

**THE CHURCH OF  
ST JOHN THE BAPTIST  
OLD SODBURY  
SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

*For*

**JOHN FALCONER ASSOCIATES**

*on behalf of*

**THE PCC OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST,  
OLD SODBURY**

CA PROJECT: 2648  
CA REPORT: 08144


JULY 2008



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CA PROJECT: 2648  
CA REPORT: 08144

prepared by	Kelly Saunders, Project Supervisor
date	22 July 2008
checked by	Cliff Bateman, Project Manager
date	22 July 2008
approved by	Simon Cox, Head of Fieldwork
signed	
date	23 July 2008
issue	01

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## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- Fig. 1 Site location plan (1:25000)  
Fig. 2 The site, showing location of groundworks (1:500).

## SUMMARY

**Project Name:** The Church of St John the Baptist  
**Location:** Old Sodbury, South Gloucestershire  
**NGR:** ST 75576 81781  
**Type:** Watching Brief  
**Date:** 14-16 July 2008  
**Location of Archive:** To be deposited with Bristol's Museums, Galleries and Archives  
**Site Code:** SOD08

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with the excavation of a drainage run and associated inspection chambers at the Church of St John the Baptist, Old Sodbury, South Gloucestershire.

A number of disarticulated human remains were revealed during the groundworks, all of which were re-interred during the backfilling process. No other artefactual material was recovered.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In July 2008 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief for John Falconer Associates at the Church of St John the Baptist Church, Old Sodbury, South Gloucestershire (centred on NGR: ST 75576 81781; Fig. 1). The objective of the watching brief was to record all archaeological remains exposed during the groundworks associated with the provision of new drainage and to ensure the agreed specification of works was adhered to.
- 1.2 The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a detailed Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by CA (2008). The fieldwork also followed the *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (2001), the *Guidance for best practice for treatment of human remains excavated from Christian burial grounds in England* (English Heritage and the Church of England 2005) and the *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage 1991).

### ***The site***

- 1.3 The church is situated to the north of the village of Old Sodbury on a natural promontory from where land drops sharply to the south and west. It lies at approximately 146m AOD. To the north and east of the site are Haye's Farm and the local school, to the west agricultural land, with the greater part of the churchyard to the south.
- 1.4 The underlying solid geology of the area is mapped as Middle Lias Dryham Silts and Clays of the Lower Jurassic Period (BGS 1970). This was encountered in the southern section of the drain run.

### ***Archaeological background***

- 1.5 The Church of St John the Baptist is of Late Norman or Transitional date with a later west tower. The church was heavily restored in the mid 19th century (Verey and Brooks 1999).

## **Methodology**

- 1.6 The fieldwork followed the methodology set out within the WSI (CA 2008). An archaeologist was present during intrusive groundworks comprising the excavation of a drainage run, typically measuring 0.4m in width, and associated inspection chambers (see Fig. 2 for location and extent).
- 1.7 Where archaeological deposits were encountered written, graphic and photographic records were compiled in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual* (2007).
- 1.8 The archive and artefacts from the evaluation are currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble. Subject to the agreement of the legal landowner the archive will be deposited with Bristol's Museums, Galleries and Archives. A summary of information from this project, set out within Appendix B, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

## **2. RESULTS (FIG. 2)**

- 2.1 For ease of description the observed drainage run has been divided into three areas. Throughout Area 1 the drainage run was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.93m below present ground level (bpgl). Heavily reworked soils 101, averaging 0.8m in thickness, from which disarticulated human remains were recovered was revealed throughout. They were overlain by topsoil 100.
- 2.2 In Area 2 the drainage run was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.58m bpgl. Subsoil 202, averaging 0.4m in thickness, was overlain by modern tarmac and associated bedding for the existing pathway.
- 2.3 Within Area 3 natural substrate 304, comprising of mudstone interleaved with clay, was revealed at an average depth of 0.5m below present ground level. This was overlain by subsoil 303, which was in turn sealed by either tarmac or topsoil.
- 2.4 Other than the disarticulated human remains, no features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during groundworks and, despite visual

scanning of spoil, no other artefactual material pre-dating the modern period was recovered.

- 2.5 All of the disarticulated human remains recovered during the groundworks were, with the approval of the Parochial Church Council, re-interred during the course of the groundworks.

### **3. DISCUSSION**

- 3.1 The distribution of disarticulated human remains suggests that Area 1, immediately to the south of the church, has been long been utilised as a burial ground. Many of the present monuments and grave markers within this area date to the mid to late 18th century, and are likely to have displaced older inhumations.

- 3.2 Areas 2 and 3 lie further from the church and the current excavations were largely contained within the edge of the existing path. These areas contained gravestones of a later date, and the absence of observed disarticulated remains suggests that the location of the existing pathway has been respected by later inhumations.

### **4. CA PROJECT TEAM**

Fieldwork was undertaken by Kelly Saunders, who also wrote the report. The illustrations were prepared by Jemma Elliot. The archive has been compiled Kelly Saunders, and prepared for deposition by Kathryn Price. The project was managed for CA by Cliff Bateman

### **5. REFERENCES**

BGS (British Geological Survey) 1970 *Sheet 251, Malmesbury, Solid and Drift Geology*

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2008 *St John the Baptist, Old Sodbury, South Gloucestershire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*

Verey, D., and Brooks, A.,1999. *The Buildings of England. Gloucestershire 1: The Cotswolds*, (3rd edition, London) 534-5

**APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS**

## Area 1

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
100	Layer	Topsoil			0.13	
101	Layer	Mid yellow brown slightly silty clay. Frequent stone fragments, frequent disarticulated human remains.			>0.8	

## Area 2

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
200	Layer	Tarmac path			0.09	Modern
201	Layer	Bedding for tarmac			0.09	Modern
202	Layer	Medium dark brown silty clay, frequent stone fragments			0.3	

## Area 3

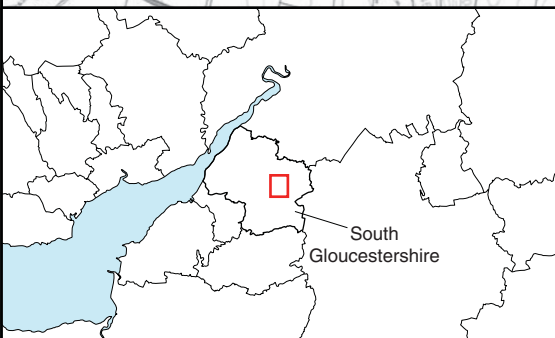
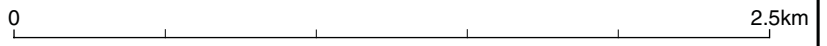
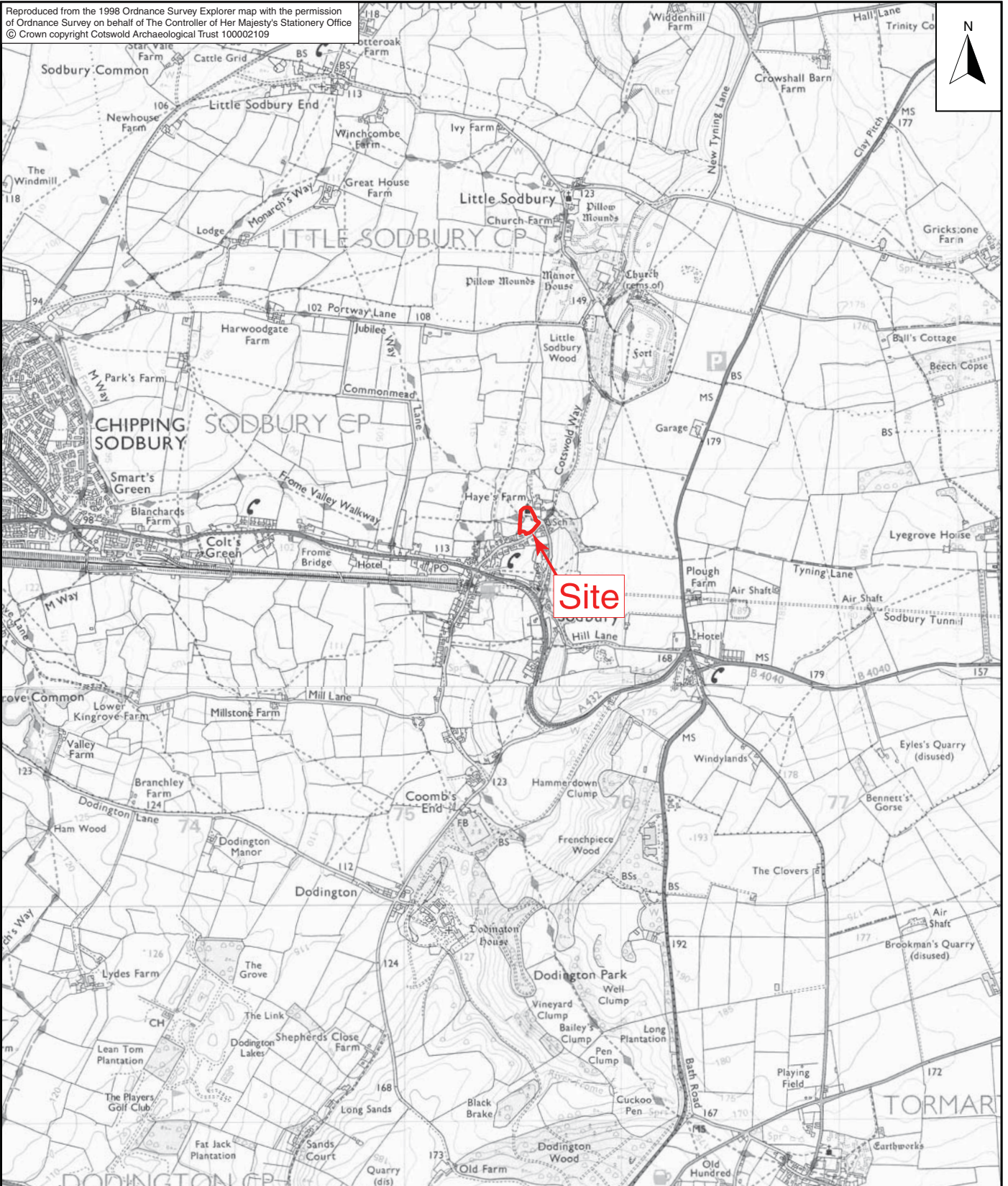
No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
300	Layer	Tarmac path (west of area)			0.05	Modern
301	Layer	Bedding for tarmac (west of area)			0.13	Modern
302	Layer	Topsoil (east of area)			0.05	
303	Layer	Medium dark brown silty clay, occasional stone fragments, heavily rooted			0.5-1.1	
304	Natural	Medium orange brown mudstone interleaved with clay				




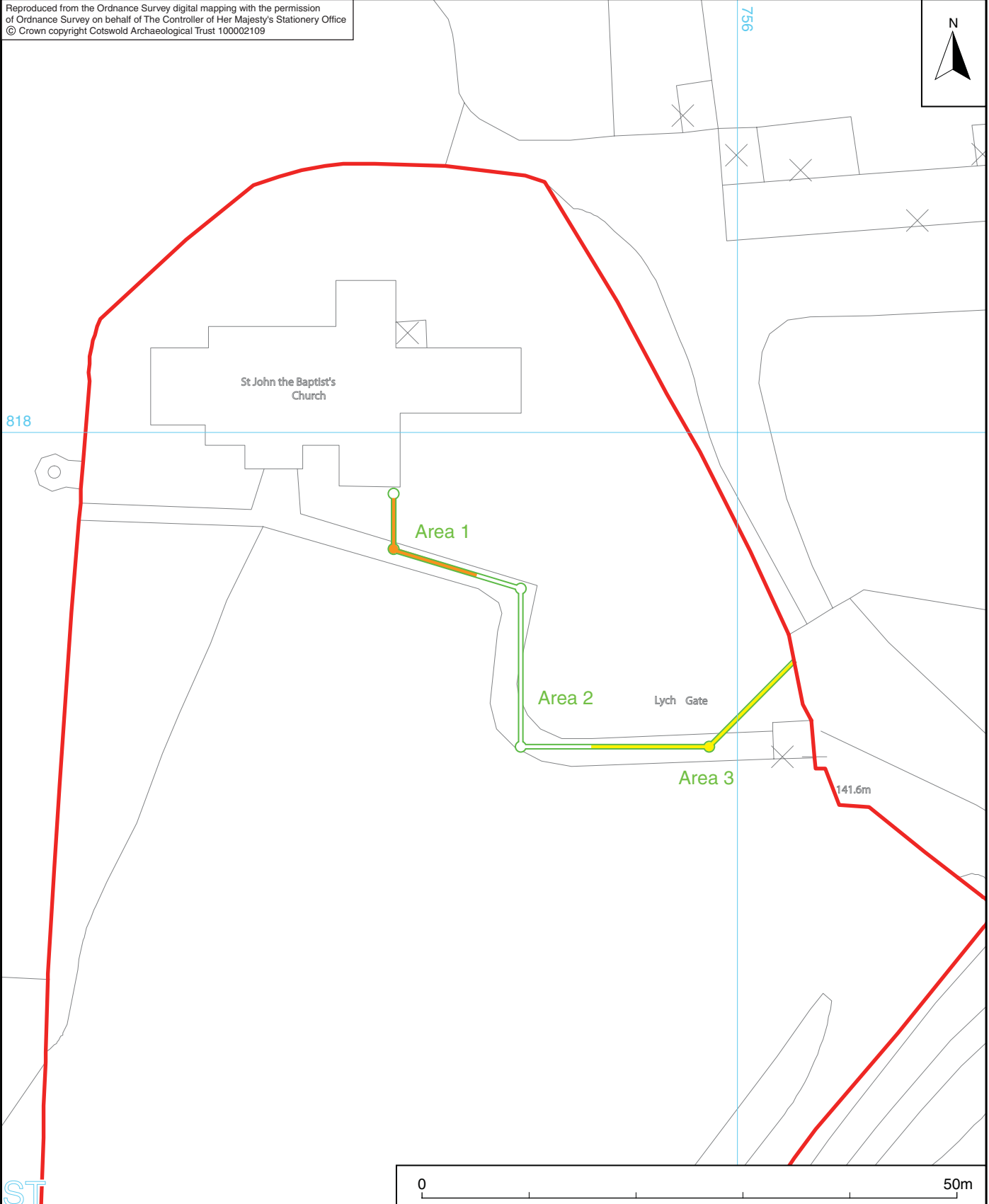
## APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		
Project Name	The Church of St John the Baptist, Old Sodbury, South Gloucestershire	
Short description (250 words maximum)	An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with the excavation of a drainage run and associated inspection chambers at the Church of St John the Baptist, Old Sodbury, South Gloucestershire.  A number of disarticulated human remains were revealed during the groundworks, all of which were re-interred during the backfilling process. No other artefactual material was recovered.	
Project dates	14-16 July 2008	
Project type (e.g. desk-based, field evaluation etc)	Watching Brief	
Previous work (reference to organisation or SMR numbers etc)	None	
Future work	Unknown	
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>		
Site Location	The Church of St John the Baptist, Old Sodbury, South Gloucestershire	
Study area (M <sup>2</sup> /ha)	0.7ha	
Site co-ordinates (8 Fig Grid Reference)	ST 75576 81781	
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator	None supplied	
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Cliff Bateman	
Project Supervisor	Kelly Saunders	
<b>PROJECT ARCHIVES</b>		
	Intended final location of archive (museum/Accession no.)	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical		
Paper	Bristol's Museums, Galleries and Archives	Proforma recording sheets
Digital		
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>		
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2008 <i>The Church of St John the Baptist, Old Sodbury, South Gloucestershire: Archaeological Watching Brief</i> CA report No. <b>08144</b>		

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 <b>COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY</b>			
PROJECT TITLE <b>St John the Baptist, Old Sodbury          South Gloucestershire</b>			
FIGURE TITLE <b>Site location plan</b>			
DRAWN BY	SCALE	PROJECT NO.	FIGURE NO.
JE	1:25,000@A4	2648	<b>1</b>



- site
- area of observed groundworks
- area containing disarticulated human remains
- area of observed natural substrate



**COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY**

PROJECT TITLE

**St John the Baptist, Old Sodbury  
 South Gloucestershire**

FIGURE TITLE

**The site, showing location  
 of groundworks**

DRAWN BY

JE

SCALE

1:500@A4

PROJECT NO.

2648

FIGURE NO.

**2**