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S E R V I C E S

S O U T H

**St Mary's Church, Chart Road,  
Sutton Valence, Kent**

**Archaeological Watching Brief**

**by Teresa Vieira and Jim Webster**

**Site Code: MSV16/228**

**(TQ 8098 4919)**

**St Mary's Church, Chart Road,  
Sutton Valence, Kent**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief  
For the Diocese of Canterbury**

by Teresa Vieira and Jim Webster  
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code MSV16/228

**January 2017**

## Summary

**Site name:** St Mary's Church, Chart Road, Sutton Valence, Kent

**Grid reference:** TQ 8098 4919

**Site activity:** Watching Brief

**Date and duration of project:** 22nd - 23rd November 2016

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** Jim Webster

**Site code:** MSV 16/228

**Summary of results:** The watching brief successfully investigated those parts of the site which were to be most affected by a new drainage trench through the churchyard. One articulated human burial was identified, and this was lifted following basic recording. The human remains were then handed over to the church for reburial, along with a small amount of unarticulated bone fragments. Finds dating from the post-medieval period were recovered from the gravesoil.

**Location and reference of archive:** The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service in due course. The artefacts recovered will be returned to the client.

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# **St Mary's Church, Chart Road, Sutton Valence, Kent An Archaeological Watching Brief**

by Teresa Vieira and Jim Webster

**Report 16/228**

## **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at St Mary's Church, Chart Road, Sutton Valence, Kent (TQ 8098 4919) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Ms Carina Eisenmann-Oettinger of Thomas Ford & Partners, 177 Kirkdale, London, SE26 4QH, on behalf of the Diocese of Canterbury.

A Faculty has been obtained from the Diocese of Canterbury to construct a new kitchenette and toilet with associated drainage. As a condition on the granting of the faculty an archaeological watching brief is required. This is to take place during groundworks as a result of the possibility of damage or destruction of archaeological deposits.

The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a written scheme of investigation approved by the archaeological advisor of the Diocese. The work was carried out to comply with the Kent County Council requirements for fieldwork, and in accordance with the generic specification for watching briefs prepared by the Kent County Council's Heritage Conservation Group guidance (KCC 2011). The fieldwork was undertaken by Jim Webster on the 22nd and 23rd November 2016, and the site code is MSV 16/228.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service in due course. The artefacts recovered will be returned to the client.

## **Location, topography and geology**

The village of Sutton Valence is located approximately 8 km south-east of Maidstone, Kent. The site lies on the north side of Chart Road, in the western part of the village, west of Sutton Valence Castle which dates back to the 12th century. The site slopes slightly to the north and is occupied by St Mary's Church and its surrounding graveyard (Fig. 2). According to the British Geological Survey the underlying geology consists of Hythe Beds of the Lower Greensand Formation (BGS 1976). This formation is characterised by sandy limestone and calcareous sand. However, due to the depth of the drainage trench the natural geology was not exposed during the groundworks. The site lies at a height of approximately 90m above Ordnance Datum.

## **Archaeological background**

The Archaeological background of the site has stems from its location at the parish church which is usually considered to lie at the centre of the historic core of a settlement. Sutton Valence is first documented in the 9th century and then in Domesday Book (Williams and Martin 2002) and has late Saxon origins. A church at the village is also mentioned in Domesday Book, but the current building was mostly re-built in the 19th century. The church is a Grade II Listed Building.

## **Objectives and methodology**

The primary aim of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the proposed groundworks. This was to involve the monitoring of the excavation of a drainage trench for the new kitchenette and toilet. Archaeological deposits threatened by the groundworks which could not be preserved *in-situ* were to be fully recorded to ensure their preservation by record.

## **Results**

The excavation of the drainage trench was carried out using a 360° type mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, under constant archaeological supervision. The trench ran westwards from the church for about 30m, and was 1m wide and between 0.48m and 0.85m deep (Fig.3; Pls 1 and 3). The stratigraphy consisted of around 0.25m of turf and modern topsoil (50) above a 'gravesoil' deposit (51) of light greyish brown clayey silt, which was excavated to a depth of 0.60m. Numerous fragments of disarticulated bone, presumably human, were recovered from the gravesoil, along with finds dating from the medieval and post-medieval period. A single grave containing an articulated skeleton (52) was recorded in the central part of the drainage trench (Fig.4; Pl. 2). Based on the size of the skeleton, it is possible that belonged to an adolescent or female. The grave cut (1), was not particularly clear, but appeared to be an extended oval in plan. It was recorded and excavated and the skeletal remains were removed and passed on to the parish church for re-internment, along with the disarticulated remains.

## **Finds**

### *Pottery* by Luke Barber

Three sherds of pottery were found in the gravesoil deposit (51). These consist of an oxidised bodysherd of hard-fired earthenware (4g, uncertain form), the rim from a Frechen stoneware jug (16g) and part of a glazed red earthenware vessel (6g) with clear internal glaze. All sherds can be placed between c. 1600 and 1700/25.

### *Ceramic Building Material* by Luke Barber

Two pieces of tile were collected from the site, both from gravesoil (51). The earliest consists of the corner from a very worn inlaid encaustic floor tile with bevelled edges and a thickness of 19mm (76g). Virtually all of the clear glaze has worn off, as has most of the inlaid design. However, part of a probable griffon survives facing into the tile's corner. The tile is tempered with moderate/abundant medium quartz with occasional iron oxides and marl pellets to 0.5mm. A mid 13th to 14th century date is likely.

The other tile consists of a 100g fragment from a peg tile (roofing) in a hard-fired fine/silty fabric peppered with calcareous inclusions (voids) to 1mm. The tile has a 10mm squared peg hole, a cream slip-type surface and measures 12mm thick. A 16th to 17th century date is suspected for this tile.

### *The Clay Tobacco Pipe* by Luke Barber

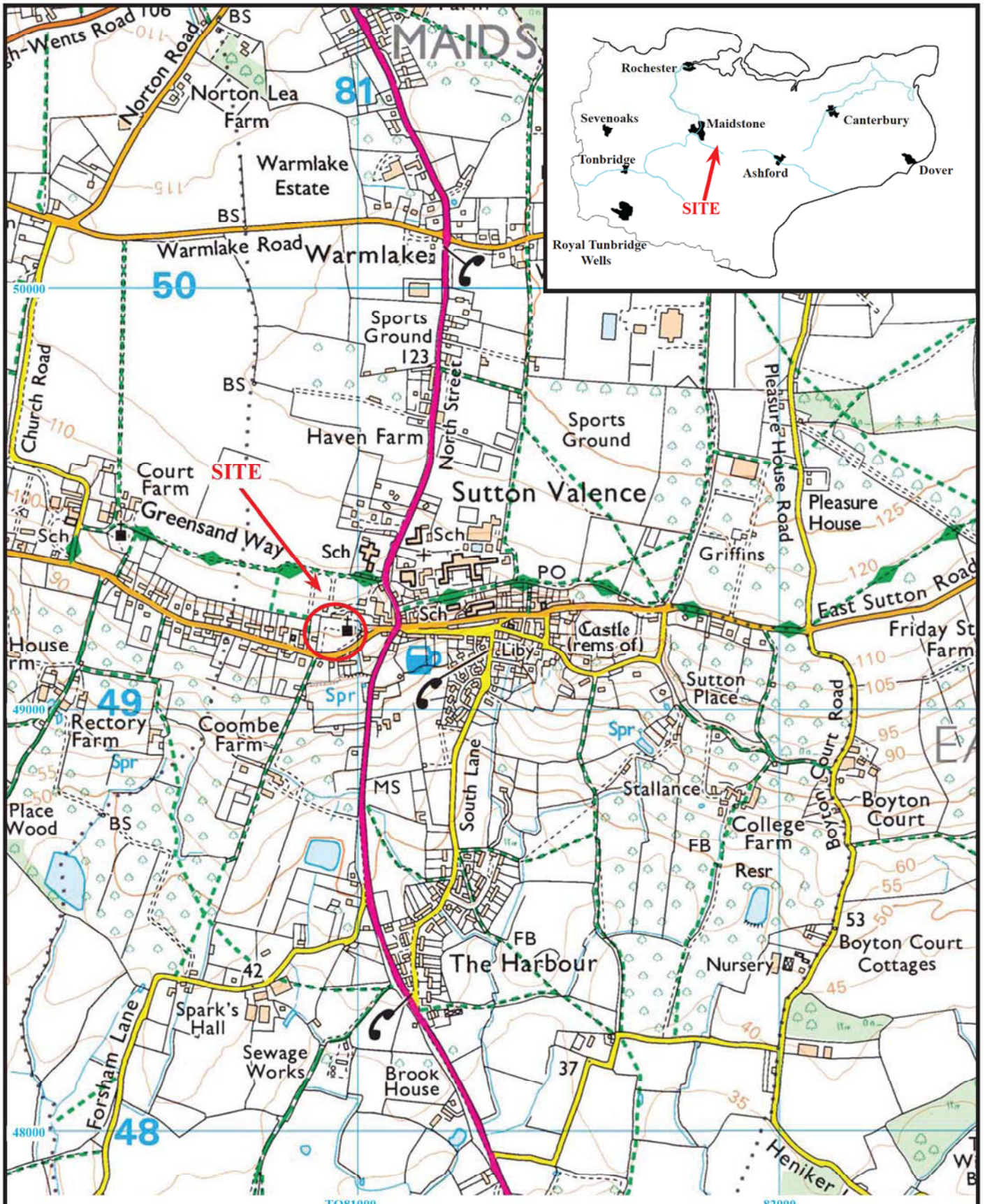
Context (51) contained two quite fresh stem fragments (6g) with a cumulative length of 115mm and bores of 1.8mm. A mid/late 18th century date is suspected, but a slightly later date cannot be ruled out.

### **Conclusion**

The watching brief successfully investigated those parts of the site which were to be most affected by a new drainage trench through the churchyard. One articulated human burial was identified, and this was lifted following basic recording. The human remains were then handed over to the church for reburial, along with a small amount of unarticulated bone fragments. Finds dating from the medieval and post-medieval period were recovered from the gravesoil.

### **References**

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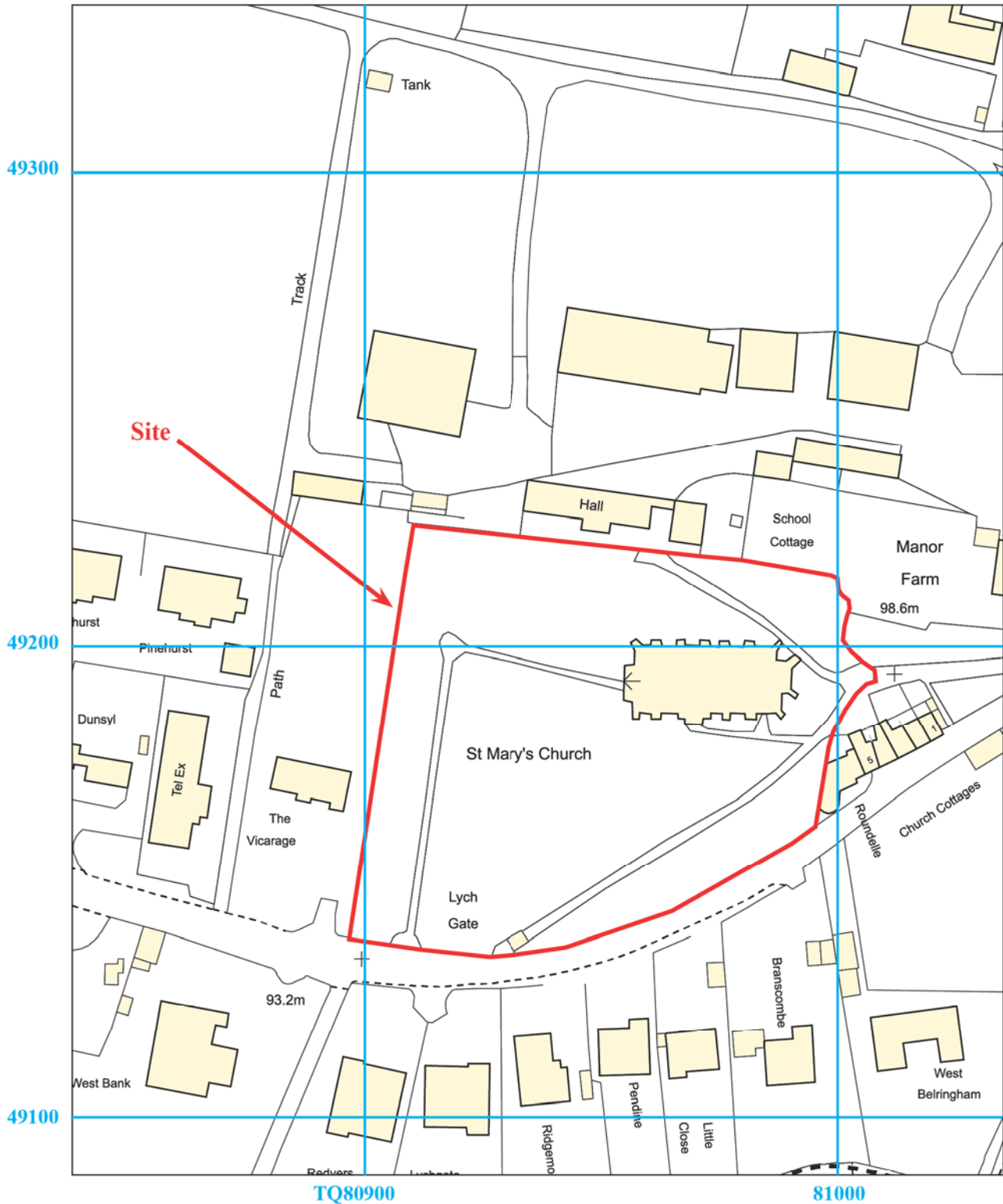
MSV 16/228

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Sutton Valence, Kent, 2016  
Archaeological Watching Brief**

Figure 1. Location of site within Sutton Valence and Kent.

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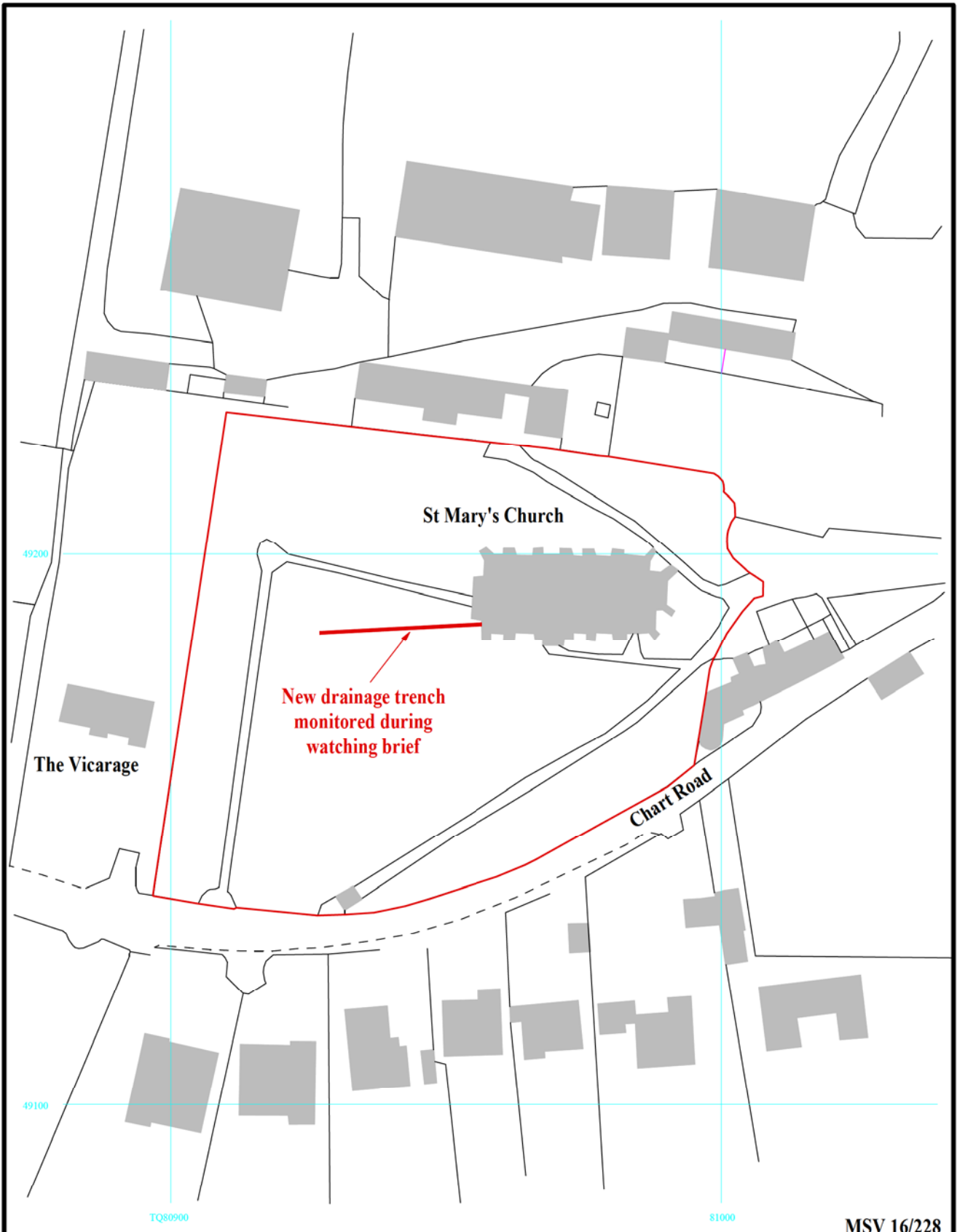


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Archaeological Watching Brief**  
Figure 2. Detailed location of site

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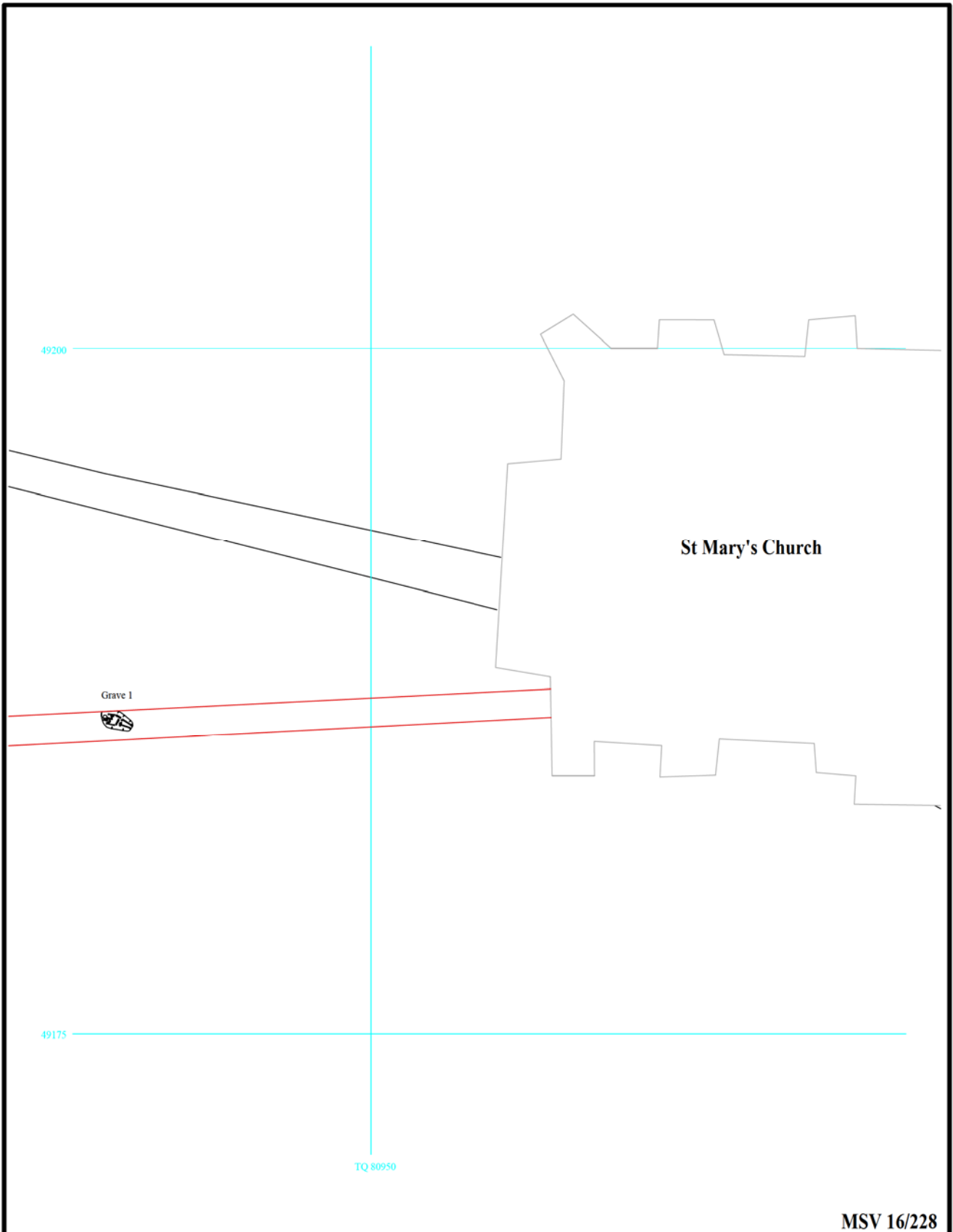


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Sutton Valence, Kent, 2016  
Archaeological Watching Brief**

Figure 3. Site plan showing area monitored.



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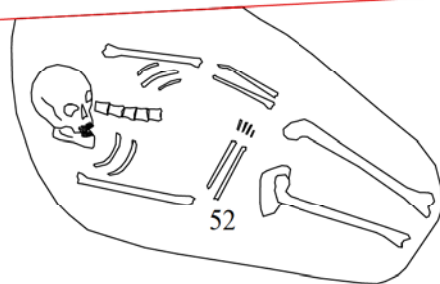


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Sutton Valence, Kent, 2016  
Archaeological Watching Brief**

Figure 4. Detail of drainage trench showing skeleton.



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1

MSV 16/228



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Sutton Valence, Kent, 2016  
Archaeological Watching Brief**

Figure 5. Detailed plan of skeleton.



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Plate 1. Drainage trench, looking East,  
Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 2. Skeleton 52, looking West,  
Scales: 0.50m and 0.30m.



Plate 3. Eastern end of drainage trench, showing stratigraphy, looking North, Scale: 0.50m

MSV 16/228

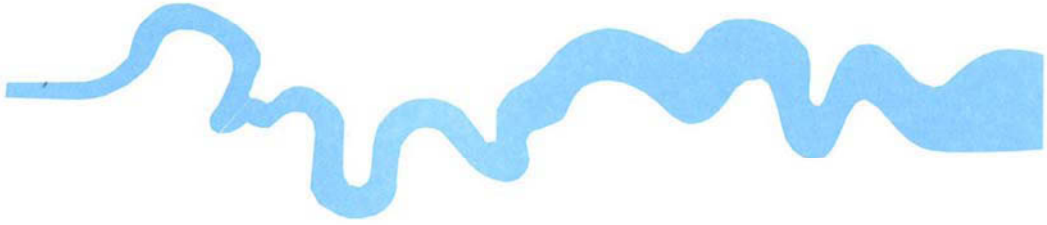
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Sutton Valence, Kent, 2016  
Archaeological Watching Brief  
Plates 1 - 3.



## 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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