

# *Marches Archaeology*

## **1 Bird Street Lichfield Staffordshire**

### **Report on a watching brief**

November 1999

*Marches Archaeology Series 103*

**1 Bird Street  
Lichfield  
Staffordshire**

**NGR: SK 1162 0940**

**Report on a watching brief**

**Report by**  
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*September 1999*

*Marches Archaeology Series 103*

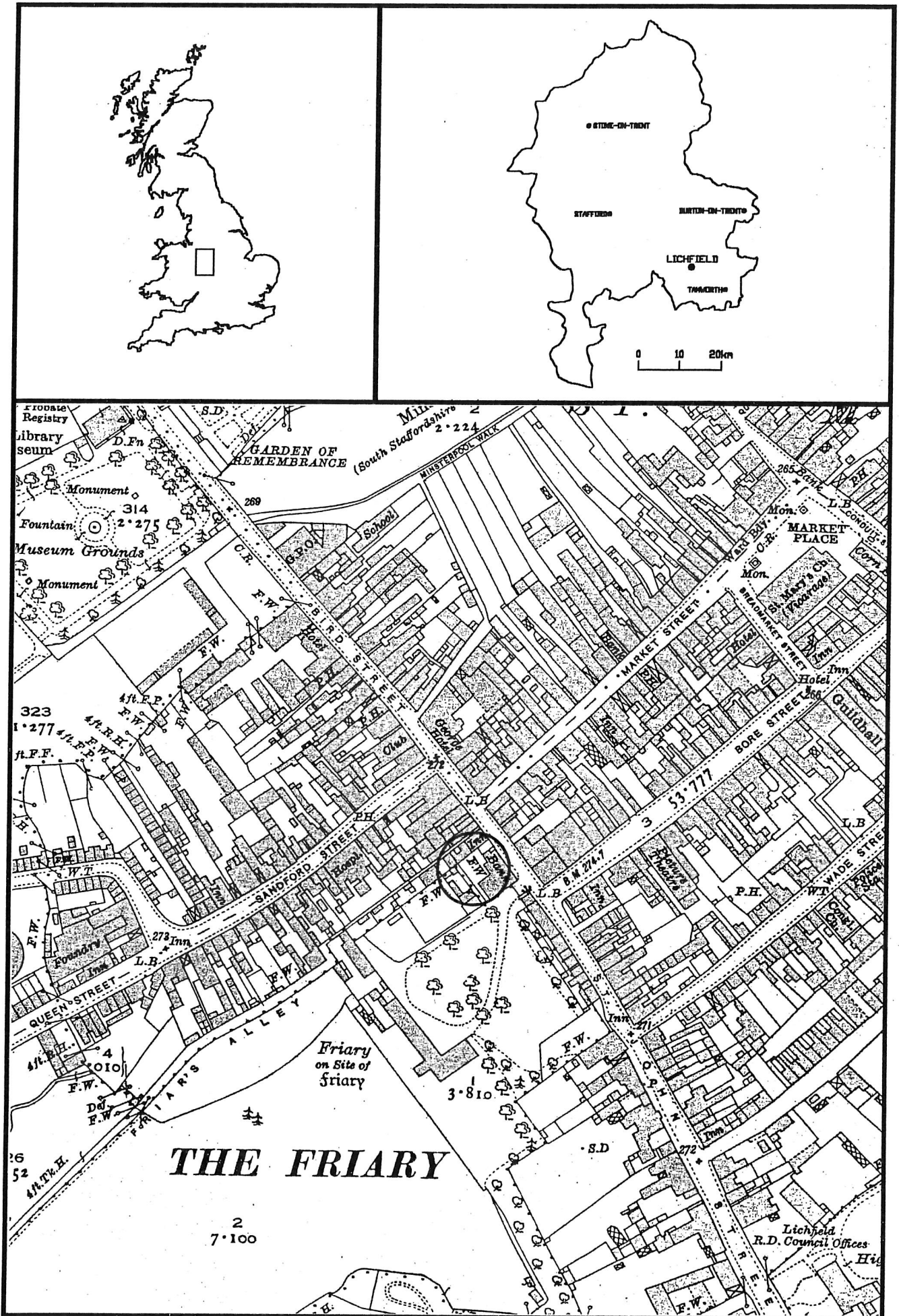


Fig. 1 Location of the site

**1 Bird Street  
Lichfield  
Staffordshire**

**NGR : SK 1162 0940**

**Report on a watching brief**

*Summary*

*A watching brief at 1 Bird Street in Lichfield revealed nine burials and evidence for the burial of at least five other individuals. The site lies to the east of the Franciscan Friary and it is assumed that the skeletons are of medieval date and are associated with the Friary.*

**1 Introduction**

Planning Consent was granted for the erection of an extension to the rear of 1 Bird Street, Lichfield. Group Northern Design Limited commissioned Marches Archaeology to carry out a watching brief on the works in order to retrieve any human remains as the site lay within the presumed boundaries of the cemetery of Lichfield's Franciscan Friary.

A 'Licence for the Removal of Human Remains' (No. A1666) was obtained on 10 March 1999 in accordance with the requirements of Section 25 of the Burial Act, 1857.

**2 Description of the site**

The site lies immediately to the north-west of 1 Bird Street, which is a L-shaped building. The proposed new extension would infill the area to form a roughly square building. The site is generally flat ground at a height of approximately 83.5m O.D. The land slopes 0.5m down to Bird Street at the east. The ground surface before work started was hard standing.

**3 Archaeological and historical background**

The site lies on the western side of Bird Street, which formed the western extent of the planned Norman town of Lichfield (Bassett, 1982; Slater, 1986). It lies directly east of the church of the Franciscan Friary which was founded between 1230 and 1237 and suppressed in 1538. The church was partially excavated in the 1930s and again in the 1980s (Welch, 1991). A seventeenth century plan of the friary indicates that the precinct extended to the Bird Street frontage. The area directly west of the site, the site of the Friary church, is Scheduled as an Ancient Monument (County Monument Number 32).

An evaluation excavation of the site was carried out in 1995 (Langton, 1995). This encountered predominantly post-medieval deposits but several layers dating from the medieval period were also found, together with a burial and a pit. Where pottery was found

in association with these layers it was of thirteenth or early fourteenth century date. It was therefore concluded that the site might lie within a burial ground associated with the friary.

The Franciscan Friary was founded in the 1230s, probably in 1237 (VCH, 1970, 268). As such it was clearly a later development than the twelfth century 'new' town (Taylor, 1969). From 1298 onwards records show that the Friary was granted an annual relief of one shilling on each of 3½ burgages. These burgages are generally thought to have been part of the founder's grant (VCH, 1970, 268) and are thought to lie in the area of the Friary church and to have fronted onto Bird Street. If this was the case the site of 1 Bird Street was within this original grant.

There are contemporary references to a disastrous fire in the Friary in 1291 but the extent and impact of this event is unknown (Bassett, 1982, 105). From the later thirteenth century onwards the Friary was granted more land and continued to flourish until the sixteenth century, the Dissolution coming on 7 August 1538 (VCH, 1970, 268).

It is not clear what happened to the site in the centuries after the Friary was sold following the Dissolution. The tenorial history of the estate carved out of the Friary has been summarised by the VCH (1990, 70). However, the information presented there for the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is at variance with the evidence of the Tithe apportionment of 1848 (Table 1) so clearly by this time the properties fronting onto Bird Street had been sold off from the main part of the estate. It is not known when this change of ownership occurred. As a desirable street area it may well have been soon after the Dissolution. Of particular interest is the ownership by the subchantor and Vicars Choral of a strip about four metres wide along the frontage (parcels 344a, 346, 347a). This unusual holding may well be very early, possibly even having been owned during the lifetime of the friary.

<b>Parcel no.</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Occupier</b>	<b>Description</b>
344	William Jackson	Robert Harding	Part of house, yard, offices etc.
344a	William Jackson, lessee of subchantor and Vicars Choral	Robert Harding	Part of house
345	Edward Starten	Robert Short	Part of house, yard, offices, workshop and garden
346	Edward Start, lessee of subchantor and Vicars Choral	Robert Short	Part of house
347	National Provincial Bank of England Company	National Provincial Bank of England Company	Part of National Provincial Bank, house, yard, offices etc.
347a	National Provincial Bank of England Company, lessee of subchantor and Vicars Choral	National Provincial Bank of England Company	Part of National Provincial Bank of England, house

**Table 1 - Land ownership in 1848**

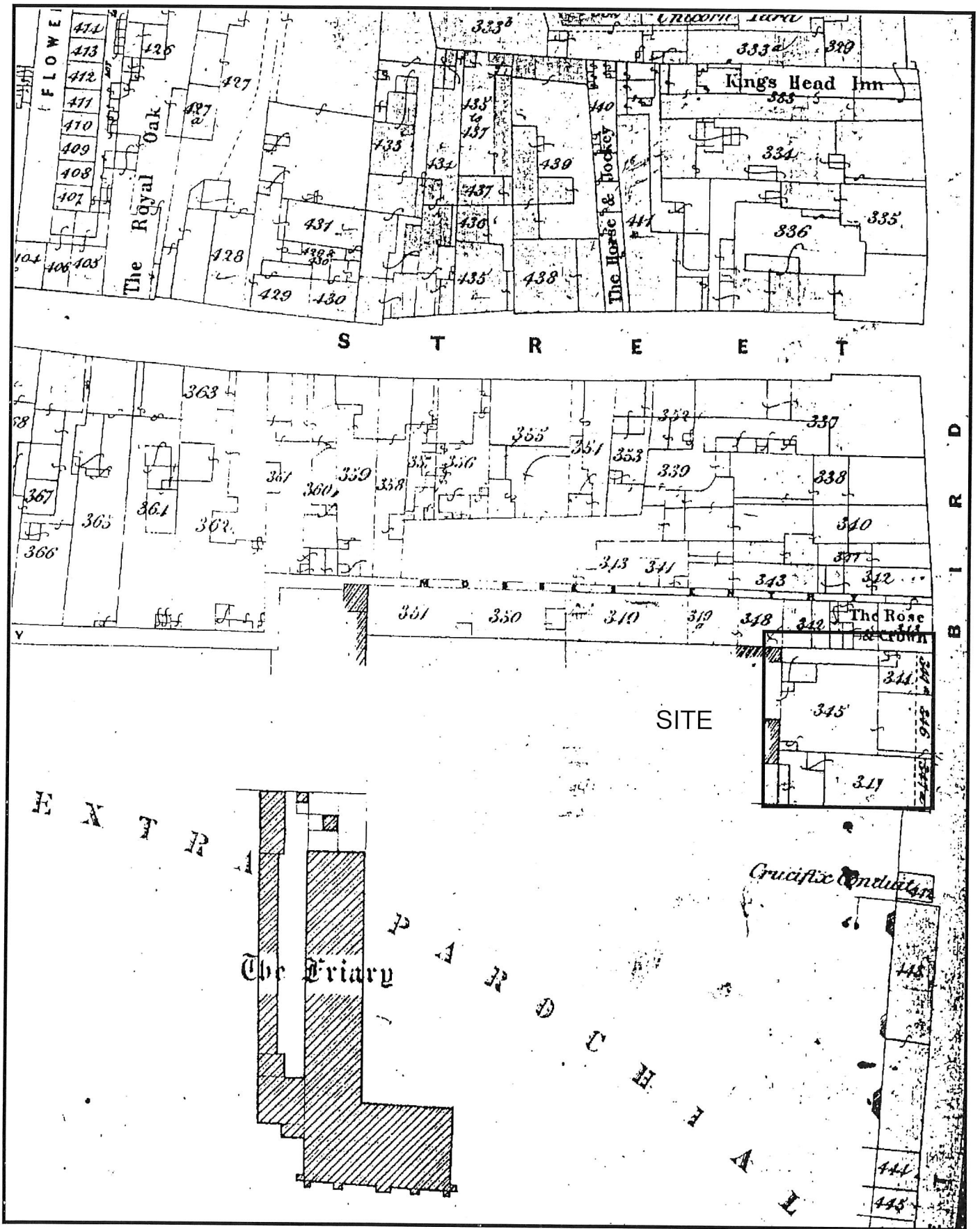


Fig. 2 Detail of the Tithe Map

Eventually the area became built up as domestic and commercial properties fronting onto Bird Street. There is extensive map coverage of the area from the 1830s onwards. This indicates that the L-shaped building had been constructed (as two separate buildings initially) by 1832. The area of the proposed extension remained open ground until the second half of the twentieth century when a small extension to the main building was constructed.

#### **4 Scope and aims of the project**

The requirement for the archaeological project did not fall within the remit of the Planning Consent but was required to fulfil the legal requirement of Section 25 of the Burial Act 1857. The scope of the works was defined in the Licence (Appendix 1).

The aims of the project were those defined by the Institute of Field Archaeologists for archaeological watching briefs:

'to allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of development or other potentially disruptive works'

and:

'to provide an opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support a treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard.

The specific objective was to recover information about the use of the site as burial ground. This included consideration of density of burial, age, sex and health of those buried and the date range during which the burial ground was used.

#### **5 Description of the watching brief**

An area 10.2m north-south by 8.7m east-west in size was reduced in level by a mechanical excavator. The work was supervised archaeologically and there were opportunities for testing of the stratification. Three narrow slot sondages were excavated by hand to test the deeper stratification. Subsequently, deeper machine excavation was carried out in a 0.6m wide trench along the west and north sides of the excavated area. This was intermittently observed by an archaeologist, and some significant deposits were removed by the groundwork contractor without archaeological observation.

Where excavation was deep enough, the natural sands [33] were encountered at between 82.4m and 82.7m m O.D. (an average of 0.9m below present ground level.).

Overlying this was a layer of soil [2, also numbered 4, 5, 6 and 15 in different sondages]. This was reddish brown soft sand with frequent small patches of grey brown material which were more silty and more charcoal rich which were probably mainly root and animal holes.

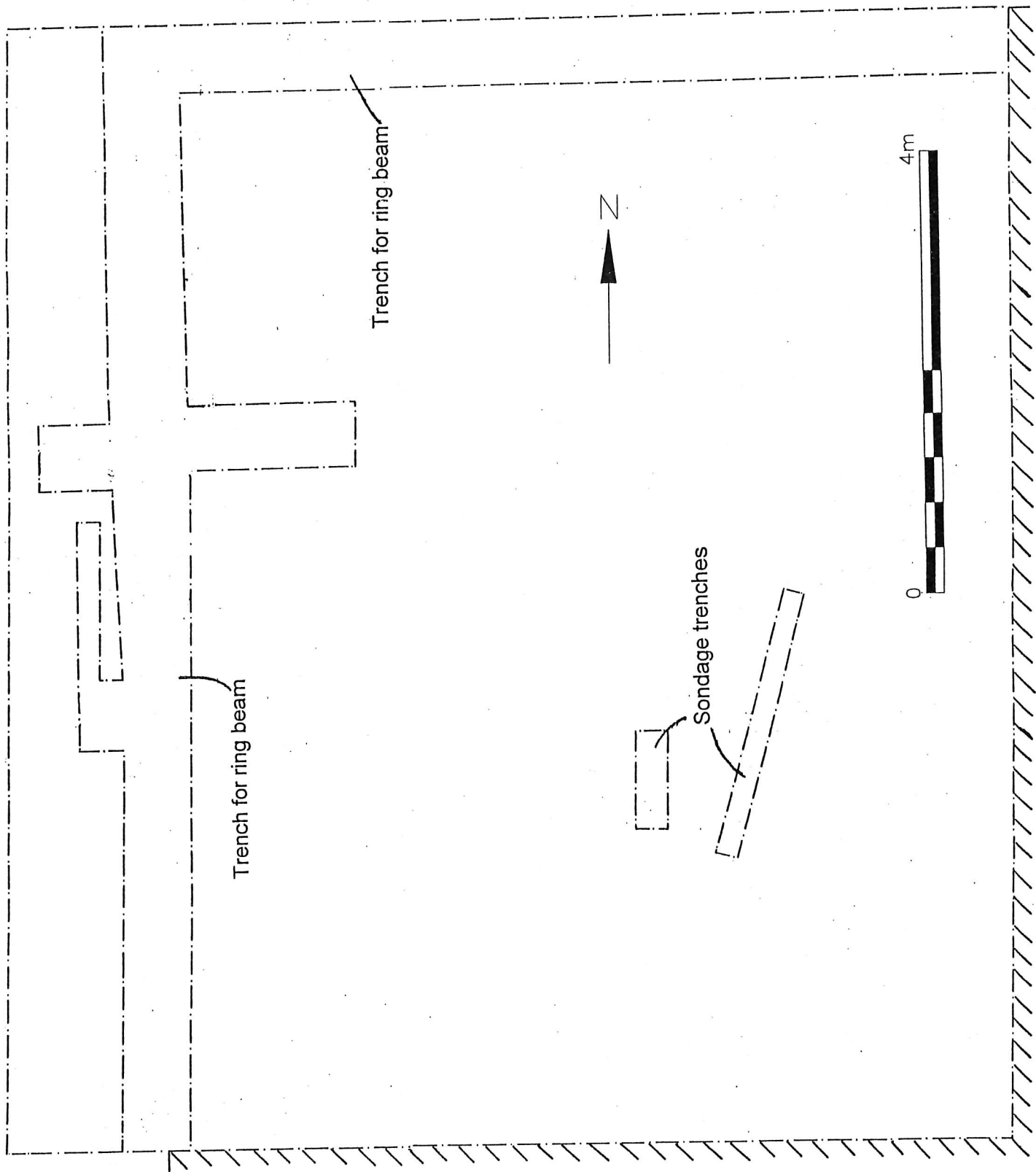


Fig. 3 Location of the trenches



This soil had accumulated during the medieval period and produced pottery ranging from the twelfth to fourteenth centuries.

Nine burials were identified cutting through this (Table 2). All were extended, supine inhumations, laid with the head at the west and the feet at the east. No obvious grave goods were found, though a single amorphous piece of corroded iron found below the left ribs of skeleton 21 may have been deliberately deposited. The only evidence for coffins or other receptacles was a single iron nail found in grave fill [25]. The same grave [26] included a 2mm thick layer of charcoal [27] below the body [24], with the backfilled material [25] above. In such 'charcoal burials' it is rare to have coffins.

<b>Skeleton</b>	<b>Backfill</b>	<b>Cut</b>	<b>Comments</b>
7	Not identified	Not identified	
9	10	11	
12	Not identified	Not identified	
13	Not identified	Not identified	
14	16	17	
18	19	20	
21	22	23	
24	25	26	laid on bed of charcoal 27
30	31	32	

**Table 2 - Graves by context**

The edges of six graves were positively identified, and the fills recorded. Three other graves were identified only by presence of skeletal material. In one case [7] this was as the body lay largely to the east of the excavated trench and only a small area was exposed, in which no cut was apparent. In the other two cases [12] and [13], the skeletal material was removed by the groundwork contractor without archaeological supervision and recording was possible only in section, where sufficient remained to indicate the orientation and extent of the burials.

In two cases (skeletons [14] and [24]) burials were truncated by later burials. In both of these graves the backfilled material included disarticulated human remains, which is thought to be derived from the disturbance of yet earlier graves.

A brown sand [8] with frequent charcoal and frequent brick and tile fragments accumulated over the soil layer through which the burials had been cut and sealed the burials. This became reddish brown with depth, merging with layer [2] below. This layer was removed throughout the site by mechanical excavator and was defined only in section. No finds were retrieved from this material.

The overlying material [1] was of eighteenth century and later date and consisted of mixed deposits including sands, silts, brick rubble, foundation trenches and service trenches. This was removed by mechanical excavator and no attempt was made to identify the stratigraphic sequence within this material.

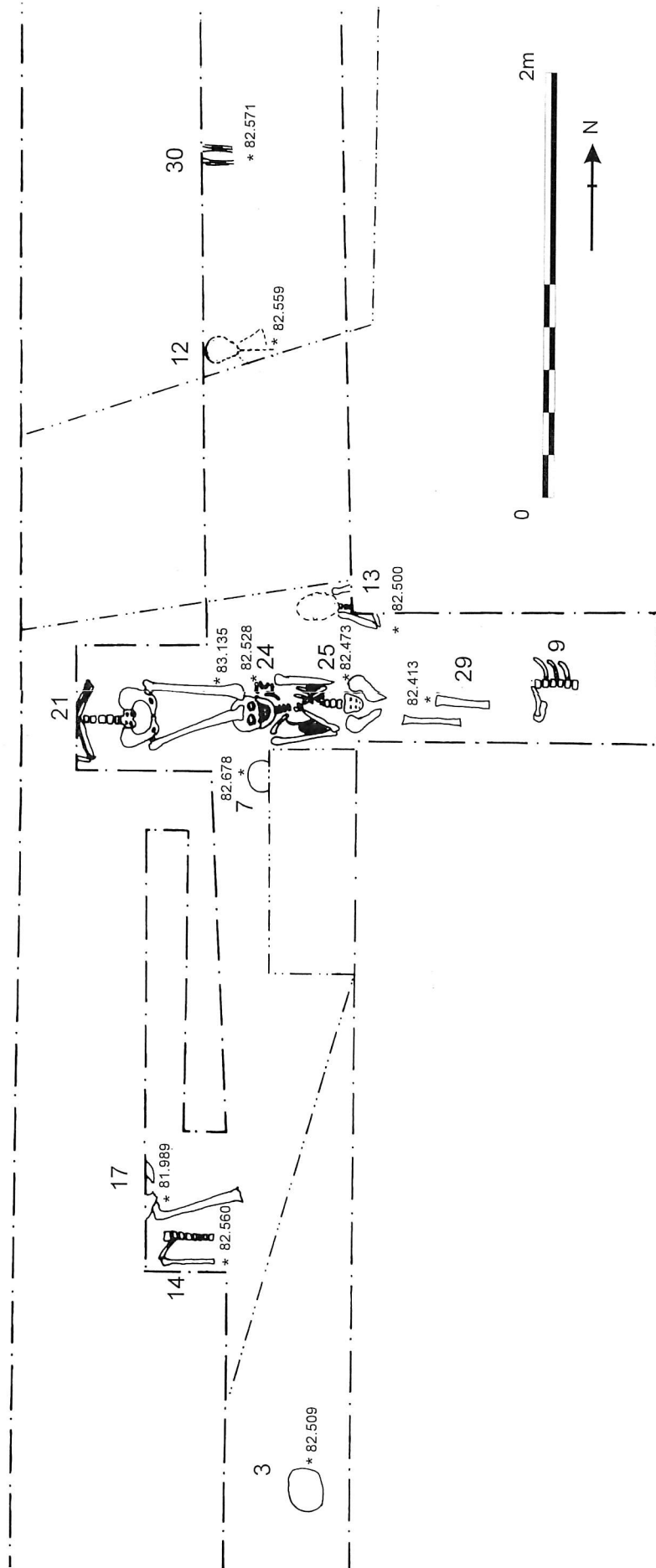


Fig. 4 Plan of skeletal remains

## 6 The Human Remains by Marianne Cole

### 6.1 Introduction

The remains of at least 14 individuals from an evaluation at Number One, Bird Street, Lichfield were received for examination. The sample consisted of 9 discrete individuals and a quantity of disarticulated bone. None of the skeletons were complete and due to the nature of the watching brief, a proportion of each was left in situ. The estimated date for these burials is between the 13th and 15th Centuries. A report detailing the inhumations at the neighbouring site of Lichfield cathedral of St. Mary and St. Chad (Loe & Rogers 1994) was used as a basis for comparison.

The purpose of this analysis was to ascertain the age at death, sex and stature of the individuals. The skeletons were also examined for any evidence for disease or trauma.

The overall condition of the bone ranged from "very poor" to "good". The majority though, were considered to be in a poor condition. The definition of "poor" in this context refers to bone that was friable and badly abraded. It is not a reflection of how much bone was present.

Condition	Percentage of sample
Very Poor	11% (n = 1)
Poor	33% (n = 3)
Fair	22% (n = 2)
Good	33% (n = 3)

**Table 3 - Condition of Bone**

The majority of skeletons were represented by less than 15% of bone. This will have a detrimental effect on the amount of information that can be gained from them.

The disarticulated bone was also considered to be in a poor condition and some of it was severely eroded. The poor quality of the bone is consistent with other remains found in the area and also from having sustained damage through mechanical excavation.

### 6.2 Methodology

Before examination each skeleton was placed in anatomical position to ascertain the percentage of bone recovered. A full inventory was made of all bone present and then each was examined in turn to evaluate the sex, age at death and stature. Estimations were made according to standards for osteological data set out in Buikstra and Ubelaker in their 1994 volume. Any evidence of pathology or bony abnormality was also recorded.

### 6.3 Sex Attribution

The sex of the adult individual can be represented on the skeleton. The areas that have been found to be the most sexually dimorphic are the skull and the pelvis. If the skeleton is complete, sex can be ascertained with 95% accuracy. This however assumes that the bones

will have the characteristics present to be evaluated. Not all adults have these characteristic features present on the bone. This is not due to any pathology or injury but is part of the range of variation that is expected in any sample. In any assemblage there will be some individuals that will be left unsexed. The findings for the Lichfield assemblage were categorised as male, female, possible male, possible female and unknown. A chart of the findings can be found below.

Skeleton number	Percentage of bone present	Estimated sex
3	10%	Possible Female
21	45%	Female
24	55%	Male
28	3%	Possible Male

**Table 4 - Sex estimation**

Only four (44%) of discrete individuals could be assigned a sex. This left five where sex could not be determined. In this instance this was primarily due to the smaller percentage of bone recovered for the remaining seven individuals.

One of the nine discrete individuals was a juvenile and was not assigned a sex. This is a common practice due to the equivocal nature of sub-adult bone. Most of the characteristics that are used to assign sex are underdeveloped until the onset of puberty.

#### 6.4 *Age at Death*

The determination of age from any set of human remains is a controversial area. Its accuracy is highly dependant upon the way in which the sample correlates to the classifications published in standard osteological texts such as Brothwell 1981. A good correlation will give more accurate estimations and vice versa. The following features were used to age this sample: the dentition, the fusion of the epiphyses and the morphology of the pubic symphysis.

Few of the individuals could be accurately aged due to the lack of dentition or other relevant bone. Most however could be determined as being adult. In total six were determined to be adult, one could be more accurately aged and the final individual was the sub-adult aged at eight years of age.

The results can be summarised as follows:

Skeleton number	Age Estimation
30	8
24	33-45
6 remaining	Adult

**Table 5 - Age Estimation**

The juvenile was aged by taking measurements of the diaphyseal lengths and these were compared to a chart devised by Stloukal & Hanakova in 1978 (in Ferembach et al 1980). It

should be acknowledged that this estimate can only be used a general guide. The technique was developed on a Slavic population where no consideration was made of the sex of the individual child. The effect of the sex of the child upon its growth cannot be accounted for and it is recommended that this age is viewed with a healthy scepticism.

### 6.5 Stature Estimation

Stature was calculated taking long bone lengths and applying them to Trotter and Gleser's 1952 regression equation ( in Bass 1995). Where sex was known, the estimate was made using the appropriate formula. No stature was estimated for the juvenile skeleton. The statures for individuals at Bird Street can be summarised as follows, all of the stature measurements are in centimetres.

Skeleton number	Formula used	Stature estimate	Margin of error
21	White Females	160	3.72
24	White Males	174	4.57

**Table 6 - Stature Estimation**

The chart below shows the similarities between the stature of individuals from the site at Bird Street, believed to be part of the Friary cemetery, and the site at the Cathedral. For the sample at the Cathedral two phases will be used in this instance, both Early Medieval (11-13th Centuries) and Medieval (13-15th Centuries). This is to provide a wider range of individuals for comparison.

Lichfield Cathedral					
Early medieval			Medieval		
Skeleton number	Sex	Stature (in cms)	Skeleton number	Sex	Stature
16	F	155	10	?M	166
33	F	164	36	M	175
35	?M	177	61	M	179
69	M	173			

**Table 7 - Stature from Lichfield Cathedral**

It can be seen from the above chart that the stature from No.1 Bird Street is within the expected range of variation for both males and females.

### 6.6 Discontinuous or non-metric traits

This refers to "any minor anomaly of skeletal anatomy not normally recorded by measurement" (Mays 1998). They do not reflect any underlying disease or trauma. It is possible that there may be a genetic factor in the occurrence of non metric traits but as yet this is not proved. Over 400 traits have been described, but in the interests of time and relevancy,

14 cranial and 8 post cranial traits were considered for this sample. The results show a very limited number of individuals showing a non metric trait. This is due to the poor quality of the sample and the lack of material to examine.

Skeleton Number	Type of Non-metric trait	Left	Right
24	Supra-orbital foramen	present	present
	Sacral Hiatus	N/A	N/A
2	Supra-orbital foramen	trait absent	absent

**Table 8 - Non-metric traits**

### 6.7 Dental Health

Of the 9 individuals represented in this sample, only one had surviving dentition. This was skeleton Number 24. Of the 32 possible teeth that this individual could have displayed, there were 26 still present in the jaw. Five of the six missing teeth had been lost post-mortem and one, a mandibular third molar, had been lost ante-mortem. There was no evidence for dental disease on any of these teeth. There was a slight calculus deposit on the dentition. Calculus is thought to reflect the general dental hygiene of the individual. However it is a substance that often flakes off either during excavation or cleaning and thus its true extent can never be verified. The state of this skeleton's dentition is within the expected range for its sex and age.

### 6.8 Pathology

Skeletal evidence for pathology can tell us about the state of health of the individual, less often it can point to a cause of death. It must be appreciated though, that not all diseases manifest themselves on the human skeleton. The types of pathology that are most commonly found on skeletal material can be divided into six categories. These are: joint disease, trauma, infection, less common are congenital disease, neoplasms and metabolic disorders. Twelve of the fourteen possible skeletons displayed no evidence of disease on the bone. The majority of these had less than 10% bone present and so it cannot be ascertained whether the individuals were free from skeletal pathology or that the relevant bone has not been recovered.

Skeleton number 14 showed evidence of DISH or Diffuse Idiopathic Skeletal Hyperostosis. This was seen in the thoracic vertebrae that had fused in the characteristic "dripping candle wax" pattern (Rogers & Waldron 1994). A formal diagnosis would require at least four thoracic vertebrae to be fused. This skeleton was poorly preserved and only two vertebrae were found intact. These two vertebrae were considered sufficient to support the diagnosis of DISH. Other fragments also displayed characteristic bone changes. DISH is more commonly found in males and in people over the age of 50. DISH is being increasingly found at monastic sites and there is a recognised connection with obesity or adult onset diabetes (Resnick & Niwayama 1995).

DISH can be considered as a type of joint disease. This was the only manifestation of joint disease found in this assemblage. Joint disease is the most common form of pathology found

on archaeological skeletons. The lack of it in the Bird Street material is thought to be due to the low quantity of bone recovered.

Skeleton number 24 showed evidence of spina bifida occulta. This manifests in the skeleton as an open canal along the back of the sacrum where the posterior neural arch has not fused. This is not the same condition as spina bifida aperta or cystica where disability is often a consequence. Spina bifida occulta is asymptomatic and there is no evidence that the individual would have had any adverse effects from this condition. Some authors list spina bifida occulta as a non metric trait due to its benign nature. The prevalence in modern populations is 5-25 % and is likely that this is a good reflection of how common it was in the past.

#### 6.9 *Trauma*

Several of the bones bore marks that could possibly have been weapon injuries or cutmarks. It was more likely though, that these were post-mortem artefacts, either caused by processes at work in the soil or by mechanical damage on excavation. Several of the bones were sent for radiographic analysis. The consultation concerning these x-rays confirmed that they were post-mortem in origin and were not caused at or around the time of death.

#### 6.10 *Disarticulated Bone*

Disarticulated human bone was presented for examination from several separate contexts. The minimum number of individuals represented was five. This was ascertained by noting any duplication of bones within the assemblage and noting any anomalies in bone size or shape that would indicate a juvenile. At least one male and one female were present in this set. Sexing was carried out using the same criteria as with the articulated remains. Several of the bone fragments showed pathology. Included here are second and third cervical vertebrae fused together showing eburnation (or excessive wear) to the odontoid peg of the second cervical vertebra. Other vertebral bodies showed prolific osteophyte growth.

It was noted that at least one juvenile was present. It was not possible to age this individual. Mixed in with the human bone were 17 animal bone fragments, these were found to be sheep, pig and possibly cow bone. This represents a typical domestic assemblage.

Whilst it remains a possibility, there was no evidence on the bone to suggest that any of this disarticulated bone belonged with the articulated remains.

#### 6.11 *Conclusions and discussion*

It can be concluded that this sample represents the remains of nine discrete burials including one juvenile of approximately eight years of age. Included with this group for study were several bags of disarticulated bone. This represents at least five individuals, one of which was again a juvenile, but of unknown age. The state of preservation of these remains was poor. Most of the individual skeletons had less than 15% bone present. On comparison with material from the Lichfield Cathedral site, this is what would be expected. Neither sample reports good preservation or bone quality. This places limits upon the amount of useful information that can be gathered.

In total it can be stated that there were at least three females and three males present. There were also at least two juveniles. Several sets of sub-adult remains were found at the Cathedral site and the inclusion of children in a Friary cemetery does not represent anything unusual. No comment can be made concerning the dental health of this sample as there are too few individuals with surviving dentition.

Several of the bones carried post-mortem markings that resembled trauma. Full radiographic analysis proved that these marks were post mortem artefact only. Two of the skeletons displayed notable pathology. Skeleton 24 showed characteristics of spina bifida occulta. An asymptomatic condition that is reasonably common in archaeological samples. Skeleton 14 had DISH. This a type of joint disease that is being increasingly found in monastic sites.

The figures for age, sex and stature all correspond well with the sample from the Cathedral and overall the two sites fit well together. The state of preservation is similar but this has unfortunately limited the amount that can be learned from this site.

## 7 **The Pottery** by *Stephanie Rátkai*

### 7.1 *Methodology*

All the pottery was examined macroscopically. Following Ford (1995) the pottery has been divided into three groups: iron rich sandy utilitarian ware, Midlands white ware and iron rich sandy table ware. Within these groups there were variations in fabric which were noted. Pottery was quantified by sherd count and minimum number of rims present.

### 7.2 *The pottery*

A total of 63 sherds were recovered from Bird Street. Of these 18 were post-medieval, the remainder being medieval (Table 8). The quantity of pottery within Ford's three groups is as follows:

iron rich sandy utilitarian ware - 21 sherds (12th - 14th centuries)

iron rich sandy table ware - 6 sherds (12th - 14th centuries)

Midlands white ware - 13 sherds (13th - 14th centuries)

In addition there was a single Midlands purple ware sherd and a buff ware sherd which resembled Chilvers Coton C fabric (Mayes and Scott 1985). Two unusual non-local fabrics were represented. These were two sherds of Warwickshire grey/black ware (Rátkai 1990, fabric 121) and a single sherd with volcanic rock inclusions. The latter sherd was paralleled by pottery from Wolvey, north Warwickshire (Rátkai 1998), the inclusions for which were thought to derive from the near-by Caldecote volcanic series, c 11 kilometres north of Nuneaton. Warwickshire grey/black wares have a wide distribution in Warwickshire though as yet they are unsourced and seem to have their floruit in the 13th century although there is a likelihood of some sherds being of later 12th century date. The fabric tempered with volcanic rock has not been commonly found in Warwickshire but the pottery from Wolvey suggests a 12th - 13th century date.



Context	Date
1	18th century (residual 17th century pottery)
2	13th - 14th century
4	12th - 13th century
6	12th - 13th century
16	13th - 14th century
19	13th - 14th century
22	13th - 14th century
25	13th - 14th century

**Table 9 - spot dating**

There were few form sherds. These were limited to a bowl rim in buff ware (u/s), a squarish bowl rim in white ware and a white ware cooking pot/jar rim, both from context 25. Some of the white ware was glazed and there was one red painted sherd.

Two of the utilitarian sandy ware fabrics resembled cooking pots from Stafford Castle (Rátkai in prep, Fabric group D11-D13). Likewise some of the glazed iron rich sandy table ware fabrics resembled pitchers from the castle bailey. These fabrics seem to date to the 12th - 13th centuries at the castle.

### 7.3 Discussion

Since Bird Street is close to Sandford Street, where a quantity of medieval and later pottery was unearthed, a comparison of the two groups is of interest. There is a comparatively greater proportion of iron rich sandy utilitarian ware at Bird Street, whereas at Sandford Street white wares predominate (56 sherds to 23 iron rich sandy utilitarian ware sherds).

At Drayton Bassett (Ford, 1995) the utilitarian wares occurred earlier than the white wares although there is an overlap in the use of the two wares in the 13th - 14th centuries. Clearly, with such a small group of pottery it is difficult to draw firm conclusions. However, the comparatively greater quantity of iron rich sandy utilitarian ware may indicate some earlier occupation than Sandford Street, possibly in the 12th century.

There was only one late medieval sherd at Bird Street, an unstratified Midlands purple sherd. This is in contrast to Sandford Street, although the small size of both assemblages may have skewed the data. However, there is a possibility that Bird Street was less intensively occupied in the later medieval period.

## 8 Other finds

Two iron small finds were registered from grave fills. One (SF 1, context 22) was an amorphous iron object 50mm x 50mm x 25mm. The other (SF2, context 25) was a flat headed nail, 53mm long, possibly from a coffin.

Clay pipe was found only in modern overburden [1] and in unstratified deposits. The only other category of material recovered was ceramic roof tile, which was recovered from modern overburden [1], unstratified deposits and grave fills [19] and [31].

## 9 Discussion

The earliest deposit above the natural sands is dated by ceramics to the thirteenth or fourteenth century, by which time the friary occupied the site. Although there was some earlier pottery from the site this was in later contexts. Accordingly the land use of the area before *circa* 1230 is unclear. No deposits or features from this period were found in the foundation trenches or the sondages and this may suggest that the area was not fully burgaged at this time.

The only deposits and features relating to the land use during the friary's lifetime are from a cemetery. The shallowest human remains were only 400mm below the current ground surface (83.13m O.D.). The deepest remains revealed were some 1.15m lower than this and it is entirely possible that yet deeper burials could exist.

The extent of the disturbance of the cemetery deposits by the watching brief was limited to the foundation trenches at the north and west of the site. The evidence is therefore partial but as far as can be ascertained these were standard Christian burials, with no evidence of coffins. The single charcoal burial [24] is a type more common in the later Saxon period and into the twelfth century (Schofield, 1988, 28).

The dating of the burials can only be broadly established as thirteenth and fourteenth centuries from the ceramic evidence. Within this period there were at least three 'generations' of burials. Much ink has been spilt in attempts to identify what length of time there is between 'generations' and although a notional length of 20-30 years is often suggested there is no certainty of this. There was no pottery later than the fourteenth century associated with any of the burials but some of the latest grave fills ([10] and [31]) produced no pottery. The direct evidence suggests, then, that the area had ceased to be used as a cemetery by the end of the fourteenth century. This evidence, however, may be skewed by the limited nature of the watching brief and it cannot be ruled out that the cemetery in this area continued to the Dissolution.

The demography, similarly, gives only fragmentary evidence. The presence of at least two juveniles and three females (as well as three males) in a friary cemetery is good evidence that burial within the precinct was not restricted to the members of the community. This is not uncommon, as patrons and donors were often allowed to be buried within the curtilage in recognition of their financial contributions and in the apparent hope of being closer to God than would be the case in a parish cemetery. It is also possible that the women and children were employed within the friary and were therefore allowed to be buried here.

The state of health of the population was relatively good, insofar as could be ascertained from a limited sample. The absence of trauma is noted but not considered significant. The presence of one case of DISH on a friary site is not unusual, and may reflect the relatively good diet available within the community.

The post-medieval evidence was not closely examined on site, but it appears that the site remained open after the Dissolution until the eighteenth century. The documentary and cartographic sources do not give any further detail on the nature of the land use until the construction of the National Provincial Bank.

## **10 Conclusions**

The interest of the site clearly centres on the use of the area as a cemetery. The presence of at least two children and three adult females is proof that this part of the cemetery was not the sole preserve of the friars. The assemblage is too small to be of great statistical significance but is sufficient to shed some light on the layout of the friary and to provide information on an understanding of the economic structure of the community.

Of secondary interest is the absence within the areas dug sufficiently deep of evidence for any archaeological features or deposits earlier than the tenure of the land by the friary. This tends to suggest that this part of the western side of Bird Street was not fully built up by the early thirteenth century. However, it must be stressed that this evidence is incomplete as it relates to only one part of the backland, and not to the frontage.

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## 12 The archive

The archive is currently held by Marches Archaeology awaiting transfer to an approved repository. It is intended to deposit the archive at The Potteries Museum and Art Gallery.

The archive consists of:

1 context index sheet

33 context sheets

1 sheet of levels

1 index of small finds

2 small finds record sheets

23 finds recording sheets

3 photographic recording sheets

1 film of colour transparencies

2 films of black and white negatives

1 A1 sheet of site drawings

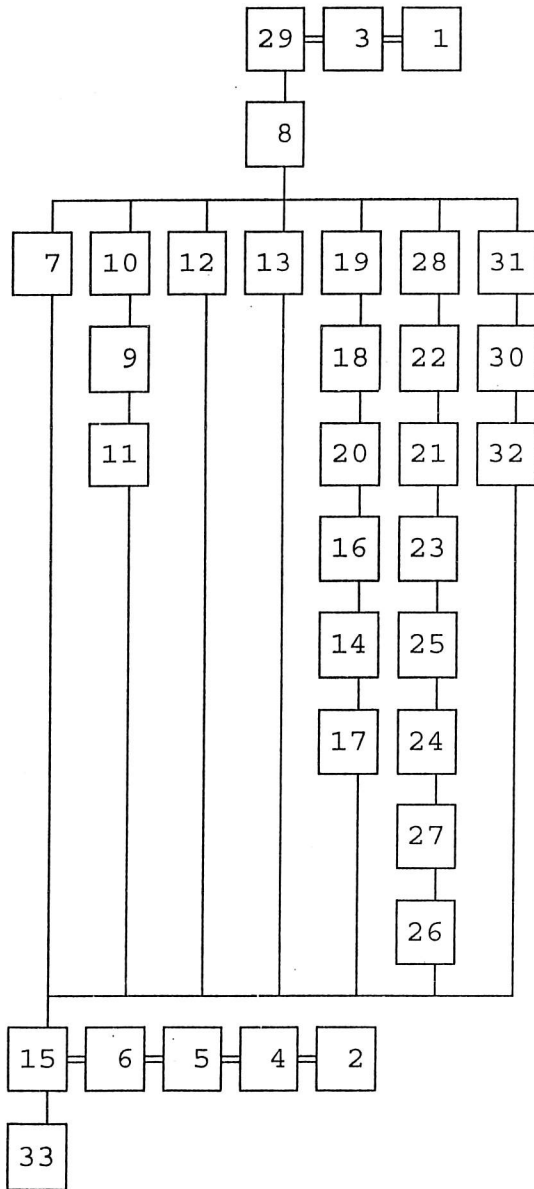
1 A1 sheet of inked drawings

1 site matrix

1 computer disk (Lotus Approach 97 - database; Harris matrix (Bonn v.4.0))

This report

13 The site matrix





Licence Number A1666

File Number BCR/99 5/6/1

## LICENCE FOR THE REMOVAL OF HUMAN REMAINS

1. In virtue of the power vested in me by Section 25 of the Burial Act, 1857 (20 & 21 Vic., cap.81), I hereby grant Licence for the removal of the remains of **person or persons unknown which may be disturbed in the process of an archaeological evaluation excavation from the place in which they are now interred in the place known 1 Bird Street, Lichfield, Staffordshire .**
2. It is a condition of this Licence that the following precautions shall be observed;
  - a) **The removal shall be effected with due care and attention to decency;**
  - b) **The ground in which the remains are interred shall be screened from the public gaze while the work of removal is in progress;**
  - c) **The removal shall be to the satisfaction of the Chief Environmental Health Officer for the Lichfield District Council and shall be in accordance with any additional restrictions he may impose;**
  - d) **The remains shall, if of sufficient scientific interest , be examined by a suitably qualified person under the arrangements of Marches Archaeology;**
  - e) **The remains shall, if of sufficient scientific interest, be retained for archival storage at the University of Bristol under the arrangements of Marches Archaeology or they shall be conveyed to a burial ground in which interments may legally take place and there be reinterred and in any intervening period they shall be kept safely, privately and decently.**
3. This Licence merely exempts from the penalties which would be incurred if the removal took place without a Licence; it does not in any way alter civil rights. It does not confer the right to bury the remains in any place where such right does not already exist.
4. This Licence expires on the **31 May 1999**

*Jack Howard*

**HOME OFFICE**  
**10 March 1999**

**One of Her Majesty's Principal  
Secretaries of State**





# BSL99A Weight and quantity of finds by context

Context number	Weight	Quantity
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## Clay pipe

0	20	2
1	50	3
	<u>70</u>	5

## Nails

25		1	Flat headed, 53mm long
	<u>0</u>	1	

## Other iron objects

22		1	Small find 1: amorphous iron blob
	<u>0</u>	1	

## Pottery

0	850	21	9 med, 12 post-med
1	550	5	4 post-med, 1 med
2	110	14	med
4	15	3	med
6	10	1	med
16	60	5	med
19	40	3	med
22	20	3	med
25	100	9	med
5	10	1	
10	10	1	
	<u>1775</u>	66	

## Roof tile (ceramic)

0	370	5	
2	10	1	could be floor tile
19		3	one could be floor tile
31	50	1	
	<u>430</u>	10	
	<u>2275</u>		