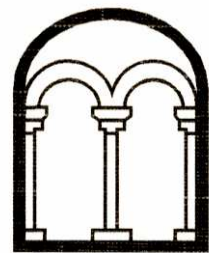


**ALL SAINTS' CHURCH
EMBERTON
MILTON KEYNES**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION
INVESTIGATION AND RECORDING**

Albion
archaeology



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1. INTRODUCTION

Albion Archaeology was commissioned by Emberton Parochial Church Council to undertake an archaeological investigation during the installation of two trench-arch drains and associated works.

The archaeological works were undertaken by Wiebke Starke (Archaeological Supervisor) with report figures prepared by Joan Lightning (CAD Technician).

2. BACKGROUND

All Saints' Church (Images 1 and 2) is located in the core of the village of Emberton, Milton Keynes, centred on grid reference SP 88496/49456 (Figure 1).

The underlying geology comprises interbedded limestone and argillaceous rocks. The superficial deposits comprise lime-rich, loamy and clayey soils (BGS; NSRI).

The building is Grade II listed; the list description is given below.

Parish Church. Chancel, nave and aisles built c1340, west tower early C15. Porches and vestry c1870. Nave much restored and clerestory rebuilt c1870. Chancel walls ashlar, remainder of coursed rubblestone. Chancel roof tile, the remainder slated. 2 bay chancel, 5 bay nave with aisles, west tower and north and south porches. Chancel has 5-light east window and 2 windows of 3-lights to each side, all with Decorated flowing ogee light tracery. Plain plinth, moulded sill, string course. Moulded cornice enriched with flowers, grotesque heads and hearts. Buttresses, one to middle of north wall, two at each east angle have gabled heads, those on east have square pinnacles, enriched with crocketed gables and traceried sides, below are niches with trefoil pointed heads and gabled labels. Nave has north and south porches c1870 and 3-light windows with Victorian Decorated tracery, reticulated or flowing, 2 to the east of the porches one to their west. (By 1850 all Medieval tracery in the nave had been removed). Clerestory has 5 quatrefoil Victorian windows. West tower of 2 stages with a north east stair-turret and diagonal west buttresses. West doorway of 3 moulded orders, 2-light windows over. Bell chamber has 2-light windows with outer arch of 3 orders. Upper storey replaced belfry removed in 1850. Coped parapet. Interior: Chancel arch early C15 of 2 moulded orders dying into the walls. Nave arcade of 5 bays with pointed arches of 2 moulded orders. Piers of 4 engaged shafts with moulded bell capitals and bases. Moulded labels with modern stops. Tower arch of 3 chamfered acutely pointed orders, outermost continuous, inner two with 3 attached shafts, moulded bell capitals and bases. Piscina and Sedilia range in chancel. 4 bays of cusped ogee arches with moulded capitals and, in spandrels, shields with instruments of the Passion. Piscina in left bay. On north side of chancel oak 3-bay screen with cusped foiled arches, C15; font is octagonal bowl with tracery pattern panels. Stem also panelled.



Moulded base, c1400. Brass in chancel north wall, John Mordon alias Andrew, 1410. Figure of priest in mass vestments. North chancel window has stained glass by O'Connor, 1865. At west end War Memorial by Farmer and Brindley, c1920. Alabaster angel on oxblood marble plinth.

3. DESCRIPTION OF BUILDING WORKS

The monitored building works comprised external service installation and internal alterations (Figure 1). The service installation involved the construction of two trench-arch drains and associated storm water pipes, a pit for sewage tank and pump and re-routing of the water supply and electricity cables.

Trench-arch 1 was located to the west of the church connecting to a tap. Trench-arch 2 and associated pump chamber were located south of the church.

The works inside the building involved the installation of a toilet in the south porch and a kitchen unit in the north-west corner of the north aisle but no groundworks.

4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

Archaeological monitoring of all groundworks was undertaken between 2nd and 9th August 2013. The methods employed during the project complied with the Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct and Standards and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (1999), English Heritage's *MoRPHE (Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment)* (2006), ALGAO East's *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (2003) and Albion Archaeology's *Procedures Manual* (2001).

The groundworks were carried out by the building contractor with a mechanical excavator operating under constant archaeological observation. Where required, the trenches were cleaned by hand following machine excavation. The location of trenches and sections through deposits were drawn and annotated on *pro forma* recording sheets. A digital photographic record was made showing the location of the works and the nature of the exposed deposits.



5. RESULTS

The results of the monitoring and the deposits observed are summarised below. The locations of the trenches are shown in Figure 1.

5.1 Trench-Arch 1 and Storm Water Pipe

Trench-arch 1 was located at the west end of the church and was aligned north-south (Image 3). The trench was excavated 1m wide and 4m long and *c.* 1m deep. The soil build-up in the trench-arch comprised a *c.* 0.1m-thick layer of topsoil of friable dark grey brown clay silt with moderate small to medium stones over *c.* 0.9m of re-worked graveyard soil¹ comprising friable mid grey brown clay silt with moderate inclusions of small to medium stones, fragments of brick/tile and slate as well as moderate amount of fragmented human remains. The underlying geology was not encountered in the trench. No cut features were observed in the trench.

Trench-arch 1 was connected to the west end of the church by a trench for the storm water pipe. This trench extended north-west from the end of the buttress at the west window of the north aisle and then westwards to connect with Trench-arch 1. The trench was 0.3m wide and 11m long. It was 0.5m deep in the vicinity of the church walls, gradually deepening to 0.9m where it fed into the trench-arch. The soil profile displayed in the pipe trench corresponded with that seen in the trench-arch, comprising topsoil over re-worked graveyard soil.

The French drain along the foundations of the current church (Image 4) is a repeatedly refurbished feature, dating from the 1800s. It was last renewed in the late 20th century. Due to these works the original foundation trenches for the church foundations are no longer present.

Remains of a former gravel path were observed in the trench, *c.* 1m from the north aisle buttress (Image 5). This path corresponds with a path layout depicted on 1st and 2nd edition 25-inch OS maps.

The remains of a possible dry stone wall were encountered *c.* 4m into the trench to the north of the church (Image 6). The remains comprised large limestone slabs in a parallel arrangement. The wall was 0.5m wide and on a north-south alignment *c.* 0.3m below the current surface within the reworked graveyard soil. A cut for the wall, mortar or alternative bonding for the stones was not observed. One slab was removed in the course of the excavation. A modern electric cable runs across the feature but has had no negative impact on it.

¹ The term *graveyard soil* describes a homogenous deposit commonly found in graveyards, where the soil has been re-worked over the centuries by continuous burials within a restricted area. The soil can contain varying amounts of small to large stones, ceramic building material, fragmented headstones, coffin nails or other grave-related artefacts and varying amounts of fragmented, disarticulated or articulated human remains. The depth of these deposits may vary with the depth of the burials that occurred at the location.



5.2 **Water Supply Pipe**

The trench for the water supply pipe leading to the new kitchen unit and toilet was arched around the west and south-west end of the church (Images 7 and 8). The 0.3m-wide trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.6m.

From the south porch to the west door the soil profile matched the observations made in the other excavated areas. Only a small amount of fragmented human remains was encountered within the trench.

West and north of the tower the graveyard soil contained a higher percentage of gravel and stone rubble. The former is associated with a gravel path recorded on the early OS maps and the latter is likely to represent construction debris from the church. At its north end the water supply pipe trench joined the storm water pipe trench for trench-arch 1.

5.3 **Trench-Arch 2 and Pump/Tank Pit**

Trench-arch 2 and associated pump pit and pipe trenches were excavated south of the church to take the waste water from the toilet that was installed in the south porch. The pit for the sewage tank and pump for trench-arch 2 was excavated *c.* 4m south-east of the south porch, measuring 1.4m by 1.4m and 1.5m in depth (Image 9). The pipe trench leading from the east side of the doorway to the pit was 0.3m wide and had a maximum depth of 1.1m. Trench-arch 2 was excavated east of the pump pit; it was 1.2m wide and 6.4m long. Its depth varied from 0.4–0.6m with the deepest part being in the centre of the trench (Images 10 and 11).

Here the soil profile comprised 0.15–0.2m of topsoil over 0.9m of re-worked graveyard soil. In situ geological deposits were exposed at a depth of *c.* 1.1m; limestone bedrock was reached at *c.* 1.3m. The topsoil comprised friable dark grey clay silt with moderate amounts of small/medium stones. In the area excavated for the pump the graveyard soil appeared homogenous throughout. No cut features were visible. However, it contained a higher concentration of fragmented human remains and articulated human remains were encountered towards the base of the pit at a depth of *c.* 0.9–1.1m.

Few artefacts were recovered from the graveyard soil (see section 6) and none could be associated with any of the human remains. The area excavated for the trench-arch produced a moderate amount of fragmented human remains but did not disturb any graves.

6. **ARTEFACTS**

A small number of artefacts were retrieved from the graveyard soil during the archaeological observation and were subsequently handed over to the PCC's project manager.

Pottery comprised a jar rim and two body sherds (23g) of shell-tempered St Neots-type ware (fabric type SNC1; after Mynard 1992), dating from the 10th–12th century.



The metalwork assemblage comprised two items, a jetton and a buckle. Jettons originated in western Europe in the mid/late 13th century and continued in use into the 17th century. They were used with a counting board or cloth which had a column of marks of value on the left; reckoning was carried out by moving the counters into the appropriate column or box. In the 14th and 15th centuries the copper-working industry at Tournay produced quantities of jettons in imitation of French counters of this period and the example found at All Saints' Church was one such product.

A rectangular copper alloy buckle with separate central iron bar and iron 'Y-shaped' (two prong) pin was also found. The frame is curved, suggesting use as a shoe buckle. A similar rectangular copper alloy buckle with iron double-prong pin and rotating central bar was found in deposits of 1485–1600 at Sandal Castle, Yorkshire (Goodall 1983, 231 and fig. 1 no. 15).

Metalwork Catalogue

Jetton. Copper alloy. French Tournay jetton. Obverse: a heater shield apparently of France-modern, but not really so, as the lower portion of a lys appears at the top of the field, ensigned with a small open crown. Legend AVE MARIA GRACIA:I. Reverse: a cross of three-strands fleurdelisée and fleuronée with a quatrefoil in the centre, all within a tressure of four arches fleuronée at each angle. In the spandrels of the arches A V E I, with small quatrefoils to each side of each letter. Diameter 25mm. Context 2 (graveyard soil, pump pit)

Buckle. Copper alloy. Rectangular buckle with separate central bar of iron, bar housed in transverse perforation through thickness of frame. Frame is angled. Bar retains iron bifurcated or Y-shaped pin (two prongs). Length 34mm; width 30mm; thickness 1.8mm. Context 2 (graveyard soil, pump pit)

7. CONCLUSIONS

The results of the observations were broadly similar in all parts of the graveyard. No artefacts, cut features, burials or disarticulated bone were identified in the majority of the excavated areas. A small section of a north-south aligned limestone wall was visible in the trench north of the church to the north-west of the north aisle.

Burials and a larger amount of disarticulated human remains were encountered in the pump pit south-east of the south porch. The former 19th-century gravel path, leading around the west side of the church to the tower door, was identified in the trench leading around the north-west corner of the church towards the north porch.

The observations were necessarily limited by the extent of the groundworks. The relatively small size of the service trenches provided limited potential for observation. The trench-arches had more potential; however, the limited excavation depth meant that in situ geological deposits were only encountered in the pump pit.

The negative results from trench-arch 1 west of the church and the water pipe trench around the south towards the south porch are more significant. The absence of evidence for graves or disarticulated bone suggests that there were fewer burials in these areas. As the masonry exposed north of the church was



only exposed within the limits of the pipe trench no detailed or extensive observations could be made.

Artefacts recovered from the graveyard soil comprise a small amount of late Saxon/Saxo-Norman pottery and two metal objects. The pottery sherds, though probably residual, indicate early settlement activity in the vicinity of the church. The metal objects, a 13th-century French jetton and a 15th-century shoe buckle demonstrate the continued use of the churchyard. Both objects originate from excavation of the pump/tank pit and would suggest the area south of the church was used for burials during the medieval period.

8. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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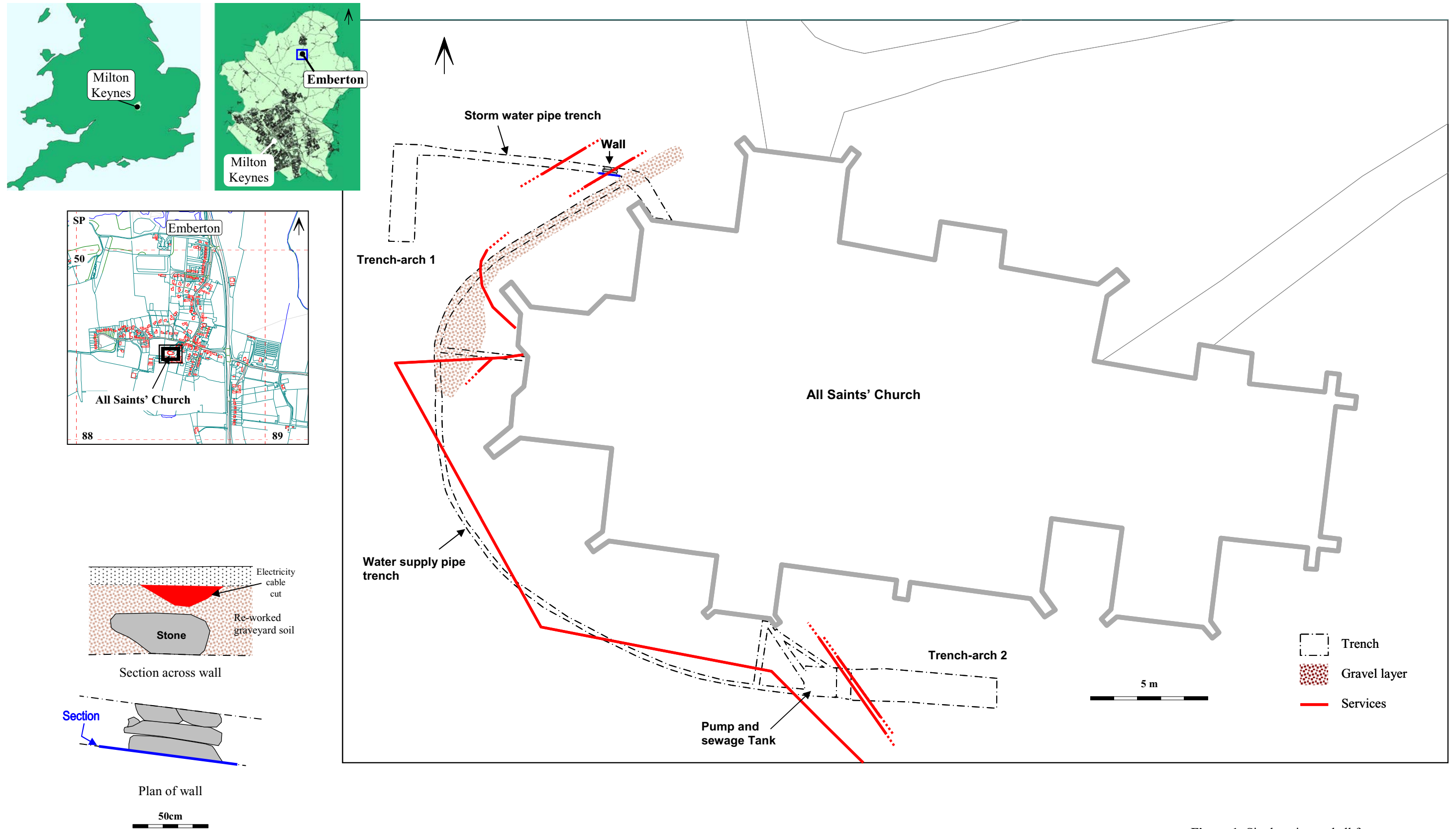


Figure 1: Site location and all features
 Base map reproduced from the Ordnance Survey Map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, by Albion Archaeology, Central Bedfordshire Council, OS Licence No. 100017358(LA). © Crown Copyright.



Image 1: View of south-east side of church



Image 2: View of north side and west end of church,



Image 3: View of Trench-arch 1 at north-west corner of tower (1m scale)



Image 4: Foundations of current church and 20th-century French drain at north-west corner of north aisle (1m scale).



Image 5: Gravel layer of 19th-century path in trench section north of church looking east (1m scale).



Image 6: Remains of probable limestone wall, looking south-west (1m scale).



Image 7: Water pipe trench north-west of tower looking south-east (scale 1m)



Image 8: Water pipe trench in front of south porch (1m scale)



Image 9: Pump pit south-east of south porch, depth c. 1.2m (scale 1m)



Image 10: Trench-arch 2 south of church looking north-west (1m scale)



Image 11: Trench-arch 2, south of church looking south-east (1m scale)

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