

St. Peter and St. Paul's Church, Alconbury Cambridgeshire

Archaeological Investigations



Simon Timberlake,
Natasha Dodwell,
Dave Webb and
Marcus Brittain

St. Peter and St. Paul's Church, Alconbury, Cambridgeshire

**Archaeological monitoring of the North Porch extension and
associated works**

**Simon Timberlake, Natsasha Dodwell,
Dave Webb & Marcus Brittain**

Cambridge Archaeology Unit
University of Cambridge
January 2016

Report No.1315

ECB 4384

Between March and June 2015 archaeological monitoring was undertaken within the graveyard of St. Peter & St. Paul's Church, Alconbury during groundworks carried out in advance of the construction of a porch extension and associated services and soakaway(s) adjacent to the North Aisle. These groundworks involved excavation to a depth of 0.8-0.9m (and to at least 1.2m for the building footings) within an area of approx. 6m² located just to the north of the existing church porch, plus the digging of a 2.2 x 1.7m and 1.2m deep soakaway to the east of this, then between here and the gate at the northern end of the churchyard a further two trenches, in total 35m long and 0.5m wide. The vast majority of the area cut by these groundworks proved to be densely packed with un-marked burials, amounting to 154 complete or partial skeletons identified and recorded (many of which had to be removed for re-burial), alongside several hundred kilos of disarticulated bone. Whilst many of these burials are likely to have been Medieval, the extent of intercutting of the graves and re-deposition of pottery and grave furniture made individual dating difficult, there clearly being a number of un-marked Post-medieval burials lying close to the church, amongst which were juveniles and infants.

Of some archaeological interest was the mixed incidence across the sampled area of Roman pot and tile, a very significant presence of Saxon (including Early-Middle Saxon pottery), and not unexpectedly a wide range of 12-15th century Early Medieval wares. Amongst the most important finds was a sherd from an Early-Middle Saxon funerary urn, and in the area of the North Porch a building/ occupation layer which appeared to pre-date the 14th century construction of the North Aisle. Associated with the latter were found small fragments of a double-sided composite bone comb which may be Saxon in date, whilst just 3m to the north of this within the generic re-deposited 'grave soil' was found a coin of the Emperor Domitian which appears to have been modified in the post-Roman (Anglo-Saxon?) Period with the addition of a punched dot-ring motif, then worn as a brooch or pendant. From the service trench excavation to the north of this came further Saxon pottery and a probable Saxon iron knife, the latter associated with a charnel spread.

Whilst the recording of burials from this churchyard has not really provided us with any representative sample of the Medieval-Postmedieval population of Alconbury, it has alerted us to the high density of what in all probability are early burials lying close to the church. More importantly, the non-burial associated finds recovered from the grave soil indicate a Roman presence nearby, and the possibility also of an Anglo-Saxon settlement or Saxon church upon this site.

Introduction

Between March and June 2014 the Cambridge Archaeological Unit carried out a programme of archaeological monitoring of the groundworks required for a porch and toilet/kitchen block extension to the North Aisle of Alconbury parish church (TL 1846 7613). The latter also included a number of associated soakaway(s) and service trench/ drains. This work was commissioned by Freeland Rees Roberts Architects on behalf of St. Peter & St. Paul's Church, Alconbury, and followed a Written Scheme of Investigation (Dickens 2014) prepared in response to a condition placed on planning consent by Huntingdonshire District Council, and to a brief issued by the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Team [CHET] (McConnell 2014).

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; (b) to identify and record burials which may be disturbed by this work and where necessary to lift and maintain the integrity of these for re-burial; and (c) to recover any disarticulated human remains and collect these for re-internment within the graveyard.

The depth of excavation required within the area of the planned extension (excluding the deeper footings for the walls) was 0.645m below the level of the church floor over an area of approx. 6m², a level that was equivalent to 0.8-0.9m+ below the graveyard ground surface. Likewise the 2m x 1.7m wide soakaway located a short distance to the east of the extension, with its associated silt traps and drains, involved excavation to a depth of at least 1.2m below ground level, whilst a further 35m length of 0.5m wide drain and service trench crossing from here to the north end of the churchyard had to be dug to a minimum of 1m depth in some places. This meant that almost all of the work conducted was likely to encounter burials or other archaeological features, which in the case of deep excavations carried out close to the walls of 14th century North Aisle of the church, was a problem likely to be compounded by a significantly higher density of both early and disturbed graves. 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. Furthermore, the modified brief for archaeology supplied by DAC/CHET (and supported by English Heritage's best practice approach referred to in the BBAO 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 Alconbury village in the vicinity of the church and graveyard consists of a gravel terrace either side of the valley of the Alconbury Brook. The gravel here covers a small outcrop of Boulder Clay, and beneath that Upper Jurassic Oxford Clay (BGS 187 1993). The church and graveyard sit on a bluff located on the eastern edge of this small valley and floodplain, the natural mound for this forming a moderately high point within the village at around 20m AOD.

Archaeological background

No previous archaeological work is recorded within the boundary of the church and churchyard, and there are no finds recorded. However, other than the church itself there are 13 records in the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (CHER) located within 250m of this location

Mesolithic-Bronze Age

There is a single local stray find of prehistoric date, recorded as part of a perforated shaft hole implement or stone axe, with an hour-glass perforation, thought to be Mesolithic (HER 00802).

Iron Age

There are no reported Iron Age finds from the centre of Alconbury close to the church. However, Late Iron Age – Roman settlements have been recorded several kilometres distant at Alconbury Hill and Alconbury Airfield.

Roman

A number of stray finds of Roman coins have been reported from the village of Alconbury, along with finds of pottery. A Roman coffin was unearthed at the village of Little Stukeley, whilst significant Roman settlements are known at Alconbury Hill, Alconbury Airfield and Tort Hill, East Sawtry (CHER 11665). The course of Ermine Street passes quite close to Alconbury (within a kilometre of the church), the location of which has been confirmed at the Alconbury junction on the A1.

Anglo-Saxon

There are indications of Late Saxon activity at Spring Cottage Farm (CB 155500) where a droveway, field boundary, ditches and probable structural remains were found during an evaluation in 1997.

Medieval

Medieval ridge and furrow has been observed at several locations around the village (HER 10506, 10505, 10507, 10504, CB 15501)

Alconbury Parish Church

Although not mentioned in Domesday, stones of the 12th century (probably Barnack) visible within the chancel walls indicate that a stone church was likely at that time. The present chancel and steeple are 13th century in date, with the north aisle, clerestory, church spire and south porch added in the 14th century. Further minor additions were made in the later centuries (including the 1684 exterior stone buttresses built against the subsiding north wall of the north aisle). A significant restoration was carried out in the 1880s during which the lower part of the tower was re-built.

Postmedieval – Modern

There are a number of listed buildings within the village, including an at least four within 250m of the church.

Methodology

The mitigation strategy included the monitoring of the groundworks, including 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 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 stored by the church for re-internment. Both cleared spoil and graves were monitored by metal detector for coffin nails, shroud pins or other metal objects. Where locatable, both these and other find categories were numbered and where possible marked on plan as small finds. All articulated human bone found (both as partial or intact skeletons) was left cleaned and exposed after planning and recording (with the addition of burial numbers), but remained covered from public view and protected until such point as each burial could be metrically recorded (and where possible provisionally aged and/or sexed with any obvious palaeo-pathology noted), drawn on plan and on standard CAU skeleton recording sheets, then bagged, numbered and lifted.

Throughout the course of this work the area with burials was screened from public view through the erection of metal fencing with the addition of a further plastic net membrane. For the archaeological work health and safety was conducted in accordance with the guidelines established in the FAME manual *Health and Safety in Field Archaeology* (2010), and the excavations were and regularly checked for section stability, and laddered for entry and access, with archaeological work proceeding only to a depth of 1.2m below ground level.

Survey during the excavation and removal of burials was carried out by the archaeologists in attendance using 30 + 50m tapes and dumpy level, with survey points and wherever possible the excavated and exposed graves within the excavation(s) were also recorded by the Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU) survey team.

No human bone was removed from the site (or church premises), although finds including the categories of iron nails, pins, coffin furniture, animal bone, worked bone, burnt clay and tile, burnt stone, and pottery were removed to the Finds Department in the CAU for cleaning and bagging prior to post-excavation analysis.

All articulated burials (whether complete or partial) were given individual burial numbers, thus any discrepancy between specifically numbered burials and the actual number of recorded burials was due to the allotment of different number ranges whilst working within different areas of the graveyard (hence burial numbers ranged from 1-

78 and from 100-178). In addition, a few identified 'grave cuts' were allotted burial numbers, but the skeletons were not exposed or excavated.

Results

Excavation carried out within the area of the footings for the north porch extension revealed archaeology at the shallowest level close to the existing doorway and step to the North Aisle. Beneath the modern replacement step and its underlying mortar layer (001) lay a thin foundation horizon of broken brick and tile (002), the latter overlying a more substantial cut and fill for a wall base or stone floor composed of rounded river stone and flint within a matrix of packed earth, gravel and mortar (003); perhaps the foundation footings for the 14th century North Aisle extension, but quite possibly a still earlier building associated with the church (Figure 1). These footings which were at least 1m wider than the wall within the area of the porch step extended both to the west and east of this, and were also clearly cut by the 1684 support buttresses. Within the matrix in between these cobbles were found pieces of unglazed Medieval floor tile plus some later Medieval green glaze pottery. The lower parts of these stone cobble footings (004) were generally more densely packed and infilled with a looser weathered mortar matrix. More interesting still was the preserved soil layer (005) which lay beneath this. The latter contained weathered and decomposed mortar fragments alongside stone flakes derived from the weathering and erosion of the church walls, but also perhaps from the original facing (i.e. working) of the stone on site, the latter reflecting a constructional phase which could date back to the 12th-13th century.

The excavation produced sherds of both Saxon and early Medieval pot as a well as a number of fragments derived from a Saxon – Early Medieval double-sided composite bone comb which showed traces of a dot-ring and parallel geometric line decoration (see Figure 6 and worked bone report). Despite this presence of Saxon pottery and finds, this seems to be Early Medieval structural foundations, a little earlier perhaps than the date given for the footings of the church. For instance, a 1m-wide excavation slot dug beneath this revealed a dark grey-brown loamy silt (006) containing rare lumps of chalk and weathered mortar plus sherds of pottery, at least some of which were Early-Middle Saxon. Whilst pre-dating the North Aisle, it seems likely this phase was probably contemporary with the earliest Medieval stone church. Yet there remains the possibility (based on pottery finds such as the sherds from an Early-Middle Saxon burial urn) that this might be the *site* of an earlier Saxon church. The highest recovery of Saxon pottery/artefacts came from the area lying closest to the church, either from the original trenches and footings associated with the North Aisle, or from the ubiquitous re-deposited grave soil (009) and grave fills located a short distance (i.e. 3-4 metres) to the rear. However, finds of Early-Middle Saxon pottery and a *Seax*-type iron knife blade within one of the service trenches dug to the north raises the possibility of there being a slightly more extensive church/ settlement area behind this, possibly with Saxon burials.

The relationship of the darker grave soil to the constructional layers of the church could not easily be determined during excavation, although it seemed likely that the latter were earlier, with the church foundations being sited upon a slightly higher knoll of gravel, perhaps with evidence for sand and gravel quarrying around it. Subsequently this area became infilled with at least a metre or so of intensively

turned-over grave soil, amongst which lay disarticulated skeletal material in between successive layers of disturbed and intercut burials, at least some of which may be Early Medieval in date (e.g. Burials 167 and 171).

During the recording and removal of skeletons a range of other non-burial finds including Roman pottery and tile (such as box flue and *tegula*), Early-Middle Saxon pottery, Medieval (12th-15th century AD) pottery and floor tile, alongside Early Postmedieval pottery was recovered from the grave soil. Of particular interest was the discovery of a Roman coin of the emperor Domitian (81-96 AD) which appears to have been re-used in the post-Roman (most probably Anglo-Saxon) period as either a brooch or pendant. The coin had had a punch dot and ring ornament applied to it as well as a central piercing to the left of the emperors' image, such that the head would have been facing downwards when suspended (Figure 6).

Of the 154 burials recorded during the archaeological monitoring works, some 64 came from the area of the new porch extension footprint (Figure 2), 57 from the silt-traps and soakaway located just to the north of the church and east of the porch extension (Figure 3), 8 from the E-W pipe trench (Figures 2 + 4), plus another 25 from the N-S service trench (Figure 4). The majority of the latter were simply recorded, but left in *situ.*, as they were not disturbed by the final depth of excavation.

A summary record of these archaeologically excavated church burials is provided within the Burial Gazetteer(s) (see Tables 7-10), with additional information supplied in the report on the human remains undertaken by the CAU osteoarchaeologist Natasha Dodwell. This includes 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 in any way, given the very small size and un-dated nature of the population sample. Whilst a good proportion of these are likely to be Medieval, the presence of Postmedieval juvenile and neonate burials interred close to the walls of the church were implied by the presence of small 'modern' alloy silver coloured upholstery pins used for wrapping the shroud bundles, and likewise pitch-covered shrouds associated with several coffin burials, perhaps part of an acknowledged 'late' (probably 19th century) customary practice of lining coffins in those cases where bodily decay might occur during the 'lying in state' prior to internment (McCarthy et al. 2012, 283). Likewise, the depth of burial below surface within the graveyard could not be used as a gauge of the relative date of internment, as was shown by the finding of 'late' coffin burials amongst the shroud-type burials at the base of the soakaway. Indeed the differential range of burial depth encountered at Alconbury was at least 0.6m, with the highest burials occurring at around 19.7m AOD and the lowest at 19.13m AOD (NB the height of the church floor height was 20.14m AOD).

Conclusions

The discovery of 154 complete or partial un-marked burials during the groundwork excavations carried out in advance of the construction of the North Porch extension was perhaps not that surprising in view of the age and importance of this medieval church, and also the location of the excavations close to the wall foundations on the north side of the 14th-century aisle. What it does imply (a consideration to be well aware of in any future planning application) is that the incidence of un-marked early

graves surrounding a Medieval church of this size and importance is much more likely to consist of hundreds or even thousands rather than tens of individual burials.

More interesting archaeologically was the tentative evidence of nearby Roman settlement (as indicated by the small amounts of redeposited roof and hypocaust tile, pottery etc.), alongside a rather more robust Early-Middle Saxon presence; the larger number of finds from the latter suggesting either a settlement or an earlier church on this site. Although no archaeological features certainly dating to this period were recognised, the moderate pottery assemblage provisionally identified as being Middle Saxon (including sherds of a burial urn) attests to the likelihood of contemporary occupation. The significance of this is reflected by two exceptional finds recovered from the area of the new porch; that of a Saxon-Medieval composite bone comb found beneath the doorstep to the North Aisle, and a coin of the Emperor Domitian later re-used as a Saxon brooch which was found in grave soil. The latter was very well-preserved and is a rare object worthy of further study in its own right.

Acknowledgements

The archaeological work carried out in response to a condition on planning consent by Huntingdonshire District Council was based on a WSI commissioned by Freeland Rees Roberts Architects on behalf of St. Peter's and St. Paul's Church, Alconbury. The management of the groundworks was undertaken by Fairhurst Ward Abbotts with the excavation carried out by Bowie Construction Ltd. The Vicar of St. Peter's and St. Paul's Church and project manager for the works kindly facilitated our stay on site. Kasia Gdaniec monitored the archaeological investigation on behalf of CHET. Alison Dickens was CAU Project Manager, and survey work was carried out by Jane Matthews and John Moller. The core archaeological team on-site consisted of Simon Timberlake, Natasha Dodwell, Hannah Pighills and Ben Neill. Marcus Brittain carried out the later trench monitoring.

References

- Ashby, S. 2007 *Bone and Antler Combs*, Datasheet 40: The Finds Research Group AD700-1700
- Bass, W.M. 1987 *Human Osteology* Columbia, Missouri Archaeology Society
- Brothwell, D. 1981 *Digging Up Bones* British Museum (Natural History) London
- Brooks, S. and Suchey, J. 1990 Skeletal Age Determination Based on the Os Pubis: A Comparison of the Acsádi-Nemeskéri and Suchey-Brooks Methods *Human Evolution* 5:227-238
- Buikstra, J. E. and Ubelaker, D. H. (eds) 1994 *Standards for the collection from human skeletal remains* Arkansas Archaeological Survey. Research Series No. 44. Fayetteville: Arkansas Archaeological Survey
- Gowland, R. 2007. Beyond ethnicity: Symbols of Identity in Fourth to Sixth Century AD England, *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology History* 14, 56-65
- Lovejoy, C. O., Meindl, R. S., Pryzbeck, T. R. and Mensforth, R.P 1985 Chronological Metamorphosis of the Auricular Surface of the Ilium: A New method for the Determination of Age at Death *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 68: 15-28
- McCarthy, R., Clough, S., Boyle, A. & Norton, A. 2012 The Baptist Chapel burial ground, Littlemore, Oxford, *Postmedieval Archaeology* 46(2), 281-290

McConnell, D. 2014 Brief for Archaeological Monitoring and Recording: St. Peter and St. Paul's Church, Alconbury

McMinn, R.M.H., Hutchings, R.T., Pegington, J. and Abrahams, P. A 1993 *Colour Atlas of Human Anatomy*, Third Edition. Wolfe Publishing

Schaefer, M., Black, S., and Scheuer, L. 2009 *Juvenile Osteology: A laboratory and Field Manual* Academic Press, London

Ubelaker, D.H.1989 *Human Skeletal Remains: Excavation, Analysis, and Interpretation* Taraxacum Press, Washington, D.C

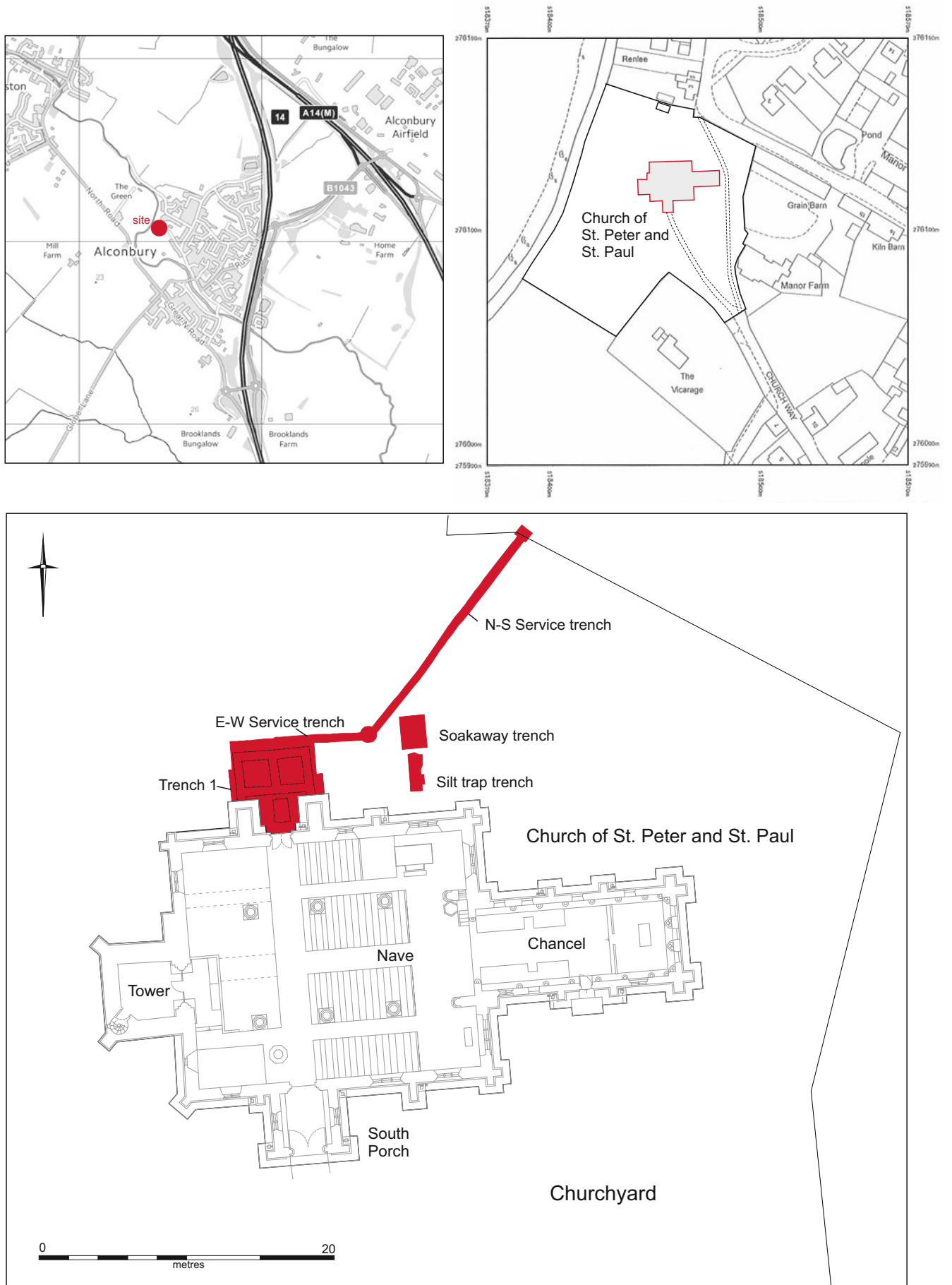


Figure 1. Site location and areas of archaeological investigation

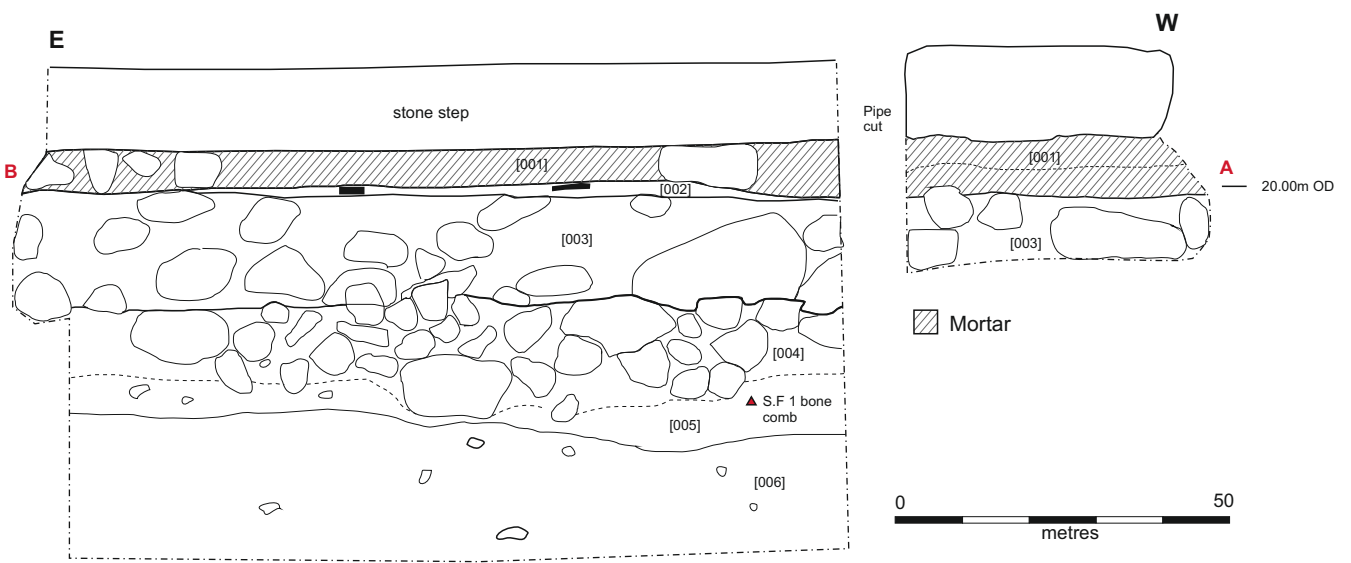
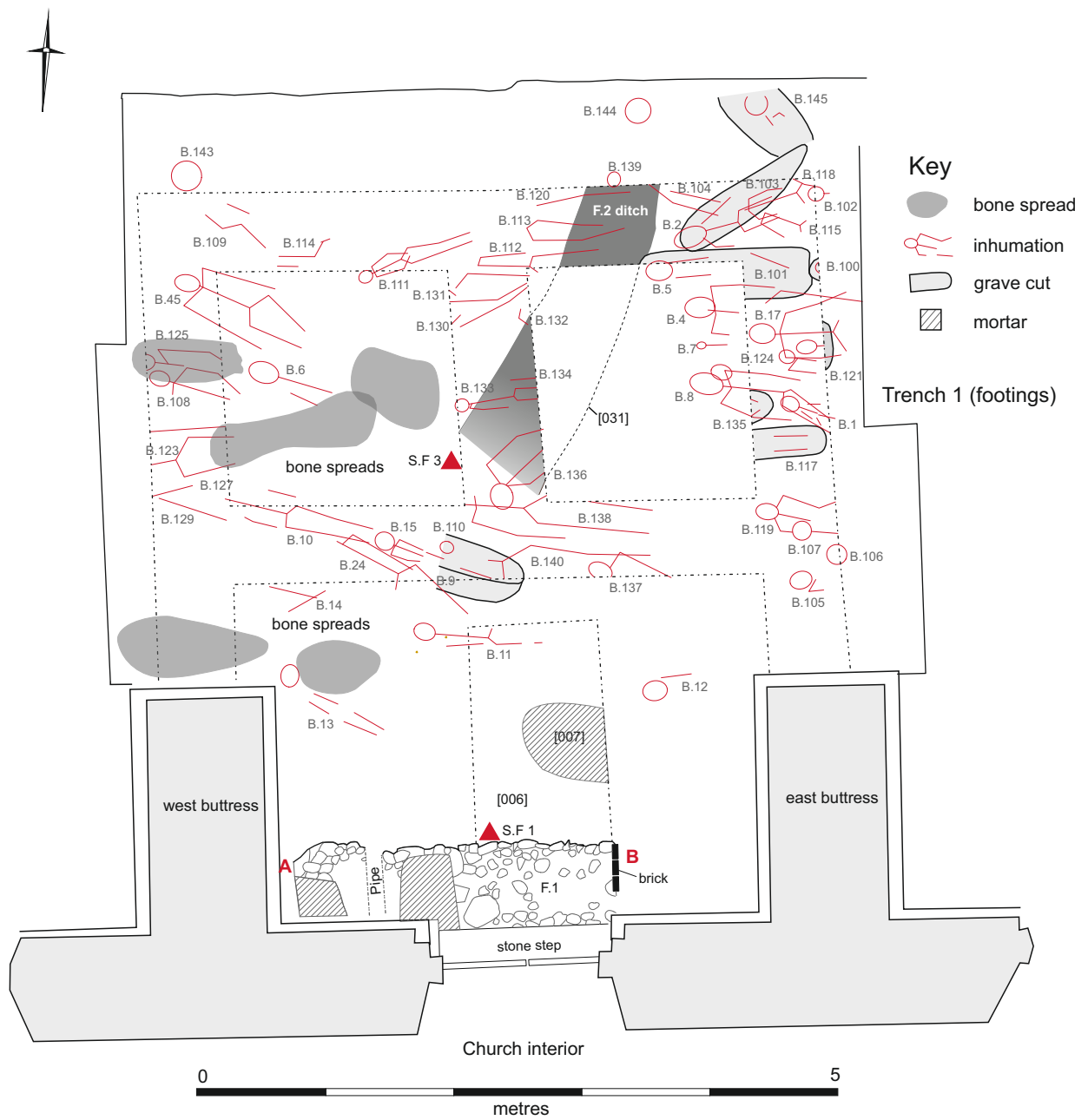


Figure 2. Trench 1 (footings) plan and section

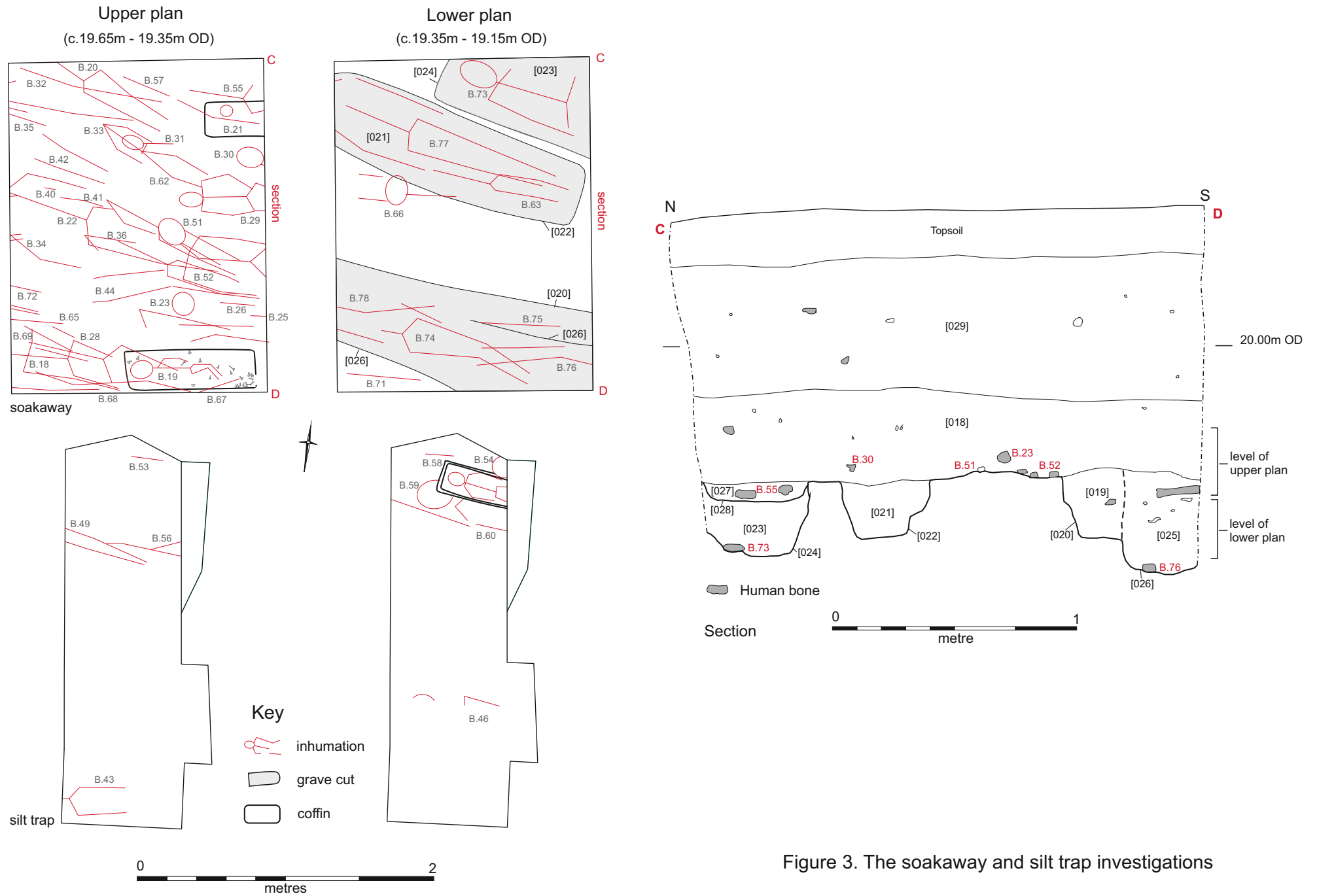


Figure 3. The soakaway and silt trap investigations

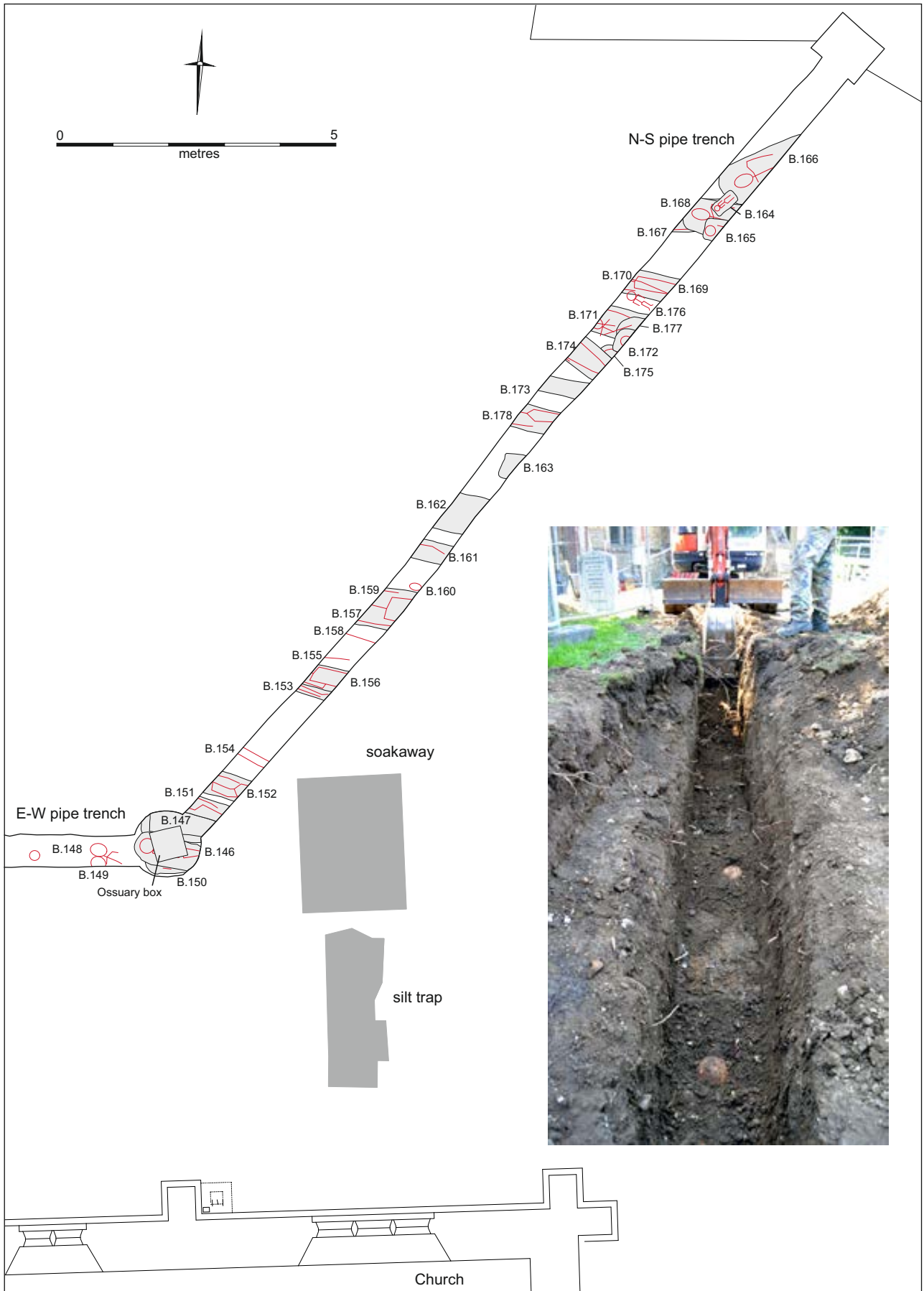


Figure 4. The service trench investigations



Burials 29 and 30 (soakaway)



Burial 45 (trench 1)

Figure 5. Photographs



Sf.3 Reworked Roman coin



Sf.1 Bone comb fragments

Figure 6. Artefact photographs

APPENDIX 1

Specialist reports

Metalwork *Grahame Appleby & Andrew Hall*

A total of 84 (388g) pieces of metalwork were recovered during the archaeological monitoring and excavation, including 4 coins and a button, 12 copper alloy shroud pins, 55 nails and screws, studs, lumps and one knife blade fragment. Two pieces of lead were also recovered from the top soil (cat. nos. 100 and 101), possibly off-cuts or scrap from window or roof lead (these two items are not described further).

Coins

<91> [001] Three coins: a) copper half-penny of Elizabeth II dated 1954; b) copper half-penny George III dated 1775; c) copper farthing of George III dated 1774.

<102> Top-soil [036]. Copper alloy As. Obverse has an image of Domitian (Emperor 81-96 AD) and the reverse a standing figure of Fortuna or Vertus. The coin has been modified in the post-Roman period, most likely Anglo-Saxon, with punched ring and dot decoration to both the obverse and reverse and a centrally placed piercing to the left of the emperor's image (the face would be facing downwards when suspended).

Copper alloy

<108> Burial 2. Two complete straight-sided, dome-headed and one fragmentary copper alloy shroud pins; length 31.5mm.

<109> Burial 2. Small, very fragmentary ring recovered from area of right hand.

<112> Burial 19. Collection of six copper alloy/tin shroud pins and fragments; length 18.2mm-29mm.

<115> Burial 29. Reasonably well preserved straight-sided, dome-headed shroud pin; length 32.3mm.

<117> BR [156]. Fragments of one or two copper alloy/tin shroud pins; length 4.6mm-20mm.

<119> B [157]. Complete copper alloy/tin shroud pin with relatively flat head; length 23.5mm.

<120> SF5. Corroded possible button with textile impressions preserved in corrosion products; post-Medieval or modern.

Ironwork

<092> [001]. Collection of 12 very corroded and delaminating iron fragments and lumps, including nail and possible stud fragments; the head of one stud measures 18mm in diameter with traces of mineralised wood on the underside; total weight 26g. Possible decorative studding.

<093> [003]. Fragment of a highly corroded, short-shanked nail or stud with square or rectangular cross-section; length 32.7mm, weight 10g.

<094> [005]. One complete and one fragmentary nail. The complete nail possesses a square-shaped flat head; length 42mm, weight 13g. Fragment length 26.7mm, weight 1g.

<095> [005], north of porch step. Fragment of a large nail, with square-shaped flat head and concreted lump. Nail length 44.4mm, weight 8g; lump, weight 15g.

<096> F.1684? [008]. Fragment of a square-shaped flat headed nail; length 36.6mm, weight 6g.

<097> [009]. Large, complete nail with corroded flat head; length 81.5mm, weight 10g.

- <098> [036] -65cm. Two screw-thread fittings. Modern; total weight 19g.
- <099> [036] 0.5-1cm. Highly corroded nail fragment; length 49.8mm, weight 5g.
- <103> [036] NE Quadrant. Fragment of a flat, Y-shaped object with one rounded terminal and 'open' rounded recess and rectangular cross-sectioned 'tang'. Possibly a fitting, although its function is unknown; length 42.8mm, weight 7g.
- <104> [036] NE Quadrant. Complete corroded nail; length 56.6mm, weight 6g.
- <105> [036] SE Quadrant: -40-50cm. Heavily corroded and concreted lump, possibly one or more small nails or studs; the underside of one nail or stud head is clearly visible with part of the shank still attached; weight 17g.
- <106> [039] -40cm, cleaning. Complete flat-headed nail with square cross-section -shaped shank; length 42.8mm, weight 4g.
- <107> 1. Charnel Spread. Fragment of a reasonably well-preserved, straight-backed small knife with a curved blade to the tip; length c. 78.5mm, weight 40g. Probably Saxon or early Medieval.
- <110> Burial 6 infill. Large, very corroded nail fragment; length 50mm, weight 10g.
- <111> Burial 19. Three relatively thin, rectangular cross-section -shaped coffin nails, one complete (length 61.5mm), length 29mm-61.5mm; total weight 6g. Possibly late Medieval, early post-Medieval.
- <113> B21. Flat-top modern screw; weight 3g.
- <114> Burial 29. Relatively thin nail, 62.7mm long, with mineralised wood heading towards the terminal and head, and a small hand-made nail, length 30.5mm. Also found within this context was a modern screw which possesses a flat head and mineralised wood adhering to its mid-point (length 36.5mm); probably intrusive. Total weight 15g.
- <116> Tr. B. [156]. Collection of seven lumps and fragmentary and complete coffin nails, two with clear traces of mineralised wood adhering to the shank; lengths 48mm-63mm, total weight 45g.
- <118> Burial [157]. Collection of one complete and 11 fragmentary coffin nails of varying length and weights, including shanks and heads (length: 26.7mm-51.4mm; total weight 51g.) Mineralised wood is preserved on at least two fragments.

This is a relatively small and unremarkable assemblage containing material that would be expected from a cemetery and church site. Two objects, however, are of note. These are the pierced and decorated re-used Roman coin of Domitian that has clearly been modified in order to suspend it as a piece of jewellery or decoration (Gowland 2007) and the small straight-backed knife. These are both potentially contemporary, the pierced re-used Roman coin dating from the Early Anglo-Saxon period. The items may thus indicate that an Anglo-Saxon settlement, structure or even burial may have been located nearby.

Iron slag *Simon Timberlake*

A single piece of ironworking slag (25mm x 30mm x 40mm (thick) = 52g) was recovered from the topsoil layer (at a depth of 0.7-0.8m) recorded within the NW section of the open area excavation dug for the north porch extension. The slag is dense and crystalline with traces of wustite and fayalite. Not being that typical of secondary smithing slag, it wasn't possible to be sure whether this was slag from an iron smelting (i.e. bloomery) or smithing process, yet when found in this context it

seems that this must have been re-deposited, and most probably Late Medieval/ or early Postmedieval in date.

Glass *Vicki Herring & Simon Timberlake*

Apart from a single piece of broken 18th-19th century bottle glass (22g) from the topsoil, the only glass find recorded came from the grave soil (009) of the open area excavation for the North Porch extension was a small fragment of thin (1.7mm thick) pale green bottle or window glass weighing < 1g. This was unlikely to be Medieval, but could have come from a small Roman glass bottle, or perhaps a thin Postmedieval window pane.

Brick and tile *Simon Timberlake*

A total of 3.28 kg of tile and brick was recovered from the excavation and open trench areas to the north of the church. The majority of this tile came from the area of the North Aisle doorway or porch (in particular from the foundation or sub-foundation layers for the wall and steps), although a reasonable proportion also came from the topsoil layers within the graveyard, a context within which this was clearly redeposited.

Quite weathered but probably Roman tile and brick amounted to some 1.07 kg, this chiefly consisting of fragments of roof tile (e.g. *tegula*) but also a conclusively identified fragment of box flue (hypocaust) tile which was found redeposited in the fill of the construction trench dug for the westernmost 1684 support buttress. The presence of this appears to indicate that Roman building remains existed close to the church and centre of Alconbury, possibly including a high-status building such as a villa.

At least 0.36 kg of the tile recovered would appear to be Medieval, on the basis that traces of a very thin de-vitrified yellow glaze could be seen on some fragments of probable floor tile which seem to have been rejected as wasters, but which probably originally 10-13 cm square and between 15-20mm thick. Examples of such plain thinly glazed or unglazed floor tiles are often associated with Medieval churches of the 12th-14th century, and these are reported in the archaeological literature (for example SEE on-line version of *Journal of the Trust for Thanet Archaeology* project VM-365).

Another 1.1 kg of tile, mostly thin buff-red coloured flat roof tile (13-15mm thick) but also unglazed red floor tile (15-20mm thick) may be Medieval in date, but this has been referred to as Medieval-Postmedieval simply on account of the lack of any clear diagnostic features.

Postmedieval (most probably late Postmedieval i.e. 17th-18th century) brick and tile amounted to another 0.3 kg, with 'modern' brick and tile fragments a further 0.2 kg.

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| <i>Fabric 1</i> | hard light grey clay fabric internally with a buff-light pink coloured exterior and abundant crushed shell inclusion, minor fired grog and burnt flint, plus traces of carbonaceous material |
| <i>Fabric 2</i> | hard light grey well-fired and v slight micaceous sandy textured fabric with rare inclusions of burnt flint and well-fired grog with a pinky-reddish oxidised rough sandy exterior |
| <i>Fabric 3</i> | mid-grey well-fired clay fabric without inclusions and with thick (3-15mm) smooth oxidised red exterior |
| <i>Fabric 4</i> | similar to Fabric 2 but more sandy and oxidised (pink-red) throughout |
| <i>Fabric 5</i> | highly fired dark grey interior with thick (10-12mm) oxidised buff-pink exterior (brick) |
| <i>Fabric 6</i> | reddish with softer grog inclusions and 'streaked' clay texture internally |
| <i>Fabric 7</i> | similar to Fabric 3 but much more highly fired, reddish throughout, and probably machine cut |

Fabric 8 highly fired cindery darker grey internal fabric with rare burnt flint inclusion and oxidised ext
Fabric 9 sandy gritty soft red clay brick fabric
Fabric 10 high-fired hard oxidised pink fabric with v small (<2mm) inclusions of burnt/ calcined flint

| Cat no. | Context | number pieces | weight (g) | dimensions (mm) | fabric type | description | tile type |
|---------|-------------|---------------|---------------|---|------------------------|--|---|
| <004> | 002 | 1 | 362 | 90x 105 x 30 (thick) | 2 | abraded fragment of broken tile re-used in foundn of porch step | possible Roman <i>pilae</i> tile or brick (15-20cm square?) |
| <002> | 003 | 1 | 180 | 95 x 70 x 17 | 6 | distorted and weathered tile frag | a poorly glazed (yellow) Med floor tile waster (10+ cm square?) |
| <003> | 003 | 1 | 152 | 70 x 40 x 40 | 3 | abraded fragment of tile or brick | Roman or later? |
| <005> | 003 | 1 | 106 | 85 x 80 x 13 | 10 | broken unabraded tile corner | Med-PM? roof tile |
| <16> | 005 | 4 | 462 ((1)=202) | (1)65 x 80 x 25; (2)80 x 60 x 30; (3)60 x 45 x 20; (4)55 x 50 x 5 | (1)4; (2)6; (3)7; (4)5 | broken roof tile, brick, and worn floor tile | (1) possibly Roman (?) floor tile; (2) Med-PM floor tile; (3) Postmed roof tile; (4) modern brick |
| <007> | 005 | 2 | 398 | 115 x 80 x 27 | 6 | clearly a worn unglazed floor tile | Med – early PM floor tile from church? |
| <17> | 005 | 2 | 180 | 55 x 40 x 55 (thick) | 9 | weathered brick frag | hand-made 17thC brick? |
| <20> | 008 | 1 | 76 | 65 x 65 x 13 (thick) | 1 | abraded frag broken tile (redeposited) | comb-decorated Roman box flue |
| <27> | 009 | 1 | 98 | 95 x 55 x 14 | 10 | broken frag roof tile | Med-PM? roof tile |
| <37> | 035 | 1 | 30 | 60 x 35 x 10 | 10 | weathered abraded roof tile frag | Med-PM? roof tile |
| <42> | 036 topsoil | 1 | 178 | 55 x 55 x 60 (thick) | 5 | broken corner unweathered brick | Postmed early machine-cut brick (19thC?) |
| <61> | 036 | 2 | 82 | 50 x 50 + 40 x 45 x 15-20 (thick) | 6 + 8 | broken frags of floor tile | Medieval floor tile wasters – 1 with yellow glaze? |
| <48> | 036 | 3 | 318 | (1)120 x 80 x 13; (2)80x30x22; (3)55x40x 11 | (1)10; (2)4 | roof tile + floor tile frags | (1)Med-PM? roof tile; (2) Roman or Med floor tile |
| <41> | 036 | 1 | 38 | 50 x 42 x 12 (thick) | 10 | roof tile | Med-PM? roof tile |
| <47> | 036 | 1 | 120 | 75 x 50 x 30 (thick) | 6 | a worn unglazed floor tile | Med – early PM floor tile from church? |
| <55> | 036 | 2 | 166 | (1)60 x 70 x 20 (thick); (2)65 x 62 x 11 | (1) 6? + (2) 10 | worn unglazed floor tile with traces of mortar + roof tile frag | Med? floor tile from church + Med-PM roof tile |
| <72> | 038 | 1 | 54 | 90 x 40 x 13 (thick) | 10 | weathered | Med-PM? roof tile |
| <73> | 039 | 1 | 282 | 72 x 80 x 25 (thick) | 3 | broken edge of only slightly abraded tile frag with old chisel break | possible Roman <i>tegula</i> roof tile? |

Table 1: Catalogue of brick and tile

Burnt Stone and Building Stone *Simon Timberlake*

Some 556g of *burnt stone* (most of which consisted of pebble material collected from the local gravels) was recovered from the topsoil, grave soil and the north aisle porch step construction debris deposits within the area of the excavation and services trench on the north side of the church. As with the small chips of dressed *building stone* (c.160g), many of which will have been derived from late Medieval working on-site of stone used in the construction of the North Aisle, for the erection of buttresses (c. 1684), or from the weathering and erosion (frost flaking) of the walls; most of this material has now ended up being re-deposited within the soils and backfill of the cemetery.

Both the North Aisle foundations and earliest porch steps appear to have been constructed of river pebbles and cobbles collected from the underlying gravels. Many of these are composed of flint, but some of are composed of sandstone and quartzite. Evidently amongst all this were pebbles of burnt stone, some of which may have had their origin within prehistoric cooking hearths; something suggested by size as well as the type of cracking and fragmentation which is typical of potboilers (<32> + <35> etc.). At least one of these pieces (<23>) was found encased in mortar, suggesting that it had either been used already as infill stone within the earlier church walls, or else had been inserted directly and mortared into the North Aisle foundations.

| Cat. No. | Feature/ SF/ enviro ◇ | Context | Nos. frags | Size (mm) | Weight (g) | Geology | Notes |
|----------|-----------------------------|---------|------------|-----------|------------|--|--|
| 09 | | 005 | 1 | 65 | 98 | fine-medium sandstone | BS |
| 18 | | 005 | 1 | 40 | 34 | metasandstone | BS |
| 22 | | 008 | 1 | 25 | 14 | fine qtz sandstone | BS |
| 23 | | 008 | 1 | 50 | 76 | quartz porphyry | BS small fragment encased in mortar – part of walling |
| 32 | | 009 | 2 | 25-60 | 72 | burnt fractured pebble frags of metasandstone and quartzitic sstn | BS |
| 28 | | 009 | 1 | 55 | 84 | metasandstone (?) pebble | BS |
| 60 | | 036 | 1 | 45 | 10 | North Welsh slate | fragment roof slate c.18 th -19 th C |
| 56 | | 036 | 1 | 80 | 98 | oolitic limestone poss Ketton Stone | fragment of faced building stone – as ashlar freestone- perhaps from porch or quoins |
| 75 | | 040 | 2 | 45-50 | 78 | metaquartzite pebbles (Bunter?) from gravels | BS |
| 43 | | 036 | 2 | 45-70 | 152 | quartzite pebble + bioclastic limestone (U Jur Corallian or Inferior Oolite) | BS + chip of building stone? |

Table 2: Catalogue of burnt stone and building stone

Pottery report *David Hall and Simon Timberlake*

A total of 112 sherds of pottery were recovered, weighing 1005g. Of this some 45 sherds were dated as being Saxon (mostly Early-Middle Saxon), some 35 sherds of Medieval (12th-15th century AD), 28 sherds of Post-Medieval, and 4 sherds Roman pot. Table 3 shows the number of sherds and weights of sherds relating to the identification of different ware types/ spot dates which have been provided by David Hall.

| Fabric | Date | No | Weight | Context/feature | Notes |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------|----|--------|--|---|
| Greyware | Roman | 1 | 21 | (036) | |
| Coarseware | Roman | 5 | 17 | (009); (018) | |
| | Roman | 1 | 7 | (035) | |
| | Early-Mid Saxon? | 2 | 21 | (009); B.171 | includes decorated sherd typical of burial urns |
| | Mid-Saxon | 2 | 13 | (037); B.167 | incl rounded rim + decorated form |
| Handmade gritty ware | Saxon? | 2 | 13 | unstrat | |
| Hard dark ware | Saxon | 1 | 7 | (041) | |
| | Saxon | 39 | 250 | (005); (006); (009); (018); (036); (040) | |
| St.Neots | 12 th C | 12 | 54 | (005); (018); (036); B.1 | incl. 2 jar rims |
| Reduced Stampford | 12 th C | 2 | 34 | (009); (035) | |
| Livton | 13 th C | 1 | 39 | (002) | jar rim |
| Pink Shelly Ware | 13 th C | 7 | 48 | (036); (041); B.166 | incl bowl/jar rim |
| Green Glazed Pink | 13 th /14 th C | 2 | 11 | (005) | fineware |
| Greyware | 14 th C | 2 | 10 | | |
| Greenglazed Grimston | 14 th C | 1 | 77 | (038) | jug handle |
| Pink | 14 th /15 th C | 3 | 14 | (009); (036) | |
| Red | 15 th C | 5 | 39 | (035) | 2 greenglazed bowl rims |
| Surrey Tudor Green | 16 th C | 1 | 2 | (036) | rim of small beaker/cup |
| Plain Red | 16 th /17 th C | 9 | 69 | (036) | |
| GRE | 17 th C | 11 | 174 | (036); (040); B.6 | incl bowl rims |
| Iron-glazed | 17 th /18 th C | 2 | 13 | (036) | |
| English Stoneware | 18 th | 1 | 17 | (038) | |
| Iron-glazed | 19 th C | 1 | 16 | | |
| Staffordshire Ware | 19 th C | 1 | 12 | | |
| Blackglazed | 19 th C | 1 | | (038) | |
| Miscellaneous | 19 th C | 4 | 27 | (036) | |

Table 3: Pottery wares and dates

The degree of re-deposition of pottery through grave digging is evident from the range of pottery dates (Roman – 19th century AD) found within the various topsoil layers, as well as a more limited range of dates (Roman – 15th century AD) associated with the undifferentiated lower grave soil (009) which is then cut by graves in the area of the new porch excavation. Interestingly, the lower undifferentiated grave soil (018) within the base of the Soakaway has no pottery in it dating to later than the 12th century.

Faunal remains and worked bone *Vida Rajkovača*

Eight loose teeth were recovered from three contexts. Cow was identified based on four specimens (from [005] and [036]), horse, pig and sheep were also recorded from [036].

| Taxon | [005] | [036] | fill of burial 6 | Total |
|--------------|----------|----------|------------------|----------|
| Cow | 1 | 3 | . | 4 |
| Sheep/ goat | . | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Pig | . | 1 | . | 1 |
| Horse | . | 1 | . | 1 |
| Total | 1 | 6 | 1 | 8 |

Table 4: Number of Identified Specimens for all species from all contexts.

A number of garment buttons and a possible worked bone bead were found accompanying several of the burials (B.2, B.29, and B.156). All the buttons and bead were made from either rib segment or scapula blade.

Bone comb

Three small pieces (<12> SF.1) from the same worked bone object were recovered from [005] beneath the original porch and doorway to the North Aisle. Probably fashioned from cattle-sized scapula, these represent fragments of a side plate of a probable double-sided composite bone comb decorated with dot in two circle motifs, 'framed' with three parallel lines. A likely date for this comb would be Saxon-Early Medieval. Similar examples to this (i.e. Type 13) are briefly illustrated and described in Ashby 2007.

Human Remains *Natasha Dodwell*

Human remains were recovered from two main areas; an open area excavation forming the footprint for the proposed new porch and the soakaway/silt traps excavation approximately 1.7m east of the porch. These burials were exposed, lifted and recorded whilst there was an osteologist was on site. Many of these were relatively complete; thus information regarding the age, sex and pathologies of these skeletons is more detailed than for those partial bodies removed from the trenches dug for the building footings and services.

Methodology

All of the skeletons/partial skeletons from the building footprint and the soakaway/silt traps were scanned by the on-site osteoarchaeologist to assess age and sex and any gross pathologies. Immature individuals were aged using metrical data (Schaefer *et al* 2009) and the stage of dental development and eruption (Ubelaker 1989). In line with standard practice, no attempt was made to attribute a sex to immature individuals. Adults were aged using the stage of epiphyseal fusion, the degree of molar wear (McMinn *et al.* 1993; Brothwell 1981, 69 fig.30), and where they survived the appearance of the pubic symphysis and the auricular surface (Brooks and Suchey 1981 and Lovejoy 1985). 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 following 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 many instances where only a small amount of the skeleton was exposed broad categories such as ‘immature’ or ‘adult’ were used.

Sexing and aging individuals is greatly inhibited if a skeleton is fragmentary or incomplete. An approximate figure of completeness is given in the summary tables at the end of this report together with any osteological information gleaned whilst on site (Tables 5-10).

None of the skeletal material was removed from site and the bones from each burial were placed in individual bags for reinterment in the grave yard.

Results

In total of 154 skeletons or partial skeletons were identified, recorded and lifted during the groundworks in the graveyard (Table 5). Sixty four burials/partial burials were uncovered in the main area in front of the porch (open area and footings) and a further forty four burials were identified in the soak away with an additional thirteen uncovered in the associated/adjacent silt traps. Eight partial skeletons were removed from the E-W pipe trench and twenty five from the N-S service trench.

| | Main Area & footings | Soakaway | silt traps | E-W trench | N-S trench | Total |
|----------------|----------------------|----------|------------|------------|------------|-------|
| No. of burials | 64 | 44 | 13 | 8 | 25 | 154 |

Table 5: the number of burials from each area investigated

Both adult and immature remains were identified, the youngest dying around birth (Table 6). In the main area 31.25% (n=20) of the skeletons were immature with most of these dying before they reached the age of 5 years. Forty four adult graves were identified; eight of these were female and the remaining were too partial to sex. In the soakaway and silt traps 35.1% (n=20) of the skeletons were immature with most dying in the juvenile age category (5-12years). Thirty seven adults were uncovered with equal numbers of males and females identified. A large number of skeletons from the main area and the soakaway could not be attributed a precise age or sexed with confidence because they were not complete. This applies to those skeletons excavated from the service trenches but more so. No ‘young’ adults were positively identified but given the number of individuals classified as ‘adult’ this is not significant.

| | Area 1(including footings) | | | | | Soakaway & silt traps | | | | | N-S trench | | | | E-W trench | | | | TOTAL |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|---|---|---|-------|-----------------------|---|---|---|-------|------------|---|---|---|------------|-----|---|-------|-------|
| | N/A | F | M | ? | total | N/A | F | M | ? | total | N/A | F | M | ? | total | N/A | ? | total | |
| Neonate | 4 | - | - | - | 4 | 5 | - | - | - | 5 | 0 | - | - | - | 0 | 0 | - | 0 | 9 |
| Infant | 3 | - | - | - | 3 | 1 | - | - | - | 1 | 0 | - | - | - | 0 | 0 | - | 0 | 4 |
| Older infant/ young juvenile | 1 | - | - | - | 1 | 0 | - | - | - | 0 | 0 | - | - | - | 0 | 0 | - | 0 | 1 |
| Juvenile | 2 | - | - | - | 2 | 12 | - | - | - | 12 | 0 | - | - | - | 0 | 0 | - | 0 | 14 |
| Juvenile/ subadult | 0 | - | - | - | 0 | 1 | - | - | - | 1 | 0 | - | - | - | 0 | 0 | - | 0 | 1 |
| Subadult | 1 | - | - | - | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | 1 | 0 | - | - | - | 0 | 0 | - | 0 | 2 |
| ‘Immature’ | 9 | - | - | - | 9 | 0 | - | - | - | 0 | 7 | - | - | - | 7 | 3 | - | 3 | 19 |
| Total immature | 20 | - | - | - | 20 | 20 | - | - | - | 20 | 7 | - | - | - | 7 | 3 | - | 3 | 50 |
| Young adult | - | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|---|---|---|----|----|---|----|----|----|----|---|---|---|----|----|---|---|----|-----|
| Middle adult | - | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 5 | 0 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 | |
| Middle/mature | - | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | |
| Mature adult | - | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 | |
| Adult | - | 3 | 0 | 36 | 39 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 17 | 19 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 13 | 18 | 0 | 5 | 5 | 81 |
| Total adult | - | 8 | 0 | 36 | 44 | 0 | 10 | 10 | 17 | 37 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 13 | 18 | 0 | 5 | 5 | 104 |
| TOTAL | | | | | 64 | | | | | 57 | | | | | 25 | | | 8 | 154 |

Table 6: Age and Sex composition by Area (skeletons sexed as ?F and ? male have been amalgamated with those of certain sex)

Pathologies

None of the material was washed but all of the bone from Area 1 and the soakaway was rapidly scanned for pathological changes; those recorded should be seen as a minimum. The most commonly occurring pathologies were dental lesions and degenerative/osteoarthritic changes. Caries, calculus (including subgingival), periodontal disease and ante mortem tooth loss were all noted. One mature female, Burial 23 was edentulous (completely toothless). Most of the degenerative changes occurred in the spine although osteoarthritic lesions were also recorded in neck, wrists, shoulder, elbow and hips. Two individuals had well healed fractures. The middle adult female, Burial 27 had a fractured left clavicle and the adult, Burial 141 had a fractured left femur shaft. Although well healed this latter fracture was poorly realigned and proliferation of new bone around the fracture site had led to fusion of the distal joint to the proximal tibia; not only would this have been painful but the individual would have a pronounced limp if he/she were even able to use the limb.

Stature

Of some interest is that the age calculated from the immature dentition is greater than that from metrical data. (e.g. Burial 2 long bone lengths are c. 4 years, dentition at least 2yrs, possibly 6 years older). This suggests general poor health and nutrition in childhood.

| Burial No. | Age | Sex | Pathology | Completeness % |
|------------|-----------------------------|---------|--|----------------|
| 1 | Neonate | N/A | | 50 |
| 2 | juvenile | N/A | | 100 |
| 3 | adult | ? | | <5 |
| 4 | middle/mature adult | female | degenerative disease of spine | 50 |
| 5 | older infant/young juvenile | N/A | | <25 |
| 6 | mature adult | female | | 50-75 |
| 7 | neonate | N/A | | >75 |
| 8 | Middle adult | female | hypoplasia, calculus, eburnation in wrists, button osteoma | >75 |
| 9 | infant | N/A | | 50-75 |
| 10 | middle adult | female | slight lipping on vertebral bodies | >75 |
| 11 | juvenile | N/A | | 25-50 |
| 12 | adult | ? | | <5 |
| 13 | adult | female | | 100 |
| 14 | infant | N/A | | <5 |
| 15 | neonate | N/A | | <25 |
| 16 | infant | N/A | | <25 |
| 17 | mature adult | female | AMTL, OA in r. shoulder & neck, | 50 |
| 24 | mature adult | female | Schmorl's nodes in lower thoracic | 50 |
| 37 | neonate | N/A | | <25 |
| 38 | adult | ? | | <5 |
| 45 | adult | ?female | | 50-75 |
| 100 | immature | N/A | | <5 |
| 101 | adult | ? | | <5 |
| 102 | immature | N/A | | <5 |
| 103 | adult | ? | | 25 |
| 104 | adult | ? | | 25 |
| 105 | adult | ? | | <5 |
| 106 | adult | ? | | <5 |
| 107 | ?adult | ? | | <5 |
| 108 | adult | ? | | <5 |
| 109 | adult | ? | | <5 |
| 110 | immature | N/A | | 50 - 75 |
| 111 | subadult | N/A | | <5 |
| 112 | adult | ? | | <5 |

| | | | | |
|-----|----------|-----|---|---------|
| 113 | adult | ? | | 50 |
| 114 | immature | N/A | | 25 |
| 115 | adult | ? | | 5 - 25 |
| 116 | adult | ? | | <5 |
| 117 | adult | ? | | <5 |
| 118 | adult | ? | | <5 |
| 119 | adult | ? | | 25-50 |
| 120 | adult | ? | | 5 - 25 |
| 121 | immature | ? | | 5 - 25 |
| 122 | immature | ? | | 25 -50 |
| 123 | adult | ? | | 25 |
| 124 | adult | ? | AMTL | 25 |
| 125 | adult | ? | | <5 |
| 126 | adult | ? | | 25 |
| 127 | adult | ? | | <5 |
| 128 | adult | ? | | 5 - 25 |
| 129 | adult | ? | | 25-50 |
| 130 | adult | ? | | 25-50 |
| 131 | immature | N/A | | <5 |
| 132 | adult | ? | | <5 |
| 133 | immature | N/A | | 25-50 |
| 134 | immature | N/A | | <5 |
| 135 | adult | ? | | <5 |
| 136 | adult | ? | edentulous | 25-50 |
| 137 | adult | ? | | 5 to 25 |
| 138 | adult | ? | | >75 |
| 139 | adult | ? | | <5 |
| 140 | adult | ? | | 25-50 |
| 141 | adult | ? | healed fractures left femur, angled. Fused to lower leg | 25-0 |
| 142 | adult | ? | | <5 |

Table 7: Burial gazetteer - Area 1: Main excavation (including footings) AMTL=antemortem tooth loss, OA=osteoarthritis

| Burial No. | adult | Sex | Pathology | Completeness % |
|------------|--------------|---------|---|----------------|
| 18 | mature adult | male | OA spine & compression fracture (T11) | 25-50 |
| 19 | neonate | N/A | | 100 |
| 20 | juvenile | N/A | | >75 |
| 21 | neonate | N/A | | >75 |
| 22 | adult | male | AMTL, caries, slight calculus, degenerative disease in spine | >75 |
| 23 | mature adult | female | edentulous, OA in r. hip, degenerative disease in r. shoulder and spine . | >75 |
| 25 | infant | N/A | | >75 |
| 26 | juvenile | N/A | | <25 |
| 27 | middle adult | female | ?fracture left clavicle, OA in left elbow | 25-50 |
| 28 | middle adult | ?male | degenerative disease of spine. T1- C7 block vertebra. | 50 |
| 29 | juvenile | N/A | | 50 |
| 30 | mature adult | ?female | AMTL, heavy calculus, OA in neck | 5 |
| 31 | juvenile | N/A | | <25 |
| 32 | middle adult | ?male | | 50 |
| 33 | adult | ? | | >5 |
| 34 | juvenile | N/A | | >5 |
| 35 | juvenile | N/A | | >5 |

| | | | | |
|----|---------------------------|---------|---|---------|
| 36 | adult | ? | | >5 |
| 39 | neonate | N/A | | >5 |
| 40 | adult | ? | | >5 |
| 41 | adult | ? | | >5 |
| 42 | adult | ? | | 25 |
| 43 | juvenile | N/A | | 25-50 |
| 44 | adult | ?male | | 25 |
| 46 | mature adult | male | degenerative disease of spine. Calculus, AMTL | 25-50 |
| 47 | adult | ? | calculus, AMTL, caries | <5 |
| 48 | adult | ? | | <5 |
| 49 | adult | ? | | <25 |
| 50 | adult | ? | | <5 |
| 51 | juvenile | N/A | | 50-75 |
| 52 | older juvenile | N/A | | >75 |
| 53 | neonate | N/A | | 25-50 |
| 54 | mature adult | ?male | cribra orbitalia, caries, hypoplasias | <5 |
| 55 | middle adult | female | degenerative disease of spine | 25 |
| 56 | adult | ? | | <5 |
| 57 | juvenile | N/A | | <5 |
| 58 | neonate | N/A | | 50 |
| 59 | mature adult | female | AMTL | 5 -25 |
| 60 | adult | ? | | <5 |
| 61 | adult | ? | | <5 |
| 62 | young juvenile | N/A | | >75 |
| 63 | juvenile | N/A | | 50 |
| 64 | juvenile/subadult | N/A | | <5 |
| 65 | adult | ? | | <5 |
| 66 | mature adult | ?female | degenerative disease of the spine | 5 - 25 |
| 67 | subadult | N/A | | <5 |
| 68 | older middle/mature adult | ?female | degenerative disease of the spine | 25 - 50 |
| 69 | adult | ? | | 25 |
| 70 | middle adult | male | degenerative disease of the spine | 25 |
| 71 | adult | ? | | 5 |
| 72 | adult | ? | | 5 - 25 |
| 73 | middle adult | ?male | AMTL, caries, OA in neck, calculus | 50 |
| 74 | older middle/mature adult | female | | 50 |
| 75 | adult | ? | | 5 |
| 76 | middle adult | female | degenerative disease of the spine | 25 - 50 |
| 77 | middle adult | male | calculus, caries | 75 |
| 78 | middle adult | female | | 25 |

Table 8: Burial Gazetteer: Soak away & silt traps(AMTL=antemortem tooth loss, OA=osteoarthritis)

| Burial No. | Age | sex | Completeness % |
|------------|-------------|---------|----------------|
| 151 | adult | ? | <5 |
| 152 | adult | ? | 50 |
| 153 | adult | ? | 5 - 25 |
| 154 | adult | ? | 5 - 25 |
| 155 | adult | ? | <5 |
| 156 | immature | N/A | 50 |
| 157 | immature | N/A | <5 |
| 158 | adult | ? | <5 |
| 159 | adult | ?male | 5 - 25 |
| 160 | adult | ? | <5 |
| 161 | adult | ? | <5 |
| 162 | UNEXCAVATED | | |
| 163 | UNEXCAVATED | | |
| 164 | immature | N/A | 100 |
| 165 | adult | ?female | 5 - 25 |
| 166 | adult | ?Male | 25-50 |
| 167 | adult | ?Male | 5 - 25 |
| 168 | adult | ?male | 25 |
| 169 | immature | N/A | 25-50 |
| 170 | adult | ? | <5 |
| 171 | adult | ? | <5 |
| 172 | immature | ? | <5 |
| 173 | immature | N/A | 25-50 |
| 174 | immature | N/A | 5 - 25 |
| 175 | adult | ? | <5 |
| 176 | adult | ? | 5 - 25 |
| 177 | UNEXCAVATED | | |
| 178 | adult | | 25 |

Table 9: Burial Gazetteer: Burials encountered within the N-S trench (no pathologies observed)

| Burial No. | Age | Sex | Completeness % |
|------------|---------------------------|-----|----------------|
| 143 | ?adult | ? | <5 |
| 144 | adult | ? | <5 |
| 145 | adult | ? | <5 |
| 146 | immature | N/A | 75 |
| 147 | immature & disarticulated | N/A | 75 |
| 148 | adult | ? | 5 - 25 |
| 149 | adult | ? | <5 |
| 150 | immature | N/A | 50 |

Table 10: Burial gazetteer: Burials encountered within the E-W service trench (no pathologies)

APPENDIX 2

ACP15 Footings excavation (North porch of church):

| Feature no. | Feature type | Context no. | Context type | Context description | Length (m) | Width (m) | Depth (m) | cuts/ cut by | Assoc burials (B no.) | Section / plan | Findings | Period |
|-------------|---------------------------|-------------|---------------------|---|------------|-----------|------------|---|-----------------------|----------------|--|---------------------------|
| | | [001] | mortar layer | sandy lime mortar with concret gravel + pebbles | 2.5 | 0.5 | 0.1 to 0.3 | under stone step | | #1 + #6 | tile | 19thC? |
| | | [002] | rubble layer | thin layer of broken brick+ tile + loose mortar | 2.5 | 0.5 | 0.05 | | | #1 + #6 | Med pot + PM brick + tile | 19thC? |
| F.1 | foundn course for N Aisle | [003] | cobble foundn | large cobbles of round river stone + flint in matrix earth, gravel + mortar. Largest cobble 300mm, with average 100-150mm | 2.4 | 0.6 | 0.4 | cut by W butt (1684) foundn trench [016] | | #6 | pottery, human+ animal bone, Med floor tile, Fe nail | late Med (14thC?) |
| F.1 | foundn course for N Aisle | [004] | cobble foundati on | similar to above but more densely packed with weathered mortar + soil | 2.4 | 0.6 | 0.2 | cut by W butt (1684) foundn trench [016] | | #6 | bone + Fe nail | late Med (14thC?) |
| F.1 | foundn course for N Aisle | [005] | decomp mortar/ soil | gritty loamy soil with limestone (stone chippings from building stone) underlies uneven base of footings in bottom of construction trench | 2.4 | 0.6 | 0.2 | cut by W buttres (1684) foundn trench [016] | | #6 | bone comb (Saxon?) + Mid Saxon / 12-14thC pot | Medieval church footings? |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|--|-------|------------------|--|----|-----|------------|--|--|--------------------|--|---|
| | | [006] | soil layer | dl grey brwn loamy silt with darker organic lenses, gravel, pebble and burnt stone/flint, chalk and fine mortar incl. and bone | 4+ | | | cut by W + E buttres (1684) foundn trench | various (does this layer merge with grave soil?) | #6 + #1 | Saxon pot + human/ animal bone + tile + nails | pre-dates N. Aisle constr (Saxon church?) |
| | | [007] | lens within soil | weathered mortar washed out from walls incorp in soil | 2 | 1.5 | 0.1 to 0.2 | cut by graves in this area | | #6 | | |
| F.4 | construct trench for E buttress (1684) | [008] | backfill | yellow to mid brwn sandy silt and soil with crushed chalk and limestone chippings + flint gravel, mortar + bone frags | 2+ | 2 | 1+ | cut by mod pipe trench | | #1 + #6 | human bone | 1684 |
| | | [009] | grave soil | dk mid grey to mid brwn sandy silt with darker humic patches and lumps of yellow brwn silty clay in softer patches with limestone chippings and abundant disarticulated human bone | 4+ | 4+ | min 0.6 | several grave cuts + mod pipe trench + tree root disturb | up to 100 | #1 + #6 + #8 + #10 | Early-Mid Sax burial urn + Med pot + human/ an bone + tile + nails + Cu-alloy Roman coin (Sax re-use) + shroud pins+ bone button | Early Med? |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|---|-------|---------------|--|-----|-----|--------------|-------------------------------|-----|---------------------|------------|---|
| | | [010] | rubble layer | gravel with modern building material contamination lying just beneath topsoil/turf | 1.4 | | 0.1 | pipe trench | | #6 | | modern |
| | | [012] | rubble layer | stony layer with broken-up brick rubble | 2.6 | | 0.15 to 0.4 | pipe trench | | #6 | | modern |
| | | [013] | gravelly soil | soil and gravel mix with stones towards top (re-deposited?) | 2.3 | | 0.15 to 0.25 | pipe trench | | #6 | | late Med/ early Postmed |
| F.4 | constr trench for E buttress (1684) | [014] | cut | v steep sided with shallowing flat base | 2+ | 2 | 1+ | | | #1 + #6 | | 1684 |
| F.5 | constr trench for W buttress (1684) | [015] | backfill | yellow to mid brwn sandy silt and soil with crushed chalk and limestone chippings + flint gravel, mortar + bone frags | 2+ | 2 | 1+ | | | #1 | | 1684 |
| F.5 | constr trench for W buttress (1684) | [016] | cut | v steep sided with shallowing flat base | 2+ | 2 | 1+ | | | #1 | | 1684 |
| | | [017] | subsoil | light yellow brwn sandy silt with increasing amounts of clay and dirtier patches | ? | | | cut by Burial 10 (and others) | var | #1 | | |
| F.2 | SW-NE trending 'V shape' ditch cut into natural below | [030] | ditch fill | moderate compact yellow brwn to grey clay-rich silt with gravel + pebbles towards base, with weathered disartic human bone, weathrd lmstn building stone, and tile | 2.8 | 0.6 | 0.4 | cut by almost all burials | | #8 + sketch section | pot + tile | post-dates construct earliest stone church - a drain? |
| F.2 | | [031] | cut | steep-sided 'V' to 'U' shape | 2.8 | 0.6 | 0.4 | cut by burials | | #8 + sketch section | | ditto |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|-----------------------------|-------|--------------------|---|------|-----|--------------------|---------------------|-------|---------------------|------------|------------|
| F.3 | early + deep E-W burial cut | [032] | disturb grave fill | greyish brwn sandy silt mottled with orange patches of clay, containing some charcoal + bn | 1.32 | 0.5 | 0.28+ | much animal disturb | B.141 | #8 + sketch section | pot | Early Med? |
| F.3 | ditto | [033] | cut for grave | oval pit w steep sides + flat irreg base | 1.32 | 0.5 | 0.28+ (to natural) | | | #8 + sketch section | | Early Med? |
| | | [034] | lower grave soil | breccia of loamy grey silt mixed with large amount of clay and sandy clay, gravel + disarticulated bone | | | | | B.141 | #10 | human bone | Early Med? |

ACP15 Soakaway excavation (North side of church):

| Feature no. | Feature type | Context no. | Context type | Context description | Length (m) | Width (m) | Depth (m) | cuts/ cut by | Associate burials (B no.) | Section / plan | Finds | Period |
|-------------|--------------|-------------|---------------------------------------|---|------------|-----------|------------|----------------|-------------------------------|----------------|--|------------|
| | | [018] | grave soil | dk mid grey to mid brwn sandy silt similar to [009] - relatively undifferentiated and re-worked | 3+ | 2.5+ | 0.3 to 0.4 | var grave cuts | var incl B.1-3, B.18-20, B.23 | #2, #4, #5 | Roman, Saxon - 12-13thC pot + human bn+ Fe nail +Cu-alloy | Early Med? |
| | graves | [019] | grave fill within cut for B.74 + B.78 | darker coloured loamy and slightly more clay-rich silt, smoother +softer than [018], with fewer stones and broken-up inclusion of yellow clay | 1.7 | 0.5? | 0.3 | | B.74 + B.78 | #9, #2 | human bn | Med ? |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|-------|---------------------------------------|---|-----|----------|-------|--|-------------|--------|---------------|-------|
| | | [020] | grave cut for above | steep nr vertical, and slight stepped convex sides (coffin shaped) | 1.7 | 0.5? | 0.3 | cut by [025 - 026] + overlay /trunc by [018] | B.74 + B.78 | #9, #2 | | Med ? |
| | | [021] | grave fill within cut for B.77 + B.62 | similar fill to [019], but slightly more sandy | 1+ | 0.35-0.4 | 0.20+ | | B.77 + B.62 | #2 | human bn | Med ? |
| | | [022] | grave cut for above | steep nr vertical, and slight stepped with flat base | 1+ | 0.35-0.4 | 0.2+ | cuts natural sand-clay | B.77 + B.62 | #2 | | Med ? |
| | | [023] | grave fill for basal burial B.73 | similar fill to [019], but slightly darker coloured, with fewer clay inclusions + more bone | 1+ | 0.5 | 0.3 | | B.73 | #2 | human bn, pot | Med ? |
| | | [024] | grave cut for above | vertical to steep sloping cut with flat uneven base (U-shape) | 1+ | 0.5 | 0.3 | cut by B.55 [028], but cuts natural sand-clay gravel | B.73 | #6, #2 | | Med ? |
| | | [025] | grave fill for B.76 | similar or identical to [019] but with slight increase yellow clay inclusions (thus difficult to determine presence of cut [026]) | 1+ | 0.30+ | 0.4 | | B.76 | #9, #2 | human bn | Med ? |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|-------|---------------------|--|----|------|-------------|---------------------|------|--------|----------|-------|
| | | [026] | grave cut for above | vertical with flat bottom (U shaped) | 1+ | 0.3+ | 0.4 | trunc [019] + [020] | B.76 | #9, #2 | | Med ? |
| | | [027] | grave fill for B.55 | identical to [023] | ? | 0.4 | 0.1+ | | B.55 | #5, #2 | human bn | Med ? |
| | | [028] | grave cut for above | steep-sided with flat base | | 0.4 | 0.1+ | trunc of B.73 [024] | B.55 | #5, #2 | | Med ? |
| | | [029] | upper grave soil | grey-black silty soil with gravel and stones | 3+ | 2.5+ | 0.5 to 0.65 | | | #2 | occas bn | PM/ |

ACP15 Service Trenches (north side of church):

| Feature no. | Feature type | Context no. | Context type | Context description | Length (m) | Width (m) | Depth (m) | cuts/ cut by | Associate burials (B no.) | Section / plan | Finds | Period |
|-------------|--------------|-------------|-------------------|--|------------|-----------|-----------|--------------|---------------------------|----------------|---|---------|
| | | [035] | mixed burial soil | Trench B (NE of 1st inspection chamber) - context description not recorded (MWB June 2015) | 20+ | 0.6 | 1.1 | | var (SEE plans) | #13 - #17 | Roman + 12th-15th, 17th-19thC pottery, flint, human bn (disartic) | Med -PM |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|-------|---------|--|----|-----|---|--|-----------------|-----------|---|------|
| | | [036] | topsoil | Trench B (SW of 1st inspection chamber) - context description not recorded (DJW June 2015) | 26 | 0.6 | ? | | var (SEE plans) | #11 - #12 | various incl Roman, Saxon, 12th (St Neots), 14th, 16-17th + 19thC pot | |
| | | [037] | | Trench B - ditto- silt trap area - no context description (DJW) | | | | | var (SEE plans) | #11 - #12 | Mid Saxon pot | |
| | | [038] | | Trench B - ditto - 'electrical pipe trench' area (DJW) | | | | | var (SEE plans) | #11-#12 | 14thC + 18-19thC pottery | |
| | | [039] | | Trench B - ditto- non-specific 'finds from cleaning' (DJW) | | | | | var (SEE plans) | #11-#12 | various | |
| | | [040] | | Trench B - ditto- non-specific 'finds from spoil tip' (DJW) | | | | | var (SEE plans) | #11-#12 | Saxon + 17thC GRE | |
| | | [041] | | Trench B - ditto- non-specific 'unstratified finds' | | | | | var (SEE plans) | #11-#12 | E-M Saxon + 13th/14th C pottery | Med? |
| | | [042] | | Trench B - ditto - charcoal spread (1) | | | | | var (SEE plans) | #11-#12 | various | |

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

[List of Projects](#) | [Manage Projects](#) | [Search Projects](#) | [New project](#) | [Change your details](#) | [HER coverage](#) | [Change country](#) | [Log out](#)

Printable version

OASIS ID: cambridg3-239633

Project details

| | |
|--|---|
| Project name | St.Peter and St.Paul's Church, Alconbury, Cambridgeshire |
| Short description of the project | Between March and June 2015 archaeological monitoring was undertaken within the graveyard of St. Peter and St. Paul's Church, Alconbury during groundworks carried out in advance of the construction of a porch extension and associated services and soakaway(s) adjacent to the North Aisle. The area cut by these groundworks proved to be densely packed with un-marked burials, amounting to 154 complete or partial skeletons identified and recorded, alongside several hundred kilos of disarticulated bone. Whilst many of these burials were likely to have been Medieval, there were a number of un-marked Post-medieval burials lying close to the church, amongst which were juveniles and infants. Of archaeological interest was the mixed incidence of Roman pot and tile, Early-Middle Saxon pottery (including sherds of a funerary urn), plus a wide range of 12-15th century Early Medieval wares. Within the area associated with the latter were found small fragments of a double-sided composite bone comb which may be Saxon in date, whilst just 3m to the north of this within re-deposited grave soil was found a coin of the Emperor Domitian. This coin appears to have been modified in the post-Roman (Anglo-Saxon?) period with the addition of a punched dot-ring motif, and was perhaps worn as a brooch or pendant. From the service trench excavation to the north of this came further Saxon pottery and a probable Saxon iron knife, the latter associated with a charnel spread. The finds from the excavations indicate a Roman presence nearby, and perhaps also an Anglo-Saxon settlement or church on this site. |
| Project dates | Start: 23-02-2015 End: 01-06-2015 |
| Previous/future work | No / No |
| Any associated project reference codes | ACP15 - Sitecode |
| Any associated project reference codes | ECB4384 - HER event no. |
| Type of project | Field evaluation |
| Site status | Listed Building |
| Current Land use | Other 4 - Churchyard |
| Monument type | CHURCH Medieval |
| Monument type | CHURCH Post Medieval |
| Monument type | GRAVES Medieval |
| Monument type | GRAVES Post Medieval |

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Monument type | FOUNDATION WALL Medieval |
| Significant Finds | TILE Roman |
| Significant Finds | POTTERY Roman |
| Significant Finds | COIN Roman |
| Significant Finds | POTTERY Early Medieval |
| Significant Finds | IRON KNIFE Early Medieval |
| Significant Finds | BONE COMB Early Medieval |
| Significant Finds | PENDANT Early Medieval |
| Significant Finds | POTTERY Medieval |
| Significant Finds | FLOOR TILE Medieval |
| Significant Finds | SHROUD PINS Post Medieval |
| Significant Finds | COFFIN FURNITURE Post Medieval |
| Significant Finds | ROOF TILE Post Medieval |
| Methods & techniques | "Sample Trenches" |
| 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 HUNTINGDONSHIRE ALCONBURY St.Peter and St. Paul's Church, Alconbury, Cambridgeshire |
| Postcode | PE284DX |
| Study area | 12 Square metres |
| Site coordinates | TL 1847 7613 52.37 -0.259722222222 52 22 12 N 000 15 35 W Point |
| Height OD / Depth | Min: 19m Max: 20m |

Project creators

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Name of Organisation | Cambridge Archaeological Unit |
| Project brief originator | Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body |
| Project design originator | Alison Dickens |
| Project director/manager | Alison Dickens |
| Project supervisor | Simon Timberlake |
| Type of sponsor/funding body | Diocese |

Name of sponsor/funding body St. Peter and St. Paul's Church, Alconbury

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient Cambridge Archaeological Unit

Physical Archive ID ACP15

Physical Contents "Animal Bones","Ceramics","Glass","Industrial","Metal","Worked bone","Worked stone/lithics"

Digital Archive recipient Cambridge Archaeological Unit

Digital Archive ID ACP15

Digital Contents "Animal Bones","Ceramics","Glass","Human Bones","Industrial","Metal","Stratigraphic","Survey","Worked bone","Worked stone/lithics"

Digital Media available "GIS","Images raster / digital photography","Spreadsheets","Survey","Text"

Paper Archive recipient Cambridge Archaeological Unit

Paper Archive ID ACP15

Paper Contents "Animal Bones","Ceramics","Glass","Human Bones","Industrial","Metal","Stratigraphic","Survey","Worked bone","Worked stone/lithics"

Paper Media available "Context sheet","Map","Plan","Report","Section","Survey "

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Title St. Peter and St. Paul's Church, Alconbury, Cambridgeshire: Archaeological monitoring of the North Porch extension and associated works

Author(s)/Editor(s) Simon Timberlake, Natasha Dodwell, Dave Webb and Marcus Britten

Other bibliographic details Report no. 1315

Date 2016

Issuer or publisher Cambridge Archaeological Unit

Place of issue or publication University of Cambridge

Description digital pdf + 27pp A4 grey literature report with colour cover image and 6 colour + B and W figures including section and plans

Entered by Dr Simon Timberlake (st410@cam.ac.uk)

Entered on 21 January 2016

OASIS:

Please e-mail [Historic England](#) for OASIS help and advice

© ADS 1996-2012 Created by [Jo Gilham and Jen Mitcham](#), email Last modified Wednesday 9 May 2012

Cite only: <http://www.oasis.ac.uk/form/print.cfm> for this page