

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

IN THE CHURCHYARD OF

THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST. MARY THE VIRGIN,

CHURCH ROAD, GREAT MILTON,

OXFORDSHIRE

NGR SP 6282 0242

On behalf of

The Parish Church of St. Mary the Virgin

APRIL 2012

REPORT FOR	The Parish Church of St. Mary the Virgin Great Milton C/o Revd. V.L. Story The Rectory, Great Milton, Oxfordshire OX44 7PN
PREPARED BY	Andrej Čelovský
EDITED BY	David Gilbert
ILLUSTRATION BY	Andrej Čelovský
FIELDWORK	5 th , 21 st and 22 nd March 2012
REPORT ISSUED	2 nd April 2012
ENQUIRES TO	John Moore Heritage Services Hill View Woodperry Road Beckley Oxfordshire OX3 9UZ Tel/Fax 01865 358300 Email: info@jmheritageservices.co.uk
Site Code	GSM 11
JMHS Project No:	2519
Archive Location	The archive is currently held by JMHS and will be deposited in due course with Oxfordshire County Museum Service.

CONTENTS

	Page	
SUMMARY	1	
1 INTRODUCTION	1	
1.1 Site Location	1	
1.2 Planning Background	1	
1.3 Archaeological Background	1	
2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION	1	
3 STRATEGY	3	
3.1 Research Design	3	
3.2 Methodology	3	
4 RESULTS	3	
4.1 Field Results	3	
4.2 Reliability of Results	5	
5 FINDS	5	
5.1 Human Bones	5	
5.2 Ceramic Building Material	5	
5.2 Environmental Remains	5	
6 DISCUSSION	5	
7 ARCHIVE	6	
8 BIBLIOGRAPHY	6	
FIGURES		
Figure 1	Site Location	2
Plate 1	Hand excavation of trench	4
Plate 2	Machine excavation of trench	4
Plate 3	Representative section of trench	4
Plate 4	Excavated footing for concrete base	4

Summary

A watching brief was carried out by John Moore Heritage Services during groundwork at the churchyard of the Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin, Great Milton, involving the excavation of new oil feed trench and shallow footing for concrete base of new oil tank. Several successive deposits and Victorian footpath were recorded during the fieldwork. No other features of archaeological significance were observed.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The site is located on the southern side of the village, east of Church Road, Great Milton (NGR SP 6282 0242) and lies at approximately 80m AOD. The underlying geology is Portland Formation on the edge of Kimmeridge Clay.

1.2 Planning Background

South Oxfordshire District Council granted planning permission for replacing the existing oil tank and oil feed in the churchyard (P11/W1198). Due to the potential presence of archaeological remains an archaeological watching brief was required as a condition during the groundwork. Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services (OCAS) were consulted. Based on provided information, which were in line with PPS 5 and Local Plan policies a *Written Scheme of Investigation* was prepared by John Moore Heritage Services (JMHS 2011). This document outlined the method by which the watching brief would be carried out in order to preserve by record any archaeological remains of significance for such archaeological work.

1.3 Archaeological Background

A *Written Scheme of Investigation* (JMHS 2011) set out the archaeological background to the site and detailed the known Historical Environment Record (HER) assets located close to the site.

The church lies in the core of the medieval settlement with the church itself dating to the 11th century with later additions. It is grade I listed (HER PRN 4076). The church is adjacent to the 15th century Manor House, now Le Manoir Aux Quat Saisons (HER PRN 11345). The graveyard is likely to contain a large amount of human remains dating back to the 11th century and although the proposed route of the oil line is fairly shallow there is a possibility of human remains being encountered. When this part of the churchyard was last disturbed 40 years ago no remains were found when the present oil pipe was laid.

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The aims of the investigation as laid out in the *Written Scheme of Investigation* (JMHS 2011) were as follows:

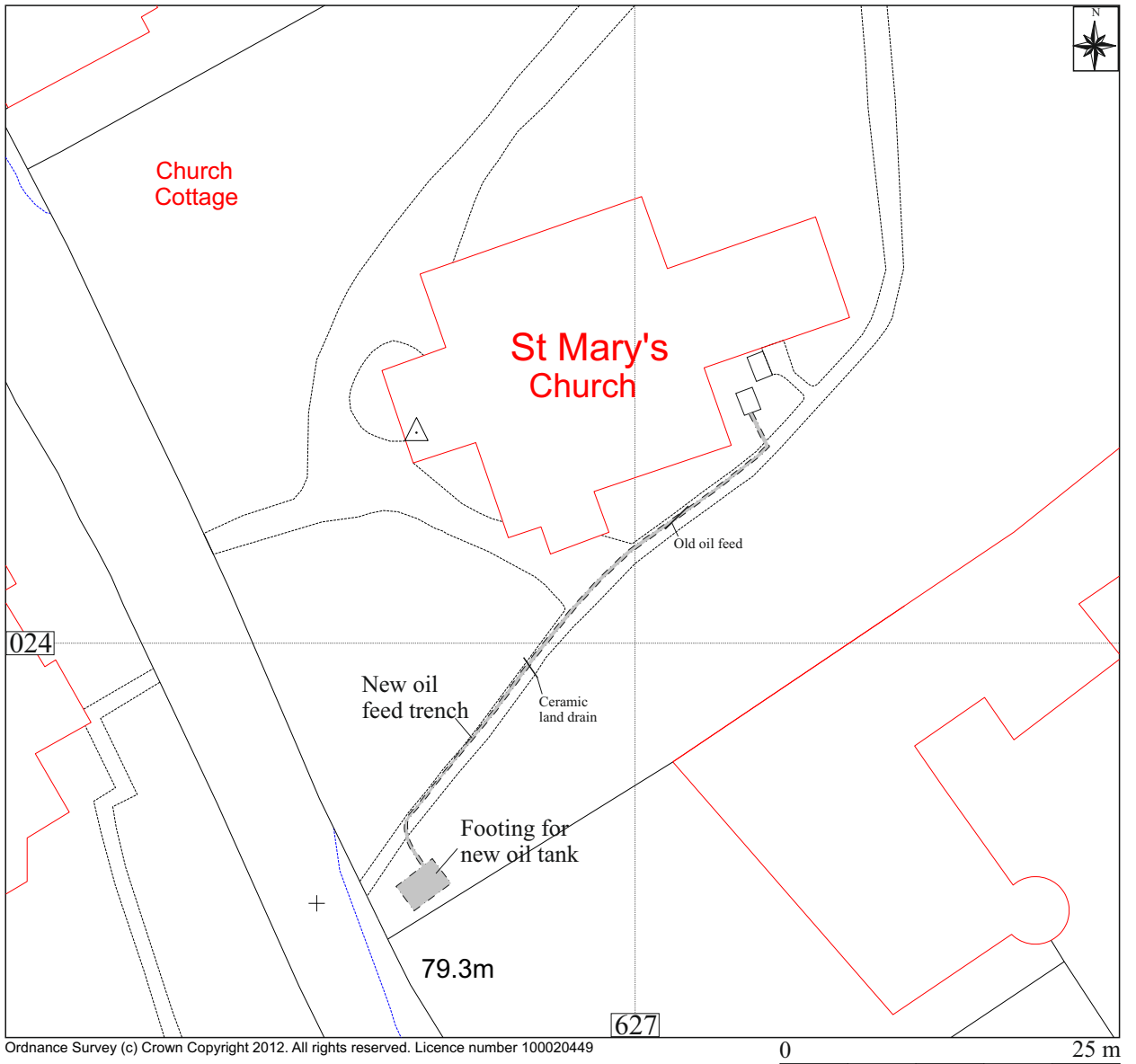
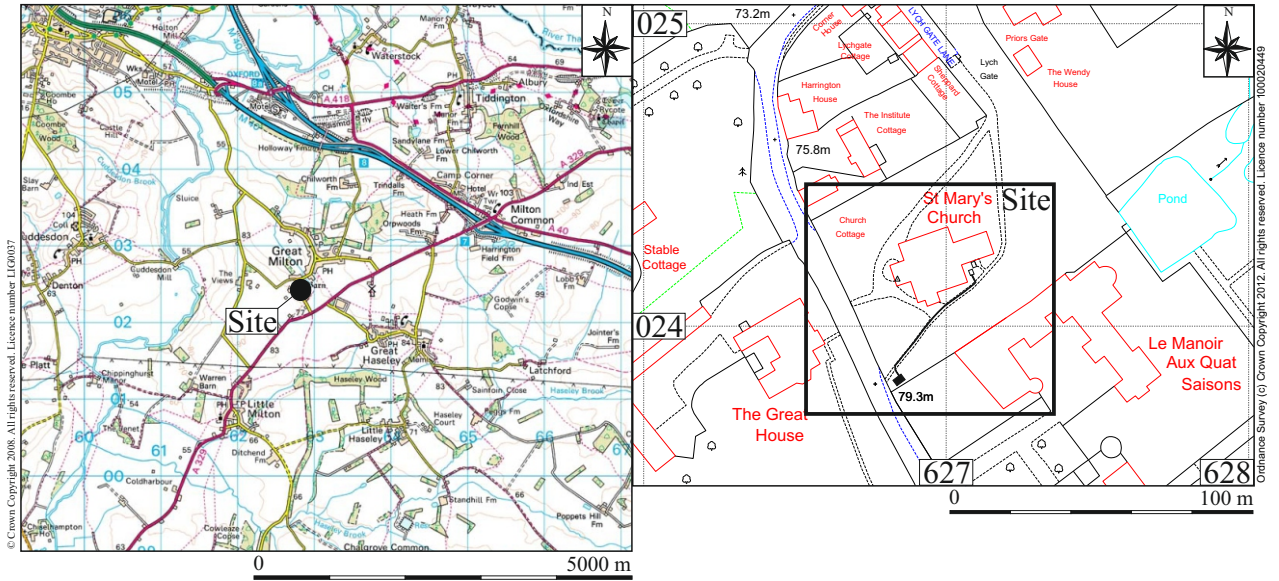


Figure 1. Site location

- To make a record of any significant remains revealed during the course of any operations that may disturb or destroy archaeological remains.

And in particular:

- To record any articulated human remains.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute for Archaeologists (2008), and John Moore Heritage Services *Written Scheme of Investigation* (JMHS 2011) agreed with OCAS, on behalf of the local planning authority.

3.2 Methodology

An archaeologist was present on site on appropriate occasions during the course of the groundwork. This involved the hand and machine excavation of the trench for new oil feed pipeline and excavation of the footing for the concrete base of new oil tank.

4 RESULTS (Plate 1 - 4)

All features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers with no brackets indicate feature cuts and numbers in () show feature fills or deposits of material. A general description of the feature fills is given.

4.1 Field Results

The trench was excavated to a general depth 0.48m beneath the present ground surface in overall length *c.* 45m and it was width 0.24m.

The natural geological deposits in the area were a Portland Formation on the edge of Kimmeridge Clay, but excavation was not deep enough to encounter this deposits. The lowest deposit noted within the trench was 0.32m thick greyish mid brown sandy loam (104), which contained occasional disarticulated human bones and small and medium size sub-angular stones. Above or cut into this layer was a linear construction cut 103 of the present footpath, 0.09m deep and *c.*1.30m wide. The lower fill of construction cut was compacted greenish light brown sandy loam (102) 0.06m thick, which contained occasional fragments of ceramic building material (CBM). The nature of this deposit suggested that it formed the sub-base for footpath.

Overlying the deposit (102) was *c.* 0.03m thick greyish white fine gravel (101) this formed the present surface of the footpath (Plate 3).

Also visible was the 0.29m wide and 0.14m deep cut of early modern land drain, contained 0.10m wide ceramic pipe. At the northeast part of trench was observed old oil feed pipe.



Plate 1. Hand excavation of trench, looking Southwest.



Plate 2. Machine excavation of trench, looking Southwest.



Plate 3. Representative section of trench, looking Northwest.



Plate 4. Excavated footing for concrete base, looking Northwest.

The footing of the concrete base for the new oil tank was excavated to a general depth 0.12m and covered an area of 3.10 x 2.10m (Plate 4). During hand excavation of footing was removed small amount of modern topsoil (100), seen as dark grey sandy silt.

4.2 Reliability of Results

The reliability of the results is considered to be good. The archaeological watching brief took place in clement, dry conditions with very good light and visibility. Excellent cooperation from the ground workers sufficient time was enabled to investigate and record the archaeological features to required standards.

5 FINDS

5.1 Human Bones

Small assemblage of disarticulated human bones was recovered from the deposit (104) along the trench. Eleven bones were recorded on site; one small fragment of skull, right part of maxilla, one premolar tooth, four vertebrae, three fragments of ribs and lower part of ulna (English Heritage 2005). All bones were re-buried in the trench.

5.2 Ceramic Building Material (CBM)

Early modern ceramic building material was recovered from compacted sub-base (102) of footpath 103. Assemblage of CBM, contained small and medium size fragments of bricks a roof tiles and few occasional fragments of ceramic land drain pipe. None of these finds were retained.

5.3 Environmental Remains

No deposits suitable for environmental analysis were identified, and no samples were taken.

6 DISCUSSION

The archaeological watching brief at churchyard of the Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin, Great Milton, was successful in proving that no archaeological remains of significance were observed in the excavated area of trench and footing for the concrete base of new oil tank.

Occasional disarticulated human bones recovered from the subsoil (104) indicates that this deposit was disturbed by excavation of graves in past. Due to the nature of the deposit and limited space by size of the excavated trench, no grave cuts were observed along the trench.

Early modern CBM recovered from the compacted sub-base (102) suggest that footpath was laid out possible in the Victorian period. Possible shortly after the

footpath was laid out a ceramic land drain was inserted, which cut trough sub-base (102) of footpath into subsoil (104).

7 ARCHIVE

Archive Contents

The archive consists of the following:

Paper record

The project brief

Written scheme of investigation

The project report

The primary site record

Physical record

None of finds were retained

The archive currently is maintained by John Moore Heritage Services and will be transferred to the County Museums' Store.

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

English Heritage, 2005, *Guidance for best practice for treatment of human remains excavated from Christian burial grounds in England*. London: English Heritage and Church of England.

Institute for Archaeologists, 2008 (Revised), *Standard and Guidance for An Archaeological Watching Brief*. Reading: IfA.

John Moore Heritage Services, 2011, *The Churchyard, The Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin, Church Road, Great Milton, Oxfordshire. Archaeological Watching Brief; Written Scheme of Investigation*. Unpublished document.