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SNY	802525
ENY	114557
CNY	119922
Parish	603131
Rec'd	24/11/1999

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION

3 LITTLE STUDLEY CLOSE

RIPON

NORTH YORKSHIRE

N.G.R. 425950 458780

COUNTY / PARISH NO.6031

FOR

THE HERITAGE UNIT

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

NOVEMBER 1999

K. CALE

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**3 LITTLE STUDLEY CLOSE
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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION
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INTRODUCTION

On the 23rd September 1999 Mr.N.Campling, County Archaeologist, Heritage Unit, North Yorkshire County Council contacted Mr.K.J.Cale and engaged his services to make an urgent site inspection and attend to the disturbance of human remains at 3 Little Studley Close, Ripon.

The following statement outlines the nature of my findings.

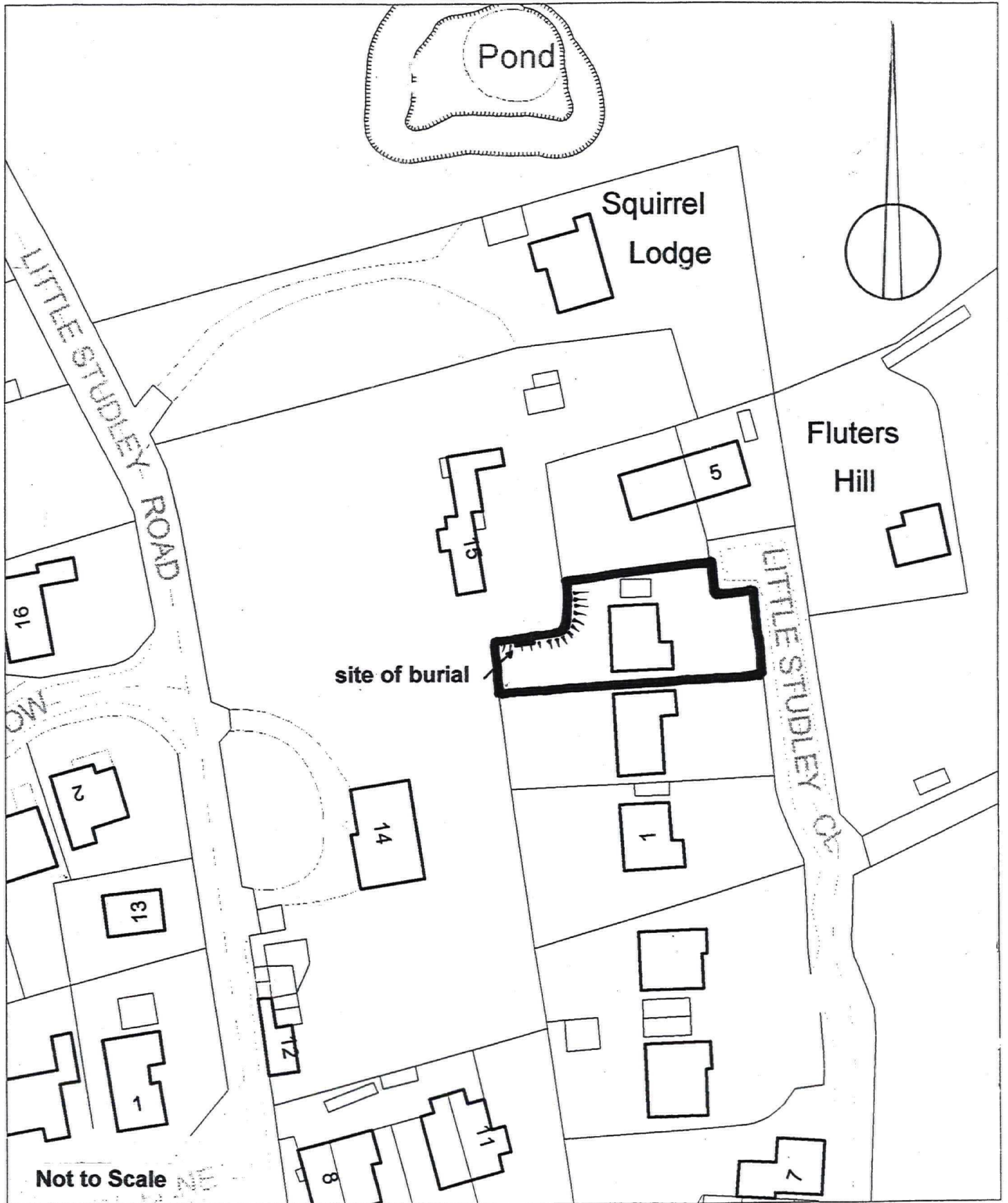
BACKGROUND

On Friday 17th September 1999 Mr.& Mrs.Wrightson, the owner/occupiers of 3, Little Studley Close contacted Harrogate Police Station to report the disturbance of human remains. The remains had been disturbed during recent groundwork's to enlarge the lawn area, this involved the demolition and reconstruction of a revetment / rockery wall within their garden to the rear of the property.

Deputy Crime Commander Javid Ali arrived on site and removed a small assemblage of bone fragments. This included rib and cranium fragments together with a mandible. The remains were forwarded to Sheffield where Police Forensic Staff rapidly examined the bones and considered them to be of some antiquity. Deputy Crime Commander Javid Ali reported the discovery to Mr.J.Cave, The Coroner who was satisfied that the matter be handed over to Mr.N.Campling, County Archaeologist.

On Monday 20th September 1999 Mr.Campling met with Mrs.Wrightson on site and agreed a future strategy to deal with the discovery. Mr.Campling noted that some small bone fragments were scattered across the surface of the excavated spoil.

FIGURE 1 GENERAL SITE LOCATION PLAN



LOCATION AND STATUS

3 Little Studley Close is situated in the northern suburbs of the City of Ripon at N.G.R.43121 47225. This small estate development was built on a green field site during the 1940's. The culdesac commands an elevated aspect, situated at 25m AOD, on gravel knolls, overlooking the flood plain of the River Ure to the east. The properties are strung out along the west side of the street, with garden areas to the front and rear of each property parcel.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The property parcel is aligned east with the single storey dwelling being centrally positioned with detached garage to the north. The rear garden area is presently managed as lawn. The garden is contained to the south by a Leylandii hedge, to the west by a miniature dry stone wall, to the east by the dwelling and to the north by rising ground. The surface of what appears to be a natural knoll is elevated by up to 1.80m above the adjacent lawn. The knoll has a steep facing south and east facing aspect. The lower slopes of which had been revetted with a dry stone wall / rockery, the height of which measures 0.6m.

The study area is situated in the base of the south facing aspect of this knoll. The existing revetment wall was being demolished and the lower slopes of the bank were being cut back, to the vertical, by up to 0.90m, prior to the reconstruction of the revetment wall. The human remains were identified during the excavations to cut back the perimeter of this bank.

HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Ripon is one of the earliest documented towns in North Yorkshire and with its Saxon monastery and pre-Conquest urban traditions it is of regional, if not national, importance. Bede records that in c. 657 a monastery was founded here by Eata and was granted 30 households which were already in existence. The origins of the settlement at Ripon may date back to the 5th century or even earlier into the Roman period, though evidence for Roman occupation is sketchy. Eata's foundation was re-established by Wilfrid in c. 670, who built at least one church, possibly two, and accompanying ecclesiastical buildings in Ripon which formed the basis of the later medieval religious centre in the town.

The lay settlement at Ripon seems to have flourished in the Saxon period, and traditionally Ripon was granted municipal rights and privileges in 886. The post-Conquest town expanded also and became the centre of a thriving woolen industry in the medieval period.

Saxon and Medieval Settlement

The position of the settlement mentioned by Bede is not known, nor is the site of the earliest monastic establishment fixed with any certainty. The crypt of the present Minster is of the Saxon period, and is generally regarded as being a surviving part of Wilfrid's church. However, the site of Ladykirk, on St Marygate to the north of the Minster, also has very early associations and it has been postulated that either Eata's or Wilfrid's, or even both, monasteries were here. The Chapel of St Mary, mentioned in 1228, may be the same as Ladykirk, and Leland in 1546 saw 'exceedingly ancient' work within the fabric of Ladykirk.

Excavations at the Old Deanery and Deanery Gardens, adjacent to the site of St Mary's Church, revealed medieval, possibly 12th century, timber buildings as well as later structures and medieval inhumations, and also a demolition layer below medieval cobbles which contained a 7th century brooch and may have been from a pre-Conquest structure. There have been numerous finds of Saxon material from Ripon, including coins, combs and cross fragments, and these are mainly concentrated in the area to the east and north of the present Minster.

A document of 1228 gives the crossroads of Stonebridgegate and Allhallowgate as the centre of the town of Ripon, before the development of the Market Place area. Stonebridgegate, also called Heregate, is referred to as a royal road, and seems to have been one of the most important streets of the early town. Settlement was concentrated in the area north of the monastery precinct in St Marygate and Stonebridgegate and that this is likely to reflect the pre-Conquest area of settlement is backed up by the finds of pre-Conquest objects in the area.

Whether occupation continued uninterrupted in this part of the town throughout the medieval period is unknown. It is possible that as the new centre to the west around the Market Place was developed, the Stonebridgegate/St Marygate area became a backwater. There may then have been expansion back into the area in the 15th century as the town developed with the growth of the woolen trade.

Previous Excavation

There have been a number of small scale excavations in the town, but unfortunately the publication record is not good and evidence of what has been found is rather sketchy.

A number of finds of prehistoric material are recorded from Ripon, but the precise location of most of these is unknown. There are also reported finds of Roman material, notably tesserae from Ailey Hill and from Ladykirk. No Roman structures are known, but it is possible that the settlement has its origins in the Roman period as a staging post or small civil settlement.

The most commonly recorded finds in Ripon are graves, all apparently Christian and associated with several different cemeteries. Ailey Hill, traditionally viewed as a barrow or motte, proved on excavation to be a natural mound but contained a number of burials. A gravel pit on Allhallowgate near the supposed site of a church contained numerous skeletons, one interred with a cross. There were burials under the site of Morrisons supermarket.

Excavations at Ladykirk in 1955 found part of a cemetery as well as a medieval tenement and 19th century rubbish pits. A 1963 excavation further south near Low St Agnesgate revealed a continuation of the same cemetery and medieval structures dating from the 12th to the 15th century.

The Old Deanery was excavated in 1975 and revealed more burials, associated with either the Minster or Ladykirk, with 12th century timber buildings and an early 14th century stone building. Deanery Gardens nearby, excavated in 1978, also contained inhumations apparently from two different medieval cemeteries. This site contains the best excavated evidence so far recorded for the pre-Conquest settlement, in the shape of the 7th century brooch already referred to, found stratified in a layer of mortar and stone fragments which lay beneath a cobbled area which was in its turn cut by several medieval rubbish pits. The lower levels of the site contained no pottery which may in itself indicate a pre-Norman date, and the fact that some of the pits contained human skeletal material, presumably from earlier burials on the site, also argues for a long history for the site.

THE NATURE OF THE WORKS

1. To recover all the human bone fragments from the excavated spoil mound.
2. To clean and record the pre excavated section.
3. To collect those remains removed from site by North Yorkshire Police.

Initially no provision was made for exposing and exhuming those remains in situ. However, due to the concerns of Mr. & Mrs Wrightson, the Heritage Unit agreed to fund the exhumation. Mr. Cale applied for a Burial Licence For The Removal Of Human Remains, the Home Office granted this licence (A2187) on 4th October 1999. However by this time the new revetment wall had been constructed, concealing the burial, in light of this it was felt by Mr. & Mrs. Wrightson and the Heritage Unit that the burial should be left undisturbed.

SUMMARY

The Bank:

PLATE 1 and 2



Site prior to archaeological intervention, facing north east.



Site following archaeological intervention, facing north.

A detailed inspection of the stratigraphy of the bank would indicate that this is a natural feature derived from deposits of alluvial drift, these sands and gravels were identified in the lower 0.46m of the section. The overlying stratigraphy would indicate that the bank has been enhanced and heightened by up to 0.61m of made up ground. This appears to have been achieved in two phases of landscaping. Unfortunately no artefacts were identified to date these deposits. The surface of this mound appears to have been artificially levelled and supports the eastern extent of the gardens of the adjacent property, No.15 Little Studley Road.

The Burial:

The burial was located within the base of the south facing aspect of a knoll like mound at 0.85m below the surface of the bank. The burial was contained within the naturally deposited sands / gravels and was sealed by up to 0.22m of same. No indication of a grave cut was identified within the section. Those remains in situ consisted of the upper thoracic vertebrae with a concave impression of a cranium identified to immediate east of same.

It was confirmed that the remains were those of a single inhumation arranged in a supine posture. The skeleton was that of an adult aligned east facing west. The upper torso, limbs and cranium had been cut, disturbed and displaced during the recent excavation of the bank. Inspection of these bone fragments would indicate that the skeleton was in fair state of preservation.

Unfortunately no artefacts were found date the burial, however, the nature and location of the burial suggest a prehistoric date. It has been speculated by the owner/occupier of the neighbouring dwelling No.15 Little Studley Close that the burial is medieval on account of the site being occupied by an Infirmary.

The remains were subsequently analysed by Dr.A.Boylston at the Calvin Wells Laboratory, Department of Archaeological Sciences, University of Bradford, who confirmed the following;

- . The burial was that of an elderly male.
- . The dentition confirmed that the individual had ante mortem tooth loss together with highly abraded molars.
- . The mandible and maxilla confirmed the individual had poor dental hygiene. This included the following;
 - a high build up of tartar on all teeth.
 - a broken right mandibular canine.
 - an abscess over the front incisor.

severe periodontal disease.
porasti of the palate.

Despite the degeneration of the palate there was no indication of bone loss of the maxilla which could be a possible indication of leprosy.

- The individual suffered from osteo-arthritis with degeneration of the end of the first rib and wear on the clavicle.
- Two of the cervical vertebrae had fused on their left side.
- The individual had a metopic suture on the cranium, this would have only fused in old age and is considered to be a minor abnormality and not pathological.

With the agreement of Mr. & Mrs. Wrightson the remains were returned to the site for re-interment adjacent to the burial.

CONCLUSION

The chance discovery of a burial in the suburbs of Ripon is unusual, however when this is taken into account with the paucity of archaeological data for this area of the city currently held by the Sites and Monuments Record, NYCC it raises obvious questions as to the age and context of the burial.

The context of this burial in an isolated site, on rising ground overlooking the flood plain of the River Ure may suggest a prehistoric date for the inhumation. Unfortunately as the complete skeleton was not exhumed it was not possible to determine the burial position, its orientation facing west may be indicative of a pre Christian burial.

However, local opinion has it that the site to the immediate north west of the burial, i.e. that occupied by No.15 Studley Road was occupied by a medieval infirmary. Whilst this is unproven the west facing aspect of the burial may corroborate this as priests were buried during the medieval period facing west.

It is hoped that the discovery of this burial will direct archaeological attention to this area of Ripon, it is recommended that any future groundwork's within the Little Studley area should receive archaeological consideration. Furthermore it is hoped that this burial and the possible site of a medieval infirmary will stimulate some thorough historical research on this particular area of Ripon.

Kevin John Cale

November 1999

APPENDIX A

Stratigraphic Section

Area A

Type: Landscaping:excavation:hand
N.G.R: 43121- 47224

Length: 1.0 m
Depth: 1.10 m

Planform: Liner
Aligned: West
Aspect: South

Context No's: 1000 - 1002
Plate No: -
Fig. No: 1

This short section of the bank that was subject to archaeological investigation revealed the following stratigraphy;

The surface of the bank was sealed by a medium brown (10YR3/2) loam. The matrix of this layer of topsoil was dry and friable, the layer contained a low quantity of inclusions, these were dominated by root with the occasional water worn pebble. No finds were identified within this layer.

The topsoil sealed a layer of made up ground (context 1001) this layer of pink medium brown (7.5YR4/3) sandy loam. The layer was dry, friable and contained a moderate quantity of inclusions, these were dominated by water worn pebble, root, sand blotching and sand lenses. The inclusions were evenly mixed throughout the layer. The layer has the characteristics of a mixture of topsoil and subsoil. The layer measures up to 0.38m in depth and appears to be anthropogenic in origin, although no finds or archaeological features were identified within this layer. The layer was bedded level on the surface of the sub soil.

The sub soil (context 1002) consisted of a pink orange (5YR4/6) sand matrix that contains a very high quantity of inclusions, these were dominated by water worn gravels, measuring <0.10m in size with an average size of <0.03m in size. The fine grained sand was dry and loosely compacted. The layer exceeds 0.46m in depth. The layer contained the remains of a human burial SK1. No indication of a grave cut was identified within the section. The layer sealed the remains of SK1 that were identified towards the base of the excavation. No finds were identified within this layer.

APPENDIX B

Inhumation Record Sheet

Site LITTLE STUDLEY
Code CLOSE N° 3.

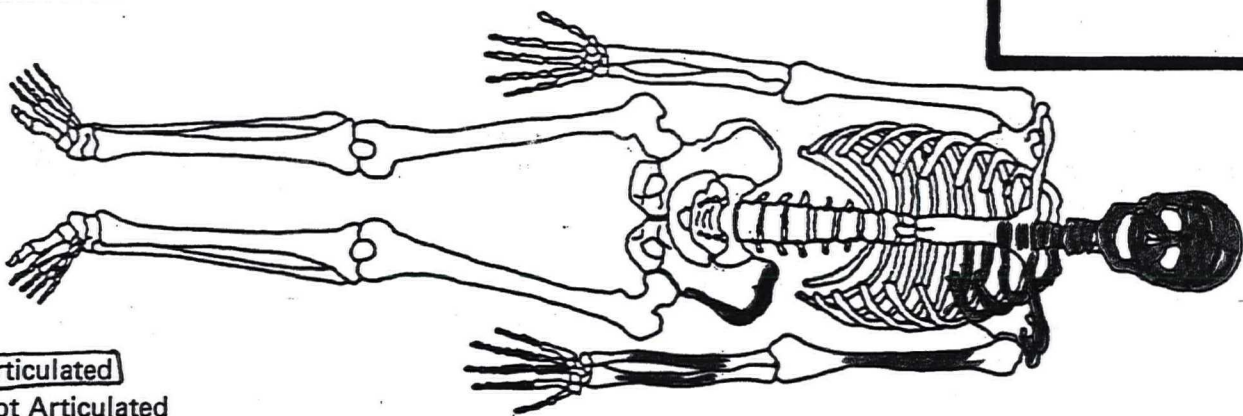
Sub RIFON
Divn. N. YORKSHIRE.

Grid
43121 47225

Context No.
SKI.
1003.

Type BURIAL: INHUMATION: SUPINE.

Mark All Bones Present

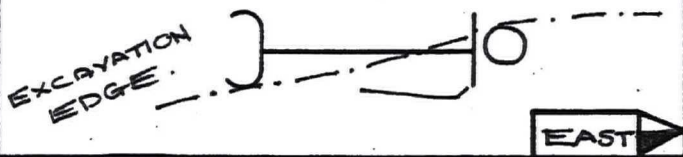


Articulated
 Not Articulated

Condition of Bone Shadow Poor Fair Good Crushed Broken Whole
Treatment of Bone DRY BRUSHED

HU	N/A.	RA	N/A.	TI	N/A.	Position : Legs	Arms	Skull
UL	N/A.	FE	N/A.	FI	N/A.			

In Coffin Type _____ Context
In Grave Type _____ Context
Grave Fills 1002 SAND + GRAVEL.



ARCHAEOLOGY INHUMATION RECORD

OBSERVATIONS
Additional Description SK DISTURBED DURING RECENT PROGRAMME OF LANDSCAPING
NO ARCHAEOLOGIST PRESENT. MORE ROBUST BONE REMOVED FROM SITE BY
N. YORKSHIRE POLICE, ARCHAEOLOGIST RECOVERED REMAINING BONE FRAG FROM
EXCAVATED SOIL. ONLY UPPER LEFT AREA OF SK. DISTURBED. REMAINING SK.
LEFT IN SITU. SK. REMAINS EXAMINED BY A. BOYLESTONE, DEPT. ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SCIENCES BRADFORD. DATE NOT DETERMINED.

Initial Pathology ADULT - ELDERLY.
MALE.
ANTE-MORTEM TOOTH LOSS - POOR DENTAL HYGIENE
OSTEOARTHRITIS IN NECK VERTEBRAE.

Above 1002 Below 1002.

Stratigraphic Relationships TOPSOIL - MADE UP GROUND - SAND/GRAVEL - SKI - SAND+GRAVEL.
1000 → 1001 → 1002 → 1003 → 1002.

Finds Present but not collected NONE.

Special Finds NONE.

Samples NONE.

Interpretation INHUMATION ADULT MALE.
DATE NOT DETERMINED.

Provisional Date 23 09 99. Final Phase 15 11 99.

Plan FIG. N° 1. Section _____ Continuation NONE

Photo (m) NONE. Photo (c) PLATE 1 + 2. Signature KSC.

Exc. Method HAND: SPADE: NON ARCHAEOLOGICAL. Date 15 11 99

Risk of Contamination LOW. Checked KSC.