

**T H A M E S      V A L L E Y**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**

**S E R V I C E S**

**St Mary's Church, Church Street, Meysey Hampton,  
Fairford, Gloucestershire**

**Archaeological Watching Brief**

**by Steve Crabb**

**Site Code: SMC14/143**

**(SP 1171 2000)**

**St Mary's Church, Church Street,  
Meysey Hampton, Gloucestershire**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief  
For Meysey Hampton Parochial Council**

by Steven Crabb

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code SMC 14/143

**July 2014**

## Summary

**Site name:** St Mary's Church, Church Street, Meysey Hampton, Gloucestershire

**Grid reference:** SP 1171 2000

**Site activity:** Watching Brief

**Date and duration of project:** 23rd July 2014

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** Steven Crabb

**Site code:** SMC 14/143

**Summary of results:** Two inhumations were observed. The bones were collected from within the line of the pipe trench cut and were returned to the church for reburial. No finds of archaeological interest were recorded.

**Location and reference of archive:** The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Corinium Museum in due course.

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[www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp](http://www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp).*

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 31.07.14 Steve Preston ✓ 31.07.14
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# **St Mary's Church, Church Street, Meysey Hampton, Gloucestershire An Archaeological Watching Brief**

by Steven Crabb

**Report 14/143**

## **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at St Mary's Church, Church Street, Meysey Hampton (SP 1171 2000) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Hugh Coleridge of the Parochial Church Council.

A faculty has been granted by the Archdeaconry of Cheltenham to install drainage in the form of a trench arch system adjacent to the church. This was subject to a condition which requires the implementation of a programme of archaeological work, consisting of a watching brief due to the potential for the works to disturb skeletal or archaeological remains. A written scheme of investigation was approved by the diocesan archaeological advisor.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Corinium Museum in due course except human remains which were retained by the church.

## **Location, topography and geology**

The site is located in the graveyard of St Mary's Church which is located to the north of the centre of the village of Meysey Hampton. Meysey Hampton is a small village located to the west of Fairford and south east of Cirencester (Fig.2). The site is located within a graveyard that is still in use and which is mostly flat but has a slight slope downwards from east to west. The underlying geology is Oxford Clay (BGS 1974) though this was not encountered during the groundworks. The site is at an elevation of approximately 100m above Ordnance Datum.

## **Archaeological background**

The site is located within the northern side of the graveyard of St Mary's Church, which was consecrated in 1269. The church was extended in the 14th century and restored in the 1870s. The church is Grade II\* listed, and five monuments of 17th- and 18th-century date in the southern area of the graveyard are Grade II listed. The village was mentioned in Domesday Book and has late Saxon origins (Williams and Martin 2002) and the

historic settlement is likely to lie nearby though the current focus of the village is now to the south east of the church.

## **Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the groundworks. Particular attention was to be paid to the drainage trench as it has the greatest potential for uncovering archaeological or skeletal remains.

## **Results**

The excavation of the pipe trench and the drain trench were excavated using a small 360° type machine and conducted under archaeological observation. The pipe trench initially extended 3m from the north side of the transept leading from the wall at a distance of 1.2m from the north-western corner. This trench was 0.25m wide and 0.6m deep. The drainage trench then extended another 17m from the northern end of the pipe trench in a WSW direction before turning and extending a further 8m west (Fig. 3; Pl. 1). This was 0.7m wide and sloped from 0.6m deep at the eastern end to 0.5m at the western end. The last 1m of the trench rose by a further 150mm (to 350mm deep).

The pipe trench revealed a cast iron oil pipe immediately adjacent to the church otherwise nothing of note was observed. The stratigraphy consists of 200mm of topsoil overlying at least 400mm of grave soil, throughout this there were fragments of waste stone and disarticulated human bone.

The drainage trench had the same stratigraphy as the pipe trench, including fragments of waste stone and disarticulated human bone. Two graves were disturbed during the excavation of this trench. At 7m from the eastern end of the trench an articulated skull and vertebrae were disturbed (sk52) and excavated from grave 1 (Pl. 2). The grave cut was not clear in the base of the trench, however the skull was disturbed at a depth of 0.55m, and the body was aligned east-west with the skull at the western end. The grave was not fully excavated as it extended beyond the extents of the trench.

At approximately 11m a truncated lower portion of a skeleton (sk54) was disturbed from grave 2. This grave had been truncated by a later grave (grave 3) which being deeper was not further disturbed meaning that the right leg was truncated mid lower leg and the left leg was truncated above the knee joint. Fragments of pelvis and femur were recovered after they had been disturbed. No photograph was possible as the remains were recovered from the machine bucket.

Other than the graves observed a surface water drain was uncovered at 4–6m from the eastern end.

## **Finds**

### *Human Remains*

Two articulated individuals were uncovered and retained at the church for reburial. The individual from grave 1 is likely to have been aged between the late teenage years and early 20's as shown by mostly but not completely healed cranial sutures. The fragments of pelvis recovered from grave 2 suggest they were from an adult female. Also recovered was approximately 20 fragments of disarticulated human remains. None of the burials or disarticulated bones were datable from the presence of associated objects.

## **Conclusion**

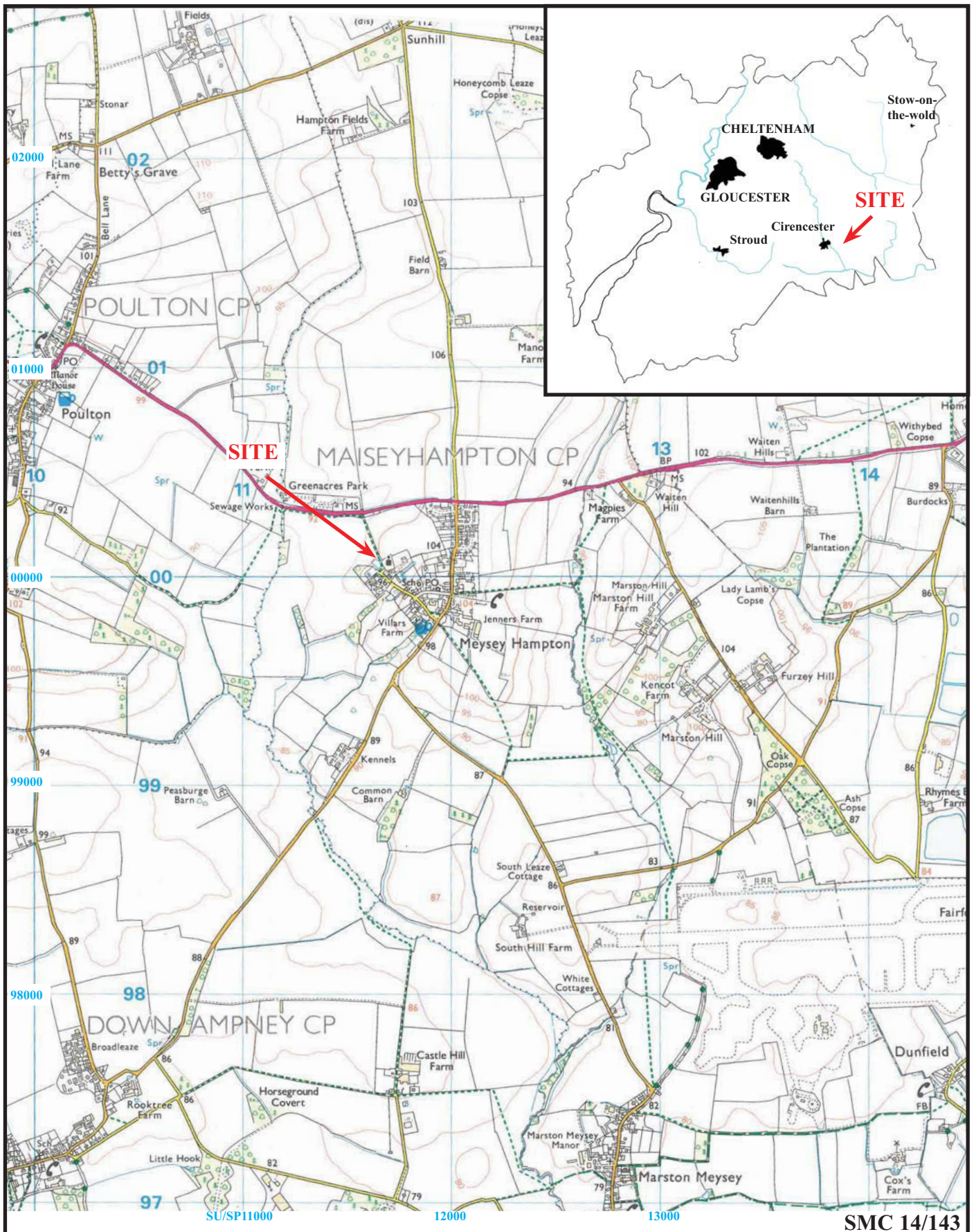
Two graves were observed at a shallow depth of c. 0.55m. No, other grave cuts could be observed at this general level. All human remains were retained for reburial at the church.

## **References**

BGS, 1974, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000, Sheet 252, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth  
Williams, A and Martin, G H, 2002, *Domesday Book, a complete translation*, London

**Appendix 1:** summary of features

Cut	Deposit	Type
1	Sk 52, 53	Grave
2	Sk 54, 55	Grave
3	56	Grave



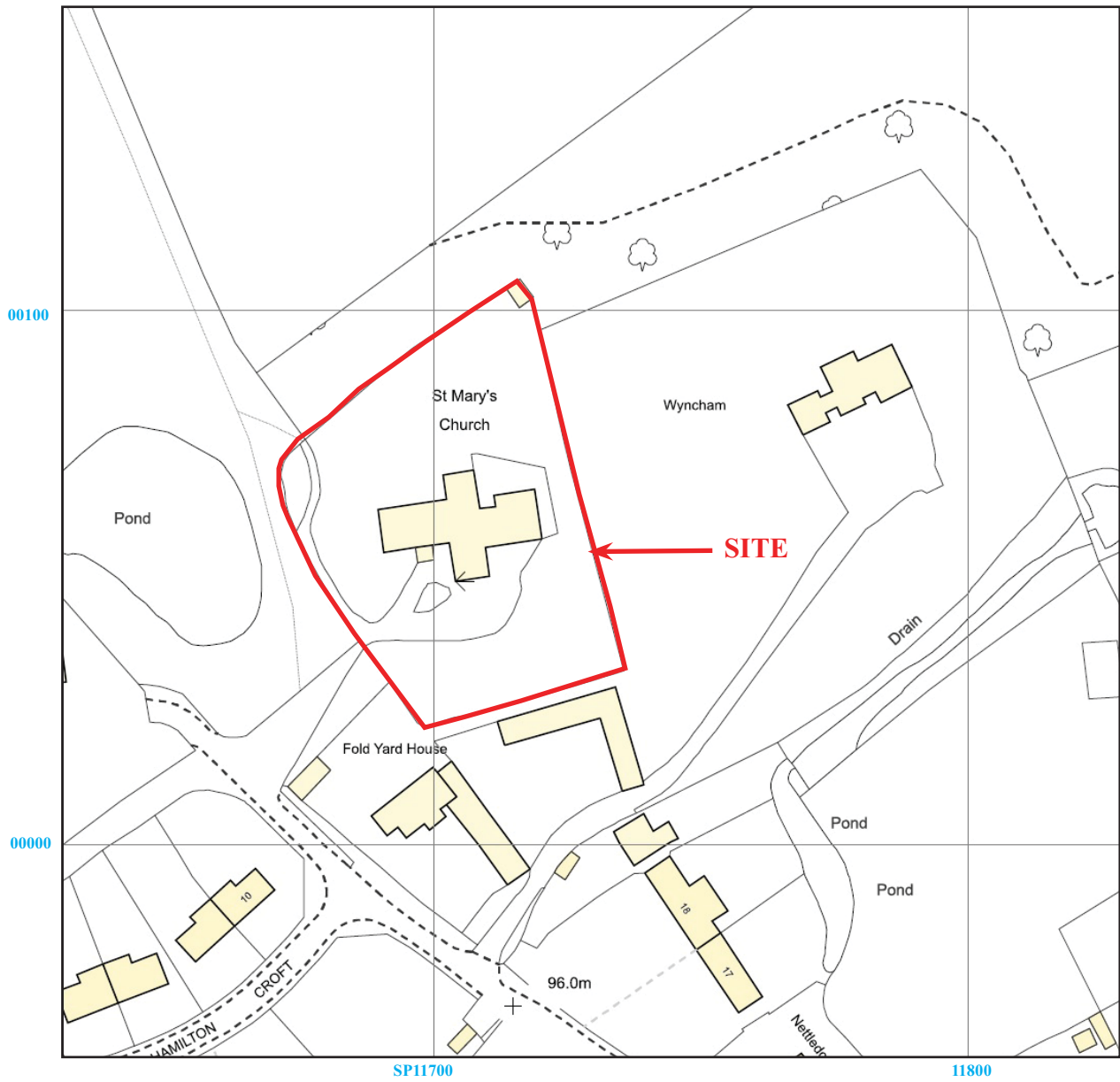
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Figure 1. Location of site within Gloucestershire.

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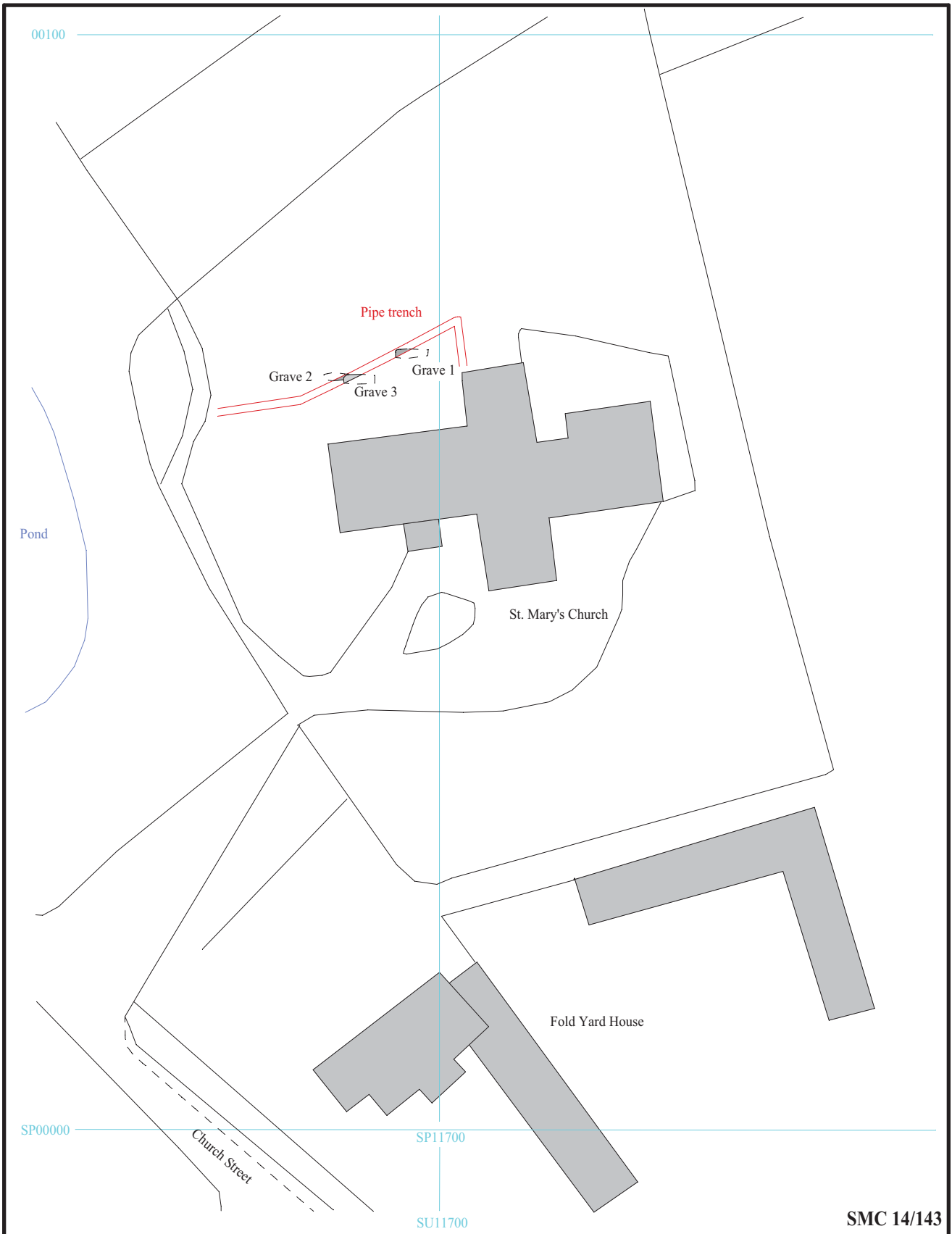


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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

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Figure 3. Locations of drain and pipe trench observed.



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Plate 1. View of trench, looking west.



Plate 2. Picture of skull, looking southwest, Scales: 0.30m and 0.50m.

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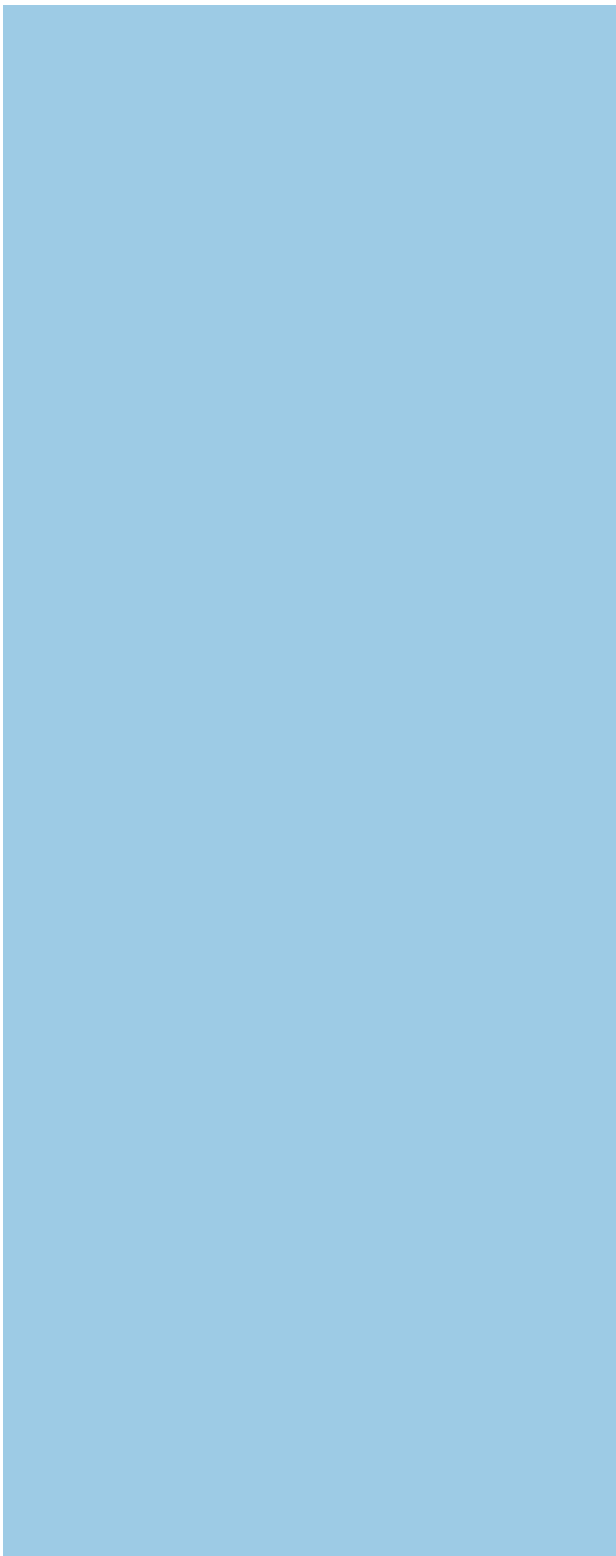
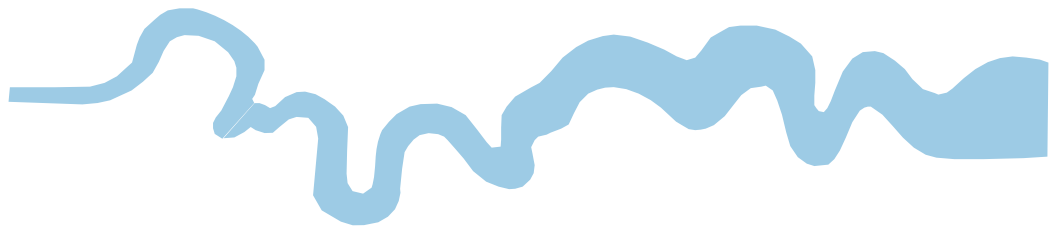
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Plates 1 - 2.

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## TIME CHART

	<b>Calendar Years</b>
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43
Iron Age _____	BC/AD 750 BC
Bronze Age: Late -----	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle -----	1700 BC
Bronze Age: Early -----	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late .....	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early .....	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late .....	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early .....	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper .....	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle .....	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower .....	2,000,000 BC





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