



HERITAGE NETWORK



**CHURCH OF ST MARY MAGDALENE,
Westoning, Beds.**

HN856

Archaeological Monitoring Report



THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD

Registered with the Institute of Field Archaeologists as an Archaeological Organisation

Archaeological Director: David Hillelson, BA MIFA

CHURCH OF ST. MARY MAGDALENE Westoning, Bedfordshire

Project no.: HN856

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Archaeological Monitoring Report

Prepared on behalf of Westoning Parochial Church Council

By

Greg Jones, BA (HONS), MA

Report no. 593

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The cover photograph shows the church looking north west

Acknowledgements

The fieldwork for this project was carried out by Greg Jones. The report text and illustrations were prepared by Greg Jones, and edited by Helen Ashworth.

The Heritage Network would like to express its thanks to David Baker, Diocesan Archaeological Advisor; Pam Ward, architect; Gordon Kinns, site contractor; and Peter Little, churchwarden, St. Mary Magdalene's Church, for their co-operation and assistance in the execution of this project.

Summary

Site name and address:	Church of St. Mary Magdalene, Westoning, MK45 5JW		
County:	Bedfordshire	District:	Central Bedfordshire
Village/town:	Westoning	Parish:	Westoning
Planning reference:	N/a	NGR:	TL 02823 32792
Client name and address:	Westoning PCC, St Mary Magdalene's Church, Westoning, MK45 5JW		
Nature of work:	New drain installation	Former land use:	Churchyard
Site status:	Listed Building	Reason for investigation:	Direction of Diocesan Faculty
Position in planning process:	N/A	Project brief originator:	Diocesan Faculty
Size of affected area:	c.2.2m ²	Size of area investigated:	2.2m ²
Site Code:	HN 856	Other reference:	n/a
Organisation:	Heritage Network	Site Director:	David Hillelson
Project type, methods etc.:	Monitoring	Archive recipient:	Bedford Museum
Start of work	26/02/2010	Finish of work	01/03/2010
Related HER Nos:	5389	Periods represented:	Medieval/Post-medieval
Oasis UID	heritage1-73176	Significant finds:	Human remains
Monument types:	n/a		
Physical archive:	n/a		
Previous summaries/reports:	n/a		

Synopsis:

In response to the requirements of a diocesan faculty, the Heritage Network was commissioned by Westoning Parochial Church Council to implement a programme of archaeological monitoring during the excavation of a drainage trench and associated soakaway at the Church of St. Mary Magdalene, Westoning, Bedfordshire.

The archaeological monitoring revealed a group of disarticulated human bones, representing the remains of at least one individual. No evidence for a grave cut or for a coffin was encountered and no finds were present to date the burial.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report has been prepared at the request of Westoning Parochial Church Council, as part of the archaeological monitoring and recording of the excavation of a drainage trench and associated soakaway in the churchyard of St Mary Magdalene's Church, Westoning, Bedfordshire.

1.2 The investigation is a requirement of a Diocesan faculty. The present report describes the findings of the monitoring programme and is intended to complete the requirements of the diocesan faculty.

1.3 The site, centred on NGR TL 02823 32792, lies in the churchyard on the south-eastern side of the church, which is aligned north-east to south-west. The churchyard is bounded to the north by Church Road, to the west by The Grove, to the south by Manor Gardens and to the east by The Old Vicarage (Figure 1). The church, which forms part of the manorial complex to the north-west of the modern village of Westoning, is a Grade II* listed building (LBS no. 38101) It was originally built in the 12th century, but was rebuilt in the 14th century and altered in the 15th century. The chancel and nave are largely 14th century in date and the West Tower dates to the 15th century. Westoning Manor house (HER 13846), which was built in the 1840s lies to the south-west of the church. The medieval moated manorial site (HER 233) lies to the south-east of the present manor and is a Scheduled Monument (SM 20407).

1.4 The aim of the present project was to identify, record and protect, as necessary, any archaeological features and deposits which may be uncovered in the course of the groundworks; and to retrieve artefactual and ecofactual elements which allow the date, character, and significance of the site to be assessed in accordance with the current published regional research agenda (Glazebrook 1997, Brown and Glazebrook 2000), subject to the limitations of reasonable safety and practicality.

2. Fieldwork

SITE TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

2.1 The church lies on a ridge of higher ground, at approximately 83m AOD, between two streams to the north-west of Westoning.

2.2 Locally the soils belong to the Evesham 3 Association (411c), described as '*Slowly permeable calcareous clayey, and fine loamy over clayey soils. Some slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged non-calcareous clayey soils.*' (SSEW 1983).

2.3 The underlying geology consists of glaciofluvial sands and gravels above Gault Formation Mudstone (www.bgs.ac.uk/opengeoscience).

METHODOLOGY

2.4 Two site visits were made to inspect and supervise the excavation of the new drainage trenches. The trench from the church to the soakaway had been dug, and the drain laid, prior to the Heritage Network's involvement with the project. However, it was left open for inspection. The excavation of the soakaway was conducted under close archaeological supervision.

2.5 The drainage and soakaway trenches were hand-dug by the contractors.

2.6 All human remains were rapidly assessed on site for age at death, sex and any sign of obvious pathology. Age at death was ascertained by recording the degree of bone fusion, with specific reference to the cranial sutures and epiphyses of the long bones, and examining the levels of dental development and wear. Remains were then categorised as Adult (fully fused, with complete adult dentition in wear), sub-adult (largely fused skeleton of near adult proportion, some deciduous dentition) or juvenile (little or no fusion, predominantly deciduous dentition). Sex was inferred from observation of a series of gender specific traits observed on the pelvis and cranium. The pelvis is considered the most reliable indicator of sex in the human skeleton (Buikstra and Ubelaker 1994, p16) and where possible changes were observed on the ventral arc, sub pubic concavity and ischiopubic ramus ridge. These changes were scored as:

Blank –unobservable

1- Female

2- Ambiguous

3- Male

Changes in the greater sciatic notch were also noted and recorded as:

1- Female

2- Probably female

3- Ambiguous

4- Probably male

5- Male

In addition to these morphological differences a number of gender specific traits were also observed on the cranium. These differences were based at the nuchal crest, mastoid process,

supra-orbital margin, supra-orbital ridge and mental eminence. Each of these were rated as follows:

- 1- Female
- 2- Probably female
- 3- Ambiguous
- 4- Probably male
- 5- Male

As remains could not be cleaned or removed from site it was not possible to conduct a more comprehensive assessment.

2.7 All work was carried out in consultation with the DAC and in accordance with current standards and guidelines published by English Heritage, the Institute for Archaeologists, and others.

MONITORING AND RECORDING

2.8 The observed stratigraphy consisted of a layer of greenish black (10Y 2.5/1) topsoil, approximately 1m deep, overlying the yellowish brown (10 YR 5/8) sandy gravel natural.

2.9 A drainage trench (Trench 1) had been hand excavated from the western side of the buttress on the south-eastern corner of the church (Figure 2). It ran on a north-west to south-east alignment and measured 4m long, 0.4m wide and 0.4m deep (Plate 1). The trench had been excavated and the drain laid prior to the first site visit.

Trench 1 data

Length (m):	4	Width (m):	0.4	Maximum Depth (m):	0.4	Orientation	N-S
Context	Type	Description	Dimensions (m)				
			Length	Width	Depth		
Topsoil	Layer	Dark greyish brown (10YR 4/2) soft clayey silt topsoil	4+	0.4+	0.4+		

2.10 The foundations of the church wall were revealed in the trench at its northern end. Although it was impossible to produce a detailed record of the footings as the new drain pipe had already been inserted they were seen to comprise squared regular coursed limestone which had a measured depth of at least 0.4m (Plate 2).

Trench 2

2.11 This was located at the southern end of Trench 1 and measured 1.10m long, 0.55m wide 1m deep (Plate 3). The base of the soakaway was below the water table and water seeped into the trench during the course of the excavation.

Trench 2 data

Length (m):	1.1	Width (m):	0.55	Maximum Depth (m):	1	Orientation	E-W
Context	Type	Description	Dimensions (m)				
			Length	Width	Depth		
Topsoil	Layer	Dark greyish brown (10YR 4/2) soft clayey silt topsoil	4+	0.4+	0.4+		

2.12 A number of disarticulated human bones (Skeleton 1) were encountered in the north-eastern end of the soakaway, at depths of between 0.60m and 1m below the present ground surface. No evidence for a grave cut, or for a coffin, was encountered and no artefacts were recovered to date the burial.

Human Remains

2.13 Hand excavation of the drainage trench revealed a group of disarticulated bones, representing at least 1 individual.

2.14 The human remains were examined on-site and then handed to the vicar for reburial.

Skeleton number	Depth below ground surface (M)	Age at death	Sex	Notes	Grid reference (TL)
1	0.6-1.0	Adult	-	Small amount of disarticulated bone, most likely to represent a single disturbed burial.	TL 028 327

2.15 In the course of the excavation of the soakaway, a number of disarticulated human bones were unearthed throughout the trench (Skeleton 1). On-site examination of the bones showed they consisted of 2 radial fragments, a humerus, 1 ulna, 2 tibia fragments, 2 patella, a scapula fragment and a left innominate (hip bone) fragment (Plate 4). The bones were in a very poor condition, making an assessment of the age at death and sex impossible, however, fusion of the epiphyses indicates that the individual was an adult.

2.16 No evidence to date the burial was present.

3. Discussion

Archaeological Setting

3.1 The church of St Mary Magdalene lies on a ridge of higher ground to the north-west of Westoning village. It originated in the 12th century, but was rebuilt in the 14th century with a West Tower added in the 15th century.

3.2 The site of the moated medieval manor lies to the south of the church.

Conclusion

3.3 The archaeological monitoring of the site revealed a number of disarticulated bones, possibly representing a single disturbed burial. The bones appeared to belong to an adult. No evidence for a grave cut or a coffin was encountered and no finds were present to date the burial.

Confidence Rating

3.4 In the course of the fieldwork, weather and ground conditions were acceptable for the identification of potential features and deposits, and for their investigation. There were no circumstances which would lead to a confidence rating for the work which was less than High.

4. Schedule of site visits

Date	Staff	Hours	Comments
26/02/10	GJ	3	Site inspection
01/03/10	GJ	6	Site inspection

5. Bibliography

Brown, N. & Glazebrook, J. 2000, *Research and Archaeology: a framework for the eastern counties, 2. Research agenda and strategy*. East Anglian Archaeology

Glazebrook, J. 1997, *Research and Archaeology: a framework for the eastern counties, 1. Resource Assessment*. East Anglian Archaeology

Heritage Gateway: <http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk>

Institute of Field Archaeologists, 1999 *Standard and Guidance for Field Evaluation*. (IFA)

Oake M, Luke M, Dawson M, Edgeworth M and Murphy P (2007) *Bedfordshire Archaeology – Research and Archaeology: Resource Assessment, Research Agenda and Strategy* - (Bedfordshire Archaeology Monograph 9)

Soil Survey of England and Wales (SSEW) 1983 1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales: Sheet 4, Eastern England

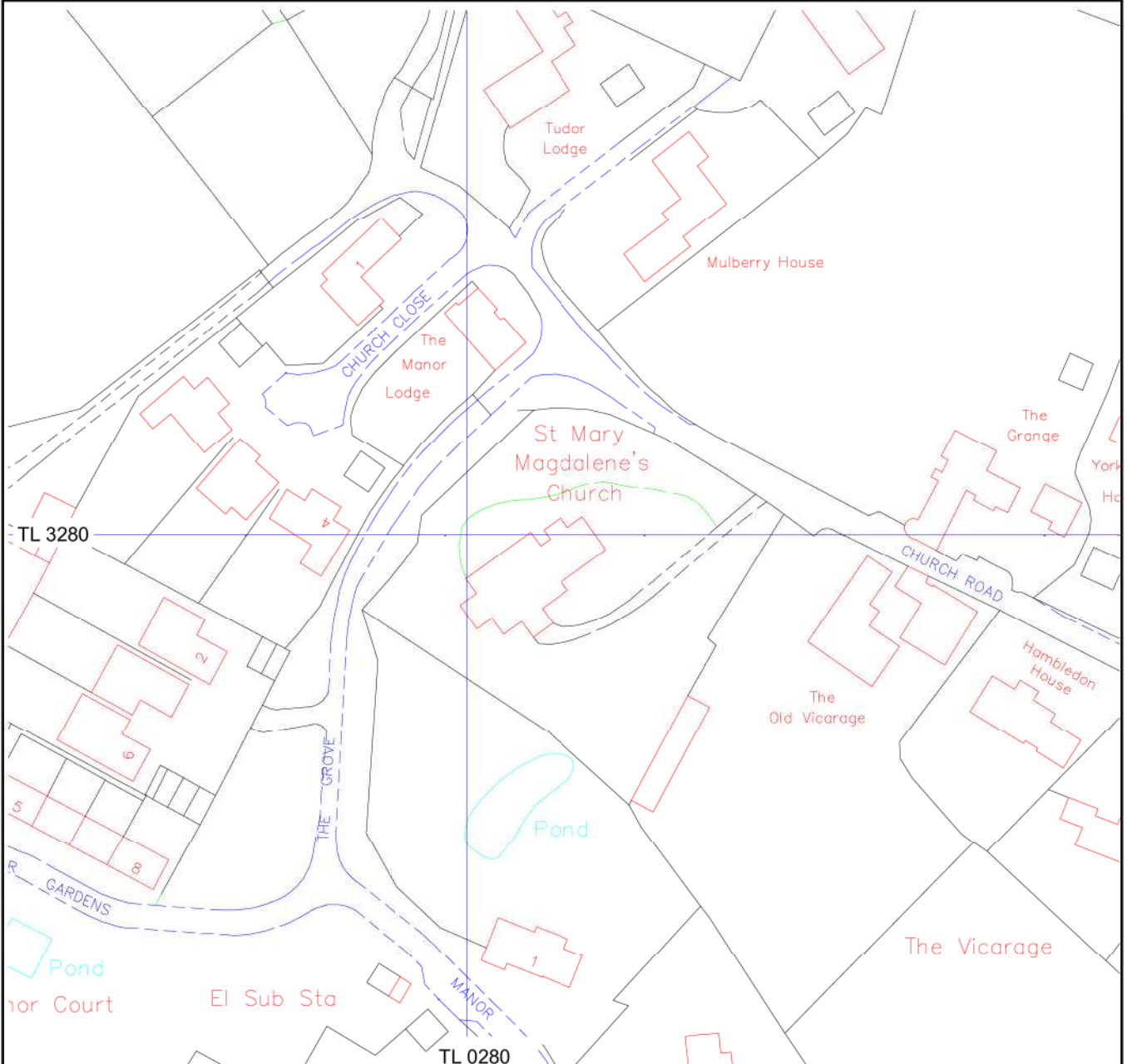
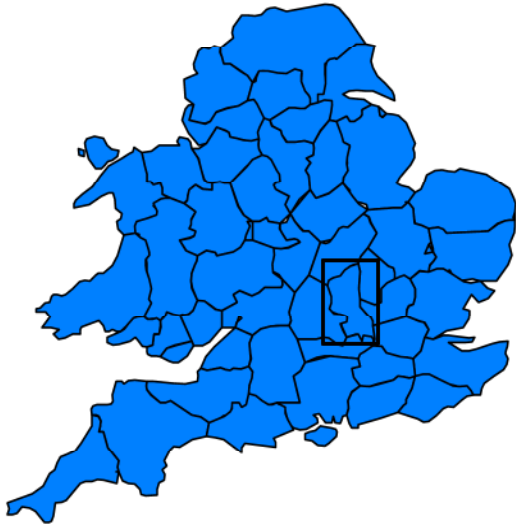
6. Illustrations

Figure 1	Site Location
Figure 2	Site Layout
Plate 1	Northern end of Trench 1
Plate 2.....	Trench 1, looking N
Plate 3.....	Trench 2, looking NW
Plate 4.....	Skeleton 1, post-excavation

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Church of St Mary Magdalene,
Westoning, Beds.

HN856

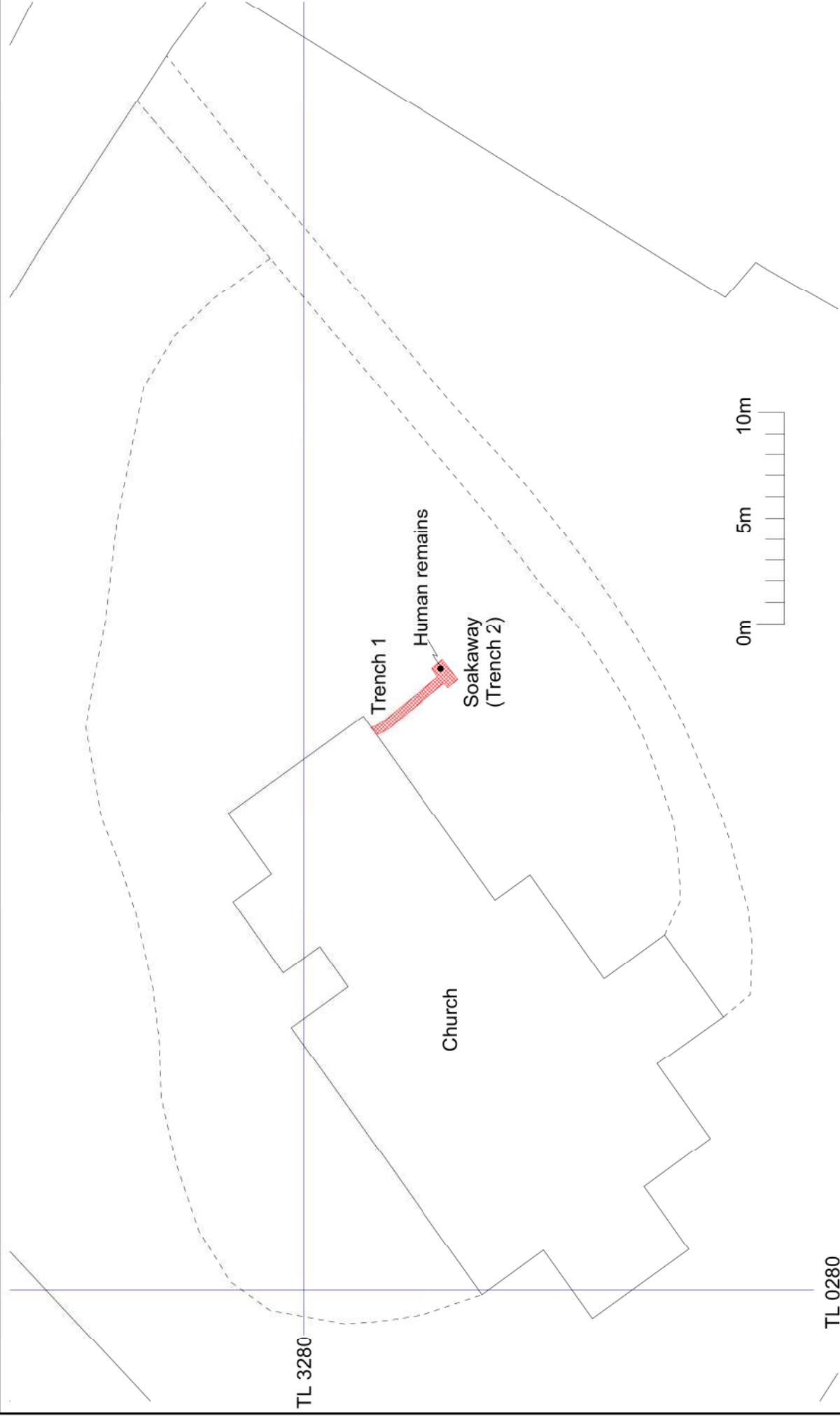


Site Location

Scale 1:1250

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Figure 1



TL 3280

TL 0280

Site layout

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Scale 1:250

Figure 2



Plate 1: The N end of Tr.1, showing church wall

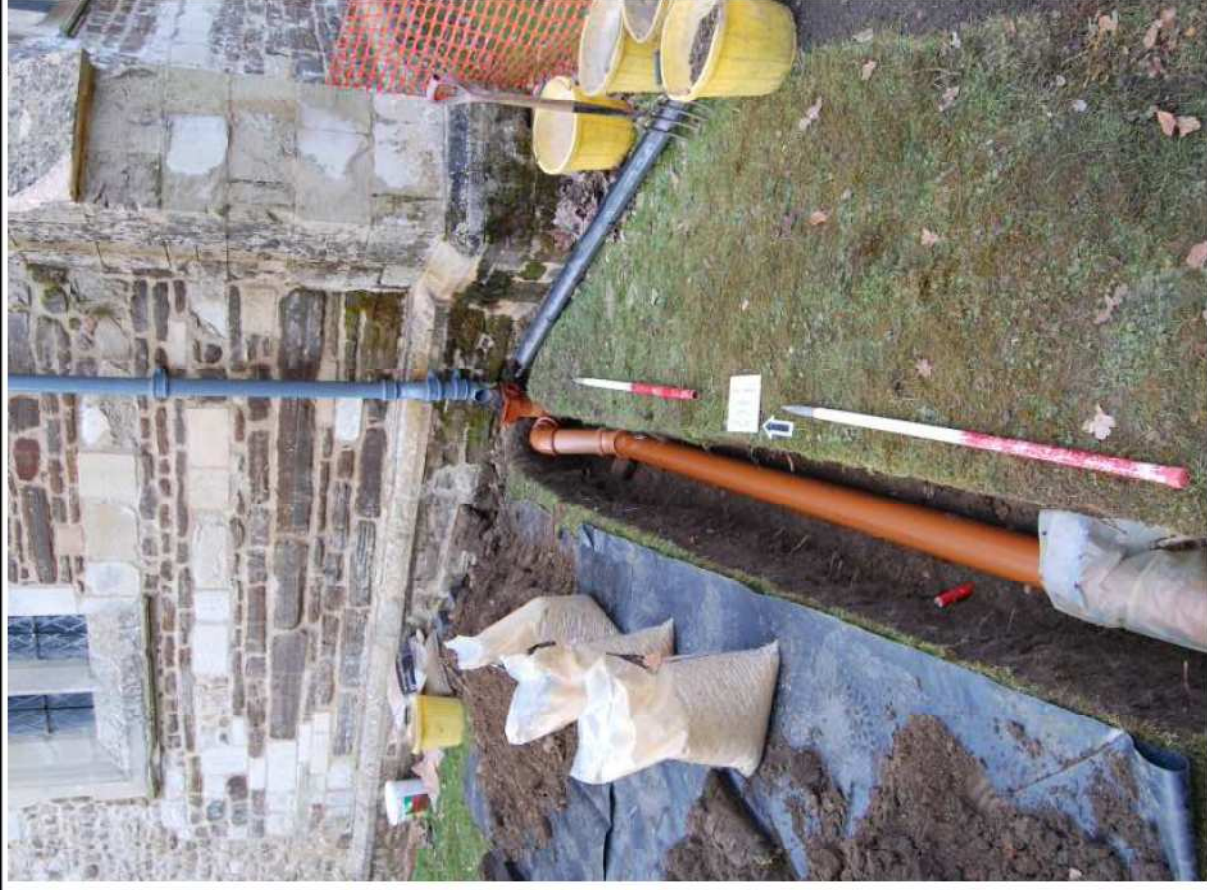


Plate 2: Trench 1, looking north



Plate 3: Trench 2, looking NW



Plate 4: Skeleton 1, post-excavation

Appendix

OASIS ID: heritage1-73176	
Project details	
Project name	St Mary Magdalene's Church, Westoning, Beds
Short description of the project	In response to the requirements of a diocesan faculty, the Heritage Network was commissioned by Westoning Parochial Church Council to implement a programme of archaeological monitoring during the excavation of a drainage trench and associated soakaway at the Church of St. Mary Magdalene, Westoning, Bedfordshire. The archaeological monitoring revealed a group of disarticulated human bones, representing the remains of at least one individual. No evidence for a grave cut or for a coffin was encountered and no finds were present to date the burial.
Project dates	Start: 26-02-2010 End: 01-03-2010
Previous/future work	Not known / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	HN 856 Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	BEDFM 2010.12 - Museum accession ID
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Listed Building
Current Land use	Other 4 - Churchyard
Monument type	NONE None
Significant finds	HUMAN REMAINS Uncertain
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'
Prompt	Faculty jurisdiction
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	BEDFORDSHIRE MID BEDFORDSHIRE WESTONING St Mary Magdalene's Church
Postcode	MK45 5JW
Study area	c.2.2m ²
Site coordinates	TL 02823 32792 51.9836254102 -0.502586889539 51 59 01 N 000 30 09 W Point
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Heritage Network
Project brief originator	N/A
Project design originator	None
Project director/manager	David Hillelson
Project supervisor	Greg Jones
Type of sponsor/funding body	Parochial Church Council
Project archives	
Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Bedford Museum
Digital archive ID	BEDFM 2010.12
Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography'
Paper Archive recipient	Bedford Museums
Paper archive ID	BEDFM 2010.12
Paper Media available	'Diary', 'Drawing', 'Photograph', 'Report'
Project bibliography 1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	St Mary Magdalene's Church, Westoning, Bedfordshire. Archaeological Monitoring Report

Author(s)/Editor(s)	Jones, G.
Other bibliographic details	Report Number 593
Date	2010
Issuer or publisher	Heritage Network
Place of issue or publication	Letchworth, Hertfordshire
Description	A4 booklet, comb bound, green cover, 6 pages, 2 figures, 4 plates