

**Archaeological Watching Brief Report
St. Martin's Church
Ryarsh, Kent, ME19 5LB**

NGR: TQ 567238 159134

ASE Project No: 160757

Site Code: RSM16

ASE Report No: 2017321

OASIS id: archaeol6-292001



By Steve Price

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Date of Issue:	July 2017		
Version:	1		

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Abstract

This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation carried out by Archaeology South-East at St Martin's Church, Ryarsh, Kent, ME19 5LB between 26th June – 14th July 2017. The fieldwork was commissioned by Lisa Brooks, of Brooks Building Consultants. Six soakaways and nine trenches of varying lengths were excavated in order to accommodate a new drainage system for the church.

The watching brief uncovered fifteen grave cuts. Eight skeletons were excavated, recorded and carefully lifted. The remnants of three decayed coffin bases were also recorded. A brick well was partially exposed within trench 5B, which was part of the existing drainage system.

All human remains found on site were retained and stored within the church for reburial at a later date by the church. No other archaeological finds were encountered during the watching brief. All graves encountered were cut through subsoil and sealed by topsoil, with profiles visible in the sections of the soakaways. Where found, skeletons were located at a depth of between 1.20m – 1.30m. Some graves were intercutting.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

- 1.1.1 Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Brooks Building Consultants to undertake an archaeological watching brief during excavations at St. Martin's Church, Ryarsh, Kent, ME19 5LB (Figure 1).
- 1.1.2 St. Martin's Church is situated approximately half a mile south of the village of Ryarsh in a semi-rural setting. The church is bounded to the north and west by arable fields, and to the east by woodlands. Manor Farm bounds the churchyard to the south.
- 1.1.3 Ryarsh parish church is a Grade II listed building constructed during the late 11th or early 12th centuries, with additions and extensions in the 14th and 15th centuries. The church underwent further restoration during the late 19th century.

1.2 Geology and Topography

- 1.2.1 St. Martin's Church is located on head deposits of clay, silt, sand and gravel. Alluvial deposits are found to the south, and Folkestone Formation Sandstone is recorded to the north, west and east (BGS: 2017).

1.3 Aims and Objectives

- 1.3.1 The aim of the watching brief was to record and carefully lift any skeletons that may be encountered during the excavations, and retain the bones at the church for reburial at a later date. All grave cuts and fills were to be recorded, along with any other archaeology that may be encountered.

1.4 Scope of Report

- 1.4.1 This report presents the results of the archaeological watching brief undertaken by ASE between the 26th June – 14th July 2017.

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Prehistoric

- 2.1.1 Palaeolithic implements in Harrison's collection are shown to have been found within the parish of Ryarsh on Harrison's map of 1888. The specific types of implements are unknown, as this information was not recorded.

2.2 Roman

- 2.2.1 Five Roman cremation burials dated to the 2nd century AD were found in 1933 during the construction of a chimney breast in the lounge of Little Petherick, East Street, Ryarsh. Finds included a bronze bracelet, a flagon, two flasks, a jar, a beaker and four Samian dishes.

2.3 Medieval

- 2.3.1 The establishment of the Norman church is recorded in 1081. The church was then dedicated to St. Lambert, and formed part of a manor belonging to Bishop Odo, the half-brother of William the Conqueror. The church was re-dedicated to St. Martin in 1448 and was extensively rebuilt in the late 15th century (Bart Combined Boniface).

2.4 Post-Medieval

- 2.4.1 The church was restored during 1871-2 with new pews, choir stalls, screen, tiled chancel and a new north-east vestry and organ chamber. Tufa quoins were reused in the north-west corner of the vestry, and in an added north-west buttress (www.kentpast.co.uk).

2.5 Recent Archaeological Investigation

- 2.5.1 An archaeological watching brief was previously carried out by ASE on 7th October 2016, when four trenches were hand-excavated to locate existing drainage pipes. This was in lieu of the works that were carried out during 26th June – 14th July 2017 that this report is focused on. A small assemblage of disarticulated human bone was recovered, that was retained on site for reburial.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

3.1 Fieldwork Methodology

- 3.1.1 The archaeological watching brief was conducted within the churchyard. The works involved the excavation of six hand-dug soakaways and nine drainage trenches of varying lengths, in order to accommodate a new drainage system for the church (Figure 2).
- 3.1.2 Excavation strategy was in accordance with KCC Manual of Specification for an Archaeological Watching Brief (KCC 2017). Archaeological deposits/features were cleaned, recorded and excavated sufficiently to characterise their nature.
- 3.1.3 Where skeletal remains were encountered, these were exposed, recorded and carefully lifted to be retained for reburial by the church at a later date.
- 3.1.4 All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using the standard context record sheets used by Archaeology South-East. Post-excavation plans were drawn at a scale of 1:20. Sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10.

3.3 The Site Archive

- 3.3.1 The site archive is currently held at the offices of ASE and will be deposited at in due course. The contents of the archive are tabulated below (Table 1). Context numbers begin at [004], in order to avoid any confusion with the previous watching brief undertaken by ASE on 7th October 2016.

Context sheets	109
Section sheets	7
Plans sheets	3
Colour photographs	0
B&W photos	0
Digital photos	201
Context register	4
Drawing register	1
Watching brief forms	15
Trench Record forms	0

Table 1: Quantification of site paper archive

Bulk finds (quantity e.g. 1 bag, 1 box, 0.5 box 0.5 of a box)	0
Registered finds (number of)	0
Flots and environmental remains from bulk samples	0
Palaeoenvironmental specialists sample samples (e.g. columns, prepared slides)	0
Waterlogged wood	0
Wet sieved environmental remains from bulk samples	0

Table 2: Quantification of artefact and environmental samples

4.0 RESULTS (Figures 2-7)

Archaeologically negative areas

4.1 Soakaway S6 and Trench 6 – monitored 04/07/17 – 05/07/17 & 14/7/17

4.1.1 Trench 6 was excavated NW-SE from the corner of the church vault, along the line of an existing drainage pipe. It measured 7.08m long, 0.35m wide and 0.70m deep. Soakaway S6 measured 1.70m long, 1.40m deep and 1.50m deep.

4.1.2 Within soakaway S6, the natural geology [016] consisted of light yellowish-orange silty sand, with occasional small pockets of angular flint and gravel. This was overlain by the backfill of the existing soakaway [110], which consisted of dark brownish-grey silt, bricks and brick rubble, and concrete slabs. This deposit measured 1.00m thick. It was overlain by topsoil [004], a friable dark greyish-brown fine sandy silt with occasional-to-moderate angular and sub-rounded stones, occasional angular flint and broken tile. The topsoil measured between 0.15-0.26m thick, and was present across the entire site.

4.1.3 Following the removal of the existing drainpipe, trench 6 revealed a stratigraphic sequence comprising drainage backfill layers [111] and [112] overlain by topsoil [004]. Backfill [111] consisted of firmly compacted mid reddish-brown silt, with frequent crushed stones and CBM, moderate angular flint and occasional broken tile. It was excavated to a thickness of 0.17m. The overlying backfill deposit [112] was made up of firmly compacted light greyish-brown silt, with inclusions of moderate angular stones, angular flint and broken tile. This context measured 0.30m thick.

Context	Type	Interpretation	Max. Length m	Max. Width m	Deposit Thickness m
004	Layer	Topsoil	-	-	0.15-0.26
016	Layer	Natural geology	-	-	-
110	Layer	Made ground	-	-	1.00
111	Layer	Made ground	-	-	>0.17
112	Layer	Made ground	-	-	0.30

Table 3: List of recorded contexts for Soakaway S6 and Trench 6.

Areas with archaeology:**4.2 Soakaway S1 and Trench 1 – monitored 30/06/17 & 03/07/17**

- 4.2.1 Trench 1 measured 7.14m long, 0.40m wide and 0.62m deep. The stratigraphical sequence within this trench consisted of subsoil [005] overlain by topsoil [004]. The subsoil [005] consisted of firmly compacted, mid brownish-grey fine sandy silt. It contained inclusions of occasional to moderate broken tile fragments.
- 4.2.2 Soakaway S1 measured 1.80m long, 1.30m wide and 1.50m deep. It was located just over 7.00m from the eastern end of the church. Within the soakaway, four graves were partially exposed, with skeletal remains uncovered in two of them.
- 4.2.3 The grave cuts became visible at a depth of 1.15-1.20m. They were hand-excavated in order to expose and lift any skeletal remains to be retained for reburial following the excavation of the soakaways. All graves were oriented east-west. Grave [046] contained a partially visible skeleton [047] consisting of left and right legs with femur, tibia and fibula present, and metatarsal bones. The remainder of the skeleton could not be exposed, as it continued beyond the limit of excavation. The visible remains measured 0.84m long and 0.31m wide.
- 4.2.4 There were some very decayed fragments of a wooden coffin base [048] visible beneath the skeleton [047]. Metal coffin handles were also found within the lowermost fill [049], which were set aside for reburial with the skeletal remains.
- 4.2.5 The full profile of the grave cut was visible in the east facing section of soakaway S1, containing four fills. It was cut through subsoil [005] and sealed by topsoil [004]. It was truncated by the excavations of trench 1, which fed into the soakaway.
- 4.2.6 Fill [049] contained skeleton [047], coffin remnants [048], and consisted of friable dark greyish-brown clayey silt, with inclusions of occasional angular flint and broken tile fragments. It measured 0.58m thick. This was overlain by fill [050], firmly compacted light greyish-brown sandy silt with occasional rounded stones and angular flint inclusions. This fill had a thickness of 0.25m. Fill [051] overlay [050], consisting of firmly compacted mid brownish-grey coarse sandy silt, with occasional mid orange mottling. This fill had occasional angular flint inclusions and measured 0.27m thick. The uppermost fill [052] consisted of firmly compacted light greyish-brown sandy silt, with inclusions of occasional angular flint and broken tile fragments. This was 0.29m thick.
- 4.2.7 Grave [053] was located adjacent to grave [046]. The full profile of this grave was also visible in the east facing section of soakaway S1, cut through subsoil [005]. It is possible that one of these graves may have been cut through the other, but any visible stratigraphic relationship had been destroyed by the prior excavation of trench 1. The east end of this grave only was visible, measuring 0.60m long, 0.84m wide and 1.36m deep. No skeletal remains were revealed.
- 4.2.8 Grave [053] contained three fills, [054], [055] and [056]. Fill [054] consisted of friable mid greyish-brown clayey silt, mottled with frequent mid orange patches.

It measured 0.36m thick. It contained inclusions of occasional rounded and sub-rounded stones, and angular flint. This was overlain by fill [055], consisting of firmly compacted dark brown sandy silt, with occasional broken tile and angular flint inclusions. It was 0.39m thick. The uppermost fill [056] consisted of firmly compacted light grey sandy silt, with occasional light yellow mottling. It contained inclusions of occasional-to-moderate angular flint, occasional rounded stones, and occasional broken tile. It measured 0.78m thick.

- 4.2.9 Graves [058] and [065] were partially visible at the eastern end of soakaway S1, continuing beyond the eastern limit of excavation. The full profile of both graves was visible in the west facing section, cutting through subsoil [005]. Within grave [058], a cranium [059] was visible in the west facing section. The decision was made to leave this *in situ* as it did not impede the excavation of the soakaway, and it would not have been possible to remove it without undermining the excavations.
- 4.2.10 Grave [058] was visible for 0.22m in length, and measured 0.79m wide and 1.29m deep. It contained six fills, [060], [061], [062], [063], [064] and [104]. Fill [060] consisted of friable mottled light greyish-brown/ mid orange clayey silt, with occasional angular flint inclusions. It measured 0.6m thick, was overlain by fill [061], friable dark brown clayey silt, with occasional mid orange mottling. This fill was 0.29m thick, containing inclusions of moderate angular flint and occasional broken tile. It was overlain by fill [062], mid greyish-brown clayey silt, with occasional angular flint inclusions. Fill [062] measured 0.26m thick, and was overlain by fill [063], mottled light brownish-grey/ mid orange-yellow sandy silt with moderate angular flint inclusions. This fill was 0.25m thick, and was overlain by fill [064], consisting of firmly compacted mid brownish-grey coarse silt with occasional broken tile inclusions. It measured 0.37m thick. The uppermost fill [104] measured 0.45m thick, and consisted of firmly compacted, light yellowish-brown coarse sandy silt, with inclusions of occasional angular flint and broken tile.
- 4.2.11 Grave [058] was truncated by grave [065]. Only the corner of this grave was visible in plan, measuring 0.33m long, 0.59m wide and 1.26m deep. It contained five fills, [066], [067], [068], [069] and [070]. The lowermost fill [066] consisted of friable light greyish-brown clayey silt. Mottled with occasional mid orange flecks. It contained occasional angular flint inclusions, and measured 0.26m thick. It was overlain by fill [067], moderately compacted mottled light brown/ light orange-yellow clayey silt, with occasional angular flint inclusions. Fill [067] measured 0.36m thick, and was overlain by fill [068]. This consisted of firmly compacted mid brownish-grey clayey silt, with moderate angular flint inclusions, and measured 0.27m thick. It was overlain by fill [069], consisting of firmly compacted light brownish-grey coarse sandy silt with a fairly large patch of chalk, with inclusions of occasional angular flint. It measured 0.37m thick. The top fill [070] measured 0.27m thick, and consisted of firmly compacted light greyish-brown coarse sandy silt, with frequent angular flint inclusions.
- 4.2.12 Other stratigraphical layers were visible within soakaway S1 through which the graves were also cut. Layer [045] consisted of friable, mottled dark-brown/ light yellowish-brown sandy silt, and was visible for a thickness of 0.05m. This was most likely a head deposit overlying the natural geology [016]. Layer [045] was overlain by [044], firmly compacted, dark brown clayey silt. This layer contained

inclusions of occasional rounded stones, and measured 0.29m deep. It was overlain by [043], which consisted of firmly compacted, mid greyish-brown sandy silt. This layer contained inclusions of occasional angular flint, chalk patches and broken tile. It measured 0.41m thick, and was overlain by subsoil [005]. These layers may be representative of the ground having been built up and levelled in order to accommodate more graves.

Context	Type	Interpretation	Max. Length m	Max. Width m	Deposit Thickness m
[004]	Layer	Topsoil	-	-	0.15-0.26
[005]	Layer	Subsoil	-	-	0.25-0.50
[043]	Layer	Levelling?	-	-	0.41
[044]	Layer	Levelling?	-	-	0.29
[045]	Layer	Levelling?	-	-	0.05
[046]	Cut	Grave cut	1.02	0.68	1.32
[047]	Skeleton	Inhumation	0.84	0.31	-
[048]	Fill	Coffin	-	-	-
[049]	Fill	Backfill	1.02	0.68	0.58
[050]	Fill	Backfill	1.02	0.64	0.25
[051]	Fill	Backfill	1.02	0.63	0.27
[052]	Fill	Backfill	1.02	0.4	0.29
[053]	Cut	Grave cut	0.6	0.84	1.36
[054]	Fill	Backfill	0.6	0.77	0.36
[055]	Fill	Backfill	0.6	0.82	0.39
[056]	Fill	Backfill	0.6	0.84	0.78
[058]	Cut	Grave cut	0.22	-	-
[059]	Skeleton	Inhumation	0.07	0.18	-
[060]	Fill	Backfill	0.22	-	-
[061]	Fill	Backfill	0.22	0.61	0.36
[062]	Fill	Backfill	0.22	0.73	0.29
[063]	Fill	Backfill	0.22	0.56	0.26
[064]	Fill	Backfill	0.22	0.57	0.25
[065]	Cut	Grave cut	0.33	0.51	0.37
[066]	Fill	Backfill	0.33	0.59	1.26
[067]	Fill	Backfill	0.33	0.2	0.26
[068]	Fill	Backfill	0.33	0.49	0.36
[069]	Fill	Backfill	0.33	0.5	0.27
[070]	Fill	Backfill	0.33	0.5	0.37
[104]	Fill	Backfill	0.22	0.79	0.45

Table 4: List of recorded contexts for soakaway S1 and trench 1

4.3 Soakaway S2, Trenches 2A and 2B – monitored 28-29/06/17, 11/7/17

- 4.3.1 Trench 2A measured 9.55m long, 0.40m wide and 0.70m deep. Trench 2B measured 3.20m long, 0.40m wide and 0.60m deep. Both trenches contained the same stratigraphical sequence. This consisted of layer [029], firmly compacted, mid yellowish-grey sandy silt. It contained inclusions of moderate angular flint, broken tile, CBM and occasional small rounded stones. The broken tile and CBM suggest this may have been some sort of make-up/landscaping layer. It was excavated to a thickness of 0.34m, and was overlain by subsoil [005] and topsoil [004].
- 4.3.2 Soakaway S2 was excavated 9.55m north-east of the church. It measured 1.75m long, 1.40m wide and 1.60m deep. Three graves were exposed in this soakaway, with two containing skeletons. All graves were cut through subsoil [005]. The stratigraphical sequence of other layers through which the graves were cut consisted of: natural geology [016]; a head deposit [017] overlying [016], which consisted of friable, light orange fine sandy silt, with occasional angular flint inclusions; [017] was overlain by [038], consisting of firmly compacted, dark brownish-orange sandy silt, mottled with dark grey patches. It is possible this may have been an older buried subsoil layer, and it was overlain by [029], which as described in 4.3.1, may have been a make-up layer. Layer [029] was overlain by subsoil [005] and topsoil [004].
- 4.3.3 The grave cuts became visible at a depth of c.1.20m. They were excavated as per 4.2.2, and were oriented east-west. Grave [022] contained skeleton [023], which could not be fully exposed due to the limit of excavation. It consisted of cranium, mandible, left clavicle, vertebrae, ribs which were broken and detached, left scapula, left humerus, left radius, left ulna, detached carpals, metacarpals and phalanges, pelvis and left femur (partially visible). The relatively small size of the bones suggested they may have been those of a child. The visible remains measured 0.93m long and 0.27m wide.
- 4.3.4 The full profile of grave [022] was visible in the WSW and NNW facing sections of soakaway 2. It contained four fills, [024], [030], [031] and [040]. Fill [024] contained skeleton [023], and consisted of moderately compacted mottled mid greyish-brown/ mid brownish orange sandy silt. It contained inclusions of frequent sub-rounded and sub-angular stones, and moderate angular flints. It measured 0.47m thick. This was overlain by fill [030], consisting of friable mid greyish-brown sandy silt, with occasional mid orange mottling. It contained inclusions of moderate angular flint, broken tile, angular and sub-rounded stones, and measured 0.45m thick.
- 4.3.5 Fill [031] overlay [030], and consisted of firmly compacted dark greyish-brown silt, with inclusions of moderate angular, sub-angular and rounded stones, occasional angular flints and broken tile fragments. It measured 0.33m thick. The uppermost fill [040] consisted of firmly compacted mid brownish-grey sandy silt, with inclusions of occasional angular flint, broken tile, sub-rounded and sub-angular stones. It had a thickness of 0.22m.
- 4.3.6 Grave [025] contained skeleton [026]. It was possible in this case to excavate the upper body fully, although the legs could only be partially exposed due to the limits of excavation. Skeleton [026] consisted of skull, mandible, left and right clavicle, vertebrae, ribs (some of which were broken and detached), left

and right scapula, left and right humerus, left ulna, detached carpals, metacarpals and phalanges, pelvis, left and right femur (partially visible). Skeleton [026] measured 1.06m long and 0.44m wide.

- 4.3.7 A decayed wooden coffin base [027] was visible beneath skeleton [026]. It measured 1.12m long and 0.46m wide. Metal coffin handles and nails associated with [027] were also found in fill [028]; these were set aside with the skeletal remains for reburial at a later date.
- 4.3.8 Grave [025] contained four fills, [028], [032], [033] and [041]. Fill [028] consisted of friable dark greyish-brown clayey silt, with inclusions of occasional rounded stones, angular flint and broken tile fragments. It measured 0.40m thick. It was overlain by fill [032], consisting of friable mid brownish-grey sandy silt, mottled with occasional mid orange patches. It contained inclusions of occasional angular flint, broken tile, sub-rounded, rounded and sub-angular stones. It was 0.44m thick. Fill [033] overlay [032], and consisted of friable light brownish-grey sandy silt. It had inclusions of occasional sub-rounded and sub-angular stones, and was 0.29m thick. It was overlain by the uppermost fill [041], consisting of firmly compacted mid brownish-grey sandy silt, with inclusions of occasional angular flints, broken tile, sub-rounded and sub-angular stones. Fill [041] measured 0.28m thick.
- 4.3.9 Following excavation of graves [022] and [025], a third grave [034] was encountered in the north-east corner of soakaway S2. This grave was only partially visible, although it was still possible to see its profile in the WSW facing section, cut through the subsoil [005]. The grave cut was visible for a length of 0.50m, a width of 0.46m and was excavated to a depth of 1.16m. As no skeletal remains were visible in the small exposed part of the grave, the decision was taken not to excavate any further.
- 4.3.10 Grave [034] contained four fills, [035], [036], [037] and [042]. Fill [035] consisted of friable dark greyish-brown clayey silt, mottled with occasional patches of mid orange. It contained inclusions of moderate angular flint and occasional small rounded stones, and measured 0.38m thick. It was overlain by fill [036], consisting of friable light brownish-grey clayey silt. With inclusions of occasional sub-angular stones. Fill [036] was overlain by fill [037], which consisted of friable mottled dark brownish-grey/ mid brownish-orange clayey silt. Fill [037] contained inclusions of occasional angular flint, broken tile, sub-rounded and sub-angular stones, and measured 0.33m thick. The uppermost fill [042] was a firmly compacted mid brownish-grey sandy silt, with inclusions of occasional angular flint and sub-angular stones.

Context	Type	Interpretation	Max. Length m	Max. Width m	Deposit Thickness m
[004]	Layer	Topsoil	-	-	0.15-0.26
[005]	Layer	Subsoil	-	-	0.25-0.50
[016]	Layer	Natural	-	-	-
[017]	Layer	Head deposit	-	-	0.30
[022]	Cut	Grave cut	1.15	0.4	1.21
[023]	Skeleton	Inhumation	0.93	0.27	-
[024]	Fill	Backfill	1.15	0.40	0.47
[025]	Cut	Grave cut	1.3	0.72	1.22
[026]	Skeleton	Inhumation	1.06	0.44	-
[027]	Fill	Coffin	1.12	0.46	-
[028]	Fill	Backfill	1.3	0.54	0.4
[029]	Layer	Levelling	-	-	0.34
[030]	Fill	Backfill	1.15	0.40	0.45
[031]	Fill	Backfill	1.15	0.40	0.33
[032]	Fill	Backfill	1.3	0.56	0.44
[033]	Fill	Backfill	1.3	0.62	0.29
[034]	Cut	Grave cut	0.5	0.46	1.16
[035]	Fill	Backfill	0.5	0.26	0.38
[036]	Fill	Backfill	0.5	0.33	0.38
[037]	Fill	Backfill	0.5	0.39	0.33
[038]	Layer	Buried soil	-	-	0.20-0.26
[040]	Fill	Backfill	1.15	0.40	0.22
[041]	Fill	Backfill	1.3	0.72	0.28
[042]	Fill	Backfill	0.5	0.46	0.22

Table 5: List of recorded contexts for soakaway S2, trenches 2A and 2B

4.4 Soakaway S3, Trenches 3A and 3B – monitored 26-27/07/17

- 4.4. Trench 3A measured 4.90m long, 0.40m wide and 0.64m deep. Trench 3B measured 6.46m long, 0.42m wide and 0.60m deep. Both trenches contained the same stratigraphical sequence. Layer [019] was excavated to a depth of 0.20m within the two trenches, and consisted of firmly compacted, dark yellowish-brown sandy silt, with inclusions of occasional angular flint. It was overlain by subsoil [005] and topsoil [004]. This did not appear to have the character of a made ground deposit/ levelling layer, and may have been a buried subsoil layer.
- 4.4.1 Soakaway S3 was excavated 4.90m to the north of the church, measuring 1.74m long, 1.15m wide and 1.38m deep. Three grave cuts were visible in this soakaway, but no skeletons were encountered. All graves were cut through the subsoil [005]. The stratigraphical sequence of other layers through which the graves were cut consisted of; natural [016]; head deposit [017]; layer [018], consisting of softly compacted, light yellowish-brown clayey silt, with occasional sub angular stones and angular flint inclusions; buried subsoil [019]; subsoil [005], and topsoil [004]. Layer [018] also appeared to be a buried soil layer.
- 4.4.2 Grave [006] measured 1.74m long, 0.62m wide and was excavated to a depth of 1.17m. It was cut through subsoil [005] and contained five fills, [007], [008], [009], [010] and [039]. Moderate disarticulated human bones were recovered from all fills and retained for reburial at a later date.
- 4.4.3 Fill [007] consisted of friable mid greyish-brown fine sand, mottled with mid orange patches. It measured 0.50m thick, and contained inclusions of occasional angular flints, sub-angular stones, brick rubble and broken tile. It was overlain by [008], friable dark greyish-brown fine sandy silt. This fill contained inclusions of occasional angular stones, sub-angular stones and broken tile, and had a maximum thickness of 0.40m. Fill [008] was overlain by [009], which consisted of friable mid greyish-brown fine sandy silt, with inclusions of occasional angular stones and angular flint. Fill [009] measured 0.34m thick, and was overlain by [010], firmly compacted mid orange-brown fine sandy silt. Fill [010] contained inclusions of moderate angular and sub angular stones, and measured 0.29m thick. It was overlain by fill [039], consisting of firmly compacted light brownish-grey sandy silt. This fill contained inclusions of occasional brick rubble and angular stones.
- 4.4.4 Grave [006] was found to truncate grave [011]. Grave [011] was cut through subsoil [005] and visible for a length of 0.80, width of 0.34m and depth 1.16m. It contained four fills, [012], [013], [014] and [015]. As with grave [006] moderate disarticulated human bones were recovered from all fills and retained for reburial at a later date.
- 4.4.5 Fill [012] consisted of friable mid brownish-grey clayey silt, with inclusions of occasional angular stones, sub-angular stones and angular flint. It measured 0.16m thick, and was overlain by fill [013]. This fill consisted of softly compacted, mottled mid orange-brown/ mid brownish-grey clayey silt. It contained inclusions of occasional angular flint, and measured 0.38m thick. Fill [013] was overlain by fill [014], softly compacted dark yellowish-brown clayey sandy silt. Fill [014] contained inclusions of occasional angular stones, rounded

stones, angular flint and broken tile. It was overlain by fill [015], which consisted of firmly compacted mid yellowish-brown sandy silt. It contained inclusions of occasional rounded stones, sub-angular stones and angular flints.

4.4.6 The third grave cut [020] within soakaway S3 was visible for 1.17m in length and 0.20 in width. Only one fill was visible [021], consisting of friable mid greyish-brown fine sandy silt, with inclusions of occasional angular flint and angular stones. A small amount of disarticulated human bone was recovered and retained for reburial at a later date.

Context	Type	Interpretation	Max. Length m	Max. Width m	Deposit Thickness m
[004]	Layer	Topsoil	-	-	0.15-0.26
[005]	Layer	Subsoil	-	-	0.25-0.50
[006]	Cut	Grave cut	1.74	0.7	1.17
[007]	Fill	Backfill	1.74	0.62	0.5
[008]	Fill	Backfill	1.74	0.58	0.4
[009]	Fill	Backfill	1.74	0.55	0.34
[010]	Fill	Backfill	1.74	0.65	0.29
[011]	Cut	Grave cut	0.8	0.34	1.16
[012]	Fill	Backfill	0.8	0.34	0.16
[013]	Fill	Backfill	0.8	0.34	0.38
[014]	Fill	Backfill	0.8	0.34	0.44
[015]	Fill	Backfill	0.8	0.34	0.48
[016]	Layer	Natural	-	-	-
[017]	Layer	Head deposit	-	-	0.23
[018]	Layer	Buried soil	-	-	0.26
[019]	Layer	Buried soil	-	-	0.29
[020]	Cut	Grave cut	1.17	0.2	-
[021]	Fill	Backfill	1.17	0.2	-
[039]	Fill	Backfill	1.74	0.7	0.2

Table 6: List of recorded contexts for soakaway S3, trenches 3A and 3B.

4.5 Soakaway S4, Trenches 4A and 4B – monitored 06-07/11/17 & 11/07/17

- 4.5. Trench 4A measured 4.70m long, 0.40m wide and 0.60-0.70m deep. Trench 4B measured 2.96m long, 0.40m wide and 0.60m deep. The stratigraphical sequence of both consisted of 0.34-0.45m of subsoil [005], overlain by 0.20-0.26m of topsoil [004].
- 4.5.1 Soakaway S4 was excavated 4.70m to the west of the church. It measured 1.80m long, 1.30m wide and 1.50m deep. Five intercutting graves and the remains of four skeletons were revealed during excavations.
- 4.5.2 Grave [071] was visible for a length of 0.80m. It was cut to a considerable width of 1.05m, and was 1.29m deep. It contained skeleton [072], and four fills [073], [081], [082] and [083]. The skull of [072] was in pieces, and the right clavicle, vertebrae, ribs (some of which were broken and detached), right scapula and right humerus were exposed and carefully lifted. Skeleton [072] measured 0.76m long and 0.32m wide.
- 4.5.3 Skeleton [072] was found within fill [073] of grave cut [071]. This fill consisted of friable mid brown clayey silt, with inclusions of occasional angular stones, sub-angular stones, and occasional angular flint. It measured 0.42m thick. Fill [073] was overlain by fill [081], consisting of friable, mottled light greyish-brown/mid brownish-orange coarse sandy silt. It contained inclusions of occasional angular stones and angular flint. It was overlain by fill [082], friable mid orange-brown silt with moderate rounded and angular stones, and occasional angular flint inclusions. The uppermost fill [083] consisted of firmly compacted mid brownish-grey sandy silt, mottled with mid orange patches. It contained inclusions of occasional rounded and sub-rounded stones, as well as occasional angular flint.
- 4.5.4 Grave [071] was cut through graves [084] and [090]. Grave [084] was visible for a length of 1.30m, width of 0.64m and was 1.27m deep. It contained two skeletons [074] and [076], and four fills [075], [085], [086] and [095].
- 4.5.5 Skeleton [074] consisted of left clavicle, vertebrae, ribs (some broken and detached), left ulna, left radius, pelvis, left and right femur. It measured 1.20m long and 0.48m wide. Skeleton [076] consisted of left scapula, some vertebrae, ribs (broken and detached), left humerus, left ulna, left radius, left metacarpals and part of the pelvis. It measured 0.58m long and 0.29m wide. The bones were smaller than those of skeleton [074], suggesting this was perhaps the skeleton of a child. Skeleton [074] had also been truncated by grave cut [087].
- 4.5.6 Skeletons [074] and [076] were found within fill [075] of grave cut [084]. This fill consisted of softly compacted, mid reddish-brown fine clayey silt. It measured 0.41m thick, and contained occasional angular flint inclusions. It was overlain by fill [085], consisting of friable, mid orange-brown fine silt, with occasional angular flint inclusions. It measured 0.31m thick, and was overlain by fill [095]. This consisted of firmly compacted. Light brown coarse sandy silt, with inclusions of occasional angular stones and angular flint. It measured 0.35m thick. The uppermost fill [086] consisted of dark greyish-brown coarse sandy silt, with inclusions of moderate sub rounded stones, angular flint, occasional broken tile and chalk flecks. It measured 0.52m thick.

- 4.5.7 Grave [087] was cut through grave [084]. It was only partially visible within soakaway S4, and contained skeleton [078] and a decayed coffin base [079]. The visible parts of skeleton [078] consisted of skull, left femur, left tibia and left fibula. The wooden coffin base [079] measured 1.22m long and was visible for a width of 0.20m.
- 4.5.8 Grave [087] contained three fills, [080], [088] and [089]. Fill [080] consisted of softly compacted, dark reddish-brown clayey sandy silt. It contained inclusions of occasional angular stones, rounded stones, and angular flint, and measured 0.40m thick. It was overlain by fill [088], which consisted of firmly compacted, light brown sandy silt. This fill contained inclusions of moderate angular flint and occasional rounded stones, and measured 0.51m thick. It was overlain by fill [089], consisting of firmly compacted, mid orange-brown fine silt. Fill [089] contained inclusions of moderate rounded stones, occasional angular stones and broken tile. It measured 0.42m thick.
- 4.5.9 Grave [090] was cut by graves [071] and [096]. It measured 1.30m long, was visible for a width of 0.45m, and was excavated to 1.30m deep. No skeleton was encountered. The grave cut contained four fills, [091], [092], [093] and [094].
- 4.5.10 Fill [091] was a mixed backfill of friable mid orange fine sand, and dark reddish-brown clayey silt. It contained inclusions of frequent rounded stones, sub angular stones and moderate angular flint, and measured 0.42m thick. It was overlain by fill [092], consisting of friable dark brownish-orange clayey silt. It contained inclusions of moderate angular stones, sub-angular stones and angular flint, and measured 0.26-0.38m thick. It was overlain by fill [093], friable, dark reddish-brown fine clayey silt. This fill contained inclusions of moderate angular flint, occasional angular stones and broken tile, and measured 0.24-0.33m thick. The uppermost fill [094] consisted of friable, dark brown fine silt, with inclusions of occasional rounded stones, angular stones and angular flint. It measured 0.42m thick.
- 4.5.11 Grave [096] was cut by grave [084], and cut through grave [090]. It was visible for a length of 0.88m, width of 0.75m and depth of 1.28m. No skeleton was encountered. The grave contained three fills, [097], [098] and [099].
- 4.5.12 Fill [097] consisted of softly compacted, dark reddish-brown clayey silt, with inclusions of frequent rounded stones, angular stones, moderate angular flint and occasional broken tile. It measured 0.74m thick. It was overlain by fill [098], consisting of friable, mottled mid greyish-brown/ light orange-brown coarse sandy silt. It contained inclusions of moderate angular flint, and measured 0.47m thick. The uppermost fill [099] consisted of firmly compacted, light yellowish-brown coarse silt, with inclusions of moderate angular flint and occasional rounded stones. It measured 0.30m thick.

Context	Type	Interpretation	Max. Length m	Max. Width m	Deposit Thickness m
[004]	Layer	Topsoil	-	-	0.15-0.26
[005]	Layer	Subsoil	-	-	0.25-0.50
[071]	Cut	Grave cut	0.8	1.05	1.29
[072]	Skeleton	Inhumation	0.76	0.32	-
[073]	Fill	Backfill	0.8	0.8	0.42
[074]	Skeleton	Inhumation	1.2	0.48	-
[075]	Fill	Backfill	1.3	0.53	0.41
[076]	Skeleton	Inhumation	0.58	0.29	-
[077]	Fill	Backfill	1.3	0.53	0.41
[078]	Skeleton	Inhumation	0.97	0.21	-
[079]	Fill	Coffin	1.22	0.2	-
[080]	Fill	Backfill	1.3	0.28	0.4
[081]	Fill	Backfill	0.8	0.4	0.64
[082]	Fill	Backfill	0.8	0.82	0.57
[083]	Fill	Backfill	0.8	1.05	0.5
[084]	Cut	Grave cut	1.3	0.64	1.27
[085]	Fill	Backfill	1.3	0.5	0.31
[086]	Fill	Backfill	1.3	0.64	0.52
[087]	Cut	Grave cut	1.3	0.35	1.27
[088]	Fill	Backfill	1.3	0.35	0.51
[089]	Fill	Backfill	1.3	0.31	0.42
[090]	Cut	Grave cut	1.3	0.45	1.3
[091]	Fill	Backfill	1.3	0.4	0.42
[092]	Fill	Backfill	1.3	0.44	0.26-0.38
[093]	Fill	Backfill	1.3	0.45	0.24-0.33
[094]	Fill	Backfill	1.3	0.45	0.42
[095]	Fill	Backfill	1.3	0.33	0.35
[096]	Cut	Grave cut	0.88	0.75	1.28
[097]	Fill	Backfill	0.88	0.75	0.74
[098]	Fill	Backfill	0.88	0.62	0.47
[099]	Fill	Backfill	0.88	0.6	0.3

Table 7: List of recorded contexts for soakaway S4, trenches 4A and 4B.

4.6 Soakaway S5, Trenches 5A and 5B – monitored 07, 10, 11, 13 & 14/07/17

- 4.6.1 Two trenches, 5A and 5B, were excavated on the south side of the church, for the new drainage to feed into soakaway S5. Trench 5A measured 4.90m long, 0.30m wide and 0.63m deep; trench 5B was 8.80m long, 0.35m wide and 0.60m deep.
- 4.6.2 The same stratigraphical make up was visible in both trenches. It consisted of what appeared to be a make-up/ landscaping layer [105] of mid yellowish-brown sandy silt. It contained inclusions of moderate angular flint, chalk flecks and broken tile, and measured 0.28m thick. It was overlain by subsoil [005] and topsoil [004].
- 4.6.3 Parts of both trenches were also excavated through the existing footpath running through the churchyard. This had been cut through the existing topsoil [004], and appears to have been a relatively recent addition. It consisted of a make-up layer [108] of mid brown sandy silt, with inclusions of moderate angular flints and occasional angular stones. This was overlain by ballast [107], and the tarmac path [106].
- 4.6.4 At 2.99m from the northwest end of trench 5B, a brick structure [109] was revealed when part of the pathway was removed. This appeared to be a well, with a pipe from the existing drainage run around the perimeter of the church leading into it. Make up layer [108] had been deposited around the well, and it was sealed by the layer of ballast [107]. Well [109] was made up of header bricks measuring 110mm wide and 70mm deep. It was not possible to take a measurement of the length of the bricks, and it was uncertain whether they were frogged or unfrogged. The bricks were bonded by light yellowish-brown sandy mortar, with frequent crushed stone inclusions. The well was excavated to a height of 0.49m and width of 0.25m.
- 4.6.5 Soakaway S5 measured 1.80m long, 1.30m wide and 1.31m deep. There were no grave cuts visible within this soakaway, nor were any skeletons revealed. The stratigraphic make up consisted of four layers [100], [101], [102] and [103], underlying the topsoil [104]. Various disarticulated human bones were recovered from each layer and retained for reburial. This suggests some further landscaping of the churchyard may have been carried out at some point. According to Laqueur 2002: 23:

“Archaeologists estimate that the average English churchyard, in use for a millennium or so, might contain the remains of some ten thousand bodies...From very near the beginning, grave diggers intercut, hacked through, turned over, tossed out earlier tenants to make room for new ones and every hundred years or so apparently levelled the ground and started again”.

- 4.6.6 Layer [100] consisted of softly compacted, dark greyish-brown clayey silt. It contained inclusions of moderate rounded stones, angular flint and occasional broken tile. It measured 0.55m thick. It was overlain by [101], which consisted of moderately compacted, mottled dark greyish-brown/ mid yellowish-brown sandy silt. It contained inclusions of occasional angular flint and charcoal flecks, and was up to 0.34m thick. It was overlain by [102], firmly compacted dark greyish-brown clayey silt. Layer [102] had inclusions of occasional rounded stones and angular flint, and measured 0.31m thick. It was overlain

by layer [103], consisting of firmly compacted, dark yellowish-brown silt, with occasional rounded stones, angular stones, angular flint and broken tile. It measured 0.39m thick, and was overlain by topsoil [004].

Context	Type	Interpretation	Max. Length m	Max. Width m	Deposit Thickness m
[004]	Layer	Topsoil	-	-	0.15-0.26
[100]	Layer	Levelling deposit	-	-	0.28-0.55
[101]	Layer	Levelling deposit	-	-	0.34
[102]	Layer	Levelling deposit	-	-	0.13-0.29
[103]	Layer	Levelling deposit	-	-	0.25-0.39
[104]	Fill	Backfill	0.22	0.79	0.45
[105]	Deposit	Made ground	-	-	0.28
106	Deposit	Made ground	-	-	0.03-0.04
107	Deposit	Made ground	-	-	0.1
108	Deposit	Made ground	-	-	0.5
109	Masonry	Well	0.72	0.25	0.49

Table 8: List of recorded contexts for soakaway S5, trenches 5A and 5B.

5.0 THE FINDS

5.1 Summary

- 5.1.1 Aside from the human skeletons, coffin furniture and disarticulated bones, no other archaeological finds were encountered during the watching brief. The skeletons and bone assemblages were retained and stored at the site, for reburial by the church at a later date.

6.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Overview of stratigraphic sequence

6.1.1 The stratigraphic sequence on site consisted of topsoil and subsoil overlying various levelling layers and buried soils. These layers were overlying natural head deposits. All graves encountered were found to be cut through the subsoil, and skeletons were generally encountered at a depth of around 1.20-1.30m. Trenches 5A and 5B also revealed the make-up deposits for the footpath running behind the south side of the church.

6.1.2 A total of fifteen grave cuts, [006], [011], [020], [022], [025], [034], [046], [053], [058], [065], [071], [084], [087], [090] and [096] were found on site. Eight skeletons [023], [026], [047], [059], [072], [074], [076] and [078] were excavated, recorded and carefully lifted for reburial at a later date. The remnants of three decayed coffin bases [027], [048] and [079] were also recorded. A brick well [109] was partially exposed within trench 5B, which was part of the existing drainage system.

6.2 Deposit survival and existing impacts

6.2.1 As all the graves encountered were only sealed by topsoil and were of a reasonable depth with full profiles were visible in section, it would seem likely that they were not much older than early 19th century. Some graves, particularly those in soakaway S4 were intercutting, presumably to try and fit as many in as possible. Grave [084] contained two skeletons, suggesting this may have been a pauper's grave.

6.2.2 The fact that human bone was recovered from various probable levelling layers not associated with any grave cuts suggests that a certain amount of re-landscaping had been carried out within the churchyard.

6.3 Consideration of research aims

6.3.1 As far as recording and careful lifting of all skeletons that were encountered during the excavations, and retention of the bones by the church for reburial, these aims were met. No other archaeological features or finds were encountered during the watching brief.

6.4 Conclusions

6.4.1 The watching brief presented a good opportunity to create records for burials that were not present in the church's own records. According to the vicar, the area in which soakaways S1 and S2 were excavated had initially been set aside for future burials, so the archaeological work had been most helpful in this respect.

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Online Resources

BGS, 2017 <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>

Bart Combined Benefice

<http://www.bartcombinedbenefice.org.uk/790783107280.html>

Kent Past <http://www.kentpast.co.uk/ryarsh.html>

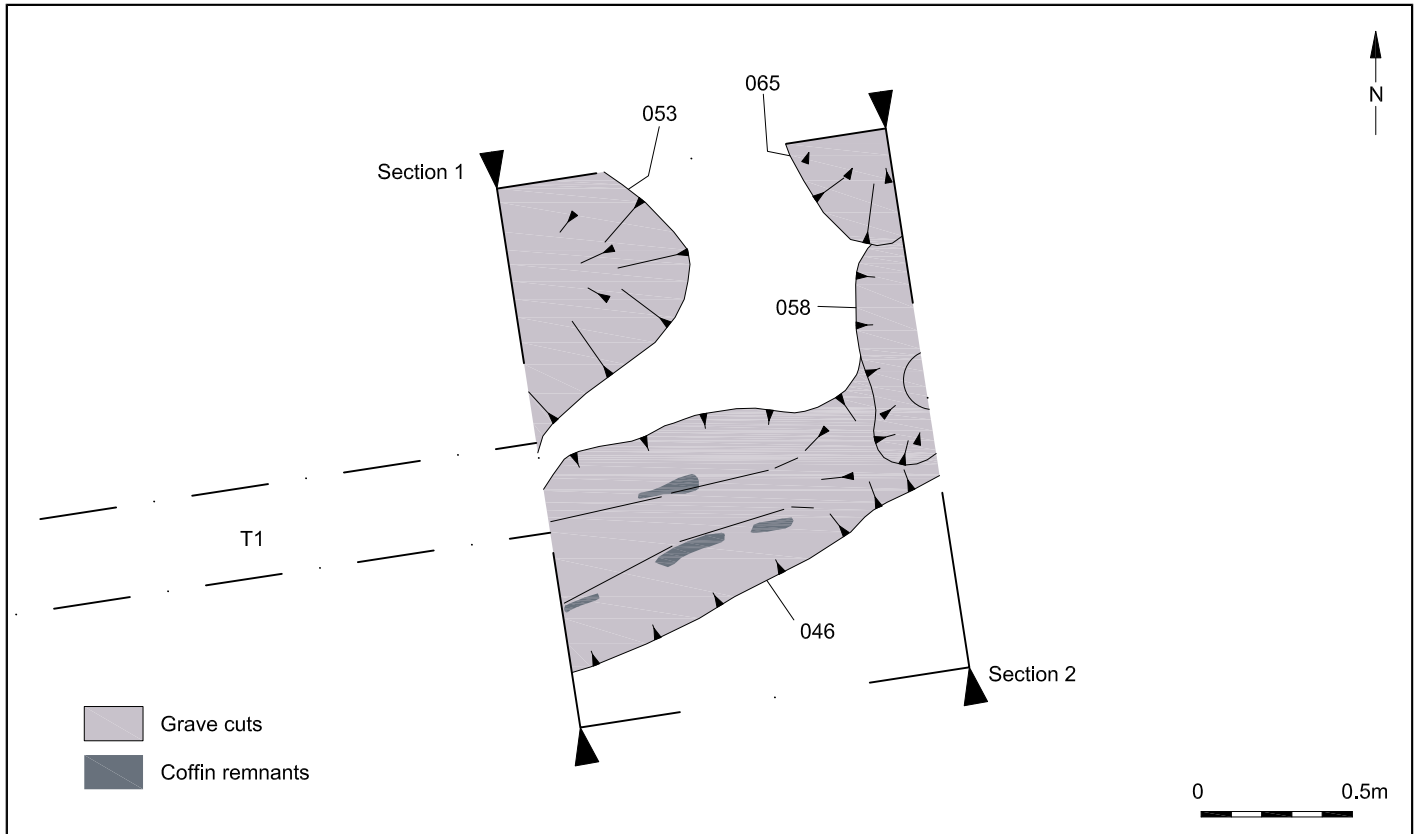
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ASE would like to thank Lisa Brooks for commissioning the work. The watching brief was directed by Steve Price. Paul Mason and Neil Griffin managed the excavations, Jim Stevenson and Dan Swift the post-excavation process.



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© Archaeology South-East		St Martins Church, Ryarsh	Fig. 1
Project Ref: 160757	August 2017	Site location	
Report Ref: 2017321	Drawn by: NH		



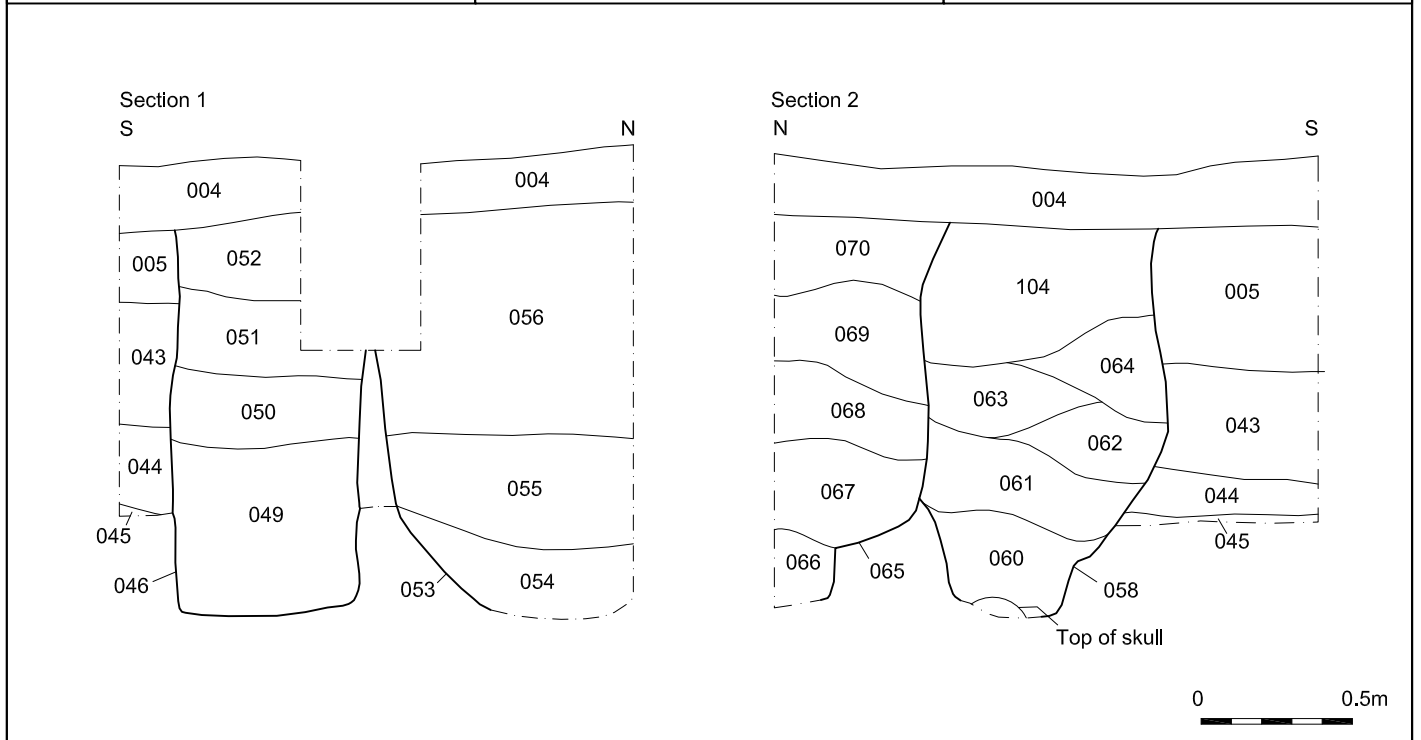
Soakaway 1 looking east

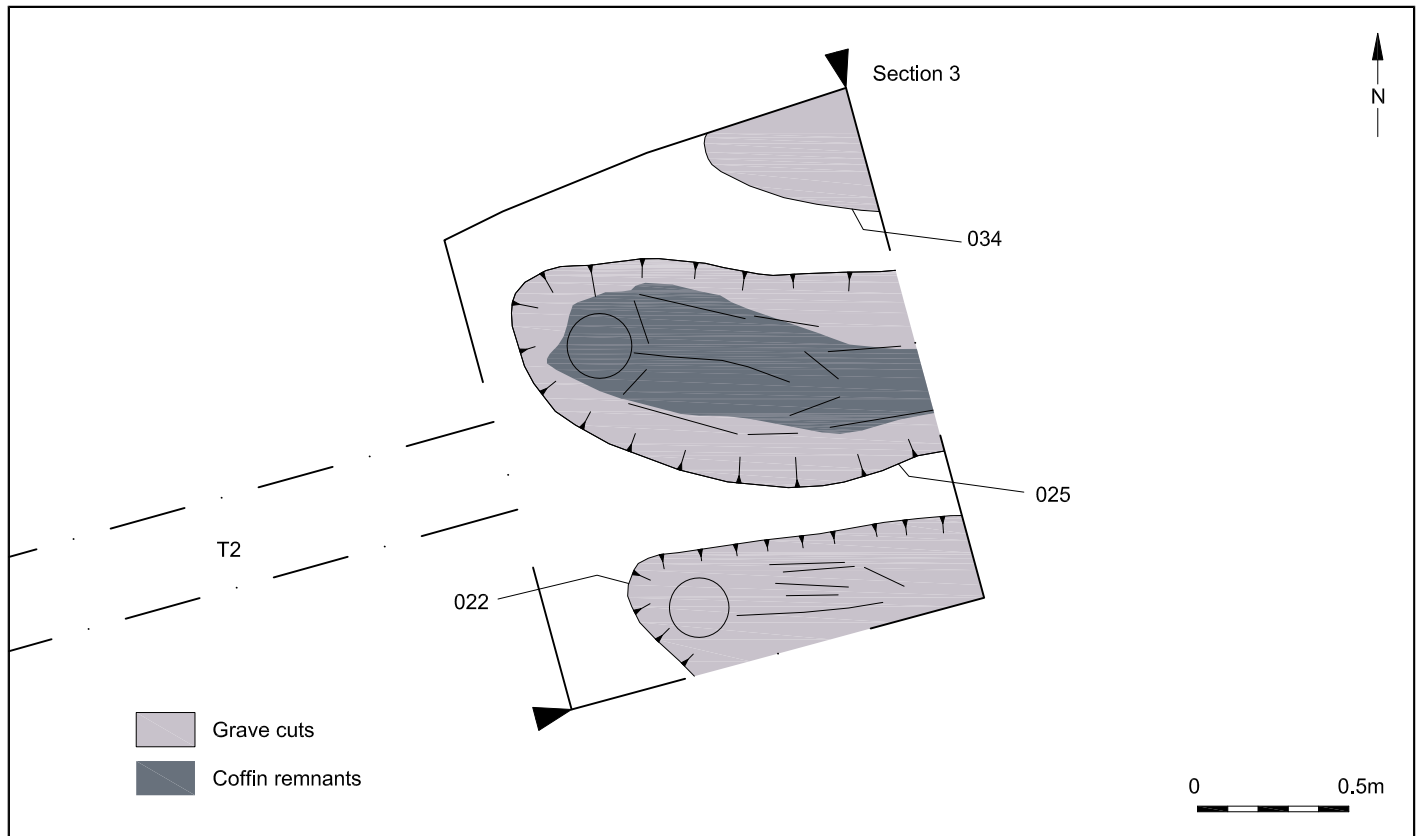


Soakaway 1 looking west



Graves 046, 053, 058 and 065





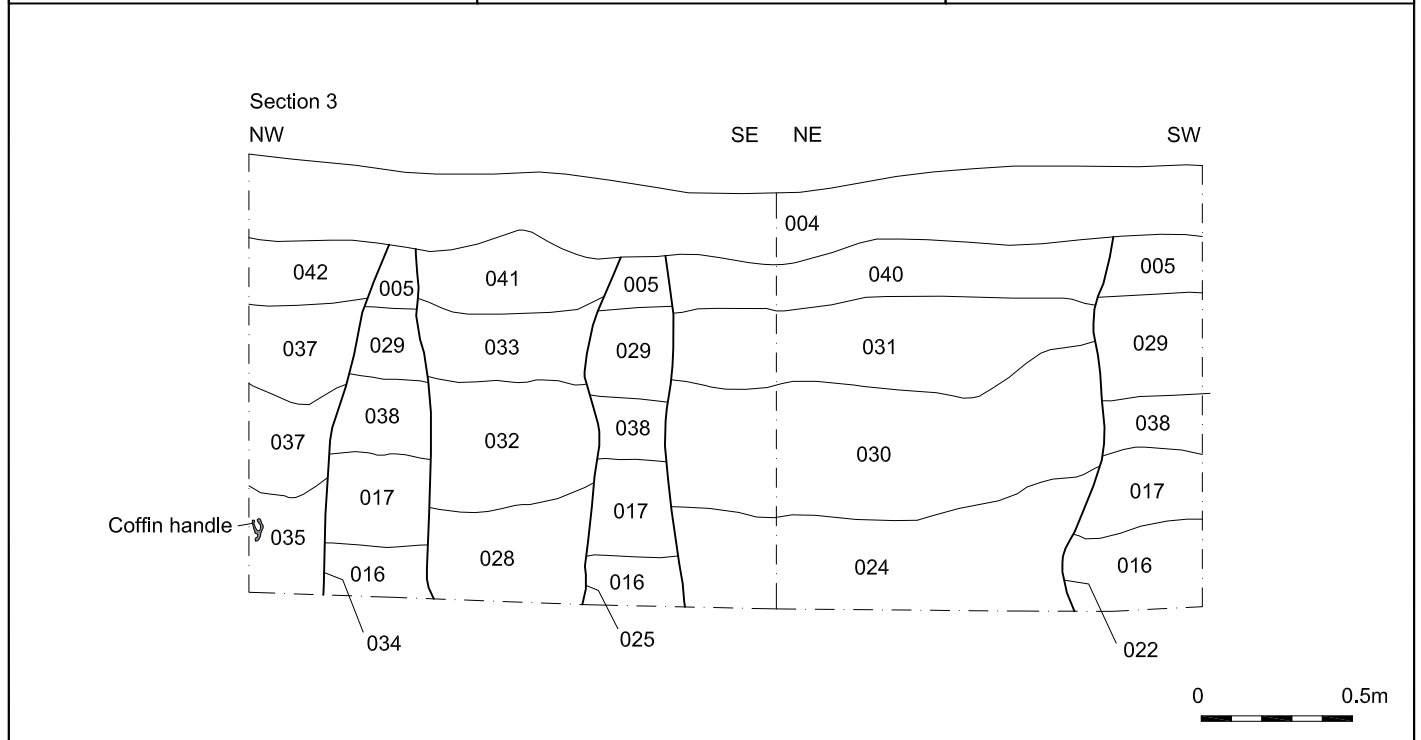
Soakaway 2 looking north-east

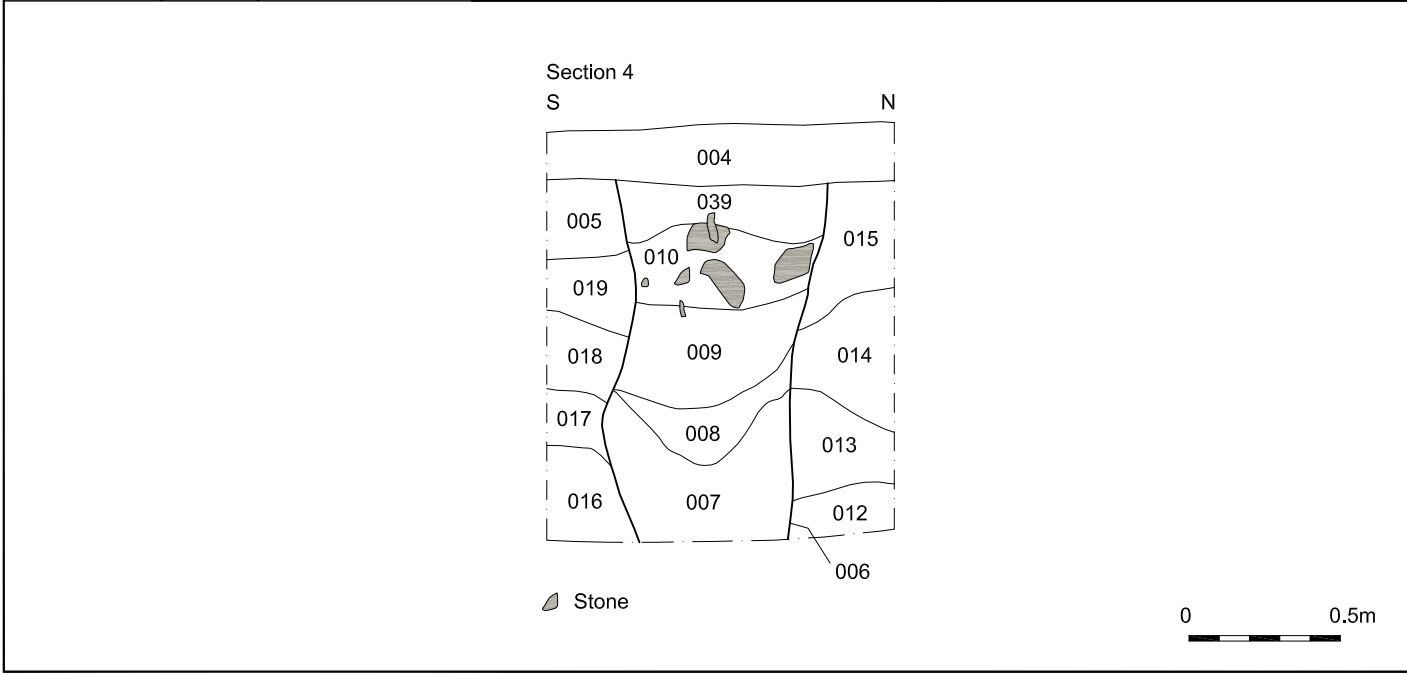
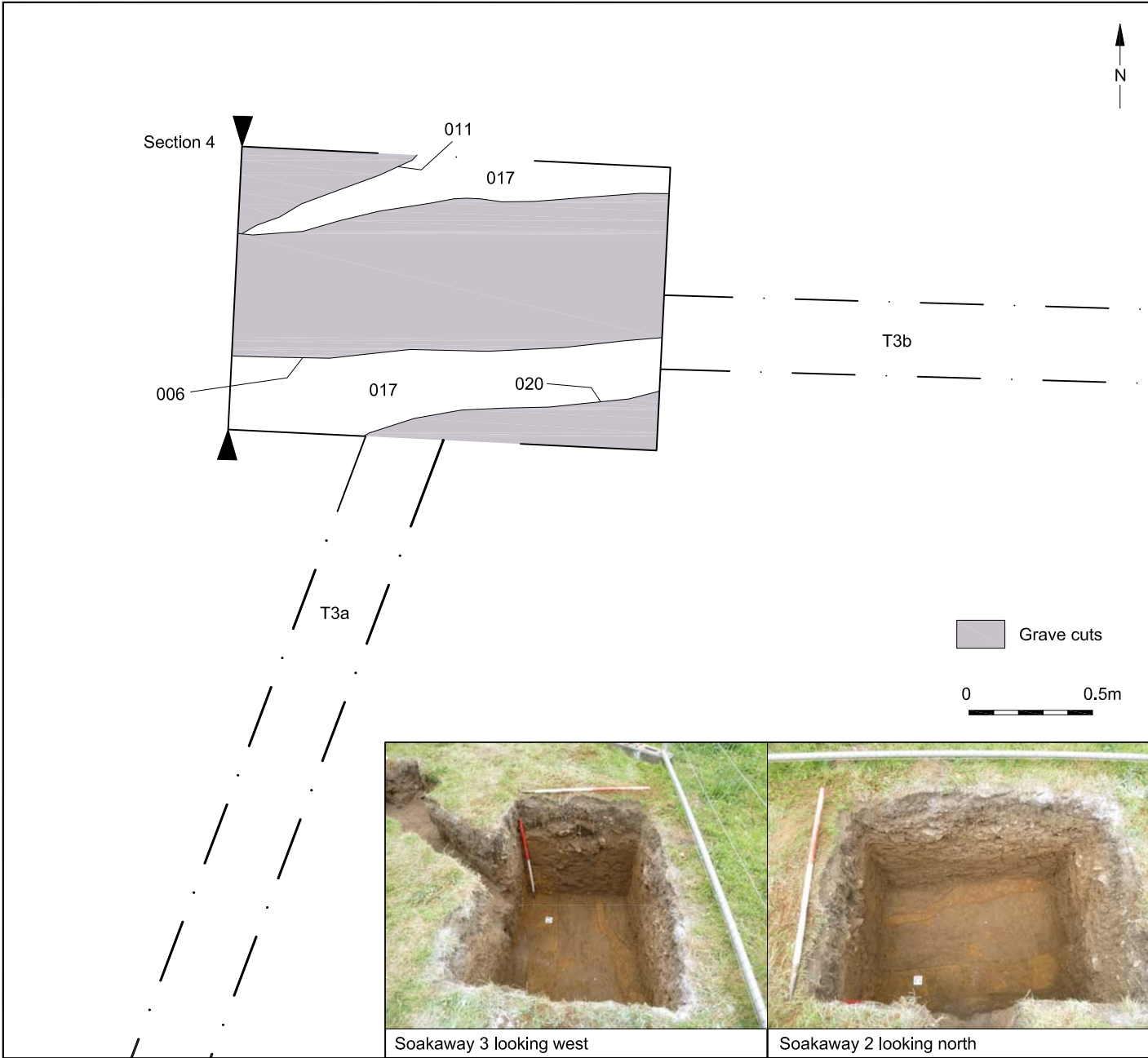


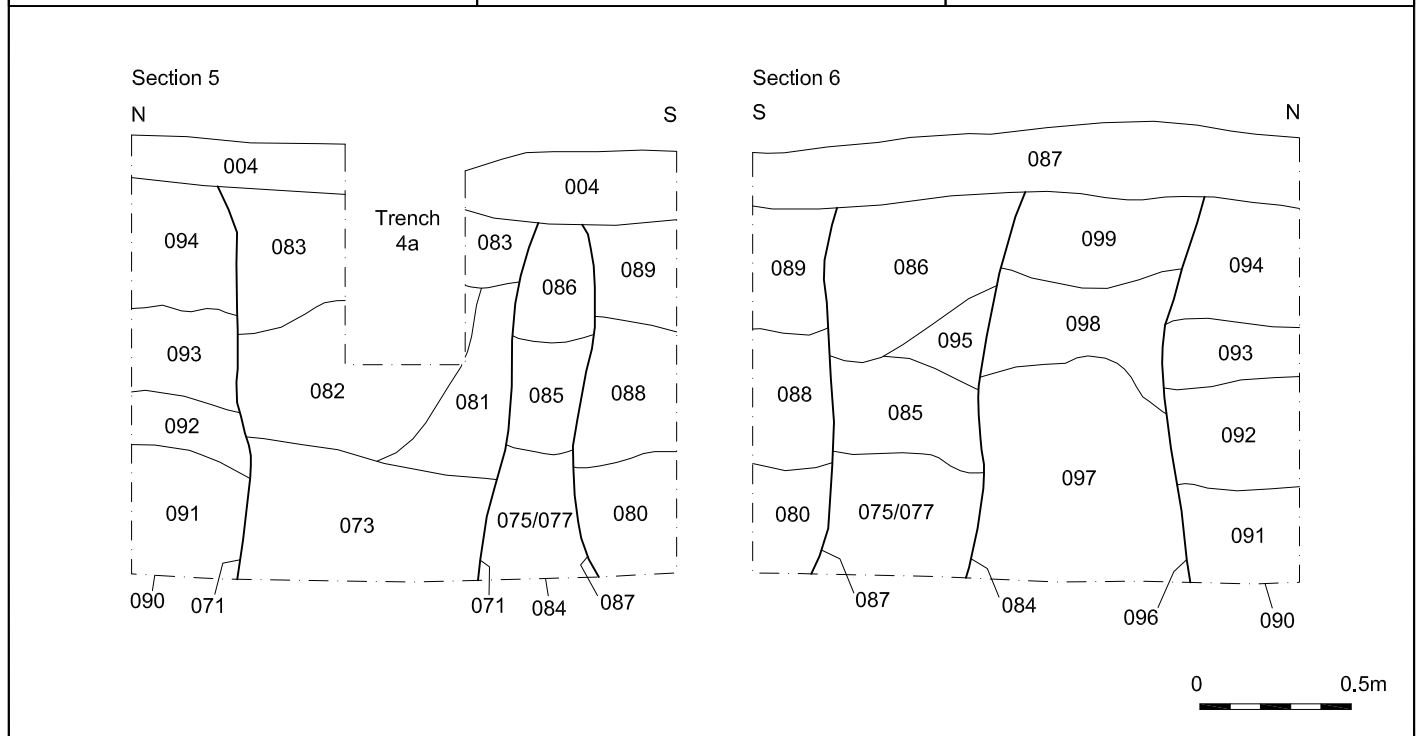
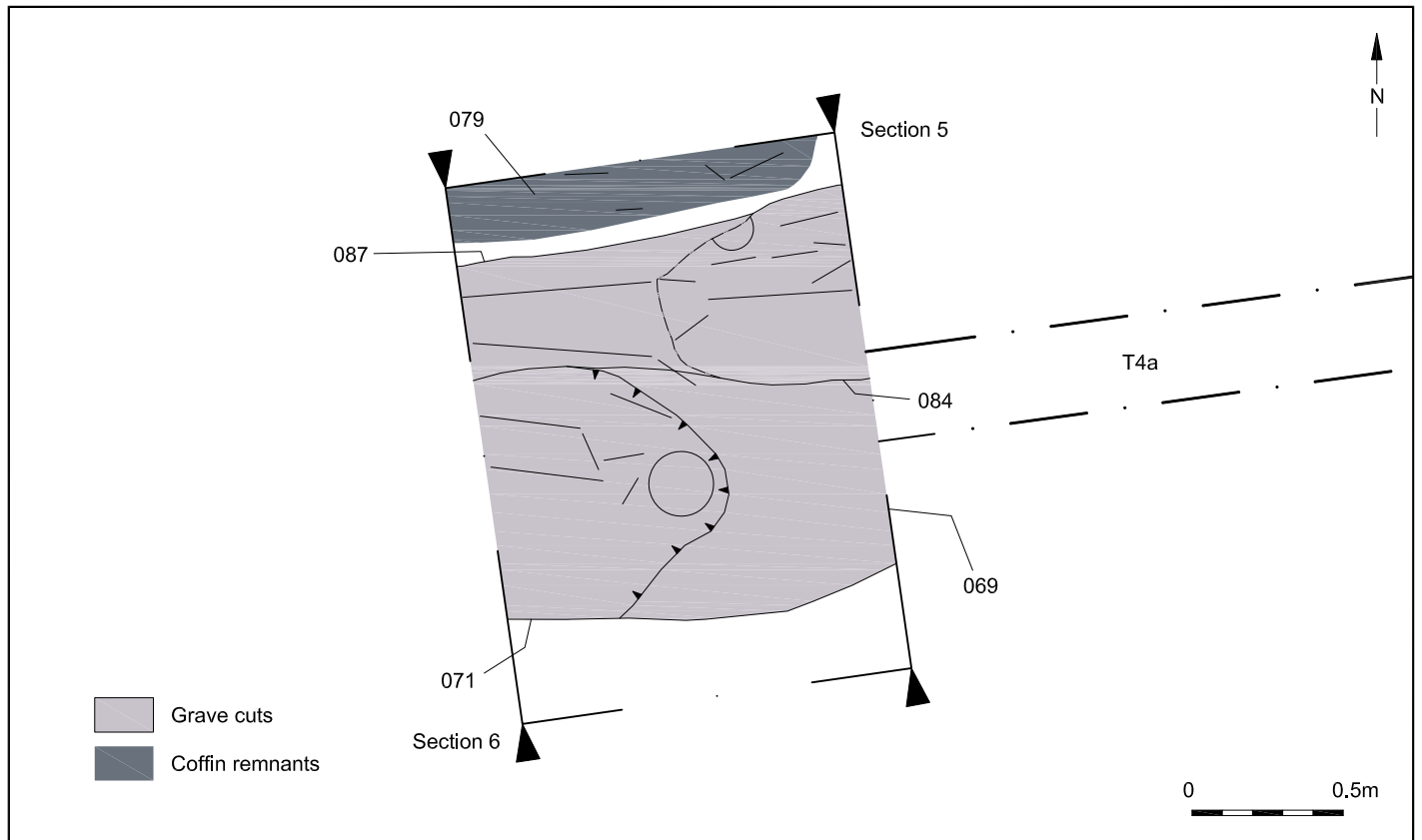
Soakaway 2 looking south-east

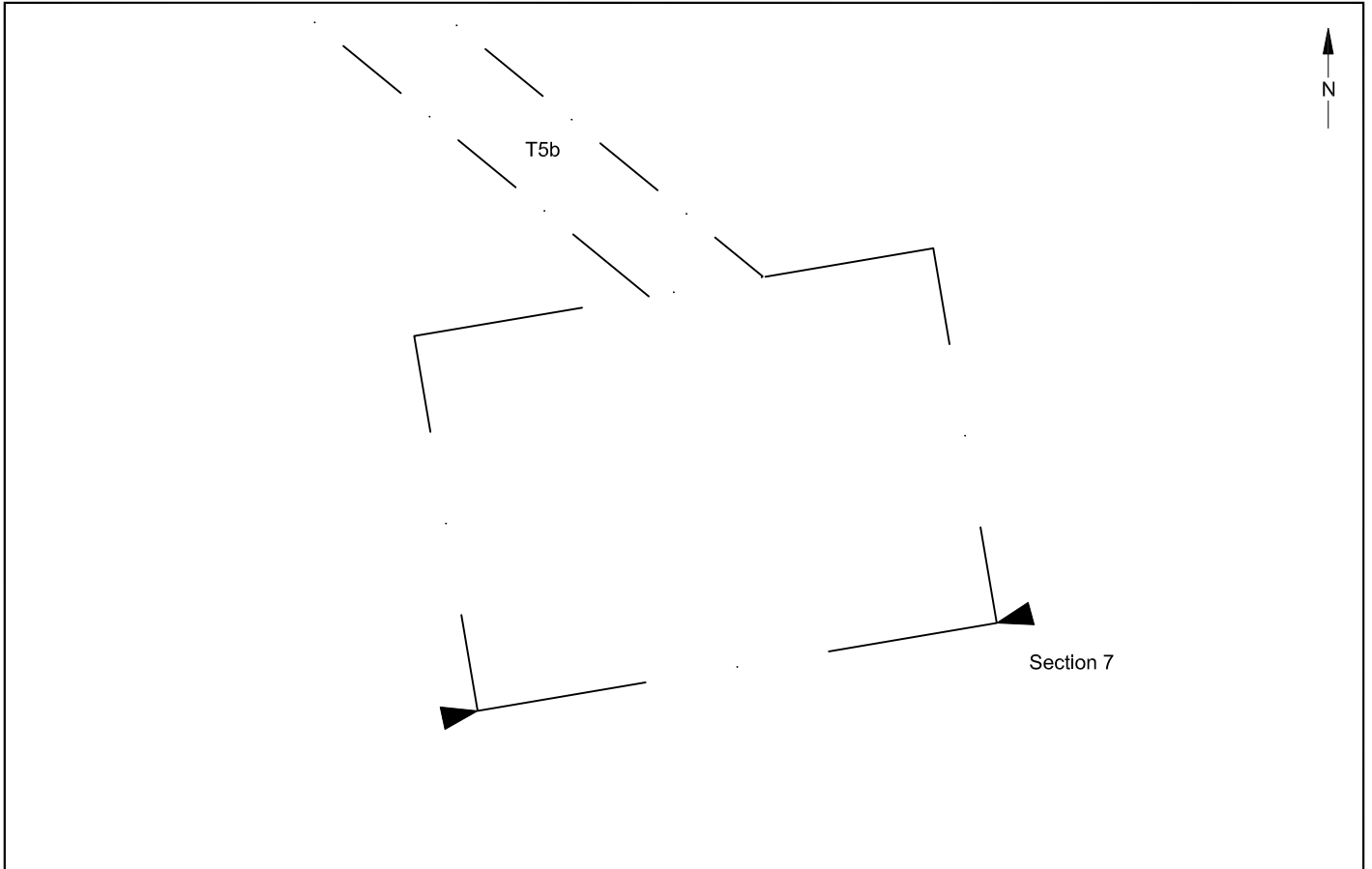


Graves 022, 025 and 034





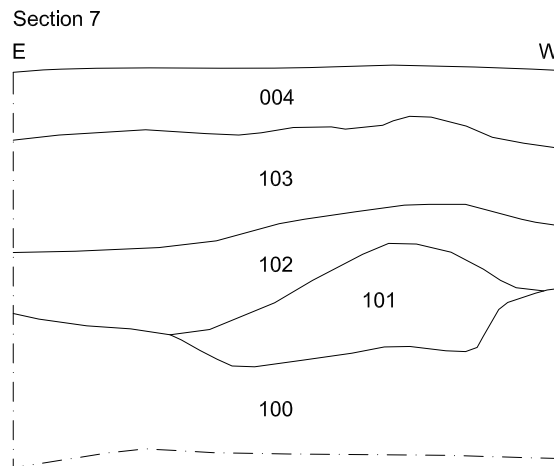




0 0.5m

Soakaway 5 looking south

Well 109 looking north-east



0 0.5m

HER Summary

HER enquiry no.	n/a				
Site code	RSM16				
Project code	160757				
Planning reference					
Site address	St. Martin's Church, Ryarsh, Kent, ME19 5LB				
District/Borough	Tonbridge and Malling				
NGR (12 figures)	567238 159134				
Geology	Head deposits of clay, silts,sand & gravel; Folkestone Formation				
Fieldwork type			WB		
Date of fieldwork	26 th June – 14 th July 2017				
Sponsor/client	Lisa Brooks				
Project manager	Paul Mason				
Project supervisor	Steve Price				
Period summary					
				Post-Medieval	
Project summary	<p><i>Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Lisa Brooks, of Brooks Building Consultants, to undertake an archaeological watching brief at St Martin's Church, Ryarsh, Kent. Six soakaways and nine trenches were excavated for a new drainage system. The watching brief uncovered fifteen grave cuts. Eight skeletons were excavated, recorded and carefully lifted. Three decayed coffin bases were also recorded. A brick well was partially exposed within one of the trenches.</i></p> <p><i>All human remains found on site were stored within the church for reburial by the church. No other archaeological finds were encountered. All graves encountered were cut through subsoil and sealed by topsoil, with profiles visible in the sections of the soakaways.</i></p>				
Museum/Accession No.	n/a				

OASIS Form**OASIS ID: archaeol6-292001****Project details**

Project name	An Archaeological Watching Brief At St. Martin's Church, Ryarsh, Kent, ME19 5LB
Short description of the project	This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation carried out by Archaeology South-East at St Martin's Church, Ryarsh, Kent, ME19 5LB between 26th June - 14th July 2017. The fieldwork was commissioned by Lisa Brooks, of Brooks Building Consultants. Six soakaways and nine trenches of varying lengths were excavated in order to accommodate a new drainage system for the church. The watching brief uncovered fifteen grave cuts. Eight skeletons were excavated, recorded and carefully lifted. The remnants of three decayed coffin bases were also recorded. A brick well was partially exposed within trench 5B, which was part of the existing drainage system. All human remains found on site were retained and stored within the church for reburial at a later date by the church. No other archaeological finds were encountered during the watching brief. All graves encountered were cut through subsoil and sealed by topsoil, with profiles visible in the sections of the soakaways. Where found, skeletons were located at a depth of between 1.20m - 1.30m. Some graves were intercutting.
Project dates	Start: 26-06-2017 End: 14-07-2017
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	160757 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Recording project
Current Land use	Other 4 - Churchyard
Monument type	CHURCHYARD Uncertain
Monument type	GRAVE Post Medieval

Project location

Country	England
Site location	KENT TONBRIDGE AND MALLING RYARSH St. Martin's Church, Ryarsh, Kent
Postcode	ME19 5LB
Study area	0 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 567238 159134 50.920786366635 0.230036708937 50 55 14 N 000 13 48 E Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South East
----------------------	------------------------

Project brief originator	Archaeology South East
Project design originator	Archaeology South-East
Project director/manager	Paul Mason
Project supervisor	Steve Price
Type of sponsor/funding body	Client

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Physical Archive recipient	Local Museum
Digital Archive recipient	Local Museum
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography"
Paper Archive recipient	Local Museum
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Drawing", "Photograph", "Plan", "Report", "Section"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	An Archaeological Watching Brief At St. Martin's Church, Ryarsh, Kent, ME19 5LB
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Price, S.
Other bibliographic details	Report number 2017321
Date	2017
Issuer or publisher	ASE
Place of issue or publication	Portslade
Entered by	Steve Price (steven.price@ucl.ac.uk)
Entered on	4 August 2017

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