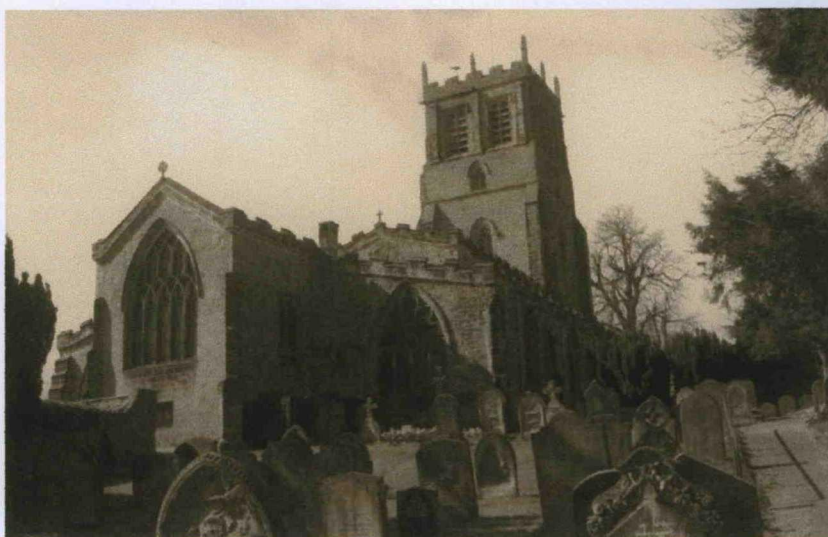




YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

NYCC HER	
SNY	9019
ENY	2556
CNY	
Parish	2011
Rec'd	17/09/2004



## St.GREGORY'S CHURCH NORTH END BEDALE

### A Report on an Archaeological Watching Brief

by Gareth Dean

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**ST GREGORY'S CHURCH,  
NORTH END,  
BEDALE,  
NORTH YORKSHIRE.**

**A REPORT ON AN  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

by

**Gareth Dean MA PIFA**

*ABSTRACT.*

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2. METHOD STATEMENT
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**List of Abbreviations**

BGL	Below Ground Level
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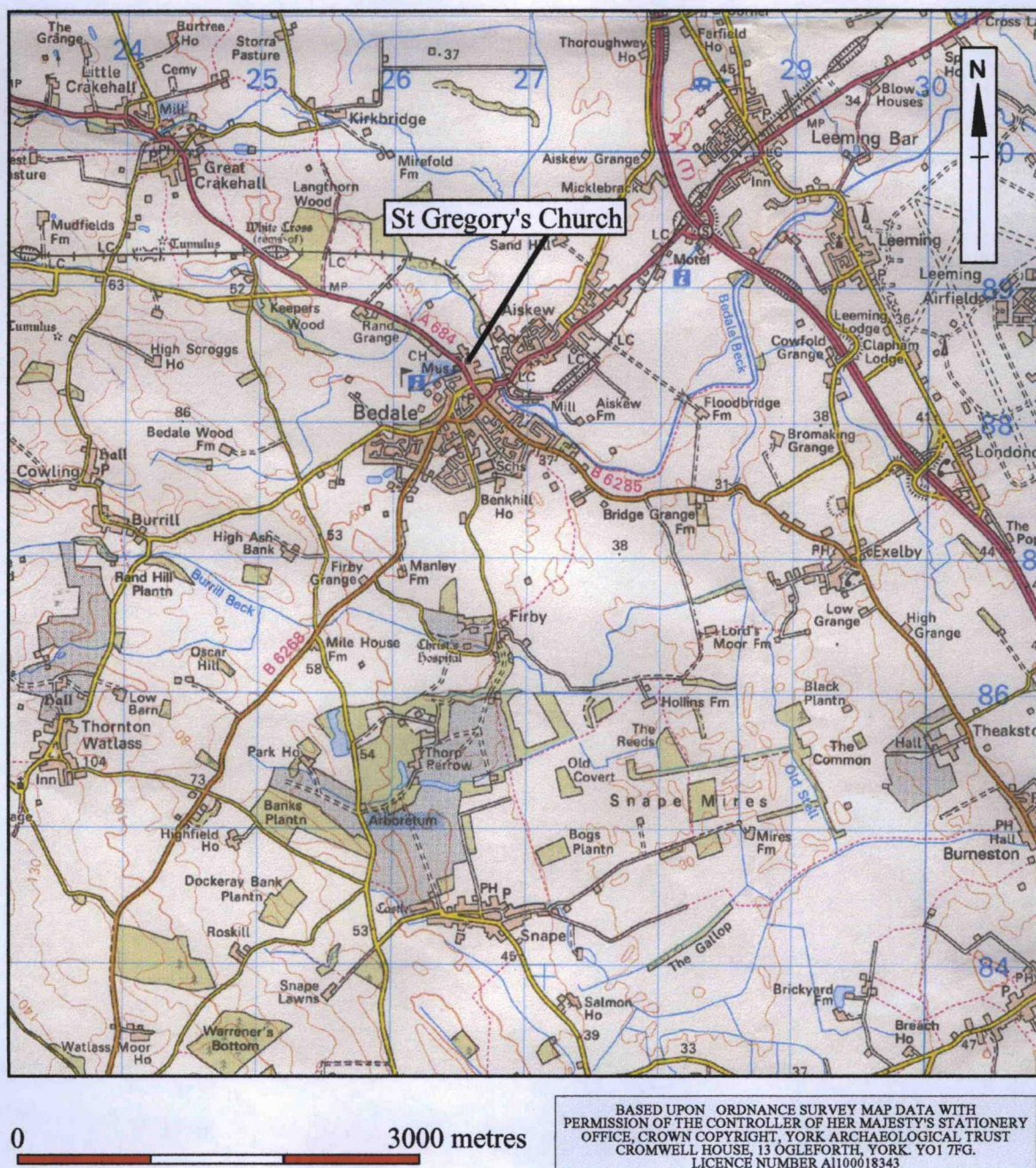


Fig. 1 Site location



## **ABSTRACT**

*An archaeological watching brief was carried out during the excavation of a junction box and cable trench in the churchyard of St Gregory's Church, Bedale. The junction box was excavated against the boundary wall on the west side of the church and exposed the wall's foundations and the remains of a sandstone block path. The cable trench extended from the junction box to the north-west corner of the tower and exposed part of a chamfered block 0.14m below the present ground surface, suggesting that there has been some raising of the ground level around the tower.*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

York Archaeological Trust monitored the excavation of a junction box and cable trench at St Gregory's Church, North End, Bedale (NGR SE 2655 8845; Fig 1) between the 5th April and the 6th April 2004.

The work was carried out for Heyrood Communications Ltd. All records are currently stored by the York Archaeological Trnst under the museum accession code YORYM: 2004.146

## **2. METHOD STATEMENT**

The junction box was located on the east side of the boundary wall, at the north side of a gate into the churchyard, west of the tower. It measured 1.3m x 0.9m x 0.55m in depth and was excavated by hand. The trench for the cable was excavated from the junction box to the north-west corner of the tower and measured 6.5m x 0.8m x 0.5m.

## **3. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

The watching brief at Bedale was carried out because it had the potential to add information about an important church. The information for this brief history is taken from the GENUKI web pages, the home page of St Gregory's church, Bedale and the online version of the Bedale Master plan for the regeneration of the town.

Bedale is an historic market town located in an area where the Vale of York joins Wensleydale. *Domesday Book* (1086) records a church at Bedale and the town became an important medieval market town which was awarded its market charter in 1251.

It is thought that an earlier church, thought to date from the pre-Norman period, may have been located on the site of the present nave. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century the church was gradually enlarged. In the 14<sup>th</sup> century, Brian Fitzalan, Lord of Bedale, who lived in the castle that stood a little to the south-west of the church, instigated many alterations to the church and this period saw the construction of a fortified church tower, one of the best examples in the North of England. The tower was constructed in response to Scottish raids into Yorkshire following the Battle of Bannockburn (1314). The raids were to continue until the Scots were defeated at Neville's Cross outside Durham in 1346.

The three lower stages of the tower were built about 1330 at the instigation of Matilda, second wife of Brian Fitzalan, as a place of refuge. Inside the entrance on the right hand side is the door to the tower stair, where the slot for a portcullis can still be seen. In the second stage was a living room - the refuge. The upper room, probably used as a bedchamber, now houses the clock. From the 14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> century the church underwent further alterations and since then the fabric of the church has remained virtually the same, though extensive restoration work has been required in the last two centuries.

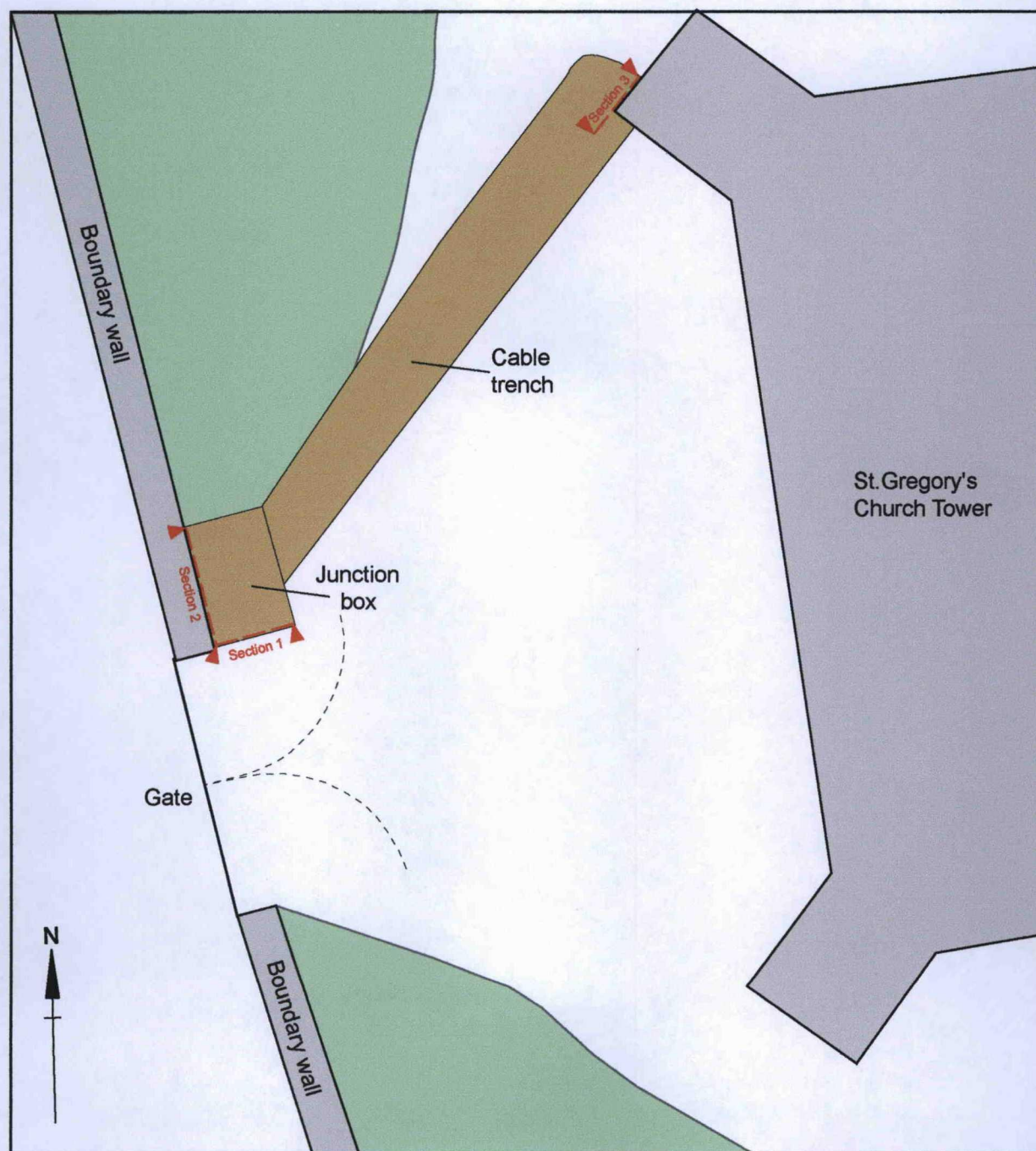
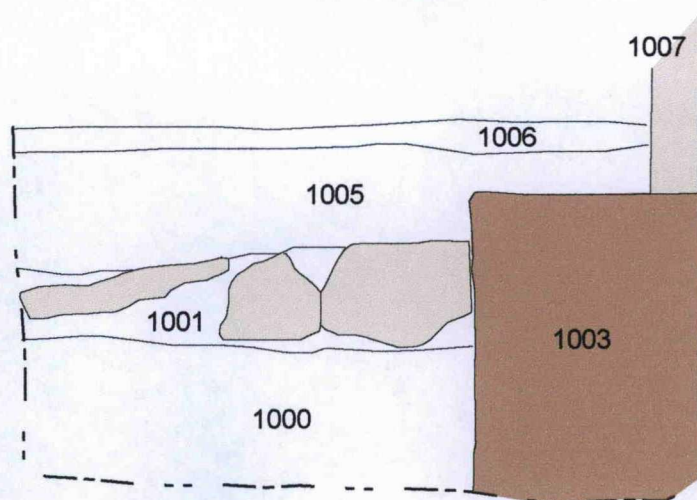


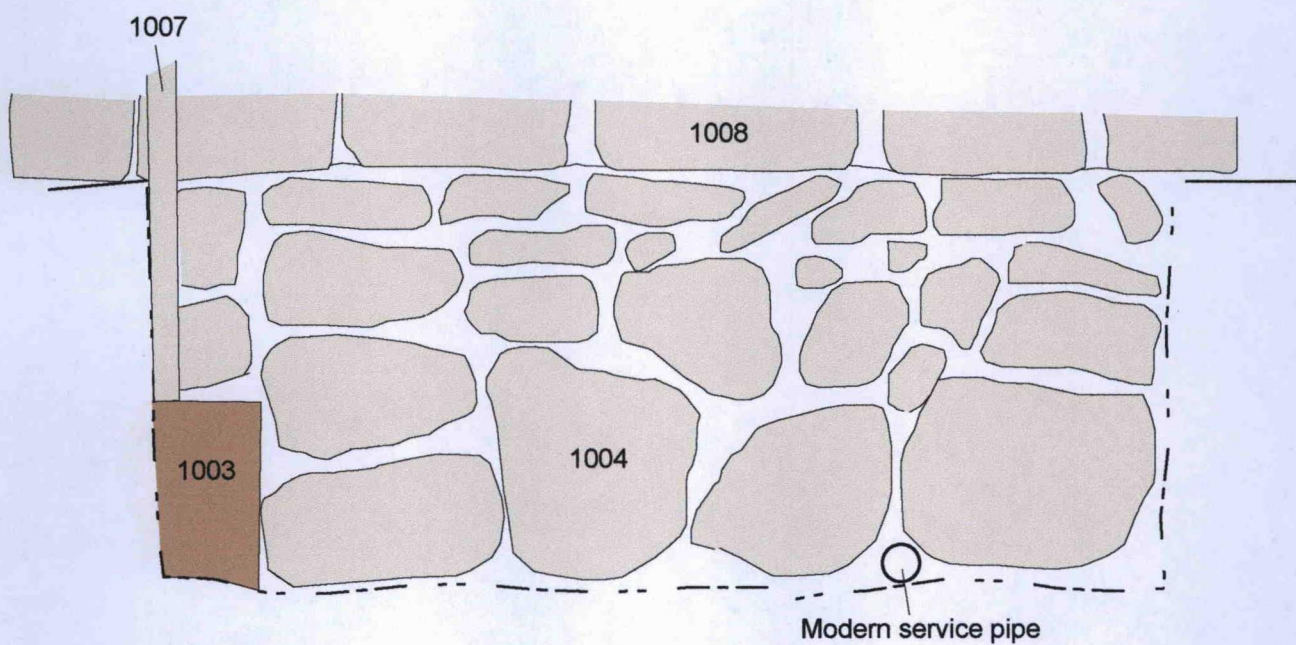
Fig. 2 Trench location



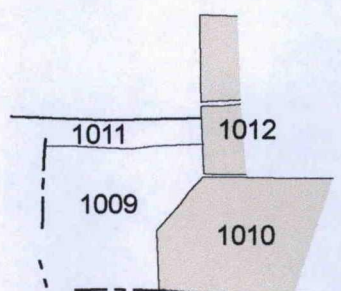




*Section 1, against boundary wall*

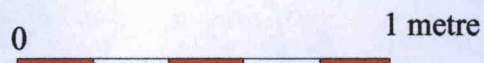


*Section 2, along boundary wall*



*Section 3, against church tower*

**Fig. 3** Recorded sections





#### **4. THE WATCHING BRIEF**

##### **4.1 Junction Box**

The earliest deposit located within the trench was a friable mid-grey brown silt sand with occasional stone fragments and charcoal flecks (1000) (see Section 1). Embedded in this deposit in the southern half of the trench was a series of large sandstone cobbles and sub-rectangular sandstone slabs (1001). They appeared to have been split to produce a flat surface and appeared to have been cut through by the brick foundation of the gate into the churchyard. It is possible that these sandstone blocks represent an earlier path or yard. The northern end of the trench had been disturbed by the excavation of a service trench and the deposits within it consisted of mixed, friable dark grey brown silt sand with inclusions of sandstone fragments and mortar flecks (1002).

The west side of the trench (Section 2) was formed by the foundations of the existing church boundary wall (1004) and the brick foundations for the gate into the churchyard (1003). The foundations of the wall (1004) consisted of large, sub-rounded sandstone cobbles bonded in a hard white mortar laid in roughly four courses with the spaces between the larger stones filled with smaller stone fragments. These foundations overlay the brick plinth foundation of the gate (1003). The bricks in the foundations for the gate measured 220mm x 100mm x 80mm and were bounded with a hard white mortar. Bonded to this was the dressed stone of the gate post (1007). It is probable that the gate and the boundary wall (1008) are of contemporary construction.

Directly above the brick foundations and the sandstone cobble path was a deposit of friable, dark grey silt sand (1005) with flecks of mortar that was overlain by the pea grit gravel of the present church path (1006).

##### **4.2 Cable Trench**

The main deposit within the cable trench was a friable, mid brown silt sand (1009), very similar to Deposit 1000 observed in the junction box. The north side of the trench was disturbed by the existing services (1002). Overlying this deposit was the pea grit (1006) of the present footpaths except in the area immediately adjacent to the church tower where it was overlain by concrete drainage gullies (1011).

In the stretch of the trench adjacent to the church tower (1012) a chamfered stone block (1010) at the base of the tower was exposed 0.14m BGL (Section 3). The stone was presumably the tower's original plinth, and would have been visible above the contemporary ground surface. Indeed, it showed evidence of weathering, the result of exposure to the elements. This suggests that the recent laying of paths etc is just one more episode in a series of events that has contributed to the build-up of the ground level in the churchyard in this area.

#### **5. BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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## **6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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