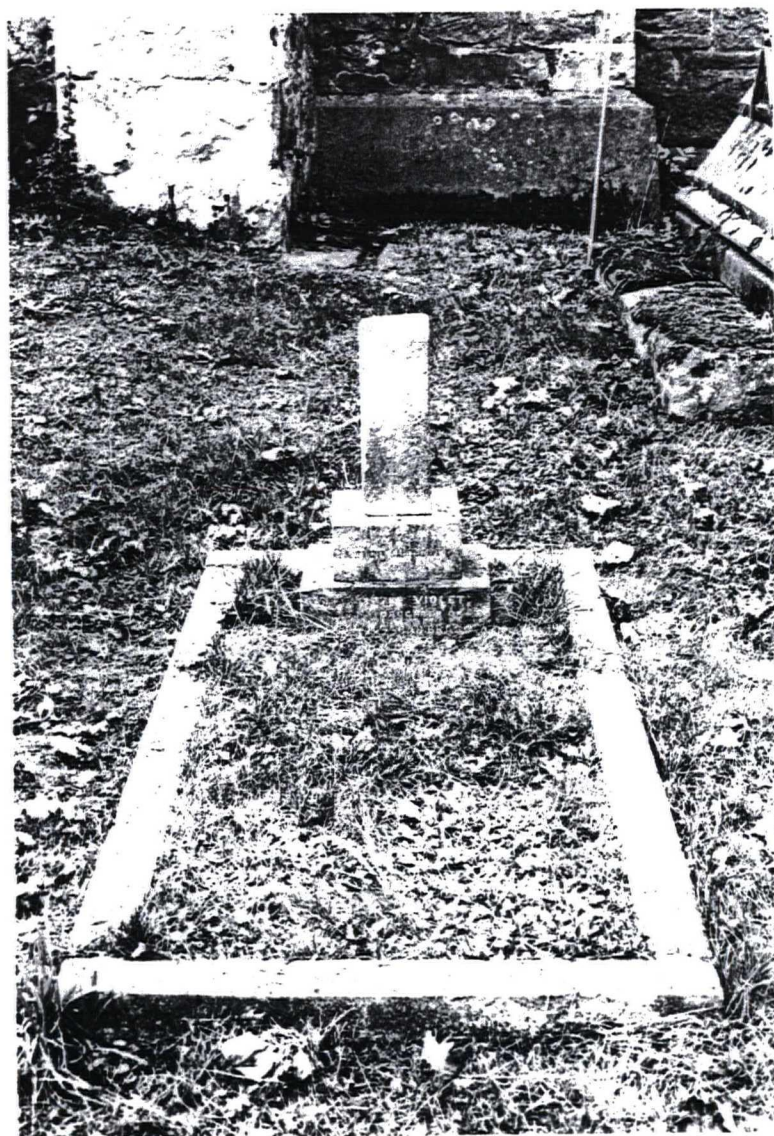
Description.

A kerbed plot orientated east-west with a two tier stone surmounted by a broken shaft at the western end. Both the kerb and the stone are of limestone and the eastern edge of the kerb is signed with the masons' name 'NELSON'. The leaded inscription is situated on the two tiered stones and remains relatively legible.

The dimensions of the lower stone are 33cm by 23cm with an overall height of 54cm.

Inscription.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF DEAR LITTLE VIOLET INFANT DAUGHTER OF
HENRY AND SARAH BRAGG WHO DIED SEPT 27TH 1882 AGED 7 MONTHS.



GRAVE MONUMENT RECORD. ST. PETER'S CHURCH, CROFT ON TEES.

Monument identification no. 8

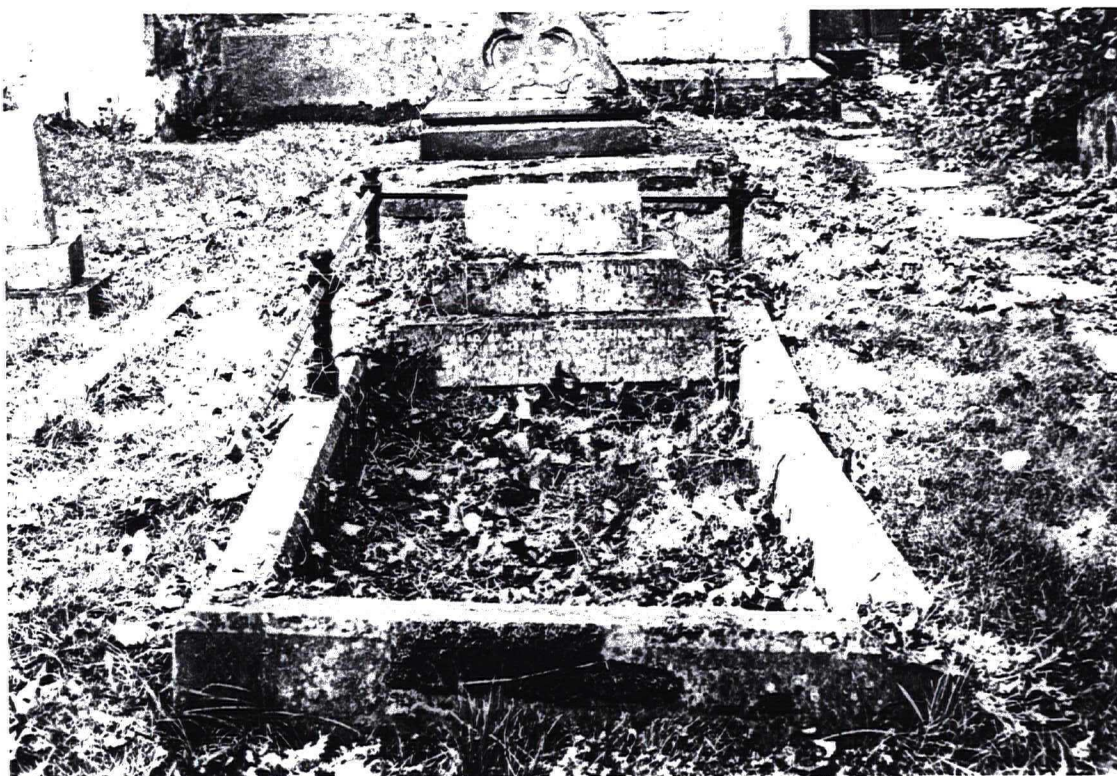
Photographic negative no. 27. 34.

Description.

A plot with a sandstone kerb into which iron railings have been fixed; these survive only on the south and western sides. The plot is orientated east -west with a three stepped gravestone at the western end. The uppermost stone includes the remains of a shaft. The masons name 'Priestman and Sons is located at the north eastern corner of the kerb. The inscription is located on the lower two tiers of the monument with leaded lettering. The base of the monument has dimensions of 72cm by 56cm with an overall height of 44cm and is generally in poor condition.

Inscription.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF GEORGE THOMPSON GOWLAND THIRKELL
LATE OF SUNDERLAND WHO DIED MAY 5TH 1882 AGED 34 YEARS. ALSO
OF JOHN WINTERINGHAM WHO DIED FEB 1ST 1915 AGED 52. ALSO OF
ANNIE FLORENCE HIS WIFE WHO DIED JAN 17TH 1930 AGED 55 YEARS.



GRAVE MONUMENT RECORD. ST. PETER'S CHURCH, CROFT ON TEES.

Monument identification no. 9.

Photographic negative no. 28. 29. 36.

Description.

A coped stone house tomb constructed of sandstone with a base of two roughly cut stone slabs. It is orientated east-west with a cruciform top and cusped trefoils at the head and foot ends. The incised lettering of the inscriptions is located on both the north and south face and is very sharp on both. The dimensions of the monument excluding the base are 205cm by 70cm and 66cm high.

Inscription.

THOMAS DAVIDSON DIED AT MONKEND JAN 15TH 1862 AGED 81 YEARS.

DOROTHY WIFE OF THOMAS DAVIDSON DIED AT MONKEND FEB 22ND
1861 AGED 80 YEARS.



GRAVE MONUMENTS RECORD. ST. PETER'S CHURCH, CROFT ON TEES.

Monument identification no. 10

Photographic negative no. 33.

Description.

A broken cross originally set in a four tier stepped base of sandstone. The cross now lies propped up against the base. The cross head bears the words 'JESU MERCY' across the horizontal, the words being separated by a rounded cartouche. The inscription in the form of incised lettering is located on the lower section of the base. This lower section has dimensions of 82cm by 58cm with the base having an overall height of 38cm. The condition of the monument is generally poor.

Inscription.

SAMUEL HENRY STOCKS M.A. CURATE OF THIS PARISH (rest illegible)

