

St. Catherine's Church, Sacombe, Hertfordshire.

HN1201

Report No.959

Site name and address:	St. Catherine's Church, Sacombe, Hertfordshire		
County:	Hertfordshire	District:	East Hertfordshire
Village/town:	Sacombe	Parish:	Sacombe
Planning reference:	n/a	NGR:	TL 33602 19360
Client name and address:	St. Catherine's PCC, c/o Mr. P. Hudson, Churchwarden, Fairview, Nasty, Ware, Herts. SG11 1HW		
Nature of work:	Soakaway	Present land use:	Churchyard
Site Status:	Grade II* Listed Building	Reason for investigation:	Diocesan Faculty
Position in planning process:	N/A	Project brief originator:	None
Size of affected area:	c.7m ²	Size of area investigated:	c.7m ²
Site Code:	HN1201	Other reference:	n/a
Organisation:	Heritage Network	Site Director:	David Hillelson
Project type, methods etc.	Monitoring and Recording	Archive Recipient:	Hertford Museum
Start of work	08/06/2015	Finish of work	16/06/2015
Related HER Nos:	N/A	Periods represented:	Post-medieval
Oasis UID:	heritage1-209497	Significant finds:	Human bone
Monument types:	Church		
Physical archive:	None		
Previous summaries/reports:	Snee, J. 2012 <i>St Katherine's Church, Sacombe, Hertfordshire: archaeological monitoring report</i> . Heritage Network report no.704		

Narrative:

The Heritage Network was commissioned by Mike Dales Partnership Ltd, acting on behalf of the Sacombe PCC, to undertake a programme of archaeological monitoring as part of an ongoing series of improvements at St Catherine's Church, Sacombe, Hertfordshire.

St Catherine's is a 14th century church, substantially renovated in the mid 19th century (Plate 1). Archaeological monitoring of previous drainage work on the southern side of the church had revealed a graveyard soil, containing disarticulated human bone fragments, above the natural chalk (Snee 2012).

This phase of groundworks consisted of the excavation of a soakaway pit and associated drainage trenches in the churchyard to the north of the church (Figure 2). Trench 1 measured 9m in length and ran north for approximately 1m from the north wall of the church, before turning to run north-east to the soakaway. Trench 2 measured 5m in length and ran north-west from the vestry to the soakaway (Figure 2, Plate 2). Both trenches were 0.40m wide and were excavated to depths of between 0.55m and 1.40m.

The stratigraphy revealed in the drainage trench sections consisted of a layer of dark grey (10YR 4/1) silty clay topsoil, between 0.15 and 0.20m in depth, above brown (10YR 4/3) friable sandy clay, 0.35m in depth, containing frequent peg tile and chalk fragments. This has been interpreted as a graveyard soil, similar to that recorded in 2012. The natural chalk was encountered at a depth of approximately 0.50m below the present ground level.

No archaeological features or deposits were encountered in the drainage trenches. The only finds consisted of a number of disarticulated human bones, recovered from both the topsoil and the graveyard soil.

The soakaway pit, which measured 1.40m by 1.40m and 1.40m in depth, was located approximately 5m to the north of the church. Two possible grave cuts, [101] and [103], were revealed in its southern and western sections immediately below the topsoil. Cut [101] was observed in the western section, cutting through a thin layer of the graveyard soil and into the natural chalk (Figure 3, Plate 3). It measured 1.20m in width and 0.35m in depth, with irregular sides and a flat base. The feature, which has been interpreted as a possible grave, contained fill (102), a brown (10YR 4/3) friable sandy clay containing frequent chalk fragments and occasional

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peg tile fragments. No skeletal material was encountered, suggesting that the soakaway had only clipped its edge.

Feature [103] was noted in the southern section of the soakaway. It measured over 1.30m in width and 0.70m in depth with irregular sides and a possibly concave base (Figure 3, Plate 4). The feature, which has been interpreted as a possible grave, contained fill (104), a brown (10YR 4/3) friable sandy silt with frequent chalk pieces. No skeletal material was encountered, suggesting that the soakaway had only clipped its edge. The graveyard soil was not visible in this section and the feature was cut into the natural chalk, which directly underlay the topsoil.

A small quantity of human bone was recovered from the graveyard soil, including fragments of long bone, as well as numerous small fragments that could not be identified. The gender and age of any individual could not be clearly ascertained from the recovered material, though the majority appeared to be from adults. A brief assessment showed that the assemblage represented disarticulated remains from several individuals. Photographs were taken of the best preserved and most identifiable bones. The bone was retained on site for re-burial.

Discussion:

The observed stratigraphic sequence is typical of churchyards, although normally the graveyard soil would be deeper. The shallowness of this deposit is probably due to the presence of chalk bedrock at a high level below the ground surface.

Bone from a number of probably adult humans was recovered, including rib, vertebrae and long bone fragments. The bone is likely to represent burials that have been disturbed and disarticulated by the continuous use of the churchyard. The lack of any marked graves in the area could indicate that the original burials were of considerable antiquity, although the lack of finds and discrete graves prevents any secure dating.

Overall the small extent of the works and the adoption of hand excavation by the contractor have kept the impact on the archaeological resource to a minimum.

Bibliography

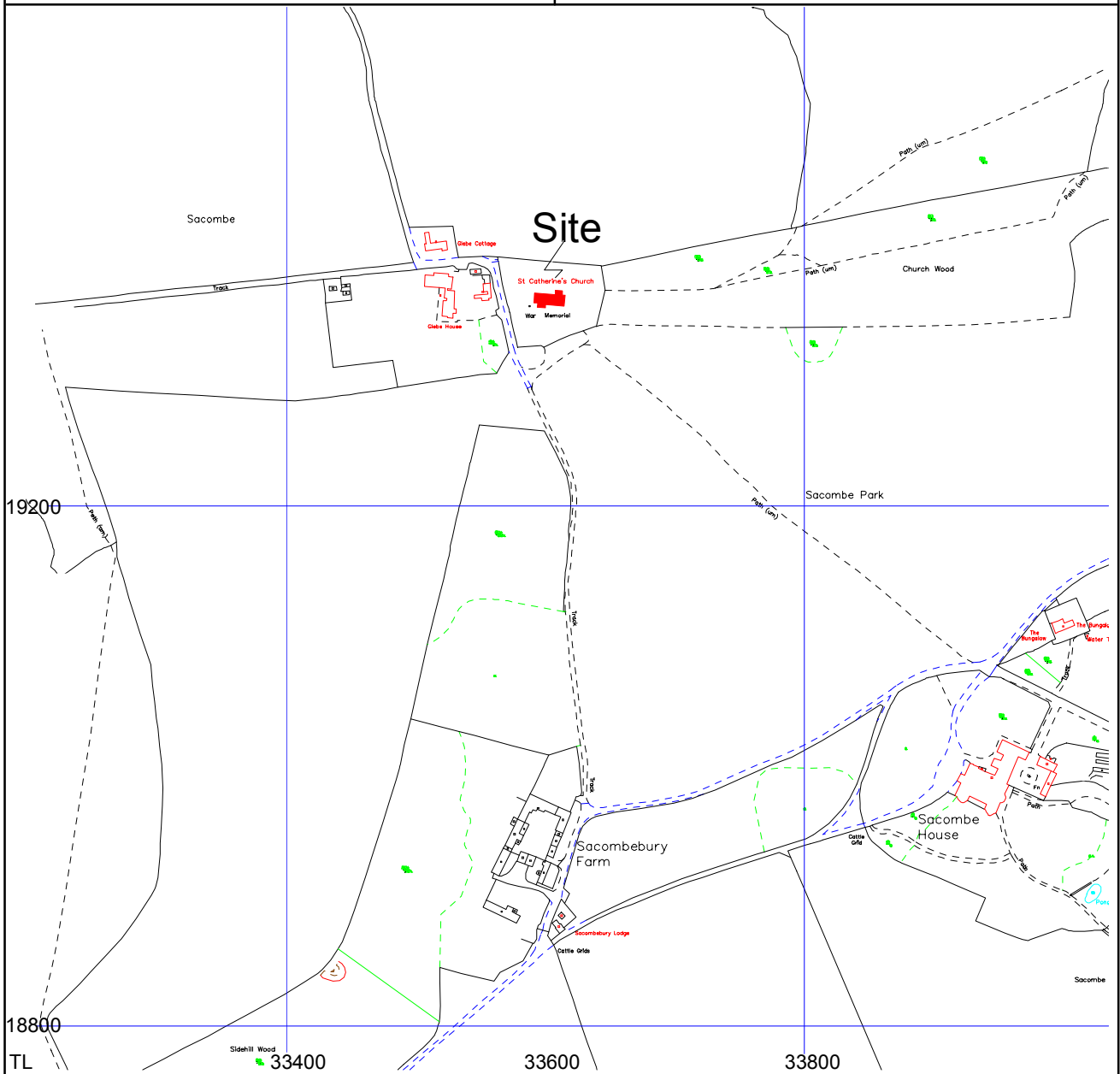
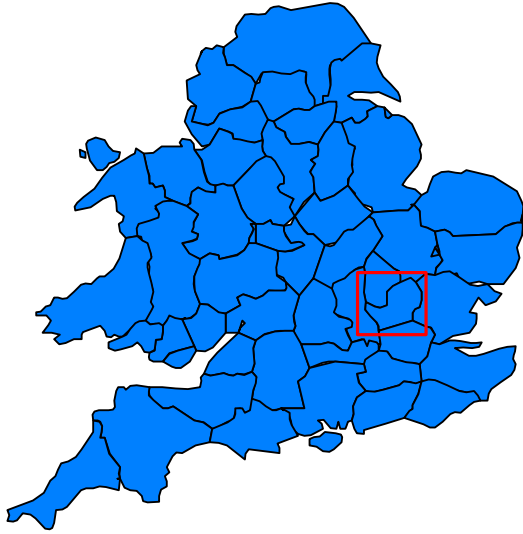
Snee, J. 2012 *St Katherine's Church, Sacombe, Hertfordshire: archaeological monitoring report*. Heritage Network report no.704

Illustrations:

Figure 1 Site Location 1:5000
Figure 2 Site layout
Figure 3 Sections 1 & 2

Plate 1 St. Catherine's Church, looking SE
Plate 2 Drain run trenches to soakaway, looking S
Plate 3 Soakaway, looking W, showing cut [101]
Plate 4 Soakaway, looking S, showing cut [103]
Plate 5 Disarticulated bone from trenches
Plate 6 Disarticulated bone from soakaway

Greg Jones
October 2015

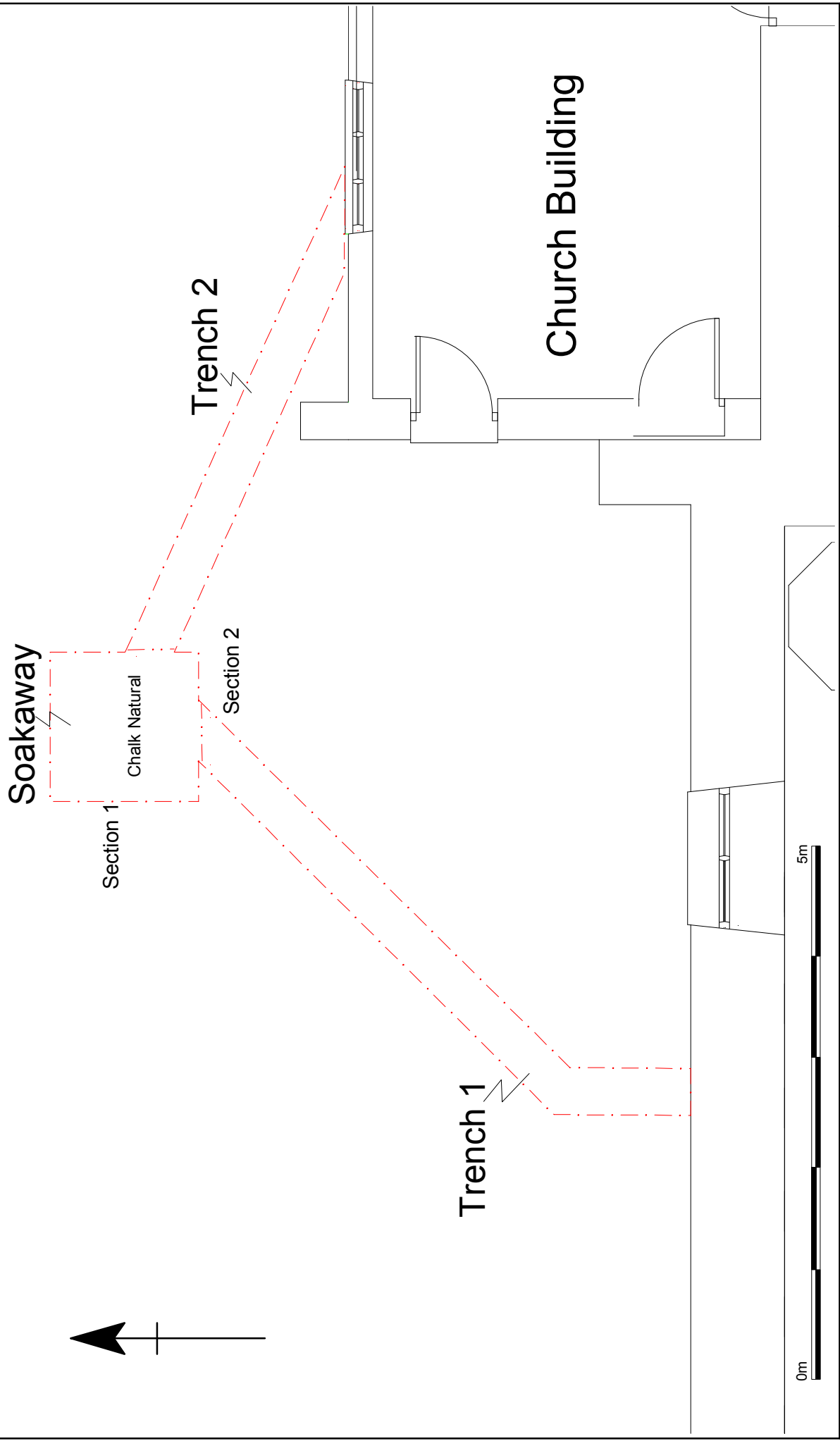


Site Location

Scale 1:5000

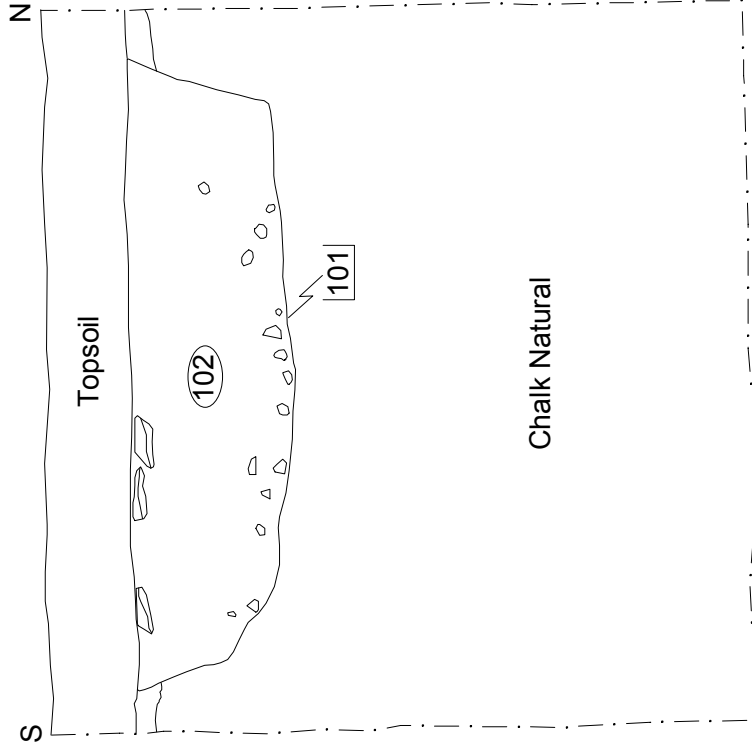
(Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey with the permission of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Licence no.AL100020449)

Figure 1

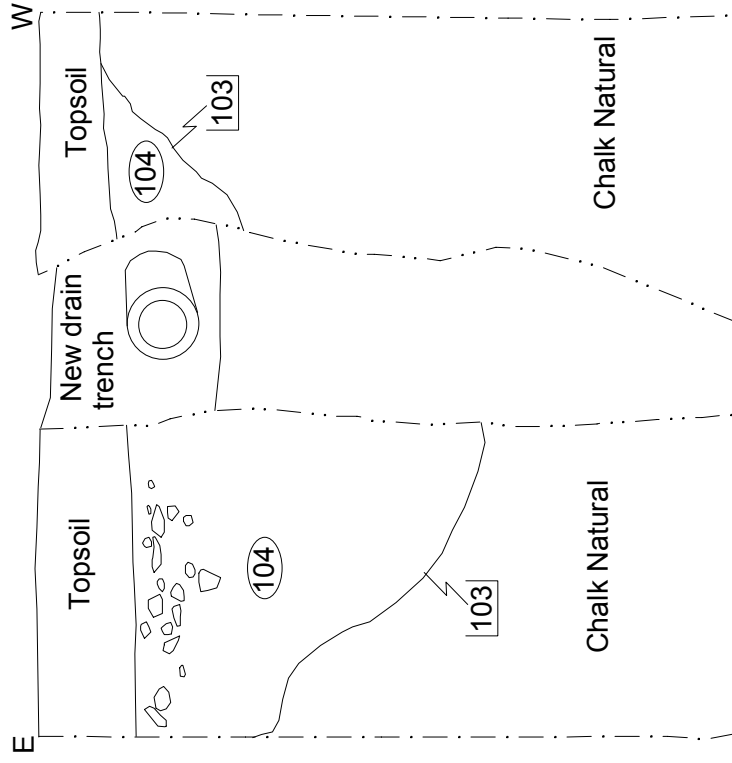


Site Layout

Section 1



Section 2



Sections 1 and 2



Plate 1 St. Catherine's Church looking SE



Plate 2 Drain run trenches to soakaway looking S



Plate 3: Soakaway looking W, showing cut [101]



Plate 4: Soakaway looking S, showing cut [103]



Plate 5: Disarticulated bone from trenches



Plate 6: Disarticulated bone from soakaway

Site Name:	St. Catharine's Church, Sacomb	HN ref:	HN1201
	Nr. Ware, Herts.	Site Code:	

Recorder(s):	GAJ	Arrive time:	8:30am	Return travel:	1.75 hrs
Date:	8/6/15	Depart time:	9:15am	Total hours:	2.5 hrs

Reported to:	John	Position:	Site Foreman
Purpose of visit:	Site visit to explain/discuss work programme.		

Photograph film no	
Staff on site:	GAJ
Observations:	
JOHN'S NUMBER: [REDACTED]	
<p>Met with John and discussed his timetable. Explained to him that any disarticulated bones need to be kept to one side for me / an archaeologist to observe / photo and to be reburied later. Also that the hand-dug trenches I need to see before they are shingled / dig after excavation and that any articulated bones seen, need to be excavated by HN so a call is needed and they need to stop. John also informed me of a (small) possibility they may get a mini-digger in. If so, I informed them, they would need to inform us so we can monitor it.</p> <p>I completed this attendance record and then took some photos of the church.</p> <p>Gave John my HN card with office number and my mobile on, and took his number (see above).</p>	
Sheet	1 of 1
Additional records:	
Text sheet(s)	
Sketch sheet(s)	
Context form(s)	
A4 Scale dwng(s)	
A3 Scale dwng(s)	
Weather:	Very sunny
Photographs	

Site Name:	St. Catherine's Church, Sacomb. Hests.	HN ref:	1201 1201
		Site Code:	

Recorder(s):	GAS	Arrive time:	14:00pm	Return travel:	1.5 hrs
Date:	09/06/15	Depart time:	15:00pm	Total hours:	2.5 hrs

Reported to:	John (Lodge + Son)	Position:	Site Foreman
Purpose of visit:	Site Visit, Monitoring Hand dug drainage trench(es) to soakaway		

Photograph film no	
Staff on site:	GAS
Observations:	<u>DRAIN TRENCH</u>
	<u>STRATIGRAPHY</u> :- TOP SOIL :- c. 0.15m (10YR 4/1 'Dark Grey') over GRAVELLED SOIL :- > 0.35m (10YR 4/3 BROWN) contained freq. pebble and chalk frags - MIXED
	2 Drainage trenches were excavated by hand and recorded during a site visit by GAS. Both trenches were 0.3m wide x 0.4m deep. Both trenches ran from the French drain of the church to the hand-dug soakaway.
	As of 09/06/15 (today) both drain trenches were finished and the soakaway was being started (but not yet excavated below c. 0.4m deep. (A further visit will be needed to inspect the the soakaway trench.
	5 disarticulated human bone fragments were unearthed and photographed. These will be reburied at end of work.
	No graves, or articulated bones, or archaeological structures were uncovered.
	Whilst recording the trenches the architect telephoned John and informed him he needed to go down another 6 inches - 10 inches in the trenches and more out of the soakaway.
	Therefore 1 or 2 more site visits will be needed later in the week. John said he would let me know when I'd need to come out.
Weather:	Sunny.
	Sheet 1 of 2
	Additional records:
	Text sheet(s)
	Sketch sheet(s) 1
	Context form(s)
	A4 Scale dwng(s)
	A3 Scale dwng(s)
	Photographs

Site Name:	St. Catherine's Church, Sacomb,	HN ref:	HN1201
	Herts.	Site Code:	

Recorder(s):	GAJ	Arrive time:	13:30 pm	Return travel:	1.5 hrs
Date:	10/6/15	Depart time:	14:30 pm	Total hours:	2.5 hrs

Reported to:	JOHN (LODGE + SONS)	Position:	SITE FOREMAN
Purpose of visit:	Site visit - Trench Inspection following hand dug trenching.		

Photograph film no																													
Staff on site:	GAJ																												
Observations:	<p>John from Lodge and Sons called me out again following the discussion from yesterday. John had hand-dug one extra 0.5m^{0.5-0.5m} down in both trenches. These were photographed. No extra bones were uncovered and the stratigraphy was the same (more graveyard soil).</p> <p>GAJ took photo's of the soakaway which is currently down 0.5m (the same depth as the drainage trench) however, another 1.5m will possibly have to come out for the soakaway. The strat in the soakaway trench is the same as that observed in the drainage trench, except that a layer of chalk 0.2 - 0.4m thick is visible. It is possible that graves are cut into the sides - however, no bones are visible and these are in section and so are not going to be disturbed. A full record of these will be made once the excavation of the soakaway is finished upon the final visit.</p>																												
	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Sheet</td> <td>1</td> <td>of</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4">Additional records:</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Text sheet(s)</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sketch sheet(s)</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Context form(s)</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>A4 Scale dwng(s)</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>A3 Scale dwng(s)</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Sheet	1	of	1	Additional records:				Text sheet(s)				Sketch sheet(s)				Context form(s)				A4 Scale dwng(s)				A3 Scale dwng(s)			
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A3 Scale dwng(s)																													
Weather:	Sunny																												

Site Name:	St. Catherine's Church, Sacomb,	HN ref:	1201
	Herts.	Site Code:	

Recorder(s):	GAS	Arrive time:	12:30 pm	Return travel:	1.5 hrs
Date:	16/6/15	Depart time:	14:15 pm	Total hours:	3.25 hrs

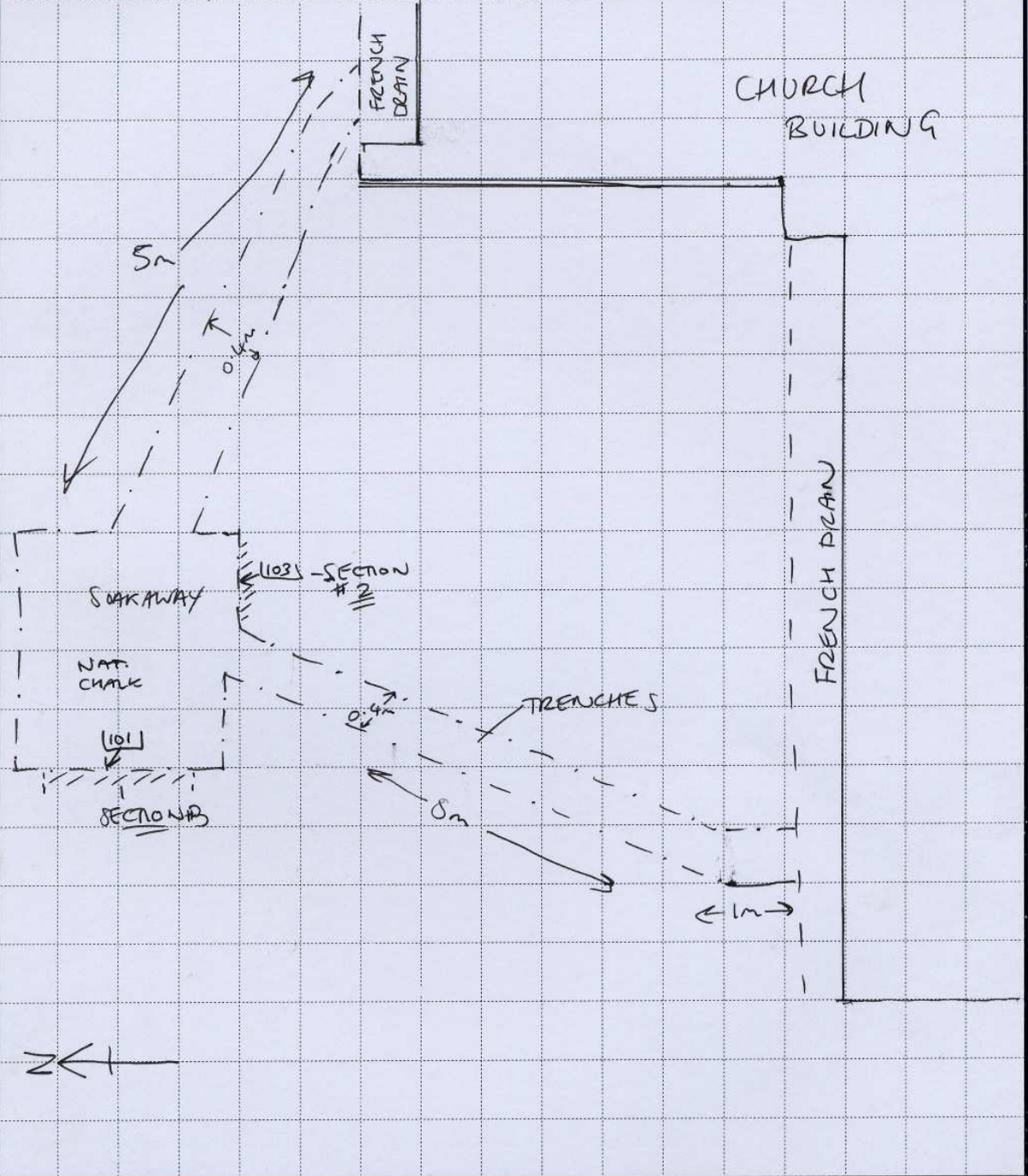
Reported to:		Position:	
Purpose of visit:	O/R monitoring/site visit - Inspecting soakaway		

Photograph film no			
Staff on site:	GAS		
Observations:			
Hard-dug soakaway was monitored during site visit by GAS			
- Stratigraphy consisted of <u>Topsoil</u> - (Dark grey 10YR 4/1) Friable, c. 0.15 - 0.2m Silty clay topsoil.			
over			
<u>Graveyard soil</u> 0.35m (Brown 10YR 4/3) Sandy clay, Friable.			
over			
<u>Chalk Natural</u> - Hard Chalk (white 10YR 8/1)			
17 fragments of Disarticulated Human Bone were found within graveyard soil - These were photographed and re-buried).			
Soakaway trench measured 1.4m deep, by 1.4m x 1.4m Area.			
2 Grave cuts visible in section. GRAVE [101] contained (102) fill (same as subsoil) Brown 10YR 4/3 Sandy clay with chalk and peg tile in the fill. No skeletons, either articulated or disarticulated were visible. - (SECTION #1)			
Grave cut [103] (See Section #2), Fill (104) same as (102). No skeletons visible. Peg tile within fill and freq. chalk inclusions.			
Dimensions (in section) - 1.1m x 0.7m deep.			
ALSO Photographed Tomb at E end of church that was damaged).			
Weather:	DRY / WARM / CAST.		
Sheet		1	of 3
Additional records:			
Text sheet(s)			
Sketch sheet(s)			
Context form(s)			
A4 Scale dwng(s)			
A3 Scale dwng(s)			
Photographs			

Sheet 1.

SITE CODE HN1201	Site Name St. Catharines Church, Secomb	Sub-division Drainage trenches.	CONTEXT N/A.
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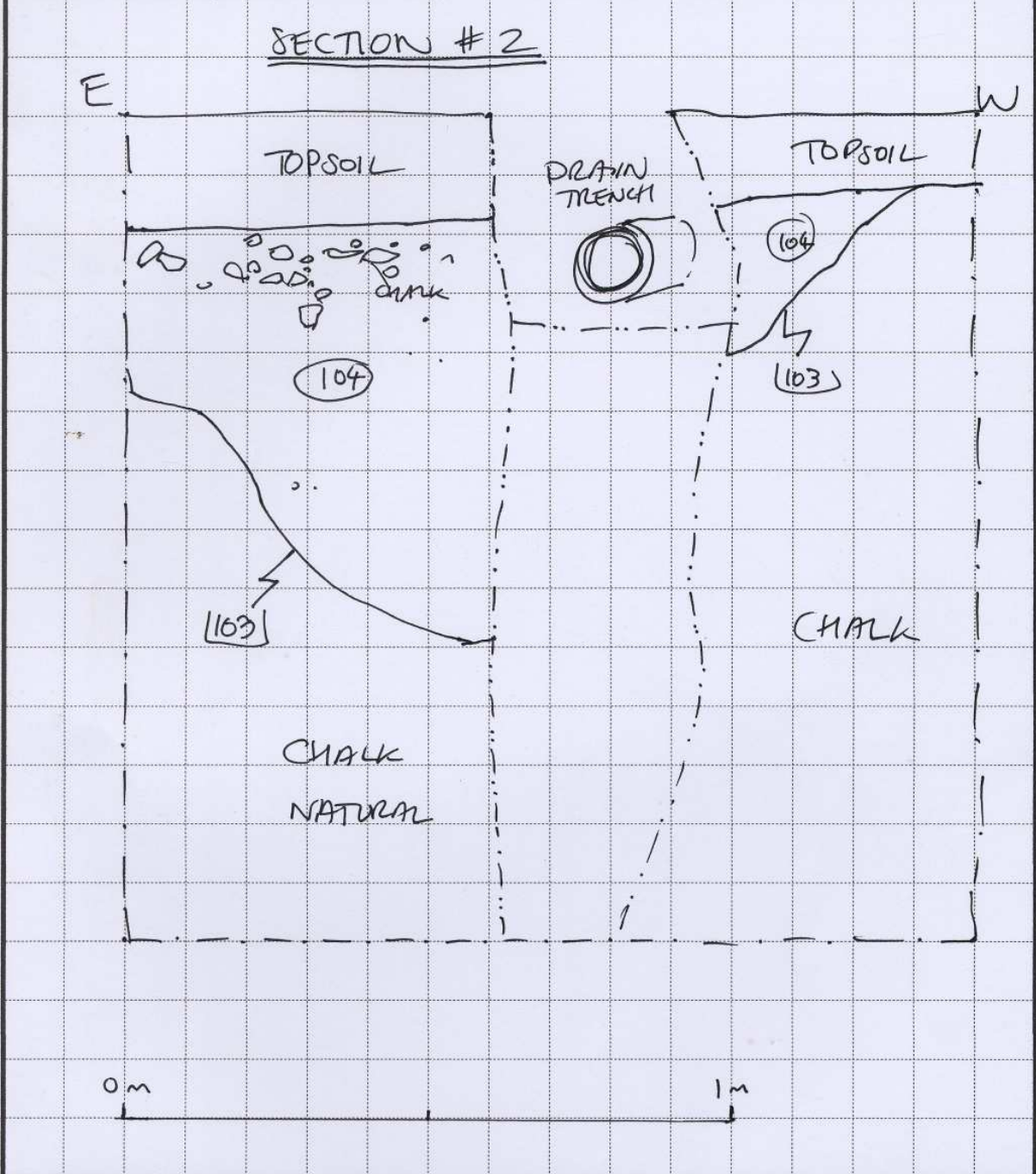
Sketch Plan and Section (include all dimensions, north arrow and levels; remember to annotate)



Discussion and interpretation		Drawing #fol	
LOCATION OF GRAVE CUTS (101) & (103) SHOWN IN			
SECTION (SEE SECTIONS 1 + 2).			
Scale	N.T.S.		
Signature	GAD		
Date	9/6/15		
Checked	✓		
Sheet	2	of	2

SITE CODE 1201	Site Name St. Catherine's Sacomb	Sub-division JOAKAWAY	CONTEXT (103)
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Sketch Plan and Section (include all dimensions, north arrow and levels; remember to annotate)



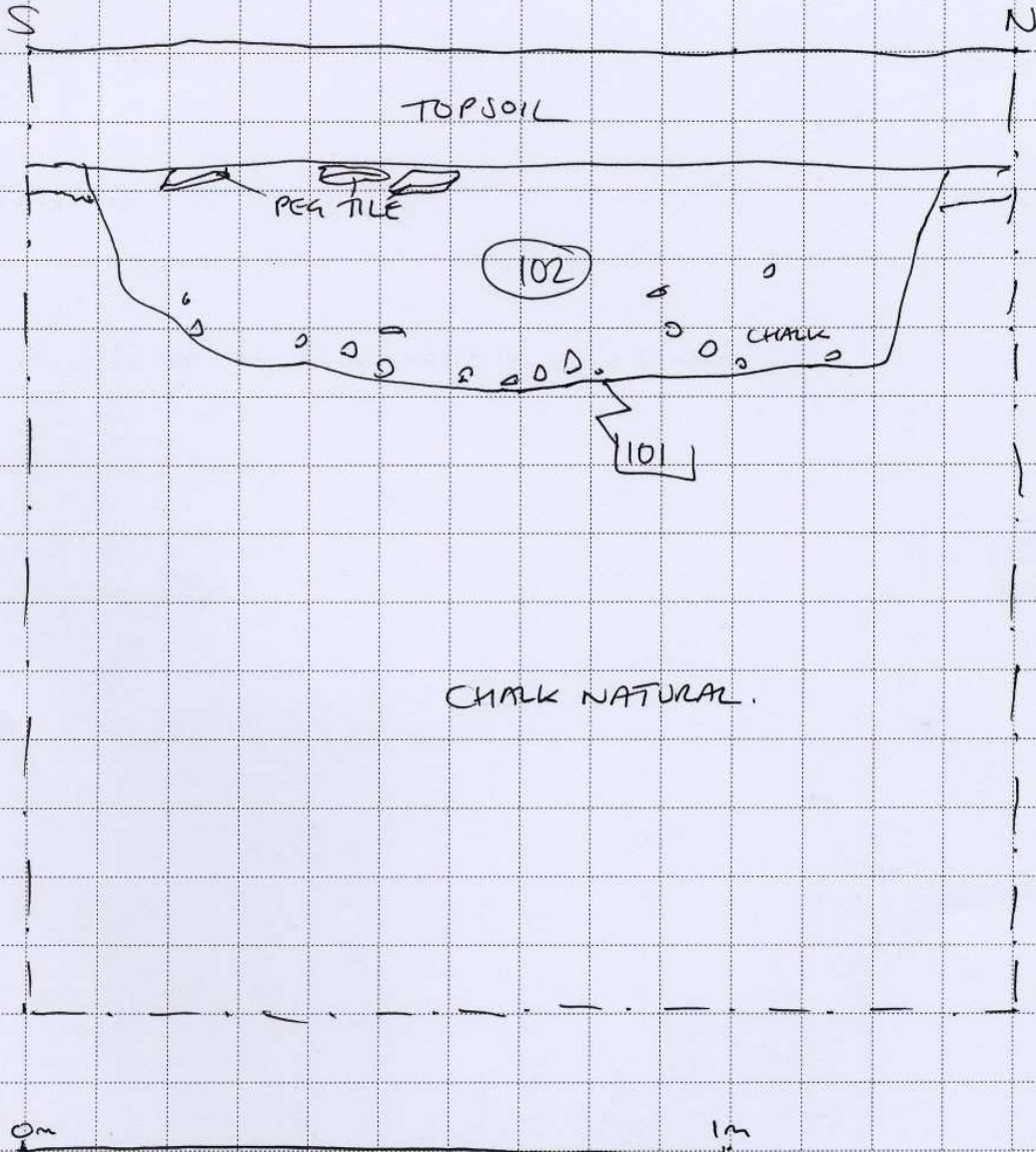
Discussion and interpretation		Drawing #2	
North Facing Section and Drain trench.		Showing Grave cut (103)	
Scale	1:10	Signature	ATJ
Date	16/6/15	Checked	
Sheet		of	

Sheet 3

SITE CODE MN201	Site Name St. Catherine's Sacorb.	Sub-division Soakaway	CONTEXT L101
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Sketch Plan and Section (include all dimensions, north arrow and levels; remember to annotate)

SECTION # 1



Discussion and interpretation Drawing #03

SECTION OF SOAKAWAY W FACING, SHOWING GRAVE CUT L101. NO SKELETON VISIBLE.

Scale	1:10
Signature	GAJ
Date	16/6/15

Sheet 2 of 2

Checked

SITE CODE HN1201	Sub-division Soakaway	Co-ordinate	Context Type CUT	CONTEXT No 101
Description				
Fill/Layer	① N/A - visible only in section			Cut
1. Matrix colour	② 1.2 m wide x 0.35 m deep.			1. Shape in plan
2. Matrix composition	③ Irregular.			2. Dimensions/depth
3. Matrix compaction	④ Flattish/slightly irregular			3. Sides
4. Inclusions (frequency & size)	⑤ Not clear			4. Base
5. Dimensions				5. Orientation
6. Other comments				6. Other comments
Structure				Group
1. Material				1. Type
2. Bonding				2. Contexts
3. Dimensions				
4. Orientation				

Stratigraphic Relationships	Cut by	Cuts	Cut contains
	Below	Above	
	Butted by	Butts	Part of Group
	Fill of	Same as	

Discussion and interpretation

CUT FOR POST-MEDIEVAL GRAVE. CONTAINED GRAVE FILL 102.

Checked interpretation Provisional date **POST-MED**

Finds (circle):

None Pottery Metal Glass Tile Brick A.Bone Shell Burnt mats. Other:

Registered Finds

Find No	Type	Coords & level:
Find No	Type	Coords & level:
Find No	Type	Coords & level:

Samples (circle):

Mollusc Flotation Wet-sieve Dry sieve C14 Other:

Sample No. Buckets/Litres

Reason for sample

Plan no. 1	Photo (b/w)	Signature GAS
Section no. 1	Photo (colour) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Date 16/6/15
Weather conditions Sunny	Risk of contamination	Checked <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Excavation methods Hand dug.		Cont.

SITE CODE KW1201	Sub-division Soakaway	Co-ordinate	Context Type FILL	CONTEXT No 102
Description				
Fill/Layer	(1) 10 YR 4/3 Brown	Cut		
1. Matrix colour	(2) JANDY CLAY	1. Shape in plan		
2. Matrix composition	(3) FRILABLE	2. Dimensions/depth		
3. Matrix compaction	(4) CHUNK - FREQUENT.	3. Sides		
4. Inclusions (frequency & size)		4. Base		
5. Dimensions		5. Orientation		
6. Other comments		6. Other comments		
Structure	(5) 1.2m wide X 0.35m deep (only visible in section).	Group		
1. Material		1. Type		
2. Bonding		2. Contexts		
3. Dimensions				
4. Orientation				

Stratigraphic Relationships	Cut by	Cuts	Cut contains
	Below TOPSOIL	Above	
	Butted by	Butts	Part of Group
	Fill of 101	Same as	

Discussion and interpretation

**POST-MEDIEVAL FILL OF GRAVE (101). CONTAINED
PEW TILE FRAGMENTS. NO SKELETON HOWEVER
VISIBLE.**

Checked interpretation Provisional date **POST-MED**

Finds (circle):

None Pottery Metal Glass **Tile** Brick A.Bone Shell Burnt mats. Other:

Registered Finds

Find No	Type	Coords & level:
Find No	Type	Coords & level:
Find No	Type	Coords & level:

Samples (circle):

Mollusc Flotation Wet-sieve Dry sieve C14 Other:

Sample No. _____
Buckets/Litres _____

Reason for sample _____

Plan no. 1	Photo (b/w)	Signature GAJ
Section no. 1	Photo (colour) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Date 16/6/15
Weather conditions Sunny	Risk of contamination NO.	Checked <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Excavation methods Hand Excavated.		Cont. _____

SITE CODE HN/201	Sub-division Soakaway	Co-ordinate	Context Type CUT	CONTEXT No (103)
Description				
Fill/Layer	① N/A - VISIBLE IN SECTION ONLY.			Cut
1. Matrix colour				1. Shape in plan
2. Matrix composition				2. Dimensions/depth
3. Matrix compaction				3. Sides
4. Inclusions (frequency & size)	② > 1.3m wide x 0.7m deep.			4. Base
5. Dimensions				5. Orientation
6. Other comments	③ Irregular slope.			6. Other comments
Structure				Group
1. Material	④ Concave? - Unclear.			1. Type
2. Bonding				2. Contexts
3. Dimensions				
4. Orientation	⑤ N/A - Unclear.			

Stratigraphic Relationships	Cut by	Cuts	Cut contains
	Below	Above	
	Butted by	Butts	Part of Group
	Fill of	Same as	

NATURAL
(104)

Discussion and interpretation

POST-MEDIEVAL? GRAVE CUT. CONTAINED GRAVE FILL (104).

Checked interpretation Provisional date **POST-MED?**

Finds (circle):

None Pottery Metal Glass Tile Brick A.Bone Shell Burnt mats. Other:

Registered Finds

Find No	Type	Coords & level:
Find No	Type	Coords & level:
Find No	Type	Coords & level:

Samples (circle):

Mollusc Flotation Wet-sieve Dry sieve C14 Other:

Sample No. Buckets/Litres

Reason for sample

Plan no. 1	Photo (b/w)	Signature GAS
Section no. 2	Photo (colour) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Date 16/6/15
Weather conditions Sunny	Risk of contamination Low.	Checked <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Excavation methods Hand.		Cont.

SITE CODE HN1201	Sub-division soakaway	Co-ordinate	Context Type FILL	CONTEXT No 104
Fill/Layer	Description			Cut
1. Matrix colour	(1) 10VR 4/3 BROWN			1. Shape in plan
2. Matrix composition	(2) SANDY CLAY			2. Dimensions/depth
3. Matrix compaction	(3) FRABLE			3. Sides
4. Inclusions (frequency & size)	(4) CHALK - FREQUENT-			4. Base
5. Dimensions	(5) > 1.3m wide x 0.7m deep.			5. Orientation
6. Other comments				6. Other comments
Structure				Group
1. Material				1. Type
2. Bonding				2. Contexts
3. Dimensions				
4. Orientation				

Stratigraphic Relationships	Cut by DRAIN.	Cuts	Cut contains
	Below	Above	
	Butted by	Butts	Part of Group
	Fill of (103)	Same as	

Discussion and interpretation

POST-MEDIEVAL? FILL OF GRAVE [103]. NO SKELETON, HOWEVER, VISIBLE.

Checked interpretation Provisional date **POST-MED ?**

Finds (circle):

None Pottery Metal Glass Tile Brick A.Bone Shell Burnt mats. Other:

Registered Finds

Find No	Type	Coords & level:
Find No	Type	Coords & level:
Find No	Type	Coords & level:

Samples (circle):

Mollusc Flotation Wet-sieve Dry sieve C14 Other:

Sample No. Buckets/Litres

Reason for sample

Plan no. 1	Photo (b/w)	Signature GAS
Section no. 2	Photo (colour) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Date 14/6/15
Weather conditions Sunny	Risk of contamination LOW	Checked <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Excavation methods Hand Excavated.		Cont.