



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

AT

ALL SAINTS CHURCH,

SPELSBURY, OXFORDSHIRE

NGR SP 3492 2151

AUGUST 2009

REPORT FOR All Saints Church, Spelsbury
c/o Acanthus Clews Architects
Acanthus House
57 Hightown Road
Banbury
Oxfordshire
OX16 9BE

PREPARED BY Milena Grzybowska

FIELDWORK 3rd June – 17th July 2009

REPORT ISSUED 18th August 2009

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

Telephone/Fax 01865 358300
Email: info@jmheritageservices.co.uk

Site Code; SPAS 09
JMHS Project No: 2064
Archive Location Oxfordshire Museum Service under
Accession Number 2009.42

CONTENTS

	Page	
<i>SUMMARY</i>	1	
1 INTRODUCTION	1	
1.1 Site Location		
1.2 Planning Background		
1.3 Archaeological Background		
2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION	1	
3 STRATEGY	3	
3.1 Research Design	3	
3.2 Methodology	3	
4 RESULTS	3	
4.1 Masonry	3	
4.1.1 Early church walls	3	
4.1.2 Vault	6	
4.1.3 Monuments	6	
4.1.4 Head Stone	7	
4.2 Human Remains	7	
4.2.1 Burial Practices	7	
4.2.2 Methods	7	
4.2.3 The Physical Evidence Summary	8	
4.2.4 Condition of the Bone Present	8	
4.2.5 Completeness of Skeletons	11	
4.2.6 Age and Sex Assessment	11	
4.2.7 Skeletal Pathology	13	
4.2.8 Vaulted Grave	14	
4.2.9 Burials Dating	14	
4.3 Animal Remains	14	
4.4 Pottery	15	
4.5 Environmental Samples	15	
5 DISSCUSSION	15	
6 BIBLIOGRAPHY	16	
 FIGURES		
Figure 1	Site Location.	2
Figure 2	Location of trenches and soakaways.	4
Figure 3	Plan and sections of walls.	5
Figure 4	Plan of projected gravecuts.	9
Figure 5	Plan of human remains.	10

Summary

John Moore Heritage Services carried out a watching brief at All Saints Church graveyard, Spelsbury. Twenty-seven burials were recorded and reburied within the churchyard. Also revealed were limestone-built walls pre-dating 18th century alterations to the church. These may relate to a late Saxon church.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site location (Figure 1)

All Saints Church is situated in the village of Spelsbury southeast of Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire, within the area administered by West Oxfordshire District Council. The village is located on a narrow hill between the Coldron and Taston brooks overlooking the River Evenlode and the ancient Wychwood Forest to the north. The church of All Saints lies on the south side of the village (NGR: SP 3492 2151). The geology is Clypeus Grit.

1.2 Planning Background

The Incumbent and Churchwardens of All Saints Church, Spelsbury appointed Acanthus Clews Architects to oversee the installation of land drainage to the perimeter of the church, discharging into new soak-aways and the partial rebuilding of an enclosure wall to a tomb. As the alterations were likely to disturb human remains and expose the foundations of the church, a programme of archaeological recording during groundwork was requested by the Oxford Diocesan Advisor.

1.3 Archaeological Background

Background information on the site has been obtained from the Archaeological Recording Specification provided by the Deanery of Chipping Norton, Archdeaconry of Oxfordshire. The earliest surviving parts of the church, i.e. the lower stages of the west tower, date from 11th to 12th century. It is thought that transepts were added circa 1200 and that the 13th century nave was built on the site of the earlier chancel. The arcades survive. Alterations to the church took place throughout the medieval period, but the church was largely rebuilt in the 18th century by the Earls of Litchfield. The tower was restored in 1706 when the upper stage was added. The rebuilding of the chancel took place in 1740 and that of the nave and aisles in 1774. A further rebuilding of the chancel occurred in 1851. The church is Listed Grade II*.

Court Close (Oxon Historic Environment Record PRN 1147, NGR SP 3486 2155) is identified as the site of the Wychwood residence of Bishops of Worcester and later as that of a castle or Dower house of the Beauchamps, Earls of Warwick. The finding of a 7-8th century escutcheon suggests a high status residence here.

2. AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The aims of the investigation were as follows:

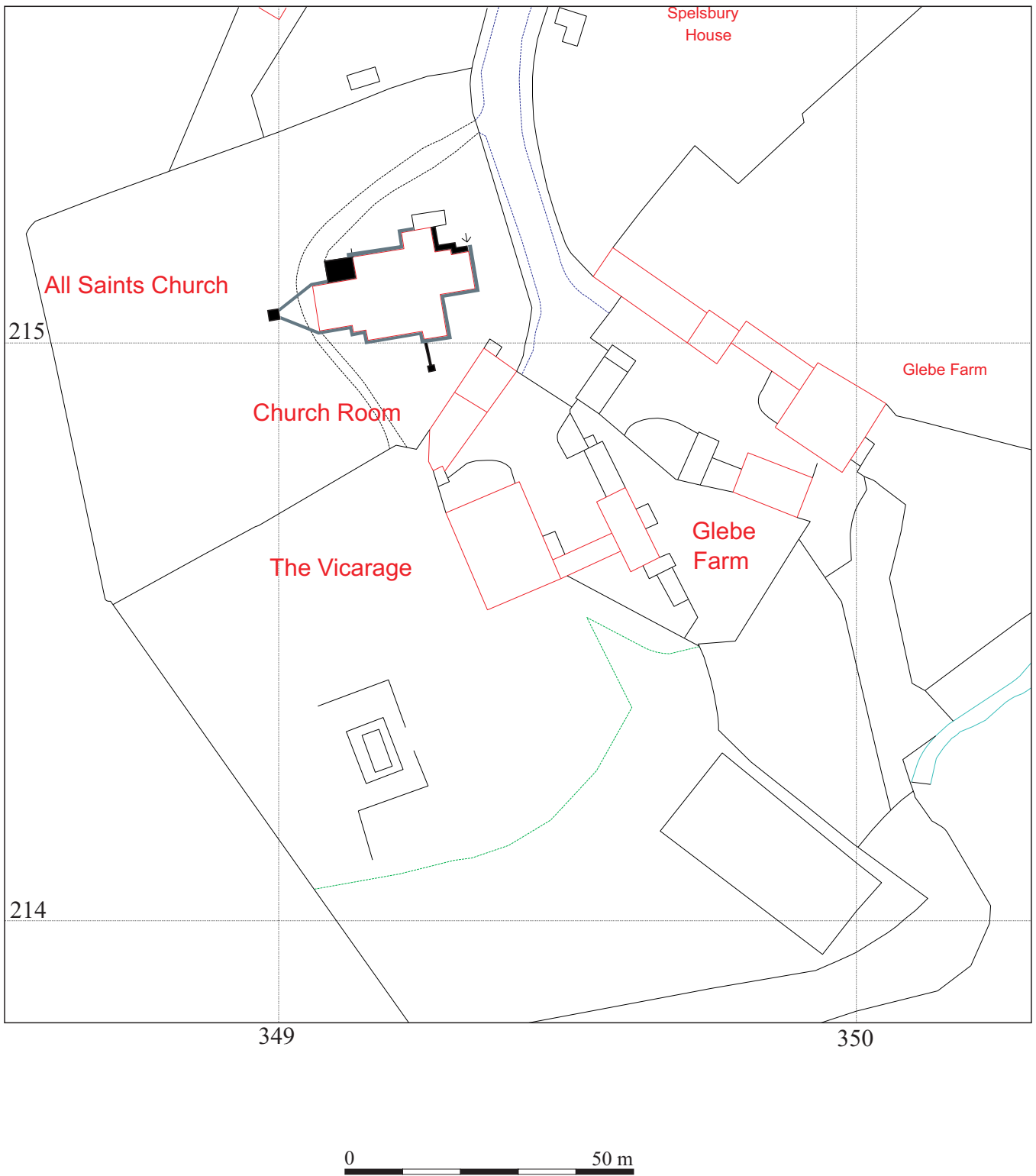


Figure 1. Site Plan.

- to record and lift any burials encountered during the course of the work
- to observe and record the foundations of the church and the disturbance of the monuments on the north side of the church
- to provide a report and ordered archive on the investigation.

3. STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to the Archaeological Recording Specification produced by Mr J.T. Munby, the Diocesan Archaeological Adviser. Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each burial and walls encountered, with scale plans and section drawings compiled where appropriate and possible. The work was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute for Archaeologists (1999) and the procedures laid down in MAP2 (English Heritage 1991).

3.2 Methodology

An archaeologist monitored the excavation of the French drain around the church perimeter as well as of the soak-aways located southerly and westerly to the church. Where the human remains or archaeological features were encountered further excavation was conducted by hand. The drainage trenches and opening in the monument walls were inspected and recorded. (For location of inspected and hand dug areas see Figure 1. For general plan of trenches, soakaways and location of the areas planned in detail see Figure 2.)

Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each burial and masonry, with scale plans and section drawings compiled where appropriate and possible. A photographic record was produced.

4 RESULTS

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers without brackets indicate features i.e. pit cuts; while numbers in () show feature fills or deposits of material.

4.1 Early church

4.1.1 Walls (Figure 3)

Remains of an earlier church were exposed by the north-east corner of the church (Fig. 3, Plan 1). The wall (35), including foundations, was 1.17m high, 0.58m long (where exposed) and ran beyond the excavation edge along the north-south axis. It consisted of random coursed roughly dressed limestone blocks composing the faces of the wall and rubble medium-sized sub-angular limestone blocks filling the space between them (Sections 2 & 3). The foundations were 1.36m wide, mortared together

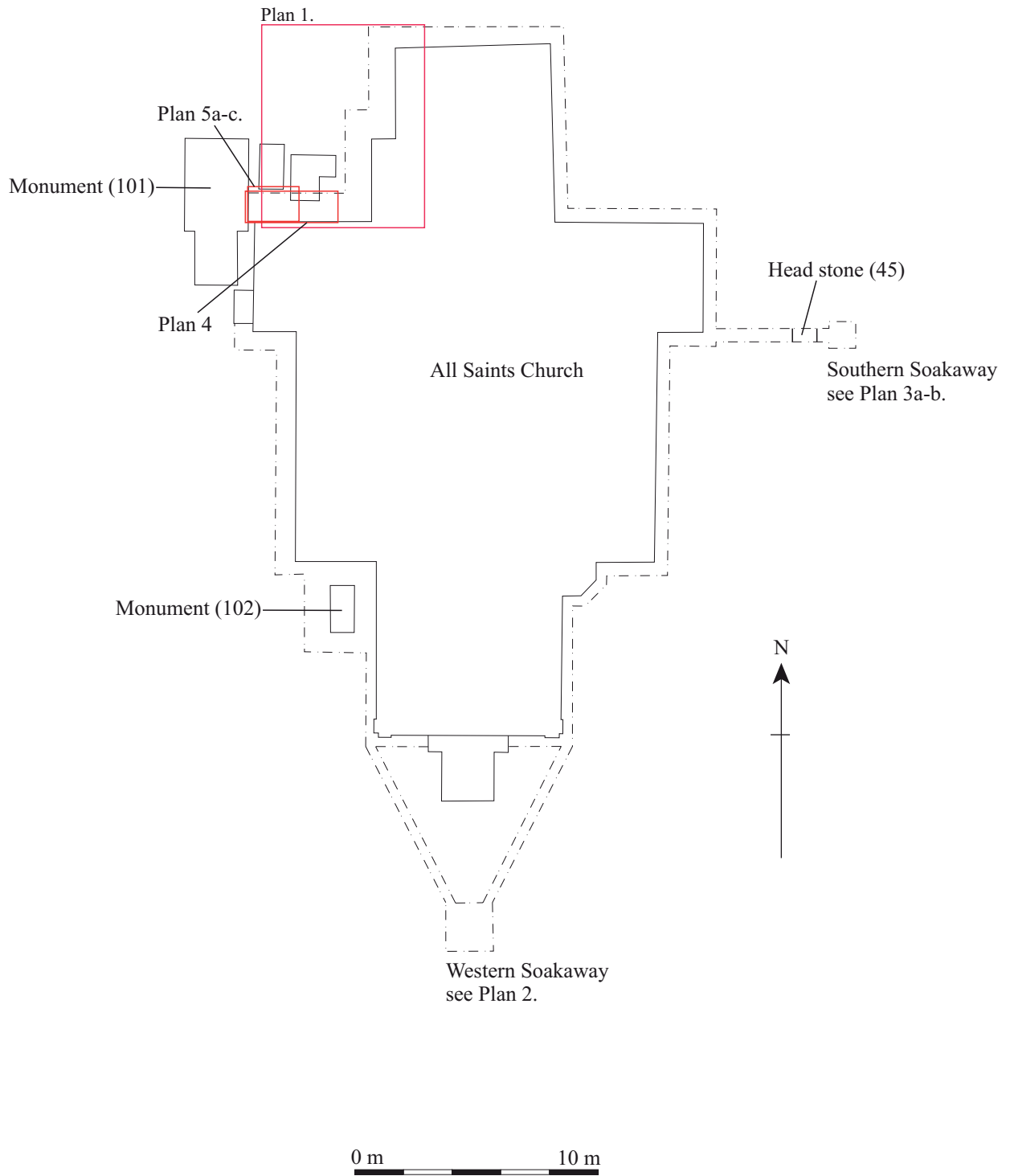


Figure 2. Trench Location.

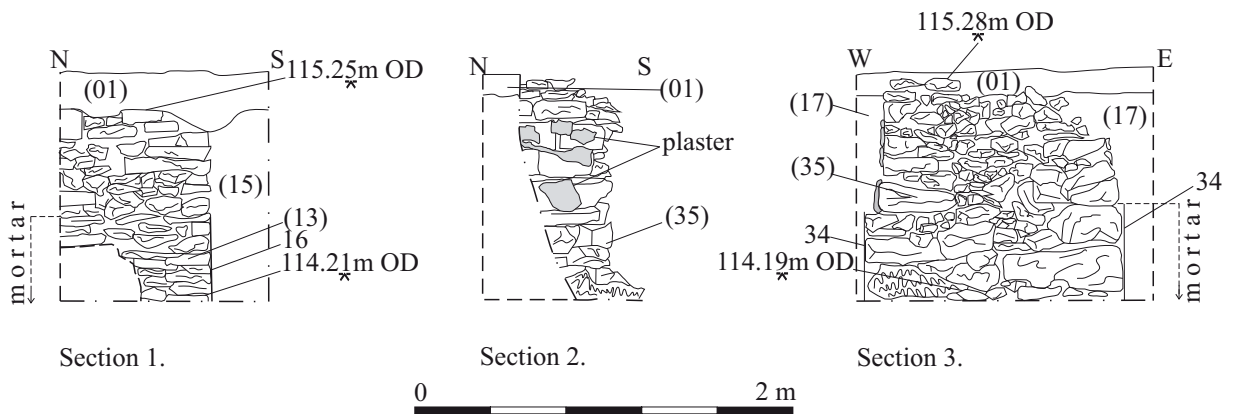
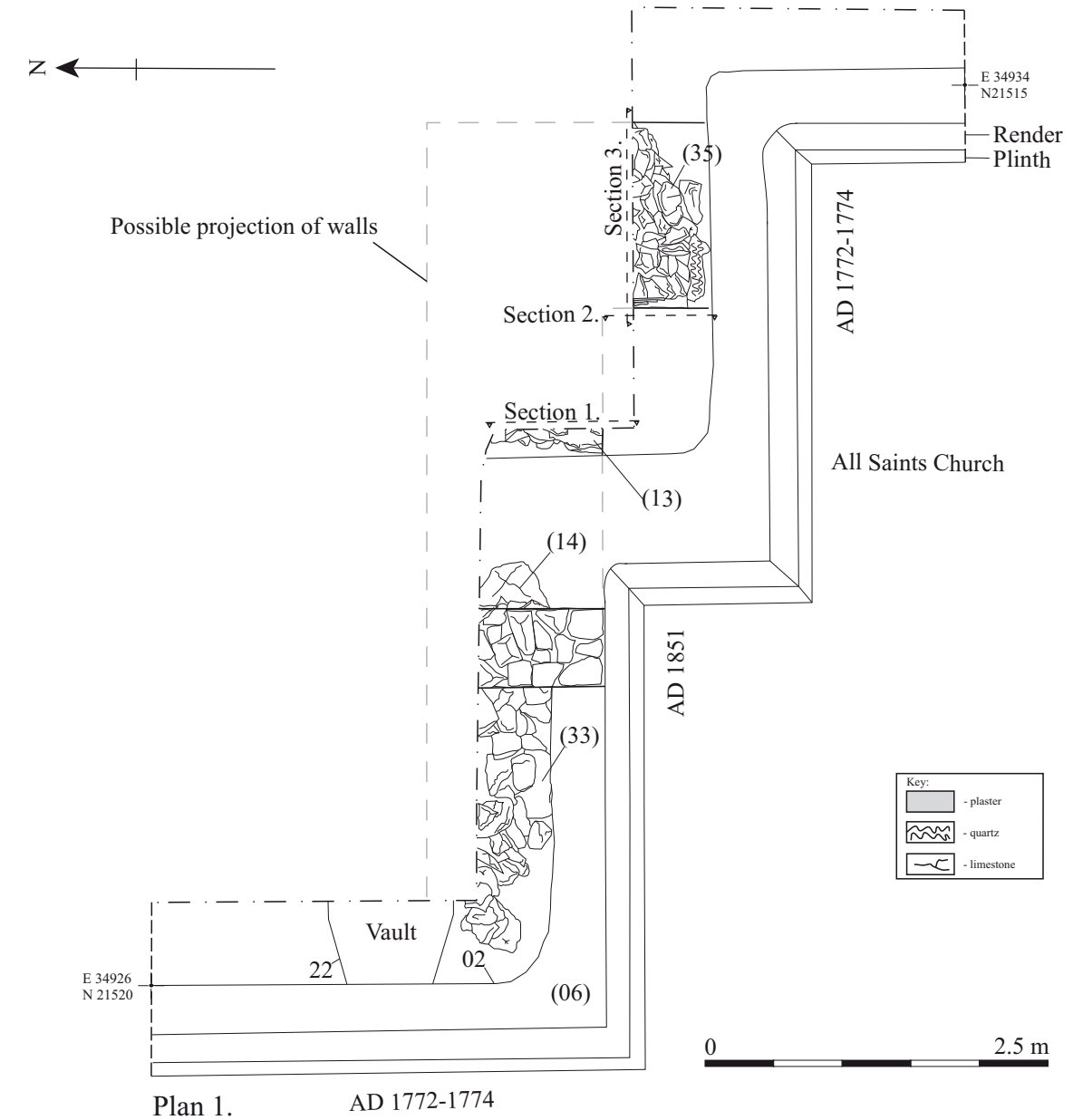


Figure 3. Plan and sections of structure (13) and (35).

and consisted of large blocks, measuring up to 0.62m x 0.40m x 0.28m. The upper part of the wall was constructed of sub-angular relatively small blocks, measuring on average 0.30m x 0.30m x 0.12m. The western face of the wall (35) was covered with the remains of beige sandy plaster. The wall itself was 1.26m wide.

Perpendicular to this on an east-west alignment ran a second wall (13). It was over 0.80m wide, 0.18m long and 1.00m high. This wall (13) consisted of random coursed flat medium-sized roughly dressed limestone blocks that composed the faces of the wall and rubble of sub-angular medium-sized limestone blocks placed between them forming a rubble core (Fig. 3, Section 1). Mortar was noticed in the lower part. No faces of this wall were exposed to establish the presence of plaster. The line of the east face was established, however the west face lay outside the excavated area.

A third wall was located on the same alignment as wall (13). This wall was also recorded as (14) and (33), which in this report will be referred to as the wall (14). It was over 0.50m wide, exposed over a 3.00m length, and was 0.70m high. Only the inner part of the wall was preserved due to heavy truncation caused by numerous gravecuts on the north, including the one for the vault (04) and modern drainage trench 02 on the south. The wall (14) consisted of medium to large sub-angular limestone blocks of an irregular shape, measuring up to 0.30m x 0.50m x 0.35m.

4.1.2 Vault (Figure 3)

The northeast part of drainage trench exposed a Georgian vault (04). It consisted of eight stretcher-type courses of red bricks (0.17m x 0.07m x 0.09m), bonded with pale yellow mortar. The vault was covered with a large white 0.10m thick limestone slab that was 1.10m wide, 0.65m high and over 0.85m long. It continued beyond the excavation edge and had an east-west alignment. The bottom of the vaulted grave was c.1.30m below the related coffin-shaped, flat body stone that carried an incised inscription. Human remains SK(11) retrieved from this burial are discussed below (Section 4.2.8 and Table 1).

4.1.3 Monuments (Figure 2)

Two monuments (101) and (102) located on the north side the church were recorded prior to its partial and complete rebuilding respectively. A photographic record was produced. Both monuments were reconstructed on the completion of ground works.

The east-west aligned chest tomb (101) was 2.15m wide, 1.90m high and 2.50m long. The structure consisted of large regular stretcher-type coursed white-yellow sandstone blocks (0.65m x 0.28m x 0.91m), finished with rectangular grey large sandstone blocks with gabled top (0.65m x 0.60m x 0.15m). The monument contained the vault with segmental arch constructed of pitched stones mortared together. The arch was springing off the foundation wall at the ground surface and slightly above this level at its northern part. The height of the vault was exceeding 1.05m. The ground works did not disturb the inside of the vault and therefore no human remains have been retrieved.

The chest tomb with plain sides (102), aligned according to east-west axis, was 1.60m wide, 2.20m long and 0.55m high. It consisted of large sandstone plinth blocks 0.87m high, on top of which lied concrete blocks of various shapes joined together with iron

slabs. The structure sat on thin flat large stones. The stone slab, covering the whole monument, carried the name of Amelia Story, who died at the age of 22 on 7th of April 1817. The monument was fully deconstructed and the underlying raised burial ground (17) was levelled with the base of the church wall. As it was expected no articulated human remains were discovered.

4.1.4 Head Stone (Figure 2)

An east-west aligned broken limestone block (45) was uncovered in the drainage cut connecting the perimeter trench with the southern soak-away. Covering this 1.1m-wide and 0.10m-thick slab, were medium-sized irregular sub-angular stones. Considering the measurements, the alignment of the find (*see Section 4.2.1*), as well as its location – just beneath the surface of the church's graveyard topsoil – it is inferred that it constitutes a head stone that relatively recently collapsed or was intentionally laid flat, possibly due to its prior breakage. No traces of an inscription were found, however it could have been weathered away. The spread of irregular stones were identified as redeposited packaging stones for the head stone cut.

4.2 Human Remains

The watching brief resulted in the retrieval of (both articulated and disarticulated) human remains. All human bone, investigated on site, was being successively reburied with the progress of work, within the area of their original deposition.

Disturbed, disarticulated skeletal material is of limited scientific value, i.e. it is difficult to date and secondly - most scientific work involves relating different types of data to one another at the individual level and with disarticulated material it is not possible to combine data in this way. For these reasons the disarticulated bone is usually not considered worthy of study and regarding time constrained nature of this watching brief this material had been excluded from the analysis.

4.2.1 Burial Practices (Figure 4)

The burials at All Saints Church reflected the predominant Christian beliefs and were aligned in an east-west orientation, with the head at the west end of the grave so that the individual would be facing the east looking towards Jerusalem at the time of Resurrection. The vast majority of the burials were truncated by later disturbance and it is clear that the churchyard of All Saints was being heavily used.

4.2.2 Methods

The skeletal material was assessed according to the standards laid out in the guidelines recommended by the British Association of Biological Anthropologists and Osteologists in conjunction with the IFA (Brickley and McKinley 2004) as well as by English Heritage (2002).

Recording of the material was carried out using the recognised descriptions contained in Standards for Data Collection from Human Skeletal Remains by Buikstra and Ubelaker (1994). A summary of the data recorded for each skeleton is contained in *Table 1*. The material was analysed macroscopically.

4.2.3 The Physical Evidence Summary (Figure 5)

The excavations at the burial ground of All Saints recovered the remains of 27 articulated individuals from mostly heavily truncated inhumations located in the southern and western soak-aways as well as in the perimeter trench. Working conditions on site were difficult due to the limitations of space, and intercutting burials with post-depositional disturbance. This resulted in inability of distinguishing specific grave cuts or fills of some of the inhumations. To enhance the legibility of the digitized drawings of this report, the burials were marked with the single contexts numbers, e.g. SK(39), which refer to the osteological material. For all the cuts, fills and coffins context numbers of particular graves, please refer to the original drawn and written record.

The burial ground (17) was friable light yellow-brown silty clay with small to medium-sized limestone pieces and moderate grit.

4.2.4 Condition of the Bone Present

Method

The condition of the bone was macroscopically assessed and graded according to those guidelines set out by Brickley and McKinley (2004). Abrasion and erosion was recorded using a scale 0-5 (i.e. absence of any changes to complete obscuring of the cortical surface).

Results

The comparative results are illustrated in Table 1. Out of the 27 individuals, 74% were categorised as being in a 'good' (0-2) state of preservation, 22% in 'fair' (2-4) condition, one individual in 'poor' (4-5+) condition.

Factors extrinsic (such as soil acidity or hydrolic action) and intrinsic (shape and density) to the bone can contribute to its preservation; it has been reported that age of the individual can also be an underlying contributory factor to state of preservation of skeletal material, with older and younger individuals more likely to have less robust and more susceptible bones (Henderson 1987). However, the preservation of the remains from All Saints appeared to exhibit no correlation on initial assessment with the age or sex, where attributable, of these individuals. Although it may be possible to infer that there should not, therefore, be any bias in the age and sex of the individuals contained in this assemblage as a result of preservation conditions, the sample under examination is a very small proportion of the All Saints population as a whole and caution should be taken with this observation. Overall, preservation of the material was fair or good but one individual demonstrated profound damage to the bone (discussed in detail in Section 4.2.8).

4.2.5 Completeness of Skeletons

Method

This is a guide to the overall completeness of the individual's skeleton remains and is calculated to the percentage of the bones present in relation to the total number of

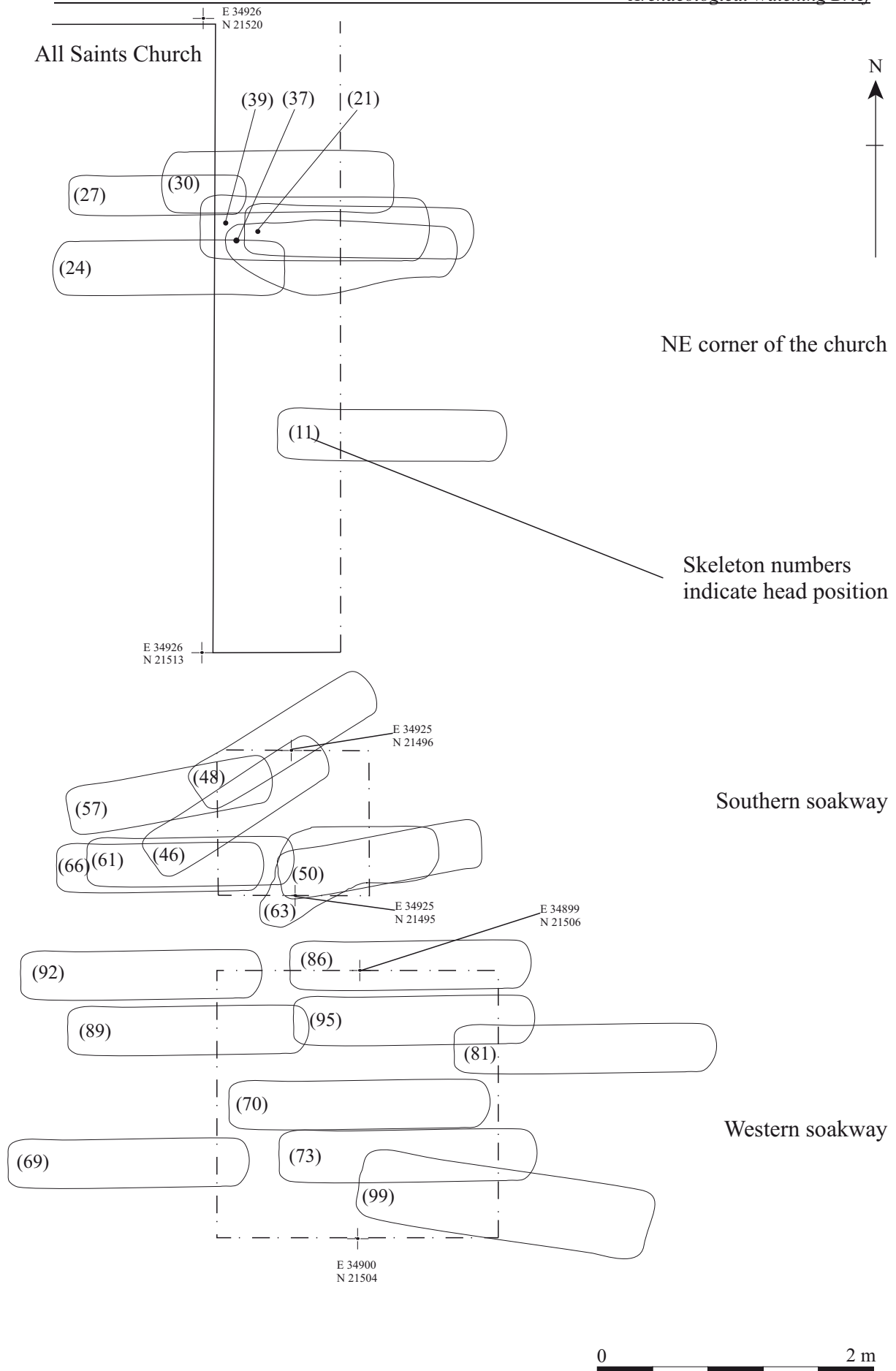


Figure 4. Projected limits of graves.

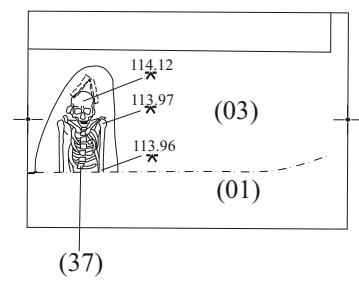
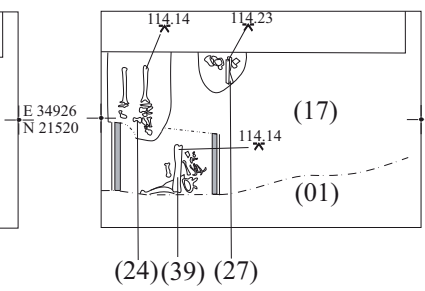
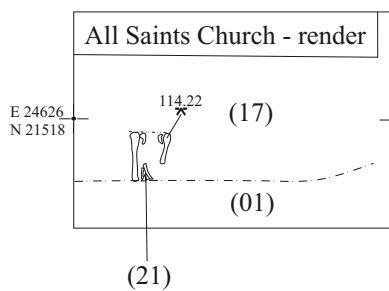
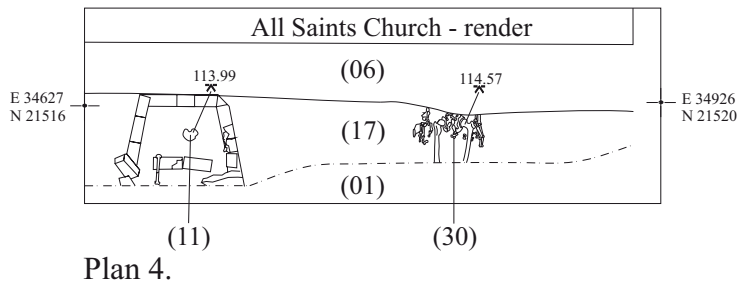
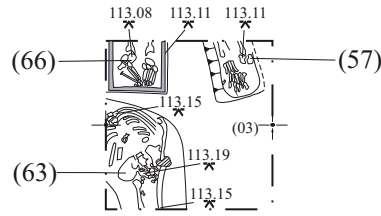
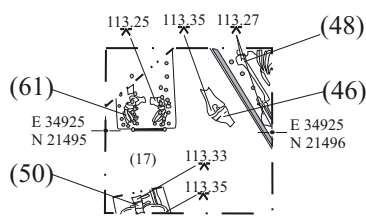
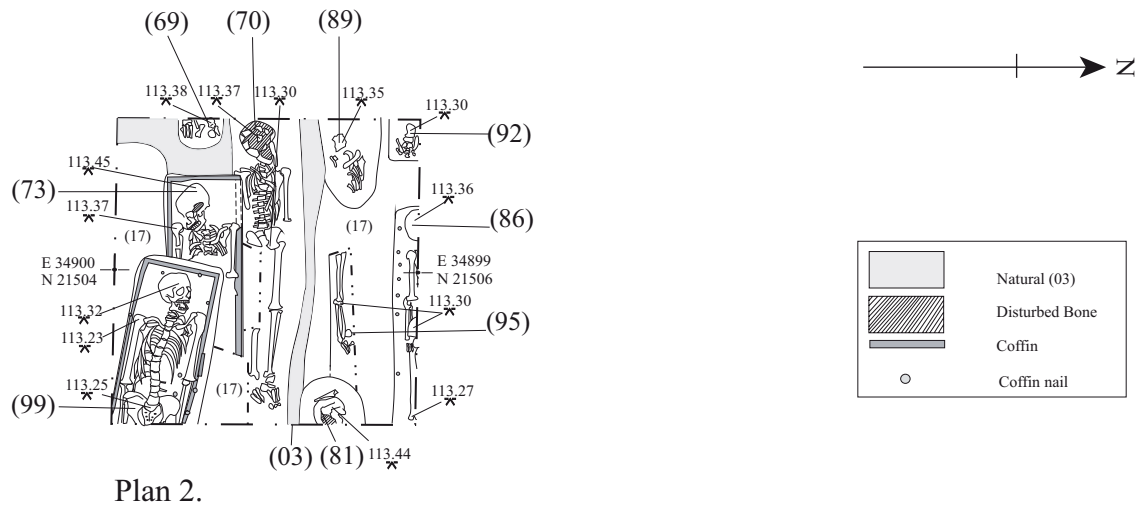


Figure 5. Human remains. Plan 2-5.

bones in a complete human skeleton. This is gauged through an assessment of the amount of material representing different areas of the body. A complete skeleton comprises of:

Skull = 20%

Torso = 40%

Arms = 20%

Legs = 20%

Each area of the skeleton was assessed and then placed into the following four categories of completeness: 75%+, 50-75%, 25-50%, <25% (Buikstra and Ubelaker 1994). Recording the completeness of the individual can allow an insight to be gained into how much post-depositional activity has occurred as well as to assess how much information can potentially be gained from the remains. Over a half of the skeletons were exposed only partially in the course of watching brief. These instances are marked with '+' in Table 1.

Results

Vast majority of skeletons were observed to be significantly depleted in material content. Table 1 below, indicates that the majority of the individuals are less than 25% complete. This is a consequence of the intensive usage of the burial ground (see Section 4.2.1) as well as small width of the drainage trench and soakaways. Of those adult individuals that were 50-75% complete (n = 3) all were ascribed both a sex and age category. Of those adults less than 25% complete (n = 17), sex could be assigned for only 3 individuals. This highlights the limitations placed upon the analysis of incomplete individuals.

Of all those adult individuals whose grade of completeness was 25-50% or above (all of whom could be assessed for sex), no correlation was observed upon an initial assessment between sex of the individual and the level of completeness, nor between age assigned and completeness. All the sub-adults recovered were less than 50% complete, though all were in fair or good condition; unfortunately the sample of sub-adults is small and it is not clear how representative this sample is of the whole population. Of all burials 59% continued beyond the excavation edge therefore it is impossible to verify whether the sub-adult remains were less likely to be complete than those of adults.

4.2.6 Age and Sex Assessment

Methods

Due to the small size of the assemblage, it is difficult to draw any firm conclusions from the analysis of the demographic data. Sex was assessed using the criteria laid out by Buikstra and Ubelaker (1984) in the analysis of morphological features of the skull and pelvis. In addition, metric data was also used where possible, taking measurements of sexually dimorphic elements such as the femoral and humeral head (Bass 1995). Categories ascribed to individuals on the basis of this data were 'Male', 'Possible Male', 'Indeterminate', 'Possible Female', 'Female' and 'Unobservable'. No sexing of sub-adult material was attempted due to the lack of reliable criteria available. Age of sub-adults was assessed, however, using both dental development

Table 1. The summary of the findings of the osteological assessment of human remains.

SK no.	Condition	Completeness	Age	Sex	Pathology	Remarks
11	5	<25% +	Old Adult	Female	None observed	Mary Wellington. Vaulted grave.
12	2	<25% +	Juvenile	-	None observed	-
21	2	<25%	Adolescent	-	None observed	-
24	2	<25%	Juvenile	-	None observed	The inferred position of the skeleton suggests that skeleton predates the 18 th century addition to the church.
27	2	25-50%	Child	-	None observed	-
30	2	25-50% +	Adult	Male?	None observed	-
37	2	25-50% +	Young Adult	Male?	Alveolar resorption	Two limestone slabs support the head - see similar SK(81).
39	3	<25% +	Adult?	Female	Schmorl's nodes	Pregnant women with foetus of the perinatal age. Wooden coffin present.
41	3	<25% +	Adult	Unk	None observed	-
46	2	<25%	Adult	Unk	None observed	-
47	2	<25% +	Juv	Unk	None observed	Skull left in situ – visible only in section.
48	1	<25% +	Adult	Unk	Large lytic lesion of the right hip of unknown aetiology	Head to the SW. Wooden coffin present
50	2	<25%	Adult	Unk	None observed	Head to the SW.
57	3	<25% +	Adult	Unk	None observed	Head to the SWW.
60	3	<25% +	Adult	Unk	None observed	-
61	1	<25%	Adult	Unk	None observed	Similar in appearance and preservation to SK(66). Remains of the coffin present in the shape of nails and handles.
63	3	50-75%	Adult	Male?	Joint disease-advanced stage of the osteoarthritis of the hip	-
66	1	<25% +	Adult	Female?	None observed	Similar in appearance and preservation to SK(61). Remains of wooden coffin present
69	2	<25% +	Adult	Unk	Halluces	-
70	3	50%	Adult	Male?	Schmorl's nodes, Alveolar resorption	-
73	2	>25%	Young Adult		None observed	Remains of wooden coffin.
86	1	>25% +	Adult	Male?	None observed	-
89	2	<25%	Adol	Unk	None observed	-
81	2	<25% +	Unk	Male?	None observed	A limestone slab supports the head – see similar SK(37).
92	1	<25% +	Adol	Unk	None observed	-
95	2	<25%	Adult	Unk	None observed	-
99	1	>50% +	Young Adult	Male	Dental diseases: Periodontitis, root caries in molars and premolars, extensive cavity in right upper M3	Wooden coffin present.

and eruption (Piontek, 1996) as well as epiphyseal fusion (Scheuer & Black 2004). These methods can usually provide reasonably accurate age estimation due to a relatively narrow range of variation in normal sub-adult development. Thus sub-adults can be placed into the following age categories: Foetal (<36 weeks), Neonate (37 weeks to 6 months), Infant (6 months-2 years), Child (2-5 years), Juvenile (5-12 years) and Adolescent (12-19 years). Although these groups can be seen to overlap, usually the different methods used to assess the age of a sub-adult provide a slight variation in estimated age at death. Thus, for example, any individuals displaying a range from 4-5 years of age would be placed in the Child category, whilst an individual estimated to have an age at death of 5-6 years would be placed in the Juvenile category.

Assessment of adult age at death, unfortunately, results in much less specific age estimates due to a much greater individual variation in the features exhibited by the examined elements at particular ages. Age estimation of adults was assessed on the basis of the obliteration of skull sutura (Piontek, 1996) and the pubic symphysis (Brookes and Suchey 1990). The latter method examines the deterioration of the surface and categorises it accordingly. This deterioration is due in part to the health status of the individual but can also be influenced by life-style and so the variation produced by these factors results in much wider age categories: Young Adult (20-34), Middle Adult (35-49) and Old Adult (50+) (Buikstra and Ubelaker 1984).

Results

Only eight sub-adult articulated remains were recovered, including one unborn child (1 foetal, 1 child, 3 juvenile, 3 adolescent) in comparison to the remains of twenty adults.

The analysis of the age and sex distribution of the adults was limited by the small number of adults that could be assigned to a category of both criteria. Overall, of the twenty-seven individuals, one was classified as 'Male', six as 'Possible Male', one as 'Female' and two as 'Possible Female'. The combined categories results in a ratio of 7:3 Male:Female. However, ten other adults were considered to be of 'Indeterminate' sex or 'Unobservable', so this result may be artificial. Only three of the adults could be assigned an age (two young adults and one old adults) leaving seventeen individuals categorised as general 'Adults'. Again, the nature of the assemblage means that little can be inferred from these figures.

4.2.7 Skeletal Pathology

Palaeopathology is the study of diseases of past peoples and can be used to infer the health status of groups of individuals within a population as well as indicate the overall success of the adaptation of a population to its surrounding environment. Pathologies are categorised according to their aetiologies; e.g. congenital, metabolic, infectious, traumatic, neoplastic etc. Any pathological modifications to the bone are described.

As can be seen from Table 1, the conditions present amongst adults included joint disease, Schmorl's nodes, dental diseases, halluces and lytic lesion. Due to nature of

this osteological material little can be said of the general condition of the discussed population.

4.2.8 Vaulted Grave (Figure 5, Plan 4)

The preservation state of skeleton SK(11) that included only a part of frontal squama and right humerus was exceptionally poor, especially in comparison to the neighbouring skeletons inhumed in un-vaulted graves. Such a fragmentary preservation of the human remains in this case was due to fact, that mortuary structures, although isolating the body from the soil environment at the same time might trap both downward percolating water and liquid body decomposition products and as a result quicken the process of decay. Regarding the lack of diagnostic bones of this skeleton it was not possible to estimate the definite sex of the individual, however the gracility of the humerus suggested it had belonged to a female. This finding was consistent with the following inscription incised on the gravestone: *Mary Wellington, died April 11th 1821, 77 years old.* As no other articulated human remains have been found above the vaulted grave 22 it is inferred that the tombstone placed directly above it refers to the skeleton SK(11). Neighbouring this to the north lay another similar gravestone, bearing same style inscription: *J. Wellington, died May 11th 1807, 68 years old.* No remains relating to this were found above the natural undisturbed ground. The very well preserved human remains SK(30) uncovered to the north from the vaulted grave and over 50cm above the bottom of the latter were not located directly below the discussed gravestone, hence cannot be definitely attributed to it. Further north there was yet another flat top monument referring to the both above-mentioned people and the same dates. It is supposed they were initially interred separately and then reburied together in the vaulted grave in a single coffin. The fact that no male bones were found in this grave is not surprising considering extremely poor state of the remains of M. Wellington, who died fourteen years later than J. Wellington. It is possible that in the course of installing the perimeter drain 02 in later times, the three gravestones were accidentally swapped, what resulted in wrong indication of the actual location of the bodies.

4.2.9 Burials Dating (Figure 5, Plan 5b)

Apart from that discussed above SK(11) no direct dating evidence has been retrieved from the distinguished gravecuts. Relative dating has been established for the human remains SK(24), whose upper part of the body was cut away at the knees' height during or prior to digging the foundations for the eighteen century alterations to the church. This finding puts back two earlier inhumations SK(37) and SK(39) before that time.

4.3 Animal Remains

Seven single sheep/goat and two single pig teeth were recovered from the general graveyard soil (17) in the perimeter trench as well as in the western soak-away. They have not been retained.

4.4 Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

A single sherd of medieval pottery weighing 20g occurred in general graveyard soil 17. It is a rimsherd from a jar in Cotswolds Ware, classified as fabric OXAC in the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1984; 1994). It is a common find at sites in central and south-western Oxfordshire.

The ware has a general date-range of c AD975-1350, with the form of the rim and method a manufacture suggesting that this sherd is from a vessel of 11th – 12th century date. The sherd is in fairly good condition.

4.5 Environmental Samples

No environmental evidence was recovered.

5 DISCUSSION

Remains of two extensive walls of undoubtedly same structure were uncovered by the north-east corner of the existing church. No evidence has been found to establish the exact date of the discussed structure, however it is certain it pre-dates the 18th century alterations to the existing church. Walls (13) and (14) which were identically aligned and most probably same, ran along the axis slightly to the north from the late 12th-13th century column line of the main nave. The foundations of the existing church seem to start higher up than that of the structure under discussion, however the level of the surrounding burial ground would rise over the centuries. Considering the substantial width of the walls as well as its good quality it is thought the building was also of a considerable size and of some importance. Summarizing, the nature of the discussed here construction remains unclear, though it cannot be excluded that it constituted a north-east corner of an early church, probably of late Saxon date. In medieval times it was not uncommon to build a church over the existing ones and it seems the All Saints Church would represent such a case.

In the course of watching brief at the All Saints Church in Spelsbury, Oxfordshire, only a small percentage of the churchyard was disturbed, however majority of the work had an impact upon inhumations. Twenty-seven of them were identified, out of which at least two-thirds had been heavily disturbed by later activity, from further burials in the area. All the skeletons were recorded, recovered, analysed and reburied immediately. No direct dating evidence of the burials was retrieved, but it was established that at least three of the inhumations predated the eighteen-century alteration to the church. The distribution of the graves in western and southern part of the graveyard proved to be even, with the less frequent burials by the north-east corner of the church.

Dated to 11th-12th century the fragment of pottery retrieved from the burial ground derives from the earliest known stage of the functioning of the existing church. Animal teeth recovered on many occasions across the site probably derive from grave diggers' lunches. Other animal bone may have been missed during the collection of, but un-examined, disarticulated human remains.

6 BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Baas, W.M. (1995) *Human Osteology, A Laboratory and Field Manual* Missouri Archaeological Society, Inc., Columbia, USA
- Brickley, Megan and McKinley, Jacqueline I, (ed.) (2004) *Guidelines to the Standards for Recording Human Remains*, IFA Paper No.7, BABAO
- Braun, H. (1974) *Parish Churches. Their Architectural Development in England* Faber and Faber, London
- Buikstra, J. E. and Ubelaker, D. H. (1994) *Standards for Data Collection from Human Skeletal Remains*, Arkansas Archaeological Survey Research Series no. 44
- English Heritage (2002) *Human Bones from Archaeological Sites: Guidelines for producing assessment documents and analytical reports*, Centre for Archaeology Guidelines
- Garland, A.N., Janaway, R.C., (1989), *The taphonomy of inhumation burials*, in *Burial Archaeology. Current Research, Methods and Developments*, BAR British Series 211, Roberts, C. et al. (ed.)
- 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, 1994 Oxford Pottery: A Synthesis of middle and late Saxon, medieval and early post-medieval pottery in the Oxford Region *Oxoniensia* **59**, 17-217
- Ortner, Donald J. (2003) *Identification of Pathological Conditions in Human Skeletal Remains*, 2nd edition, Academic Press, London
- Pionek, Janusz (1996) *Biologia Populacji Pradziejowych*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, Poznań
- Resnick, D. (2002) *Diagnosis of bone and joint disorders*, 4th edition, WB Saunders, Philadelphia
- Roberts, C. and Manchester, K. (1997) *The Archaeology of Disease*, Sutton Publishing Ltd. Stroud, England.
- Rodwell, W. (1989) *Church Archaeology*, English Heritage, London
- Scheuer, L and Black, S. (2004) *The Juvenile Skeleton*, Elsevier Academic Press, London
- Waldron, Tony (2009) *Paleopathology*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge
- Wood, J.W. et al. (1992) *The Osteological Paradox. Problems of inferring health*

from skeletal samples, in *Current Anthropology* 33, 4, 343-70.