



# Northamptonshire Archaeology

An archaeological watching brief at  
All Saints' Church, Pytchley,  
Northamptonshire  
June 2011



## Northamptonshire Archaeology

2 Bolton House  
Wootton Hall Park  
Northampton NN4 8BE  
t. 01604 700493 f. 01604 702822  
e. [sparry@northamptonshire.gov.uk](mailto:sparry@northamptonshire.gov.uk)  
w. [www.northantsarchaeology.co.uk](http://www.northantsarchaeology.co.uk)



Northamptonshire  
County Council

Yvonne Wolfram-Murray

Report 11/131

June 2011



**STAFF**

Project Manager: Simon Carlyle BSc MSc MIfA

Text: Yvonne Wolframm-Murray BSc PhD

Fieldwork: Paul Clements BA  
Yvonne Wolframm-Murray  
Anne Foard Cert Ed

Medieval pottery: Iain Soden BA MIfA

Illustrations: Amir Bassir BSc Hons

Project archive: Theodora Anastasiadou-Leigh BA  
MA (Bhm) MA (York)

**QUALITY CONTROL**

	Print name	Signed	Date
Checked by	Charlotte Walker		
Verified by	Simon Carlyle		
Approved by	Andy Chapman		

**OAS/S REPORT FORM**

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		
Project name	An archaeological watching brief at All Saints Church, Isham Road, Pytchley, Northamptonshire	
Short description	An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology during groundworks connected with the connection of mains services at All Saints' Church, Isham Road, Pytchley. Other than the expected grave-soil and burials, no other archaeological features were encountered. A small assemblage of medieval pottery was recovered from the grave-soil.	
Project type	Watching Brief	
Site status	Parish church	
Previous work	None	
Current land use	Parish church	
Future work	Unknown	
Monument type/ period	Medieval church	
Significant finds	None	
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>		
County	Northamptonshire	
Site address	All Saints Church, Isham Road, Pytchley, Northamptonshire	
Study area (sq metres)	c24m	
OS Easting & Northing	SP 860 747	
Height OD	c96m aOD	
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator	Quinton Carroll, Diocesan Archaeological Advisor	
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Director/Supervisor	Yvonne Wolfram-Murray / David J Leigh	
Project Manager	Simon Carlyle	
Sponsor or funding body	All Saints Church PPC	
<b>PROJECT DATE</b>		
Start date	June 2011	
End date	June 2011	
<b>ARCHIVES</b>	<b>Location (Accession no.)</b>	<b>Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)</b>
Physical	-	Medieval pottery
Paper	Northamptonshire Archaeology	Watching brief forms (11) Colour slides (21) black and white contact prints (20) Digital photographs (33)
Digital	Northamptonshire Archaeology	Report text and figures

# Contents

- 1 INTRODUCTION
  - 2 BACKGROUND
    - 2.1 Location and geology
    - 2.2 Historical background
  - 3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY
  - 4 THE RECORDED EVIDENCE
  - 5 MEDIEVAL POTTERY by Iain Soden
  - 6 THE SITE ARCHIVE
  - 7 CONCLUSIONS
- BIBLIOGRAPHY**

## Figures

- Front cover: All Saints' Church, Pytchley
- Fig 1: Site location
- Fig 2: All Saints Church, Pytchley
- Fig 3: The church tower
- Fig 4: General site plan showing the trench
- Fig 5: The service trench, looking east
- Fig 6: The service trench, looking west

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AT ALL SAINTS' CHURCH  
ISHAM ROAD, PYTCHLEY, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE  
JUNE 2011**

*Abstract*

*In June 2011 an archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology during groundworks connected with the connection of mains services at All Saints' Church, Isham Road, Pytchley. Other than the expected grave-soil and burials, no other archaeological features were encountered. A small assemblage of medieval pottery was recovered from the grave-soil.*

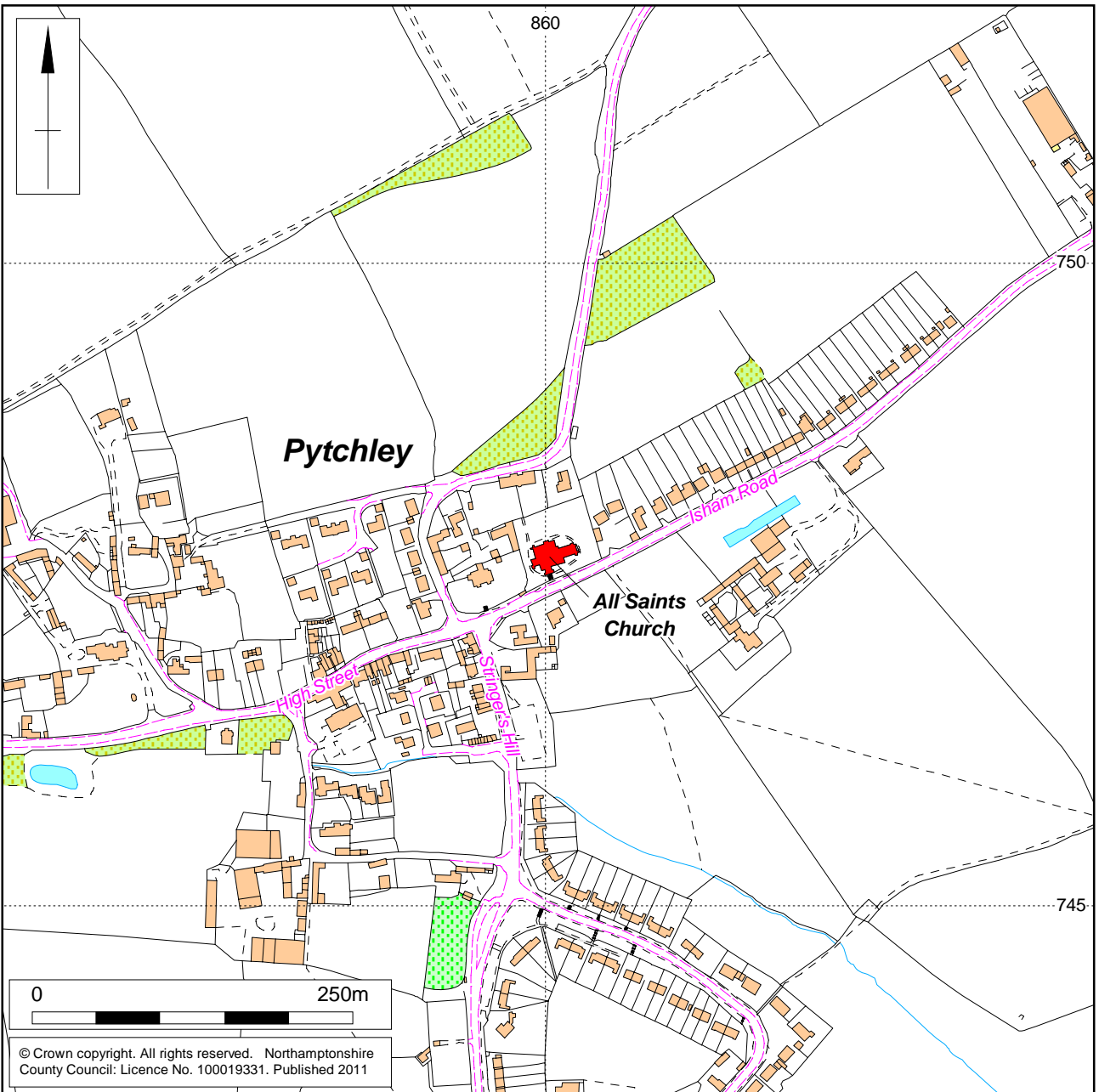
**1 INTRODUCTION**

In June 2011 an archaeological watching brief was undertaken during groundworks connected with the installation of mains services at All Saints' Church, Isham Road, Pytchley, Northamptonshire (NGR: SP 860 747; Figs 1 and 2). The work was undertaken on behalf of Priory Heritage Ltd acting for their clients All Saints Church PPC and adhered to the requirements for archaeological work as set out in a letter from Mr Quinton Carroll the Diocesan Archaeological Advisor (DAA).

**2 BACKGROUND**

**2.1 Location and geology**

All Saints' Church is located on the north side of Isham Road within the village of Pytchley, which lies approximately 4.8km south of Kettering. The underlying geology has been mapped by The British Geological Survey of Great Britain as comprising the Great Oolite Group, Sandstone, Limestone and Argillaceous Rocks ([www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex/home.html](http://www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex/home.html)).



Scale 1:5000

Site location Fig 1



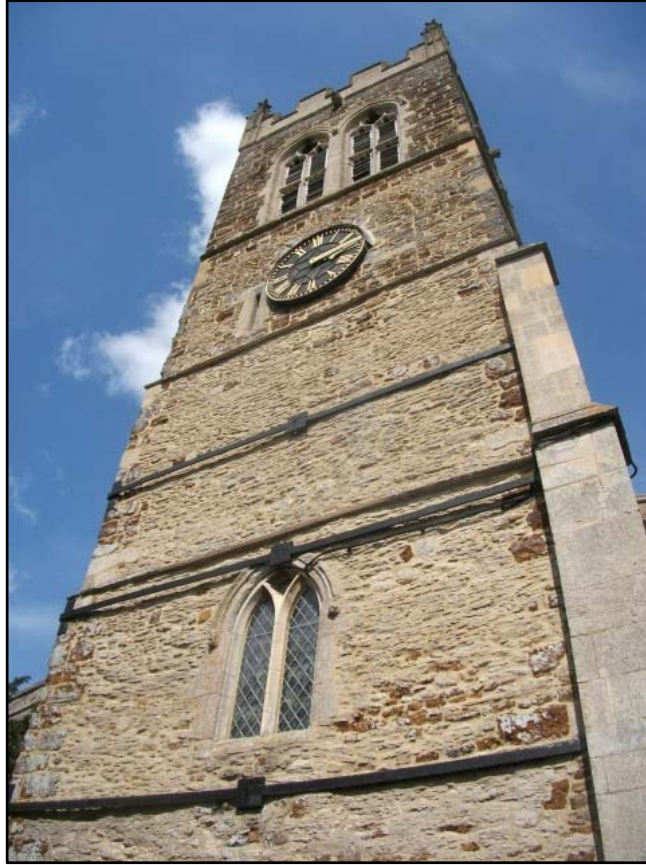
All Saints' Church, Pytchley Fig 2

## 2.2 Historical background

The village of Pytchley is referred to as *Picteslei* in the Domesday Book of 1086AD where it is recorded as being part of Peterborough Abbey. South of the church was Pitchley Hall, built between 1580 and 1590 for Sir Euseby Isham; it was demolished by George Payne and sold in 1854 ([www.pytchley-village.co.uk/History/History.php](http://www.pytchley-village.co.uk/History/History.php)).

All Saints' Church is a Grade I listed building, the earliest parts of which dates from the 12th century, with later 13th and 14th century alterations. The church was extensively restored in the 19th century (Pevsner 1990). In 1843 an older cemetery was found under the Norman arcade comprising of cists associated with late Roman pottery and coins, this in turn lay beneath burials of possible Saxon date (RCHME 1979). The tower (Fig 3) is of sandstone construction and dates from the 13th/14th centuries. An increase in height in c 1427 caused a weakening of the tower, which was subsequently strengthened in 1837 using iron banding.

The churchyard went out of use around 1897, when a plot opposite the church was made available ([www.5churches.org.uk/index.php/pytchley](http://www.5churches.org.uk/index.php/pytchley)).



The church tower Fig 3

### 3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The aims of the watching brief were to:

- ◆ Observe the groundworks connected with the excavation of the new service trench and to record all archaeological deposits uncovered
- ◆ Determine the date, character, state of preservation and depth of any archaeological deposits observed and to retrieve all datable artefacts
- ◆ Create a permanent archive and record of the archaeological information collected during the course of the fieldwork and analysis.

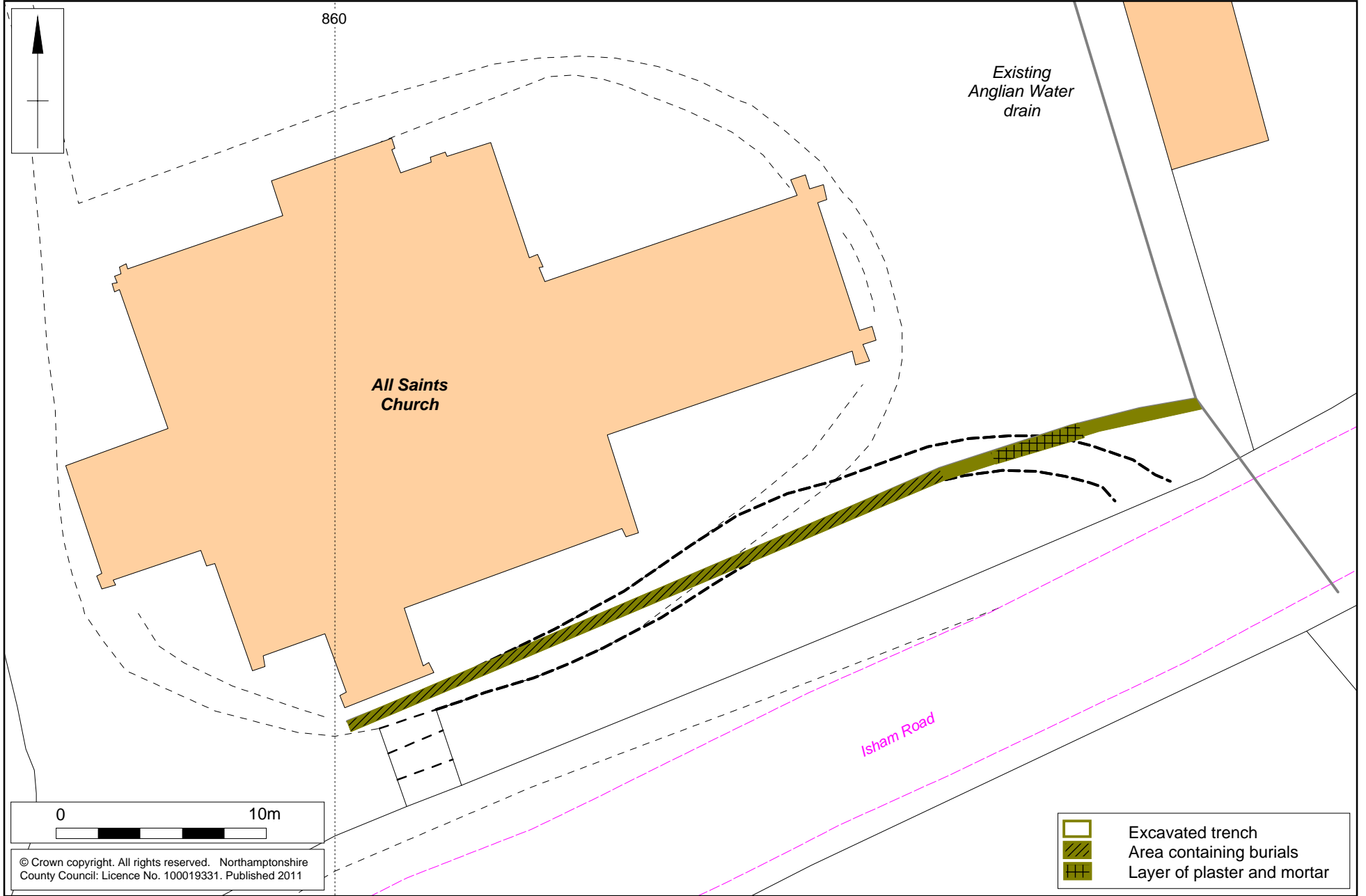
The fieldwork comprised three visits on consecutive days to the site during the excavation of the service trench (Fig 4).



Scale 1:250 (A4)

General site plan showing the trench

Fig 4



A photographic record in both black and white negative and colour slide was kept, with supplementary photographs in digital format. The written record used Northamptonshire Archaeology pro-forma sheets. The watching brief was carried out in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (IfA 2008) and the English Heritage procedural document *Management of Research Project in the Historic Environment* (EH 2006).

#### **4 THE RECORDED EVIDENCE**

The section of service trench under archaeological observation followed the line of the existing tarmac path, which extended from the main entrance of the church eastwards (Figs 4, 5 and 6) in order to join up with existing services running parallel with the eastern boundary wall of the churchyard. The service trench measured 0.5m wide and was, on average, 1.0m deep, maintaining a fall from west to east.

The natural substratum was encountered at a depth of approximately 1.0m below the present ground surface in the eastern half of the trench. This was overlain by mid grey-brown silt loam grave-soil from which five sherds of medieval pottery were collected. Within this layer two distinct burial horizons were recorded; the lower of these lay approximately 1.0m below present ground level with the second at a depth of 0.35-0.50m. Towards the western end of the trench a probable third layer was noted. In total, 35 articulated and partially articulated skeletons were recorded. The upper 0.25m of the grave-soil contained human bone fragments. Sealing this was the modern path, which was up to 0.25m thick and comprised a foundation layer overlain by tarmac surfacing.

In compliance with the requirements for archaeological work as set out by the DAA, no human remains were removed from the boundaries of the churchyard.

Towards the eastern end of the trench, no further articulated burials were noted and there was a change from the grave-soil to dark orange-brown silty clay with increased gravel content and the occasional human bone fragment.

Close to where the trench left the path, compacted light grey-brown silt, approximately 1.0m below the current ground level and up to 2.0m wide, contained frequent fragments of mortar and plaster.



The service trench, looking east Fig 5



The service trench, looking west Fig 6

**5 THE MEDIEVAL POTTERY** by Iain Soden

Five sherds of medieval pottery, weighing 167g, were recovered from the grave-soil. They are all in Lyveden/Stanion B ware (County Type Series no 320), a distinctive oolitic tempered fabric from the major eponymous industry from these two villages in north-east Northamptonshire. They date to between c1250 and c1500. None of the sherds are abraded; one fragment is from a twisted, dowelled jug handle, while another probably derives from the bung-hole of a cistern. Dark green glaze overlies a yellow-firing, white trailed-slip decoration. None are unusual or significant.

**6 THE SITE ARCHIVE**

The project has generated a small archive comprising:

RECORD	NUMBER
Watching brief forms	7
Pottery sherds	5
Colour prints	10
Black and white contacts and negatives	11
Digital photographs	33

**7 CONCLUSIONS**

Archaeological observation of the excavation of the service trench revealed articulated burials and a small assemblage of medieval pottery from the grave-soil. The burials were aligned east to west and were arranged in rows which are on a slightly different position to the current pre-19th century gravestones. These burials therefore relate to an earlier phase of the graveyard.

Towards the eastern end of the trench, material containing numerous fragments of modern building material may be associated with the restoration works carried out on the church in the 19th century.

No archaeological deposits, other than the expected grave-soil and burial were present. The watching brief was carried out in favourable conditions and the results are considered to be reliable.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

EH 2006 *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment*, English Heritage Procedural Document

IfA 2008 *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief*, Institute for Archaeologists

Pevsner, N, 1990 *The Buildings of England: Northamptonshire*, Penguin Books

RCHME 1979 *County of Northampton, Archaeological Sites, Volume Two Central*  
Royal Commission on Historical Monuments England

**WEBSITES** (Accessed June 2011)

[www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex/home.html](http://www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex/home.html)

[www.5churches.org.uk/index.php/pytchley](http://www.5churches.org.uk/index.php/pytchley)

[www.pytchley-village.co.uk/History/History.php](http://www.pytchley-village.co.uk/History/History.php)



Northamptonshire County Council

# Northamptonshire Archaeology

## Northamptonshire Archaeology

2 Bolton House  
Wootton Hall Park

Northampton NN4 8BE

t. 01604 700493 f. 01604 702822

e. [sparry@northamptonshire.gov.uk](mailto:sparry@northamptonshire.gov.uk)

w. [www.northantsarchaeology.co.uk](http://www.northantsarchaeology.co.uk)



Northamptonshire  
County Council

