



**Chris Butler MfA  
Archaeological Services Ltd**



**Archaeological Watching Brief  
at  
Alciston Church, Alciston,  
East Sussex**

Project No. CBAS0141

by  
David Atkin

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### ***Summary***

*An archaeological watching brief was carried during groundworks associated with the construction of a French drain adjacent to the churchyard wall at Alciston Church, Alciston, East Sussex. One disturbed in-situ burial was uncovered and was associated with a single sherd of 13<sup>th</sup> century pottery. Disarticulated human bone, possibly disturbed by earlier repair work to the wall, was recovered along with tile dating from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries along with two sherds of late 18<sup>th</sup> century pot. No other archaeological features or finds were noted.*

*The churchyard wall had four phases of construction and repair, although it was not possible to accurately date these different phases, apart from suggesting that all, apart from the earliest, are from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century*

# **Chris Butler Archaeological Services Ltd**

Rosedale  
Berwick, Polegate,  
East Sussex  
BN26 6TB

Tel & fax: 01323 811785

e mail: [chris@cbasltd.co.uk](mailto:chris@cbasltd.co.uk)

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## **Appendix**

Appendix I: HER Summary Form

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Chris Butler Archaeological Services Ltd were commissioned by Richard Crook of John D. Clark Architects on behalf of Alciston Church to carry out an archaeological watching brief during the groundworks associated with works adjacent to the churchyard wall at Alciston Church, Alciston, East Sussex, TQ 5058 0555 (Fig. 1).
- 1.2 The site is situated within an archaeological sensitive area designated because it lies within the historic core of the Medieval and Post Medieval village of Alciston. The site is also within the Alciston Conservation Area. The manor house, barn and dovecote of the Medieval Grange survive to the south and west of the church (Fig. 1).
- 1.3 Alciston church was built in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, although excavation has shown that there was a pre-conquest church on the same site. The church was partly rebuilt in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, with a final Medieval phase of building in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The church was 'restored' in 1853, and the porch was rebuilt in 1951<sup>1</sup>. The register of vicars dates from 1575. The church lies on the south-western edge of a quadrilateral churchyard whose original dimensions were 40 x 47 metres, and which is raised above the surrounding ground to the north and west.
- 1.4 Originally an Anglo Saxon settlement called Aelfsige tun (The enclosed land of Aelfsige), the Domesday book mentions Alistone as being quite a valuable estate owned by the Abbey at Battle . Later it was known as Alsistone, and finally Alciston<sup>2</sup>. Alciston is in Alciston hundred and is part of the Rape of Pevensey.
- 1.5 The geology, according to the British Geological Survey sheet 319/443, is Chalk, with the Gault Clay situated a short distance to the north of the site, and outcrops of Head deposits to the east and south.
- 1.6 A watching brief was required to monitor the excavation of a French drain and other excavations on the south side of the north churchyard wall, within the churchyard, as part of the groundworks to stabilise the wall (Fig. 9). It was possible that this work would encounter burials, and archaeological remains associated with the boundary of the churchyard.
- 1.7 A written scheme of investigation which covered the watching brief was prepared and submitted to the Diocesan Advisory Committee and the Archaeology Team at East Sussex County Council for approval. The watching brief was carried out between the 16<sup>th</sup> April and the 18<sup>th</sup> May 2012 by the author and Chris Butler.

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<sup>1</sup> The Churches of Selmeston & Berwick in the County of Sussex

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.villagenet.co.uk/sevensisters/villages/alciston.php>

## 2.0 Historical & Archaeological Background

- 2.1 No prehistoric or Roman remains or artefacts are known from the site, although a number are known from the surrounding landscape. Prehistoric flintwork and stone axes have been found locally, and there are numerous Bronze Age burial mounds known from the north scarp slope of the South Downs to the south of the site<sup>3</sup>.
- 2.2 Recent discoveries nearby (Fig. 2) include an Iron Age coin (MES2662) dating to the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC<sup>4</sup>, a metal knife of Roman date (MES11048), and a Roman coin of 4<sup>th</sup> century date (MES14671). Later finds include a Medieval coin (MES14668), a Medieval brooch pin (MES14672) and a Medieval buckle (MES14673), together with a Post Medieval jetton (MES14674).
- 2.3 Alciston has its origins in the Anglo-Saxon period when it was called Aelfsige tun (The enclosed land of Aelfsige). Before 1066 it was held by Young Alnoth from King Edward, and answered for 50 hides. No Saxon artefacts or sites are known nearby, although an excavation at the church in 1984 found evidence for a pre-Norman chalk-built apse<sup>5</sup>.
- 2.4 The Domesday Book tells us that in 1086 the Abbott of St Martin's of Battle held Alciston Manor, and it answered for 44½ hides<sup>6</sup>. There were 65 villagers who with seven smallholders had 21½ ploughs. There were 21 slaves and 50 acres of meadow. Alciston Manor was an important manor forming part of Battle Abbey's extensive estates, and has retained its feudal topography almost intact<sup>7</sup>. The manor house (now Alciston Court) was built in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century, and together with the church, the 16<sup>th</sup> century barn and 14<sup>th</sup> century dovecote form an important group of buildings (MES2628).
- 2.5 In the 14<sup>th</sup> century Alciston Manor had a mixed agricultural economy, predominantly arable (wheat) and sheep, but also including cattle and pigs with chickens, geese, ducks and pigeons, with much of the produce being sent to Battle Abbey<sup>8</sup>. Alciston had flocks of over 2,000 sheep<sup>9</sup>, and formed the centre at which wool from the surrounding Abbey estates was collected, weighed and packed by the merchants before being transported<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Grinsell, L.V. 1934 'Sussex Barrows', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **75**, 269-70.

<sup>4</sup> Rudling, D. 1991 'Two Iron Age silver coins found in East Sussex', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **129**, 245.

<sup>5</sup> Leach, P. 1987 'Excavations at Alciston, 1984', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **125**, 91-8.

<sup>6</sup> Morris, J. 1976 *Domesday Book: Sussex*, Chichester, Phillimore.

<sup>7</sup> Mason, R.T. 1978 'Alciston Court: A Manor House of Battle Abbey' *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **116**, 159-162.

<sup>8</sup> Brent, J.A. 1968 'Alciston Manor in the Later Middle Ages', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **106**, 89-102.

<sup>9</sup> Pelham, R.A. 1934 'The Distribution of Sheep in Sussex in the Early Fourteenth Century', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **75**, 128-135.

<sup>10</sup> Brent, J.A. 1968 'Alciston Manor in the Later Middle Ages', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **106**, 89-102.

- 2.6** The plague reached Alciston in early 1349 and probably caused the death of over one third of the population, and it seems unlikely that the population ever recovered to the pre-plague levels. In 1336 there were 31 tenants at Alciston, but by 1433 there were only 24<sup>11</sup>. It is likely that as a result of this, Alciston is a shrunken Medieval village<sup>12</sup> (MES2661).
- 2.7** It is possible that many of the tenants were living on dispersed farms rather than in the nucleated settlement around the manor house and church, however a survey of 1433 includes a detailed description of the tenements, and it has been possible to reconstruct the form of the 15<sup>th</sup> century settlement (Fig. 3)<sup>13</sup>
- 2.8** A tile kiln, built in 1418 and part of the Battle Abbey estate, was situated about half a mile north of the church<sup>14</sup>. 42,000 tiles were produced in 1429-30<sup>15</sup>, and by 1599 it was also producing bricks. The tile kiln was out of use by 1666.
- 2.9** In the 15<sup>th</sup> century there was a decline in grain production, and a similar decline was experienced in sheep farming, with flocks of only 800 being recorded in the 1480's<sup>16</sup>. However the manor appears to have been prosperous, as modifications to the manor house were carried out in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century, and the large tithe barn was built in the 16<sup>th</sup> century<sup>17</sup>.
- 2.10** After the dissolution of the monasteries the Manor was given to Sir John Gage in return for a knight's fee, i.e. the provision of armed horsemen for the king's service<sup>18</sup>. There are five houses in Alciston which date to the 17<sup>th</sup> century<sup>19</sup>, of which two (including The Old Clergy House MES2627) may be earlier. Another 10 properties in the village date to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, however, the village did not grow in size, and this therefore seems to be the result of properties being replaced or rebuilt rather than new properties, but represents the continuing prosperity of the area.

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<sup>11</sup> Brent, J.A. 1968 'Alciston Manor in the Later Middle Ages', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **106**, 89-102.

<sup>12</sup> Burleigh, G.R. 1973 'An Introduction to Deserted Medieval Villages in East Sussex', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **111**, 45-83.

<sup>13</sup> Brandon, P.F. 1962 'Arable Farming in a Sussex scarp-foot Parish during the Late Middle Ages', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **100**, 60-72.

<sup>14</sup> Beswick, M. 2001 *Brickmaking in Sussex*, Midhurst, Middleton Press.

<sup>15</sup> Brent, J.A. 1968 'Alciston Manor in the Later Middle Ages', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **106**, 89-102.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>17</sup> Mason, R.T. 1978 'Alciston Court: A Manor House of Battle Abbey' *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **116**, 159-162.

<sup>18</sup> *The Churches of Selmeston & Berwick in the County of Sussex*

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.imagesofengland.org.uk/>

- 2.11** The earliest part of Alciston church is the eastern apse (Fig. 4), found during the 1984 excavation<sup>20</sup>, which dates to a pre-conquest church. The earliest part of the current church is a window in the north wall of the chancel which dates to the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The south wall of the church was rebuilt in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and the porch was added at the same time (although rebuilt in 1951). The final phase of Medieval building is represented by the east wall of the chancel which has a 15<sup>th</sup> century window<sup>21</sup>. The church was drastically ‘restored’ in 1853<sup>22</sup>.
- 2.12** A map of Alciston dating to 1647 map and the Tithe map have not yet been consulted due to the tight timescale for completion of this document. They will be consulted prior to the fieldwork and will be incorporated into the final report.
- 2.13** Yeakell & Gardiner’s map of 1778-83<sup>23</sup> shows the church and adjacent manorial buildings, but not in sufficient detail to be able to determine much additional information. The field to the north of the church appears to be cultivated, as are most of the fields around the village.
- 2.14** Kelly’s Directory for 1867<sup>24</sup> states that the living is a vicarage consolidated with that of Selmeston, in the alternate gift of the Bishop and of the Dean and Chapter of Chichester, joint yearly value £210 with residence, and held by the Rev William Douglas Parish, S.C.L., of Trinity College, Oxford. Lord Gage is principal landowner and lord of the manor. The chief crop is wheat. The area is 2,079 acres, and the population in 1861, was 220.
- 2.15** The 1<sup>st</sup> Edition OS map (1874) shows the church and a churchyard of the same size and shape as it is today. The south-eastern part of the churchyard is shown covered with trees and shrubs, and footpaths enter the churchyard in the north-west corner, along the north-east side and on the south side (Fig. 5). The manor house is called Alciston Place at this time.
- 2.16** The 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition OS map (1899) shows little change, although the only entrance to the churchyard is now shown on the north-west corner. Alciston Place is now called Alciston Court (Fig. 6).

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<sup>20</sup> Leach, P. 1987 ‘Excavations at Alciston, 1984’, *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **125**, 91-8.

<sup>21</sup> Clarke, H. & Leach, P.E. 1985 ‘The Medieval Churches of the Cuckmere Valley’, *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **123**, 95-108.

<sup>22</sup> The Churches of Selmeston & Berwick in the County of Sussex

<sup>23</sup> [http://www.envf.port.ac.uk/geo/research/historical/webmap/sussexmap/Yeakell\\_36.htm](http://www.envf.port.ac.uk/geo/research/historical/webmap/sussexmap/Yeakell_36.htm)

<sup>24</sup> Kelly’s Post Office Directory of Essex, Herts, Middlesex, Kent, Surrey and Sussex, 1867

- 2.17** The 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition OS map of 1909-10 (Fig. 7) and 4<sup>th</sup> Edition OS map of 1928 (Fig. 8) show little change, although a set of steps is now shown at the entranceway to the churchyard. The shape and size of the churchyard have remained unaltered throughout this period.
- 2.18** There has only been one archaeological investigation within the churchyard. This was an excavation in 1984 at the eastern end of the church in an attempt to determine the early history of the church. A pre-conquest apse constructed from chalk blocks was discovered, although excavation was restricted by brick-built tombs and modern drains. The excavation showed that the ground was very disturbed as a result of earlier burials<sup>25</sup>.
- 2.19** A site visit was carried out on the 7<sup>th</sup> June 2010. The churchyard is approached by a path from the north-west, and is entered through a double wooden gate in the north-east corner of the churchyard (Plate 1). The churchyard is raised some 1.5m above the level of the fields to the north and west of the site, and access to the raised churchyard is by a flight of brick-built steps retained within brick walls (probably of 19<sup>th</sup> century origin) to a tarmac path which leads to the church door.
- 2.20** The churchyard is surrounded by a flint built retaining wall of unknown date, which is capped with bricks, which are almost certainly of 19<sup>th</sup> century date. Two brick-built buttresses have been added to the north side of the wall, probably during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. There are no obvious repairs, although there may be a change in the wall to the east of the first buttress, which may indicate a partial rebuild.
- 2.21** On the south side of the wall within the churchyard, the area of the work (Plate 1) is grassed, with a number of small trees (one now removed) and shrubs set back from the wall, together with a flag pole and some paving slabs. The ground slopes gently down to the wall, and is only some 0.3m below the top of the wall. There are no obvious graves or structures in this area, the nearest being a short distance outside the area of proposed works, and are of 20<sup>th</sup> century date.



Plate 1: Alciston Church: The site prior to work commencing

<sup>25</sup> Leach, P. 1987 'Excavations at Alciston, 1984', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **125**, 91-8.



### 3.0 Method Statement

- 3.1 The archaeological work was carried out in accordance with ESCC's *Standards for Archaeological Fieldwork, Recording and Post-Excavation in East Sussex* dated April 2008 (Recommended Standards), and the Association of Diocesan and Cathedral Archaeologists' *Archaeological requirements for works on churches and churchyards*<sup>26</sup> (ADCA Requirements).
- 3.2 The groundworks for the landscaping were excavated in shallow spits by 3 tonne ditching machine using a flat-bladed 600mm ditching bucket and by hand, under archaeological supervision. The soil adjacent to the wall for the French drain was excavated by hand so as not to cause any damage to the wall. The area excavated for the landscaping and the French drain was approximately 1m inside the north wall on its south side and ran for approximately 12m from the north-west entrance to the east before following the wall and turning south-east for a further 12m (Fig. 9). Excavation ceased at approximately 1.3m below the current ground level.
- 3.3 The spoil from the excavations was inspected at regular intervals to recover any artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest. A Garrett 150 metal detector was also used at regular intervals to scan spoil derived from the excavations. The only metal signals were detected were modern debris.
- 3.4 All human remains discovered during the work were collected and will be returned to the church for reburial.
- 3.5 All artefacts recovered during the excavations on the site are the property of the Client. They are to be suitably bagged, boxed and marked in accordance with the *United Kingdom Institute for Conservation, Conservation Guidelines No 2* and on completion of the archaeological post-excavation programme the Client/Developer will arrange for them to be deposited in Lewes Museum or similar repository agreed with the County Archaeologist if appropriate.

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<sup>26</sup> ADCA 2004 *Archaeological requirements for works on churches and churchyards, Guidance Note 1*

## 4.0 Results

- 4.1** Context 1 was the soft topsoil deposit in the north-east corner of the graveyard. It was a clayey-silt deposit with very occasional ceramic building material (CBM) at 1% and evidence of bioturbation in the form of rooting at 2%. It was mid grey-black in colour and had a depth of 350mm.
- 4.2** Context 2 was a soft, silty clay, mid grey deposit of a well-developed cemetery soil. It was directly underneath Context 1. It contained inclusions consisting of very occasional chalk pieces up to 30mm in size at <1%, CBM at 1%, disarticulated bone at 1% and roots at 2%. This deposit had a very strong clay component to it and was approximately 950mm in depth to the limit of excavation.
- 4.3** Context 3 was linear cut for the modern 1960's repair to the wall. It was 300mm in width and 4m in length. It ran approximately north-south and was filled by Contexts 4 and 5 and cut Context 2.
- 4.4** Context 4 was the modern repair to the wall and consisted of flint with brickwork capping with lime mortar and sand and cement render. It incorporated modern breeze blocks at its base (Plate 2).



Plate 2: Alciston Church: Modern repairs to wall

- 4.5** Context 5 was a mixed modern deposit that filled Context 3 and consisted mainly of material re-deposited from Context 2 and included modern debris that was incorporated within the backfill and were not retained.

- 4.6** Context **6** was a soft to firm, silty-clay, light to mid grey deposit very similar to Gault clay. It was directly underneath Context **2**. It contained inclusions of very occasional chalk pieces up to 20mm in size at <1%, CBM at 1% and charcoal at <1%. This deposit was approximately 300mm in depth to the limit of excavation and was encountered approximately 1.3m below the present ground surface within the graveyard.
- 4.7** Context **7** was assigned to an incomplete child's skeleton that appeared to sit immediately above Context **6** and within Context **2**. No grave cut could be ascertained. It was orientated east-west and only part of the skull and a few other bones were recovered (See 5.4 below). A single sherd of medieval pot was recovered from the immediate area to the left of the shoulder.



Plate 3: Alciston Church: Excavation for the French Drain

- 4.8** Context **8** was assigned to an area containing a disarticulated group of human bone that were found adjacent to the wall and pillar to the step entrance to the churchyard. It appeared to be re-deposited bone that had been disturbed and incorporated into the steps and wall of the entrance to the graveyard. Associated with the bone was a firm, mid-grey brown, sandy-clay loam with chalk pieces up to 10mm at 1%, roots at 2%, charcoal pieces and flecks at <1% and flint pieces at 1%. Also noted was a possible stake hole, 80mm in diameter, and still containing wood remains, although this was not investigated as it was below the level of impact.
- 4.9** Context **9** was assigned to the earliest phase of the flint wall surrounding the churchyard. The wall was approximately 700mm in height with the thinner later 19<sup>th</sup> century wall (Context **10**) sitting directly on-top. The early wall was constructed of un-knapped flint nodules with lime mortar used as a bonding agent and showed signs of repair. A sample of mortar was taken (Sample 1).

**4.10** Context **10** was assigned to the later phase of the surrounding flint wall. It was up to 1m in height and was constructed of flint nodules bonded with a lime mortar and had knapped flints incorporated into its facing (Plate 4). A sample of mortar was taken (Sample 2). The wall had a rounded brick capping along its length bonded with a light grey concrete which had also extended down the upper surfaces of the wall. The wall showed some signs of later repair with modern bricks having been inserted on the inside, and there was an area of brick repair at the bend in the wall (Fig. 9).



Plate 4: Alciston Church: Different phases of wall construction

## 5.0 Finds

**5.0.1** The archaeological work recovered a moderately sized assemblage of finds from the site. These are summarized below in Table 1.

**5.0.2** The assemblage is not considered to hold any potential for further analysis and is recommended for discard. The human remains will be returned to the church for reburial.

**Table 1:** Quantification of finds (no./weight in grams)

Context	Pot (by period)	Ceramic Building Material	Bone	Other	Date
<b>Spoil</b>	1750-1900: 1/2g	-	-	-	c. 1760-1800
<b>1</b>	1750-1900: 1/10g	Peg tile 7/328g	-	Stone 1/56g	c. 1780-1800
<b>2</b>	-	Peg tile 4/138g	Animal 11/245g Human 62/1562g	Iron 2/5g	Mixed tile: c16th/17 <sup>th</sup> & c19th
<b>7</b>	1225-1350: 1/8g	-	Human 175/206g	-	c. 1225-1300?
<b>8</b>	1750-1900: 1/2g	-	Human 30/1892g	Fire-fractured flint 1/3g	c. 1750-1850
<b>9</b>	-	-	-	Mortar 1/122g	-
<b>10</b>	-	-	-	Mortar 1/34g	-

### 5.1 The Pottery by Luke Barber

**5.1.1** The earliest pottery from the site consists of a slightly abraded bodysherd tempered with moderate medium sand from Context 7. The sherd is medium fired, predominantly to a reduced grey, but with some signs of oxidised brown patches. A 13<sup>th</sup> century date is quite probable but a more diagnostic sherd would be needed to be certain and an earlier date cannot be ruled out.

**5.1.2** The remaining pottery is of late post-medieval date, mostly of late 18<sup>th</sup> to early 19<sup>th</sup> century types. A tiny fragment of creamware was recovered from spoil while Context 1 produced part of the base from an early transfer-printed pearlware bowl (probably c. 1780-1800). Context 8 contained one small sherd of glazed red earthenware.

## 5.2 Ceramic Building Material by Luke Barber

**5.2.1** All of the ceramic building material (CBM) from the site consists of peg tile fragments. Those from Context **1** are slightly crudely finished but well/hard fired. All vary between 12 and 14mm thick and are tempered with sparse fine sand and either sparse iron oxides to 1mm or sparse calcareous inclusions to 1mm. A 17<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> century date range is probable.

**5.2.2** The peg tile from Context **2** is a little more mixed. There are three fragments; crudely made and hard-fired (12-13mm thick), tempered with sparse fine sand and abundant marl streaks. These are probably of 16<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> century date. However, the final tile, measuring 11mm thick and tempered with sparse fine sand only, is of 19<sup>th</sup> century type.

### 5.3.0 Other Building Material by Luke Barber

**5.3.1** Context **1** produced a single fragment from a Horsham stone roofing slab. Although this roofing type appears to have been most common between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries its durability means it can still be seen in use on some older houses in the area.

**5.3.2** Two mortar samples were also taken from **9** and **10**. That from Context **9** (Sample 1) consists of a somewhat friable off-white sandy lime mortar with moderate/abundant flint and chalk 'grits' to 3mm and sparse rounded flint pebbles to 11mm. That from Context **10** (Sample 2) consists of a notably harder cream/yellow white sandy lime mortar with moderate/abundant flint grits to 3mm. Both mortar types are typical of the coarse lime mortars used in flintwork construction from the medieval period to at least the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Without more diagnostic aggregates it is impossible to date them reliably within this period.

## 5.4 Human & Animal Bone by Hayley Forsyth

**5.4.1** A moderate mixed assemblage of human and animal bones were recovered from 3 contexts during the excavation and comprised of 11 mixed animal fragments weighing 245g and 267 mixed human fragments weighing 3660g with a total bone fragment count of 278, weighing 3905g (Table 1). The animal bone was identified using Schmid<sup>27</sup> and recorded age using Silver<sup>28</sup>; the human bone was identified and aged using White & Folkens<sup>29</sup> and Schaefer *et al*<sup>30</sup>.

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<sup>27</sup> Schmid, E. (1972) *Atlas of Animal Bones for Prehistorians, Archaeologists, and Quaternary Geologists*. London, Elsevier Publishing.

<sup>28</sup> Silver, I. A (1969) The ageing of domestic animals. In D. Brothwell & E. Higgs (eds.) *Science in*

- 5.4.2** The assemblage comprised mostly of mixed human remains; a child from Context **7**, three adults from Context **8** and two adults and a juvenile in Context **2** as well as several animal bone fragments present in Context **2**. The bones showed signs of slight erosion and several of the human bones had old mortar adhered to them which affected the weight in Table 1.
- 5.4.4** There were 12 human skull fragments within Context **2** belonging to at least 3 different individuals based on their morphology. Also present was an adult right mandible fragment and a left fragment from another individual with evidence of ante-mortem tooth loss of molars, premolars, canine and incisors. An adult right maxilla fragment was also discovered with the 2<sup>nd</sup> premolar, 1<sup>st</sup> molar and 2<sup>nd</sup> molar showing severe wear suggesting an older individual<sup>31</sup>. A right mandible fragment with the 2<sup>nd</sup> premolar and 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> molars present suggests an age range of 35-45 using dental attrition wear rates<sup>32</sup> from a male individual based on the morphology.
- 5.4.5** Context **2**, the human remains consisted of an adult right scapula fragment, a left juvenile and a left adult, heavily built, clavicle fragment. A slender adult fragmented right humerus, an unsideable fragmented adult humeral head and a further humeral head, left, with mortar adhered to the proximal aspect. A left adult humeral shaft was also discovered with no epiphyses present and the distal aspect of another adult humerus. The lower shaft of a heavily built right adult humerus was also present as well as a very slender humeral shaft fragment possibly from a juvenile. An adult heavily built ulna fragment and a left adult ulna shaft were present, as well as a left adult radial shaft and a right adult radial shaft, heavily built. An adult slender left radial shaft was also evident.
- 5.4.6** Pelvis fragments were evident and included an adult right auricular surface and iliac tuberosity, age cannot be determined as it is incomplete. Part of a left adult acetabulum and auricular surface was present; the greater sciatic notch suggests that this individual was male. A right adult part acetabulum and auricular surface was also discovered, with the greater sciatic notch suggesting this individual was a male. These fragments could belong to the same individual but as they are incomplete this cannot be determined for sure. An adult right fragmented tibia was present in Context **2**, along with a left. These could both belong to the same individual based on their morphology. A fragmented shaft from an adult fibula, unsideable, was also present.

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*Archaeology*. 283-302.

<sup>29</sup> White, T and Folkens, P (2005) *The Human Bone Manual*. London. Academic Press, Elsevier.

<sup>30</sup> Schaefer, M, Black, S & Scheuer, L (2009) *Juvenile Osteology A Laboratory and Field Manual*. London. Academic Press, Elsevier.

<sup>31</sup> Brothwell, D. (1981) *Digging up Bones*. Cornell University Press. New York.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*

- 5.4.7** Also present in Context 2 was a right fragmented adult femur missing both the proximal and distal ends, 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of a shaft fragment from a left adult femur, slender in appearance. A further 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of an adult femur heavily built in appearance and does not belong to the above. A left adult femoral head was also discovered, as well as a right. Based on the above there are two adult individuals in this context as neither of the right femur elements belong together. The left fragmented femur of a juvenile individual was also present in this context 2/3<sup>rd</sup> were present. There is evidence to suggest that the proximal end was unfused at death. From this evidence this individual was less than 14 years old at death<sup>33</sup>. A further femur (distal unfused) fragment from a juvenile individual was also discovered; this could belong to the above, however there is a piece of shaft missing so this cannot be determined. 15 unidentifiable long bone fragments were also present.
- 5.4.8** The animal bones from Context 2 comprised of 4 unidentifiable medium mammal long bone fragments and 2 unidentifiable large mammal long bone fragments. Also present was a medium mammal humerus fragment with evidence of butchery; chop marks on the posterior shaft, with gnawing by a dog/fox at the distal end. A fragmented right pig ulna, a fragmented left cattle metatarsus and the 2<sup>nd</sup> metatarsal from a horse were also discovered.
- 5.4.9** Context 7 comprised of several skull fragments; left and right parietals and temporal bones, frontal and occipital areas, in addition to the right and left zygomatics and right and left eye orbits. The part fusion of the pars lateralis and pars basilaris of the occipital bone suggests an individual older than 3 but younger than 7 years of age<sup>34</sup>. There were also 11 unfused vertebral fragments, the fusion of the elements of the 1<sup>st</sup> cervical vertebrae increases the minimum likely age to +4 years of age. A right humerus fragment, unfused and a left unfused ulna fragment were also discovered. There were also 22 unidentifiable fragments present.
- 5.4.10** Teeth were present in Context 7; the fragmented left half of a mandible contained an un-erupted adult 2<sup>nd</sup> molar, an erupting adult 1<sup>st</sup> molar, a juvenile 1<sup>st</sup> molar, premolar, canine and lateral incisor in use. The left and right central incisors were missing, as was the right lateral incisor. The right adult central and lateral incisors were visible in the fragmented jaw and were un-erupted. Loose maxillary teeth were also present; 1<sup>st</sup> adult molar, a juvenile molar, juvenile premolar, a left juvenile canine and a left juvenile lateral incisor. The un-erupted left adult central and lateral incisors were evident in the fragmented maxillary bone. Analysis of the dentition suggests a tentative age of 6 years old at death<sup>35</sup>.

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<sup>33</sup> Schaefer, M. Black, S & Scheuer, L (2009) *Juvenile Osteology A Laboratory and Field Manual*. London. Academic Press, Elsevier.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*



**5.4.11** Context **8** comprised of; 5 skull fragments, 2 set in old mortar, a left humerus fragment. Fragments of pelvis were also present; an un-sideable ilium, right and left ischial tuberosities possibly from different individuals based on morphology, an un-sideable fragment of pubis and right and left fragments of acetabulum. Also present was a slender fragmented left femur, a heavily built right mid-shaft femur fragment and a left with a fragmented proximal aspect. Also present were another 2 right femur shaft fragments, a right distal femur fragment and an unsideable femur shaft fragment. From the above it is suggested that there are 3 individuals in this context as none of the right femur fragments belong together. Four tibia fragments were also present; 3 left (one heavily built and one slender and one unfused) and a right unfused tibia shaft fragment. Also present were 4 un-identifiable long bone fragments, 1 un-sideable fibula fragment and 1 3<sup>rd</sup> left metatarsal fragment.

## **5.5 Other Finds** by Chris Butler

**5.5.1** The only other finds recovered during the watching brief were two iron nail fragments from Context **2**, possibly originating from a wooden coffin, and a single piece of fire-fractured flint from Context **8**.

## 6.0 Discussion

- 6.1 Given the origins of the church in the pre-conquest period it should come as no surprise that Context 2 represents a huge build-up of cemetery soil that has accumulated with the internments and constant re-working of the graveyard soil.
- 6.2 Surprisingly, there were less in-situ burials than one might expect. This may be partly due to the construction/repair of the wall, presumably in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the subsequent repairs and construction works that will have disturbed earlier burials. This is suggested by the bones from Context 8, which appear to have been disturbed during the construction of the steps and then re-interred in-situ, some bones having mortar adhering to them.
- 6.3 It is interesting to note that the child's skeleton (Context 7) had a single sherd of medieval pottery associated with it. It's possible to speculate that given the depth above the current ground level, the child's location just above Context 6 and the presence of the medieval pottery, that this burial represents the medieval burial. Of course, the presence of the medieval sherd may be misleading and it may be residual with the burial being much later in date.
- 6.4 The origin of the wall itself is also open to debate. That work was carried in the 19<sup>th</sup> century is clear from the brick inclusions within the later build. The earlier wall may be of a medieval date, but apart from the differences within the lime mortar and the later inclusions, there is little to tell them apart. A photograph (Plate 5) of the church in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century shows the walls to have been much taller than they are today, although the current gate and steps are present.



Plate 5: Alciston Church: Late 19<sup>th</sup> century photograph

- 6.5** It seems likely that the wall around the churchyard has at least four phases. The first being the lower original build, of unknown date. The later flint rebuild is likely to have taken place in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with the subsequent lowering in height and capping with brick taking place at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> or in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The brick buttresses may also have been added at this time. The latest repairs, represented by the breeze block infill dates to the 1960's.
- 6.6** The methodology adopted for this evaluation proved to be satisfactory, and the confidence rating should be considered to be reliable.

## **7.0 Acknowledgements**

- 7.1** We would like to thank Richard Crook of John D. Clark Architects and the church wardens of Alciston Church for appointing us to undertake this project on behalf of Alciston Church. We would also like to thank the contractor, Rob Coleman for his co-operation throughout.
- 7.2** Luke Barber and Hayley Forsyth reported on the finds. The project was managed for CBAS by Chris Butler, and was monitored for ESCC by Greg Chuter.

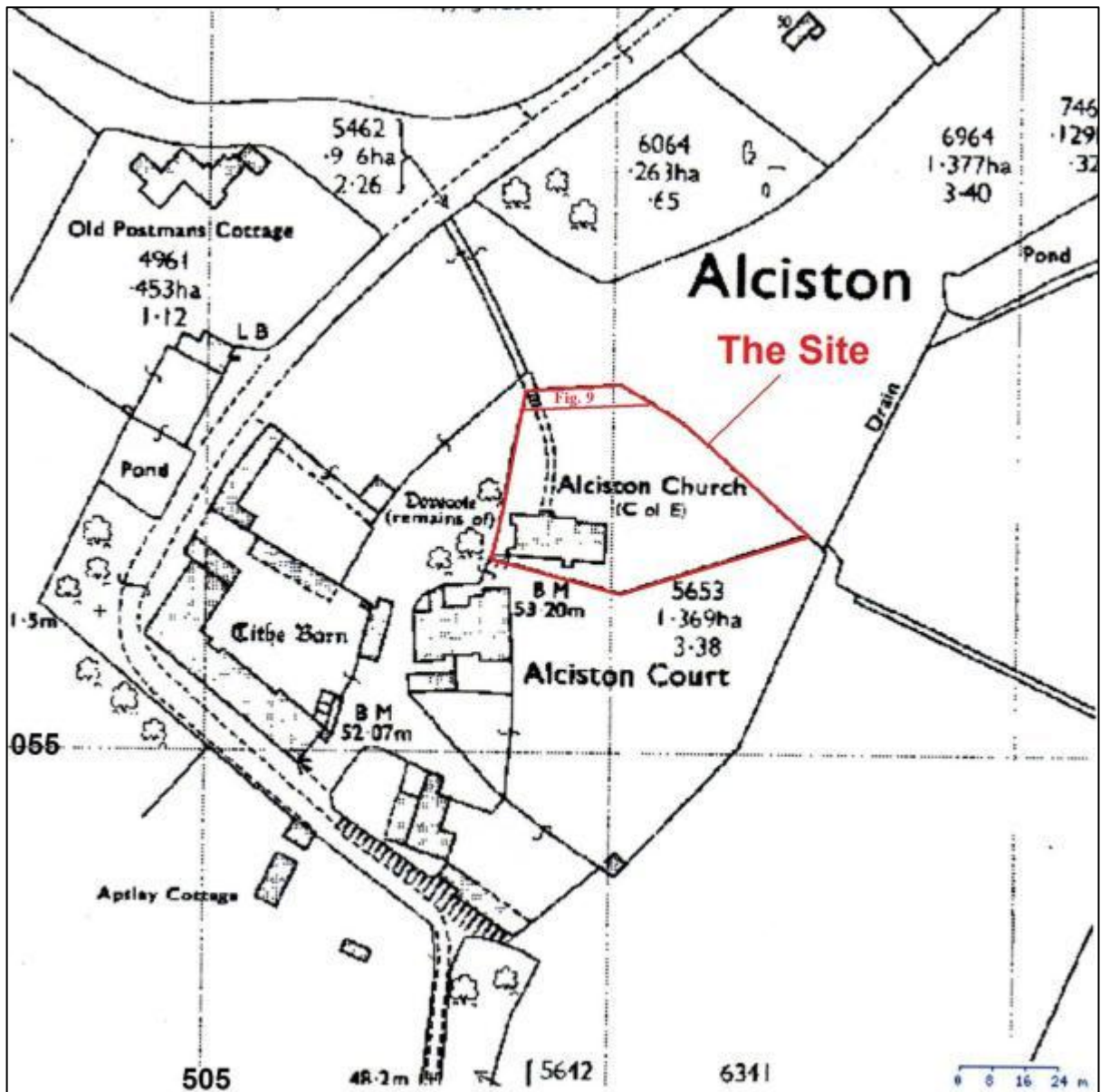


Fig. 1: Alciston Church, Alciston: Location Map & location of Fig. 2  
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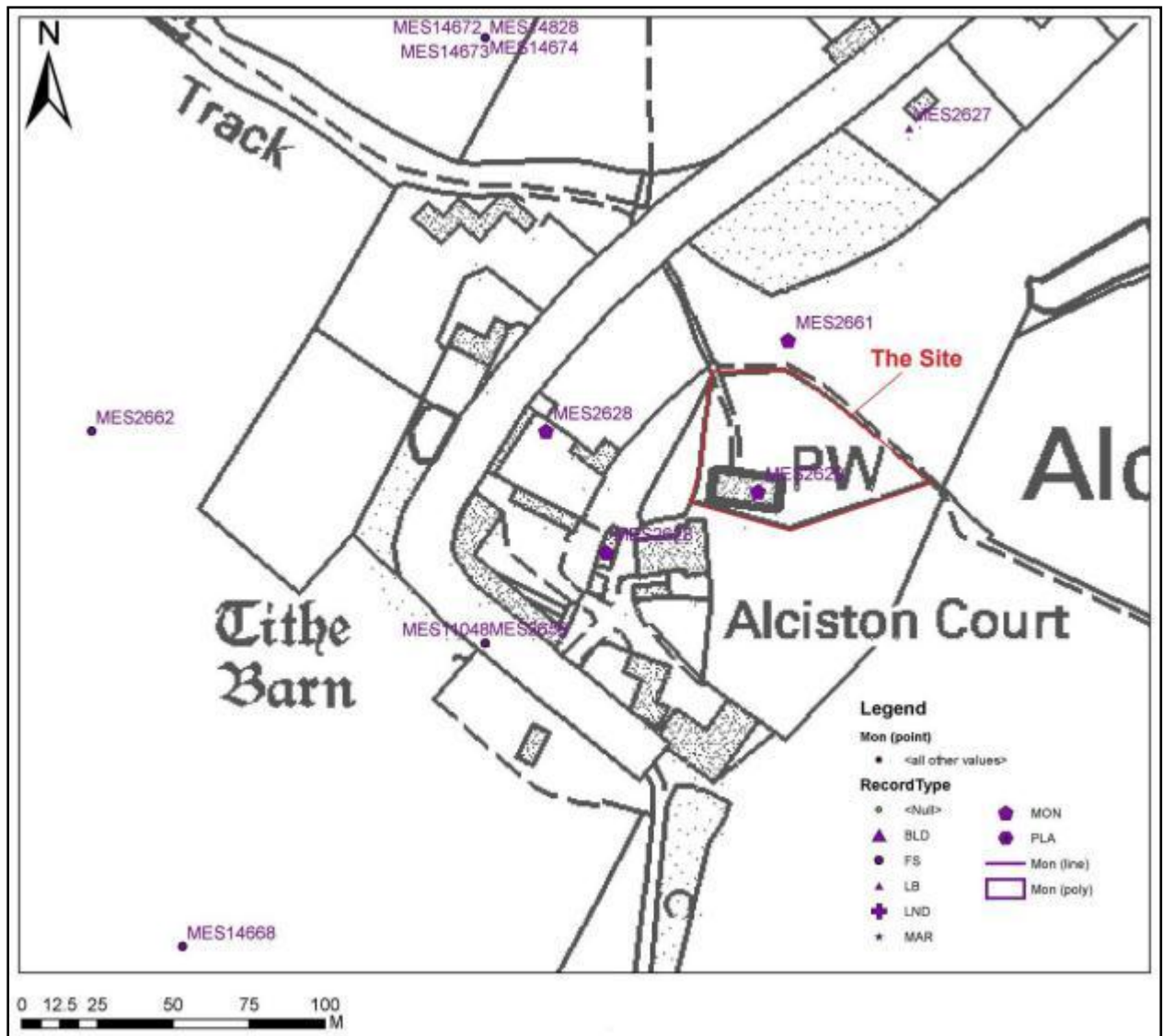


Fig. 2: Alciston Church, Alciston: Monuments on the HER referred to in Section 2



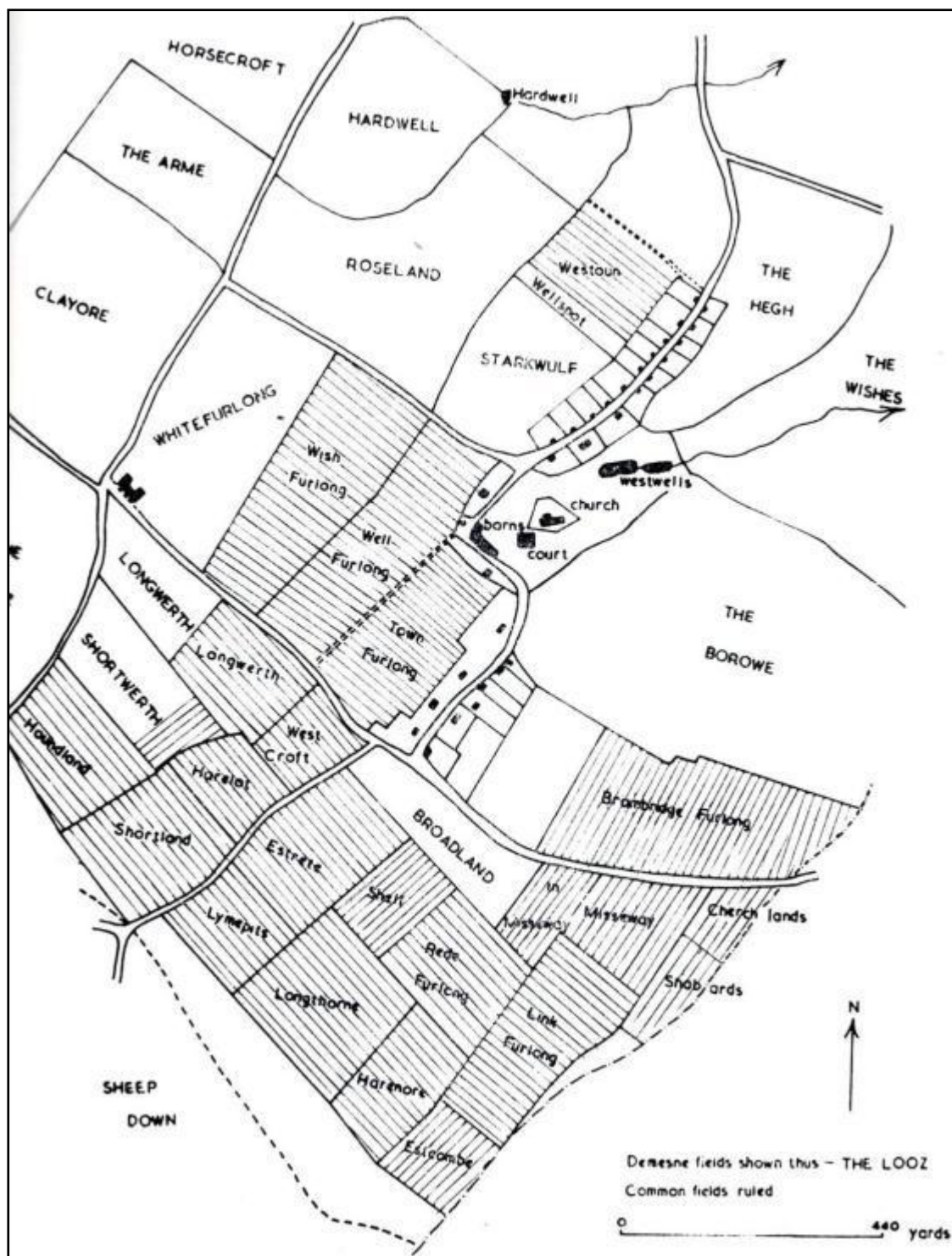


Fig. 3: Alciston Church, Alciston: Reconstruction of Alciston c. 1433

(From Brandon, P.F. 1962 'Arable Farming in a Sussex scarp-foot Parish during the Late Middle Ages', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **100**, 60-72.)

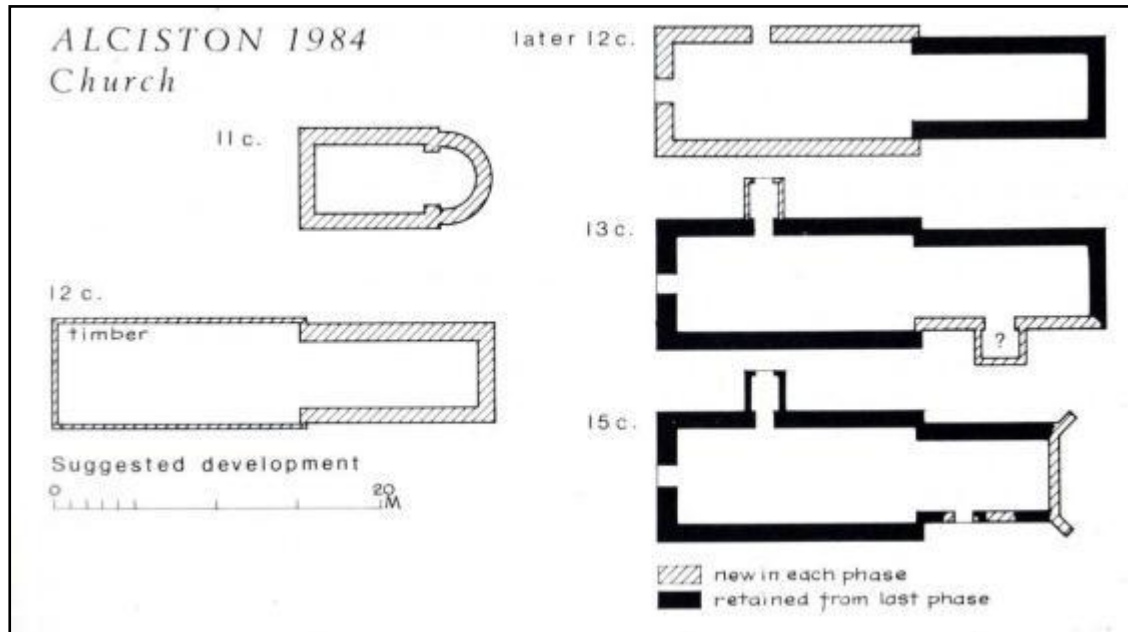


Fig. 4: Alciston Church, Alciston: Development of the Church

(From Leach, P. 1987 'Excavations at Alciston, 1984', *Sussex Archaeological Collections* **125**, 91-8.)

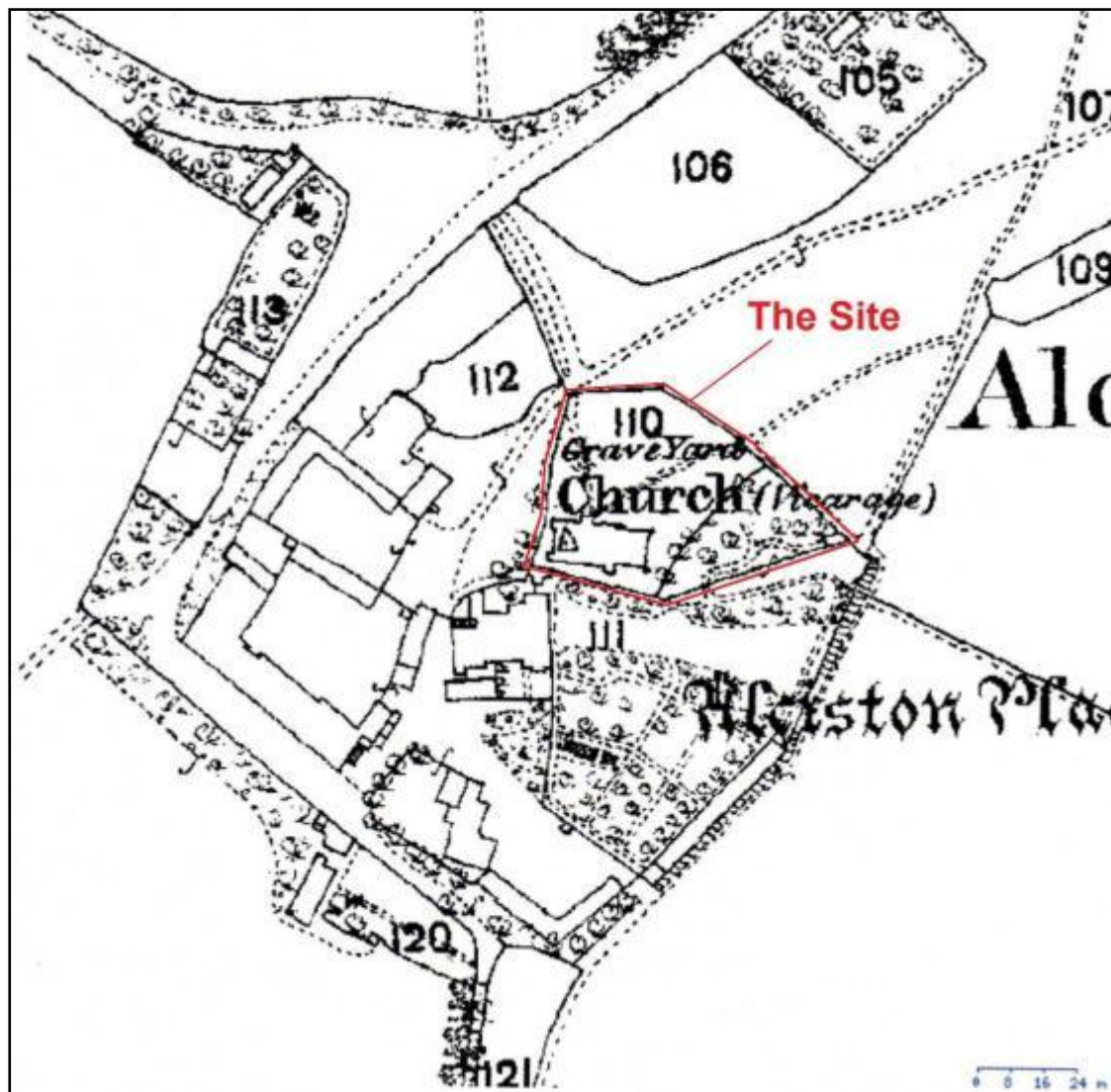


Fig. 5: Alciston Church, Alciston: 1<sup>st</sup> Edition OS Map (1874)





Fig. 6: Alciston Church, Alciston: 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition OS Map (1899)

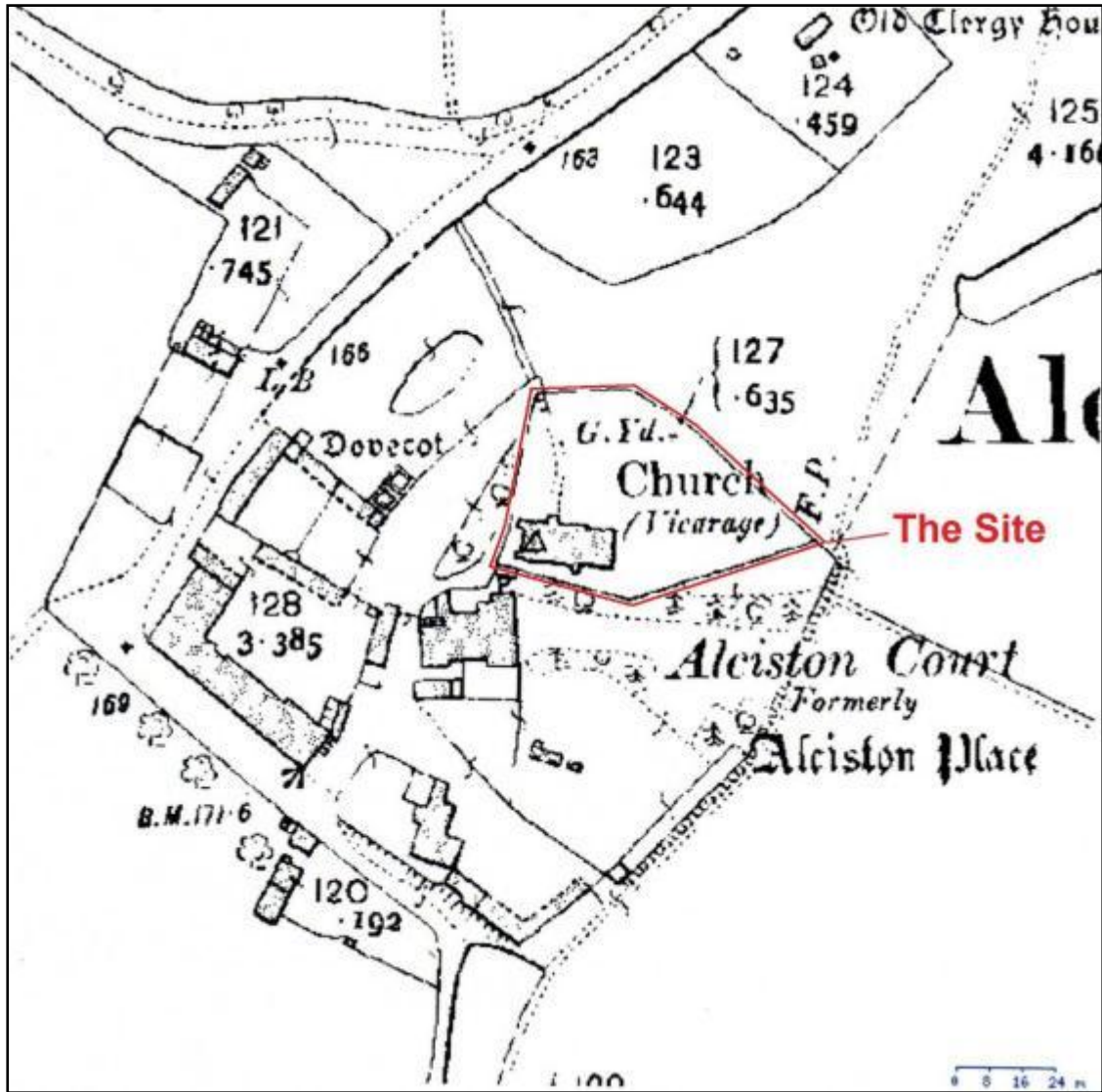


Fig. 7: Alciston Church, Alciston: 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition OS Map (1909-10)

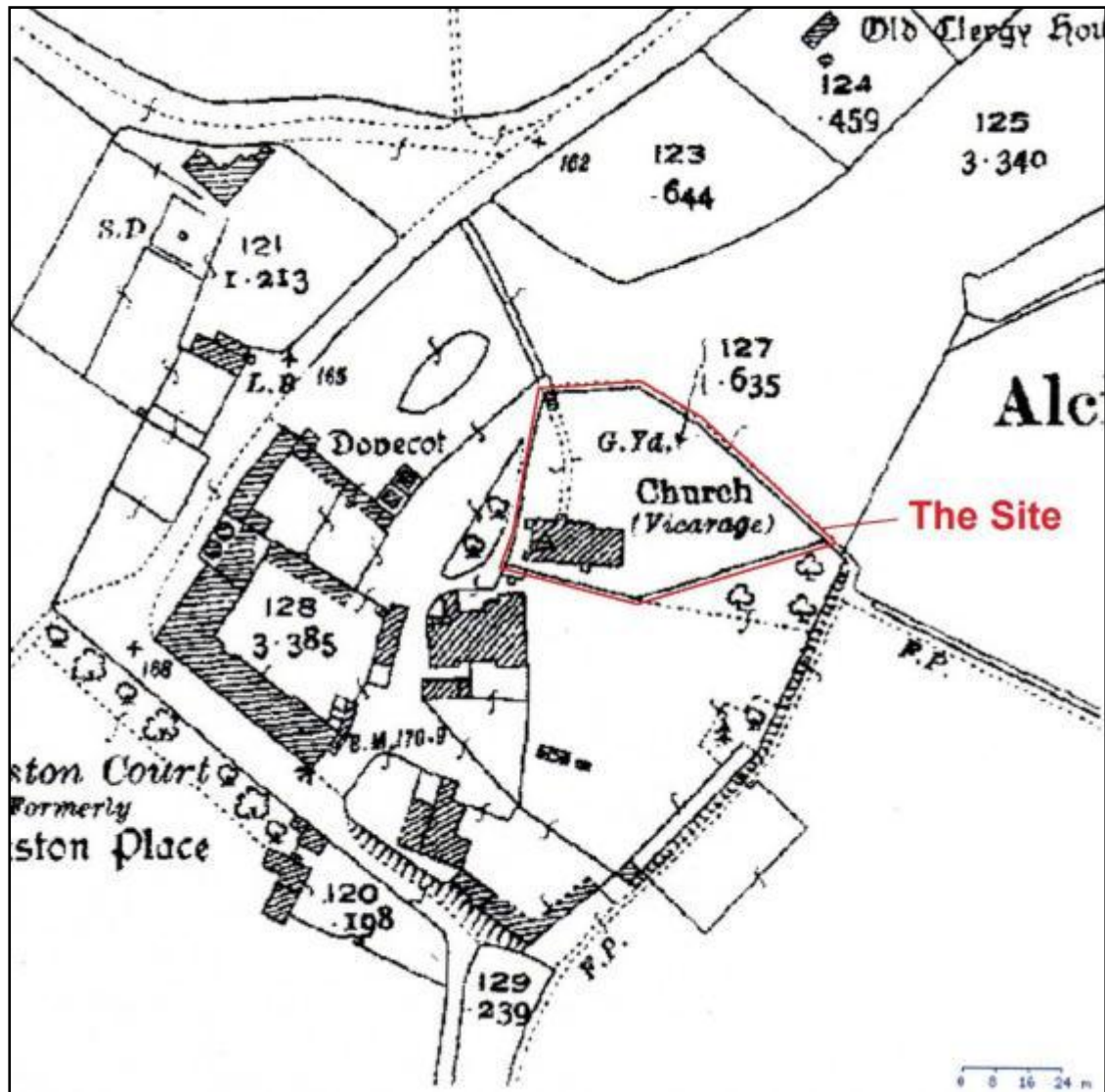


Fig. 8: Alciston Church, Alciston: 4<sup>th</sup> Edition OS Map (1928)

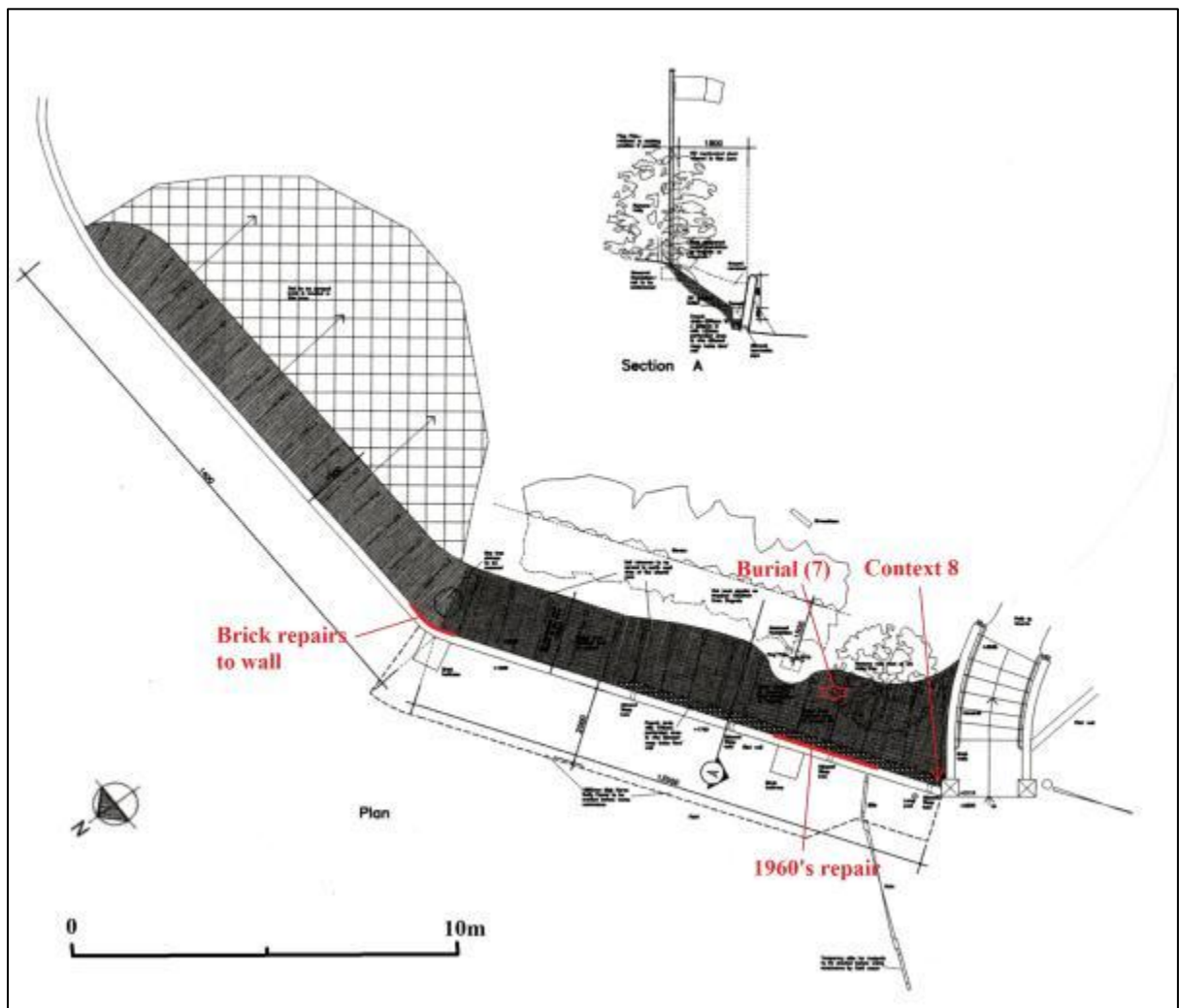


Fig. 9: Alciston Church, Alciston: Plan of the area monitored

## Appendix 1 HER Summary Form

Site Code	ALC10					
Identification Name and Address	Alciston Church, Alciston, East Sussex.					
County, District &/or Borough	Wealden District Council					
OS Grid Refs.	TQ 5058 0555					
Geology	Gault Clay.					
Type of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	Watching Brief <b>X</b>	Standing Structure	Survey	Other
Type of Site	Green Field	Shallow Urban	Deep Urban	Other <b>X</b>		
Dates of Fieldwork	Eval.	Excav.	WB. 16.04.12- 18.05.12	Other		
Sponsor/Client	Richard Crook of John D. Clark Architects on behalf of Alciston Church					
Project Manager	Chris Butler MifA					
Project Supervisor	David Atkin					
Period Summary	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	BA	IA	RB
	AS	MED <b>X</b>	PM <b>X</b>	Other		
<p>100 Word Summary.</p> <p><i>An archaeological watching brief was carried during groundworks associated with the construction of a French drain adjacent to the churchyard wall at Alciston Church, Alciston, East Sussex. One disturbed in-situ burial was uncovered and was associated with a single sherd of 13<sup>th</sup> century pottery. Disarticulated human bone, possibly disturbed by earlier repair work to the wall, was recovered along with tile dating from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries along with two sherds of late 18<sup>th</sup> century pot. No other archaeological features or finds were noted.</i></p> <p><i>The churchyard wall had four phases of construction and repair, although it was not possible to accurately date these different phases, apart from suggesting that all, apart from the earliest, are from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century</i></p>						

## **Chris Butler Archaeological Services Ltd**

Chris Butler has been an archaeologist since 1985, and formed the Mid Sussex Field Archaeological Team in 1987, since when it has carried out numerous fieldwork projects, and was runner up in the Pitt-Rivers Award at the British Archaeological Awards in 1996. Having previously worked as a Pensions Technical Manager and Administration Director in the financial services industry, Chris formed **Chris Butler Archaeological Services** at the beginning of 2002.

Chris is a Member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists, a committee member of the Lithic Studies Society, and is a part time lecturer in Archaeology at the University of Sussex. He continues to run the Mid Sussex Field Archaeological Team in his spare time.

Chris specialises in prehistoric flintwork analysis, but has directed excavations, landscape surveys and watching briefs, including the excavation of a Beaker Bowl Barrow, a Saxon cemetery and settlement, Roman pottery kilns, and a Mesolithic hunting camp. He has also recently undertaken an archaeological survey of Ashdown Forest and Broadwater Warren.

**Chris Butler Archaeological Services Ltd** is available for Flintwork Analysis, Project Management, Military Archaeology, Desktop Assessments, Field Evaluations, Excavation work, Watching Briefs, Field Surveys & Fieldwalking, Post Excavation Services and Report Writing.

# **Chris Butler MfA Archaeological Services Ltd**

Rosedale  
Berwick  
Polegate  
East Sussex  
BN26 6TB

Tel & fax: 01323 811785

e mail: [chris@cbasltd.co.uk](mailto:chris@cbasltd.co.uk)