

LAND AT ST. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS CHURCH, CLYST HONITON, DEVON

(NGR SX 98950 93495)

Results of Archaeological Monitoring and Recording

Planning Application Reference Number: 15/0922/FUL
(Condition 3)

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With a contribution from:
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On behalf of:
Clyst Honiton Parish Council

Report No: ACD1184/1/0

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archaeology

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CONTENTS

	<i>Summary</i>	
1.	Introduction	1
2.	Archaeological background	1
3.	Aims	1
4.	Methodology	1
5.	Results	2
6.	The finds	3
7.	Comments	3
8.	Archive and OASIS	4
9.	Acknowledgements	4
10.	References	4

List of figures

- Fig. 1: Site location
Fig. 2: Plan of area observed and graves
Fig. 3: Section of graves F104, F107 and ditch F110
Fig. 4: Sections of area observed

List of plates

- Plate 1: View of churchyard looking southwest towards excavation area
Plate 2: Showing intercutting graves F107 and F104. View to north
Plate 3: Showing possible intercutting graves F113 and F121, with ditch F110 to the left. View to southwest

Summary

Archaeological monitoring and recording was carried out during groundworks associated with the construction of a new toilet block on land at St Michael and All Angels Church, Clyst Honiton, Devon (SX 98950 93495), was undertaken by AC archaeology in July 2015.

Excavations exposed two intercutting graves with in situ skeletons, as well as two further possible graves. The graves were poorly dated, but are considered to be of post-medieval date. A 19th century ditch was also exposed, with this likely to have been related to the current churchyard boundary.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document sets out the results of archaeological monitoring and recording carried out at St. Michael and All Angels Church, Clyst Honiton, Devon (SX 98950 93495) during the construction of a new toilet block within the churchyard. The work was required as a condition (3) of planning permission (ref. 15/0922/FUL) granted by East Devon District Council, and as advised by the Devon County Council Historic Environment Team (hereafter DCCHET).
- 1.2 The archaeological work was carried out by AC archaeology during July 2015 and was commissioned by Clyst Honiton Parish Council.
- 1.3 The new toilet block was located on the southeast side of the St Michael and All Angels Church curtilage and adjacent to the entrance from Church Side (Fig. 1). The southeast side of the site was adjacent to a hedgebank that formed the churchyard boundary. It was situated at 115m aOD on ground that sloped moderately-steeply towards a footpath to the southwest. The underlying solid geology comprised sandstone of the Dawlish Formation (British Geological Society Online Viewer).

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The site is located within the historic core of the medieval village of Clyst Honiton which is listed in a charter of c.1100 as '*hina tune*' and was called 'Honiton Clyst' by 1472 (Devon Historic Environment Record ref. MDV58501). St. Michael and All Angels Church was extensively restored in the 19th century but retains some 15th century or earlier fabric, as well as a 12th century font.

3. AIMS

- 3.1 The aim of the archaeological monitoring and recording was to preserve by record any archaeological features or deposits exposed during groundworks associated with the scheme. This is with particular reference for the potential for medieval and later human remains to be exposed by the work.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 Groundworks comprised the initial bulk reduction into the sloping ground of an area measuring 4.4m by 4m, followed by the excavation of 0.8m wide footings trenches. Excavations were carried out using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless grading bucket and a toothless trenching bucket, under the control and direction of the site archaeologist. Following the initial overburden

removal the area was cleaned by hand where necessary to clearly identify grave outlines and other features.

- 4.2** All features and deposits exposed were recorded using the standard AC archaeology pro-forma recording system, comprising written, graphic and photographic records, and in accordance with AC archaeology's General Site Recording Manual, Version 2 (revised August 2012). Detailed sections and plans were produced at a scale of 1:10 and 1:20 as appropriate.

5. RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

Natural subsoil (context 120), which consisted of a mid yellowish-red sand, was exposed at a depth of approximately 0.9m below existing levels. The natural subsoil was overlain by a buried subsoil (103), which consisted of a mid reddish-brown sandy-silt loam. This was sealed by two dumped soils, consisting of a further mid reddish-brown sandy silt-loam (102) and a dark brownish-grey silty-loam (101). Soil layer 101 contained modern glass, plastic, crisp packets, flower ceramic pots, ash and charcoal and was overlain by dark grey silty-loam topsoil (100). One sherd of post-medieval pottery was recovered from dumped soil layer (102).

The groundworks exposed two intercutting graves (F107 and F104), two further possible intercutting graves (F121 and F121) and a ditch (F110).

5.2 Intercutting graves F107 and F104

Grave F107 was the earlier of the two intercutting graves that extended from the southeast limit of excavation. It was partially exposed as a rectangular east to west aligned cut measuring approximately 0.7m wide and 0.3m deep with moderately-steep sloping sides and a flat base. It contained a partially articulated skeleton (SK108), which had been disturbed by grave F104, but included the skull and right side sternum, humerus, radius, pelvis and femur. The grave was backfilled with a mid to light greyish-brown, sandy-loam (109).

Grave F104 was sub-rectangular in plan and measured 0.52m wide and 0.3m deep with steeply-sloping sides and a flat base. It contained the upper portion of an articulated skeleton (SK105). The skeleton was well preserved and included the section from the skull to the base of the ribs. Its backfill comprised a mid yellowish-brown sandy-silt loam (106), from which a single iron nail was recovered.

5.3 Intercutting possible graves F121 and F113

Possible grave F121 was the earlier of the two features. Only the base of the feature was exposed, with the remainder of the feature cut by possible grave F113 to the northeast, as well as extending beyond the excavation limit. It measured 0.44m deep and contained a mid reddish-brown sandy loam basal fill (118), which was overlain by a mid yellowish-brown sandy-silt loam (119).

Possible Grave F113 was cut by ditch F110 and measured 0.48m deep, with vertical sides and a flat base. It contained a mid greyish-brown sandy-silt loam fill (115) that included a possible *in situ* human skull and mandible.

5.4 Ditch F110

Ditch F110 extended northwest to southeast across the northeast side of the site. It was partially exposed, but measured at least 1.75m wide and a maximum of 1.06m deep with steeply-sloping sides and a concave base. The ditch contained two fills, with these consisting of mid yellowish-brown to mid reddish-brown silty-loams (111 and 112). A fragment from a clay tobacco pipe stem was recovered from upper fill 112 (not retained).

6. THE FINDS *by Naomi Payne*

6.1 All finds recovered on site during the monitoring were retained, cleaned and marked where appropriate. They were then quantified according to material type within each context and the assemblage was scanned to extract information regarding the range, nature and date of artefacts represented. The only finds retained were a piece of post-medieval pottery and an iron object. They are summarised in Table 1 below.

Excavated human remains were reinterred within the graveyard.

Table 1. Summary of finds by context

Context	Context description	Iron		Post-medieval pottery	
		No	Wt	No	Wt
102	Dumped soil			1	27
106	Fill of grave F104	1	31		
Total		1	31	1	27

6.2 Iron

A single iron object (33g) was recovered from context 106. This is highly encrusted but appears to be a nail with a square-sectioned shaft. It is most likely of post-medieval date.

6.3 Post-medieval pottery

A single sherd (27g) of post-medieval pottery was recovered from context 102. This is a body sherd of South Somerset glazed earthenware with a white slip trailed on the internal surface. It is probably from a large dish of 18th or 19th century date.

7. COMMENTS

7.1 The groundworks exposed evidence for at least two, and perhaps four graves, in this part of the church graveyard. These survived as relatively shallow features sealed by a sequence of overlying soils that measured a maximum of 0.9m thick. These exhibited a degree of disturbance or dumping, suggesting that the ground level had been subsequently elevated, or at least re-worked, with this perhaps associated with the adjacent terraced footpath. The graves were poorly-dated, but, based on the recovery of an iron nail from grave F104, are considered to be post medieval.

Ditch F111 represents a later feature to the graves, with this cutting through much of the soil sequence and into one of the possible graves (F113) below. Its position, as parallel to the perimeter hedgebank to the southwest, suggests that it represents an associated feature to this boundary, while the presence of a clay pipe stem in its fill indicates a probable 19th century date.

8. ARCHIVE AND OASIS

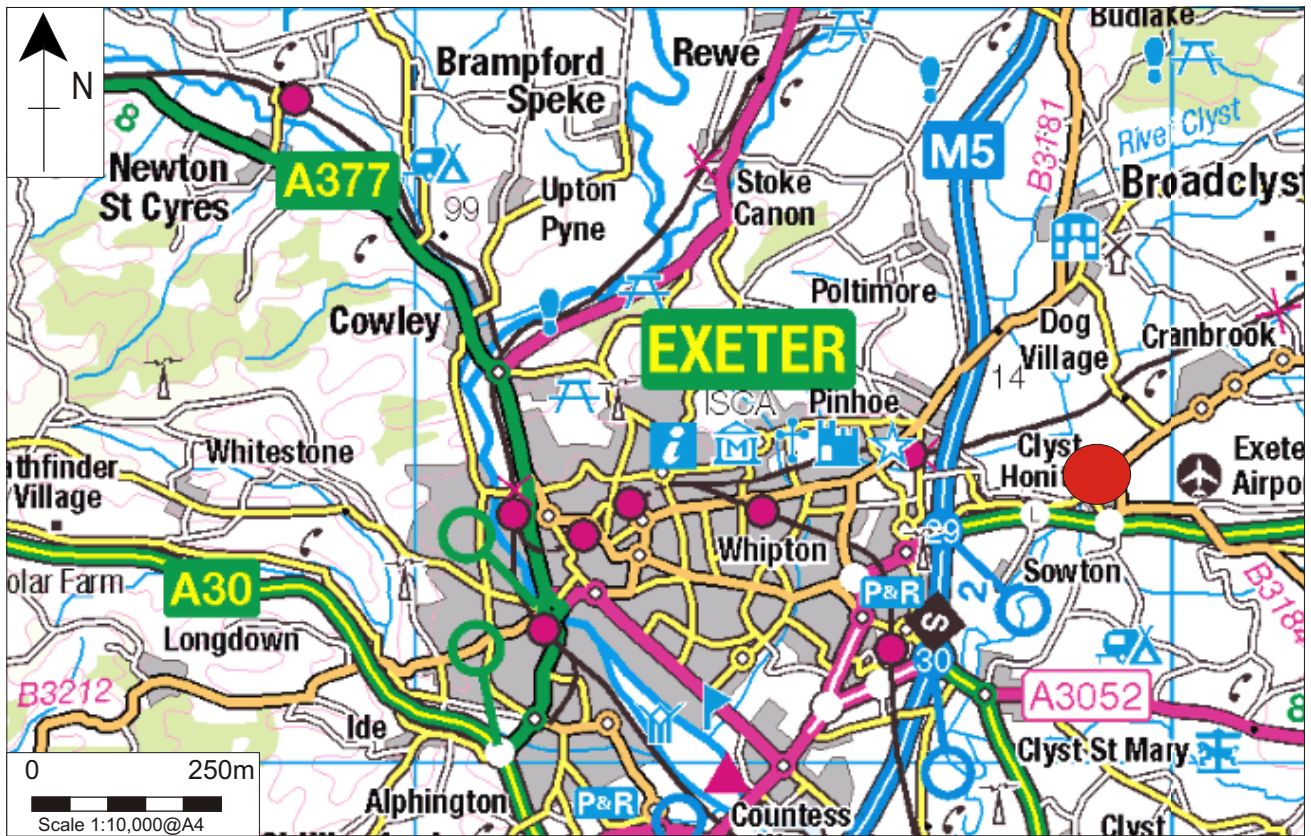
- 8.1** The paper and digital archive is currently held at the offices of AC archaeology Ltd, at 4 Halthaies Workshops, near Exeter, Devon, EX5 4LQ. The digital archive will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service.
- 8.2** An online OASIS entry has been completed, using the unique identifier **257549**, which includes a digital copy of this report.

9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

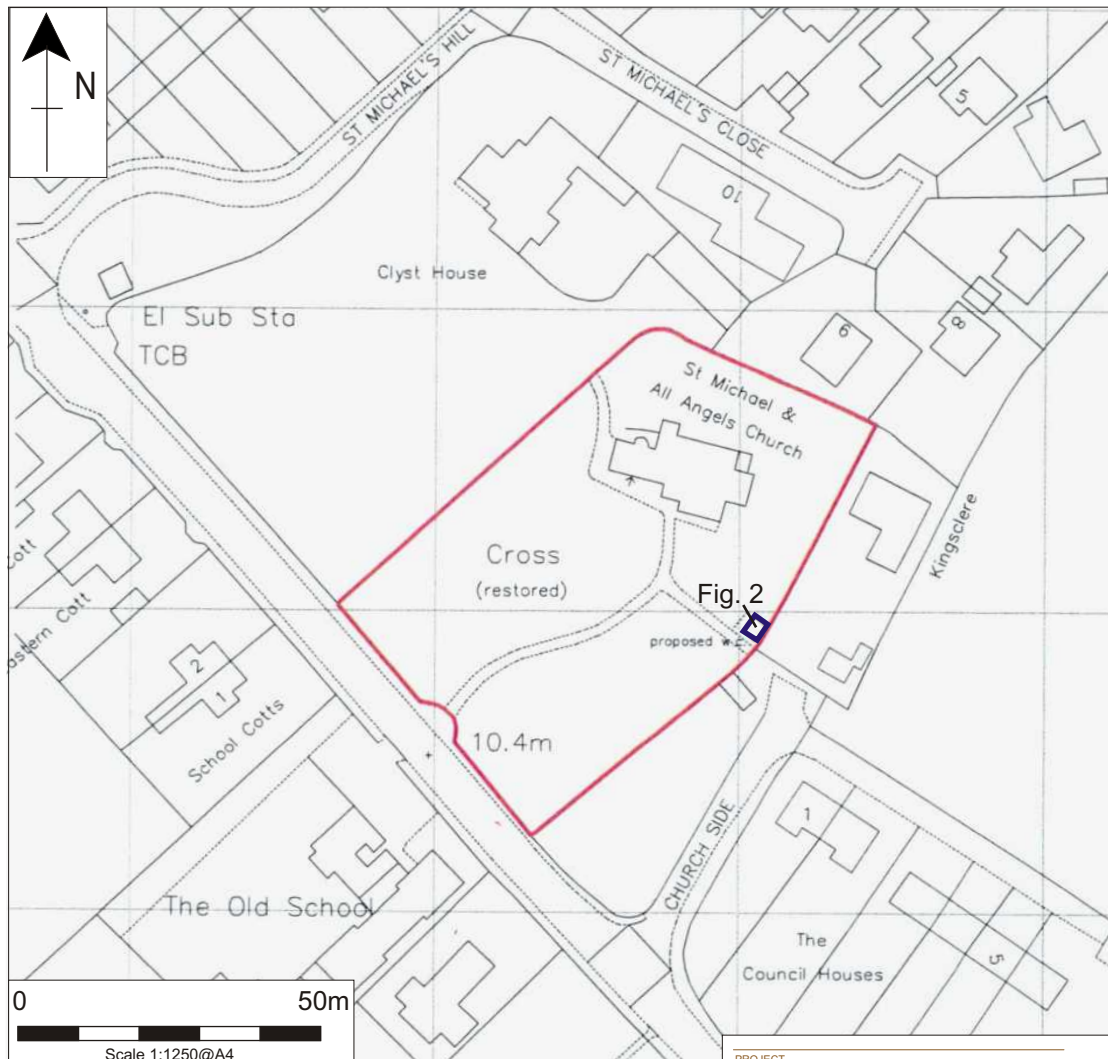
The watching brief was commissioned by Clyst Honiton Parish Council. The fieldwork was carried out by Paul Cooke and Ben Pears, with the illustrations for this report prepared by Stella De Villiers. The advice and collaboration of Stephen Reed, Devon Council Historic Environment Officer is duly acknowledged.

10. REFERENCES

British Geological Survey Online Viewer *www.bgs.ac.uk*



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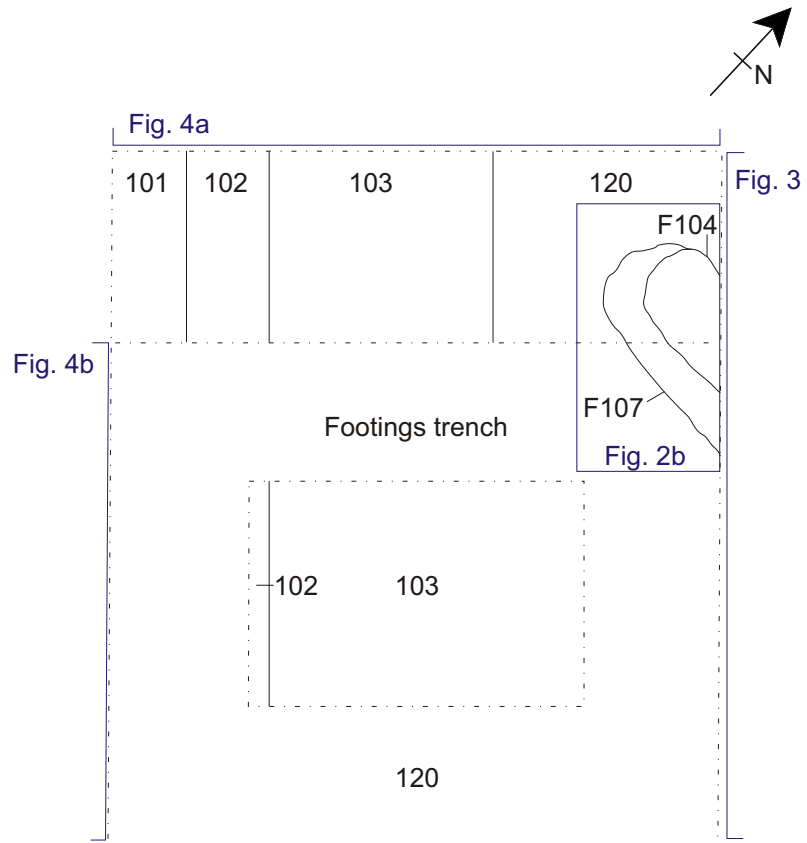
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St Michael and All Angels Church, Cyst Honiton, Devon

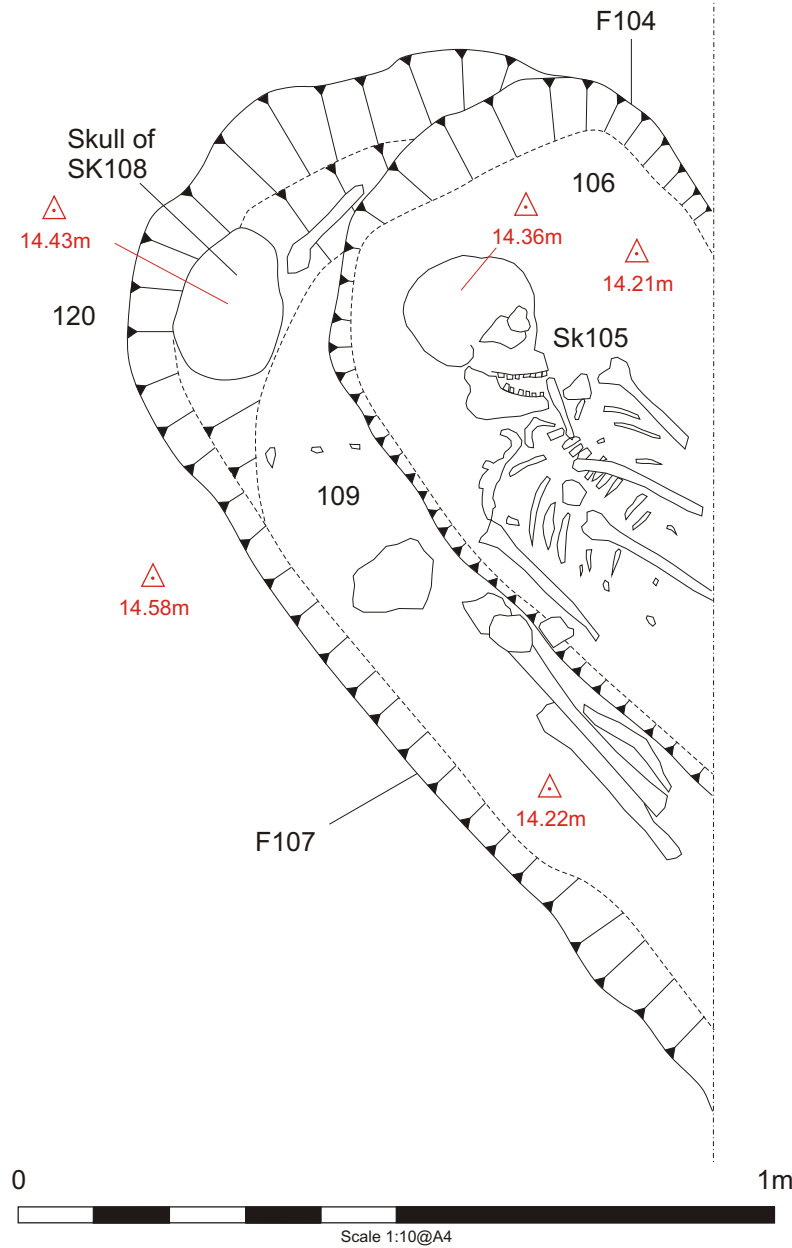
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Fig. 1: Site location



a) Plan of area observed



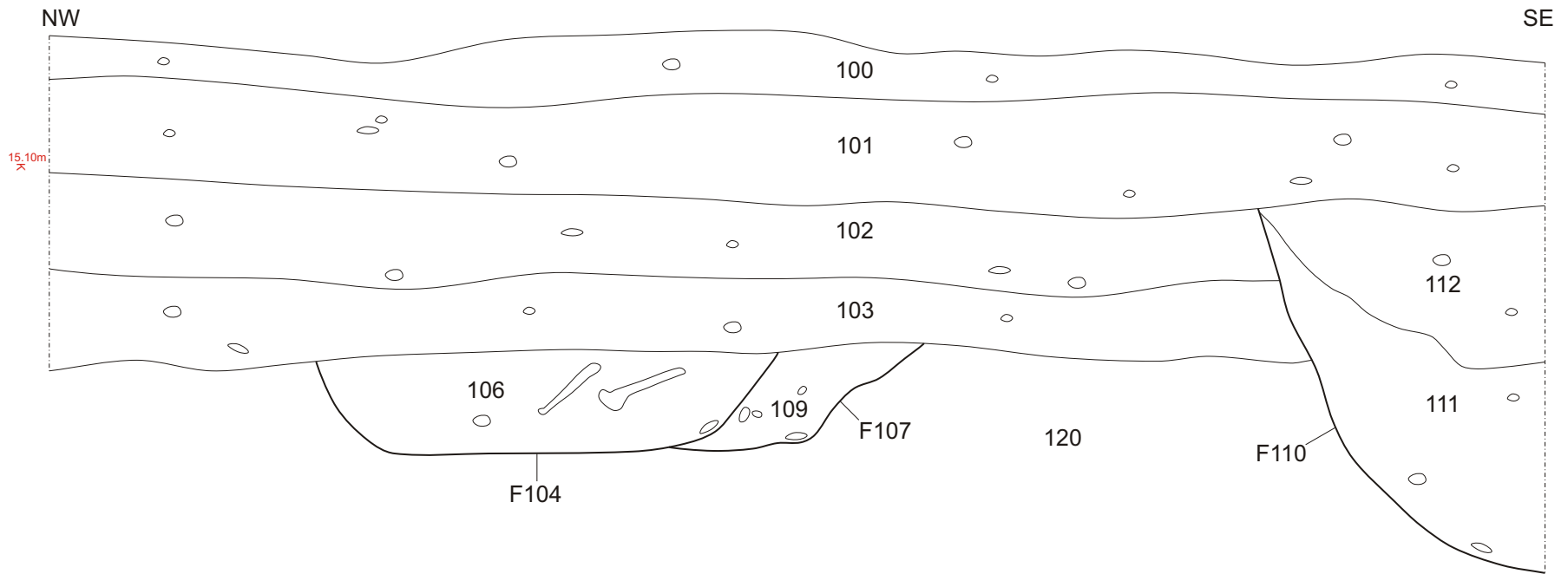
b) Plan of graves F104 and F107



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St Michael and All Angels
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TITLE
Fig. 2: Plans of area
observed and skeletons



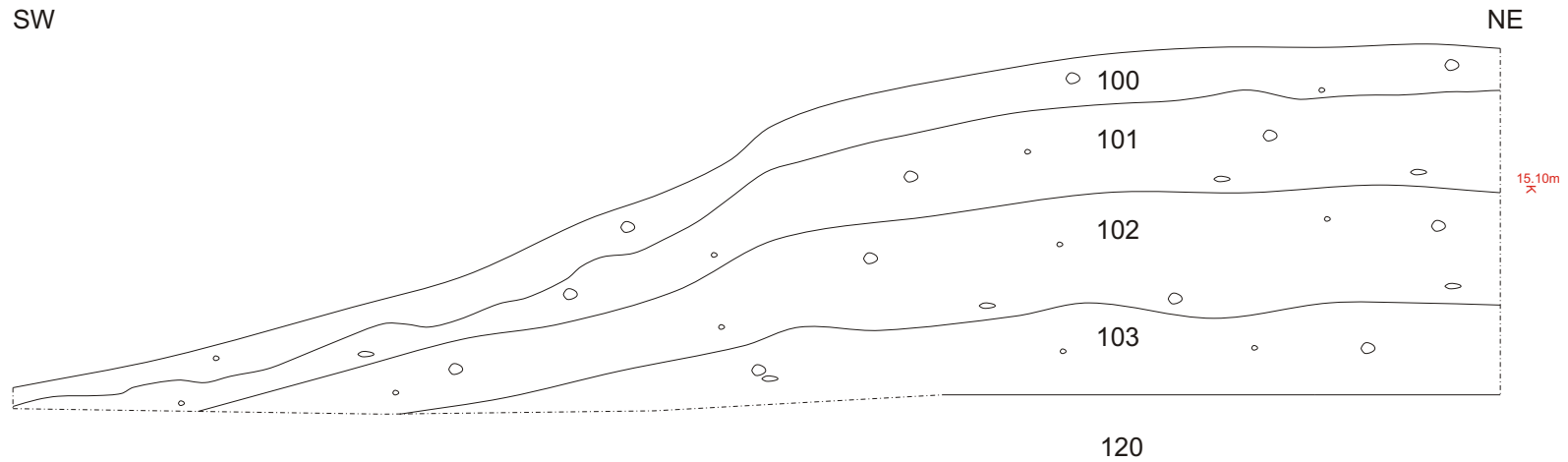


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 Church, Clyst Honiton,
 Devon**

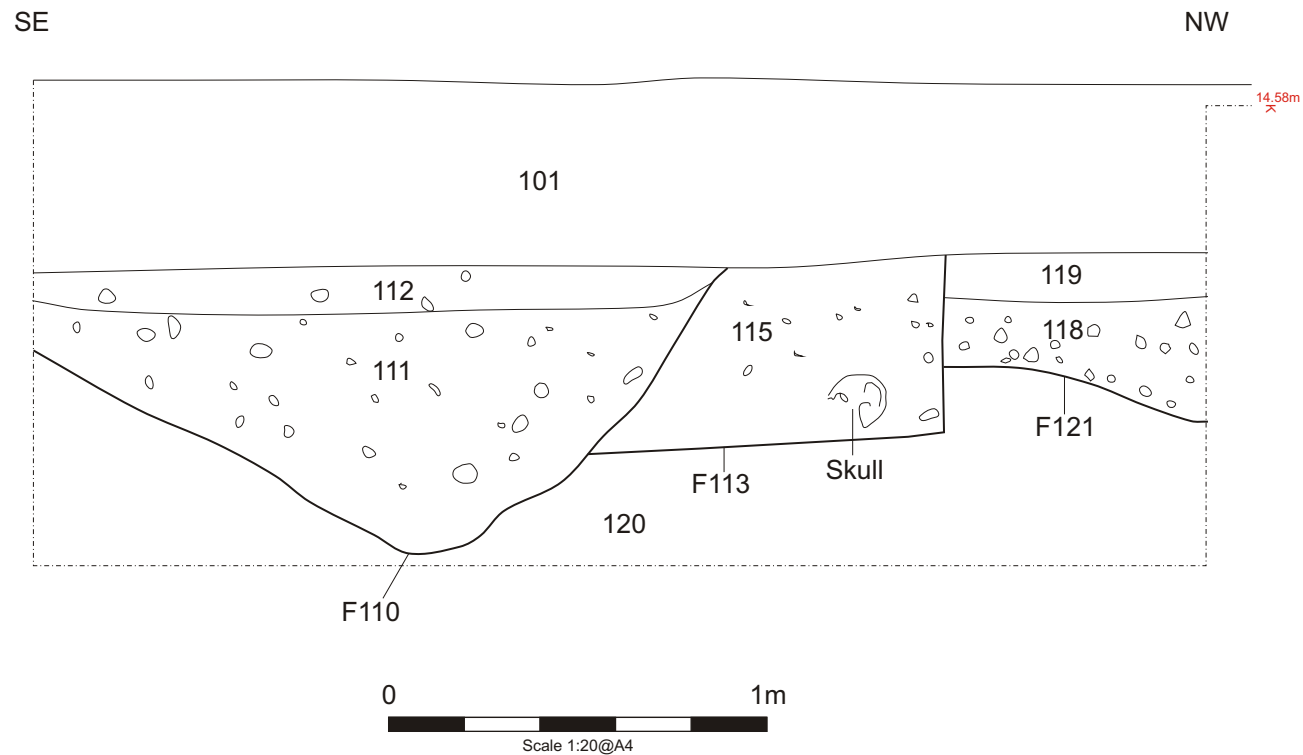
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**Fig. 3: Section of graves
 F104, F107 and ditch F110**



a) Southeast facing section of overlying soil sequence



b) Section of possible graves F113 and F121, and ditch F110



PROJECT
St Michael and All Angels
Church, Clyst Honiton,
Devon

TITLE
Fig. 4: Sections of area
observed





Plate 1: View of churchyard, looking southwest towards excavation area



Plate 2: Showing intercutting graves F107 and F104. View to north (scale 1m)



Plate 3: Showing possible intercutting graves F113 and F121, with ditch F110 to the left. View to southwest (scale 1m)

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