Holy Trinity Church, Hildersham Cambridgeshire

Archaeological Evaluation and Monitoring



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Between March 2014 and December 2015 archaeological monitoring was undertaken within the graveyard of Holy Trinity Church, Hildersham during groundworks carried out in advance and post-construction of a porch extension and toilet, together with its associated services and soakaway(s). These groundworks involved excavation down to a depth of 1.4 metres within the proposed 12.5m² footprint for the porch located on the north side of the church, alongside the digging of five additional service trenches across the graveyard, the longest of which was 90m from the church to the main gateway onto the road. In total 43 burials were encountered during this work, some nineteen of which were found within the footprint for the new church porch. All of the latter were fully skeletonised, these consisting of at least eight adults and five juveniles interred as shroud burials, being most likely Early Medieval in date. Given the similarity between these fully excavated burials and those recorded but not excavated within the associated service trenches, it seems possible we could be looking at a Medieval date for all of these umarked early graves. Just four sherds of 12th century AD St. Neots and greyware pottery were recovered from the main excavation, two sherds of this being associated with grave fill.

Introduction

Between March 2014 and December 2015 the Cambridge Archaeological Unit carried out a programme of archaeological monitoring of the groundworks required for a small porch extension to the north side of Hildersham parish church (TL 5453048807). The latter construction included the digging of five further trenches for services and soakaways. This work was commissioned by Freeland Rees Roberts Architects on behalf of Holy Trinity Church, Hildersham, and followed a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for archaeological evaluation and monitoring (Dickens 2014) prepared in response to a condition placed on planning consent by South Cambridgeshire District Council. The work was monitored by Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Team (CHET) and the DAC Archaeologist Dr T.Reynolds.

The main objective of the proposed research design was to mitigate the impact of these works on any archaeological remains through using preservation by record, thus contributing to the reconstruction of the use/ history of the site. The stated priorities of the work were thus to: (a) examine features which might relate to the history of the church and the development and early phases of the village and (b) to recover any disarticulated human remains and ensure their immediate re-deposition within the churchyard.

The maximum depth of excavation required within the area of the planned extension (i.e. 12.5m^2) was approx.1.4m below the level of the church floor. However, all of the archaeology was encountered at a shallower depth than this (i.e 0.7m or above) corresponding to the top of the chalk outcrop which defined the base of the grave cuts. Likewise those graves encountered within the service trenches lay within 0.7 m of the surface. A variation of the June 2014 faculty issued by the Diocesan registry in March 2015 allowed for the study and removal of human remains within the footprint area of the new porch and toilet, and their re-internment elsewhere within the graveyard carried out in May 2015. Likewise the modified brief for archaeology supplied by DAC/CHET (and supported by English Heritage's best practice approach referred to in the BABAO guidelines) required that all partial or complete articulated burials should by necessity be recorded *in situ.*, preferably by a team of experienced archaeologists under the guidance of an osteoarchaeologist.

Geology and topography

The underlying geology beneath the centre of Hildersham consists of the Middle Chalk overlain by patches of Boulder Clay in which pockets of the terrace gravel survive. An outcrop of sandy gravel is to be found immediately to the north of the church at around 40m AOD. The church sits upon a slightly elevated bluff defined by the 35m AOD contour which overlooks the flood plain of the River Granta and some alder carr woodland.

Archaeological background

The only previous archaeological work carried out within the boundary of the churchyard was that of a monitoring exercise carried out during the replacement of an oil pipe, when disarticulated human bone was collected and re-buried, but no

archaeological features noted (Rees 2013). Apart from the church, no archaeological records pertaining to this site are known.

Prehistoric

There are a number of stray finds of prehistoric date known within a radius of 500m of this site. All of these are of pretty poor provenance. Amongst these was the find of a Palaeolithic implement within the 'Cambridgeshire Gravel' of Hildersham (Marr 1909).

Roman

There are indications of Roman activity within the present village. These include antiquarian references to possible Roman activity at Dovehouse Meadow just to the northwest of the churchyard [HER 06126], and a possible Roman barrow 135m west of the church excavated in the 1850s, and likened to those at Bartlow [HER 06212].

Saxon

Earthworks supposedly part of a Saxon settlement have been noted within the area paddocks just to the north and west of the churchyard. Meanwhile a geophysics survey in 2007 [MCB 17874] revealed possible traces of trackways and a building (currently undated) within a field associated with visible earthworks.

Medieval

Medieval earthworks have been noted at a greater distance from the church [HER 09352]

Postmedieval

At least six Medieval/ Postmedieval listed and non-listed buildings/ structures are known of within a few hundred metres of the church

The Parish church of Holy Trinity, Hildersham is Grade I listed (entry no. 1127726). The church is built of field stones with ashlar dressings, and consists of a chancel with a south chapel and north sacristy, an aisled nave of two bays with a south porch, and west tower. The church probably dates to the late twelfth century, the oldest surviving parts are the thirteenth century sacristy and west tower. The nave was rebuilt in the late thirteenth century, probably retaining its original dimensions. The aisles probably had their windows fitted at the same time as the south chapel was built, 1321-32. The chancel arch was rebuilt probably c. 1400. In the fifteenth century the chancel was given new windows, which still survived c. 1850, and a new door to the sacristy. The octagonal thirteenth century font rests on five columns and has trefoiled canopies on each face (Pevsner 1970, 406; Salzman 1978, 67; Philips 1980) There are some remarkable interior wall and roof paintings dating to c.1890s which were painted by an unknown Italian artist in the Augustus Pugin neo-Gothic revival style under the guidance of Revd Robert Goodwin and his elder sister Elisabeth Hemmington-Goodwin (who was also the benefactor) and the architect and designer Charles Alban Buckler.

Methodology

The mitigation strategy agreed upon included the monitoring of the groundworks, such as soil stripping under archaeological supervision and the inspection of the subsoil for archaeological features. All burial (grave) and non-burial features (such as ditches, pits, foundation cuts etc) were planned (either at 1:50 and 1:20 or 1:10 scale) and fully excavated where this was safe or practical to do so, with selected sections recorded across features (at 1:10) and along excavation edges.

In terms of specific field procedures, the soil removed from the footprint excavation was monitored for the presence of disarticulated human bone or other relevant artefacts (including from the spoil heaps), with all such bone being collectively bagged up and labelled according to date and area, this then being given to the Church for re-internment. Cleared spoil and graves were monitored by metal detector for the presence of coffin nails, shroud pins or other metal objects. Where these could be accurately located, small find categories (such as pottery) were marked upon plans or sections as small finds. All articulated human bone (either as partial or intact skeletons) was left cleaned and exposed after planning and recording, then covered from public view and protected until such point as each burial could be metrically recorded (and wherever possible aged and/or sexed with obvious palaeo-pathology noted) and lifted under the guidance of the CAU osteologist (Natasha Dodwell). Standard CAU skeleton recording sheets were completed for each burial on site. Health and safety was conducted in accordance with the guidelines established in the FAME manual Health and Safety in Field Archaeology (2010). Survey during the excavation and removal of burials was carried out by the archaeologists in attendance and by the Cambridge Achaeological Unit (CAU) survey team.

No human bone was removed from the site (or church premises), although small finds such as pottery, animal bone and tile were removed to the Finds Department in the CAU for cleaning and bagging prior to post-excavation analysis. Reburial was carried out on 11th May 2015 by H.J. Paintin & Sons, undertakers, overseen by the Priest in Charge Rev. Dr. Julie Norris.

Results

The first phase of investigation on-site involved the machine-digging of a 1m² testpit (later widened to a 2m² testpit) within the area of the footpath leading up to the north door of the church. This revealed topsoil underlain by a layer of rammed chalk (possibly an earlier footpath), which on removal revealed an earlier topsoil/ graveyard soil, and then articulated human bone at approx. 0.5-0.6m depth. As a result of these burial discoveries, the whole footprint area for the porch extension, toilet and the immediate service provision area for this was de-turfed, then dug by hand, exposing a series of E-W skeletons, and beneath that some of grave cuts dug into the top of the chalk. Some nineteen burials were identified beneath a dark humic soil (008), some of these truncated by later burials intentionally placed on top, or else by burials interred upon a slightly different orientation (Figure 2). The orientation of many of these, although still E-W, did not match the alignment (of the nave) of the church, or for that matter most of the marked Postmedieval graves. However, the alignment of the church itself does not match those of the cardinal points either (see Figure 1). No grave furniture was encountered with any of the burials, nor pins nor nails, and it would seem therefore that most of the inhumations were probably shroud burials

sewn-up with thread(?); the evidence for this being seen in the form of cuts into the chalk moulded to fit the shape of the shoulders, neck and head, whilst tapering at the other end from the pelvis to the toes (see Burials 5, 10, 11-14+ Figure 3). However, four 'coffin-shaped' grave cuts were also noted (Burials 4 +6-8). Four sherds of 12th century (Early Medieval) pottery including St.Neots and Greyware types were recovered from the general area of the graves, with two sherds collected from the actual fill (019) of grave cuts, but bagged up as generic 'grave fill' finds. Another two sherds were re-deposited finds from the fill (020) of a Postmedieval pit (F.4) associated with an old soakaway. An earlier posthole (F.1) and pit (F.2) were encountered close to and just under the walls of the church (SEE Figure 2), thus it seems possible that they pre-date it; being loosely referred to here as 'Saxon/Medieval'? However, the latter assignation remains uncertain.

Seven burials (B.23-29) were encountered during the digging of Trench 1, dug from the north end of the porch to the downpipe located at the far NW end of the church. Approximately 30-40cms wide this trench was dug to a depth of 0.5-0.6m. The burials and skeletons (where exposed) were planned but not need to be excavated or removed, the level reached being sufficient for the purposes of drainage.

A further seven burials (B.30-36) were uncovered and planned during the digging of Trench 2 (approx. 12m long and 1m wide) for the foul pipe soakaway. These were all located towards the southern end of the wider part of this trench, suggesting that the density of un-marked early burials probably tailed-off within an 8-10m radius of the church. Apart from the topsoil and make-up layers associated with the later insertion of the footpath, a dark grey silt 'burial soil' (108) was encountered.

Just three burials (B.20-22) were encountered during the digging of the 90m long water pipe trench (Trench 3) which followed the line of the footpath eastwards from the porch extension, and then south-eastwards from the NE corner of the churchyard wall to the main gate onto the road. The three burials which were orientated WNW-ESE forming a linear group of unmarked graves located on their own some 11m due east of the N end of the porch extension. None of these graves needed to be excavated. However, some 45m due east of the porch extension, beyond the graveyard, a non-burial feature, in this case two sections of a rubble wall (F.5) were encountered, here interpreted as (probably) being associated with the old Hildersham School, the site of which is marked by a plaque nearby.

The final trenches (Trench 4+5) were two other 30-40cms wide surface drain trenches which led from the east side of the porch extension to soakaway located upon its north-west side. Trench 4 nearest the church held a further seven burials (B.37-43), all of these lying within a 5m radius of the church, with at least one aligned SW-NE. The partially exposed skeletons were encountered at a depth of between 40-70cms. Grave cuts and fills were identified in the case of five of these burials (B.37, B.40-43), with another consisting just of a skull truncated at the neck (B.38) and a further disturbed individual re-deposited within the topsoil (B.39).

A summary record of the archaeologically excavated burials from this churchyard is provided within the Burial Gazetteer (Table 1), with additional information supplied in the specialist report on the human remains undertaken by the CAU osteoarchaeologist Natasha Dodwell. This includes some details on the relative age,

stature, basic pathology, and where possible the sex of these graveyard burials, although the data supplied should not be interpreted as being demographically meaningful, given the very small size and un-dated nature of the population sample. Whilst the majority of these skeletons are likely to be Medieval in date, the presence of Postmedieval burials, particularly of juveniles or neo-nates cannot be excluded, given the custom of burying unbaptised infants close to the walls of the church. However, probably the most interesting burial from the point of view of an early date for some of these inhumations was Burial 18 (see Figure 4), the upper half of which underlies (or else was truncated by) the step and probably, therefore, the wall foundation for the early 1200s AD-built north aisle. Alongside the evidence for 12th century pottery, and a burial alignment at least 20-30° off that of the 13th century church, this grave plus many of the accompanying and similarly-aligned ones, suggest the presence of an earlier church on this site, perhaps dating to the 11th-12th century or earlier. This has interesting implications with respect to the recorded presence of Saxon-Early Medieval settlement nearby.

The differential range of burial depths encountered at Hildersham was about 0.5m, with the highest burials occurring at around 38.22m AOD (c.0.35m below ground level) and the deepest around 37.7m AOD (c.0.7m below ground level). These are shallower depths of burial than found in the probably equivalent-aged graves excavated during the construction of a porch extension at Alconbury Parish Church (Timberlake et al. 2016), the reason being the shallower depth of rock outcrop here at Hildersham, the top of the chalk defining the depth to which graves could easily be dug using spades.

Conclusions

Some 43 burials were identified during the digging of the footings for the porch and the associated service trenches, nineteen of which were recorded fully, excavated, then re-interred within the cemetery. Most of these graves were on a E-W alignment different to that of the church, with one burial truncated by the step associated with the probable 13th century doorway and by the foundations for the north aisle wall. This and the recovery of 12th century pottery from several of the grave fills suggests that some or all of these graves are Medieval, and linked perhaps to an earlier church building on this site, possibly dating to the 11th-12th century or before. Anthropomorphic grave cuts into the top of the chalk are associated with a number of these relatively shallow burials, this being an Early Medieval practice, as well as in indication of burial in shrouds rather than in coffins. Some interesting pathologies were noted on a number of the burials, including a rare congenital condition known as syntosis (a fusing of bones at the elbow) which affected three apparently related individuals. Whilst useful details could be recorded regarding the age, sex, stature and health of some of the Medieval population of Hildersham, it would be quite unwise to look upon this as any sort of representative demographic study, there probably being hundreds of un-marked burials of similar date, but of a varied nature, surrounding this parish church, reflecting its place in the community for over 1000 years.

Acknowledgements

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the excavation carried out by the contractors Meades Ltd. The Vicar of Holy Trinity Church kindly facilitated our stay on site. Kasia Gdaniec monitored the archaeological investigation on behalf of CHET and Dr. T.Reynolds on behalf of the Diocese. Alison Dickens was CAU Project Manager, and survey work was carried out by John Moller. The core archaeological team on-site consisted of David Webb, Natasha Dodwell, Hannah Pighills and Simon Timberlake.

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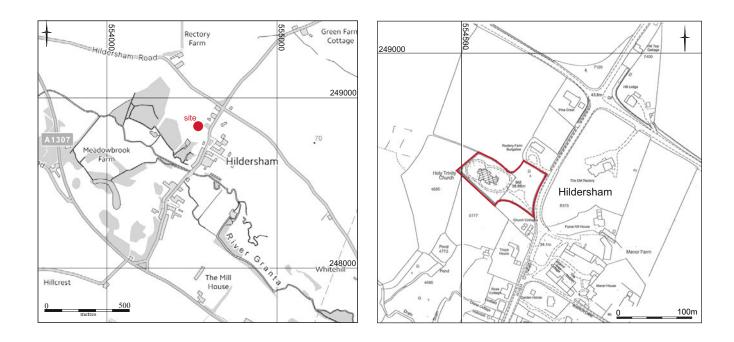
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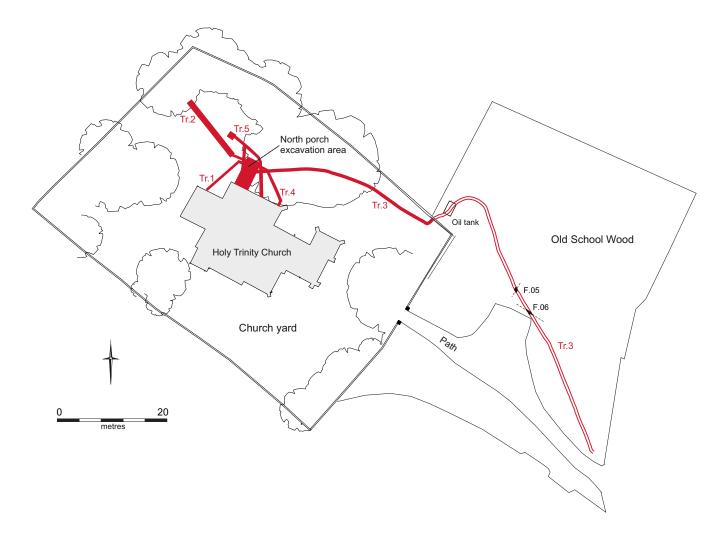


Figure 1. Holy Trinity Church, Hildersham: Location of Archaeological Investigations

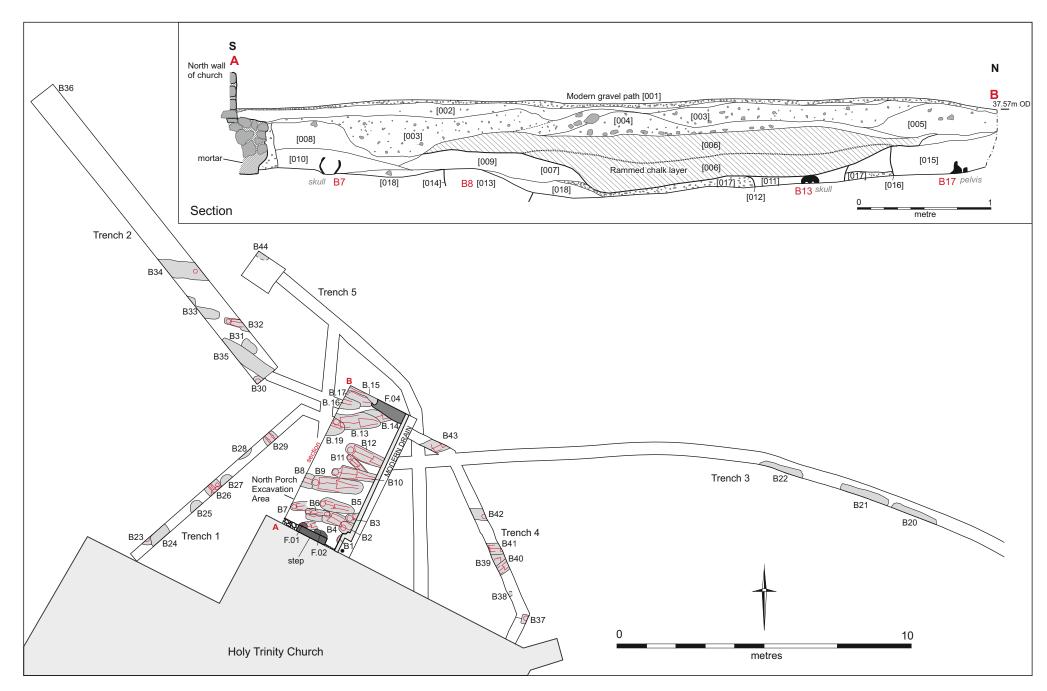


Figure 2. Archaeological investigations within the Churchyard, with inset section of north porch excavation



Burials 9-12 Burials 4 and 6

Figure 3. Photographs of burials within the north porch excavation area



Burial 18



The re-burial of the human remains ceremony 11th May 2015

Figure 4. Photographs

Specialist reports

Brick and tile Simon Timberlake

A single fragment of modern yellow clay brick (28g) and a fragment of handmade red sandy brick or pot (1g) were recovered from the fill (020) of pit F.4 which was associated with an old (but probably postmedieval) soakaway.

Pottery David Hall

Four sherds of 12th century AD coarseware pottery were found during the excavation of the footings area for the new porch. These consisted of a Greyware pot rim (<3>2g) and a body sherd of shell-gritted St.Neot's ware (<3>3g) recovered from a generic Medieval? 'grave fill' context (019), plus body sherds of St. Neot's ware (<5>5g) and also Greyware (<5>8g) recovered from the fill (020) of pit F.4 that was associated with an old (Postmedieval) soakaway.

Flint Emma Beadsmoore

Two secondary waste flakes dating potentially to the later Neolithic/ Early Bronze Age were recovered from the graveyard soils. One of these (<2>) came from the grave fill associated with Burial 39, whilst the other more heavily patinated flake was a surface find in the graveyard.

The Human Remains Natasha Dodwell

Nineteen inhumation burials were excavated within the footprint area for the proposed extension on the north side of Hildersham parish church. The graves, where they cut into the natural chalk were anthropomorphic in shape. Almost all of the grave cuts were aligned within a few degrees of due East-West, with the heads on the west side. Interestingly these do not respect the alignment of the church itself which is orientated WNW-ESE.

A further 24 graves were identified in various service trenches associated to the new building but are not discussed below as they were not disturbed.

Methodology

The Faculty stated that no skeletal material could be removed from the churchyard meaning that all of the osteological recording was done on site. All graves were hand dug and the skeletons photographed and planned at 1:20. The bones could not be washed but elements which were useful for aging (e.g. pubic symphyses) were dry brushed. An inventory of all of the surviving skeletal elements was made and an assessment of age at death and sex was made using the following standard techniques. The age of immature remains was determined where possible by the stage of dental development (Ubelaker 1989), metrical data and the stage of epiphyseal fusion

(Schaefer *et al.* 2009). In line with standard practice, no attempt was made to attribute a sex to immature individuals. Adult skeletons were aged using the stage of epiphyseal union (McMinn *et al* 1993), the appearance of the pubic symphysis and auricular surface of the pelvis (Brooks and Suchey 1990 and Lovejoy *et al* 1985) and the degree of dental attrition (Brothwell 1981, 69 fig.30). Sexually dimorphic traits on the pelvis and skull, and metrical data were used to attribute sex to adult individuals (Bass 1987, Buikstra and Ubelaker 1984). The assessment of both age and sex is dependent on the preservation of the skeleton and which elements are present. The following broad age categories were used.

Neonate <6months
Infant 0-4years
Juvenile 5-12years
Subadult 13-18years
Young adult 19-25years
Middle adult 26-44years
Mature adult 45 years

In some cases, for instance where only the feet or lower legs survived a broad category such as adult was attributed. For several of the adults it was possible to narrow the age category. An estimate of adult living stature was made, where possible, applying a regression equation to the length of lower limb bones, specifically the combined femur and tibia length (Trotter 1970). Observing pathological conditions that may have manifested themselves on the skeleton was severely hampered by the inability to wash the bones. Those pathological changes noted here recorded should be seen as the very *minimum*.

The skeletons were bagged individually and reburied with a short religious service in a grave on the south side of the church (Figure 4).

Results

The osteological results are summarised in the table below. Of the nineteen skeletons that were excavated seven were immature and twelve were adult. The youngest person died at about 3 years ± 12 mos (Burial 6). Amongst the adults, both males and females were present (two males, four females and four that could not be attributed a sex).

An estimate of living stature calculated by applying a regression equation to the combined femora and tibiae length could be made for three of the adults (Burials 10, 13 and 17: i.e. 173.53cm, 175.48cm and 158.98cm respectively).

Dental disease and degenerative changes to the skeleton were the two most commonly observed pathologies in this small sample of individuals. In addition, two individuals (Burials 7 and 9) exhibited lesions in their orbits characteristic of *cribra orbitalia*. This condition is thought to result from megaloblastic anaemia, where nursing infants become deficient in vitamin B12 either because of gastrointestinal disease or by maternal depletion (Walker et al. 2009). Of most interest are the three skeletons which exhibit a rare congenital condition where the elbow joint is fused (known as humeroradial / ulna synostosis depending on which bones are fused).

Burial No	Age category	Sex	Elements present (if not a complete/ near complete body)	Pathology	Notes
1	young juvenile	-	skull only	N/O	
2	juvenile	-		N/O	
3	middle adult	F	mandible, frags. of skull, shoulder girdle & spine	slight-medium deposits of calculus.	
4	Mature adult	?	lower legs and feet missing.	dentition heavily worn, AMTL, OA on right wrist	thoracic elements & neck displaced/jumbled
5	young juvenile	-		N/O	
6	infant	-		N/O	
7	juvenile	-	left arm & leg truncated	slight calculus, dental hypoplasia, <i>cribra orbitalia</i>	
8	adult	?	lower legs & feet only	N/O	feet rest on head of Burial 9. Juvenile bones in grave fill suggest grave truncates an immature grave beyond excavated area.
9	older middle	М		AMTL, caries, abscess, calculus. Compression fracture (L4&5), djd in spine, cribra orbitalia	feet of Burial 8 rest on head.
10	middle adult	М	feet lie beyond section	djd in spine & R hip. Fused elbows (L humeroulna synostosis, R humeroulna & radius synostosis)	very robust skeleton. Grave cuts Burial 11. Posterior of humerii lie against cut, hands palm down
11	infant	-	feet lie beyond section		
12	mature adult	F		slight calculus, AMTL, abscess & caries, djd in spine. Fused left elbow (L humeroulna synostosis)	hands palm down
13	mature adult	F		,	feet rest on the bottom edge of the cut. Grave cuts Burial 14.
14	young adult	F	L humerus, lumbar, R ilium & R prox. femur	enamel hypoplasias. Fused left elbow (L humeroulna synostosis)	heavily truncated - cut by grave of Burial 13
15	o dult	?	R arm and hand only	N/O	most of body lies beyond the section. Lower body truncated by soakaway
16	adult adult	?	feet only	N/O	rest of body lies beyond the section
17		?	lower legs & L illia femur & hand	N/O	truncated by Burials 15 and 16.
	adult				
18	older infant	-	no skull or right arm	N/O	lies beneath the porch step (cut by church foundations)
19	adult	?	lower legs & feet only	N/O	lies below Burial 13

Table 1: Summary detailing the age and sex of the skeletons uncovered and any gross pathological changes identified (AMTL=antemortem tooth loss, OA = osteoarthritis, djd=degenerative joint disease)

In Burials 12 and 14 (both females) the left proximal radii and distal humerii are fused, whereas in the male Burial 10 both elbows are fused (the right radius head is fused to the radial notch of the ulna and, there is similar ankylosis of the left forearm but also evidence that the ulna has fused to the humerus at the trochlear notch). The humerus, ulna and radius are joined at the elbow at about 5 weeks gestation by a common layer of dense connective tissue which surrounds the cartilage of developing bone. Synostosis occurs due to a defect in longitudinal segmentation at the 7th week of development. Undoubtedly these three individuals were closely related and, with the arm(s) in permanent extension and no movement in the elbow (s) the congenital abnormality would have been clearly visible. Indeed, for the male (Burial 10) where the condition was bilateral, the abnormality would probably have been severely debilitating.

Layout of the cemetery, shape of grave cuts and body position

The graves in the small excavation area are aligned East-West with heads in the west. Interestingly they do not respect the alignment of the church itself which is orientated WNW-ESE. There is some intercutting of graves but in most cases the truncation is slight suggesting that the graves were marked. Where graves do cut each other there would seem to have been some care not to disturb the earlier skeleton e.g. the feet of Burial 8 rests directly on the head of Burial 9. All of the grave cuts were anthropomorphic in shape i.e. the shape of the graves incorporated a niche for the head and then either were rectilinear in shape or tapered slightly towards the feet. This shape suggests that the bodies fitted tightly into the cuts (Figure), whilst the position of the bodies with knees close together, arms tight against the torso implies that they were wrapped in shrouds, although no shroud pins were discovered. Disarticulated human bone was recovered in some of the graves. Whilst most of this bone appeared to have been thrown back into the grave, in some instances more care had been taken (i.e. Burial 8 had a child's femur placed parallel/lateral to the right lower limb on the outside)

Dating the graves

Without radiocarbon dating the skeletons, a precise date for these burials was impossible to determine. However, several factors point to them being Medieval. Burial 18 was that of a child lain below the flint and mortar hardcore/make up for the step of the north door, and this appears to have been truncated by the wall foundation itself. This indicates that this burial at least predates the construction of this church wall. Meanwhile the anthropomorphic shape of the grave cuts mimic that of Medieval stone coffins (such as those found at Bakewell, Yorks.). Such grave cuts are often seen within monastic graveyards, such as that of the Benedictine St Neot's Priory (Alexander in Horton & Wait 1990), the earliest burials in this style dating to between 1080-1200 AD (Glichrist & Sloane 2005).

APPENDIX 2 HCP15 toilet/ porch extension excavation (North porch):

Feature /Burial no.	Feature type	Context	Context type	Context description	Length (m)		Depth (m)	cuts/ cut by	Associate burials (B no.)	Section / plan	Photo	Finds	Enviro sample	Period
		[001]	layer	path gravel	5.6+	2m	< 0.1	[002]		#1				modern
		[002]	layer	modern (upper) topsoil	4.8+		< 0.2	[003]		#1				modern
		[003]	layer	dirty gravel + soil	4.6+		<0.3	[008] [005] [004]		#1				modern
		[004]	layer	stony soil	2.6		< 0.2			#1				modern
		[005]	layer	gravelly soil	0.9		< 0.3	cut by [003]		#1				modern
		[006]	fill	rammed chalk	4		< 0.4			#1				modern?
		[007]	cut	ditto	ditto		ditto	cuts [009] [017] [011]		#1				modern?
		[800]	layer	darker humic soil	1.2		0.2	cut by [003] +foundation N.Aisle		#1				Med?
B.8	grave	[009]	fill	darker humic 'grave' soil (as mound over B.8 ?)	1.3	2?	0.2	cut by [006]	Burial 8	#1				Med?
B.7	grave	[010]	fill	darker humic 'grave' soil (as mound over B.7?)	0.9	2?	<0.2	cut by foundation N.Aisle	Burial 7	#1				Med?
B.13	grave	[011]	fill	darker humic 'grave' soil	0.6	2?	0.2+		Burial 13	#1				Med?
B.13	grave	[012]	cut	grave for B.13	ditto	ditto	ditto	cut by [006] cuts [017]	Burial 13	#1				Med?
B.8	grave	[013]	fill	darker humic 'grave' soil	0.6	2?	0.2+		Burial 8	#1				Med?
B.8	grave	[014]	cut	grave for B.8	ditto	ditto	ditto	cuts [018]	Burial 8	#1				Med?
B.17	grave	[015]	fill	humic 'grave' soil	0.8	2?	0.25+		Burial 17	#1				Med?
B.17	grave	[016]	cut	grave for B.17	ditto	ditto	ditto	cuts [017]	Burial 17	#1				Med?
		[017]	layer	red-brown silt (buried soil)	2.4		<0.1	cut by [012] + [016]		#1				pre-Med?
		[018]	layer	weathered chalk surface	0.9		< 0.15	cut by [014]		#1				pre-Med?

		[019]	fill	soil from generic 'grave fill'	5	4	0.1 - 0.3		from various grave fills		2 sherds 12thC pot (St Neots + greyware rim)	Med?
F.4	pit	[020]	fill	soil within area of soakaway	0.6	0.2	0.2+	cuts B.14, B.15 + B.17		#4	2 sherds 12thC pot (St Neots + greyware) +PM tile	P Med?
F.1	posthole	[021]	fill	chalky brown soil	0.3	0.3	0.2+			#5		Med/ Saxon
F.1	posthole	[022]	cut	posthole cut	ditto	ditto	ditto	cut by step footings N.Aisle		#5		Med/ Saxon
F.2	oval pit	[023]	fill	chalky brown soil	0.5	0.3+	0.2+			#5		Med/ Saxon
F.2	oval pit	[024]	cut	pit cut	ditto	ditto	ditto	cut by step footings N.Aisle		#5		Med/ Saxon
B.1	grave	[025]	fill	grave soil	<2m?	0.4		T V.7 XISIC	Burial 1	#2 + 3		Med?
B.1	grave	[026]	cut	grave cut	ditto	ditto		cut by church wall	Burial 1	#2 + 3		Med ?
B.2	grave	[027]	fill	grave soil	0.5+	0.5			Burial 2	#2		Med?
B.2	grave	[028]	cut	grave cut	ditto	ditto		cuts B.4, cut by B.3	Burial 2	#2		Med?
B.3	grave	[029]	fill	grave soil	0.8+	0.4			Burial 3	#2		Med?
B.3	grave	[030]	cut	grave cut	ditto	ditto		cuts B.4, cut by B.2	Burial 3	#2		Med?
B.4	grave	[031]	fill	grave soil	1.2+	0.5			Burial 4	#2		Med?
B.4	grave	[032]	cut	coffin shaped-grave cut	ditto	ditto		cuts B.6, cut by B.2, B.3 + B.5	Burial 4	#2		Med?
B.5	grave	[033]	fill	grave soil	1.3	0.5			Burial 5	#2		Med?
B.5	grave	[034]	cut	shroud-shaped grave cut	ditto	ditto		cuts B.4	Burial 5	#2		Med?
B.6	grave	[035]	fill	grave soil	0.7+	0.4			Burial 6	#2		Med?
B.6	grave	[036]	cut	coffin shaped-grave cut	ditto	ditto		cuts B.7, cut by B.4	Burial 6	#2		Med?

B.7	grave	[010] [037]	fill	grave soil	0.6+	0.3		Burial 7	#2	Med?
B.7	grave	[038]	cut	coffin shaped-grave cut	ditto	ditto	cut by B.6	Burial 7	#2	Med?
B.8	grave	[009] [013]	fill	grave soil	0.4+	0.5		Burial 8	#2	Med?
B.8	grave	[014]	cut	coffin shaped-grave cut	ditto	ditto	cuts B.9	Burial 8	#2	Med?
B.9	grave	[039]	fill	grave soil	1.9	0.56		Burial 9	#2	Med?
B.9	grave	[040]	cut	grave cut	ditto	ditto	cut by B.8	Burial 9	#2	Med?
B.10	grave	[041]	fill	grave soil	1.6	0.5		Burial 10	#2	Med?
B.10	grave	[042]	cut	shroud-shaped grave cut	ditto	ditto	cuts B.11, cut by B.9	Burial 10	#2	Med?
B.11	grave	[043]	fill	grave soil	0.9+	0.26		Burial 11	#2	Med?
B.11	grave	[044]	cut	shroud-shaped grave cut	ditto	ditto	cuts B.12, cut by B.10	Burial 11	#2	Med?
B.12	grave	[045]	fill	grave soil	1.4	0.5		Burial 12	#2	Med?
B.12	grave	[046]	cut	shroud-shaped grave cut	ditto	ditto	cut by B.11	Burial 12	#2	Med?
B.13	grave	[011]	fill	grave soil	1.6	0.4		Burial 13	#4	Med?
B.13	grave	[012]	cut	shroud-shaped grave cut	ditto	ditto	cuts B.14 + B.19	Burial 13	#4	Med?
B.14	grave	[047]	fill	grave soil	1+	0.5		Burial 14	#4	Med?
B.14	grave	[048]	cut	shroud-shaped grave cut	ditto	ditto	cut by B.13 + F.4	Burial 14	#4	Med?
B.15	grave	[049]	fill	grave soil	0.8+	0.2+		Burial 15	#4	Med?
B.15	grave	[050]	cut	grave cut	ditto	ditto	cut by B.17 + F.4	Burial 15	#4	Med?
B.16	grave	[051]	fill	grave soil	0.6+	0.45		Burial 16	#4	Med?
B.16	grave	[052]	cut	grave cut	ditto	ditto	cuts B.17	Burial 16	#4	Med?
B.17	grave	[015]	fill	grave soil	1+	0.4+		Burial 17	#4	Med?
B.17	grave	[016]	cut	grave cut	ditto	ditto	cuts B.15, cut by B.16 + F.4	Burial 17	#4	Med?
B.18	grave	[053]	fill	grave soil	0.7+	0.3+		Burial 18	#2	Med?
B.18	grave	[054]	cut	grave cut	ditto	ditto	cut by porch step	Burial 18	#2	Med/ Saxon
B.19	grave	[055]	fill	grave soil	0.5+	0.7		Burial 19	#2	Med?
B.19	grave	[056]	cut	grave cut	ditto	ditto	cut by B.13	Burial 19	#2	Med?

HCP15 Trench 1:

I/Burial	Feature type	Context no.	Context type	Context description	Length (m)		Depth (m)	cuts/ cut by	Associate burials (B no.)	Section / plan	Photo	Finds	Enviro sample	Period
B.23	grave	[071]	fill	grave soil	0.3+	0.4+			Burial 23	#6	y			Med?
B.23	grave	[072]	cut	grave cut	ditto	ditto		cut by B.24	Burial 23	#6				Med?
B.24	grave	[073]	fill	grave soil	0.4+	0.8	0.4+		Burial 24	#6	y			Med?
B.24	grave	[074]	cut	grave cut	ditto	ditto	ditto	cuts B.23	Burial 24	#6	y			Med?
B.25	grave	[075]	fill	grave soil	0.3+	0.5	0.3+		Burial 25	#6	y			Med?
B.25	grave	[076]	cut	grave cut	ditto	ditto	ditto		Burial 25	#6	y			Med?
B.26	grave	[077]	fill	grave soil	0.4+	0.6	0.6+		Burial 26	#6	y	human bn		Med?
B.26	grave	[078]	cut	grave cut	ditto	ditto	ditto	cuts B.27	Burial 26	#6	y			Med?
B.27	grave	[079]	fill	grave soil	0.2+	0.5	0.3+		Burial 27	#6	y			Med?
B.27	grave	[080]	cut	grave cut	ditto	ditto	ditto	cut by B.26	Burial 27	#6	y			Med?
B.28	grave	[081]	fill	grave soil	0.1+	0.6			Burial 28	#6	y			Med?
B.28	grave	[082]	cut	grave cut	ditto	ditto			Burial 28	#6	y			Med?
B.29	grave	[083]	fill	grave soil	0.2+	0.5	0.3+		Burial 29	#6	у	human bn		Med?
B.29	grave	[084]	cut	grave cut	ditto	ditto	ditto		Burial 29	#6	y			Med?
		[099]	layer	sand						#6				
		[100]	layer	re-deposited chalk						#6				
		[101]	layer	brown soil with bone						#6				
		[102]	layer	topsoil						#6				
		[103]	layer	gravel filling drain (modern)						#6				
		[104]	layer	mid-brown clayey silt with disartic bone						#6				

HCP15 Trench 2:

/Burial	Feature	Context no.	Context type	Context description	Length (m)	, ,	Depth (m)		Associate burials (B no.)	Section / plan	Photo	Finds	Enviro sample	Period
B.30	grave	[085]	fill	grave soil	0.3+	0.3+	0.1+		Burial 30	#6	y	skull		Med?
B.30	grave	[086]	cut	grave cut	ditto	ditto	ditto	cut by B.35?	Burial 30	#6	y			Med?
B.31	grave	[087]	fill	grave soil	0.6	0.3			Burial 31	#6	y			Med?
B.31	grave	[880]	cut	grave cut	ditto	ditto		cut by B.35	Burial 31	#6	у			Med?

B.32	grave	[089]	fill	grave soil	0.8+	0.4			Burial 32	#6	у	skull etc	Med?
B.32	grave	[090]	cut	grave cut	ditto	ditto			Burial 32	#6	у		Med?
B.33	grave	[091]	fill	grave soil	1.2+	0.7	0.24+		Burial 33	#6	у		Med?
B.33	grave	[092]	cut	grave cut	ditto	ditto	ditto		Burial 33	#6	у		Med?
B.34	grave	[093]	fill	grave soil	2?	1.4?	0.4+		Burial 34	#6	у	skull	Med?
B.34	grave	[094]	cut	grave cut	ditto	ditto	ditto		Burial 34	#6	у		Med?
B.35 (F.3)	grave	[095]	fill	grave soil	2.2?	0.5	0.55+		Burial 35	#6	у		Med?
B.35 (F.3)	grave	[096]	cut	grave cut	ditto	ditto	ditto	cuts B.30+ B.31	Burial 35	#6	у		Med?
B.36	grave	[097]	fill	grave soil	0.8+	0.4			Burial 36	#6	у		Med?
B.36	grave	[098]	cut	grave cut	ditto	ditto	ditto		Burial 36	#6	у		Med?
		[105]	layer	turf						#6			
		[106]	layer	sand						#6			
		[107]	layer	re-deposited chalk						#6			
		[108]	layer	dark grey silt 'burial soil'						#6			Med?
		[109]	layer	gravel path make-up (modern)						#6			
		[110]	layer	mixed dark grey silt + chalk						#6			
		[111]	layer	re-deposited chalk						#6			
		[112]	layer	dark grey rooted soil						#6			

HCP15 Trench 3:

	Feature type	Context no.	Context type	Context description	Length (m)		Depth (m)		Associate burials (B no.)	Section / plan	Photo	Finds	Enviro sample	Period
B.20	grave	[058]	cut	grave cut	ditto	ditto		cuts B.21	Burial 20	#7 + #8	у	not excav		Med?
B.21	grave	[059]	fill	grave soil	1.8	0.24+	0.2+		Burial 21	#7 + #8				Med?
B.21	grave	[060]	cut	grave cut	ditto	ditto	ditto	cut by B.20	Burial 21	#7 + #8	у	not excav		Med?
B.22	grave	[061]	fill	grave soil	1	0.2+			Burial 22	#7 + #8	у			Med?
B.22	grave	[062]	cut	grave soil	ditto	ditto			Burial 22	#7 + #8		not excav		Med?
		[063]	layer	gravel			0.05			#8				
		[064]	layer	topsoil/ gravel			0.15			#8				
		[065]	layer	sand + gravel			0.15			#8				

		[066]	layer	compacted broken-up chalk		0.25		#8		
		[067]	layer	grey silty sand w frags building stone		0.05		#13		
		[068]	layer	dark grey silty sand		0.05		#13		
		[069]	layer	yellowish brown sandy gravel		0.1		#13		
		[070]	layer	decayed weathered chalk		0.2		#13		
F.5	wall rubble	[113]	layer	demolitrion rubble assoc with old Hildersham School				#9		
		[114]	layer	silty loam + gravel in pipe trench nr churchyard gate				#9		

HCP15 Trenches 4+5:

l/Burial	Feature		Context type	Context description	Length (m)		Depth (m)	cuts/ cut by	Associate burials (B no.)	Section / plan	Photo	Finds	Enviro sample	Period
		[115]	layer	soil within backfilled construction trench for church						#12				
B.37	grave	[116]	fill	grave soil	0.2+	0.3			Burial 37	#12		skull		
B.37	grave	[117]	cut	grave cut	ditto	ditto			Burial 37	#12				
1B 38	truncated burial									#12		skull		
B 30	disturbed burial									#12		pelvis + R arm + juv rib		
B.40	grave	[118]	fill	grave soil	0.4+	0.35	0.2+		Burial 40	#12		human bn		
B.40	grave	[119]	cut	grave cut	ditto	ditto	ditto	cut by B.39?	Burial 40	#12				
B.41	grave	[120]	fill	grave soil	0.5+	0.4	0.2+		Burial 41	#12		human bn		
B.41	grave	[121]	cut	grave cut	ditto	ditto	ditto		Burial 41	#12				
B.42	grave?	[122]	fill	grave soil' + roots	0.5+	0.4			Burial 42	#12				
B.42	grave?	[123]	cut	cut	ditto	ditto			Burial 42	#12				
B.43	grave	[124]	fill	grave soil	0.6+	0.5	0.2+		Burial 43	#12		human bn		
B.43	grave	[125]	fill	grave cut	ditto	ditto	ditto		Burial 43	#12				

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OASIS ID: cambridg3-239579

Project details

Project name Hildersham Parish Church, Cambridgeshire

Short description of the project

Between March 2014 and December 2015 archaeological monitoring was undertaken within the graveyard of Holy Trinity Church, Hildersham during groundworks carried out in advance and post-construction of a porch extension and toilet, together with its associated services and soakaway(s). These groundworks involved excavation down to a depth of 1.4 metres within the proposed 12.5m2 footprint for the porch located on the north side of the church, alongside the digging of five additional service trenches across the graveyard, the longest of which was 90m from the church to the main gateway onto the road. In total 43 burials were encountered during this work, some nineteen of which were found within the footprint for the new church porch. All of the latter were fully skeletonised, these consisting of at least eight adults and five juveniles interred as shroud burials, being most likely Early Medieval in date. Given the similarity between these fully excavated burials and those recorded but not excavated within the associated service trenches, it seems possible we could be looking at a Medieval date for all of these umarked early graves. Just four sherds of 12th century AD St.Neots and greyware pottery were recovered from the main excavation, two sherds of this being associated with grave fill.

Project dates Start: 17-03-2015 End: 01-12-2015

Previous/future

work

Yes / No

Any associated project reference

codes

Any associated project reference codes

HCP15 - Sitecode

ECB4383 - HER event no.

Type of project Field evaluation Site status Listed Building

Current Land use Other 4 - Churchyard Monument type **CHURCH Medieval**

Monument type **GRAVES Medieval**

Significant Finds WORKED FLINT Early Neolithic

Significant Finds POTTERY Medieval

Significant Finds **HUMAN BONE Early Medieval** "Targeted Trenches", "Test Pits" Methods &

techniques

OASIS FORM - Print view

Development type Large/ medium scale extensions to existing structures (e.g. church, school, hospitals, law courts,

etc.)

Prompt Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16

Position in the

planning process

After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country England

Site location CAMBRIDGESHIRE SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE HILDERSHAM Holy Trinity Church,

Hildersham

Postcode **CB21**

Study area 12.5 Square metres

Site coordinates TL 54517 48776 52.115277777778 0.256944444444 52 06 55 N 000 15 25 E Point

Height OD /

Depth

Min: 35m Max: 37m

Project creators

Cambridge Archaeological Unit Name of

Organisation

Project brief originator

Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body

Project design

originator

Alison Dickens

Project

director/manager

Alison Dickens

Project supervisor David Webb

Type of Diocese

sponsor/funding

body

Name of

Holy Trinity Church, Hildersham

sponsor/funding

body

Project archives

Physical Archive

recipient

Cambridge Archaeological Unit

Physical Archive

ID

HCP15

Physical Contents "Ceramics", "Worked stone/lithics"

Digital Archive recipient

Cambridge Archaeological Unit

Digital Archive ID HCP15

"Ceramics", "Human Bones", "Stratigraphic", "Survey", "Worked stone/lithics" Digital Contents

Digital Media available

"GIS","Images raster / digital photography","Spreadsheets","Survey","Text"

Paper Archive Cambridge Archaeological Unit

OASIS FORM - Print view

recipient

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Paper Media available

"Context sheet","Map","Plan","Report","Section","Survey "

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