



Northamptonshire Archaeology

An archaeological watching brief at St Peter's Church, Raunds, Northamptonshire September 2011



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**Northamptonshire
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Report 11/202

October 2011



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QUALITY CONTROL

	Print name	Signed	Date
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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	An archaeological watching brief at St Peter's Church, Raunds, Northamptonshire	
Short description	An archaeological watching brief was conducted in September 2011 during the installation of a new water pipe at St Peter's Church, Raunds, Northamptonshire. An unmarked grave and a brick-built crypt were identified and avoided, their locations have been surveyed for future reference. No definite headstones survive for these burials. All charnel was collected and reburied.	
Project type	Archaeological watching brief	
Site status	Ecclesiastical	
Previous work	None	
Current Land use	Closed graveyard	
Future work	None	
Monument type/period	Saxon to late post-medieval	
Significant finds	Human bone (charnel was reburied)	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Northamptonshire	
Site address	St Peter's Church, Raunds	
Study area	c0.16ha	
OS Easting & Northing	TL 0004 7306	
Height OD	c61m above Ordnance Datum	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator	Quinton Carol, Diocesan Archaeologist (Peterborough)	
Project Design originator	Jim Brown, Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Director/Supervisor	Jim Brown, Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project Managers	Jim Brown, Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Sponsor or funding body	Commissioners of the Church of England	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	28th September 2011	
End date	29th September 2011	
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no)	Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical	Northamptonshire Archaeology Archive Store	None
Paper		Site registers, written record, photographic archive
Digital		Client PDF report
BIBLIOGRAPHY	Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report	
Title	An archaeological watching brief at St Peter's Church, Raunds, Northamptonshire	
Serial title & volume	Northamptonshire Archaeology report 11/202	
Author(s)	Jim Brown	
Page numbers	8	
Date	October 2011	

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**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AT
ST PETER'S CHURCH, RAUNDS, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
SEPTEMBER 2011**

Abstract

An archaeological watching brief was conducted in September 2011 during the installation of a new water pipe at St Peter's Church, Raunds, Northamptonshire. An unmarked grave and a brick-built crypt were identified and avoided, their locations have been surveyed for future reference. No definite headstones survive for these burials. All charnel was collected and reburied.

1 INTRODUCTION

During September 2011 Northamptonshire Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief at St Peter's Church, Raunds, Northamptonshire (Fig 1; NGR TL 0004 7306). The work was carried out for the Commissioners of the Church of England at the request of the Diocesan Archaeologist during the installation of a new water pipe. There was no written brief or specification for this work as it was conducted in response to an emergency call-out by the local parish warden.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Archaeological background

Raunds parish has been the subject of extensive archaeological research, and the focus of four monograph publications; *Raunds Furnells: The Anglo-Saxon church and churchyard, Raunds Area Project* (Boddington 1996), *Raunds Area Survey: An archaeological study of the landscape of raunds, Northamptonshire 1985-94* (Parry 2006), *Raunds: The origin and growth of a midland village AD450-1500* (Audouy and Chapman 2009) and *West Cotton, Raunds: A study of medieval settlement dynamics AD450-1450* (Chapman 2010), although the last of these is concerned with the deserted medieval hamlet outside Raunds village to the west. Together these publications bring together a vast array of evidence garnered from over thirty-four years of fieldwork, published by Northamptonshire Archaeology. The medieval and recent history of the parish has also been covered by a further monograph; *Raunds: Picturing the Past* (Hall *et al* 1988).

St Peter's Church is thought to be of twelfth century decent, contemporary for a short time with the earlier Christian site, excavated at Raunds Furnells (Boddington 1996). Its documentary history is discussed by Richmond (2009). Only one feature of the church remains that is twelfth century in date, this is the rear arch of a round-headed window over the second bay from the west of the south arcade of the nave. The plinths and upper wall here are likely to be contemporary features. Evidence for the twelfth century chancel and tranverse chapel are slightly more speculative, with much of the building fabric having been altered in the thirteenth century.

The remainder of the building exhibits good evidence for development from the early thirteenth century into the later fifteenth century. The tower was constructed c1225, probably as a freestanding structure, and connected to the nave at a later date. The chapel to the south of the chancel is likely to be early thirteenth century, if the south doorway is original. The present arcade between the chancel and chapel can be dated

by the corbel on the east respond to c1275. The base of the central pier seems to be earlier thirteenth century, and suggests that the arcade was enlarged to the whole length of the chapel c1275. The blocked window at the east end of the chancel north wall is probably thirteenth-century and may belong with the east window and the lengthening of the chancel. The vestry, which once stood to the north of the chancel, is dated by the doorway as fourteenth century. The south arcade of the nave is c1300 onwards to judge by the polygonal piers, but following the thirteenth-century spacing. The north arcade was rebuilt around the mid-fourteenth century, and the south aisle was refenestrated to the same design as the east and west windows of the north aisle. In the later fifteenth century the nave and chancel walls were raised in height and a clerestory formed, extending the whole of the length of the nave. A vault was inserted in the tower, the south porch was remodelled and new windows were inserted in the chancel and chancel chapel.

The present church is at its fullest extent, there are no former extensions that have since been demolished. It is situated within an enclosure that has remained unchanged since the estate map of 1798. The enclosure may be based on a much earlier, perhaps even Saxon, plot boundary that survived into the medieval period. This seems probable in the context of the neighbouring excavated evidence.

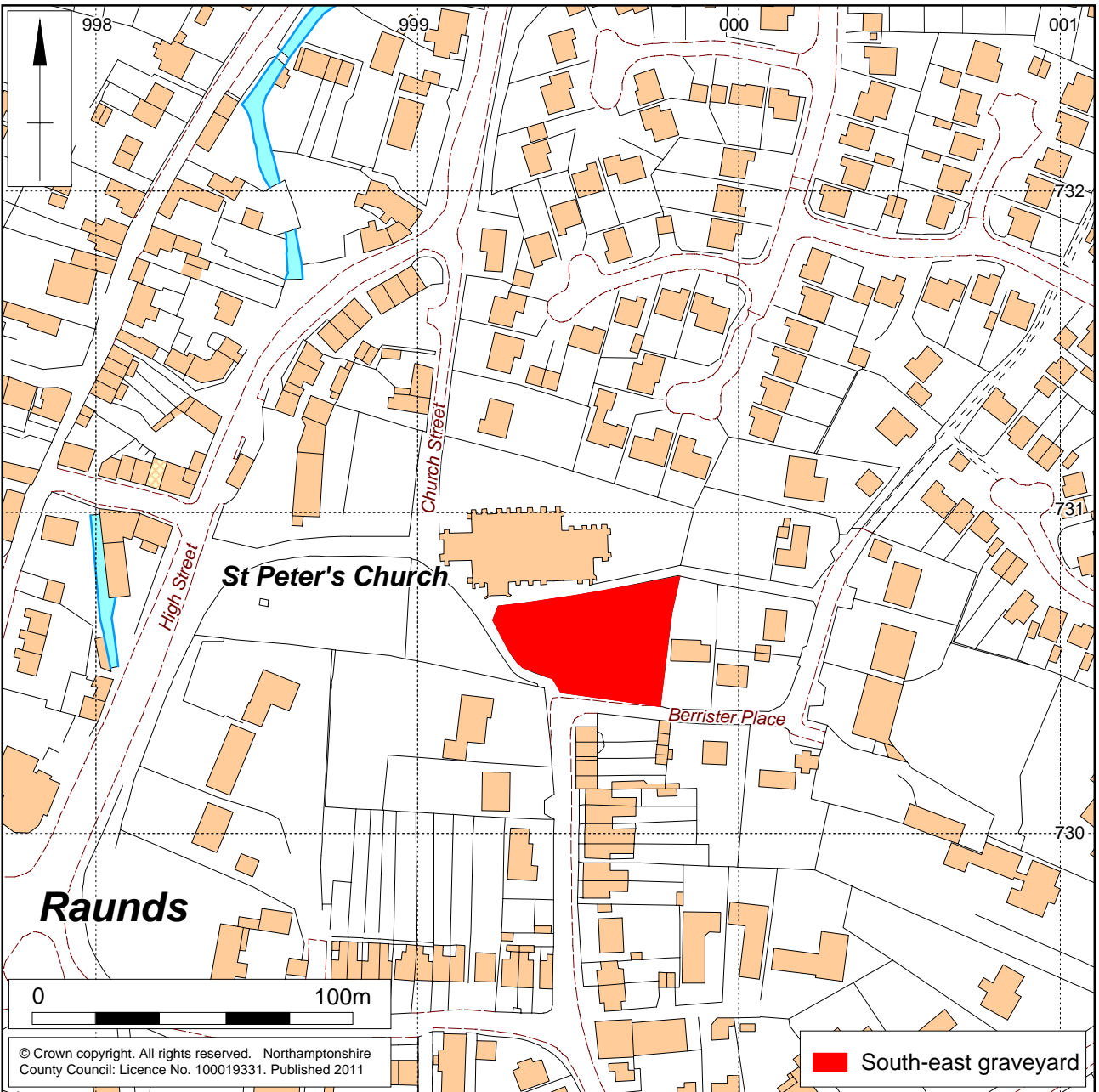
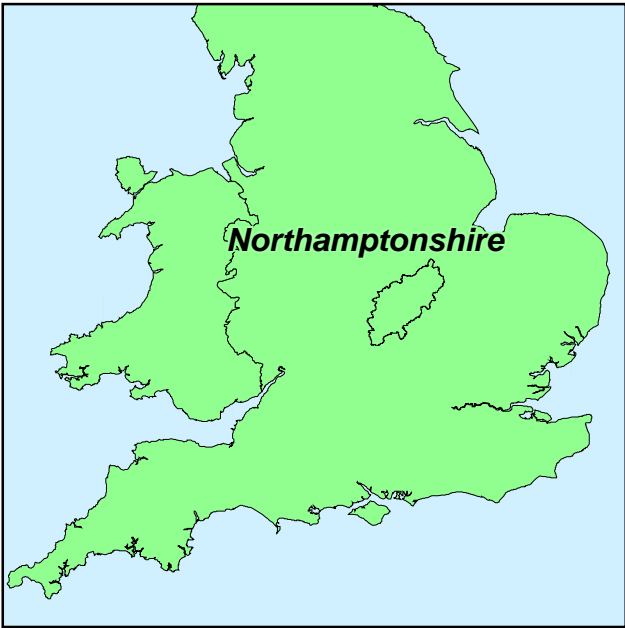
The site of St Peter's Church lies immediately south of the extensive excavations at Burystead, 1985-7 (Audouy and Chapman 2009, 121-136). These excavations investigated early to middle Saxon timber buildings, late Saxon timber buildings and plot boundaries, medieval manorial features such as tenement plots, a walled enclosure, drying/malting oven and dovecote; and late medieval to post-medieval developments. Further evidence of the former Saxon settlement boundaries were also identified in trenches to the west of St Peter's Church, at the back of the garage site.

To the south of St Peter's Church, along Park Road, trial excavations and further excavation in advance of development recorded an early Anglo-Saxon cremation cemetery of probable sixth century date (Parry 2006, 225-229).

2.2 Topography and geology

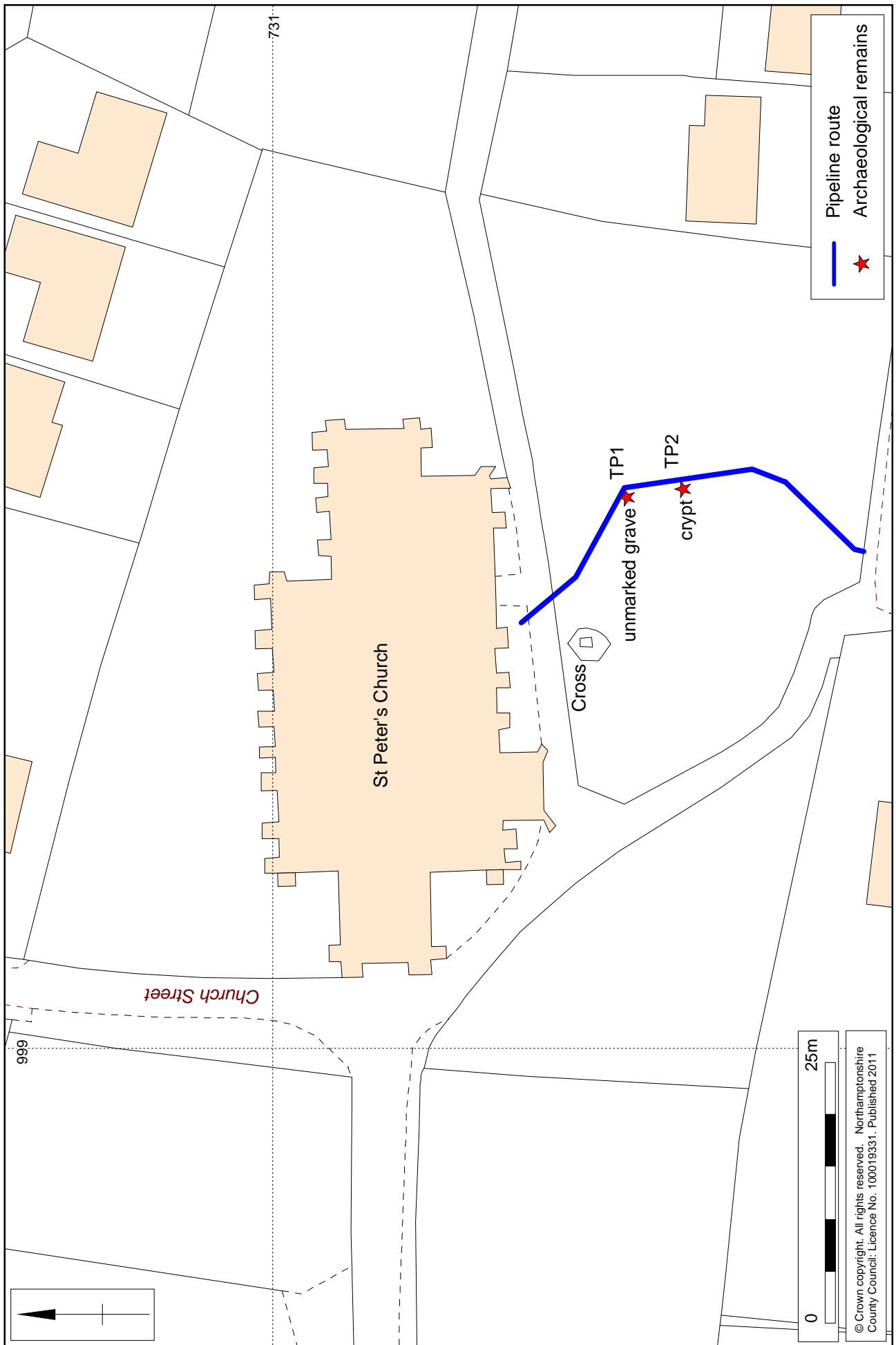
St Peter's Church, Raunds, lies on high ground and is located east of the stream that flows through the village and which has been largely culverted. This stream flows out of the village to the west where it feeds the River Nene. The south-east graveyard is c0.16ha in extent (Fig 1). The ground slopes down to the west, towards High Street from c61m above Ordnance Datum by the church tower, to c50m above Ordnance Datum in the street. The church is to the north of this part of the graveyard. The southern edge of the plot is bordered by Berrister Place; the east is bounded by private residences and the west by the memorial terrace that fronts onto High Street.

The geology of the valley sides comprises a sequence of Northampton Sand Ironstone, Great Oolite Limestone and Clay, with outcrops of Cornbrash and Oxford Clay (Parry 1996, 222). Pockets of drift material are present as red loam and areas of Cornbrash are generally thin with Great Oolite Clay exposed beneath. North End, the portion of Raunds to the north-east, lies exclusively upon Oxford Clay.



Scale 1:2000

Site location Fig 1



Scale 1:500

General site plan Fig 2

3 WATCHING BRIEF STRATEGY

3.1 Aims and objectives

The objective of the work was to supervise the installation of the new water pipe in such a way as to avoid truncation of *in situ* burials, to collect and rebury any charnel and to make a permanent archive record of any unmarked burials or features.

3.2 Methodology

The route of the water pipe was plotted in such a way as to avoid crossing marked graves, and to pass between grave plots. The principal work was conducted with a mole drill. However, in order to allow the pipeline to avoid graves several interventions had to be excavated. Pits which were 1.2m long by 0.5m wide by 0.6m deep provided access for the mole drill to be shifted between changes of direction. At the southern boundary of the graveyard heavy tree roots and loose dry soils made use of the mole drill impossible, and a trench had to be excavated by mini-digger to retrieve the trapped drill. This was conducted with a 400mm wide toothless ditching bucket under continuous archaeological supervision. Topsoil and grave earth deposits were removed to 0.6m depth, avoiding *in situ* graves. Charnel was collected and reburied.

All archaeological deposits and artefacts encountered during the course of fieldwork were fully recorded. The recording methodology followed the standard NA context recording system with watching brief record sheets, cross-referenced to scale plans and photographs (NA 2006). The record was supplemented by direct annotations of the site general plan as required. All levels were related to Ordnance Survey datum. All exposed archaeological features were cleaned to enhance their definition and photographed, but were reburied without being further disturbed.

All works were conducted in accordance with The Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (1995, revised 2008) and *Code of Conduct* (1985, revised 2010).

4 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

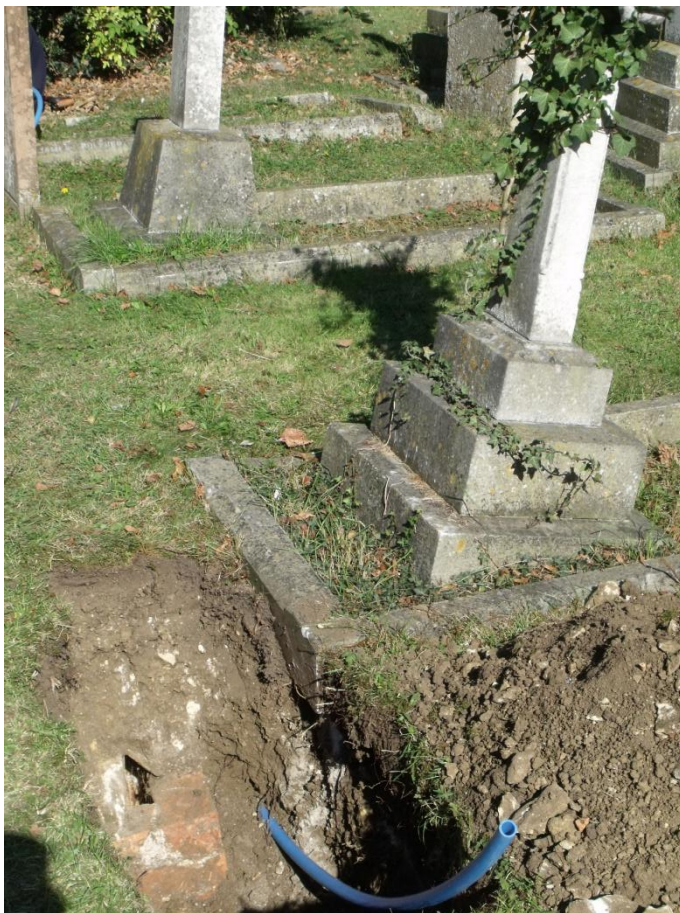
Interventions were excavated 0.6m deep into the grave earth which largely comprised soft or friable mid- to dark greyish-black and brown silty clay loam containing infrequent to moderate well sorted pebbles and limestone fragments <120mm in size.

Two of the interventions encountered archaeological remains, which were recorded and left *in situ* (Fig 2). TP1 passed close to the legs in an unmarked grave, orientated with the head at its west end, and buried 400mm deep. The test pit was moved slightly to avoid truncation. TP2 encountered a substantial brick obstruction, the corner of an unmarked crypt. The mole drill was placed in such a way as to pass the brick structure without further need for exposure (Figs 3-4).

The foot of the unmarked crypt was encountered between the grave markers of Eugene Joseph Whitney (Died March 16th 1909) and Jeremiah Marchant (Died December 22nd 1842). The crypt was built with red brick, bonded together with soft greyish mortar cement, cleaned, but not pointed and one course thick. The lid of the crypt was formed by a 60mm thick grey limestone slab, situated 360mm below the surface. The chamber within was 450mm deep to the surface of the internal grave earth and 350mm wide internally. The sides of the crypt opened outwards, suggesting a typical coffin shape in plan.



Corner of brick-built crypt, looking north
Fig 3



Crypt in relation to nearby monuments, looking north-east
Fig 4

The topsoil was soft dark greyish-black silty clay loam similar to the grave earth below, but with less stone. The topsoil was generally free draining and was 180-220mm thick across the site.

5 DISCUSSION

Given the position of the crypt in relation to the marked graves to either side, and the materials of its construction, it is probably of mid- to late nineteenth century date. The crypt could possibly belong to Jeremiah Marchant (1842), if the headstone had fallen and then been re-erected the wrong way around. The other grave cannot be dated, but probably predates the nearby headstones which appear to be a subsequent generation of burials.

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