



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING ACTION

AT

ST EBBE'S CHURCH,

OXFORD,

OXFORDSHIRE

NGR SP 512 060

On behalf of

St Ebbe's church

FEBRUARY 2004

REPORT FOR **St Ebbe's Church**

PREPARED BY Mike Parsons

ILLUSTRATION BY Mike Parsons

EDITED BY John Moore

AUTHORISED BY John Moore

REPORT ISSUED February 2011

ENQUIRES TO John Moore Heritage Services
Hill View
Woodperry Road
Beckley
Oxfordshire OX3 9UZ

Tel: 01865 358300
Email: info@jmheritageservices.co.uk

JMHS Project No: 1293
Site Code: OXSEC 03
Archive Location: OXCMS: 2003.164

CONTENTS

	Page
<i>SUMMARY</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>1 INTRODUCTION</i>	<i>1</i>
1.1 Site Location	1
1.2 Planning Background	1
1.3 Historical Background	1
<i>2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>3 STRATEGY</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>4 RESULTS</i>	<i>5</i>
3.1 Geology	5
3.2 Features Pre-dating the Cemetery	5
4.3 Cemetery	7
<i>5 FINDS</i>	<i>14</i>
5.1 Pottery	
<i>6 DISCUSSION</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>8 BIBLIOGRAPHY</i>	<i>20</i>
APPENDICES	
Appendix 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type	22
Appendix 2: Archaeological Context Inventory	24
Appendix 3: Skeleton List	27
Appendix 4: Matrix and Phasing	30
FIGURES	
Figure 1. Site location	3
Figure 2. Features Pre-dating the Cemetery	6
Figure 3. Earliest Burials	8
Figure 4. Phase 1 Burials	9
Figure 5. Phase 2 Burials	11
Figure 6. Phase 3 Burials	12
Figure 7. Phase 4 Burials	13
Figure 8. Phase 4A Burials	15
Figure 9. Phase 4B Burials	16
Figure 10. Phase 4C Burials	17

SUMMARY

Below the existing churchyard soil, and disturbed by several phases of burials, evidence of early medieval St Ebbe's was uncovered in the form of pits with finds dating from the late 11th century. One of these features may have been a cellar-pit. A slightly later pit cut a series of gravel surfaces.

The earliest burials encountered are thought to date to the 12th century and were on a slightly different alignment from later burials and the alignment of the present church. This may suggest that an earlier church existed on the site within a plot further to the north than the investigation area. The churchyard appears to have been extended both to the west and south in the 12th century in which the earliest burials of this investigation were interred. The possible re-building of the church would have followed relatively shortly. Seven later phases of burials dating from the later 12th century to the 19-20th century were identified. The graveyard diminished in size on the west with the building of a new boundary wall in the later 18th century.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location

St Ebbe's church stands on the corner of St Ebbe's Street and the former Church Street, which now is a cul-de-sac known as Pennyfarthing Lane (Figure 1). The proposed site for the extension of the Parish Rooms was to the southwest of the church. The new lobby partly replaced the existing smaller lobby and a lean-to was built against the east side of the Parish Rooms. The new build was within the area of the former graveyard.

1.2 Planning Background

Planning permission was granted for the extension to the Parish Rooms, involving a new lobby, extension to the hall, a new crèche and replacement offices. The Diocesan Advisory Committee raised concern that the work would have implications for the archaeology of the church and graveyard and thus a watching brief was to be maintained during the course of the groundworks. This watching brief was carried out under a Faculty and a Written Scheme of Investigation was also agreed with Oxford City Council.

1.3 Historical Background

There has been a church of St Ebbe's on the site since the 11th century. It is considered that the church is dedicated to an abbess Æbbe of Abingdon ('Æbbe's dun') (Kelly, 2000, cxcviii-cxcix). The church lay within a *curia* (a court), which consisted of a block of '13 houses and the church' mentioned in Domesday on either side of Church Street belonging to *Ealdorman* Æthelmær and was given to Eynsham Abbey in c. 1005 (Blair 1994, 151).

The surrounding area was given over to tenements in the early 13th century only to be halted by the east west construction of the city wall.

Greyfriars was established in 1224. They gradually acquired property south of Church Street from 1227 until they occupied most of the space between Church Street and the town wall, although the line of the town wall at this time is uncertain. Between 1244 and 1248 a series of transactions allowed the friars to extend their property as far south as the Trill Mill stream and they also acquired an island beyond the stream. At the same time they were given permission to build across the line of the town wall (Hassall *et al.* 1984, 142 - 143).

In the 14th Century, the Greyfriars monastery dominated the St Ebbe's area and the graveyard extended up to Church Street (Hassall *et al.* 1984, 194).

Richard Gunter acquired the eastern half of the Greyfriars site and by 1544 his brother James was lessee of a close at the north-east corner of the Greyfriars site known as 'le churchyarde'. A plot of land to the west of St Ebbe's Church, held by Richard Pratt of Radley, was given to the church in 1570 (Hassall *et al.* 1984, 271).

The church of St Ebbe's survived the Oxford fire of 1644, which ravaged the parish.

Logan's map of 1675 show a large area of land around the church that must include the plot of land to the west acquired in 1570. A building on the Church Street frontage is shown to the west of the church. Another building appears to abut the south side of the church at the east end.

A plan, based on the frontage survey of 1772, shows a north to south wall dividing up the churchyard, splitting off the plot of land to the west of the church (Hassall *et al.* 1984, 272, Fig 61).

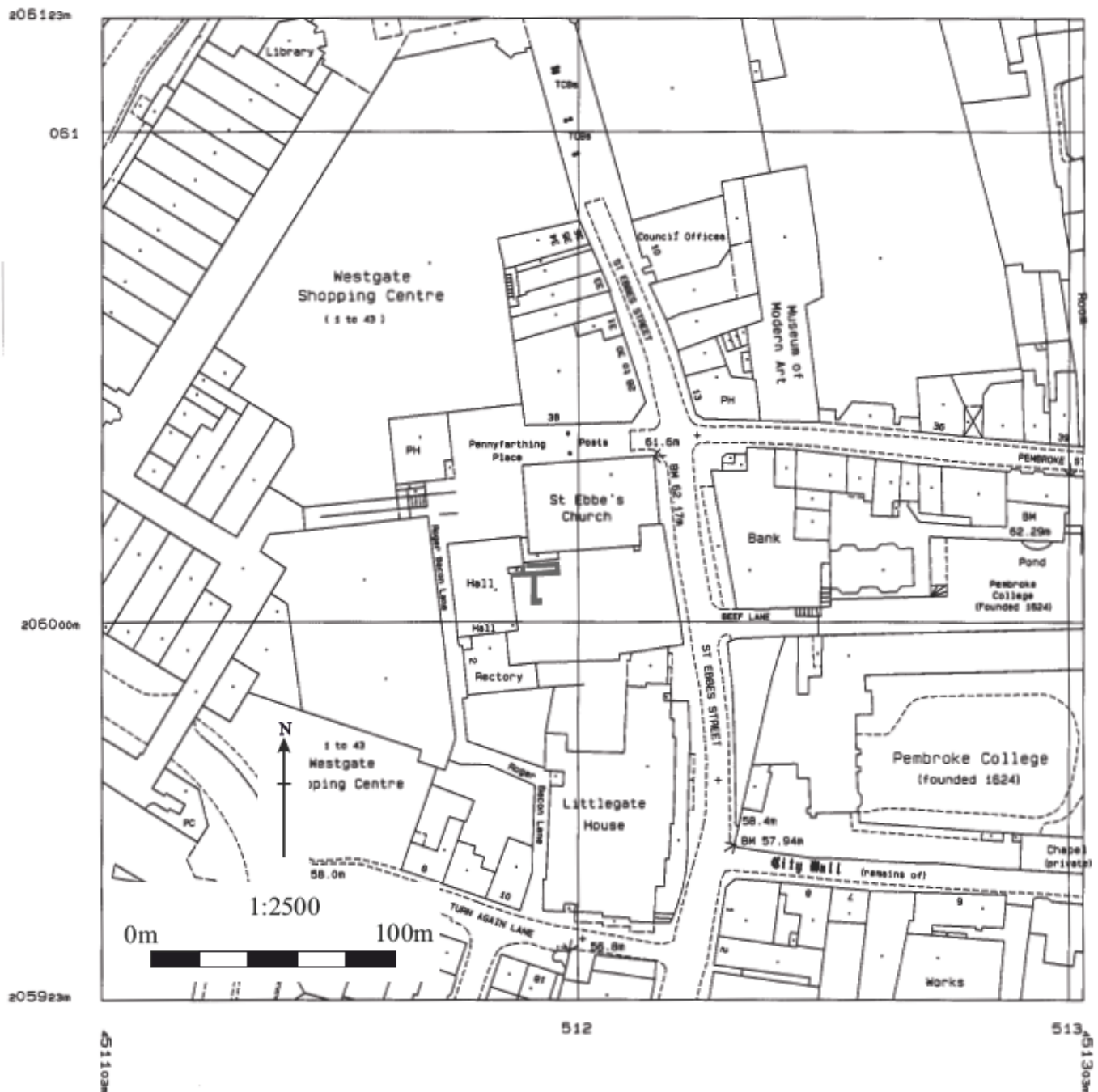
The cemetery was extended (circa 1840 – 1850) by the purchases of small pieces of extra land to the south, due to overcrowding brought on by outbreaks of cholera in 1832, 1849 and 1854 that occurred within the parish. (Hassall *et al.* 1984, P274-5)

When the new Rectory building was constructed in 1971 many stray human bones indicated that the Greyfriars cemetery extended at least this far (Hassall, 1972) but see Discussion below.

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The prime aims of the investigation as laid out in the *Written Scheme of Investigation* were:

- To make a record of any significant remains revealed during the course of any operations that may disturb or destroy archaeological remains.
- To confirm that the 19th Century rebuild is in the same location as the medieval church.
- To identify and record any remains of the *curia*.
- To collect together any human remains disturbed by the buildings works for reburial on site.
- To make public the results of the investigations.



3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

Site procedures for the investigation and recording of archaeological deposits were defined a *Written Scheme of Investigation* that was approved by Oxford City Council (OCC) and the Archaeological Advisor for the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC). The work was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994), and was monitored by Brian Durham of OCC.

3.2 Methodology

The strategy in the Written Scheme of investigation was for the top of the ground-beam trenches to be excavated to a depth of 600mm. The pile positions were then to be excavated by hand, to a further depth of 1500mm, with an archaeologist in attendance. If human remains were found in the course of the hand excavations then either a) the location of the mini-pile would be altered so as to minimise disturbance of such remains or b) any remains which had to be disturbed were to be set reverently to one side within the excavation so far as was possible. If this were not possible, such remains as had to be disturbed were to be removed and reburied within the churchyard.

Early on in process the above was found not to be feasible due to the impossibility of hand digging small areas to a depth for the piles in relatively loose graveyard deposits. Therefore, the strategy was revised in agreement with the OCC. The concrete patio was removed with a breaker. The foundation trenches (Fig. 1) were 0.60m – 0.75m wide, and these were hand dug by the main contractor down to the top level of burials, generally 900mm deep. Thereafter archaeologists carried out all excavation. Excavation proceeded to depth of approximately 1.20m before shoring was installed, due to the instability of the graveyard soils. Excavation of the trenches continued to a depth of 2.00m below the existing ground level, with further deeper hand excavation of the pile positions where archaeological features or graves existed. No further excavation was carried out within the trenches beyond the 2.00m depth outside of the proposed pile positions. Approximately 22 metres of trench were excavated.

Where mortuary structures were encountered it was possible to re-position some pile locations so that they could remain *in situ* and not be disturbed. However, this was not possible in the case of one brick built burial vault [11] that needed to be totally excavated in order to position a pile.

Time and conditions did not allow for a full in-depth study of the part of the graveyard being investigated. Basic records were made of each skeleton as they were excavated. Grave cuts, where visible, were recorded although not many were seen due to the limited width, depth of the trench and the homogeneous nature of the graveyard soils. Only human remains within the trenches were moved. Bones seen in the sides of the trench were left *in situ*. The human skeletal remains were bagged, labelled and stored on site inside the church buildings, and later re-buried within the footing trench.

Written records, levels and plans were completed for all features encountered. Due to the shoring of the trenches it was not possible to complete any section drawings.

4 RESULTS

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers in [] indicate features i.e. walls, pit cuts; while numbers in () show feature fills or deposits of material. Skeleton numbers are prefixed by Sk. The matrix and phasing is shown in Appendix 4

4.1 Geology

The underlying geology of the area is Jurassic Oxford Clay, above which are the Pleistocene gravels of the Second Gravel Terrace. The natural gravel (39) was encountered at 60.20 m OD in Trench 2 and at various lower depths in Trench 1, 3 & 4 due to truncation by pits and some deep shaft graves.

4.2 Features Pre-dating the Cemetery (Figure 2)

One of the earliest features was a path or courtyard surface [72]. This was seen at the western end of Trench 2 in the north facing section only. The feature comprised thin deposits of gravels and silts and was cut by a pit [67] and several graves, so its full extent could not be seen. Partial collapse of the side of the trench and then subsequent shoring of the trench prevented full recording. A modern service drain obscured the south facing section at this point. The thin deposits could represent a succession of path or courtyard surfaces.

Seven cut features were encountered within the excavation. Although it was not possible to fully excavate them as they were below the construction level, their uppermost fills contained sufficient quantities of pottery and animal bone to date and define their purpose.

Cutting the surfaces [72] was a pit [67] with an estimated diameter of c. 1.3 m. Pottery from the pit is dated from the late 11th century onwards. Towards the south end of Trench 2 and within Trench 4 were three further pits. The sub-circular pit [38] had an estimated diameter of c. 2.2 m. The upper 350 mm of the pit fill (37) was excavated to reveal sides at an angle of 70° from the horizontal. The fill was a grey orange-brown sandy coarse silt with 30-40% by content of small-medium gravel. It also contained occasional flecks of charcoal and daub. This pit was cut by later pit [36], which was oval in plan measuring 1.8 m NE/SW and c. 1.2 m NW/SE (estimated). The upper 780 mm was excavated showing that the pit had near vertical sides. The fill (35) was similar to that of the earlier pit (37) although having less gravel content (15%) and no traces of daub. To the west of the last pit was a sub-circular pit [44] with an estimated diameter of 1.4 m. 760 mm of the upper fill of orange brown sandy silt with 40% gravel, the occasional charcoal fleck and limestone fragments were excavated. All three pits contained pottery dating to the late 11th century.

A sondage was excavated for a pile position within Trench 3 under part of Crypt [11]. Within the sondage were parts of two pits [56 and 65]. The fills of pit 56 sloped downwards from the SE corner of the sondage. No relationship between the features or their extents was established. Both pit fills produced pottery dating to the late 11th century.

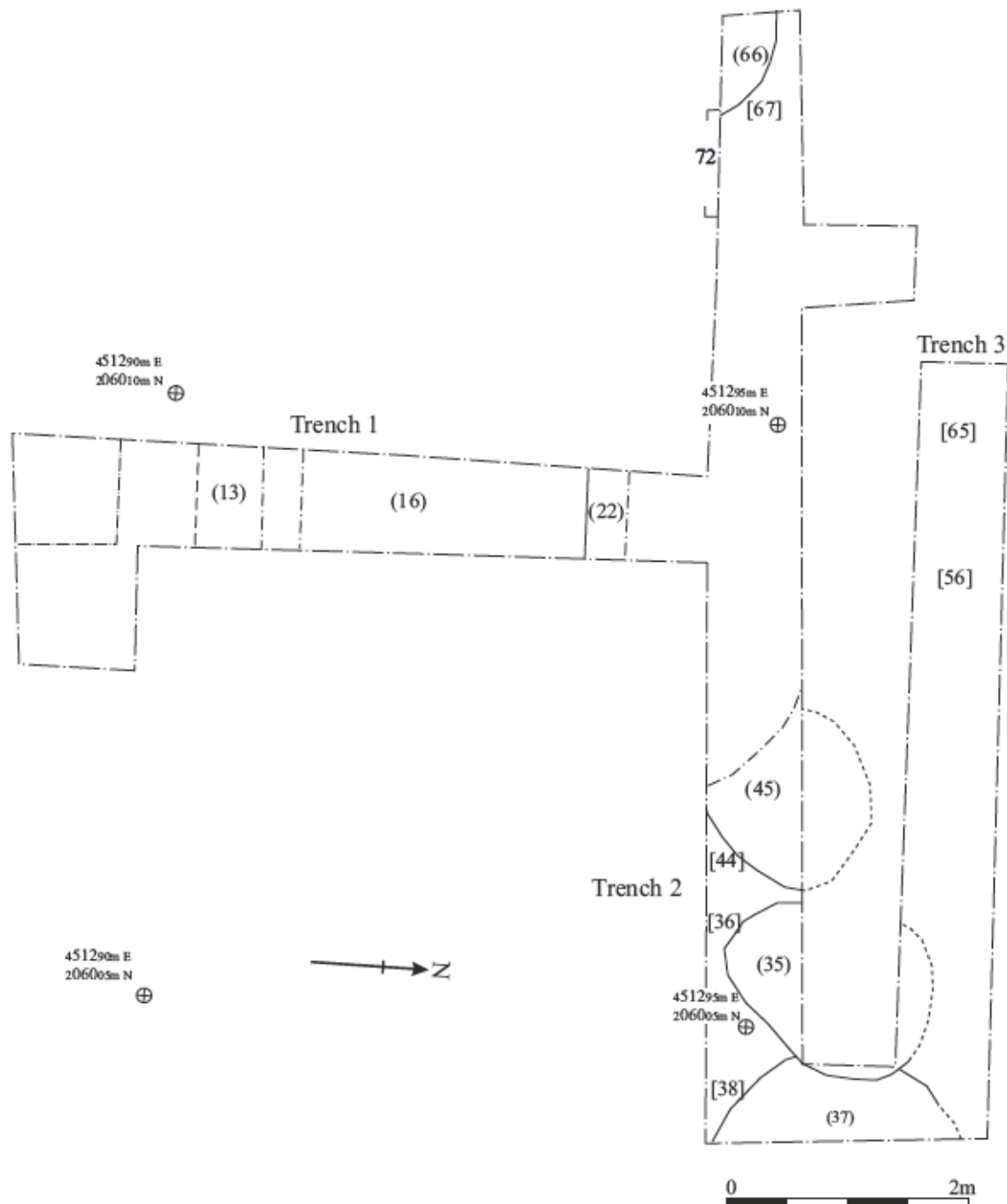


Figure 2: Features pre-dating the cemetery

A possible cellar-pit was found within Trench 1. Little excavation of the fills was undertaken and the feature had been cut into by several graves, some of which were not fully excavated, as they were not going to be disturbed by the piles. Deposits 13 and 16, either side of grave cut 14 (not fully excavated), were similar in nature comprising mid grey-brown silty sand with 10-15% fine and small gravel (13) and pale mid-grey brown silty sand with 30% fine and small gravel with the occasional piece of limestone (16). To the west the deposits were cut by a deep shaft grave 52. Deposit (16) cut, near vertically (only a small depth excavated), a further deposit (22) comprising yellow-grey very sandy silt with 30% fine gravel. This last deposit only survived c. 300 mm wide before being cut by skeleton [SK35].

If this was a cellar pit then it would have been at least 3.2 m long/wide with an apparently straight western edge. No pottery was found within the excavated parts of deposits (13 and 22). Material from deposit (16) dates from the late 11th century.

4.3 Cemetery

A total of 78 complete or partial human skeletons were removed from the foundation trenches, along with equally (by volume) as much charnel bone. The total burials comprised 66 adults, 6 adolescents, 4 juveniles and 2 neonates. Twenty-six of the burials were in coffins; the evidence for which consisted predominantly of coffin handles, nails and the odd fragment of coffin decoration. Four 19th century brick built burial vaults were encountered. Only one of these [11] was going to be disturbed by the pile positions, so the briefest of recording was made on the other three. It was noted during the excavation that some burials were on a different alignment, and that some were to the west of and under wall [33], which shows on maps as a boundary wall (see later).

The general graveyard soil was given context number (2).

The cemetery has been sorted into eight separate phases of burial activity for simplicity (see matrix – Appendix 4). The phasing has been based on orientation, stratigraphic relationships, similarity of depth, relative position within the cemetery, and dating where present. Later deeper burials have obviously damaged or destroyed earlier shallower graves.

Earliest burials (Figure 3)

Four burials were found to be orientated WNW/ESE. These were also found to be some of the deeper burials. All were within Trenches 2 and 3 and comprised skeletons Sk78 within grave [64] with grave fill (63); Sk57; Sk44; and Sk55 within grave [42] with grave fill (43). There was no evidence for coffins with any of these burials. Only late 11/12th century pottery was found within the grave fills (43 and 63). Skeleton Sk57 had slumped into the fill of pit 44.

Phase 1 (Figure 4)

Sixteen burials and three un-excavated graves have been assigned to this phase of activity. All burials were orientated W/E. These burials comprise an unexcavated burial in grave [14] that is earlier than Sk27; grave [15]; Sk29 in grave [06] with fill (05); Sk67; Sk43; an unexcavated burial in grave [23]; Sk61; Sk48; Sk50 in grave [30]

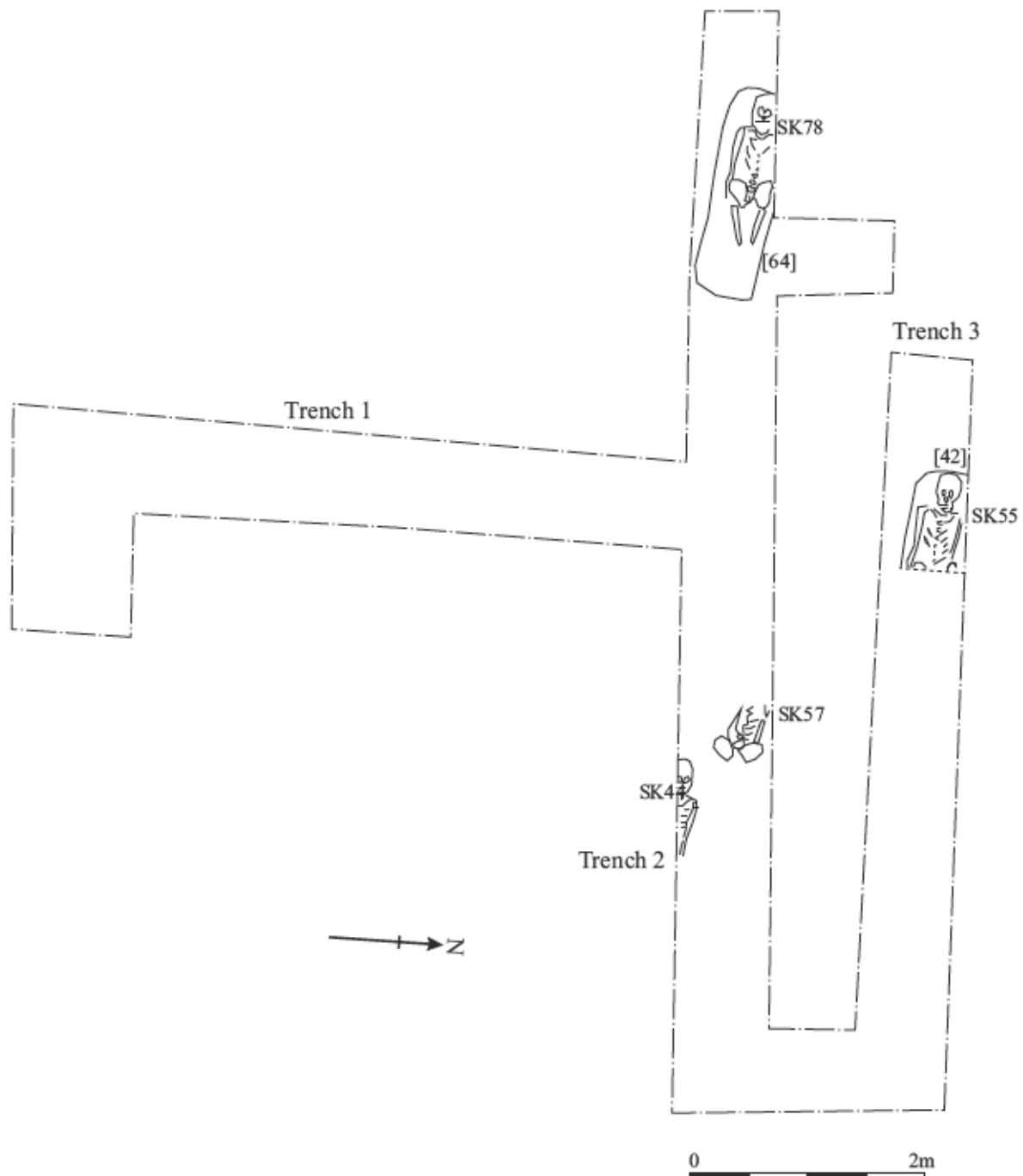


Figure 3: Earlier burials

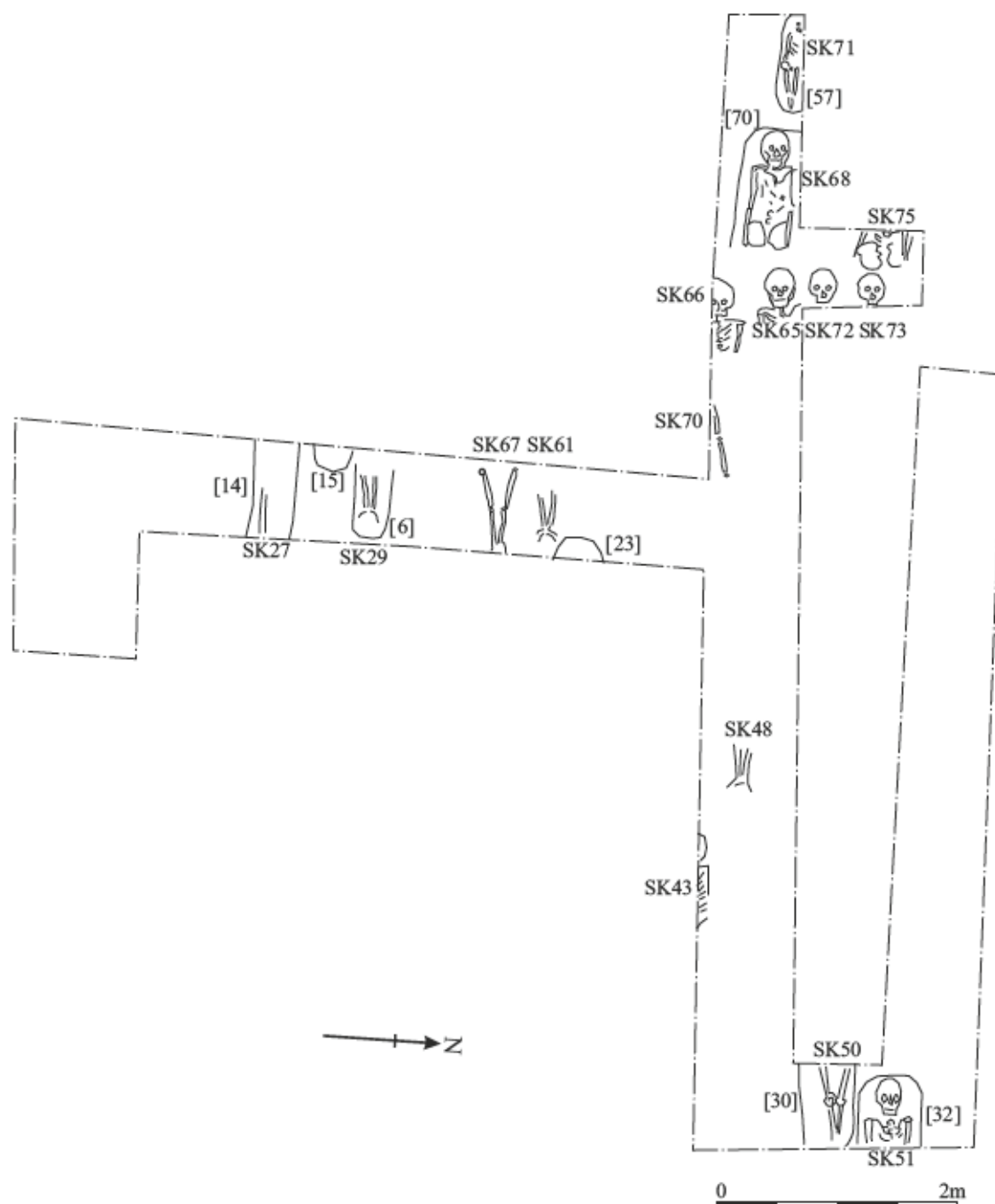


Figure 4: Phase 1 Burials

with grave fill (29); Sk51 in grave [32] with fill (31); Sk71 in grave [57] with grave fill (58); Sk66; Sk70; Sk65; Sk68 in grave [70]; Sk72; Sk73 and Sk75.

Phase 2 (Figure 5)

Thirteen burials and one un-excavated grave have been assigned to this phase of activity. All burials were orientated W/E. Sk25 and Sk62 in grave [52] with fill (54); Sk15; Sk16; Sk53 in grave [69]; Sk30 in grave [09] with fill (08); Sk39; Sk34 in grave [18] with fill (17); unexcavated grave [51] with fill (50); Sk58 in grave [47] with grave fill (46); Sk54; Sk41 in grave [25] with fill (24); Sk36; Sk40.

Phase 3 (Figure 6)

Seven burials have been identified in this phase of activity. All burials were orientated W/E. Sk17; Sk28 in grave [04] with fill (03); Sk32; Sk33; Sk59 in grave 49 with fill (48); Sk47 in grave [27] with fill (26); Sk60.

Phase 4, 4a, 4b & 4c

It is at this point that the boundary wall [33] encloses the cemetery (see below). The brick vaults are constructed and deep shaft burials are encountered. All burials of these phases respect the cemetery boundary wall.

Phase 4 (Figure 7)

Four burials [Sk9, Sk20, Sk22 and Sk23] vertically in the same grave [52]; Sk8; Sk14; Sk13; four burials [Sk38 over Sk42 over Sk45 mother and Sk46 child] in grave [68]; Sk19; Sk24 over Sk26 in grave [71]; Sk37; Sk49; Sk56 in grave [40] with fill (41); five burials [Sk52, Sk60, Sk63, Sk69, Sk76] in shaft grave [61]; [Sk74 and Sk 77] in grave [60]; and three brick vaults [21], [11] and [34],

Vault [21] was located towards the eastern end of Trench 3. Its capping had collapsed and it was full of soil. This vault was not excavated, as it was possible to re-position a pile location.

Burial vault [11] however was totally excavated as it lay directly in the position of a pile, which could not be re-positioned. It was constructed of red bricks measuring 210 mm x 100 mm x 60 mm. These were bonded with a creamy white mortar and formed a sub-rectangular coffin shape, 2.25m long x 0.85 m wide and 1.45m deep, with a brick floor. Three parallel sets of small holes 60 mm x 60 mm had been cut into the wall of the vault. These were a later addition to the construction of the vault and were possibly used for lowering in another coffin? Five re-used gravestones were placed over the bricks to seal up the grave. On removal of the gravestones it was clear that the vault had not collapsed at any time, only the bottom 450 mm had been filled. This had resulted in the fairly good preservation of the wooden coffin and its decoration (rows of copper alloy studs). The vault contained the skeletal remains of possibly two adults [Sk31] and a small child. There was a lot of disturbance to the remains from root action. Small traces of mercury were found on the brick floor of this vault, suggesting that one or more of its inhabitants had been given mercury for the treatment of syphilis, common in the 19th century.

At the far south end of Trench 1 a small easterly extension trench was excavated and revealed a limestone-capped, brick built burial vault [34]. This vault had a false mortar

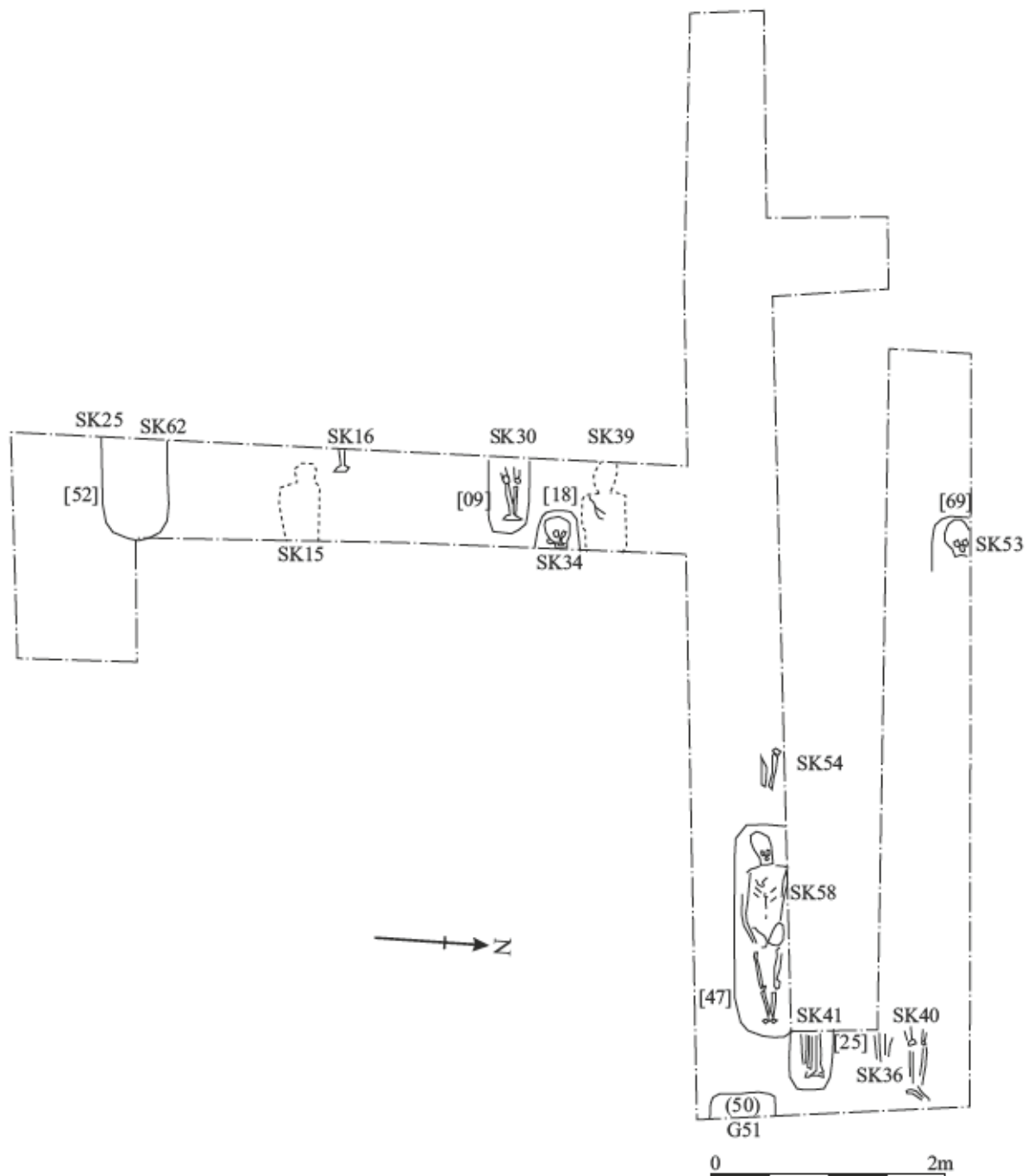


Figure 5: Phase 2 Burials

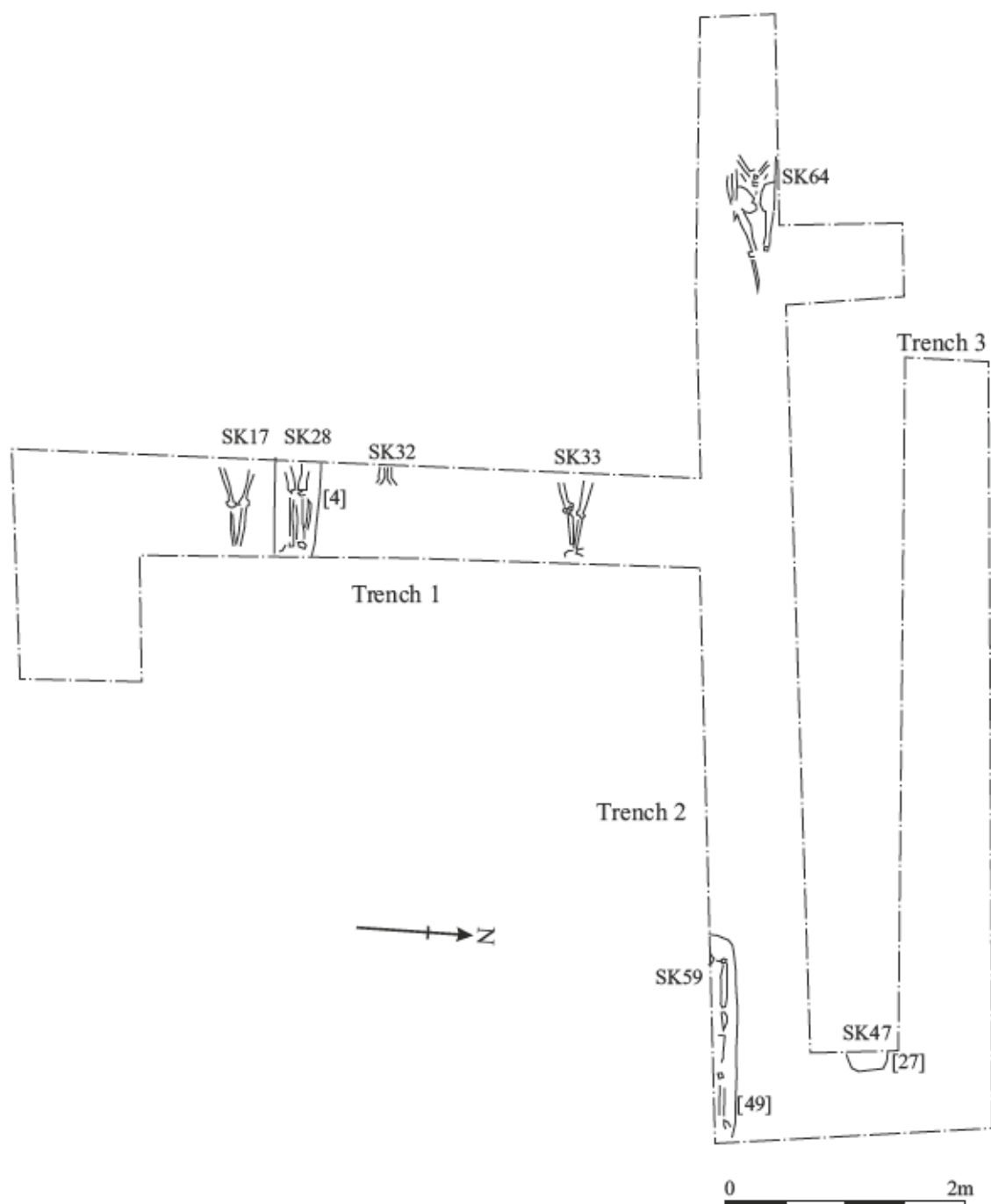


Figure 6: Phase 3 Burials

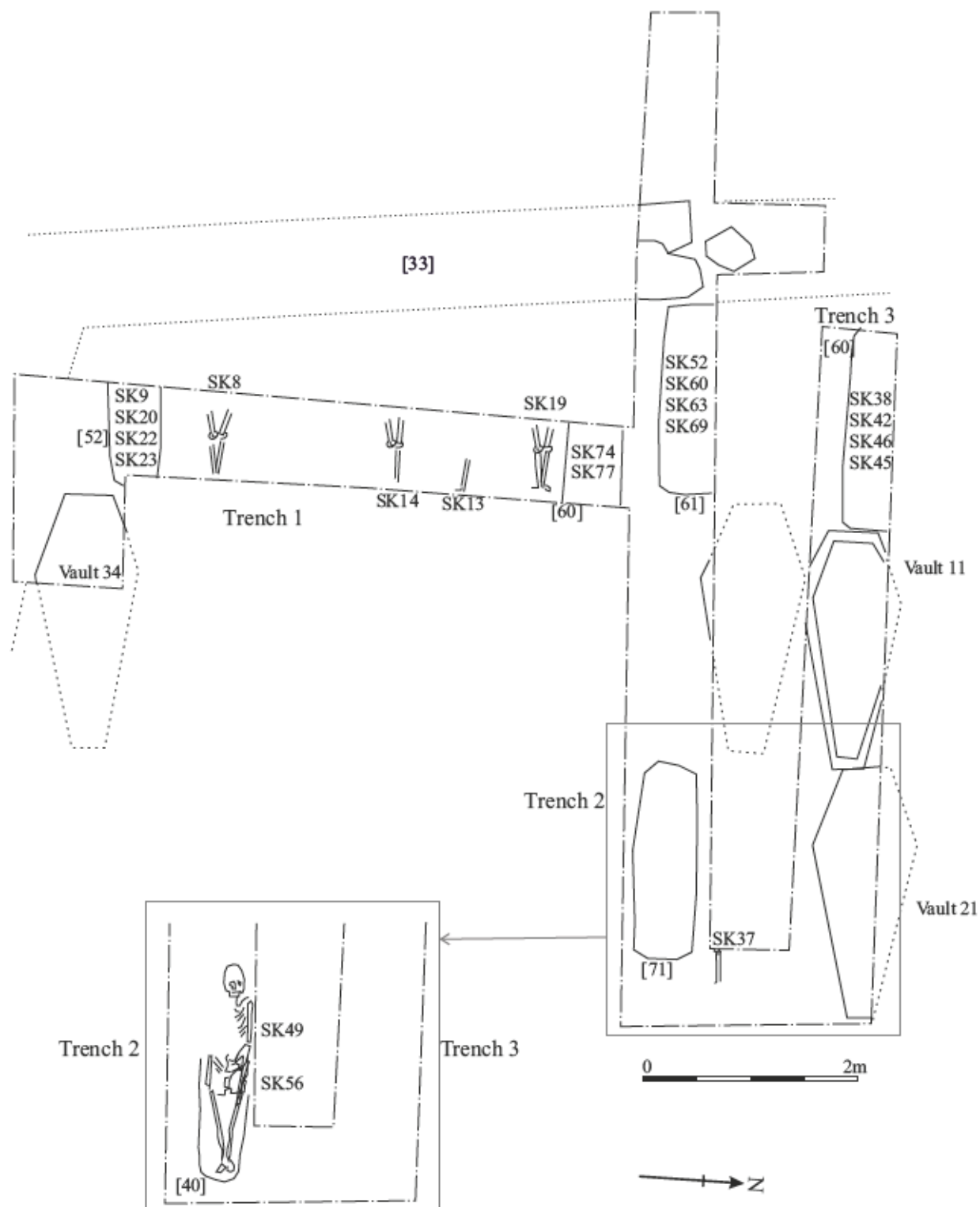


Figure 7: Phase 4 Burials

floor still in place covering an earlier burial(s). There was no later burial. The interior of the vault was whitewashed. The proposed pile position was moved so as not to disturb this vault and its occupants.

Phase 4A (Figure 8)

Sk1; probable twin burial Sk5 a young child and Sk6 a neonate; possible double burial Sk11 and Sk18; Sk21.

Phase 4B (Figure 9)

Sk7; possible double burial Sk10 and Sk12.

Phase 4C (Figure 10)

Sk2; Sk3; Sk4.

Boundary Wall (Figure 7)

A short stretch of a drystone wall foundation [33], orientated north/south, was found towards the west end of Trench 2. This was composed of a single course of large limestone blocks of average size 800 x 500 x 200 mm. The foundation was 1.3 m wide. This wall was also seen at the extreme south end of Trench 1 under the concrete foundation of the existing parish rooms.

The wall is later than nine burials that either lie beneath it or are to the west of the wall.

Other features

The site had several services present including gas pipes, electricity cables for outside lights and drainage runs. These services had disturbed some of the more shallow burials. Also present in the centre of the Trench 2 was a large circular soak-away [55], which continued below the limit of the excavation (Figure 10). This soak-away had obviously disturbed several graves at the time of its construction, as the construction cut contained large quantities of charnel bones.

5 FINDS

5.1 Pottery by *Paul Blinkhorn*

The pottery assemblage comprised 836 sherds with a total weight of 9493g. The estimated vessel equivalent (EVE), by summation of surviving rimsherd circumference was 2.55. All of the material was late Saxon or later, with the exception of three sherds of early-middle Saxon pottery and three small Romano-British sherds. The former are only the fourth find of such material in the city of Oxford. The late Saxon and medieval pottery is fairly unremarkable, and much of it is redeposited in post-medieval or modern features.

Fabric

The pottery was recorded utilizing the coding system and chronology of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1984; 1994), as follows:

OXR: St. Neots Ware type T1(1), AD850-1100. 36 sherds, 196g, EVE = 0.24.

OXZ: Stamford ware, 850-1150. 5 sherds, 34g, EVE = 0.05.

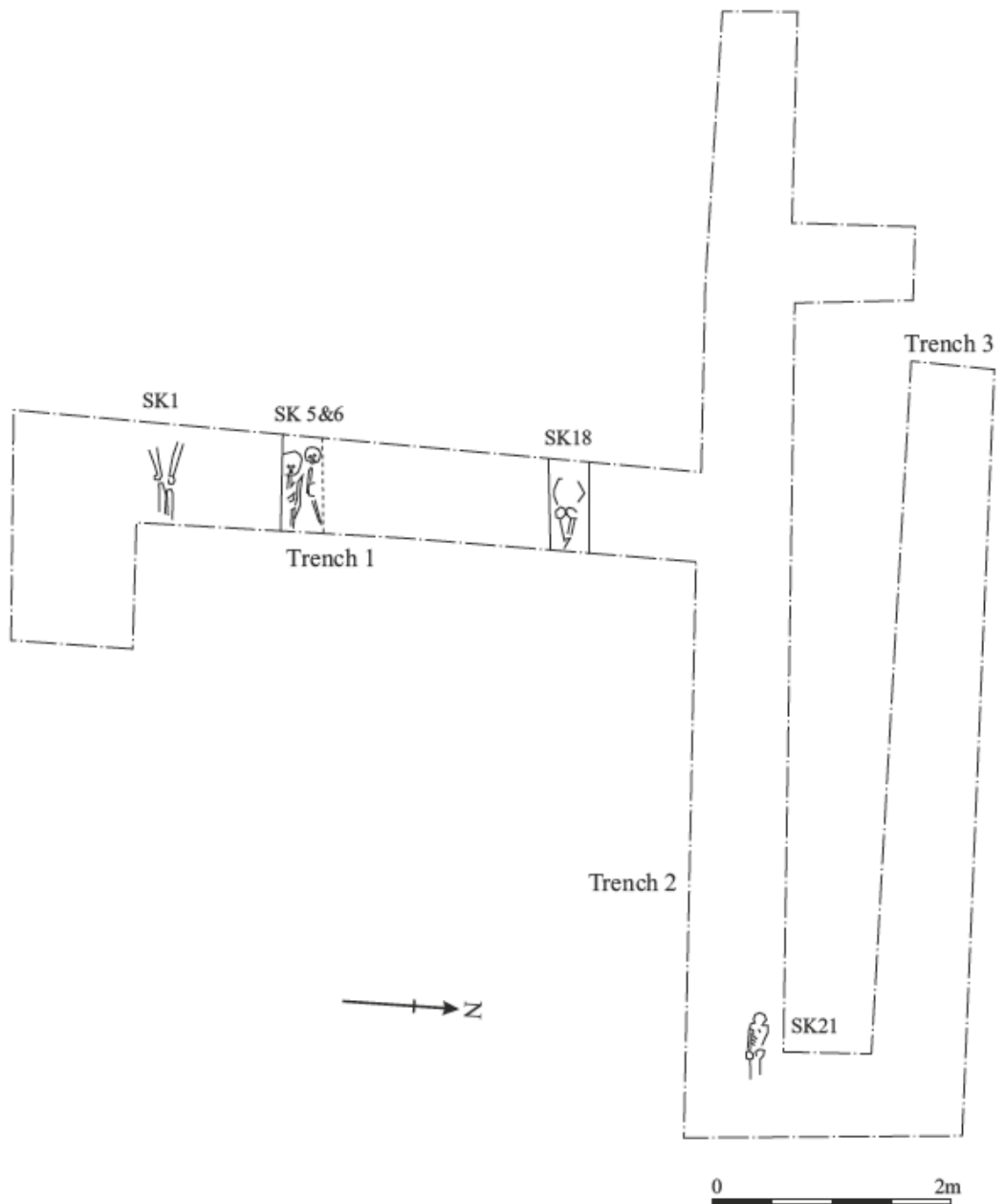


Figure 8: Phase 4A Burials

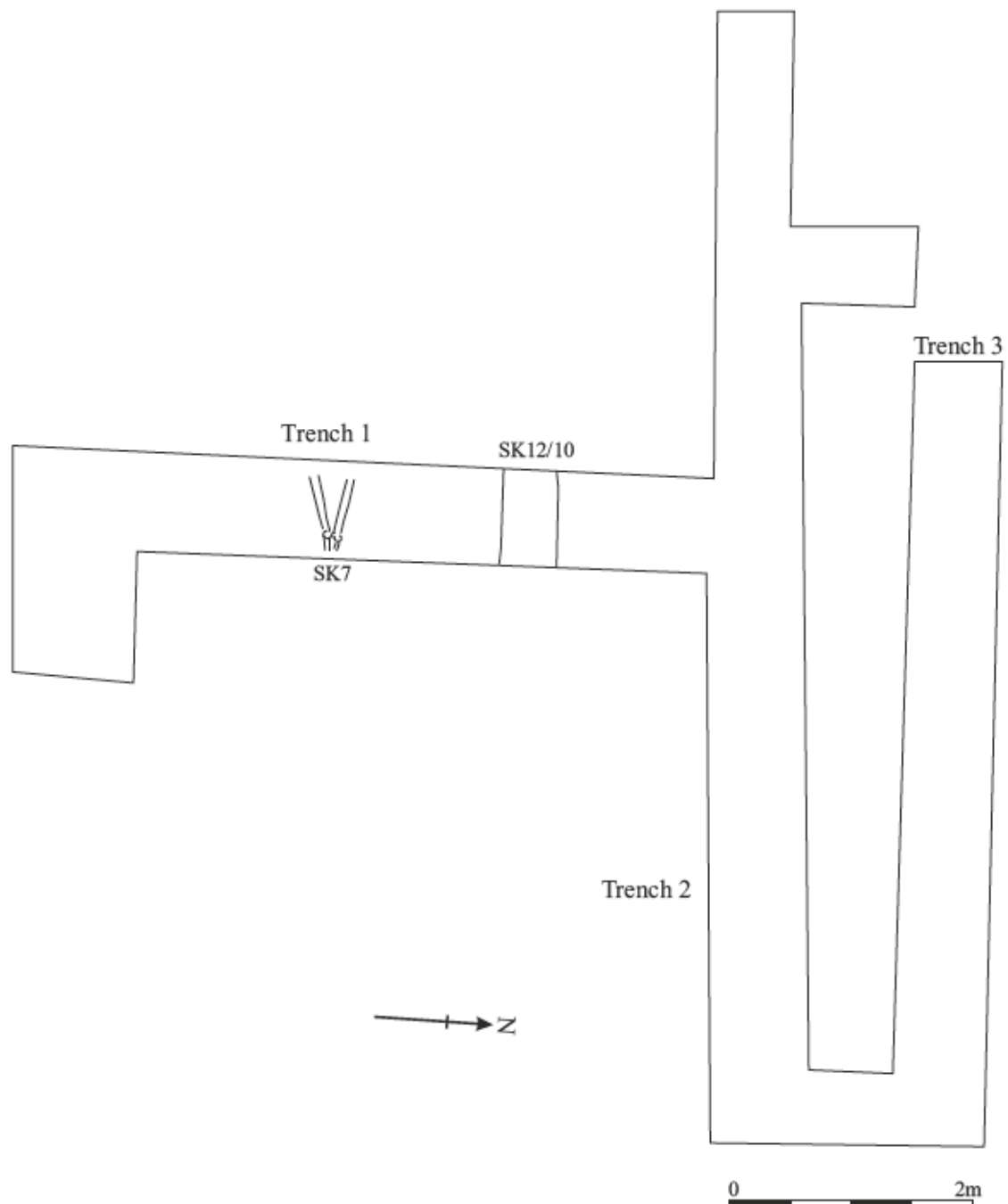


Figure 9: Phase 4B Burials

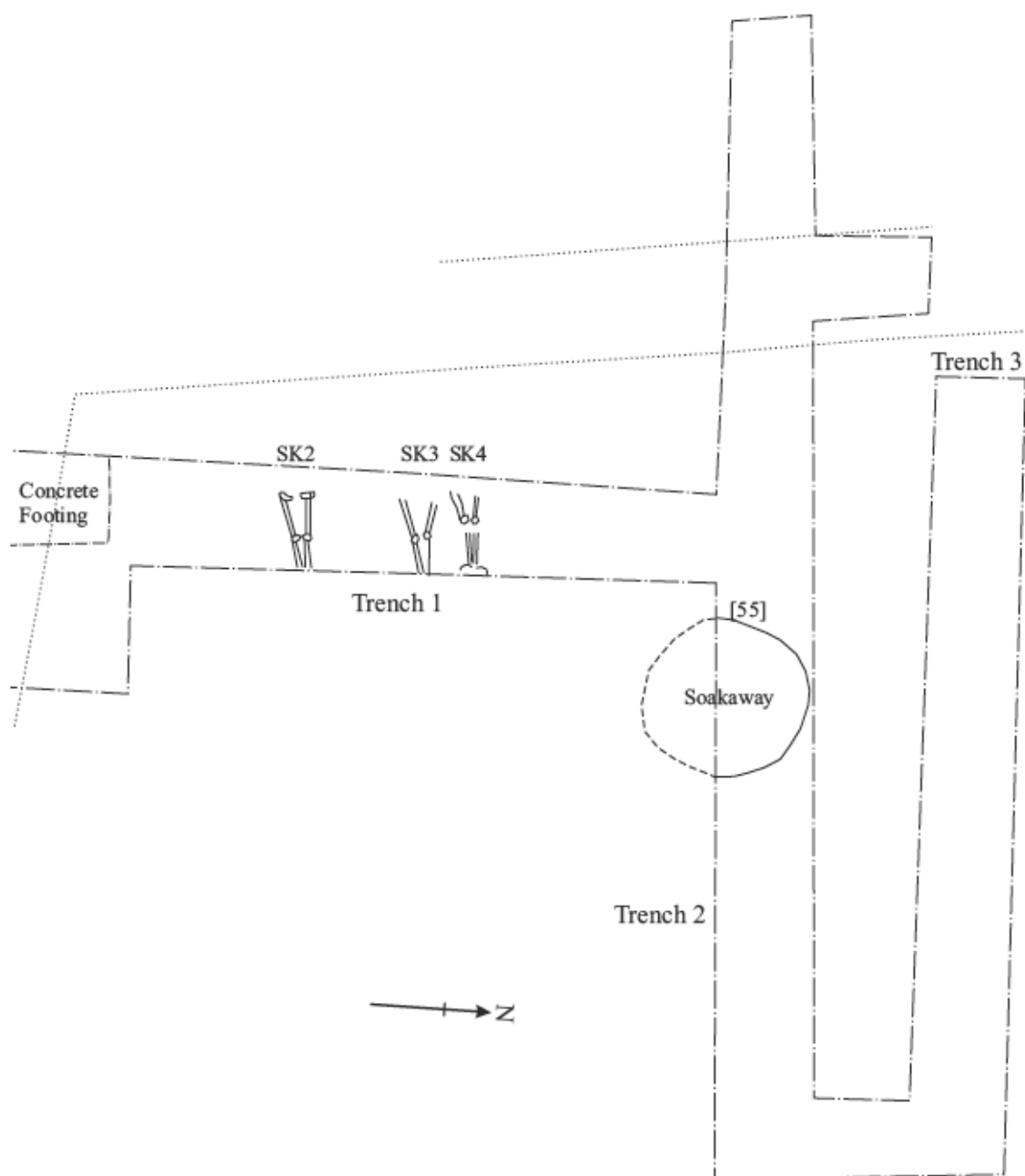


Figure 10: "Phase 4C Burials"

OXAC: Cotswold-type ware, AD975-1350. 315 sherds, 3307g, EVE = 1.39.
 OXBF: North-East Wiltshire Ware, AD1050 – 1400. 41 sherds, 404g, EVE = 0.12.
 OXY: Medieval Oxford ware, AD1075 – 1350. 154 sherds, 1226g, EVE = 0.75.
 OXAM: Brill/Boarstall ware, AD1200 – 1600. 117 sherds, 1344g, EVE = 0.
 OXBG: Surrey Whiteware, mid 13th – mid 15th C. 1 sherd, 5g, EVE = 0.
 OXBN: Tudor Green Ware, late 14th century - c. 1500. 1 sherd, 4g, EVE = 0.
 OXCL: Cistercian ware, 1475-1700. 4 sherds, 35g, EVE = 0.
 OXST: Frechen Stoneware, AD1550 – 1700. 2 sherds, 33g.
 OXDR: Red Earthenwares, 1550+. 59 sherds, 1580g.
 OXFH: Border wares, 1550 - 1700. 30 sherds, 357g.
 OXCE: Tin-glazed Earthenware, 1613 – 1800. 6 sherds, 92g.
 OXBEWSL: Staffordshire slip-trailed earthenwares, 1650-1800. 4 sherds, 68g.
 WHEW: Mass-produced white earthenwares, mid 19thC+. 52 sherds, 706g.

In addition, the following were noted:

Thetford-type Ware. c. AD 900-1150 (Rogerson and Dallas 1984). Wheel-thrown sandy ware. 1 sherd, 5g, EVE = 0.

Early-middle Saxon hand-built wares, AD450 – 850. 3 sherds, 25g, EVE = 0. The fabrics were as follows:

F1: Sparse chaff and quartz. Sparse chaff voids up to 3mm, sparse quartz up to 0.5mm. 1 sherd, 3g.

F2: Few visible inclusions except sparse quartz up to < 0.5mm. 1 sherd, 2g.

F3: Fine quartz. Moderate to dense sub-angular quartz up to 1mm, most < 0.5mm. 1 sherd, 20g.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Appendix 1. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*.

Assessment

The presence of the early-middle Saxon sherds is of some significance; as such pottery is extremely rare in the city of Oxford. There seems little doubt that this assemblage is of early Saxon date: the sherd in fabric 2, although extremely small and abraded, has a fragment of a stamp and an incised line.

The St. Ebbe's area has produced other finds of such material. A ditch at 31-4 Church Street, some 30m from St Ebbe's Church, produced the biggest group of early Saxon pottery from the city (Mellor 1989, 198), and included three stamped sherds. The site also produced small groups of other redeposited hand-built early/middle Saxon material, (ibid. 201). A small number of organic tempered early/middle Saxon sherds were noted during the excavations in the Christ Church Cloister (Mellor 1988, 34). The only other finds in the city come from Merton College, some 500m to the east of this site, where two stamped sherds were noted (Blinkhorn forthcoming).

The sherd of Thetford ware is an unusual find in Oxford, although other examples of such pottery have been noted in the city in recent years, such as at Lincoln College (Blinkhorn 2002, 233).

The rest of the pottery is typical of the range of material from late Saxon and later sites in Oxford. All the wares noted at this site were present at the earlier St. Ebbe's excavations, including the late Saxon material.

6 DISCUSSION

The very small assemblage of Roman pottery is part of a low-density general distribution, found throughout Oxford, although the only known occupation is in the area of the University Museum and University Science Area to the south of the parchmarks in the University Parks. The pottery from this site does add to the assemblage of Roman material in this part of the town. Three types of tile were recovered from Church Street (Hassall, 1989, 90), brick at the site of Oxford Castle, and mortar that is almost certainly Roman in date recovered from the Saxon rampart at 24A St Michael's Street (Dodd, 2003, 12).

The early-middle Saxon pottery is only the fifth find of such material in Oxford. Two of the other finds are from the south of the city on the edge of the Second Gravel Terrace. A ditch c. 3m wide was found during excavations at 31-34 Church Street. This was at right angles to Church Street and clearly pre-dated the road (Hassall *et al*, 1989, 90-93). The other finds in this part of the Oxford were found redeposited in later features excavated at Christ Church Cloister (Dodd, 2003, 13, 17). Two sherds have recently been found at Merton College (see Pottery above), while the fourth findspot of pottery of this date is from the site of the new Sackler Library in Beaumont Street, where the material is thought to have reached the site during field manuring (Dodd, 2003, 13, 17).

The infilling of the pre-cemetery pit features date to the late 11th century. The only pit not dated by St Neots Ware to late 11th century is 67, which could be later, but no later than the 12th century (due to absence of Brill/Boarstall wares). This pit is interesting in that it cut a series of gravel surfaces that could relate to a track or a yard surface. The series of surfaces and the later pit may belong to a plot fronting onto Church Street while the other features presumably related to the St Ebbe's Street frontage. The possible cellar-pit, which was at least 3.2m wide/long may belong to the larger type of such features found within Oxford (Dodd, 2003, 35-41). It would have been c. 25 m back from the St. Ebbe's Street frontage. Little excavation of the feature was undertaken and its form and function cannot be interpreted with much certainty. Most of the cellar-pits in Oxford have been associated with the major street frontages (*ibid*) and none seem to have been found in this part of Oxford. True cellar-pits in Oxford seem to be a phenomenon of the first half of the 11th century and this would appear to be a late type if it is a cellar-pit. However the pottery recovered was only from the top of the surviving infill and may derive from later activity levelling a disused pit.

The earliest burials found are of interest in that they are on a different orientation than the later burials. It is possible that an earlier church was on a different alignment than later buildings. A church existed on the site from the 11th century when the area of the present graveyard was in domestic use. The earliest burials overlie late 11th and possible 12th century features. The original cemetery associated with the earliest church must have been relatively small before the church acquired both the properties to the south and west for a larger cemetery. Alternatively the church did not have a

graveyard and burials could have been reserved to St Frideswide's and St Aldate's until the 12th century (J Blair, pers. com.) The acquisition of the two properties must have been fairly soon after the late 11th century as one of the earliest burials was found to have slumped into the settling backfill of one of the earlier pits. This expansion suggests that both of these properties belonged to the *curia* and that Eynsham Abbey assigned these properties for the graveyard expansion. If there was an earlier church then the rebuilding must have taken place fairly soon after the graveyard expansion as the west portal is dated to c. 1170 (Sherwood & Pevsner, 1974, 292). This would explain why the early burials were found close to the present church and that burials only slightly later would have been on a different alignment and further from the church.

The dating of the different phases of burials, assigned on the basis of orientation, stratigraphic relationships, similarity of depth, relative position within the cemetery, and dating where present is as follows:

Earliest burials, 12th century; Phase 1, later 12-14th century (the earlier part of this dating is on the basis of a rebuild; Phase 2, 15-16th century; Phase 3, 17-early 18th; Phases 4, later 18-19th century; Phases 4A-C, 19-20th century. The churchyard diminishes in size on the west side by 1772 thereby dating the end of Phase 3 and the beginning of Phase 4.

The surviving burials Sk65-6, SK 72-3 in Phase 1 indicate that the graveyard was crowded in the later 12-14th century with burials being closely laid together.

Once the new western cemetery boundary wall was constructed some burials were placed tight up against it. Brick built vaults and deep shaft graves, which may represent family plots, also become prevalent within the cemetery at this stage.

During the construction of the Rectory Building immediately to the west of these investigations the human remains revealed were thought to have been associated with the Greyfriars' cemetery. However, having established that the St. Ebbe's cemetery extended further westwards, it is probable that a large part of these related to the Church of St Ebbe's and not to Greyfriars.

7 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many thanks to Graham Perry and his team of ground workers (Cooper Construction), for their co-operation, and Gef Parsons and Pascal Eloy for their work in very confined and wet conditions. Also thanks to Brian Durham and Julian Munby for their advice on site and to John Blair for his comments on the report..

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Blair, J., 1994 *Anglo-Saxon Oxfordshire*. Stroud

Blinkhorn, PW, forthcoming Post-Roman pottery from Merton College, Oxford

- Blinkhorn, PW, 2002 The Pottery in Z Kamash, DRP Wilkinson, BM Ford and J Hiller Late Saxon and Medieval Occupation: Evidence from Excavations at Lincoln College, Oxford 1997 – 2000 *Oxoniensia* 67, 232 - 40
- Dodd, A, ed. 2003, *Oxford Before the University. The late Saxon and Norman archaeology of the Thames Crossing, the defences and the town*. Oxford Archaeology Thames Valley Landscapes Monograph No. 17. Oxford University School of Archaeology
- Hassall, T. G, 1972, Excavations at Oxford.1971. Fourth Interim Report *Oxoniensia*, 37, 139)
- Hassall, T. G, Halpin, C. E, and Mellor, M, 1984, Excavations in St. Ebbe's 1967 – 1976: Part II: Post-Medieval Domestic Tenements, and the Post-Dissolution Site of the Greyfriars, *Oxoniensia* 49, 153-275
- Hassall, TG, Halpin, CE and Mellor, M, 1989 Excavations in St. Ebbe's, Oxford, 1967-1976: Part I: Late Saxon and Medieval Domestic Occupation and Tenements, and the Medieval Greyfriars, *Oxoniensia* 54, 71 - 218
- Kelly, S, ed. 2000, 'Charters of Abingdon Abbey: Part 1' in *Anglo-Saxon Charters VII*, Oxford
- Mellor, M, 1984 A summary of the key assemblages. A study of pottery, clay pipes, glass and other finds from fourteen pits, dating from the 16th to the 19th century in TG Hassall et al, Excavations at St Ebbe's, *Oxoniensia* 49, 181-219.
- Mellor, M, 1988 Pottery in C Scull Excavations in the Cloister of St. Frideswide's Priory, 1985 *Oxoniensia* 53, 33-8
- Mellor, M, 1989 Pottery in Hassall et al. 1989, 196 - 221
- Mellor, M, 1994 Oxford Pottery: A Synthesis of middle and late Saxon, medieval and early post-medieval pottery in the Oxford Region, *Oxoniensia* 59, 17-217
- Rogerson, A and Dallas, C, 1984 *Excavations in Thetford 1948-59 and 1973-80*, East Anglian Archaeol 22
- Sherwood J and Pevsner, N, 1974 *The Buildings of England. Oxfordshire*

APPENDIX 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

	RB		E/MS		OXR		THET		STAM		OXAC		OXBF		OXY		OXAM		OXBG		OXBN		OXCL		OXST		OXDR		OXFH		OXCE		OXBEWSL		WHEW		Date	COMMENTS								
Cnxt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt								
0																										1	33	1	23						4	86	U/S									
2			1	20	2	19	1	5			45	239	7	46	49	368	61	909	1	5	1	4	2	31	4	97	44	1133	15	209	5	88	3	63	41	557	19thC									
2																																		1	18	19thC?	below sk24									
2																	1	6																				L15thC?	below sk25							
2	2	4									9	72	1	9	1	30	2	17																					13thC?	below sk53						
2					1	8					1	9			2	6	4	18																						13thC?	below sk75					
2											4	43			3	21																							L11thC?	over sk23						
2											1	4			4	15	1	8																						13thC?	over sk64					
2															2	22	2	45																						13thC?	over sk65					
2											1	3	1	16			3	11																						13thC?	over sk66					
2					1	4					7	64			7	42																								L11thC?	over sk68					
2															1	5	4	73																							13thC?	over sk72				
2															1	2	6	32										1	3											M16thC?	over sk73					
2																	2	17																							13thC?	over sk75				
3																																			1	5					L17thC?					
5											1	4																														11thC?				
14															1	25																										L11thC				
16					6	36					16	461			3	30																										L11thC				
17															1	19																										L11thC?				
19											3	12															1	6														M16thC				
26											1	3			1	4																										L11thC?				
29								2	16		19	132			5	18																										L11thC?				
31					2	16					1	16			1	3																											L11thC?			
35					2	6			1	6	29	295	2	10	3	15																											L11thC			
37					2	8					8	101	1	3																													11thC			
41								2	12		8	75			2	5	3	11					2	4			1	32													2	6	19thC			
43					4	24					8	85	2	8	2	23																											L11thC			
45	1	4	1	2	4	9					25	127	11	193	19	215																											L11thC			
46											3	33			1	4											2	133															M16thC			
48															1	5											4	136	3	16													M16thC			
54																																											M16thC			
56			1	3	2	11					69	630	10	55	31	230																												L11thC		
58											2	12			2	5																												L11thC		
59											4	25			1	3	3	13																									1	6	19thC	
62					1	3					5	67			1	41	4	41									6	107	9	103	1	4										2	15	19thC		
63											3	112	3	32	2	16																													L11thC	

	RB		E/MS		OXR		THET		STAM		OXAC		OXB		OXY		OXAM		OXB		OXB		OXCL		OXST		OXDR		OXFH		OXCE		OXBEWSL		WHEW		Date	COMMENTS
Cntxt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt		
65					1	4					1	8			1	3																					L11thC	
66											1	15	1	7	3	21																					L11thC	
Total	3	8	3	25	36	196	1	5	5	34	315	3307	41	404	154	1226	117	1344	1	5	1	4	4	35	2	33	59	1580	30	357	6	92	4	68	52	706		

APPENDIX 2: Archaeological Context Inventory

CTX	Type	Trench No	Depth m	Extent m	Comments	Physical relationship	Date	Contained skeletal remains
1	Deposit	1	0.2		concrete paving	overlays 2	modern	
2	Deposit	1 2 3 4	3.00 +	-	graveyard soil			
3	Fill	1	0.11	0.60 x 0.50	fill of grave cut 4			
4	Cut	1	0.11	0.60 x 0.50	grave	cuts: 7 & sk 27		sk 28
5	Fill	1			fill of grave cut 6			
6	Cut	1			grave	cuts 7		sk 29
7	Deposit	1			pit fill Not Excavated fully			
8	Fill	1	0.25		fill of grave 9			
9	Cut	1	0.25	0.60 x 0.45	grave	cuts 7		sk 30
10	Cut	3			construction cut for Vault 11			
11	Masonry	3	1.45	2.10 x 0.65	Brick Vault			sk 31
12	Fill	3	0.45	2.10 x 0.65	fill of 11			
13	Deposit	1	0.1	2.50 x 0.60	pit fill Not Excavated fully			
14	grave	1			un excavated grave	cuts 13		
15	grave	1			un excavated grave	cuts 7		
16	Deposit	1	0.05	1.25	pit fill Not Excavated fully	cuts 22		
17	Fill	1	0.18	0.64 x 0.50	fill of grave 18			
18	cut	1	0.18	0.64 x 0.50	grave	cuts 16		sk 34
19	finds ref	1			finds from 16 contaminated			
20	Cut	3 4			construction cut for Vault 21			
21	Masonry	3 4			Un excavated Brick Vault			
22	Deposit	1			pit fill Not Excavated fully	cut by 16		
23	grave	1			un excavated grave	cuts 16		
24	Fill	4	0.15	0.70 x 0.40	fill of grave 25			
25	Cut	4	0.15	0.70 x 0.40	grave	cuts 7		sk 41

26	Fill	4	0.2	0.56 x 0.40	fill of grave 27			
27	Cut	4	0.2	0.56 x 0.40	grave	cuts 7 & cuts sk 40		sk 47
28	finds ref	2			finds over sk 48			
29	Fill	4	0.37		fill of grave 30			
30	Cut	4	0.37		grave	cut by 27 cuts 31		sk 50
31	Fill	4			fill of grave 32			
32	Cut	4			grave	cut by 30		sk 51
33	Masonry	2	0.2	1.2	Wall			
34	Masonry	1			Un excavated Brick Vault			
35	Fill	4	0.38	0.95 x 0.15	fill of 36 Not Excavated fully	cut by 30		
36	Cut	4	0.38	0.95 x 0.15	pit	cuts 37		
37	Fill	4			fill of 38 Not Excavated fully			
38	Cut	4			pit Not Excavated fully	cuts 39		
39	Deposit	1 2 4			Natural Gravel		Geological	
40	Cut	2	0.28	1.20 x 0.60	grave	cuts 46		sk 56
41	Fill	2	0.28	1.20 x 0.60	fill of grave 40			
42	Cut	3			grave			sk 55
43	Fill	3			fill of 42			
44	Cut	2			pit			
45	Fill	2			fill of 44			
46	Fill	2	0.12	1.60 x 0.50	fill of grave 47	cut by 40		
47	Cut	2	0.12	1.60 x 0.50	grave	cuts 37 & 48		sk 58
48	Fill	2	0.13	1.40 x 0.45	fill of grave 49	cut by 47		
49	Cut	2	0.13	1.40 x 0.45	grave	cuts 37		sk 59
50	Fill	2 4	0.16		fill of grave 51			
51	Cut	2 4	0.16		un excavated grave	cuts 37		
52	Cut	1			shaft grave			sk 25,sk 62,sk 9,sk 20,sk 22 & sk 23
53	Fill	1			fill of grave 52			
54	finds ref	1			below sk 62			
55	Cut & fill	2	2.00+	1.25 x 1.25	Soakaway		modern	

56	Fill	3			fill of pit	below 11		
57	Cut	2	0.2		grave			sk 71
58	Fill	2	0.2		fill of grave 57			
59	Fill	1	0.36	0.55 x 0.40	fill of grave 60			
60	Cut	1	0.36	0.55 x 0.40	grave			sk 74 & sk 77
61	Cut	2		1.75 x 0.45	shaft grave			sk 52,sk 60,sk 63,sk 69 & sk 76
62	Fill	1			fill of 52			
63	Fill	2			fill of grave 64			
64	Cut	2			grave			sk 78
65	Deposit	3	0.20+		pit Not Excavated fully			
66	Fill	2			fill of 67			
67	Cut	2			pit Not Excavated fully			
68	cut	3			shaft grave			sk 38,sk 42,sk 45& sk 46
69	Cut	3			grave			sk 53
70	Cut	2			grave			sk 68
71	Cut	2			grave			sk 24 & sk 26
72	Deposit	2			gravel road ?			

APPENDIX 3: Skeleton list

Skeleton number	Complete / as found	Age	Sex	Grave cut number	Grave fill number	Coffin present	Alignment Skull to..	Burial Phase?	Comments
1	legs	Adult				yes	w	4a	
2	legs	adolescent				no	w	4c	
3	legs: missing L tib & fib	Adult				no	w	4c	
4	legs	Adult				yes	w	4c	
5	missing R side & legs	juvenile				no	w	4a	In same grave as sk 6
6	fragmentary	neonate				no	w	4a	In same grave as sk 5
7	legs	Adult				no	w	4b	
8	lower legs	Adult				yes	w	4	
9	lower legs	Adult		52		no	w	4	In shaft grave 52
10	legs	Adult				yes	w	4b	In same grave as sk 12
11	legs: missing R tib & fib	Adult				yes	w	4a	
12	legs	Adult				no	w	4b	In same grave as sk 10
13	L fib & ankle only	Adult				no	w	4	
14	legs: missing R tib & fib	Adult				no	w	4	
15	fragmentary	Adult				no	w	2	
16	feet only	Adult				no	w	2	
17	legs	Adult				no	w	3	
18	legs	juvenile				no	w	4a	
19	legs	Adult				no	w	4	
20	R leg only	Adult		52		no	w	4	In shaft grave 52
21	R & lower L leg missing	neonate				yes	w	4a	
22	lower R leg only	Adult		52		no	w	4	In shaft grave 52
23	legs	Adult		52		yes	w	4	In shaft grave 52
24	Complete	Adult	F	71		yes	w	4	In same grave as sk 26
25	legs	Adult		52		yes	w	2	In shaft grave 52

26	Complete	Adult	F	71		yes	w	4	In same grave as sk 24
27	lower R leg only	Adult				no	w	1	
28	legs	Adult		4	3	yes	w	3	
29	legs	Adult		6	5	yes	w	1	
30	legs	Adult		9	8	no	w	2	
31	Complete	Adult	M		12	yes	w	4	in vault 11
32	R foot only	Adult				yes	w	3	
33	legs	adolescent				no	w	3	
34	skull & R shoulder only	Adult		18	17	no	w	2	
35	legs: missing L femur	Adult		60		no	w	4	In shaft grave 60
36	legs: missing R fib	Adult				no	w	2	
37	R lower leg only	Adult				no	w	4	
38	Complete	Adult		68		yes	w	4	In shaft grave 68
39	fragmentary	Adult				no	w	2	
40	legs	adolescent				no	w	2	
41	legs	Adult		25	24	no	w	2	
42	missing torso & arms	Adult		68		yes	w	4	In shaft grave 68
43	skull & L arm only	Adult				no	w	1	
44	skull & L shoulder only	Adult				no	nw	EB	
45	Complete	Adult	F	68		yes	w	4	In shaft grave 68
46	Complete	juvenile		68		yes	w	4	In shaft grave 68
47	feet only	Adult		27	26	yes	w	3	
48	legs	Adult				yes	w	1	
49	missing R side & legs	Adult				yes	w	3	
50	legs	Adult		30	29	no	w	1	
51	skull & upper torso	Adult		32	31	no	w	1	
52	Complete	Adult	F	61		yes	w	4	In shaft grave 61
53	skull & R shoulder only	Adult		69		no	w	2	
54	legs: missing R tib	Adult				no	w	2	
55	missing pelvis & legs	Adult	F	42	43	no	nw	EB	Cut by 10
56	lower torso & legs	adolescent		40	41	yes	w	2	

57	missing skull, upper torso & legs	Adult				no	nw	EB	
58	missing skull & R arm	Adult		47	46	no	w	1	
59	R arm & lower legs only	Adult		49	48	no	w	3	
60	Complete	Adult		61		yes	w	4	In shaft grave 61
61	L & R femurs only	Adult				no	w	1	
62	fragmentary	adolescent		52		no	w	2	In shaft grave 52
63	Complete	Adult	F	61		no	w	4	In shaft grave 61
64	missing upper torso & lower legs	Adult				no	w	3	
65	skull & shoulders only	Adult	M			no	w	2	
66	skull & torso only	Adult	M			no	w	2	
67	legs	Adult				no	w	1	
68	missing legs	Adult	M	70		no	w	1	
69	Complete	Adult	F	61		yes	w	4	In shaft grave 61
70	R leg only	Adult				no	w	1	
71	Complete	juvenile		57	58	no	w	1	
72	skull only	Adult	M			no	w	2	
73	skull only	Adult	M			no	w	2	
74	legs	Adult		60		no	w	4	In shaft grave 60
75	pelvic region only	Adult	M			no	w	1	
76	legs: missing L foot	adolescent		61		no	w	4	In shaft grave 61
77	Complete	Adult		60		yes	w	4	In shaft grave 60
78	Complete	Adult		64	63	no	nw	EB	

APPENDIX 4: Matrix and Phasing

