

# archenfield archaeology ltd

project ref AA\_72



St Andrew's Churchyard, Allensmore,  
Herefordshire  
archaeological monitoring

Daniel Lewis  
2004

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## archenfield archaeology ltd

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Archenfield Archaeology Ltd is a multidisciplinary archaeological consultancy, offering a complete range of archaeological advice and services to the public and private sector. We specialise in giving archaeological advice to developers, housing associations and private individuals. We also undertake archaeological intervention, from monitoring to full-scale excavation; building survey; landscape and geophysical surveys and community-based historical and archaeological projects.

*St Andrew's churchyard, Allensmore, Herefordshire: archaeological monitoring  
2004*

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Cover photograph: Norman doorway, St Andrew's church



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### **Summary**

*Archenfield Archaeology was commissioned to monitor ground works carried out within the graveyard of St Andrew's Church, Allensmore, Herefordshire during August 2004. Trenches were excavated to allow for the improvement of existing rainwater and drainage systems from the church building. These followed the outline of the building from the north, around the east and finally heading south to the limit of the graveyard.*

*The trenches revealed that burials in the churchyard are within 1 metre of the ground surface. The shallowest was south of the church between the south-east corner of the chancel and the blocked door in the south wall and was only 0.25 metres deep. The grave was brick-lined and topped by stone flags, the lining going down at least 4 courses. A further burial was identified in the south section of the trench, east of a manhole and was 0.70 metres (303.27m OD) below the ground surface.*

*The only other archaeological feature identified was a substantial post-hole, also in this part of the churchyard and close to the south-east corner of the chancel. The hole was substantial, packed on all sides by large stone blocks and a partly decomposed post was still visible within this packing. It would either have been a gate-post or possibly a wooden grave marker.*

*It is possible that there were burials disturbed in this trench. At least one leg bone was observed in the east section, and several other bones were recovered from the spoil heap. However, given the size of the trench and the fact that disarticulated bones are common in graveyards, it is difficult to establish whether the bones were from an articulated burial or not.*

## 1.0 Introduction

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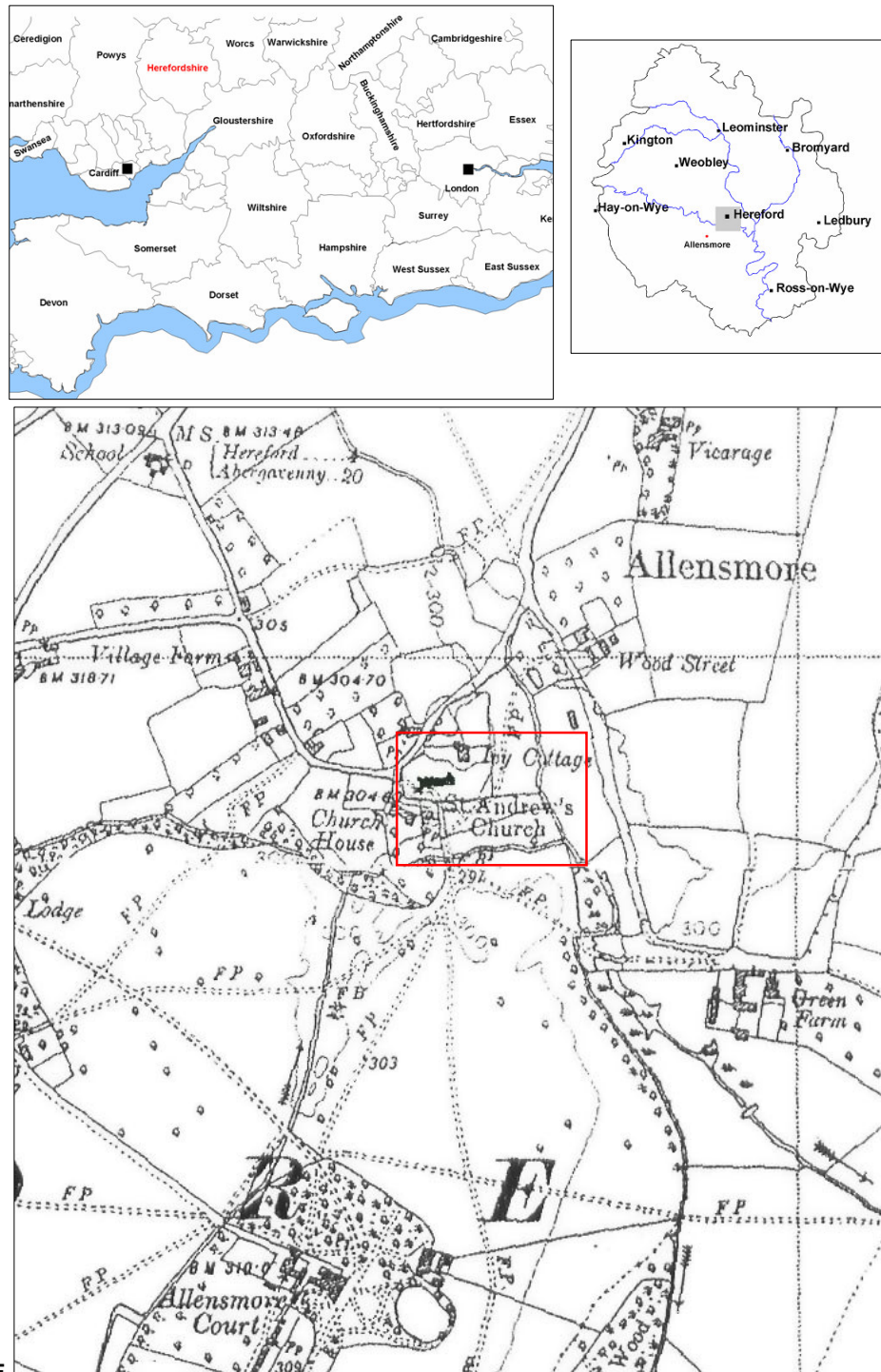
**Herefordshire Sites and Monuments Record:** Event number 38498

**Hereford Museum Accession number** 2005-83

Allensmore Parochial Church Council (the client) commissioned Archenfield Archaeology to monitor ground works carried out within the graveyard of St Andrew's Church. These works consisted of the excavation of trenches to the south and east of the church in order to improve the existing drainage systems from the church building.

A mini-digger was used by the contractors to excavate the trenches and the archaeological monitoring included the recording of any relevant information. The work was carried out from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> August 2004.

St Andrew's Churchyard, Allensmore, Herefordshire



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Figure 1: Location plan of St Andrew's Church, Allensmore County Series, Herefordshire Sheet XXXIX SW & NW 1953

## 2.0 Geological, Historical and Archaeological Background

### 2.1 Geological Background and Land Use

The geology of the area consists of beds of the Old Red Sandstone including, Downtonian, with drifts of glacial sands and gravel overlying (British Geological Survey 10 Mile Map, third edition solid, 1979).

Allensmore is a parish 4 miles south-west of Hereford. The church, Allensmore Court and Cobhall Farm its principal buildings. St Andrew's Church lies on the corner of the road that leads into Allensmore, just off the main Hereford to Madley road. There has been a church and graveyard at the site from the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

### 2.2 Historical Background

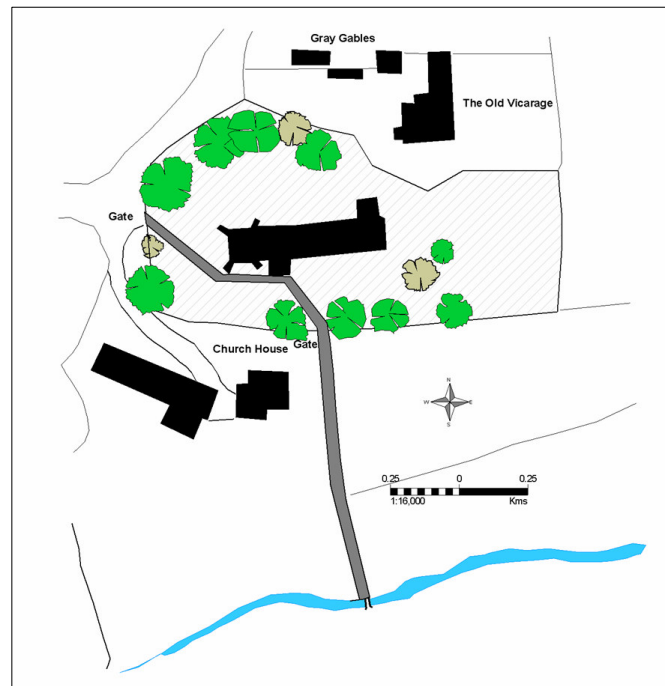


Figure 2: The churchyard around St Andrew's

In Domesday, the parish of Allensmore included the medieval settlements or hamlets of Cobhall and Winnal. Cobhall belonged to Roger de Lacy and was part of Dinedor Hundred. *'Alfward held it; he could go where he would. 1 hide which pays tax. Gerard holds from Roger. He has 2 ploughs in lordship'*. There is also mention of *'4 small holders with 1 hide; 9 slaves, male and female'*. Its value in 1066 was 50s (Thorn and Thorn, 1983).

Winnal was held by Robert son of Wymarc and was of *'3 hides. In lordship 1 plough; another would be possible. 3 villagers, 3 smallholders and 2 ploughmen with 1 plough'* (*ibid*).

In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, Alan de Plontenet Lord of Kilpeck Castle and Manor, who was a great agriculturalist, reclaimed marshland south of the Royal Forest of Haywood and named it *'Alan's moor'*. (Salter, 1998). Subsequently a very large squatter community developed in the area. These people were very poor, their houses were primitive, small and crammed in on the verges of the lanes. They grew a few

vegetables and kept pigs and chickens if they were lucky; they spun flax and hemp, gleaned fields and begged and stole to survive.

St Andrew's Church, like the churches at Hampton Bishop, Tupsley and others in the vicinity of Hereford were subject to the mother church (the Cathedral); the inhabitants being compelled to take their dead to Hereford for burial. After many complaints of the hardships caused by this practice, an agreement was reached whereby poorer members of the parish were permitted to be buried at Allensmore. A cemetery (the present churchyard) was consecrated for this purpose by Bishop Orleton in 1318 (Marshall, 1930, p2).

During the 17<sup>th</sup> century much of south-west Herefordshire (including Allensmore where there was an absentee landlord) was a staunchly Catholic area. In May 1605 this led to a local disturbance that became known as the 'Herefordshire Commotion'. The Church of England vicar, Richard Heynes, refused to bury Alice Wellington, a Catholic. He was woken at dawn the day after her death by a funeral procession of about 50 local inhabitants and by the time he could reach the churchyard Alice had been laid to rest. The vicar rushed to Hereford to report the scandal to the Bishop, and repercussions in the form of arrests and violent outburst followed lasting for some 6 weeks until the commotion finally subsided in August of that year (Raven, 1996, p10).

The tithe and apportionment, dating from the 1840s, lists field names and owners.

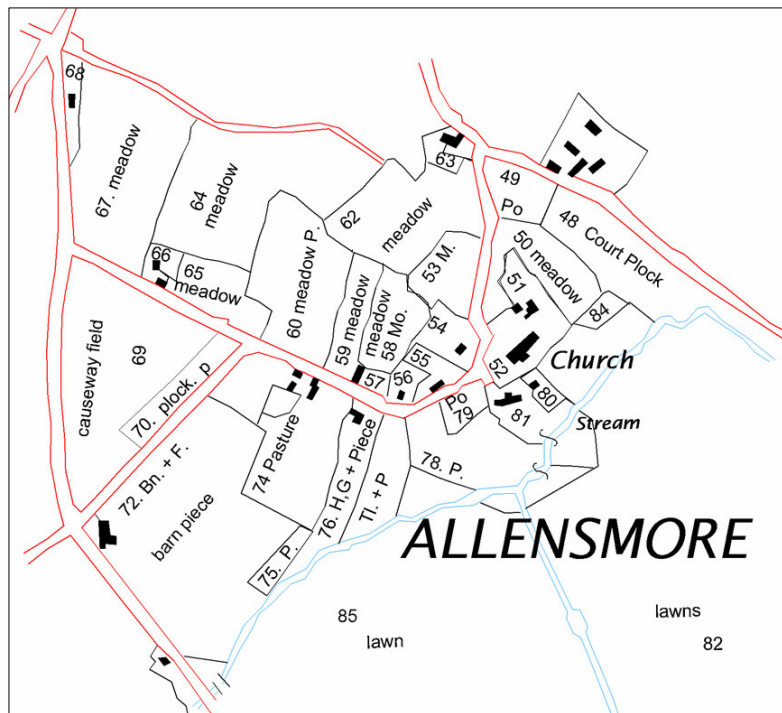


Figure 3: The 1840 tithe map

The church warden and overseer's house is listed by the apportionment as 55, slightly west of the church (figure 3). Other landowners around the church include Edmund Burham Patershall (48) James Pendergarss Esq (49) Sarah Phipson (60 & 62) Thomas Marry & Elizabeth Pritchard (57, 58, 76, 77) Thomas Morgan (56) Walter Price (53, 59, 78, 79, 80, 81) and John Powell (70, 73, 75).



### 2.3 Architectural description

St Andrew's Church was documented by the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (1967) which describes the walls as being 'of rubble with local red sandstone dressing and a roof of Welsh slate or tiles'. The church consists of a long nave and a chancel of nearly the same width, a modern vestry to the north of the chancel (on the site of an earlier chantry chapel) and a tower at the west end, which is the same width as the nave (Marshall, 1930-2, p22).

The earliest recorded detail is the western part of the south wall of the nave which contains the 12<sup>th</sup> century, or late Norman, doorway. This has a round head of two continuous moulded orders of which only the decayed base of the east outer shaft remains. In the churchyard to the south of the nave is a medieval preaching cross; the capital on top of the shaft originated from this doorway.

Early re-building of the church commenced in about 1280 and extended into the 14<sup>th</sup> century; this included the three-bay nave, the two-bay chancel and the north doorway which is now blocked. The decorated gabled south window and the timber-framed roofs were also added at this time.

The tower is of two stages and is of late 15<sup>th</sup> or early 16<sup>th</sup> century date. It has a pyramidal tiled roof which is diagonally buttressed with an embattled parapet. The two stages are separated by a string, the walls of the upper part of the tower being narrower. The top stage has two segmental headed light openings to each cardinal face whilst the north and south elevations each have small square-headed openings.

It is a possibility that the former east doorway of the tower was inserted into the west wall of the nave during extensive restoration work carried out in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Above the doorway is a recess with a chamfered segmental head which may have been the rear-arch of a former window as it is similar to the central window in the north wall of the nave. The lower section of the window has been cut away for the insertion of the doorway which is surrounded by a moulded label of perpendicular style. A former gallery was removed at this time.

The north vestry and the south porch are modern additions.

Built into the east wall of the upper tower is a re-used water basin. During the monitoring work, the old wooden bell frame was being replaced by a modern steel frame that will house 6 bells, the largest of which has just been re-cast.

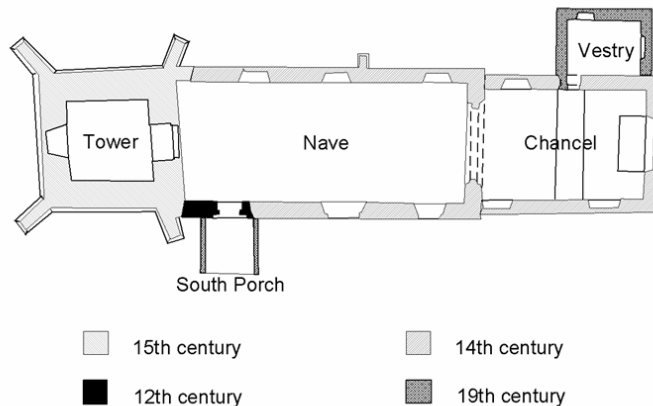


Figure 4: Phases of St Andrew's Church from the RCHME, 1967



**Plate 1: The Norman doorway**



**Plate 2: Construction break between the 12<sup>th</sup> century wall (east of the door) and the later wall of the Nave**

## **2.4 Archaeological background**

Archaeological remains within the parish of Allensmore include cropmarks at Moss Green which show a double-ditched enclosure cut by a later field boundary. On the south-west side, a field boundary respects and follows the south-west side of the enclosure, possibly representing a further bank. The enclosure is undated, but is probably earlier than the medieval period.

Allensmore is a medieval settlement that has shrunken. Settlement earthworks<sup>1</sup> to the south-east of the church consist of banks and ditches, and the remains of medieval farming techniques (ridge and furrow) are found in several fields to the south. Further earthworks to the west of Woodstreet Farm are possibly house platforms and a holloway belonging to the early settlement.

Cobhall is a small hamlet with a farm<sup>2</sup> dating to the late 15<sup>th</sup> or early 16<sup>th</sup> century, with 17<sup>th</sup> century extensions. There is a 17<sup>th</sup> century brick barn with a timber-framed roof to the south-east. There is a possible motte<sup>3</sup> to the south of Cobhall where a large circular feature has been disturbed by ploughing.

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<sup>1</sup> Herefordshire Sites and Monument Record No 7023  
<sup>2</sup> Herefordshire Sites and Monument Record No 6283  
<sup>3</sup> Herefordshire Sites and Monument Record No 16507

### **3.0 Project Aims and Objectives**

The aim of the project was to record any archaeology threatened by the groundworks.

The objectives of the project were: -

- To monitor all groundwork undertaken by the contractor
- To make a record of the extent and depth of all such groundwork
- To make a record of any archaeological features or deposits exposed

### **4.0 Methodology**

#### **4.1 *Field Methodology***

The following methodology was employed: -

- Suitably qualified archaeologists monitored all activity that involved disturbance of the ground surface
- An assessment of the archaeological significance of finds, structures and deposits was made and appropriate action taken
- Structures and stratigraphic sequences observed were recorded on scaled drawings and the position of all work disturbing the ground, and any archaeological features, was located on them
- The presence of artefacts was recorded with a description of their type, quantity and original location. The spoil was scanned for significant finds, with a fragment of gravestone, and an iron coffin handle recovered. Fragments of white and blue willow print pottery and clay pipe stems were also observed in the spoil heap but were not retained for further study.
- All descriptions of structures and deposits, photographic records and drawing numbers were recorded on the relevant data capture documents in accordance with Archenfield Archaeology's standard site recording procedures
- Significant features were, where possible, photographed next to an appropriate scale rule. Each photographic exposure was recorded in the photographic log.
- Staff carrying out the monitoring of the groundwork followed the guidelines laid down in the Archenfield Archaeology Health and Safety Policy
- Archenfield Archaeology conforms to the Institute of Field Archaeologists' Code of Conduct and Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology. All projects are, where applicable, carried out in accordance with IFA Standards and Guidance or Draft Standards and Guidance.

#### **4.2 *Processing Methodology***

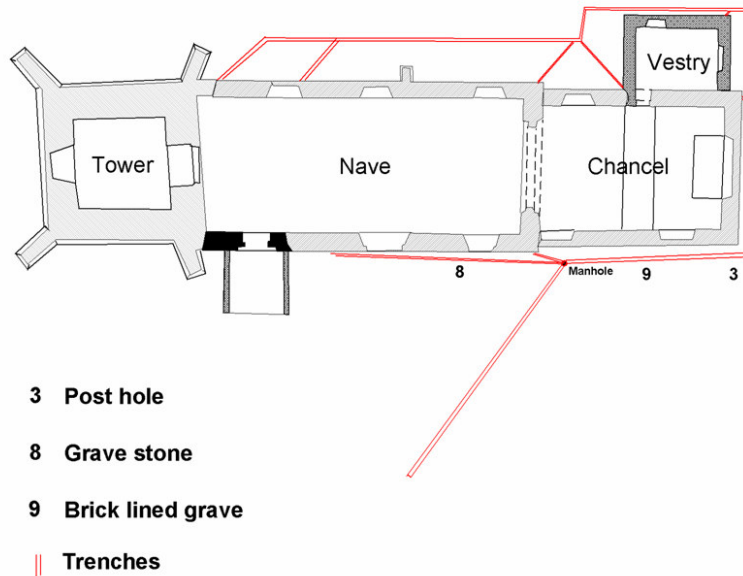
- All artefacts will form part of the project archive.
- All data were entered into a Microsoft Access relational database

## 5.0 The Results

### 5.1 The Stratigraphy

#### *North of the church*

The trenches north of the church had been excavated before the archaeological monitoring began. The main service trench ran in an east-west direction; the smaller trenches were orientated north-east/south-west in order to connect the drainpipes to the larger trench.



**Figure 5: Trench location plan**

The trench heading south from the north-east corner of the vestry was also monitored.

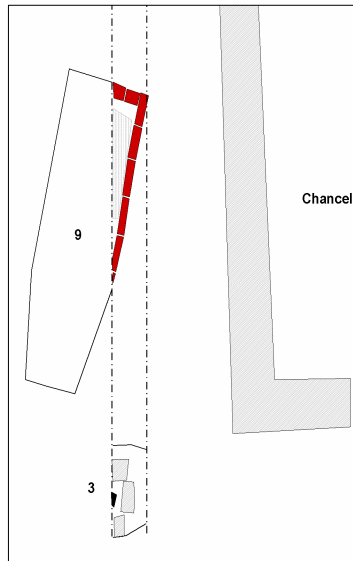
#### *East of the church*

This trench was orientated north-south and ran from the north-eastern corner of the vestry to the south-eastern corner of the chancel. The trench had one small extension that ran to the east which connected a drainpipe to the main trench.

In the north-east corner the trench was excavated to a depth of 302.33m OD through a turf and topsoil layer (1) and well mixed reddish-brown, dry, compact silty clay with inclusions of cobble, stone, and disarticulated human bone (2).

A small fragment of lead glazed Staffordshire slipware from the late 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century was recovered from the spoil heap.

**South of the church**



The trench to the south of the church was orientated east-west and ran from the east end of the chancel to the drain pipe east of the porch. The trench had two small extensions that ran to the north to connect 2 drainpipes to the main drainage trench.

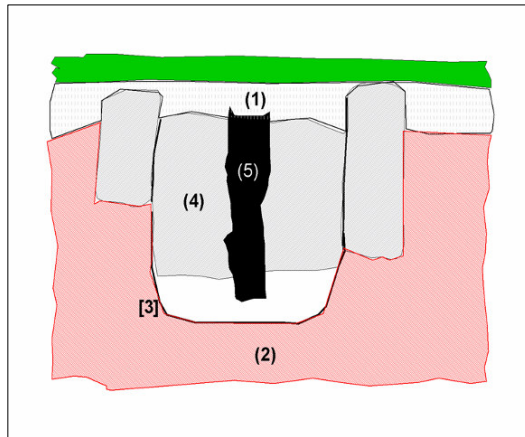
The east corner of the trench was excavated to a depth of 303.65m OD through layers 1 and 2, and to 304.23m OD in the west corner. The trench had 1 small extension that headed north, connecting a drainpipe to the main service trench.

**Figure 6: Sketch plan feature 9**



Archaeological features were found to the south of the church. A brick-lined grave was uncovered 0.25 metres below present ground level (between 303.65m – 304.23m OD) to the west of the post-hole. The grave was orientated roughly east-west and was capped with flagstones. The brick lining was at least four courses deep. The bricks were hand-made and approx 0.20 by 0.05 metres, and probably date from before 1850 as they are without a frog

**Plate 3: Brick lined grave (9)**



A substantial post-hole (3) was found close to the south-east corner of the chancel. The post-hole was packed on all sides with large cut sandstone blocks (4) and the partly decomposed post (5) was still visible in the middle. It could either have been a gate-post associated with the former path or possibly a wooden grave marker.

Figure 7: Sketch section of post-hole 3

Another gravestone (8) was left in-situ. The gravestone was standing upright but on its side and was roughly orientated north-south. The stone was close to a drainpipe, and may once have been used to channel water from the church.

### ***The Manhole Area***

This 1 metre square hole was dug to a depth of 302.67m OD and cut through layers 1 and 2. In the south section of the east-west trench, just east of the manhole, was a small human skull (10) that was recorded but left *in-situ*. This probably would have belonged to an articulated burial that was orientated east-west and was at a depth of 303.27m OD. An iron coffin handle (SF 1) was also recovered from this area as well as some iron nails that were recorded but were left *in-situ*.



Plate 4: The south trench with the machine by the cut for the manhole

### ***The Trench running south-west from the church***

The trench ran roughly south-west from the church towards the south boundary wall of the graveyard, stopping approx 1m from the wall.

The trench was excavated to a depth of 302.67m OD at the north end and 303.00m OD at the south. The trench cut through layers 1 and 2.

It is likely that articulated human burials were disturbed during the excavation of this trench. Broken fragments of human bone were observed in 3 areas of the spoil, including fragments of skull, leg bones and arm bones. It is possibly that these bones were from articulated burials orientated east-west.

Due to the width of the trench (0.30m) it was difficult to observe any grave cuts within the sections.



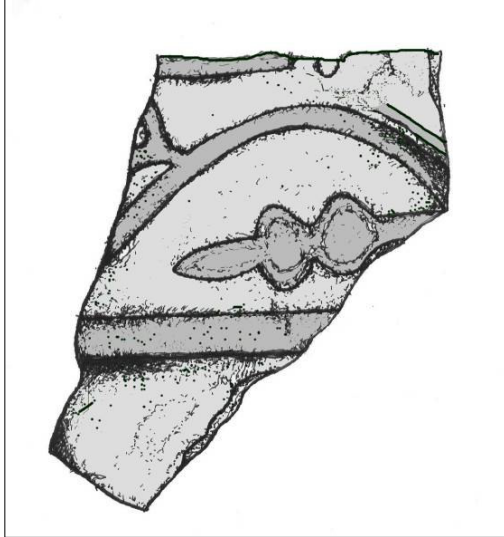
**Plate 5: Trench heading south from the church**



## 5.2 The Finds

A fragment of lead glazed Staffordshire Slipware pottery from the late-18th/early-19th century.

Two small finds were recorded from the excavations. An iron coffin handle (SF 1) and part of a possible gravestone (SF 2) will be retained in the site archive. The carving is a leaf motif, possibly from the top or border of a gravestone (figure 8). It measures approximately 0.12 by 0.20 metres, is 0.05 metres thick, and is probably made of old red sandstone.



**Figure 8: Gravestone fragment found during the excavations**

## 6.0 Conclusions

The archaeological monitoring at St Andrew's showed that human remains were present within 1 metre of the ground surface. The shallowest of the burials was only 0.25 metres below the ground surface to the south of the church and was brick lined with flagstone caps. The second burial was 0.60 metres below the surface. Both of these were orientated east-west.

It is possible that burials were disturbed in the trench running south from the church. At least one leg bone was observed in the east section, and bones were recovered from the spoil heap. However, the size of the trench, and given that disarticulated bones are common in graveyards, it is difficult to establish whether the bones were from articulated burials.

A gravestone was found that had possibly been reused in former work on the drainpipes, and a fragment of gravestone (figure 8) was recovered from the spoil heap. A reused gravestone can also be seen in the east boundary wall of the church.



**Plate 6: Re-used gravestone in the boundary wall to the east of the church**

## **7.0 Archive Deposition**

The primary project archive, consisting of the excavated material original paper records, will be prepared and stored in accordance with the guidelines laid down in the Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Guidelines for the Preparation and Storage of Archives*. The primary archive will be stored with Hereford City Museum.

A copy of the digital archive, stored on DVD and consisting of contextual and artefactual data, together with the site plan and selected photographs, will accompany the primary archive.

The client, in consultation with the project manager, will make provision for the deposition of all finds from the excavation with Hereford City Museum. On completion of the fieldwork and the processing, collation, recording and analysis of the finds from the excavation, all finds will be handed over to the museum staff, along with the project archive. Arrangements will be made with the museum for the Transfer of Title.

## **8.0 Publication and Dissemination Proposals**

Paper copies of this report will be lodged with the Archaeological Adviser to Herefordshire Council, Herefordshire Sites and Monuments Record and Hereford City Library. A short note on the project will be prepared for publication in the Transactions of the Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club.

DVDs of this report, together with the supporting archival material will be available from Archenfield Archaeology.

The complete photographic record, including the negatives, will be retained by Archenfield Archaeology.

## Bibliography

- |   |   |
|---|---|
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| Tithe Commissioners, 1842,                            | Tithe Apportionment for Allensmore Parish, Herefordshire                                  |

## Cartographic Material

- |                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| Tithe Commissioners, 1840 | Allensmore Parish Tithe Map                      |
| Ordnance Survey, 1953     | County Series, Herefordshire Sheet XXXIX SW & NW |

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