

# **Report of Work under Archaeological Supervision and Control**

## **St Mary's Church, Hickling, Norfolk Installation of lavatory and associated services**

NHER ENF 134189

**Prepared for Hickling PCC**



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<b>Project name</b>	<b>St Mary's Church</b>
<b>Parish</b>	<b>Hickling</b>
<b>District</b>	<b>North Norfolk</b>
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## Summary

Archaeological monitoring was undertaken during work installing a lavatory at Hickling Church.

Small parts of the footings and foundation of the tower and north aisle were recorded.

In the tower a 14th to 15th-century tiled floor was exposed beneath make-up material for the existing modern floor. The earlier floor extended to the north wall of the tower where it was overlaid by a solid mortar and flint footing. This might have represented a feature alongside the wall (perhaps a bench?). The glaze was better preserved in the area beneath the footing and more eroded in the central area of the tower.

In the eastern central area of the tower the earlier tile floor was partly absent and some bricks may have replaced an area of floor or represented the base for a feature of some kind (perhaps a font?). There was also some later disturbance; a sunken area included 18th and 19th-century brick in its infill. Also within the sunken area, and spread across the rest of the exposed areas was a layer of sand bedding for a brick surface; either a floor, or a base for the existing floor.

In the churchyard, several human skulls were exposed in the bottom of a water pipe trench and probably represented *in situ* burials but the work did not necessitate their removal from the ground. The positions of at least nine burials were identified in the trench for the trench arch drain, one of them with a vaulted brick tomb (probably of 19th-century date). Disturbed soils in other trenches showed that burials also existed in those areas but none were exposed by the work.

A small path or grave surround was recorded and a blocked modern soakaway was replaced during the work.

A medieval/early post-medieval finger ring and part of some possible tweezers of post-medieval date were found as well as late medieval and post-medieval pottery, a piece of medieval building stone, medieval, post-medieval and modern brick, medieval and modern floor tile, post-medieval window glass, a 16th or 17th-century clay tobacco pipe fragment, part of a modern glass bottle, a cattle mandible and an oyster shell.

Disarticulated human bone, found in several trenches, was left in the care of the church for reinterment.

## **1.0 Introduction**

St Mary's Church is situated at the northern edge of Hickling village and approximately 3.5km from the north-east Norfolk coast TG 4149 2425 (Fig. 1).

A lavatory was being installed at the church and work relating to this included service trenches, a trench arch system and preparation of an area within the tower for new partition walls. Service pipes were also laid into the west end of the north aisle for the provision of a kitchenette. During the work an existing soakaway was discovered and, due to its condition, replaced.

Archaeological work involved observing, and supervision of, the excavation of trenches in the churchyard and recording of the exposed deposits, including burials. Inside the church the lifting of the existing floor tiles and digging of the new footing trenches was observed and the exposed deposits were recorded. The work accorded to a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by Sarah Bates to meet the requirements of an archaeological brief set by Norfolk Historic Environment Service (NHES Brief for the Monitoring of Works under Archaeological Supervision and Control, CNF44536, Steve Hickling, 05/07/18).

Hickling PCC funded the improvements at the church and the archaeological work.

The archaeological archive will, on completion of the project, be deposited with the Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service, following the relevant policy on archiving standards. An Oasis form is included below as Appendix 1.

## **2.0 Geology and topography**

Hickling is situated in North Norfolk district but is at the north edge of the Norfolk Broads, the church being about 1.5km north of Hickling Broad and just west of the drained marshland of the east Norfolk coast. The underlying solid geology in the area of the site is Norwich Crag sand and gravel; sedimentary deposits formed in shallow seas in the Quaternary and Neogene periods (British Geological Survey 2017). The soils of the area are formed from detrital deposits from the action of ice and meltwater and are slow-draining acid clay loams (LandIS 2019)

St Mary's Church is located at the north side of The Walk and is, in effect, the most northerly building within Hickling village (Fig. 1). It is situated at a height of 4.46m OD (OS bench mark on south-west corner of west tower. It is set centrally within its original churchyard although this has been extended to the east (see below). The churchyard is neatly maintained level grass with a path to the south porch leading from a gate at its south-west corner and a footpath running along the west side of the churchyard exiting at the north-west corner.

### 3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

The Norfolk Historical Environment Record (NHER) records St Mary's Church as built in the 14th century but as being likely to stand on the site of an earlier church. Stone which may have come from such a building has been reused in some of the existing walls. The chancel may have been rebuilt after the Dissolution.

A Middle Saxon pottery sherd and a prehistoric flint were found when a trench was dug along the south-east side of the path to the southwest entrance to the churchyard in 1994 (the trench for the now-existing water supply). Some wall footings were seen '....on line of south bank of churchyard in section' (Norfolk Historical Environment Record). The NHER also records the possibility of a separate chapel in the churchyard (mentioned by Blomefield in his History of Norfolk) but its location and any physical evidence for it is unknown. A monument in the churchyard to John Bygrave (d. 1818) is grade II listed.

Further detail about the church is included in a building report held in the NHER (Rose 1988). This includes reference to the dedication of the church to All Saints until the dissolution of Hickling priory in the 16th century (see below). Rose describes the tower as of knapped, but not squared, flints with inclusion of occasional knapped erratics, lumps of limestone and some flint 'galetting' – this indicating the medieval use of this technique of including flint flakes within the mortar between the main flints or stones. Other than the pieces of re-used stone in the church walls (although those not closely dateable), Rose dates nothing as earlier than 14th century and, unlike some other descriptions of the building, considers the tower as contemporary with the nave and aisles and of (late) 14th-century rather than 15th-century date. Rose suggests that the chancel may have become ruined at the Dissolution, and was later rebuilt to a smaller plan.

A search of the Norfolk Historic Environment Record (NHER) for an area within a 500m radius of the church shows a record of sites and finds of prehistoric to post-medieval date. They include a possible Bronze Age ring ditch and prehistoric struck flints and Roman pottery from north-west and west of Hickling Hall to the north of the church. In fields to the south-west of the church are cropmarks of an enclosure of likely Iron Age or Roman date and other multiphase cropmarks which probably include field boundaries dating from the late prehistoric period onwards.

Cropmarks of probable medieval to post-medieval field boundaries are recorded just to the north-west of the church and similar, but undated, cropmarks have been recorded to the north, south and east of the church (including in the area of the church itself). It has been suggested that some of them represent features of pre-medieval date. Further to the south-east of the church is a linear cropmark thought to represent a post-medieval trackway.

Metal detecting to the north of the church in 2003 aimed to find evidence of early activity relating to occupation or activity near the church; finds of Roman, medieval and post-medieval date were made but nothing of Saxon date was found. Medieval pottery sherds have been found in the area immediately to the south of the church (the area now used as the church car park) and finds of medieval date have been made further from the church to the west and south-south-west with medieval and post-medieval finds also recorded from just west of Hickling Hall.

Extending over an area 500m-1km to the north-east of the church is the site of Hickling Augustinian Priory which was founded in 1185 and dissolved in 1536. Part of its church

and cloister survive and other features have been identified from aerial photographs. Many finds of medieval and post-medieval have been made during metal detecting in its vicinity.

A footpath today running along the west side of the churchyard and shown in that position on the late 19th-century 1st edition Ordnance Survey map is shown, on a tithe map of only slightly earlier 19th-century date, as running outside the churchyard. The earlier map also appears to show a small building immediately outside the churchyard boundary (on the line of the path) and opposite the church's west tower (Norfolk County Council 2012).

## 4.0 Methodology

Archaeological monitoring aimed to observe and record the presence or absence, location, nature and date of any surviving archaeological deposits within the areas affected by improvement works.

The trenches in the churchyard were dug by machine, with some smaller areas dug by hand, by the site contractors under archaeological control and supervision. The work inside the tower was all by hand.

The location of the areas of work was recorded and trenches were assigned context numbers for the purpose of reference and description. *Pro forma* context sheets were used to record the excavated trenches, features and deposits.

The location of assumed or known *in situ* skeletons (or parts thereof) revealed in the trenches was recorded but the excavation/removal of burials from the areas of work was not necessitated. Disarticulated human bone was collected in small amounts and was left in the care of the church for reburial in the churchyard.

Digital photographs recorded the archaeological deposits and the work at the site generally.

Finds of archaeological significance were retrieved. No deposits required sampling for environmental assessment.

Site conditions (weather, light and access) were good, the only exception being the limited light in some areas during the work inside the church.

## 5.0 Results (Figs. 1-6, Plates 1-18)

Context numbers are shown in square brackets and listed in Appendix 2. Churchyard soils referred to below were mostly brown sandy silts and comprised subsoil and grave fills, which had been mixed by the digging, and subsequent digging, of graves.

### Outside the church

#### *Trench 1*

A trench was dug for the new water supply pipes [1]. This ran from an existing supply near the path south of the south porch and around the west end of the church to enter the building at the north wall of the tower and the west wall of the north aisle. The trench was 0.35m wide and 0.75m-0.85m deep (Fig. 2, Plate 1). Slightly orange brown churchyard soil included occasional small and medium-sized flints and, very rarely, fragments of brick or tile and flecks of mortar.

Evidence of burials was seen within the churchyard soil in the base of the trench. Occasional slightly darker-coloured soils suggested the presence of graves (and were not investigated). Several skulls were exposed in the bottom of the trench and were thought probably to represent *in situ* burials (see Fig. 2, and Plate 2). They were, however, just below the depth required for the water pipe and they were all left in place, and re-covered with soil. A few other human bones were found but they were disarticulated pieces. They were collected and bagged for reinterment. Two sherds of post-medieval pottery, fragments of late medieval and post-medieval ceramic building material, a piece of 16th or 17th-century clay tobacco pipe and a cattle mandible were found in soil excavated from the trench.

The churchyard soil was overlaid by brown sandy silty loam topsoil which was soft with relatively few inclusions (rare flints and small fragments of mortar, chalk and brick/tile). The topsoil was 0.30m deep and within it, to the west of the south porch, some flint cobbles were exposed, neatly laid within edgings of yellowish cream-coloured bricks of 19th-century date [4] (Fig. 2, Plate 3). The feature was only 0.12m below the surface and ran from east to west. It was 0.65m wide and the cobbled 'surface' was very slightly convex and comprised a single layer of flints set directly into the soil. The feature might have been a small path – perhaps associated with a grave, or possibly an arrangement overlaying or marking a grave – the alignment of the feature and slightly its convex surface may suggest the latter.

The only other feature identified (initially seen in trench 1) was a modern soakaway which was seen to the west of the north aisle [3]. The soakaway comprised loose flint and brick rubble within a pit which extended below the base of the excavated trench. Its position is shown in Figure 2 (where the trench is shown widened by the contractors to enable their work in the area). The former soakaway did not extend as far as the north side of trench 1 but its exact extent southwards was unclear.

Several quite large pieces of worked stone were found in the soils from trench 1. They were mostly architectural pieces (Plate 4, detailed photographs in site archive). The fragments of stone were left in the care of the church.



### **Trench 8**

A trench was dug beside the north wall of the tower to enable service pipes for the new toilet to enter the building (Fig.2). The trench was 1.60m x 0.60m in size and a maximum depth of 0.65m. Extending across most of the area of the small trench was a deposit of compacted (but not solid) cream and light brown sandy crushed mortar with occasional small and medium-size flints [11] (Fig. 3A, Plate 5). Its edge was exposed running diagonally within the north-west corner of the trench and excavation of brown silty sand [13] from beside it showed that the compacted mortar was at least 0.25m in depth (its bottom was not reached). The mortar was interpreted as a foundation deposit; its substantial nature reflecting its load-bearing position at the corner of the nave and tower. Above the compacted mortar a solid flint and mortar footing [9] was seen below the north wall of the tower wall. It sloped down away from the wall, extending northwards about 0.40m at its lowest exposed part where large flint cobbles were seen (Plate 6). In the east side of the excavated trench quite solid flint and mortar represented the footing of the tower's north-east corner buttress

A hole was cut, by the contractors, through the solid wall footing [9] to enable services for the new lavatory (Fig. 2). Some sandy mortar seen in the lower part of the hole was thought to be a continuation of deposit [11] suggesting that it ran beneath the solid footing.

Above the foundation deposit was brown silty sand with occasional small fragments and flecks of mortar and rare flints [10]. In the deeper area to the north-west of the compacted mortar foundation very similar material was recorded as context [13] but is interpreted as part of the same 'churchyard soil'. Above this soil was the concrete base for the pavement-tiled gully which runs around the church. Part of a 19th or early 20th-century glass bottle was the only find from the trench.

### **Trench 14**

Another small trench was dug by the contractors at the west end of the north aisle to conduct pipes for the proposed kitchenette (Fig. 2). The earliest deposit recorded was some slightly orangey brown silty sand with rare flecks of mortar which was seen in the bottom of the trench [17] (Fig. 3B, Plate 7). Above that, some lenses of cream mortar and brown silty sand [16] represented construction debris at the base of the north aisle wall footing which comprised a slightly gravelly foundation layer [33] and solid mortared flint [34]. Above those was orange brown silty sand churchyard soil [15] which was overlaid by the concrete make up for the tiled gully (as in trench [8], see above).

### **Trenches 5 and 6**

A trench was dug to the north of the tower for an arch trench drain [5] (Figs 2 and 4, Plate 8). It was 20m long, 1.15m wide and 0.5m deep at its south end sloping very slightly down to the north. Mid to light brown churchyard soil included some sandier patches and was overlaid by the dark brown fine sandy loam topsoil. At least nine graves were identified, mostly as darker areas of soil crossing the trench from east to west although in none of them were seen any *in situ* human remains – the trench did not extend to the depth of burials. One grave contained a vaulted brick tomb [7] (Plate 9). It appeared that the top of the brick tomb may have been damaged and repaired previously as one area

had been 'patched' with modern (20th century) London Brick Company bricks which were which were not coated with mortar like those to their east and west.

A trench for a drain to the arch trench sloped slightly from 0.40m-0.45m deep [6]. Nothing of archaeological significance was seen within it.

Two metal finds were made during detecting these areas; a medieval or early medieval finger ring [5] and a post-medieval strip – possibly part of a pair of tweezers or similar [6].

### ***Trenches 31 and 30***

A trench was dug to the north of the tower for a new rainwater soakaway [31] (Fig. 2, Plate 10). It was 2.60m long, 0.80m wide and 0.55-0.70m deep. A well-defined area of light yellowish brown sand in the south-west part of the trench may have been undisturbed natural subsoil although it could have been redeposited material. Darker, slightly orange brown silty sand churchyard soils across the rest of the base of the trench showed that burials existed in the area but no other evidence for them was exposed at the depth reached by the trench. A sherd of 14th to 17th-century pottery was found in the excavated soils.

A sort length of trench was dug for a new drain running from the gully around the church to the new soakaway [30]. A sherd of 15th to 16th-century pottery was found.

## **Inside the church**

### ***Within the tower***

The existing diagonally laid red and black floor tiles were lifted by the contractors from the lines of footing 'slots' for the partition walls for the new lavatory (Figs 2 and 5, Plate 11). The earliest exposed deposit was some cream and light brown crushed mortar with some small fragments of mortar and small flints [25] (Fig. 6). This was seen at a depth of about 0.15m below the existing floor surface and represented make up material below a former floor surface. A piece of worked stone found in this deposit is from a jamb or similar feature and of medieval date; its un-eroded condition suggests it came from inside a building. Layer [25] was compacted and 'surface'-like at its upper horizon (numbered [22]). Possibly this represented trampling of the area prior to the laying of a thin layer of cream white mortar [29] which survived intermittently and was overlaid by other very thin layers of gingery brown sand [27] and black sandy silt [28]. All these thin deposits probably related to the bedding and laying of a tiled floor [21] (Plates 11 -14). This floor extended across most of the exposed areas within the tower although tiles were absent in the exposed south-east corner and along most of the eastern slot. The tiles (see below, *Ceramic Building Material*) were laid square to the tower and many, especially those at the north side of the tower, had white slip and yellowish glaze. They are of 14th to 15th-century date. In the central area of the floor the tiles appeared unglazed (Plates 11 and 12) - although there was some discolouration which may have been remnants of glaze; and this area seems likely to have been more well-trodden and heavily eroded. At the north side of the tower where tiles extended to the wall, the glaze was better preserved (Plates 13 and 14).

The tiled floor surface was not present along most of the eastern excavated slot and it may have been disturbed and partly removed (Fig. 5A, Plate 15). A row of five probable floor bricks of light buff-coloured fabric extended into the east side of the excavated slot but none were removed from the area (and their date is unknown) [24]. They sloped down slightly into a sunken area in the north-east corner of the excavated slot (the sunken area possibly due to the heavier passage of people through in the central area of the tower, or was perhaps due to an underlying feature such as a burial – or both). The bricks could have been part of the same floor surface as tiles [21] – and/or a repair or a base for a feature (for example; a font?), or they may not have been contemporary with the tiled floor.

Seen alongside the north wall of the tower was a solid flint and mortar footing which included large rounded flints [32] (Fig. 5B, Plates 11 and 16, and in section in Plate 15) It was about 80mm deep and extended about 0.60m from the wall, overlaying the tiled floor [21]. Many of the floor tiles exposed by its removal were particularly well-preserved in terms of surviving glaze compared to those in the central area of the tower (see above). The purpose of the solid footing is uncertain, perhaps it represented the former position of a bench or some other feature along-side the wall, or had some other purpose. Its date in relation to the deposits to its south ([23] and [19] - see below) was uncertain but, if of earlier date, it had probably been deliberately truncated to their level.

A layer of pale yellow sand [23] with occasional silty patches and mortar flecks, but elsewhere free of inclusions, formed make-up material which was seen in all but the northern east to west slot (Fig. 6, Plates 11, 12 and 15). In the sunken area in the excavated north-east corner the sand layer was deeper and included a variety of brick and floor tile fragments of 17th to 19th-century date – these may have been included to help reinstate the ground level in this area. Bedded upon the sand were bricks which were laid diagonally to the building. In the west and south excavated slots and in the north part of the east slot the bricks were red and of 17th to 18th-century date [19]. In the southern part of the east slot the bricks were buff-coloured and 18th to 19th century in date [20]. The regularly laid bricks may have formed a former floor surface – although it is possible that they were a base for the existing diagonally tiled floor [18].

### ***Within the north aisle***

A small hole was dug at the base of the west wall of the north aisle to enable the new service pipes to enter and exit the building [26] (Fig. 2). It was about 0.30m square and 0.50m deep. Loose mortary rubble was seen but it was not possible to define any individual deposits due to the small area, the nature of the material and the light conditions within the building. At a depth of about 0.30m, however, the deposits appeared to be more 'soily'. Some fragments of window glass recovered from the excavated deposits were probably of post-medieval date.

## 6.0 The finds

by Sue Anderson

### Introduction

Table 1 shows the quantities of finds collected during the fieldwork. A full quantification by context is provided in Appendix 3.

Find type	No.	Wt/g
Pottery: post-Roman	4	135
CBM	27	10928
Worked stone	1	171
Glass	5	46
Clay pipe	1	2
Animal bone	1	112
Shell	1	7

Table 1. Finds quantities.

### Methodology

Unless otherwise noted, all finds were quantified by count and weight, measurements were recorded as appropriate, and any observations recorded. Recording of pottery follows MPRG guidelines (MPRG 2001) and fabrics are based on Jennings (1981). The results were input onto an Access database, which forms the archive catalogue.

### Pottery

Four sherds of pottery weighing 135g were collected from three contexts (Appendix 4).

Two sherds were recovered from contractor's trench [1] at the west end of the church). These were body sherds of Frechen stoneware (16th-17th century) and iron-glazed blackware (16th-18th century).

A fragment of a large late medieval and transitional ware mug was found in drain trench [30] and a body sherd of Siegburg stoneware (14th-17th century) was found in soakaway trench [31].

### Building materials

#### **Ceramic Building Material (CBM)**

Twenty-seven fragments (10,928g) of CBM were collected from nine contexts (Appendix 5). Table 2 shows the quantities by form and fabric.

Fabric	Code	EB	LB	B	FFT	FT	QFT	FB	RTP
estuarine clays	est	6							
fine sandy with coarse quartz	fscq		1			1			
fine sandy ferrous	fsfe				8		1		
fine sandy with grog	fsg				1				
fsg with ferrous frags	fsgfe		1						1
white-firing fine sandy	wfs		1						
wfs with grog	wfg							1	
wfg poorly mixed	wfgx							3	
compressed shale	comp			2					
<i>Total no.</i>		6	3	2	9	1	1	4	1
<i>Total weight (g)</i>		987	3130	484	3177	22	131	2986	11

Table 2. CBM quantities by fabric and form

Eleven fragmentary or complete bricks were collected. Fragments of estuarine clay bricks (EB) comprised five pink brick fragments (unstratified) with strawed bases, and a fragment which had been heavily overfired (trench [30]) and which had a sanded base with some straw impressions; these bricks are likely to be of 14th/15th-century date. One complete white-firing brick (LB) was found in path [4] and was probably of 19th-century date; it measured 220 x 104 x 60mm. Fragments of two red bricks (LB) in fine sandy fabrics were recovered from floor [19] and layer [23], both broadly of 17th/18th-century date. Two modern compressed shale London Brick Company bricks (B) were collected from burial [7], one piece almost completely covered in lime mortar.

Several pieces of floor tile were collected. The earliest (14th-15th century) were Flemish-type floor tiles (FFT), most of which were recovered from floor [21], with one fragment from floor [19] and another from trench [1]. One other floor tile (FT) may have been of this type, but it was incomplete and very worn, so could not be certainly identified; it was also from trench [1]. The Flemish tile from [19] was covered in a fine lime deposit which had probably formed part of a plaster floor surface. There were traces of this on the surfaces of all the tiles from [21] as well. These tiles comprised two very worn examples and four which had their original unworn surfaces, covered in white slip and a yellowish glaze. The glazed tiles were poorly made with reduced and partly blown raised centres. This group measured 105–110 x 103–105 x 25–30mm, placing them towards the smaller end of the size range for this type of tile. One possible post-medieval quarry floor tile (QFT) was found in layer [23] – it had knife-trimmed sides and a worn surface.

Large pieces of four white-firing floor bricks (FB) were recovered from floor [20] and layer [23]. The brick from [23] had sooting in one corner which appeared to show the outline of a worked stone, suggesting that it may have formed a floor which ran below a carved upright column or jamb. The bricks were of 'standard' size for this type of paviour, 110–112mm wide and 49–53mm thick.

One small fragment of plain roof tile of post-medieval date came from trench [1].

### **Worked stone**

A small piece of worked stone (171g) was recovered from layer [25] (Appendix 6). It was in a fine-grained pale cream limestone and was part of a roll moulding of medieval date. The lack of erosion suggested that the piece had been part of an internal jamb or similar. Fine chisel marks were visible running in a straight line along the surface of the roll.

### **Glass**

Four fragments (20g) of pale green/blue window glass were recovered from trench [26] (Appendix 7). The pieces were 1.6–4mm thick and one fragment had a trace of lime mortar on the surface. One piece which varied between 2-4mm thick may be a piece of crown glass. The two thinnest fragments had slightly denatured surfaces and were probably slightly earlier than the two thicker fragments, but they were probably all of post-medieval date.

### **Bottle**

A fragment of a glass bottle (26g) was found in trench [8] (Appendix 7). It was from a circular pale green bottle of probably 19th-early 20th-century date.

### **Clay tobacco pipe**

One small stem fragment (2g) from trench [1] had a bore diameter of 3.1mm and is likely to be of later 16th or 17th-century or date (Appendix 8).

### **Biological evidence**

A fragment (112g) of the right mandible of a cow was found in trench [1] (Appendix 9). One tooth (the first molar?) was present *in situ* and the premolars had all been present at the time of death. Wear on the molar suggested that the animal was mature at the time of death.

One small oyster shell (*Ostrea edulis*) was also recovered from trench [01] (Appendix 9).

### **Discussion**

Most of the CBM and a few of the other finds were recovered from floor and make-up layers within the tower and elsewhere in the church. The Flemish floor tiles [21] can be seen as part of an *in situ* late medieval floor within the tower.

Like most churchyards, this one has produced a small quantity of post-medieval domestic rubbish (pottery, glass, animal bone, shell, etc.), mainly from trenches [1], [8], [30] and [31], which generally remains unexplained, but could be related to importation of soil to build up the graveyard, or as manure if there were flower beds in the churchyard at some point.

### **Recommendations**

The assemblage has been fully catalogued and no further work is required. Some finds are intrinsically useful for future researchers and should be retained in the archive (pottery, glass, stone, clay pipe). The CBM comprises mainly common types but suggestions for the retention of some pieces have been made (see Appendix 5). The animal bone and shell are unstratified and undatable, and as such they could be discarded if required.

### **Copper alloy objects**

by Rebecca Sillwood

Two copper alloy finds were recovered by metal detecting.

A complete finger ring was found and consisted of a slender circular hoop with a raised square bezel once containing a gem or glass setting [6] (Plates 17A and B). The bezel had four 'claws' for holding the missing gem in place. Either side of the bezel there were moulded shoulders, possibly in the form of acorns, however, they are too worn to be certain. This is followed by further mouldings extending around about a third of the ring. The ring measured 20mm in diameter and weighed 1.8g. This ring is likely to be of medieval or early post-medieval date, though no exact parallel has been found. Similar square bezelled rings of medieval date are illustrated by Egan & Pritchard (2013, 328, fig. 216, no. 1617), though they do not have the mouldings to the shoulders that the Hickling example does. Post-medieval examples of similar style are illustrated on the Portable Antiquities Scheme database ([www.finds.org/](http://www.finds.org/)).

A tapering strip was recovered, which may be part of a pair of tweezers or tongs of post-medieval date [5] (Plates 18A and B). The strip had an incised border down its length on its convex face, and the narrow end may have been shaped, but the object was too worn to be certain. The wide end of the piece was broken; this would have been the weakest point of the object. The length of the piece was 62mm and width at the wide end was 10mm. The object weighed 3.5g.

### **Other metal finds**

A number of iron nails (or various length and thickness) were found during detecting the spoil heaps. They ranged from 120-60mm in length and were mostly square or rectangular shanked. Some of them may have come from the church building. Six fragments of lead were also found (ranging from 7-296g), they were all fragments of building waste from roofing work or repairs to windows.

### ***Recommendations***

The copper alloy should be retained in the archive. The other metal finds have not been retained.

### **Flint**

A few flint flakes were recovered (from trenches 1, 5 and 8). On cleaning and examination of the material it was considered most likely, due to their nature and condition, that they were knapping debris from building flint and they have been discarded.

## **7.0 Conclusions**

Although sandy areas were seen in some areas, it was uncertain whether the sand was an undisturbed natural deposit or whether it had been redeposited during grave-digging.

Small parts of the footings and foundation deposits for the tower and north aisle were recorded. A thick layer of compacted mortar rubble appeared to form a substantial foundation deposit for the buttress at the north-east corner of the tower. Above that was the solid flint and mortar wall footing which was drilled through by the contractors to allow the services entry to the building. The footing at the west wall of the north aisle was less substantial comprising a quite gravelly deposit below the solid mortared flints. Again, the solid footing was cut through for service pipes.

Inside the tower, make up material for an earlier Flemish-type tiled floor was recorded and a piece of medieval roll-moulded stone found in the make-up layer was the only find from below the floor. Its un-eroded condition suggested it had come from inside a building and it is noted that re-used medieval stone in the church wall has been suggested as originating from an earlier (pre-14th-century) church (Rose 1988/see above). The glazed tiles of the floor are of 14th-15th-century date and laid square to the building. The glaze was better preserved on some tiles while, in the central area, in an area where more frequent passage was likely to have occurred, they were very abraded. The dating evidence from below the floor and the pattern of wear of the floor suggest

that the late medieval tiled floor survives *in situ*. Traces of a fine lime deposit identified on the Flemish tile surfaces was suggested (above) as possibly representing a plaster floor but it is noted here that these tiles mostly came from beneath a lime mortar footing (see below) and, thus, the lime deposit may well have derived from there.

A shallow, but solid, flint footing ran alongside the north wall overlaying the tiled floor surface. Its purpose is unknown but it is possible that it represented the position of a former feature; for example, a stone bench. Such features are often found in church porches and sometimes survive at other positions within the nave or aisles. It is uncertain as to whether such a bench is likely to have occurred in a tower but the presence of the west doorway and use of the tower as an entrance-way, or for processions, might increase the likelihood of a bench in this position. The presence of the flint and mortar footing offers another possible explanation for the better preservation of the floor tiles in that area; benches were often built after floors were laid, preserving areas of floor beneath them (Rodwell 2012, 49). This might suggest a bench was roughly contemporary with the glazed tile floor.

The tiled floor did not exist/survive in the eastern excavated slot although some bedding deposits which were probably associated with it were recorded. In the east side of the excavated area some buff-coloured large bricks may have represented an area of disturbance/replacement within the tiled floor and/or could have provided a base for some kind of feature - perhaps a font stood here. These bricks sloped down to the south almost certainly due to a slight hollow in the underlying deposits which may have formed due to the compaction of the soils in the central thoroughfare or the sinking of deposits due to an earlier feature – perhaps a grave. Brick and tile rubble, mainly of 18th and 19th-century date, was included in the sand in the area of the hollow, presumably to assist in the subsequent levelling of the area.

A layer of yellow sand was seen in all the excavated slots and lay across the top of all the deposits – apart from at the north side of the tower where it did not extend over the truncated footing. The sand formed a level surface for the bedding of a layer of neatly (and diagonally) laid bricks. Across most of the exposed areas these were red 17th to 18th-century bricks but in the south-east corner buff-coloured 18th to 19th century bricks were present. These bricks may have formed a floor in their own right but might have formed a base layer for the diagonally laid tiles forming the existing tower floor. The fact that the mortared footing at the north side of the tower appears to have been truncated at the same level as the top of the bricks suggests either that footing was deliberately levelled to form part of a floor base with the bricks, or that the feature represented by the footing survived above a floor level formed of bricks and was removed when the existing tiled floor was laid.

Several human skulls were exposed in the bottom of the water pipe trench and were thought to represent *in situ* burials due to their orientation and the depth at which they were seen. None of them were removed from the trench; they were re-covered with soil and left in place.

The positions of at least nine burials were identified in the trench for the trench arch drain. One grave included a vaulted brick tomb (probably of 19th-century date) which had been repaired with modern bricks. The other graves were identified only by their darker soil fills. Disturbed soils from grave-digging were also identified in the trench for the new soakaway. No human remains were seen or disturbed in either trench.



A small feature edged by bricks and infilled with flint pebbles was recorded in the water pipe trench. It was only just below turf level and within the topsoil. It was thought to be part of a path or surround for a grave plot.

A modern, dysfunctional, soakaway was replaced during the work.

Disarticulated human bone was found in several areas during the groundworks. The human remains were bagged, labelled and left in the care of the church for reburial.

Two copper alloy objects were found during metal detecting spoil heaps; a medieval or early post-medieval finger ring and part of some post-medieval possible tweezers or tongs. Both seem more likely to represent items lost in the churchyard than to be pieces deliberately deposited with burials. Other finds made during the work included late medieval and post-medieval pottery, a piece of worked building stone of medieval date, medieval, post-medieval and modern brick, medieval and modern floor tile, post-medieval window glass, a clay tobacco pipe fragment of 16th or 17th-century date, part of a modern glass bottle, a cattle mandible and an oyster shell. Recommendations for the retention of particular finds and their deposition with Norfolk Museums Service have been made above.

### **Acknowledgements**

The archaeological work was commissioned and funded by Hickling PCC. The improvement works were undertaken by ATM General Builders and thanks are due to Michael Young and his colleagues for their cooperation and help in facilitating the archaeological work.

The advice of Domenico D'Alessandro, (Nicholas Warns Architect Ltd) and Roy Lond (Churchwarden) and Warren Egerton (Fabric Officer), Hickling PCC is gratefully acknowledged.

Archaeological monitoring, recording and reporting was by Sarah Bates and the finds were examined and reported on by Sue Anderson with the two metal finds reported on by Rebecca Sillwood. Figure 2 is based on a plan provided by Nicholas Warns Architect Ltd.

### **References:**

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Jennings, S., 1981	<i>Eighteen Centuries of Pottery from Norwich</i> . East Anglian Archaeol. 13, Norwich Survey/NMS
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Rodwell, W, 2012	<i>The Archaeology of Churches</i> (Amberley)
Rose 1988	<i>8393 Hickling, St Mary's Church</i> , Building report held in NHER

## Appendix 1

# OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

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### Printable version

**OASIS ID: sarahbat1-332777**

#### Project details

Project name	St Mary's Church, Installation of lavatory and associated services
Short description of the project	Archaeological monitoring during installation of lavatory at Hickling Church. Parts of the footings and foundation of the tower and north aisle were recorded. In the tower a 14th to 15th-century Flemish-type tiled floor was exposed. Alongside the north wall, the floor was overlaid by a solid mortar and fill in the eastern central area of the tower's footing which might have represented a feature alongside the wall (a bench?). The glazed tiles were better preserved beneath the footing and very eroded elsewhere. To the east some bricks may have replaced part of the floor or represented the base for a feature (a font?) and a sunken area included 18th and 19th-century brick in its infill. Within the sunken area and spread across the rest of tower area was a layer of sand bedding for a brick surface; either a floor, or a base for the existing floor. In the churchyard, several human skulls were exposed in a water pipe trench and were probably in situ but their removal from the ground was not necessitated. At least nine burials were identified in the trench for the trench arch drain, one with a vaulted brick tomb (probably 19th-century). Disturbed soils in other trenches showed that burials also existed in those areas but none were exposed. A small path or grave surround was recorded and a blocked modern soakaway was replaced during the work. A medieval/early post-medieval finger ring and part of some post-medieval possible tweezers were found as well as late medieval and post-medieval pottery, a piece of medieval building stone, medieval, post-medieval and modern brick, medieval and modern floor tile, post-medieval window glass, a 16th or 17th-century clay tobacco pipe fragment, part of a modern glass bottle, a cattle mandible and an oyster shell. Disarticulated human bone, found in several trenches, was left in the care of the church for reinterment.
Project dates	Start: 29-10-2018 End: 11-12-2018
Previous/future work	Not known / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	134189 - HER event no.
Type of project	Recording project
Current Land use	Other 4 - Churchyard
Monument type	FLOOR Medieval
Monument type	FOUNDATION Medieval
Monument type	FOOTING Medieval
Significant Finds	FINGER RING Medieval
Significant Finds	FINGER RING Post Medieval
Significant Finds	TWEEZERS Post Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Post Medieval
Significant Finds	FLOOR TILE Medieval

Significant Finds	BRICK Medieval
Significant Finds	BRICK Post Medieval
Significant Finds	ARCHITECTURAL FRAGMENT Medieval
Significant Finds	CLAY TOBACCO PIPE Post Medieval
Significant Finds	FLOOR TILE Post Medieval
Investigation type	""Watching Brief""
Prompt	Faculty jurisdiction

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	NORFOLK NORTH NORFOLK HICKLING St Mary's Church, Hickling
Study area	0 Kilometres
Site coordinates	TG 4149 2425 52.761234001159 1.579676738837 52 45 40 N 001 34 46 E Point

### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Sarah Bates
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Sarah Bates
Project director/manager	Sarah Bates
Project supervisor	Sarah Bates
Type of sponsor/funding body	PCC
Name of sponsor/funding body	Hickling PCC

### Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Norfolk Museum and Archaeology Service
Physical Contents	"Ceramics","Glass","Metal","Worked stone/lithics","other"
Digital Archive recipient	Norfolk Museum and Archaeology Service
Digital Contents	"Ceramics","Glass","Metal","Stratigraphic","Worked stone/lithics"
Digital Media available	"Database","Images raster / digital photography","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Norfolk Museum and Archaeology Service
Paper Contents	"Stratigraphic","other"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Plan","Report","Section","Unspecified Archive"

### Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Report of Work under Archaeological Supervision and Control, St Mary's Church,

Hickling, NHER ENF 1341896

Author(s)/Editor(s)	Bates. S
Other bibliographic details	Report No. 43
Date	2019
Issuer or publisher	Sarah Bates
Place of issue or publication	Norwicjh
Description	A4 Grey literature report
Entered by	Sarah Bates (sj.bates@yahoo.co.uk)
Entered on	16 June 2019

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## Appendix 2: List of contexts

Context	Type	Area	Category	Description
1	Trench		Contractor's trench	trench for water pipe
2	Deposit	1	Pit fill	rubble infill of soakaway pit
3	Cut	1	Pit	soakaway
4	Deposit	1	Path	brick and flint cobble path
5	Trench		Contractor's trench	trench for arch trench system
6	Trench		Contractor's trench	trench for drain from [5] to [1]
7	Burial	5	Burial	brick tomb exposed in trench 5
8	Trench		Contractor's trench	small trench at N wall of tower
9	Deposit	8	Footing	flint footing of N wall of tower
10	Deposit	8	Layer	churtyard soil
11	Deposit	8	Layer	compacted mortar rubble foundation deposit
12	Cut	8	Feature	recorded as 'cut' but may be edge of foundation deposit [11]
13	Deposit	8	Layer	recorded as fil of [12] but may be same as [10]
14	Trench		Contractor's trench	small trench at W end of N aisle
15	Deposit	14	Layer	churtyard soil
16	Deposit	14	Layer	mortar lenses; construction debris at base of N aisle wall
17	Deposit	14	Layer	silty sand layer
18	Deposit	Tower	Floor	existing tiled floor
19	Deposit	Tower	Floor	(red) brick floor or bedding for tiles floor [18]
20	Deposit	Tower	Floor	(buff) brick floor or bedding for tiles floor [18]
21	Deposit	Tower	Floor	glazed tile earlier floor
22	Deposit	Tower	Layer	mortar-flecked sandy silt 'surface'/bedding for floor [21]
23	Deposit	Tower	Layer	yellow fine sand within sunken area beneath floor [19]/[20] - possible disturbance
24	Deposit	Tower	Floor	possible floor [21] repair
25	Deposit	Tower	Layer	make-up material beneath floor [21]
26	Trench	N aisle	Contractor's trench	small hole dug beneath floor/interior W wall of N aisle
27	Deposit	Tower	Layer	sand /bedding deposit
28	Deposit	Tower	Layer	sandy silt; possible trampled 'surface'
29	Deposit	Tower	Layer	mortar;?remnant of floor bedding
30	Trench	NW	Contractor's trench	trench for drain to new soakaway [31]
31	Trench	NW	Contractor's trench	trench for new soakaway
32	Deposit	Tower	Footing	footing at base of tower N wall
33	Deposit	14	Layer	foundation deposit to N aisle wall
34	Deposit	14	Footing	footing to N aisle wall
35	Deposit		Layer	loose mortar

**Appendix 3: Finds list**

Context	Pottery No	Pottery Wt (g)	CBM No	CBM Wt (g)	Stone No	Stone Wt (g)	Clay pipe No	Clay pipe Wt (g)	Glass No	Glass Wt (g)	ABone No	ABone Wt (g)	Shell No	Shell Wt (g)	Spotdate
1	2	39	3	149			1	2			1	112	1	7	16-18
4			1	2356											19
7			2	484											20
8									1	26					19-E20
19			2	449											17-18
20			1	1627											18-19
21			7	2911											14-15+
23			5	1965											19?
25					1	171									med
26									4	20					pmed
30	1	83	1	398											15-16
31	1	13													14-17
U/S			5	589											14-15

**Appendix 4: Pottery**

Thetford ware forms based on Dallas (1984) and Anderson (2004)

Context	Fabric	No	Wt/g	Form	Rim	Notes	Spot date
1	GSW4	1	29				16-17
1	IGBW	1	10				16-18
30	LMT	1	83	mug		large, green-glazed	15-16
31	GSW1	1	13				14-17

## Appendix 5: CBM

Context	Fabric	Form	No	Wt	Abr	L	W	T	Mortar	Glaze	Notes	Date	Retain in archive
0	est	EB	4	109								14-15	
0	est	EB	1	480	+		111	52			strawed base	14-15	
1	fsfe	FFT	1	116				22+	thick ms white on base	G	v worn	lmed	yes
1	fsgfe	RTP	1	11	+							pmed	
1	fscq	FT	1	22	+			16+	thick ms white on base		v worn	med/lmed	yes
4	wfs	LB	1	2356		220	104	60				19	
7	comp	B	1	133							frogged, LBC stamped	20	
7	comp	B	1	351					thick ms cream all over		frogged	20	
19	fsg	FFT	1	150				23+	msf on base, fs 'plaster' floor on surface	C		14-15	yes
19	fsgfe	LB	1	299	+			55	grey traces on base			17-18?	
20	wfgx	FB	1	1627			110	53	thin fs skim on surface		sooted surface in one corner, poss trace of moulded stone?	18-19	yes
21	fsfe	FFT	1	496		105	103	28	ms on base		worn	14-15	
21	fsfe	FFT	2	471		110	>101	30	msf on base, trace fs on surface	WSY	edge trimmed. Central reduced area	14-15	yes
21	fsfe	FFT	1	481		110+	105	27	ms on base, trace fs on surface	WSY	edge trimmed. Central reduced area	14-15	
21	fsfe	FFT	1	478		105	103	25	ms on base, trace fs on surface	WSY	central reduced area	14-15	
21	fsfe	FFT	1	484		105	105	25	ms on base, trace fs on surface		worn	14-15	
21	fsfe	FFT	1	501		106	103	27	ms on base, trace fs on surface	WSY	central reduced area	14-15	yes
23	wfg	FB	1	366	+			50			pink	18+	
23	wfgx	FB	1	479	+		110+	49			sooted header and onto top & base	18+	
23	fscq	LB	1	475	+			56			cracked, sooted stretcher (poss also rubbed before sooting)	17-18	
23	wfgx	FB	1	514			112	51				18-19	
23	fsfe	QFT	1	131				30+			KT edges, worn	19?	
30	est	EB	1	398				52			heavily overfired, sand & occ grass on base	14-15	yes

Mortar: fs – fine sand; ms – medium sand aggregates; msf – with flint. Glaze: G – green.



**Appendix 6: Worked stone**

Context	Type	No	Wt (g)	Notes	Date
25	architectural	1	171	fine cream-coloured limestone frag with carved 'roll', v fine chisel marks, unworn, prob internal	med

**Appendix 7: Glass**

Context	Type	Colour	No	Wt/g	Thickness	Notes	Date
8	bottle	pale green	1	26		straight-sided circular bottle	19-E20
26	window	pale green	1	12	2-4mm	crown glass?	pmed
26	window	pale green	1	5	2.1mm		pmed
26	window	pale blue	1	2	1.7mm	slightly denatured, straight edge	pmed
26	window	pale green	1	3	1.6mm	slightly denatured, straight edge with trace of came, mortar deposits	pmed

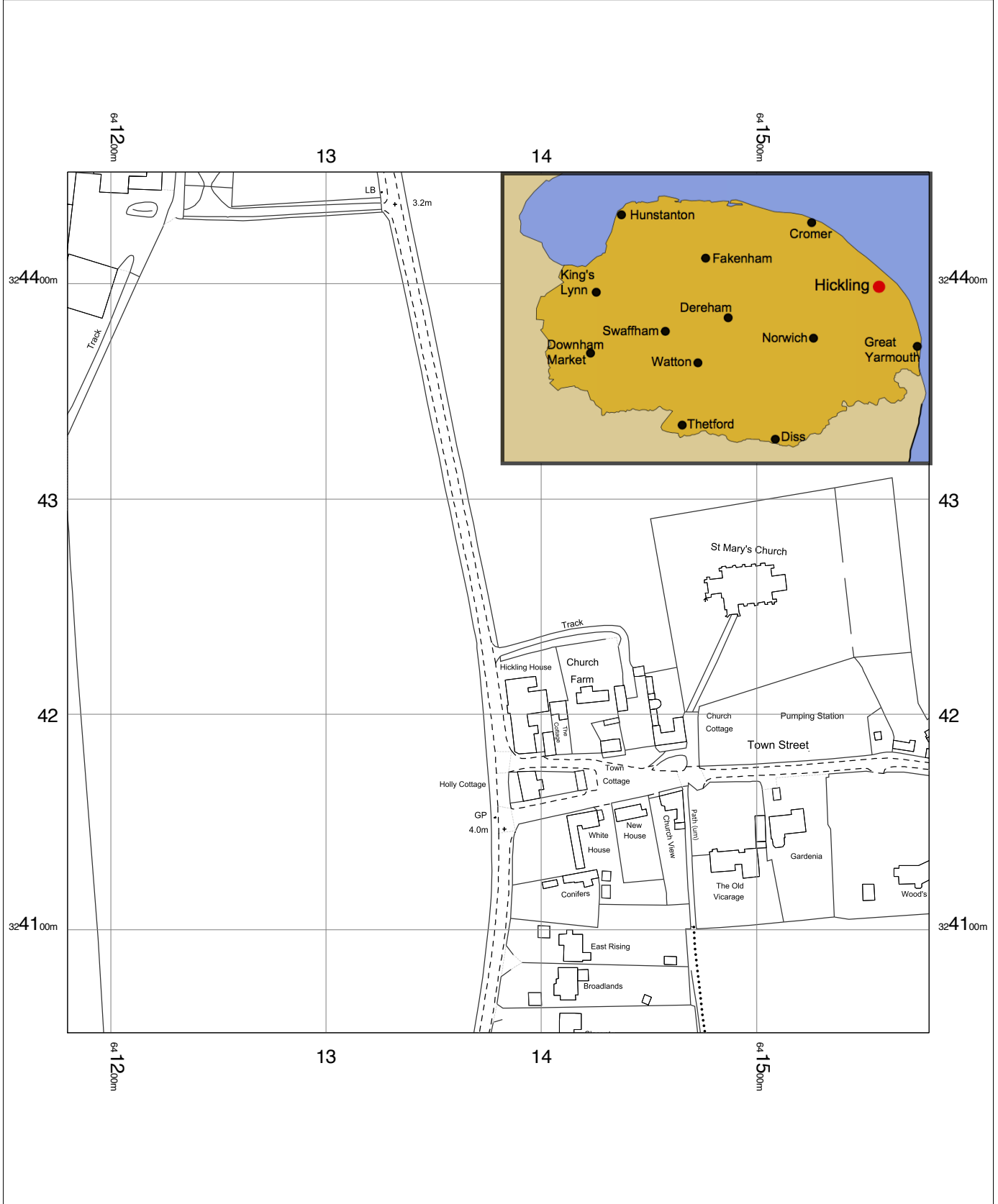
**Appendix 8: Clay pipe**

Context	Frag	No	Wt (g)	Bore diam	Abrasion	Notes	Date
1	stem	1	23.1				L.16-17?

**Appendix 9: Biological evidence**

Context	Species	Part	No	Wt (g)	MNI	Notes
1	Cattle	R mandible	1	112	1	one tooth (M1?) in situ, worn

Context	Species	No	Wt (g)	Notes
1	Ostrea edulis	1	7	small flat shell



St Mary's Church  
 Hickling,  
 Norfolk  
 NR12 0BQ

OS MasterMap 1250/2500/10000 scale  
 Friday, July 12, 2019, ID: CMMPM-00813855  
[www.myplanningmap.co.uk](http://www.myplanningmap.co.uk)  
 1:2500 scale print at A4, Centre: 641380 E, 324252 N  
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N  
↑




Fig. 1: Site Location

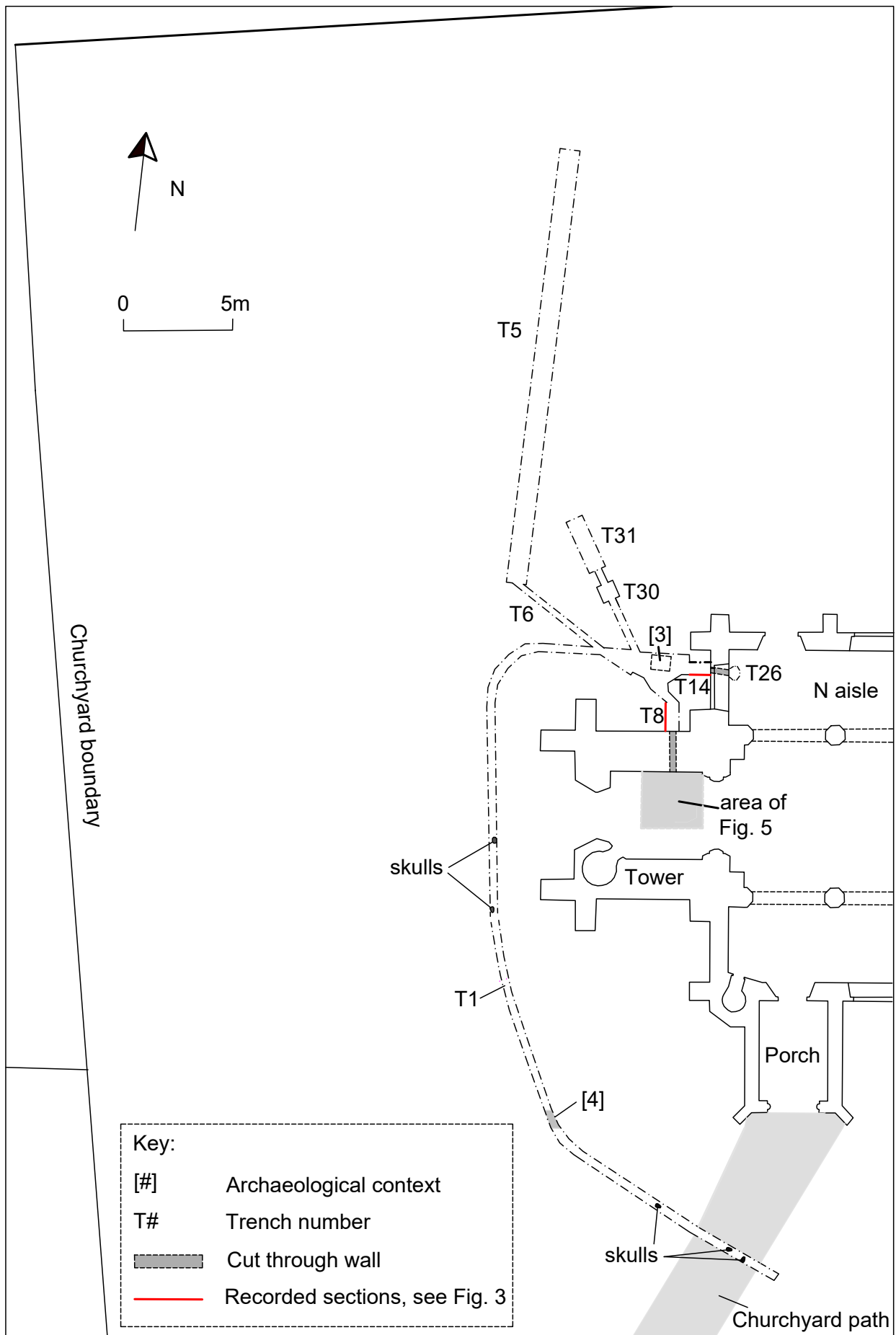
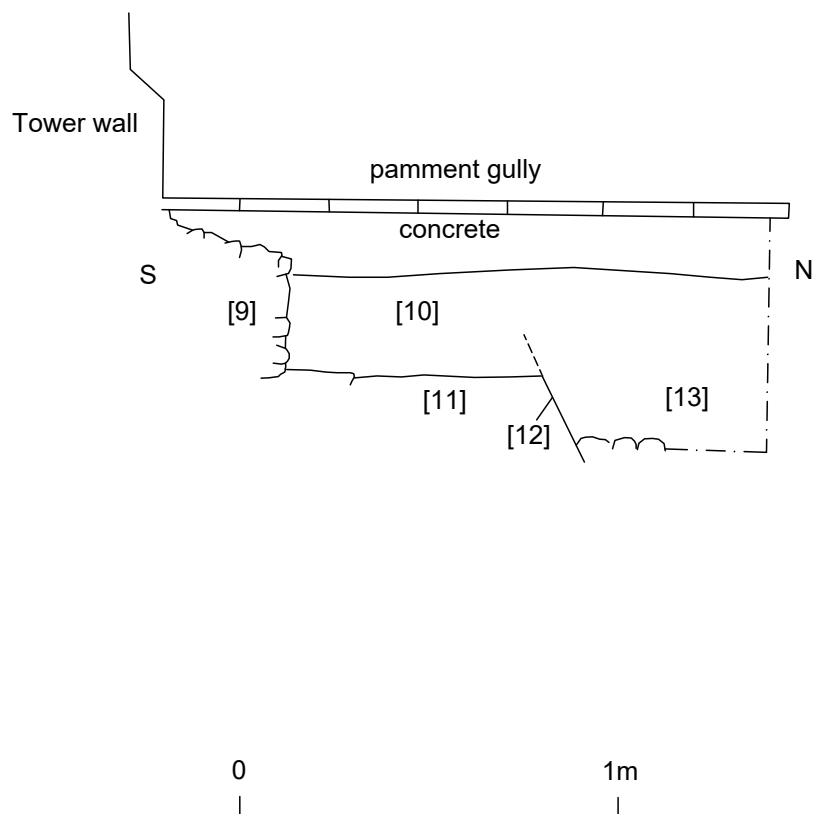


Fig. 2: Plan showing areas of work at W end of St Mary's Church. Scale 1:250

A: Trench 8, E-facing section



B: Trench 14, N-facing section

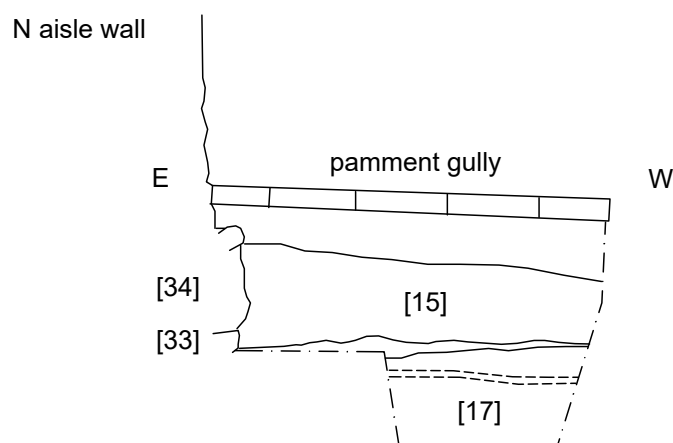


Fig. 3: Sections recorded outside A; tower and B; N aisle walls. Scale 1:20 (for locations see Fig. 2)



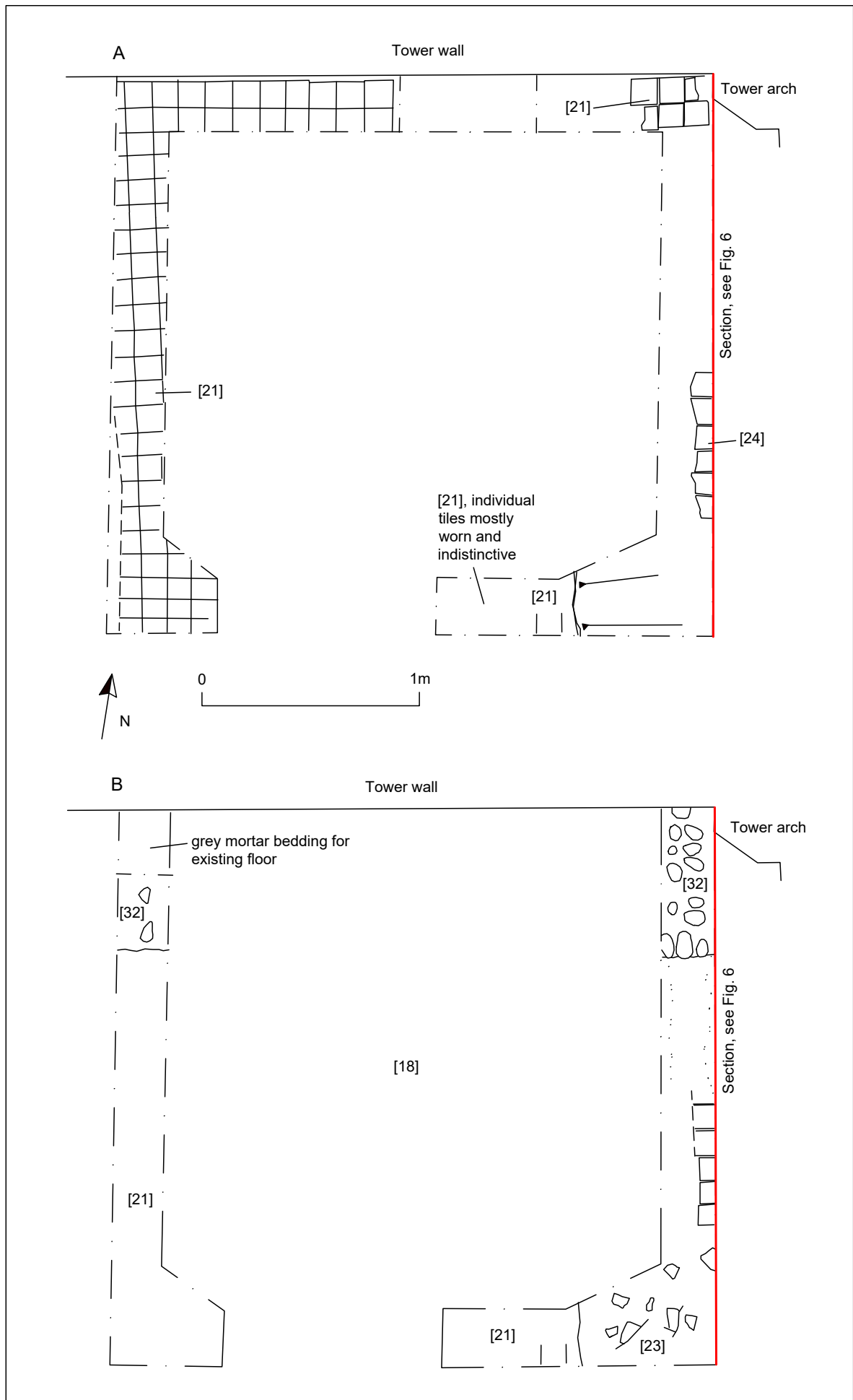


Fig. 5: Plan of area investigated within tower, A; earlier features, B; later features

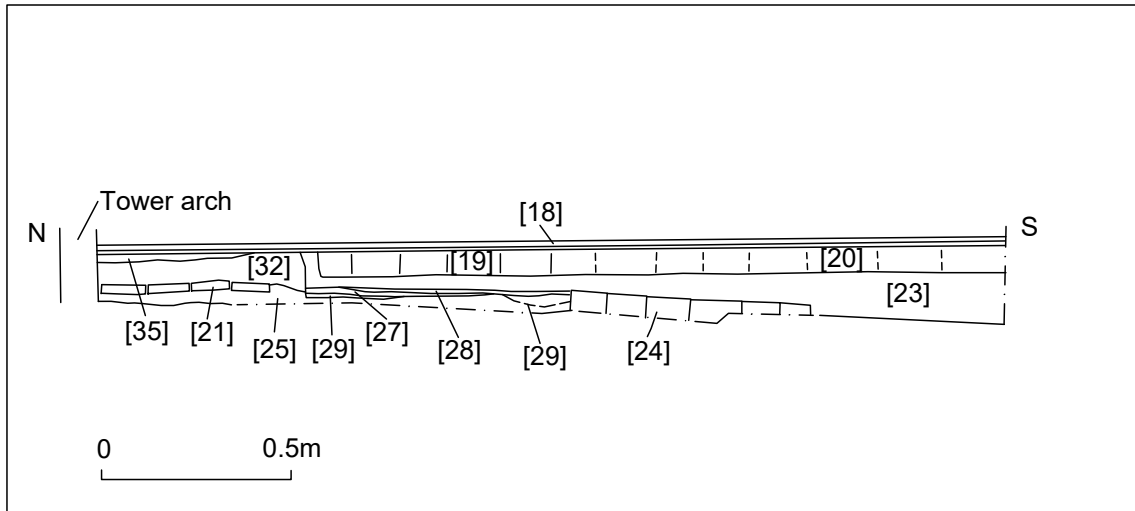


Fig. 6: W facing section within tower. Scale 1:20, (for location see Fig. 5)



Plate 1: Trench 1, W of tower, looking S, 0.5m scale



Plate 2: Trench 1, skulls beneath S path, looking E, 0.5m and 0.2m scales



Plate 3: Path or grave marker [4], looking N, 0.2m scale





Plate 4: Architectural fragments found during the work in the churchyard, trowel as scale



Plate 5: Trench 8, tower footing [9], mortar deposit [11], looking W, 0.5m scale



Plate 6: Trench 8, tower footing [9], mortar deposit [11], looking S, 0.5m scale



Plate 7: Trench 14, N aisle footing [34], mortar [16], looking S, 0.5m scale



Plate 8: Trench 5, looking S, 0.5m scale



Plate 9: Trench 5, brick tomb [7], looking N, 0.5m scale



Plate 10: Trench 31, looking SE, 0.5m scale



Plate 11: Area of work within tower, looking N, 1m and 0.2m scales



Plate 12: Floor [21], worn tiles in central area, looking NE, 0.5m scale



Plate 13: Floor [21] at N wall of tower (and existing floor [18]), looking W, 0.5m scale



Plate 14: Glazed tiles [21], as lifted from area beside N wall of tower, looking W, 0.5m scale



Plate 15: Deposits exposed in eastern footing slot, looking NE,  
0.5m and 0.2m scale



Plate 16: Footing [32] beside N wall of tower, W of tower arch, looking N.  
0.2m scale



Plate 17A: Copper alloy finger ring [6]



Plate 18A: Copper alloy strip [5], possible tweezers fragment



Plate 17B: Copper alloy finger ring [6], detail



Plate 18B: Copper alloy strip [5], possible tweezers fragment (incised detail)