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CAM ARC Report Number 933

Archaeological Investigations and Historic Building Recording Survey at the Church of St Mary and St Andrew, Whittlesford, Cambridgeshire

Excavation and Historic Building Survey

Taleyna Fletcher

December 2007

DRAFT

Cambridgeshire County Council
Environment & Community Services

Commissioned by Freeland Rees Roberts Architects

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Excavation and Historic Building Survey

Taleyna Fletcher BA, AIFA

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CHER Event Number: ECB2494
Date of works: August and November 2006 and March 2007
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PROJECT DETAILS				
Project name	Church of St Mary and St Andrew, Whittlesford, Cambridgeshire			
Short description	Archaeological investigations were carried out in the churchyard immediately to the north of the Church of St Mary and St Andrew, Whittlesford. The work was carried out in advance of an extension to the church and involved the excavation of eight 1m x 1.5m foundation trenches, connecting floor beams and a 3m x 3m septic tank. The second phase of work involved the recording of a substantial part of the north wall where prior to the removal of a 19th century buttress and the opening of a bricked-up doorway to become part of the entrance to the new extension. Several complete and incomplete burials were recorded, removed and handed immediately to the church in preparation for reburial with the exception of a burial recorded which appears to pre-date the church which was retained by CAM ARC for analysis. Several truncated, shallow features of Early Saxon date were recorded. During the archaeological investigation, a small amount of alteration work was taking place around the blocked doorway. This work was all monitored and recorded. It was necessary to return in November 2006 to complete the building recording work as the doorway was finally unblocked. A possible medieval door was found hanging *in situ.*			
Project dates	Start	7th August 2006	End	15th November 2006
Previous work	Mortimer 2005 (evaluation AFU report no. 792		Future work	no
Associated project reference codes	CHER no. ECB2494. Project Code WHI SMC 06			
Type of project	Excavation and Building Recording			
Site status	None			
Current land use	Churchyard			
Planned development	Building extension and associated services			
Monument types / period (list all that apply and use thesaurus of monument types)	Saxon – unidentified features (possible pits) Medieval - door Post medieval – inhumation (extended)			
Significant finds: Artefact type / period (list all that apply and use MDA object thesaurus)	Roman/Saxon - weight Saxon – pottery Medieval – Jetton, door, pottery Post Medieval – Human Bone and Animal Bone			
PROJECT LOCATION				
County	Cambridgeshire	Parish	Whittlesford	
HER for region	Cambridgeshire			
Site address (including postcode)	Church of St Mary and St Andrew, Whittlesford, Cambridgeshire, CB22 4NX			
Study area (sq.m or ha)	16m^2			
National grid reference	Easting (6 figure)	4737	Northing (6 figure)	4859
Height OD	Max OD		Min OD	
PROJECT ORIGINATORS				
Organisation	Cambridgeshire County Council, CAM ARC			
Project brief originator	Kasia Gdaniec			
Project design originator	James Drummond-Murray			
Director/supervisor	Taleyna Fletcher			
Project manager	James Drummond-Murray/Toby Gane			
Sponsor or funding body	Freeland, Rees, Roberts Architect			
ARCHIVES	**Location and accession number**		**Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone, database, context sheets etc)**	
Physical	CAM ARC Offices		Pottery, animal bone, human bone, fired clay, jetton	
Paper	CAM ARC Offices		Site plans, sections and elevations, photographs, indices	
Digital	CAM ARC Offices		Pdf report, digital photographs, AutoCAD drawings	
BIBLIOGRAPHY				
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Summary

Between 7th and 23rd August 2006, CAM ARC (formally the Archaeological Field Unit) of Cambridgeshire County Council conducted archaeological investigations in the churchyard immediately to the north of the Church of St Mary and St Andrew, Whittlesford. The work was carried out on behalf of Freeland, Rees, Roberts Architect in advance of an extension to the church to provide a meeting room, kitchen and toilet with associated services. The work involved the excavation of eight 1m x 1.5m foundation trenches, connecting floor beams and a 3m x 3m septic tank. The second phase of work involved the recording of part of the north wall, the removal of two 19th century buttresses and the opening of a bricked-up doorway, which was to become an entrance to the new extension.

This was a second phase of works following an evaluation of the site in March 2005 (Mortimer 2005) in which the area forming the footprint of the extension was stripped by machine and recorded without intrusive investigation. The evaluation identified the presence of up 26 burials arranged in formal rows, in a single trench covering approximately fifty square metres.

Several complete and incomplete burials were recorded, removed and handed immediately to the church in preparation for reburial, with the exception of one burial, which appeared to pre-date the church which was retained by CAM ARC for analysis.

Several very truncated shallow features were recorded within Trenches 2, 3 and 8, some two of which produced Early-Middle Saxon pottery. A large undated north-south boundary ditch was noted during a watching brief of trench 9. Other finds of significance included a medieval German Jetton (SF1) from 16th century and a large loom or thatch weight.

During the archaeological investigation, a small amount of alteration work was taking place around a blocked doorway within the north wall of the church. This work was all monitored and recorded. It was necessary to return in November 2006 to complete the building recording work as the doorway was finally unblocked.

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1 Introduction

This archaeological investigation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Kasia Gdaniec of the Cambridgeshire Archaeology, Planning and Countryside Advice team (CAPCA; Planning Application S/2317/03/F), supplemented by a Specification prepared by CAM ARC (formally Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit). The Brief required that in addition to the excavation of the foundation pads, cross beams and septic tank, a full record should be made of the blocked north doorway to the nave.

The work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed redevelopment area, with particular interest to any remains surviving beneath the level of human burials, in accordance with the guidelines set out in *Planning and Policy Guidance 16 - Archaeology and Planning* (Department of the Environment 1990). The results will enable decisions to be made by CAPCA, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority, with regard to the treatment of any archaeological remains found.

The site archive is currently held by CAM ARC and will be deposited with the appropriate county stores in due course.

2 Geology and Topography

Whittlesford Church (Fig 1) is situated on the north-eastern edge of the village at *c*. 25m OD on a low spur overlooking the River Cam. The underlying geology consists of river terrace sands and gravels (British Geological Survey 1978, Sheet 205).

3 Archaeological and Historical Background

There are no known find spots of prehistoric material in the immediate vicinity of the church. However, directly across the broad Cam valley (800m due north of the church) lies the Iron Age promontory fort of Borough Hill in the parish of Sawston (SAM 24407). There was apparently continuous occupation at this site from the Mesolithic period to the present day (Mortimer 2001).

There is no direct evidence for Roman occupation immediately around or beneath the church, although, Roman pottery has been discovered in the general area of the church. There are three known find spots: 400m west-south-west of the church during road works; 300m to the south-east during building work; 100m to the north from field-walking. This suggests that an extensive Roman settlement *may* have lain in the vicinity of the present church.

There is also the likelihood of Saxon occupation within the area, and of pre-Norman church buildings.

The earliest surviving fabric of the church (SMR 04271) is of early 12th century date – in the nave, tower and chancel. There have been extensive alterations and extensions but the north wall of the nave and the lower part of the tower remain *in situ*.

The moated site of Whittlesford Manor (SMR 01001) is located 150m to the east. Excavations here in 1994 revealed late medieval and early post-medieval remains (SMR11415). Excavations at Butts Green, just to the south of the manor, also revealed medieval features (SMR11513). Traces of earthworks (SMR 11256) in the vicinity may be related to the medieval development of the village.

4 Archaeological Investigation

The objective of this investigation was to determine as far as reasonably possible the presence/absence, location, nature, extent, date, quality, condition and significance of any surviving archaeological deposits within the development area.

4.1 Methodology

Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a wheeled JCB-type excavator using a toothless ditching bucket. The machine removed the first 0.80m of backfilled soil from the evaluation (context 100) prior to the eight foundation pads and cross beams being marked out which were then hand excavated to the level of undisturbed natural gravels and sand.

Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal detector. All metal-detected and hand-collected finds were retained for inspection, other than those, which were obviously modern and associated with burials.

All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using CAM ARCs *pro-forma* sheets. All burials encountered were cleaned, photographed and partially recorded before being removed, bagged (individually where possible) and handed immediately over to the church for reburial.

Trench plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales and digital, colour and monochrome photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits. Medium format photography using a Bronica SQ-A Zenza camera provided a high quality record of some burials.

The locations of the trenches, beams and septic tank were recorded using a Leica Total Station Theodolite and then tied into the Ordnance Survey grid. The individual site plans showing feature locations were then incorporated with the surveying data.

The nearest benchmark with a value of 25.38mOD was on the north facing church wall. Levels were taken on all sections, base plans and identifiable human burials.

4.2 Excavation

Once the backfill from the evaluation had been removed, eight trenches measuring 1m x 1.5m were hand excavated down to the depth of natural undisturbed geology (Fig 2). The clients' surveyor set out these trenches, which were to become the foundation pads of the proposed extension. Once the foundation pads were excavated and fully recorded, connecting trenches (foundation cross beams) were machined out under the supervision of an archaeologist. Finally three additional trenches were excavated under watching brief conditions in the locations for the sceptic tanks and water storage containers. As burials were encountered, they were cleaned, photographed and recorded where appropriate. Many burials were incomplete due to disturbance or truncation by later burials. In these cases, the remains were removed and bagged for reburial where recording was not possible. Due to the small size of the trenches and the cross-beams, burials were often found which could not be full exposed or completely removed, In this situation as much of the skeleton as possible was taken out, in many cases leaving some continuing beyond the trench limits.

4.3 Results

The findings of this investigation will be presented trench by trench. Cut numbers will be represented in **bold** text and all other contexts will be in standard text. Trenches 1-8 were excavated for the foundation pads of the extension, Trenches 9-11 were for soakaways and septic tanks. Figure 2 shows the location of all trenches.

Trench 1

Trench 1 was located against the north-facing wall of the church. Measuring 2.5m by 1.5m, this L-shaped trench contained eight complete skeletons (Plate 1) (including 4 infants) and several disturbed burials. In many cases grave cuts were only identified in section or on the trench base (Fig 3, Trench 1).

A burial (sk131) was recorded beneath the foundations of the northern wall of the church (Plate 2). Radiocarbon analysis dates this burial to AD770-980 (with a margin for error of 35 years) (Appendix 5). Additional analysis of the remains was carried out (Appendix 4), although it was not possible to ascertain the sex of the individual, it was aged between 20-30 years old at time of death.

The only feature identified, which was not associated with burials, was pit **126,** circular in plan with gradual sloping edges and a flat base. This did not contain any dating evidence, however it truncated grave cut **125**, which was considered to be a relatively late feature.

Natural geology was encountered at 23.41m OD.

Trench 2

Trench 2 measured 1.30m by 1m (Fig 3, Trench 2). Two complete human burials were encountered, one adult (plate 3) and one juvenile.

The only feature identified, which was not associated with burials, was pit/ditch **134** which was linear in plan with steep sloping edges an a gentle break of slope. (Fig 3, Section 3) This feature continued beyond the northern edge of the trench and neither the base nor full extent was revealed. It was filled by 133, a mid brownish orange gravely sand with no obvious inclusions. No dating evidence was retrieved from this feature, however, it was recorded beneath all layers and contexts associated with the burials, suggesting its upper extent has been lost through truncation, or that it pre-dates the burials and is one of the earliest features encountered.

Natural geology was encountered at 23.73m OD.

Trench 3

Trench 3 (Fig 3, Trench 3) measured 1.50m by 1m and was excavated to a depth of 0.90m where natural sand was encountered. During excavation, the remains of two complete adults, one juvenile and one infant were encountered. The infant burial sk103 (Plate 4) was encountered relatively high in the sequence of burials suggesting it was one of the latest or simply has lain undisturbed. There was no evidence of a coffin and there was no obvious grave cut.

Less than 20cm beneath sk 103, the remains of an adult (sk110) and a juvenile skeleton (sk 111) were encountered (plate 5). Burial 110 was on an east-west alignment and sk 111 was on a north-east-southwest alignment. There is evidence to suggest that sk111 was later as it has slightly truncated the left hand of sk 110. Again, no grave cuts were visible and there was no evidence of any coffins.

The latest burial encountered was sk 112 (Plate 6). This was cut from very high in the sequence, suggesting it was the most recent of all burials in this trench. Unlike the other burials, there was clear evidence of a coffin, surviving beneath the skeleton itself, as well as several nails. The remains of what appeared to be a plate from the top of the coffin was found. It appeared to have fallen onto the face of the skeleton, presumably when the wooden coffin had disintegrated (Plate 7).

The only feature identified, which was not associated with burials, was pit/ditch **117**. Its shape in plan was hard to determine as it continued beyond the southern edge of the trench and was truncated by **113**, (the cut for sk 112) (Fig 3, Section 8), however it does appear to have been possibly circular in plan. This pit/ditch had moderate sloping edges and its base continued beyond the limit of excavation. It was filled by 116, a light, mid-orange brown loose, gravely silty sand containing chalk lumps, gravel and flint stones however it did not contain any dating evidence. There is clear stratigraphic evidence to suggest that this is one of the earliest features on site, pre-dating the burials and possibly the same as or associated with **134** in trench 2.

Natural geology was encountered at 23.48mOD.

Trench 4

Trench 4 (Fig 3, Trench 4) measured 1.50m by 1m and was excavated to a depth of 1.10m where natural gravels were encountered. During excavation, the remains of two complete adults and one infant were recorded. The infant burial sk104, like that in Trench 3, was relatively high in the sequence of burials suggesting it was one of the latest or simply has lain undisturbed. There was no evidence of a coffin and there was no obvious grave cut.

The other two burials **120** and **123** encountered in this trench were relatively late (c. mid-late 19th century) as they were cut from high in the burial soils and over 2m deep (Fig 3, Section 1).

One of the burials, **120** was excavated to a depth of over 1.10m, which was sufficiently deep for the foundation pads. As there was no suggestion of the threat of disturbance to the remains, no further excavation was necessary. A headstone relating to the occupant of this grave was located above, just out of the development area. It stated the name Elizabeth Nunn who died in 1910.

Natural geology was encountered at 23.57m OD.

Trench 5

Trench 5 was located against the north facing wall of the church, against a 19th century buttress (Fig 2). It measured 1m by 1m and was later extended to 1.5m and excavated to a depth of 0.90m, where natural sand and gravels were encountered.

Several disturbed burials were encountered and three complete burials, sk162 (Plate 8), sk143 and sk150. All of these burials continued beyond the trench edges and were all aligned east – west. Only sk150 had an identified grave cut, **151** (Fig 4, Trench 5).

Natural geology was encountered at 23.70m OD.

Trench 6

Trench 6 (Fig 4, Trench 6) measured 1.50m by 1m and was excavated to a depth of 1.10m where natural gravels and sands were encountered. During excavation, the remains of one complete adult skeleton was recorded and several disturbed burials were noted.

Skeleton 152 (Plate 9) was buried within a deep grave **149** (Fig 4, Trench 6), which was cut relatively high in the sequence, (Fig 4, Section 4) making this one of the later burials within this part of the churchyard. Remains of the wooden coffin and nails were also retrieved.

Within this trench several metal coffin attachments including handles, nails and plates were recovered (not encountered anywhere else on the site). This may be evidence of the disposal of disturbed burials.

Trench 7

Trench 7 (Fig 4, Trench 7) measured 1.50m by 1m and was excavated to a depth of 1.10m where natural gravels and sands were encountered. During excavation, the remains of one complete adult skeleton and two infants were recorded and several disturbed burials were present.

Burials sk139 and sk142 appear to have been associated (Plate 10). It appears that the juvenile sk139 truncates the adult burial sk140, however they were encountered at the same depth and look to have been deliberately placed side by side. It is possible that the child was buried next to a parent possibly having died sometime after and an effort was made to lay the child as close as possible however the remains of the adult have been disturbed in the process.

Grave cut **161** was recorded in the base of the trench.

Natural geology was encountered at 23.56m OD.

Trench 8

Trench 8 (Fig 4, Trench 8) measured 1.50m by 1m and was excavated to a depth of 1.0m, which was sufficiently deep for the foundation pads, where natural sand and gravel was encountered. During excavation, no complete human remains were recorded yet several disturbed burials were noted.

A grave cut (**136**) was recorded, cut from high in the stratigraphic sequence (Fig 4, Section 2). As there was no suggestion of the threat of disturbance to the remains, no further excavation was necessary.

Beneath the level of burial soil (137), (a layer which resulted from the continuous disturbance of remains accumulated during the period the area was used for burial), three significant archaeological features were recorded. This layer contained a medieval German jetton (SF1) (Appendix 2).

Pit/ditch **156** had steep sloping edges and a flat base. It was filled by 155, a dark blackish brown silt with occasional medium stone and charcoal fleck inclusions. From this fill, heavily butchered cow and sheep bone and Early-Middle Saxon pottery was recovered.

Pit/ditch **156** truncated ditch **154** and pit/ditch **158**.

Ditch **154** was difficult to identify during excavation and was mostly recorded in section. It was filled by a light orangish brown sandy silt with frequent medium-large rounded pebbles and flints. Early-Middle Saxon pottery and flint was recovered from this fill. A Roman loom weight (SF 2) and sheep/goat bones were also retrieved.

Natural geology was encountered at 23.46m OD.

Watching Brief

Trench 9

Trench 9 (Fig 5, Trench 9) measured 3m by 3m and was excavated using a mechanical digger to a depth of 2.20m, where natural sand and gravel was encountered. This trench was excavated for a septic tank and was monitored as part of a watching brief. During excavation, no complete human remains were recorded and very few disturbed burials were noted. The location of this trench was on the western

edge of the current churchyard and this may account for the noted decrease in the presence of human bone.

Within the west facing section, two grave cuts (**168** and **171**) were recorded, both cut from high in the stratigraphic sequence (Fig 5, Section 5). Both were filled with a light greyish brown silt with occasional gravel stone inclusions. It appears that this trench clipped the end of these north-south aligned graves. The graves cut through layer (169), which contained no datable finds, and above that, a dark burial soil (101).

Within the south-facing section a large ditch was recorded (**166**) (Fig 5, Section 6, Plate 11). This ditch appeared to be orientated north - south. The full profile was not fully revealed within the trench, and it was truncated by grave cut **167**. It had a minimum width of 1.80m and had a depth of approximately 1.50m. Three fills were recorded; (163), the upper fill, was a very loose, grey-brown silt with moderate stone and flint inclusions. The secondary deposit, (164), was very similar to 163, with a higher gravel content. The primary fill, (165) was a soft, loose dark-grey brown, similar in consistency to 163. No finds were retrieved from any of the fills. The absence of any human remains suggests that this ditch was earlier than the use of the land for burial, as some remains would be expected in the ditch fills.

Natural geology was encountered at 22.30m OD.

Trench 10

Trench 10 (Fig 5, Trench 10) measured 1.5m by 1.5m and was excavated using a mechanical digger to a depth of 1.2m, where natural sand and gravel was encountered at 22.88m OD. This trench was excavated for a soakaway and was monitored as part of a watching brief. Several disturbed burials were recorded. No other identifiable features remained.

Trench 11

Trench 10 (Fig 5, Trench 11) measured 1.5m by 1.5m and was excavated using a mechanical digger to a depth of 1.5m, where natural sand and gravel was encountered at 23.64m OD. This trench was excavated for a soakaway and was monitored as part of a watching brief. As the trench was excavated, several disarticulated human bones were retrieved.

The north-facing section (Fig 5, Section 7) revealed a vertical edged feature, **174**, cut from beneath the topsoil. The full extent of this cut was not fully revealed as it continued beyond the western edge and the base of the trench. This feature appeared to represent an earlier drain

running approximately north-south, presumably carrying water away from the gutters around the church. The fill of this cut (173) contained 19th century brick, culvert fragments and large stones, sealed by a backfilled mid-orange brown gritty silt.

Drainage ditch **174**, truncated a layer of crumbly beige chalky silt. This layer, 175, was moderately compacted and contained flint nodules and large lumps of chalk. This layer may represent an earlier pathway, surface or layer associated with repair to the church building.

Cut into the base of the trench was the remains of a grave cut, **178**. As the burial itself was intact and was below the required depth for the soak-away, it was left undisturbed.

Pathway

A watching brief was carried out as a path to the new church extension was created. During this work, what appeared to be a sealed drain was noted on the northwest corner of the church. With careful removal of the headstone bearing the name Spicer, which had been concreted in place over the top, a sealed brick-lined chamber was revealed containing a wooden box (Plate 12 and 13). The wooden box soon disintegrated upon exposure to the air, however within it was a bronze (?) casket inscribed with the names of Henry and Gertrude Spicer, 1944. This cremation casket was removed and handed over to the church for re-burial.

4.4 Discussion

Pre-burial Activity

Despite the limited area investigated, evidence of archaeological activity, which pre-dates the use of the area for burial, has been recorded. Most of the archaeology recorded was within Trenches 2, 3, 8 and 9. Although little dating evidence was retrieved, ditch **154** and pit/ditch **156** (both in Trench 8) contained Early-Middle Saxon hand-made pottery. Seven sherds of unstratrified Saxon pottery were also recovered, of which six were Late Saxon in date.

The burial recorded in Trench 1 (sk131) was a significant find in this investigation. This burial appeared to be truncated by the foundations of the church. Dating the skeleton using Radiocarbon dating (Appendix 5) also places the burial as earlier than the construction of the church at 770-980. As this burial is earlier than the current 12th century church, then it could be suggested that it was part of an earlier burial ground. The discovery of this early burial provides evidence of Saxon burial activity on the site, possibly associated with an earlier church. Although there is no direct evidence of an earlier Saxon church on the

site, there are some fragments of architectural stone within the church walls and on display inside to suggest some earlier activity in the area.

The location of the church is crucial to understanding potential earlier buildings on the site. Whittlesford, as its name suggests, was located near to a ford or river crossing. The ford no longer exists; however, it thought to have been located close to where the church is today (Taylor in Aston, Austin and Dyer 1989). It has also been suggested that the ford was a crossing point for one of several tracks forming part of a communication link to the Ickneild Way. The current church also appears to be somewhat isolated from the village core, it has been suggested that there was occupation along Church Lane (13th century and 14th century pottery has been found to support this).

Although there was no dating evidence retrieved from the ditch recorded during the watching brief for Trench 9, this was the largest feature recorded during the investigation. This ditch, which appeared to continue on a north-south orientation, may represent an early version of the boundary around the churchyard, which is today a tree line approximately 2m to the west. This ditch does not appear on the 1st edition ordnance survey map.

Burial Activity

The cemetery has been in use over several hundred years and as a result, on the whole, only the latest burials of the late 19th/early 20th century survived intact. Many burials encountered had been truncated by later grave cuts and on average each trench contained the remains of at least eight identifiable burials and many disarticulated bones. It appears that as each new grave cut was dug, it would have cut through earlier burials and as a result that soil backfilled the cut. This made identifying cuts problematic and only the latest, most often the deepest late 19th century burials, were the only visible cuts.

5 Building Recording Survey

5.1 Methodology and Background

During the archaeological investigation, a small amount of alteration work was taking place around a blocked doorway on the north side of the church.

Whilst the eight trenches were being excavated for the concrete pads, two 19th century buttresses and a sunken boiler room were removed (for location see Fig 6 and 7). A measured survey of the buttresses and the doorway location (from inside and outside of the church

building) took place before any alteration work began (Fig 6, Plate 14). This was accompanied by a comprehensive photographic survey using a digital and Medium Format Camera. Once the eight foundation trenches and the additional service trenches had been recorded, the builders were able to construct the extension without any further archaeological monitoring.

It was necessary to return to the site in November 2006 to complete the building recording work as the doorway was finally unblocked.

The element of the church under investigation was on the north side. A sunken boiler room had been constructed in front of the doorway, the date of which was uncertain, but appeared to be post 19th century (Plate 15). The ground level had clearly been raised since the door was in use. As part of the development, in order to provide access to the extension, the ground level outside needed to be lowered and the boiler room removed. At the time of the boiler room's construction, several burials would have been disturbed. This may account for the large number of disarticulated remains found in Trench 5 immediately to the west.

5.2 Results

North Wall

The area recorded was the elevation of the north-facing wall between the two buttresses (Fig 6 Plate 14). The earliest surviving fabric of the church (SMR 04271) is of early 12th century date – in the nave, tower and chancel. There have been extensive alterations and extensions but the north wall of the nave and the lower part of the tower remain *in situ*.

The north wall retains one of the original Norman windows (Cotton 1989) (Plate 16). Due to the cost of glass at the time, windows were often very small, and splayed inside to admit more light. The style of the window matches other examples of the period, such as those found at Adel, Yorkshire and Itchingford, Sussex (Needham, A. 1944).

Buttresses

The two buttresses (Fig 6, Plate 17) were made of brick and covered with a pale grey mortar, possibly as an attempt to make them blend in with the rest of the church. The size and type of brick suggest that they were 19th century in date. The depth and width of the foundations does not appear to be significant in terms of providing any supportive function, and it could be suggested that they were for decorative purposes.

Doorway

The doorway (Plate 18) was an equilateral arch with a decorative stone moulding, fitting the style of the 13th-14th century when a plain, strong defensive door was no longer needed. Around the decorative stone moulding was a dripstone arch made from limestone (?). At the end of the dripstone, on the right-hand side of the door, were the remains of a carved stone head. This is again a common feature of the 14th century and may have been a knight or lady, king or queen (Needham 1944), however, due to exposure to the elements, it is now too worn to tell.

Carved into the stone moulding around the doorway were several graffito (Fig 9). The church has a lot of graffiti, in particular on pillars, including one of a medieval archer or bowman. At the top of the doorway was what appeared to be an “H”. Graffiti can often be found around doorways and this may represent a withes mark, a sign of superstition, or it could be a mason’s mark.

Another interesting graffito was what is known as a “Solomans Knot” (it is also referred to as a swastika or peltae in Pritchard 1967). These have been recorded within other churches in Cambridgeshire and Essex. Cutting through the knot was what appears to be a figure of a man holding a shield, recorded previously by Pritchard and interpreted as a harp. On closer inspection however, there is clearly a figure associated with it and the legs at least are still visible. Although it is almost impossible to date graffiti, the style of this figure is similar to that of the medieval bowman recorded elsewhere in the church.

From the inside of the church, it was possible to see that the doorway truncates the top of the door arch moulding of the Norman window, (Plate 19).

The bricks used to block up the doorway were laid in a Flemish bond with a white sandy mortar. Most of the bricks were hard-fired, orange-red, un-frogged and measuring on average 22 x 10.5 x 6.5cm (a sample was retained as part of the archive). These bricks date to 1800-1850.

Once the buttress and belowground store had been removed (figure 8), the blocked doorway was opened, revealing a wooden door behind the brickwork, hanging *insitu* (Plate 20).

Door

The door (Fig 8, Plate 21 and 22) was constructed of nine over-lapping oak panels, each of which was approximately 1.5cm thick. The panels were bound together using narrow oak strips secured horizontally on the back of the door (visible only from the inside) using square-head iron nails (Fig 8). The hinges (only the top hinge remained) were constructed of iron, and hung on two brackets mounted within the stone arch. The hinges were bound to the length of the door with iron studs and decorated with a cross pattern (Plate 23). The door was in relatively good condition, however approximately 30cm were missing from the bottom possibly as a result of damage caused by the water pipes for heating inserted below. There was no outer handle on the door, and locked only from the inside with a sliding bolt held in place with iron brackets. The door could be securely locked using an integral hasp and staple (Plate 24) with a padlock (not present).

It initially appeared that the door itself was contemporary with the door arch; fitted at the time it was constructed. The brackets upon which the door hung were bonded into the archway, secured with molten lead (Plate 25) and appeared to be original. These brackets appeared to have been made with, to fit, the hinges attached to the door itself, making them contemporary in date. However, further study suggests that the fittings (hinge and bracket) were original and the door itself was replaced, possibly in the 18th century (Dr Tim Reynolds *pers comm.*).

5.3 Discussion

Many early churches had both north and south doors, and it is not uncommon to find a blocked north door in churches today. Although the bricks used to block the doorway suggest it was blocked in the 19th century, it is possible that the door went out of use long before this time. A comparison can be made with Escomb Church, County Durham. Like Whittlesford, this was an Early Saxon church with a north door to the nave which was has been blocked. North doors are often linked with superstition and sometimes known as “Devils Doors”, perhaps because they were on the left side of the church, which was considered to be sinister where evil spirits were able to hide in the shadow of the building (Beddow 2000). During baptisms, the north doors would often have been left open during baptisms to allow evil spirits to leave the child and go through the doorway (Needham 1944). North doors were also an important part of procession in medieval services, and so could be suggested that north doors were blocked up after the Reformation, as they were no longer needed (A. Antrobus *pers comm.).*

6 Conclusions

Archaeological investigations at Whittlesford's Church of St Mary and St Andrew have revealed interesting and surprising results. Despite the limited area of archaeological investigation, features revealed which have survived truncation from c.19th/20th century burial activity provide evidence of earlier activity within the churchyard dating to the 12th century; the time of the earliest part of the church's construction, and residual pottery and a pre-church burial suggests activity within the vicinity in the Early Saxon period. Little evidence has been found previously relating to Saxon activity within this part of Whittlesford and although it is difficult to draw conclusions regarding the nature and type of remains found in this small excavation, it does provide strong evidence of Saxon activity and burial possibly relating to an earlier church on the site.

The monitoring of the alteration work around the doorway of the north wall also revealed surprising results. The door hanging *insitu* was a significant find, particularly with its original fixtures and fittings.

At the time of writing the report, the door has been retained by the church and is available for further analysis or study.

Recommendations for any future work based upon this report will be made by the County Archaeology Office.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Freeland Rees Roberts who commissioned and funded the archaeological work. The project was managed by James Drummond Murray and Toby Gane managed the building recording. The author would like to thank Andrew Corrigan and Helen Stocks for their assistance on site and Chris Faine who also provided essential guidance with the identification and analysis of human remains. Thanks also to the churchwarden Jonathan Bradshaw who offered constant support and assistance throughout the work. The author carried out all on-site surveying.

The brief for archaeological works was written by Kasia Gdaniec, who visited the site and monitored the investigations.

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		Brief. Cambridge Archaeological Unit Report No. 450
Mortimer, R	2005	Church of St Mary and St Andrew, Whittlesford: An Archaeological Evaluation Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology Field Unit Report No. 792
Needham, A	1944	How to Study an Old Church
Pritchard, V	1967	English Medieval Graffiti

Appendix 1: Context Summary

Context Number	Trench	Description
99		Top soil
100		Evaluation Backfill
101		Burial Soil
102	1	Skeleton
103	3	Infant Skeleton
104	4	Neonate Skeleton
105	1	Skeleton
106	1	Skeleton
107	1	Skeleton
108	1	Skeleton
109	1	Skeleton
110	3	Skeleton
111	3	Juvenile Skeleton
112	3	Skeleton (with coffin plates)
113	3	Cut for skeleton 112
114	1	Skeleton
115	1	Cut for skeleton 114
116	3	Fill of 117
117	3	Cut of Pit
118	4	Layer
119	4	Grave Fill
120	4	Grave Cut
121	2	Skeleton
122	4	Skeleton
123	4	Cut for skeleton 112
124	1	Grave Cut
125	1	Grave Cut
126	1	Cut of Pit
127	1	Cut for skeleton 131
128	2	Skeleton
129	2	Grave Cut
130	Void	Void
131	1	Skeleton
132	7	Infant Skeleton
133	2	Fill of Pit
134	2	Cut of Pit
135	8	Fill of grave 136
136	8	Grave Cut
137	8	Burial Soils
138	1	Fill of grave 127
139	7	Infant skeleton

140	7	Skeleton
141	7	Grave cut for skeleton 139 / 140
142	7	Fill of grave 141
143	5	Skeleton
144	Void	Void
145	6	Subsoil
146	6	Grave fill
147	6	Grave fill
148	6	Remains of coffin
149	6	Grave cut for skeleton 152
150	5	Skeleton
151	5	Grave cut
152	6	Skeleton
153	8	Fill of ditch 154
154	8	Cut of ditch
155	8	Fill of 156
156	8	Cut of pit/ditch
157	8	Fill of 158
158	8	Cut of pit/ditch
159	8	Fill of 160
160	8	Cut of small pit/posthole
161	7	Grave cut
162	5	Skeleton
163	9	Fill of 166
164	9	Fill of 166
165	9	Fill of 166
166	9	Cut of large N-S ditch
167	9	Fill of Grave 168
168	9	Grave cut
169	9	Grave fill???
170	9	Fill of grave 171
171	9	Grave cut
172	9	Layer
173	11	Fill of soak-away
174	11	Cut of soak-away
175	11	Layer
176	11	Grave fill
177	11	Fill of grave 178
178	11	Grave cut

Appendix 2: Finds Summary

Context	Material	Object Name	Weight in kg	Comments
131	Bone	Human Skeletal Remains	0.92	TR 1
135	Ceramic	Vessel	0.06	TR 8
137	Ceramic	Vessel	0.02	TR 8
142	Ceramic	Vessel	0.04	TR 7
153	Ceramic	Loom weight	1.69	TR 8. SF 2.
153	Ceramic	Vessel	0.03	TR 8
153	Bone	Bone	0.01	TR 8
153	Flint		0.00	TR 8
153	Ceramic	Daub	0.00	TR 8
153	Ceramic	Fired clay	0.00	TR 8
155	Bone	Bone	0.54	TR 8.
155	Ceramic	Vessel	0.00	TR 8
155	Bone	Bone	0.00	TR 8
155	Flint		0.00	TR 8
99999	Ceramic	Vessel	0.04	
99999	Ceramic	Vessel	0.04	

SF 1: Jetton, Trench 8 (137) by Chris Faine

A counting token called a jetton, used by merchants for quick sums at a time when Roman numerals were still being used was found within burial soils in Trench 8. It is German and comes from Nuremberg, which was the main European manufacturing centre in the 16th and early 17th centuries. Makers frequently placed their names on the reverse side, as is the case here; the maker being one Hanns Krauwinckel (1586-1635). The orb (called a "Reichsapfel") was a common design, as was the symbol of foreign royalty (in this case the fleurs de lys) also on the reverse side. The inscription on the obverse side (SEGEN MACHTREICH GOTES) is in old German, it says, " blessed is the kingdom of god".

According to the PAS website around 36 such tokens have been found in the county, mostly manufactured by local merchants. Two matching the same description were found by metal detectorists at Oakington (SF-4929127) and Isleham (SF10097). Isleham appears to have been a popular place for jettons of all types, with a similar one being found showing the name of a slightly earlier German maker; Hans Schultes I

(1500-1570), along with a number of local types made by individual merchants. An identical token to SF1 one was also found in Hampshire (HAMP-86F623). This one can be seen on the PAS website at http://www.finds.org.uk/finds/jetons.php. Another jetton with an identical design to SF1 (same maker) was found again at Isleham (SF-39B0201), but with a different obverse inscription (DAS WORT GOTES BELIBT EWICK) "The word of god remains (?) eternal".

Sources Consulted

www.findsdatabase.org.uk

Appendix 3: The Pottery

by Dr Paul Spoerry PhD and Carole Fletcher BA

1 Methodology

A small assemblage of 20 sherds of pottery was recovered. The basic guidance in MAP2 has been adhered to (English Heritage 1991). In addition the MPRG documents *Guidance for the processing and publication of medieval pottery from excavations* (Blake and Davey 1983) and *A guide to the classification of medieval ceramic forms* (MPRG 1998) act as a standard.

Spot dating was carried out using CAM ARCs in-house system based on that used at the Museum of London. Fabric classification has been carried out for all previously described types. All sherds have been counted classified, and weighed.

All the pottery has been spot dated on a context by context basis; this information was entered directly onto a quantification database (Access 2000), which allows for the appending of further data.

CAM ARC curates the pottery and archive until formal deposition.

2 The Assemblage

The fieldwork generated a small pottery assemblage of 20 sherds (0.230kg) from six contexts, including unstratified material.

Ceramic fabric abbreviations used in the following text are:

Colchester Type ware	COLS
Early Medieval Essex Micaceous Sandy ware	EMEMS
Grimston–Thetford	GTHET
Ipswich ware	IPS
Medieval Essex Micaceous Sandy ware	MEMS
St Neots	NEOT
Thetford ware	THET

This assemblage consists of Early, Middle and Late Saxon material along side early medieval and late medieval sherds. The Early Saxon component of the assemblage consists of six moderately abraded and abraded sherds of hand made, mainly vegetable tempered pottery. These were mainly associated with Late Saxon THET, NEOT or early

medieval pottery and can be considered to be residual in those contexts. However two contexts 153 and 155 produced only Early Saxon sherds. In addition a single Middle Saxon IPS sherd was recovered along side THET sherds and these are likely to represent Middle and Late Saxon use of the land rather than domestic occupation of the site itself. Several EMEMS sherds and a single sherd of late medieval COLS were identified. No pottery dating later than the mid 16th century was recovered

Few conclusions can be drawn from such a small assemblage, however the presence of six sherds of Early Saxon pottery and the relatively unabraded nature and size of a number of the hand made sherds suggests that the material originates on the site indicating Early Saxon occupation.

No preservation bias has been recognised and no long-term storage problems are likely. The assemblage therefore offers little potential for further study unless further excavation is undertaken. It does however indicate the presence of Early Saxon occupation within the area now occupied by the church and graveyard.

Bibliography

Blake, H., and Davey, P.	1983	*Guidelines for the Processing and Publications of Medieval Pottery from Excavations,* Directorate of Ancient Monuments and Historic Buildings Occas. Pap. 5
English Heritage	1991	*Management of Archaeological Projects* (MAP2)
Medieval Pottery Research Group	1998	*A Guide to the Classification of Medieval Ceramic Forms,* Medieval Pottery Research Group Occas. Pap. 1

Spot Dating

Context	Fabric	Number of Sherds	Weight in Kg	Vessel Form	Rim/Base/ Body Sherd	Spot Dating for Context
135	GTHET	1	0.021	Jar	Body Sherd	1000-1050?
	Hand Made Veg Temp	1	0.023	Jar	Body Sherd	
	THET	1	0.012	Jar	Rim	
137	EMEMS	1	0.012	Jar	Base	1050-1200
	Hand Made Veg Temp	1	0.004		Body Sherd	
142	Hand made Veg Temp	1	0.032	Jar	Rim	875-1150
	NEOT	1	0.003	Jar	Body Sherd	
	THET	1	0.008	Pitcher	Body Sherd	
153	Hand Made quartz temp	1	0.007	Jar	Body Sherd	450-650
	Hand Made Veg Temp	1	0.024	Jar	Body Sherd	
155	Hand Made Veg Temp	1	0.003		Body Sherd	450-650
99999	COLS	1	0.031	Jar	Base	1400-1550
	IPS	1	0.012	Jar	Body Sherd	
	MEMS	1	0.006		Body Sherd	
	NEOT	1	0.001		Body Sherd	
	THET	5	0.031	Jar	Base & Body Sherds	

Appendix 4: Human Remains

by Chris Faine

SK 131 was discovered partially truncated by the north wall of Whittlesford Church, with the result that approximately 75% of the skeleton could not be recovered. The following elements were recovered:

Proximal and distal right femur
Left femur (except distal epiphysis and greater trochanter).
Right tibia (except distal epiphysis).
Right inominate (except pubis).
Left acetabulum and portion of ischium.
Left ulna (medial portion).
Left radius (medial portion).
One rib (Sternal epiphysis).
One 2nd /one 3rd metacarpal.

Despite the lack of skeletal elements preservation is extremely good. It was not possible to ascertain the exact sex of the individual due to the lack of diagnostic elements. However, examination of the surviving sciatic notch suggests a male. Examination of the surviving auricular surface and the state of epiphyseal fusion of the bones suggests an individual of around 20-30 years of age. No pathology was seen on any of bones. In addition to these remains the grave cut also contained a distal radius and tibia of single infant (possibly neo- or prenatal). This is unsurprising given the intercutting nature of the burials at the site.

References

Brickley, M & McKinley, J. (eds). (2004). *Guidelines to the standards for recording human remains.* IFA Paper No. 7. Southampton.

Buikstra, J. & Uberlaker, D. (eds) (1994). *Standards for data collection from human skeletal remains.* Arkansas Archaeological Survey Research Series No 44. Fayetteville, Arkansas.

Appendix 5: Radio Carbon Dating Certificate

Director: *Professor A E Fallick*

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Rankine Avenue
Scottish Enterprise Technology Park
East Kilbride Scotland UK G75 0QF

Email: g.cook@suerc.gla.ac.uk
Telephone: 01355 223332
Direct Dial: 01355 270136
Fax: 01355 229898

RADIOCARBON DATING CERTIFICATE

12 February 2007

Laboratory Code	SUERC-12892 (GU-14928)
Submitter	James Drummond Murray Archaeological Field Unit Cambridgeshire County Council 15 Trafalgar Way, Bar Hill CB23 8SQ
Site Reference	Church of St Mary and St Andrew, Whittlesford
Sample Reference	WHI SMC 06 SK 131 H.S.R.
Material	Human Bone : Human
$\delta^{13}C$ relative to VPDB	-19.8 ‰
Radiocarbon Age BP	1155 ± 35

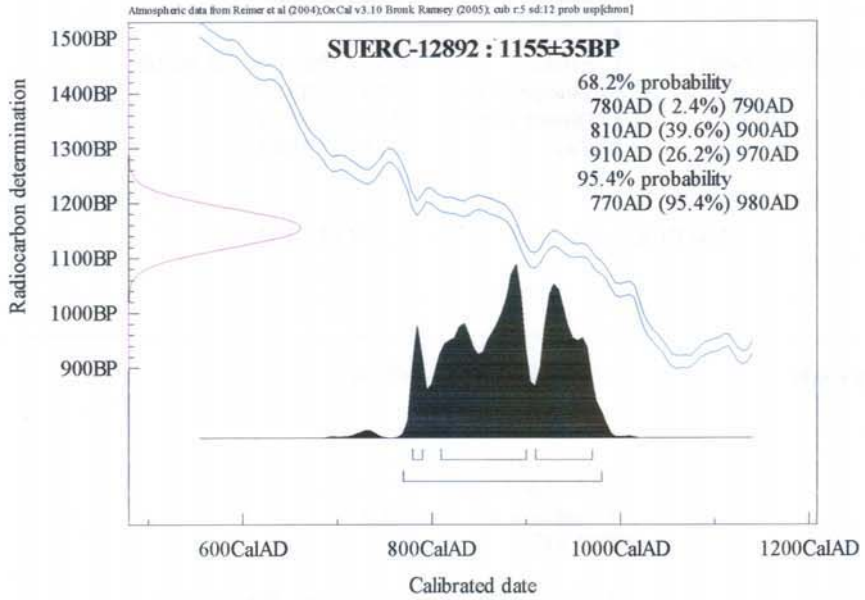
N.B.

1. The above ^{14}C age is quoted in conventional years BP (before 1950 AD). The error, which is expressed at the one sigma level of confidence, includes components from the counting statistics on the sample, modern reference standard and blank and the random machine error.
2. The calibrated age ranges are determined from the University of Oxford Radiocarbon Accelerator Unit calibration program (OxCal3).
3. Samples with a SUERC coding are measured at the Scottish Universities Environmental Research Centre AMS Facility and should be quoted as such in any reports within the scientific literature. Any questions directed to the Radiocarbon Laboratory should also quote the GU coding given in parentheses after the SUERC code.

Conventional age and calibration age ranges calculated by :- R. Anderson Date :- 12-2-07

Checked and signed off by :- P. Naysmith Date :- 12.2.07

Calibration Plot



Appendix 6: Environmental Remains

by Rachel Fosberry

1 Introduction and Methods

Three bulk samples were taken from a number of archaeological features within the excavated areas of the site in order to assess the quality of preservation of plant remains. Charred remains of cereals and pulses were recovered.

Up to ten litres of each sample were processed by tank flotation for the recovery of charred plant remains, dating evidence and any other artefactual evidence that might be present. The flot was collected in a 0.5mm nylon mesh and the residue was washed through a 1mm sieve. Both flot and residue were allowed to air dry. The dried residue was passed through 5mm and 2mm sieves and a magnet was dragged through each resulting fraction prior to sorting for artefacts. Any artefacts present were noted and reintegrated with the hand-excavated finds. The flot was examined under a binocular microscope at x16 magnification.

2 Results

Preservation is by charring and is generally poor. Charcoal fragments and cereal grains are present in all three samples in small quantities. *Hordeum* sp. (barley), *Triticum* sp. (wheat) and *Secale cereale* (rye) grains were recovered with rye predominating. Single weed seeds of *Polygonum* sp. (knotweed) and *Trifolium* sp. (clover) are also present. *Pisum* sp (pea) is present in Sample 3 (165)). Small pottery sherds were recovered from the residues of Samples 1 (138) and 2 (155).

3 Conclusions and Recommendations

The charred plant remains were all poorly preserved. The high level of abrasion and encrustation on the grains suggests that they had been disturbed and possibly redeposited. The diversity of cereal types is significant. Rye did not become an important crop until the Saxon and medieval period (Van der Veen 1992), which correlates with the pottery dating for these features. The cereal grains may have been accidentally burnt while being dried prior to storage or during cooking over open fires. Pulses are less likely to be burnt accidentally than grain, as they do not need to be exposed to heat as cereals do.

The dietary remains probably derived from the deposition of small quantities of burnt domestic refuse that presumably pre-date the church. The assemblage is small and does not require any further work.

Bibliography:

Van der Veen M. 1992 *Crop Husbandry Regimes. An Archaeobotanical Study of Farming in Northern England 1000BC - AD 500.* University of Sheffield

Appendix 7: Faunal Remains

by Chris Faine

The extremely small assemblage consisted of 25 fragments, with 11 elements identifiable to species (44% of the sample). All unidentifiable elements were classed as medium/large mammals. Two contexts contained animal remains, the majority of which came from context 155, an Early Saxon pit/ditch. These included two adult cattle metacarpals, along with an axis, radius and scapula, all of which showed evidence of heavy butchery. In addition to these the context contained a sheep 3rd and 2nd molar, and a portion of skull, including pieces of parietal, zygomatic and horn core. The skull showed evidence of being split vertically, most likely with a large knife or cleaver. The only other identifiable fragment in the assemblage came from context 153, an Early Saxon ditch, in the form of zygomatic arch from a sheep/goat.

Drawing Conventions

Plans

Limit of Excavation

Deposit - Conjectured

Sondages/Machine Strip

Intrusion/Truncation

Illustrated Section S.14

Archaeological Feature

Cut Number 118

Sections

Limit of Excavation

Cut

Cut-Conjectured

Deposit Horizon

Deposit Horizon - Conjectured

Top Surface/Top of Natural

Break in Section/
Limit of Section Drawing

Cut Number 118

Deposit Number 117

Ordnance Datum 18.45m OD

Inclusions

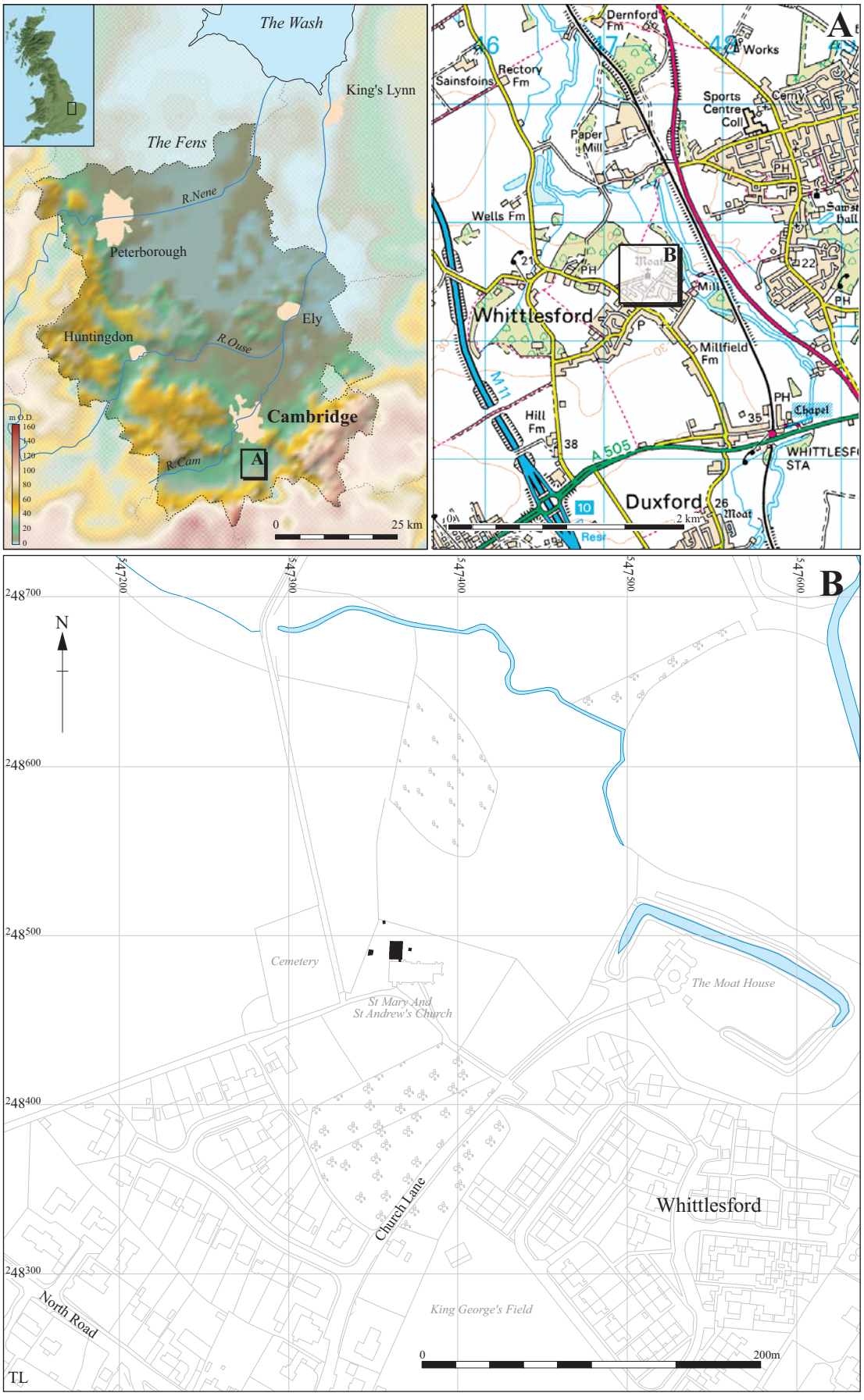


Figure 1: Site location (black)

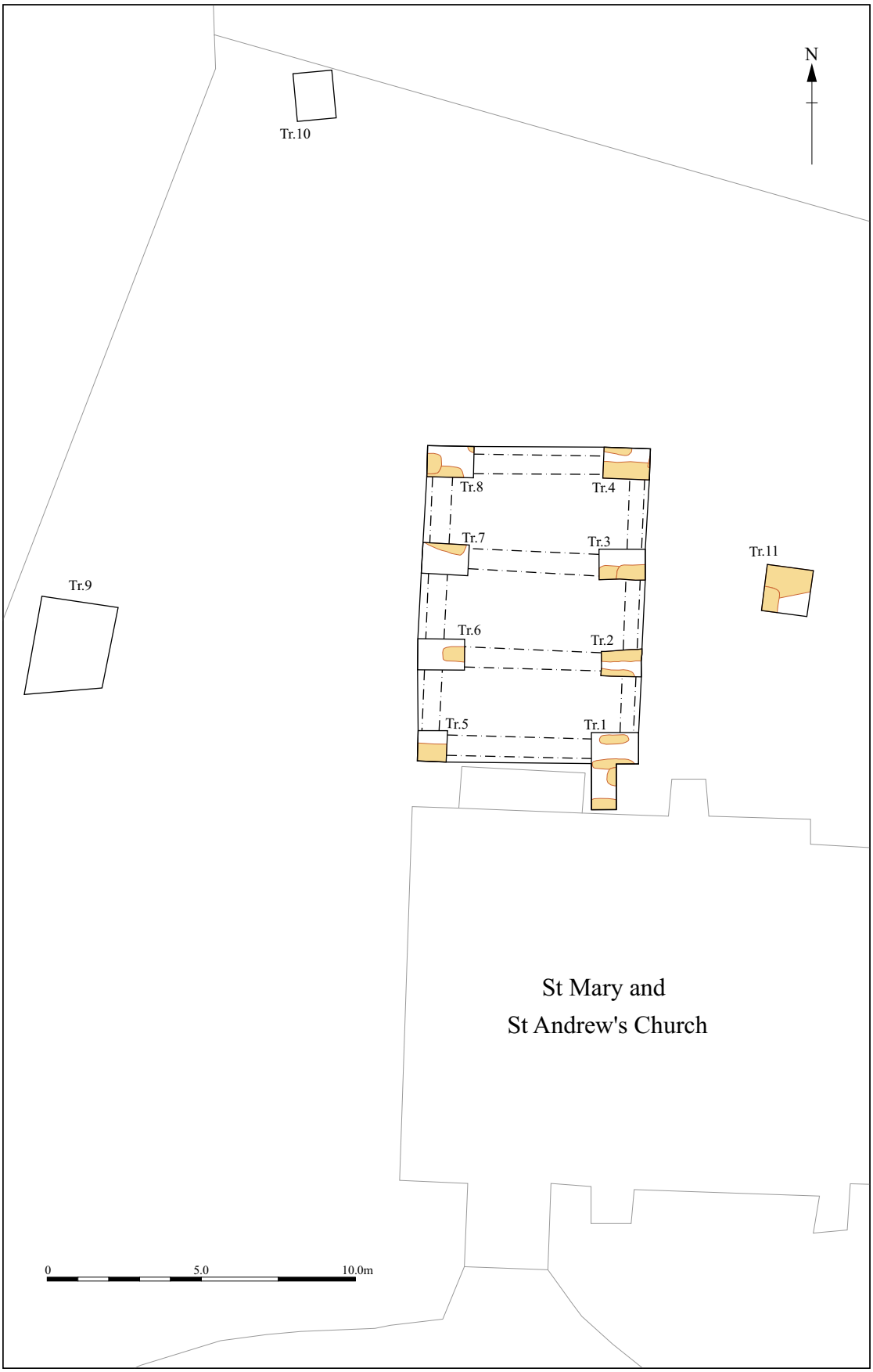


Figure 2: Location of trenches, crossbeams and septic tank

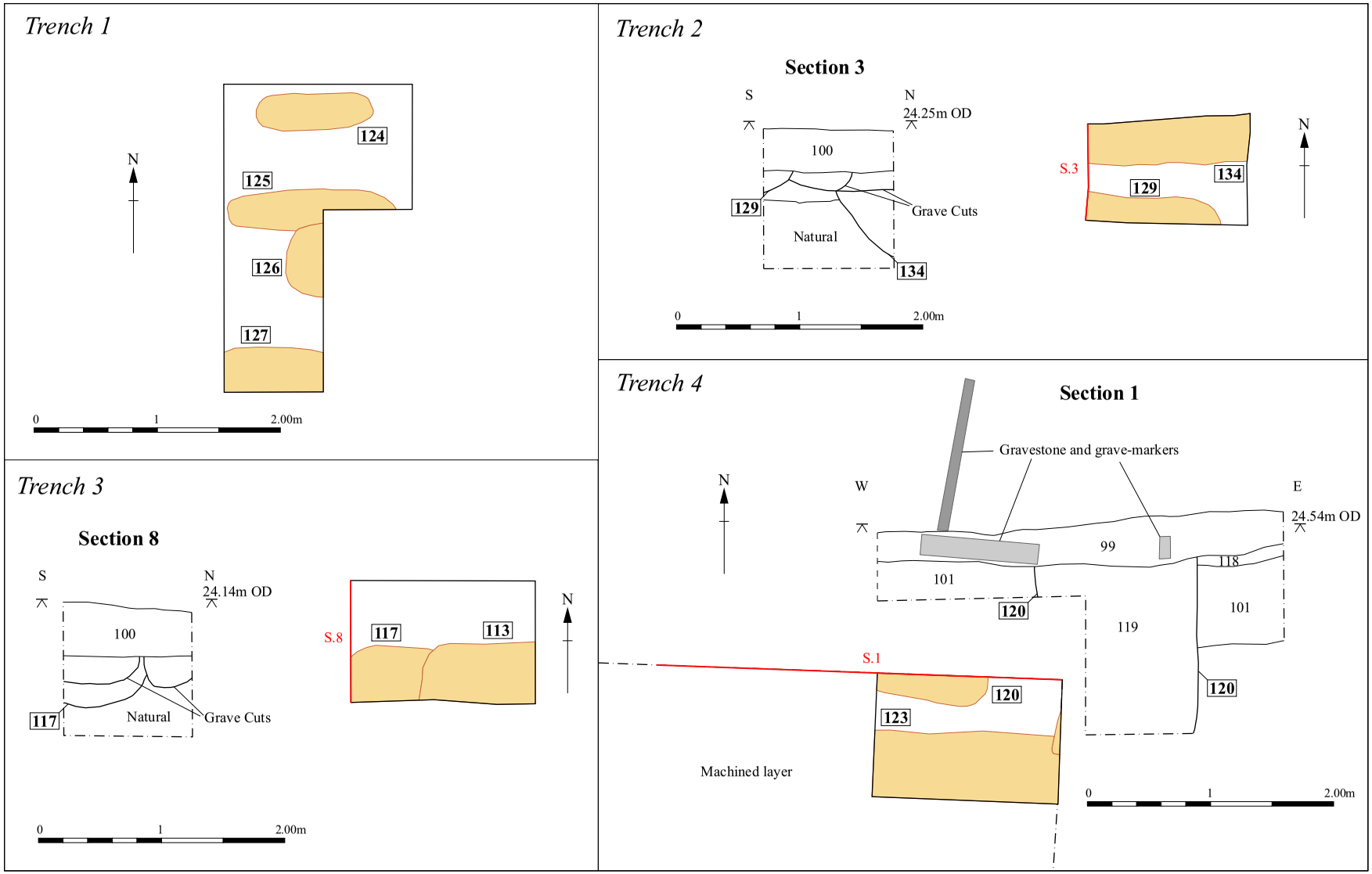


Figure 3: Trench plans and sections (Trenches 1-4)

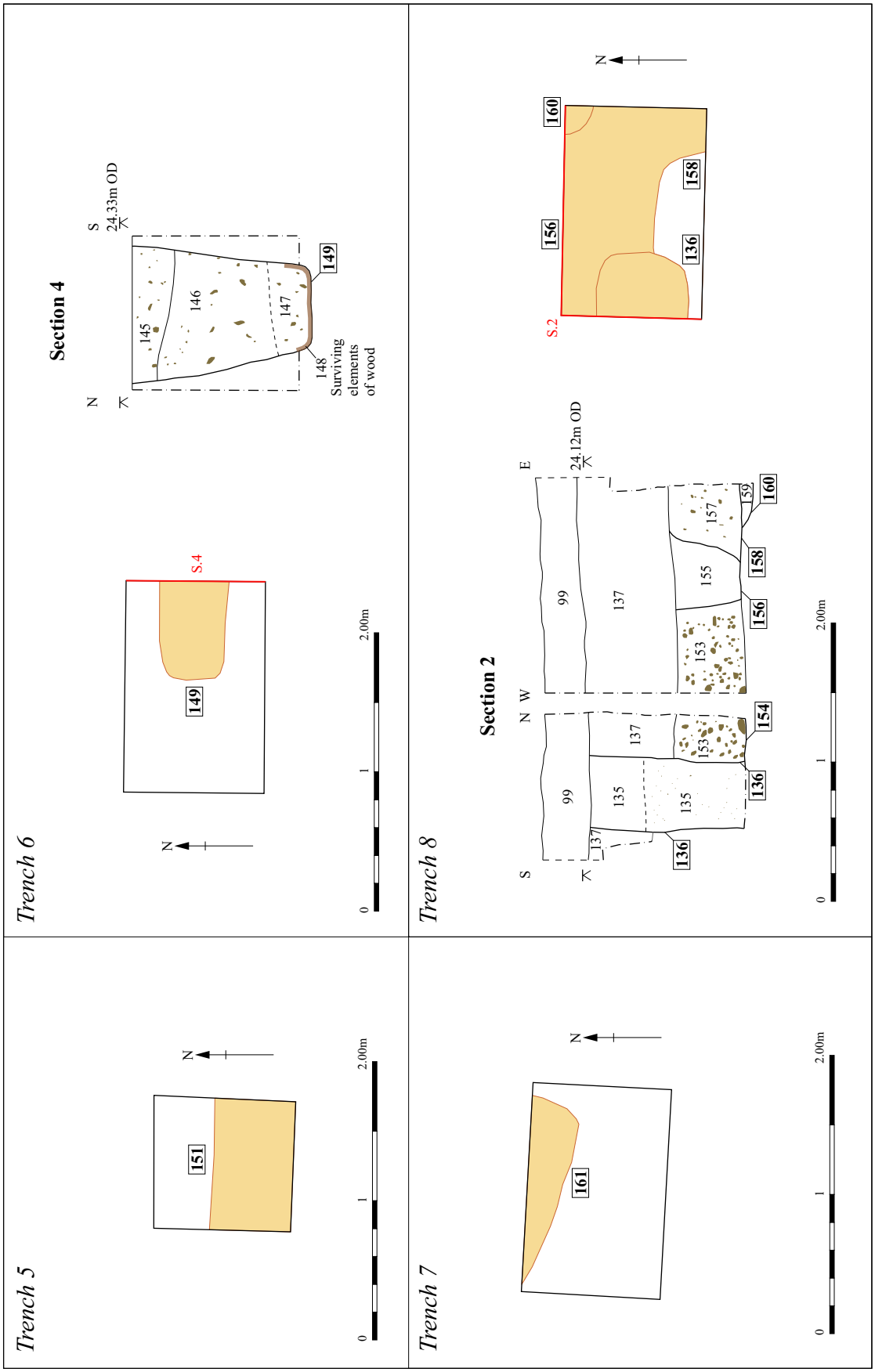


Figure 4: Trench plans and sections (Trenches 5-8)

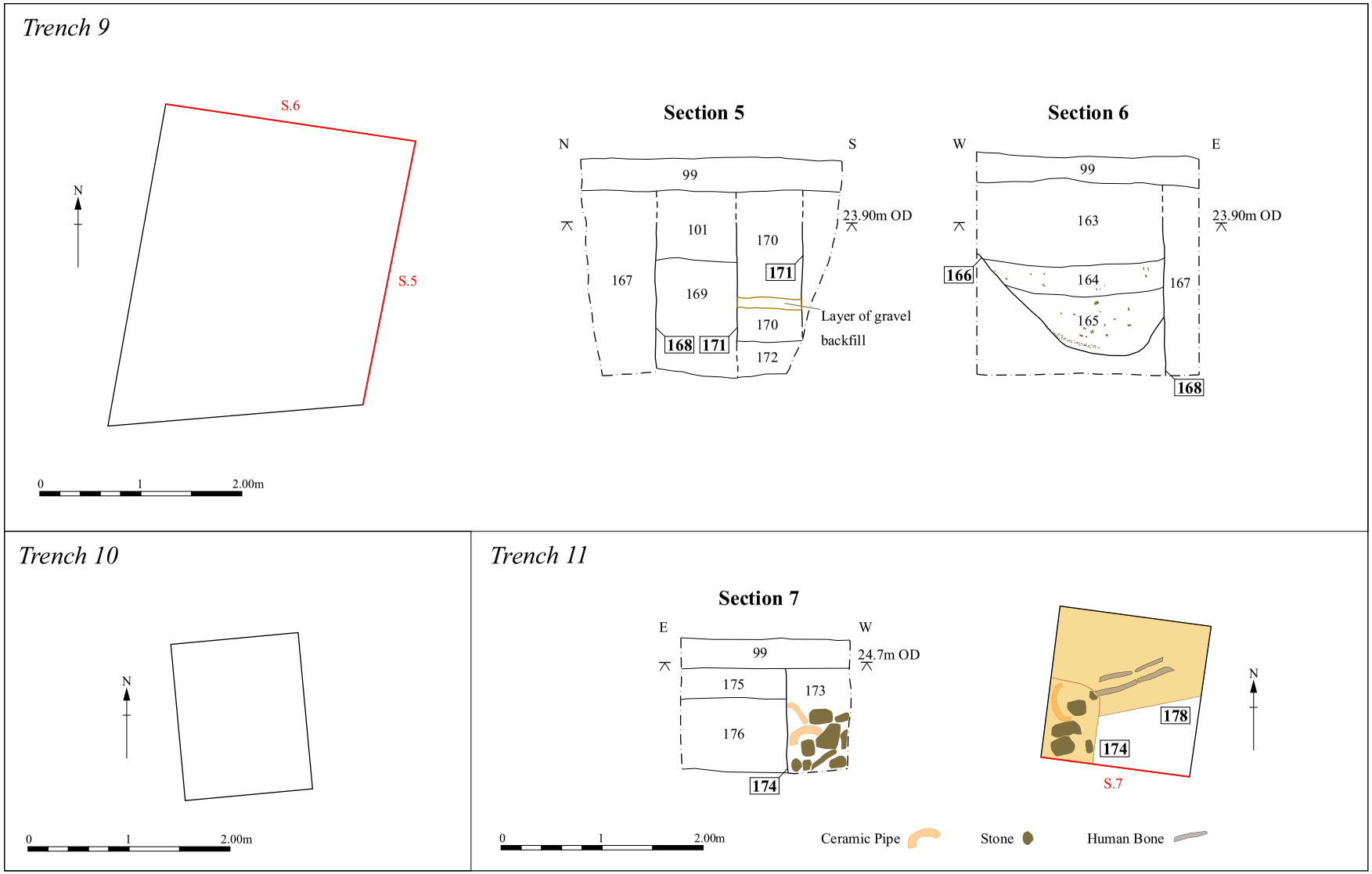


Figure 5: Trench plans and section (Trenches 9-10)

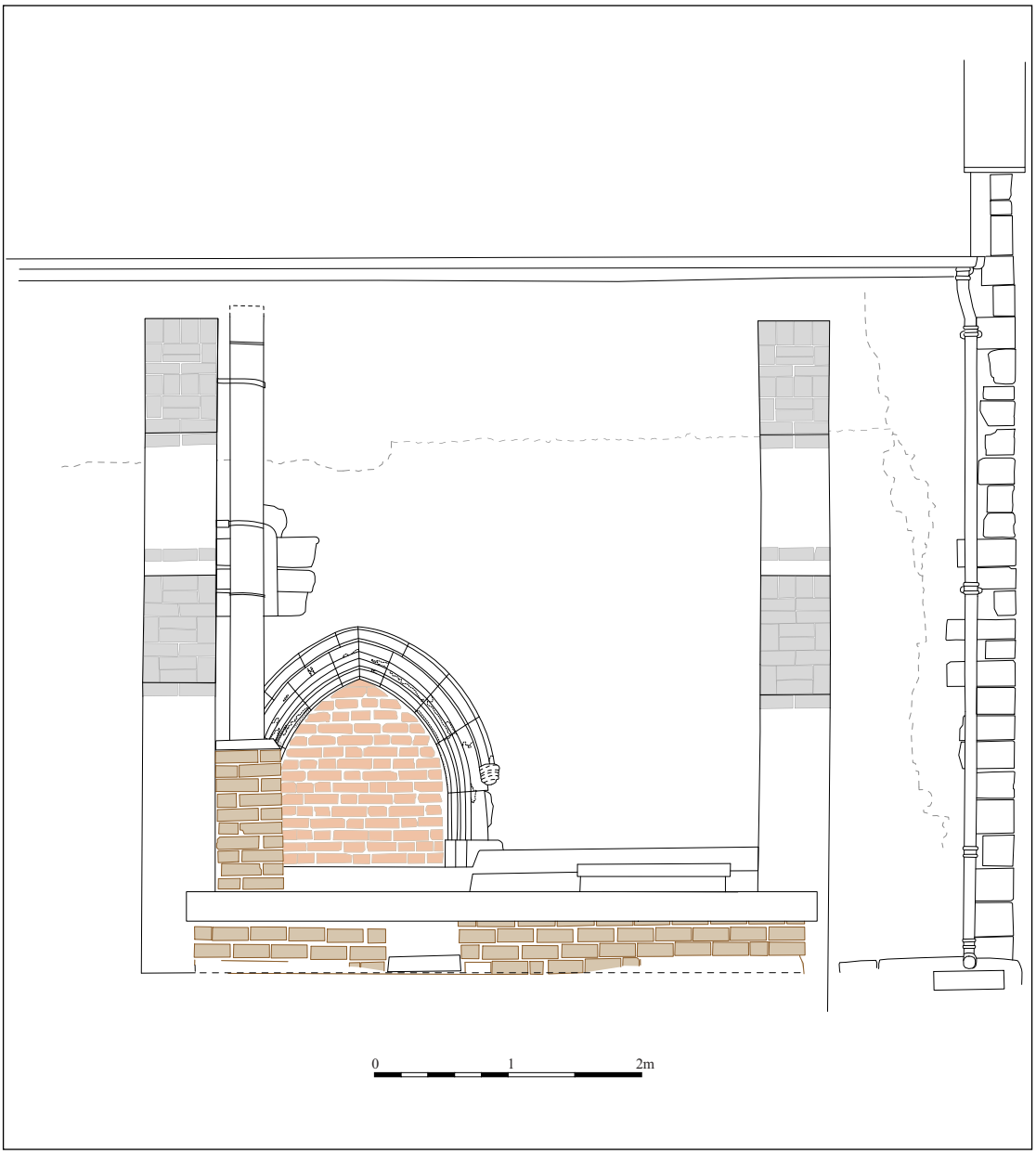


Figure 6: Elevation of section of north wall subject to investigation

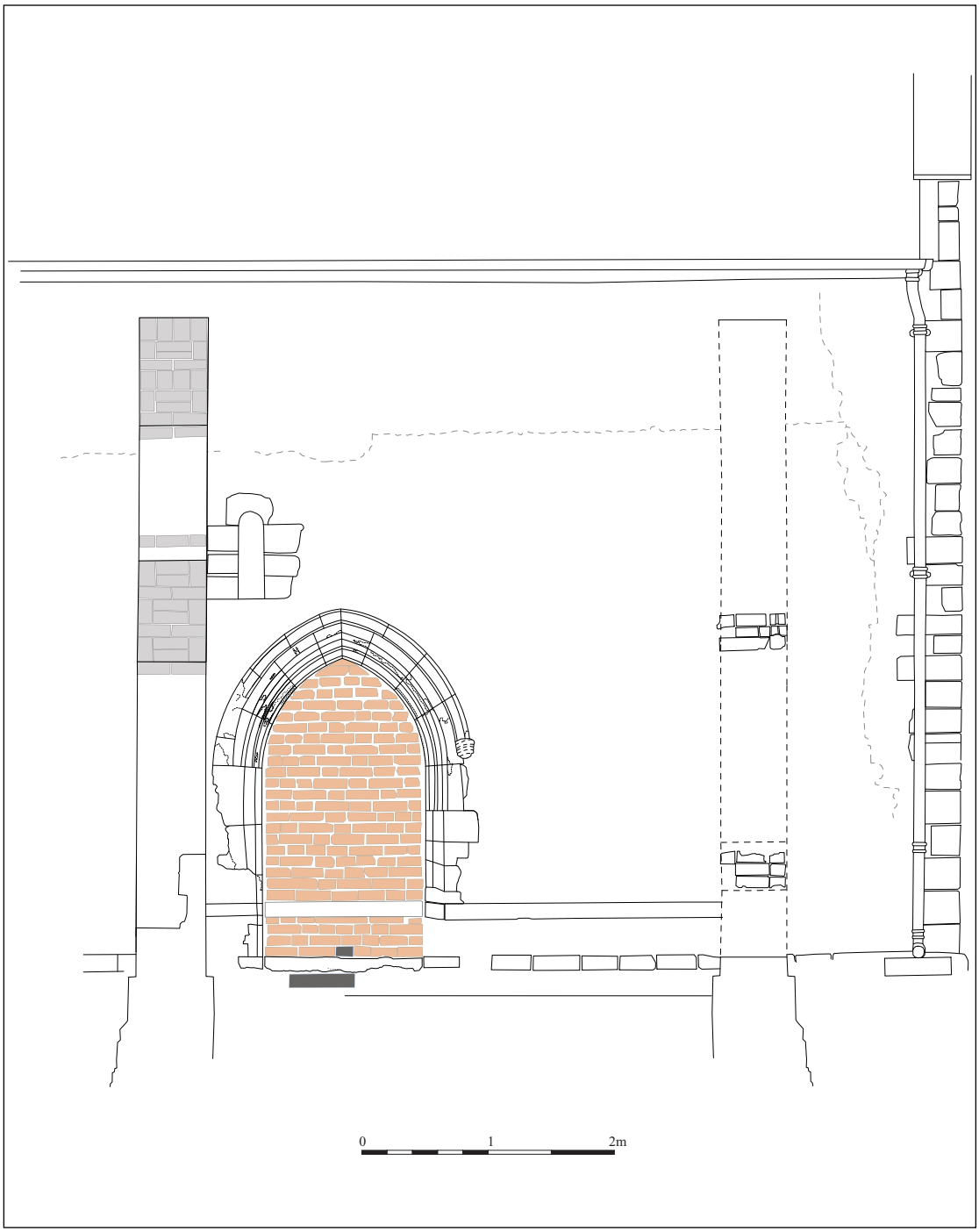


Figure 7: Elevation of north wall following the removal of buttress and below ground

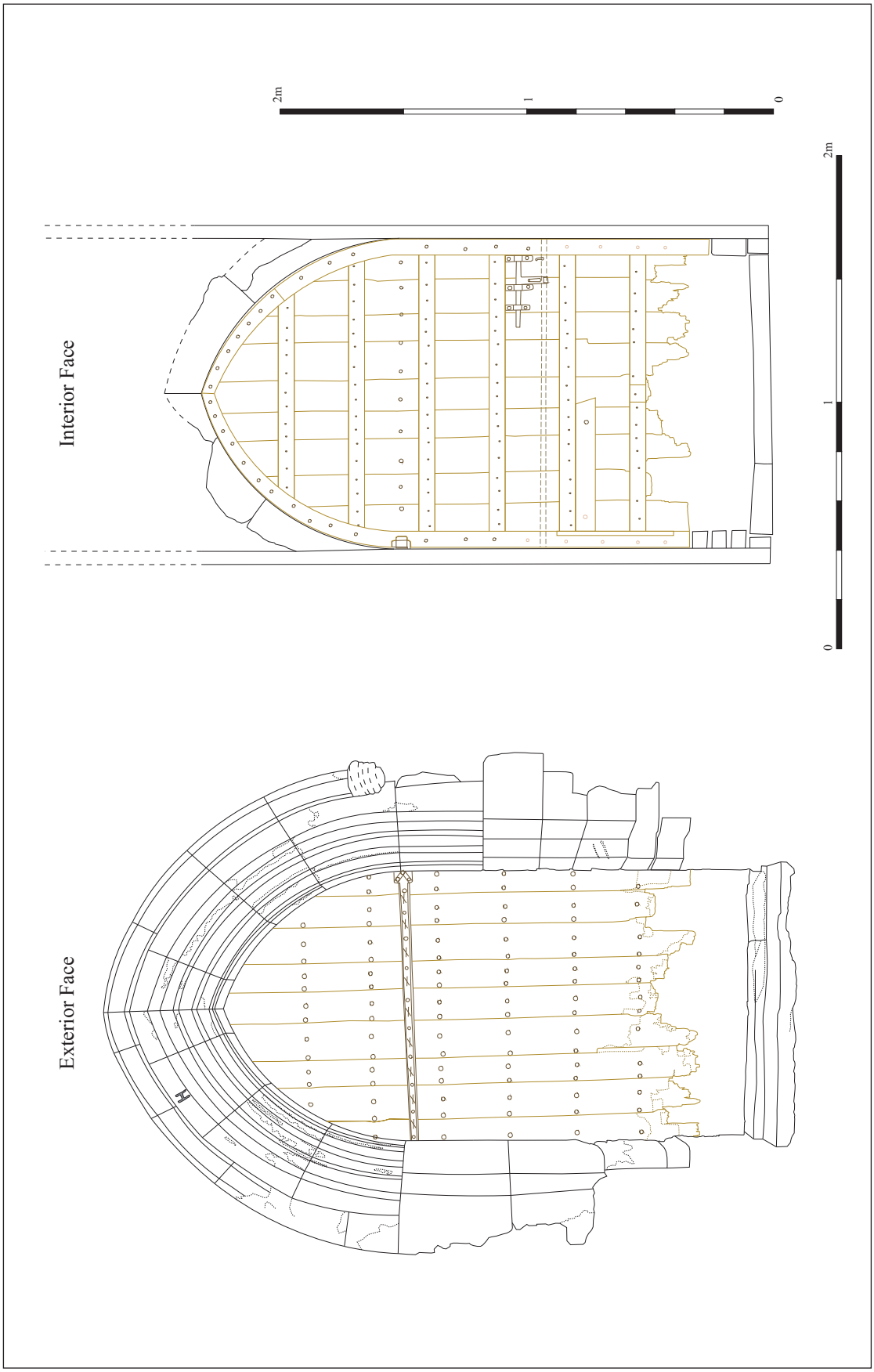


Figure 8: Exterior and interior faces of exposed door

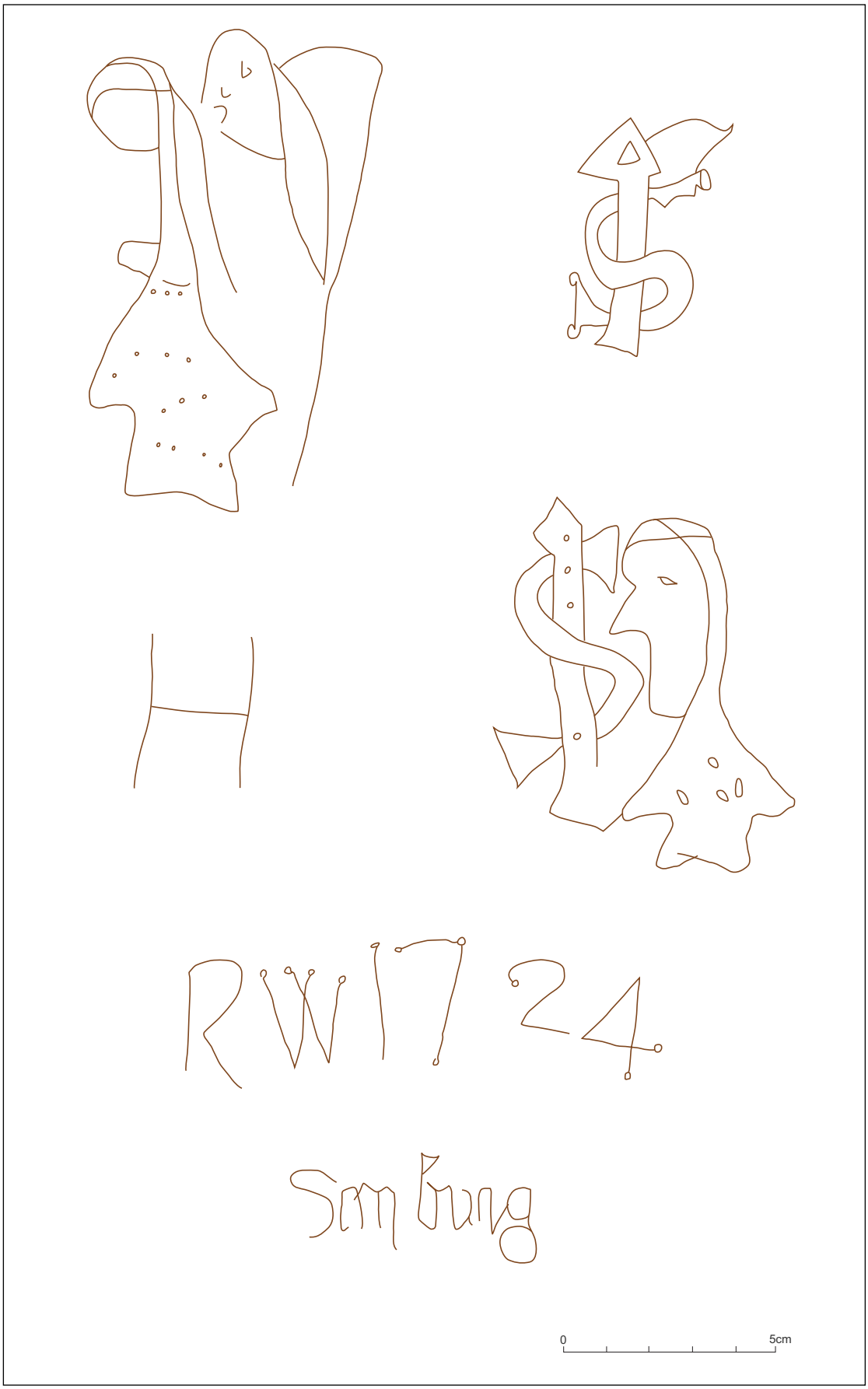


Figure 9: Graffiti found around north doorway

Plate 1: Skeleton, trench 1

Plate 2: Skeleton 131

Plate 3: Skeleton 121

Plate 4: Infant skeleton 103

Plate 5: Adult skeleton 110 and juvenile 111

Plate 6: Skeleton 112

Plate 7: Skeleton 112

Plate 8: Skeleton 162

Plate 9: Skeleton 152

Plate 10: Skeletons 139 and 140

*Plate 11: Ditch **166**, trench 9*

Plate 12: Spicer Cremation

Plate 13: Spicer Cremation

Plate 14: North-facing wall of church, prior to work

Plate 15: Sunken boiler room

Plate 16: Norman window in north wall

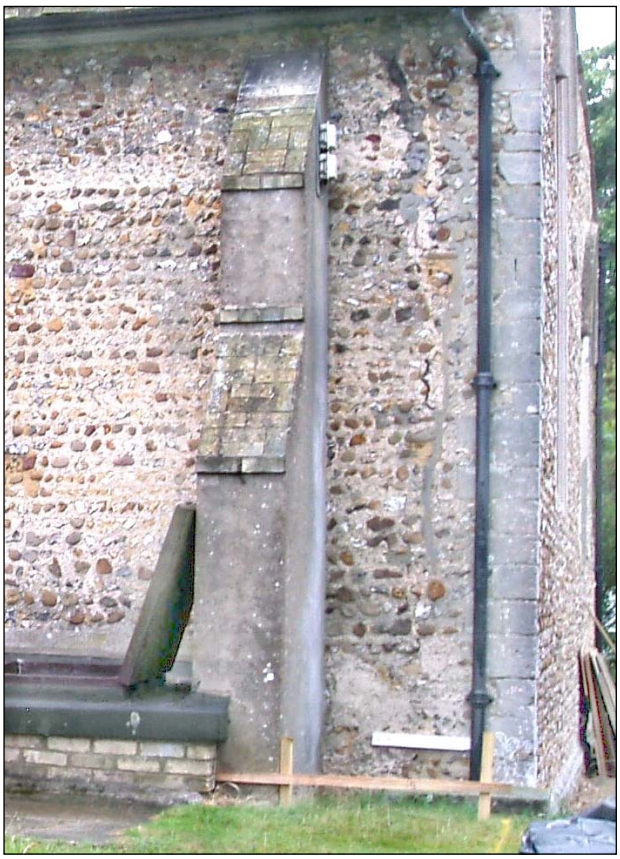


Plate 17: C19th buttress

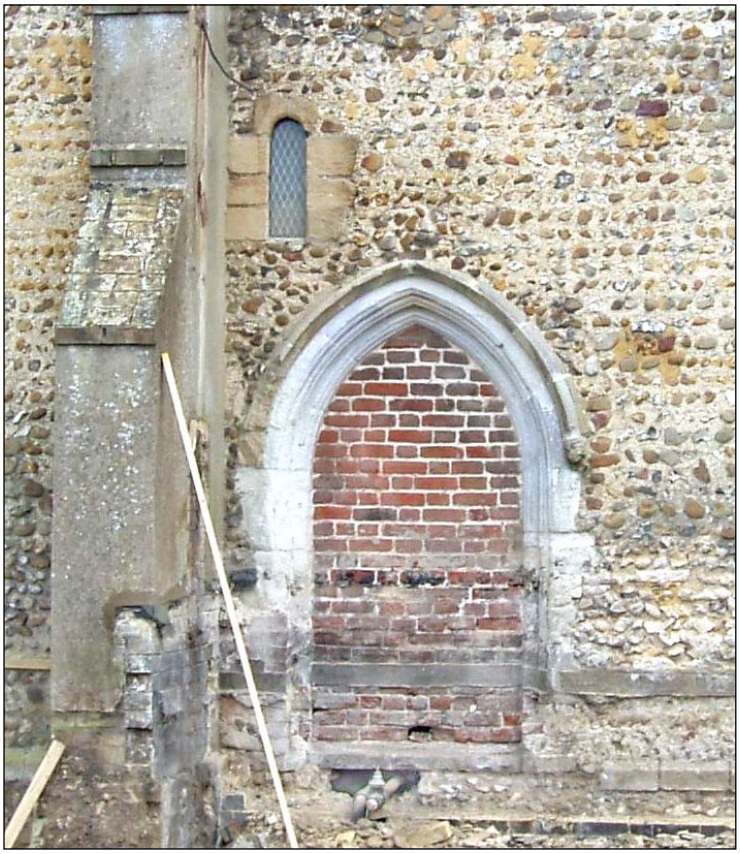


Plate 18: Blocked-up door

Plate 19: Doorway and Norman window from inside of church

Plate 20: Door during exposure

Plate 21: Door from outside

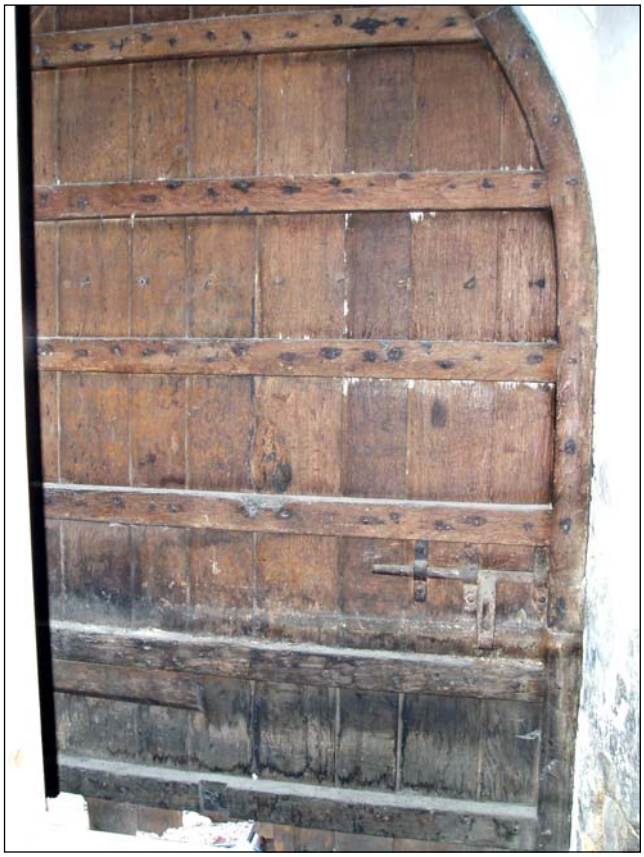
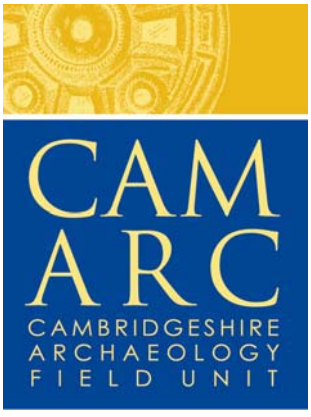


Plate 22: Door from inside church

Plate 23: Door hinge

Plate 24: Door bolt

Plate 25: Bracket for door



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