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ALL SAINTS' CHURCH, LONG MARSTON.

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF.  
OSA REPORT No: OSA05WB19.

SEPTEMBER 2005.



**OSA**

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**Report Summary.**

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**REPORT NO:** OSA05WB19

**SITE NAME:** Long Marston Church

**NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE:** SE 5084 5050

**ON BEHALF OF:** Long Marston P.C.C.  
c/o Clare Doran  
Westfields, Wetherby Road,  
Long Marston,  
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**GRAPHICS:** Liz Humble

**FIELDWORK:** Liz Humble

**TIMING:** Fieldwork  
13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> August 2005  
Post excavation & report preparation 05<sup>th</sup> September 2005

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**PERIODS REPRESENTED:** Post-medieval

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## 1.0 Abstract.

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*An archaeological watching brief was carried out by On-Site Archaeology at All Saints' Church, Long Marston on behalf of Long Marston P.C.C. The work was undertaken in order to fulfil an archaeological requirement of a faculty granted for the insertion of a drainage channel through the churchyard. + condition on planning permission.*

*The watching brief took place on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of August 2005. It comprised observation of the excavation of a single drainage channel running east from the street frontage to the church, around the western foundations of the church and finally through the churchyard.*

*As the trench was excavated, close archaeological supervision was maintained in order to identify the presence or absence of any surviving archaeological deposits. No archaeological burials or features were encountered, although several disarticulated human bones were recovered as were artefacts related to burials such as coffin handles.*



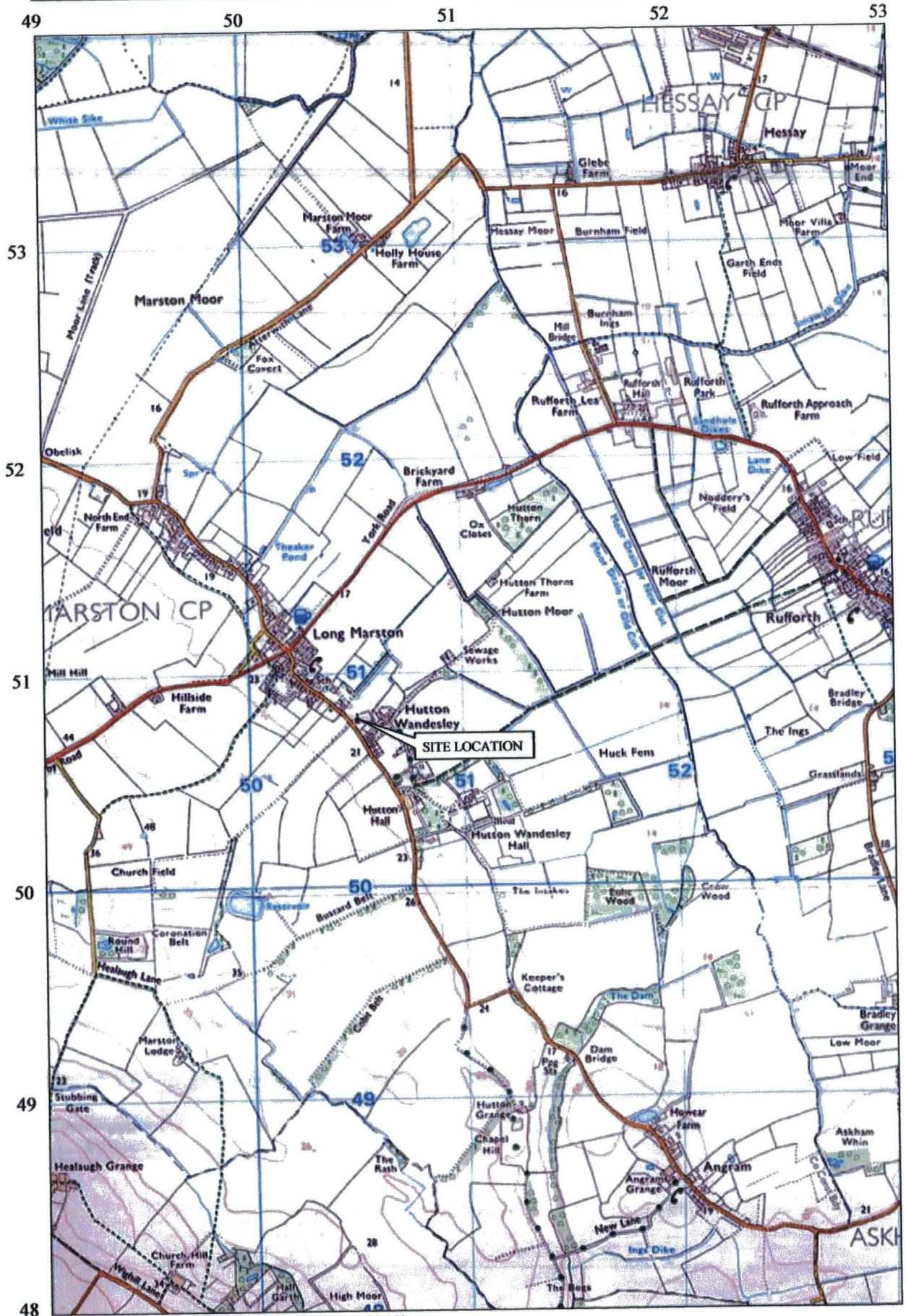


Figure 1. Site Location (NGR SE 5084 5050)

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## 2.0 Site Location, Geology, Topography and Land Use.

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The site lies approximately 7 miles west of York, to the south of Wetherby Road (the B1224). It is located on the southeast edge of the village of Long Marston in North Yorkshire. The site is located at national grid reference SE 5084 5050.

The church is situated in a rural environment on the outskirts of the village of Long Marston. The religious Christian space of the church and churchyard was enclosed and bounded by a brick wall. To the east of the churchyard lay a farm and agricultural fields with a field currently under grassland to the north of the church. Much of this land forms part of the Hutton Wandesley estate.

The excavation of a single drainage channel was observed. This ran eastwards to the church from the lych gate on the street frontage, around the western foundations of the church, and then northeast across the churchyard to a manhole 10m northeast of the boundary of the churchyard.

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## 3.0 Archaeological Background.

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There is evidence of activity during the medieval period at the village of Long Marston including a former medieval moated enclosure and earthwork remains of a former medieval settlement and associated field systems (*On-Site Archaeology* 2003). Furthermore, 'Marston Moor', a field near the village of Long Marston, was the site of one of the battles between Charles I and Parliament during the Civil War. On July 2<sup>nd</sup> 1644 the Parliamentarians won a decisive victory at this battle.

Long Marston church, dedicated to All Saints, is an historic multi-phased building with medieval origins. In 1400 a commission was granted to the villagers to build All Saints' Church at Long Marston (Bulmer 1890). The style of the church is generally acknowledged to be Romanesque, with some Tudor alterations such as the insertion of at least two Tudor style windows. Interestingly, the results of a recent measured survey undertaken by Caroline Baker at the University of York suggest that this church may have Norman origins (Caroline Baker, pers. comm. September 2005). This is because the style and size of the windows and thickness of the walls is consistent with that of a Norman church. It is unclear whether this is due to the possible re-use of much of the surviving fabric of the older church resulting in a Norman style or because this church is in fact an older foundation than traditionally assumed. *cf our letter of 6/4/05 to Harrogate Borough Council.*

The church was restored in 1869 (Bulmer 1890) and the west tower probably dates from this time. Consequently, it would be expected that there would be a long history of burial in the churchyard.

## 4.0 Methodology.

The excavation methodology employed on the 13<sup>th</sup> of August involved a group of local volunteers digging the drainage trench adjacent to the church foundations by hand. The drainage channel was dug to a width of 0.20-0.25m and a depth of 0.75m. Following this, on the 15<sup>th</sup> of August the groundworks contractors, from the Hutton Wandesley Estate office, used a mini digger with a 400mm toothed bucket to dig a 0.40m wide and 0.75m deep drainage trench through the churchyard. A 600mm toothed bucket was used to dig the trench beyond the boundary walls to the existing manhole. The dimensions of this were 10m x 0.70m x 0.90m deep.

Standard *On-Site Archaeology* techniques were followed throughout the excavation of the trenches. As the trench was excavated, close archaeological supervision was maintained in order to identify the presence or absence of any surviving archaeological deposits. A photographic record was also maintained. All depths were taken from the existing surface.

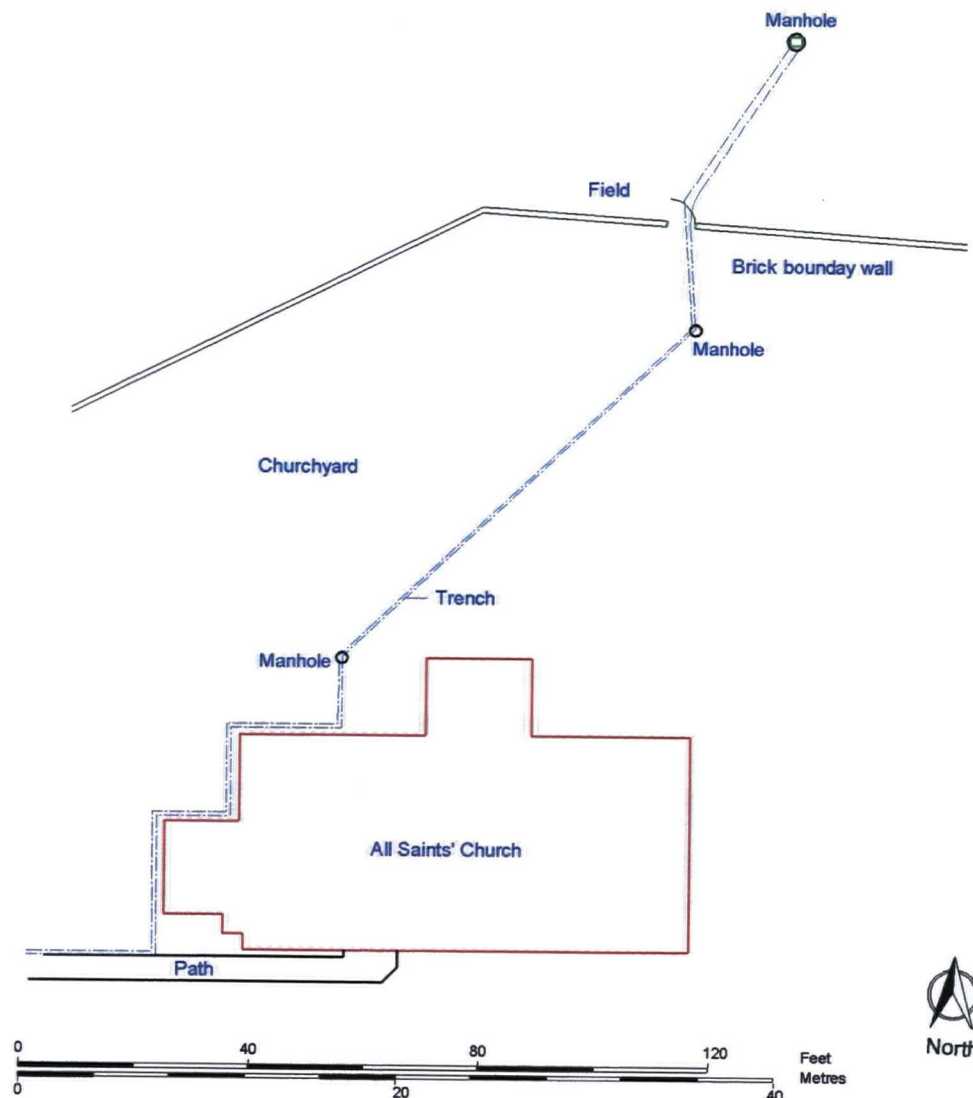


Figure 2. Trench location plan. (Scale of 1:400).



## 5.0 Results.

The natural (1004) was only reached in the part of the trench beyond the churchyard. Towards the base of the 10m stretch of the drainage trench excavated in the field northeast of the churchyard was a slightly silty orangey brown clay with 5% rounded cobbles. This is assumed to represent the interface between the natural and overlying subsoil (Plate.1). The subsoil (1002) was a compact orangey brown silt/clay with 3% rounded cobbles. It was 0.65m thick and was an archaeologically sterile layer.

In contrast, the subsoil within the churchyard was a loose, fine brown sandy silt (1001) from which several sherds of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century pottery and ceramic building material (CBM) were recovered. This was at least 0.55m deep and was not bottomed (Plate.2). It became increasingly compact and its colour and composition like subsoil (1002) in the 10m of the trench south of the boundary wall

The trench was too shallow in depth to expect to find *in-situ* burials. However, there was no evidence of grave cuts in the trench sections and it is possible that the narrow trench avoided all burials. There was a reasonable quantity of loose human bones, all of which were retrieved from this layer. In total, these came to between 55-60 fragments and included skull fragments, ribs and vertebrae. Two skulls were left *in-situ* as they only projected very slightly into the trench (Plate.3). Four bones from a human infant were found immediately adjacent to the west tower of the church. Many of these bones probably became disarticulated as a result of root action as there were several large trees close to the trench.

Several items associated with churchyard burials were recovered from subsoil (1001). They comprise three iron coffin handles, a single nail and a probable tombstone (Plate.4). The latter was discovered lying horizontally at the top of the subsoil and was sealed by the topsoil. It was 1.20m x 0.82m in size. It had been worked on one face giving it a smooth appearance and had also had a thin line incised around the stone forming a box, presumably to delineate the area where an inscription would have been chiselled. However, instead of an inscription there were tool markings produced by a chisel. The top right hand corner of the stone had broken off and it may have been due to this damage that the stone was abandoned and left flat on the ground.

The foundations of the west tower [1003] cut through the subsoil (1001). These were exposed during the excavation. They consisted of five courses of stepped stone (Plate.5). The stones were hewn to rough-hewn and were not dressed. CBM was used to fill voids between some of the stones. This tower appears to date to building work undertaken in 1869. - what evidence?

The topsoil (1000) across the trench was a loose greyish brown silt approximately 0.20m thick. It contained occasional 20<sup>th</sup> century sherds of pottery and CBM.



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## 6.0 Discussion and Conclusions.

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During the course of the watching brief the excavation of a drainage trench was observed. Numerous loose well preserved human bones were recovered from the graveyard soil with associated artefacts such as coffin handles and a possible tombstone. Interestingly, three (how?) infant bones were recovered from the subsoil immediately adjacent to the foundations of the west tower of the church. Burials within churchyards were sometimes segregated. For example, there are documented examples from the middle ages up to the 19<sup>th</sup> century of individuals who committed suicide/felons being buried in a part of the churchyard near the boundary walls, away from other burials. Similarly, there were occasions where burials were segregated by age with infants being buried immediately beyond the church walls (Hadley 2001; Paul 1996). This clearly had a symbolic significance. It may have been because they had not been baptised. Alternatively, views regarding the 'souls' of infants and the afterlife may have resulted in their liminal but important role in the churchyard. Unfortunately, the bones at Long Marston were not found within a burial and the presence of a modern water pipe in the vicinity means that they have probably been disturbed. Furthermore, the west tower is likely to be a 19<sup>th</sup> century addition, thus the medieval extent of the church is unknown.

What evidence?

There was no evidence for any significant archaeological features or burials within the excavated area. One possible explanation for this could be the commonly held belief in post medieval, and possibly also medieval, England that the north side of a churchyard belonged to the Devil resulting in a reluctance of people to be buried to the north (Paul 1996, 61). This often resulted in overcrowding in the southern part of the churchyard, whereas the northern part (where the drainage trench at Long Marston was excavated) had a relatively small number of burials.

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## 7.0 Bibliography

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Bulmer, T. 1890. *History, Topography and Directory of North Yorkshire*.

Hadley, D. M. 2001. *Death in Medieval England*. Tempus Publishing Ltd.

On-Site Archaeology. 2003. Report on an archaeological watching brief at Westfields, Wetherby Road, Marston. Unpublished On-Site Archaeology Report No OSA05WB29, November 2003.

Paul, W. N. 1996. *Enjoying Old Parish Churches*. Pentland Press Ltd.

## 8.0 Appendix 1 ~ List of Contexts.

Context	Description	Extent	Max. depth
1000	A loose greyish brown silt (topsoil)	Trench	0.20m
1001	A loose fine brown sandy silt (subsoil a)	Graveyard	0.55m
1002	A compact orangey brown silty clay with 3% cobbles (subsoil b)	c.14m x 0.70m	0.70m
1003	West tower foundations		
1004	A compact orangey brown clay with 5% cobbles (natural)	10m x 0.70m	0.05m

## 9.0 Appendix 2 ~ Archive Index.

### 9.1 *Photographic Register.*

Frame	Description	Scale	Date	Initials
<b>Digital 12.08.05</b>				
1	Human bones, including skull, view east	0.5m	13.08.05	EH
2	Coffin handles	0.5m	13.08.05	EH
3	Trench by path, view east	None	13.08.05	EH
4	Loose human bones, view south	0.5m	13.08.05	EH
5	Skull in section, loose human bones, view northeast	0.5m	13.08.05	EH
6	Skull in section, loose human bones, view north	0.5m	13.08.05	EH
7	Skull in section, loose human bones, view west	0.5m	13.08.05	EH
8	Foundation courses of the west tower, view, north	0.5m	13.08.05	EH
9	Foundation courses of the west tower, view north	0.5m	13.08.05	EH
10	Trench by the west tower, view north	0.5m	13.08.05	EH
11	Trench by the west tower, view north	0.5m	13.08.05	EH
12	Trench by the north transept, view east	0.5m	13.08.05	EH
13	Trench through the graveyard	None	15.08.05	EH
14	Possible tombstone	0.5m	15.08.05	EH
15	Trench through the graveyard, view north	None	15.08.05	EH
16	Trench through the graveyard, view south	None	15.08.05	EH
17	Trench through the field, view south	0.5m	15.08.05	EH
18	Trench section through graveyard, view northeast	None	15.08.05	EH
19	View of church, looking east	None	15.08.05	EH
20	Lych gate, view east	None	15.08.05	EH