

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

**AT**

**ST. MARY'S CHURCH,**

**WAVENDON, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

**NGR SP 9115 3720**

**OCTOBER 2009**

**REPORT FOR** St. Mary's Church, Wavendon  
Norman & Underwood  
The Freeschool Building  
170 Scudamore Road  
Leicester  
LE3 1HP

**PREPARED BY** Milena Grzybowska

**FIELDWORK** 30<sup>th</sup> Sept – 2<sup>nd</sup> Oct 2009

**REPORT ISSUED** 14<sup>th</sup> October 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;** SMCW 09  
**JMHS Project No:** 2135  
**Archive Location** The archive is currently held with John Moore Heritage Services and will be deposited with the relevant museum in due course.

**CONTENTS**

	<b>Page</b>	
<b><i>SUMMARY</i></b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>1 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>	
1.1 Site Location		
1.2 Planning Background		
1.3 Archaeological Background		
<b>2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>3 STRATEGY</b>	<b>1</b>	
3.1 Research Design	1	
3.2 Methodology	3	
<b>4 RESULTS</b>	<b>3</b>	
4.1 Human Remains	3	
4.2 Burial Practices	5	
4.3 Animal Remains	5	
4.4 Environmental Samples	5	
<b>5 DISSCUSSION</b>	<b>5</b>	
<b>6 BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>5</b>	
 <b>FIGURES</b>		
Figure 1	Site Location.	2
Figure 2	Location of monitored trenches and human remains.	4

## **Summary**

*John Moore Heritage Services carried out a watching brief at St Mary's Church graveyard, Wavendon. One burial was located within the churchyard that was left in situ.*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Site location (Figure 1)**

St Mary's Church is situated in the village of Wavendon east of Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, within the area administered by Milton Keynes Council. The church of St Mary lies in the centre of the village (NGR: SP9115 3720). The geology is Till.

### **1.2 Planning Background**

The Incumbent and Churchwardens of St Mary's Church, Wavendon appointed Acanthus Clews Architects to oversee the improvement of land drainage to the eastern perimeter of the church, discharging into new soak-away. As the alterations were likely to disturb human remains a programme of archaeological recording during groundwork was conducted that was approved by the Diocesan Archaeological Advisor.

### **1.3 Archaeological Background**

The work was undertaken within the burial ground surrounding St. Mary's Church. The earliest surviving parts of the church, i.e. the chancel arch and arcades date to 13<sup>th</sup> century. The west tower was added in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. In the 1848-49 the church underwent entire restoration and modernisation overseen by William Butterfield (Pevsner & Williamson 1994).

## **2. AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION**

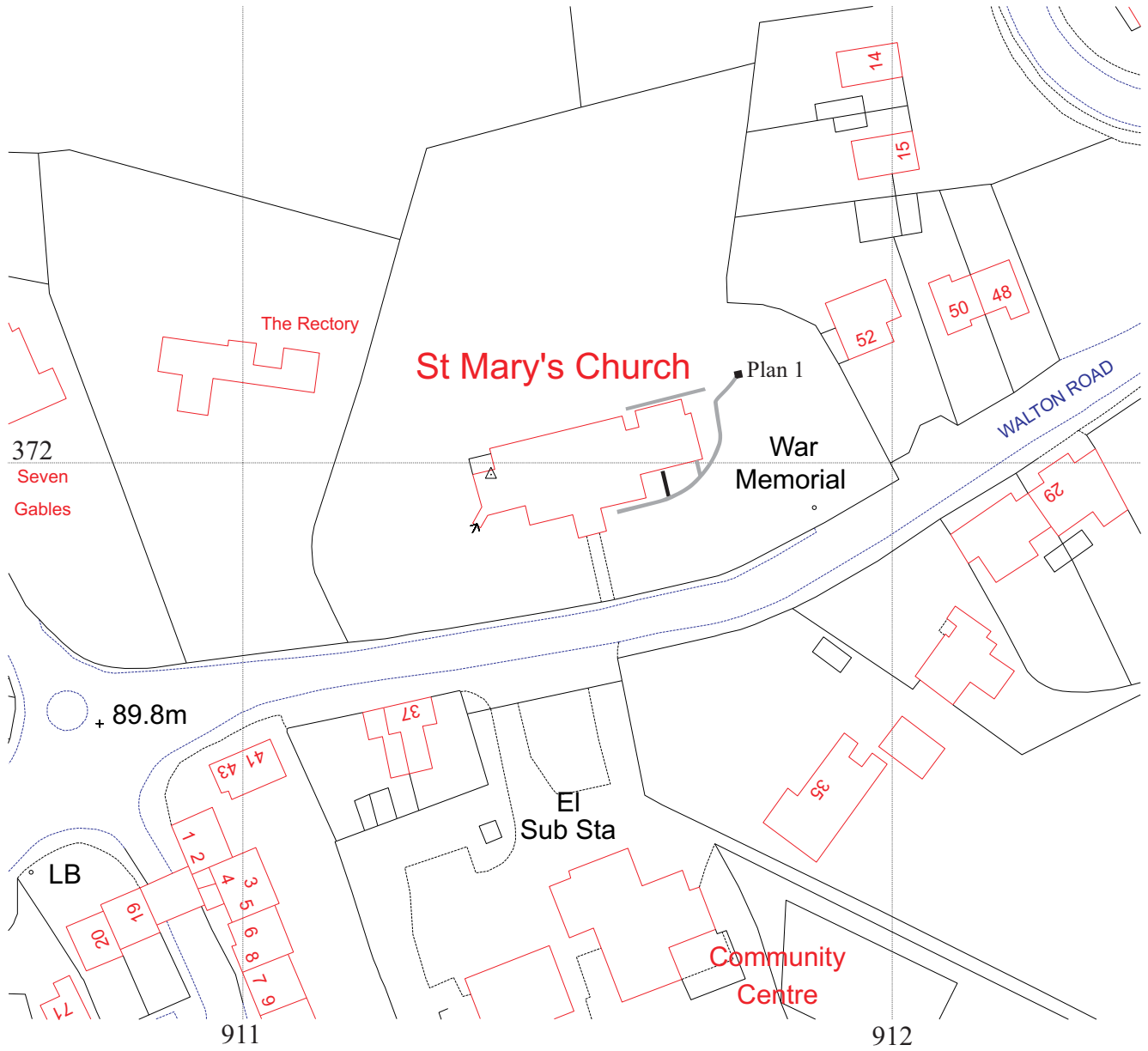
The aims of the investigation were as follows:

- to record and lift any burials encountered during the course of the work
- to excavate and record any archaeological features identify within the churchyard
- to provide a report and ordered archive on the investigation.

## **3. STRATEGY**

### **3.1 Research Design**

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work in the burial ground of St. Mary's Church in Wavendon. Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each feature encountered, with scale plans and section drawings compiled where appropriate and



© Crown Copyright 2009. All rights reserved. Licence number 100020449



Figure 1. Site Location.

possible. The work was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute for Archaeologists (2008) and the procedures laid down in MAP2 (English Heritage 1991).

### **3.2 Methodology**

An archaeologist monitored the excavation of the soak-away located to the northeast of the church as well as the trench running perpendicularly from the church towards south. Where the human remains limited investigations were conducted. The remains were left *in situ* and the depth of the groundwork was altered to accommodate this. The drainage perimeter trench running around the eastern half of the church was inspected and recorded. (*For location of inspected and hand dug areas see Figure 1. For plan of monitored trench and soak-away see Figure 2.*)

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

## **4 RESULTS**

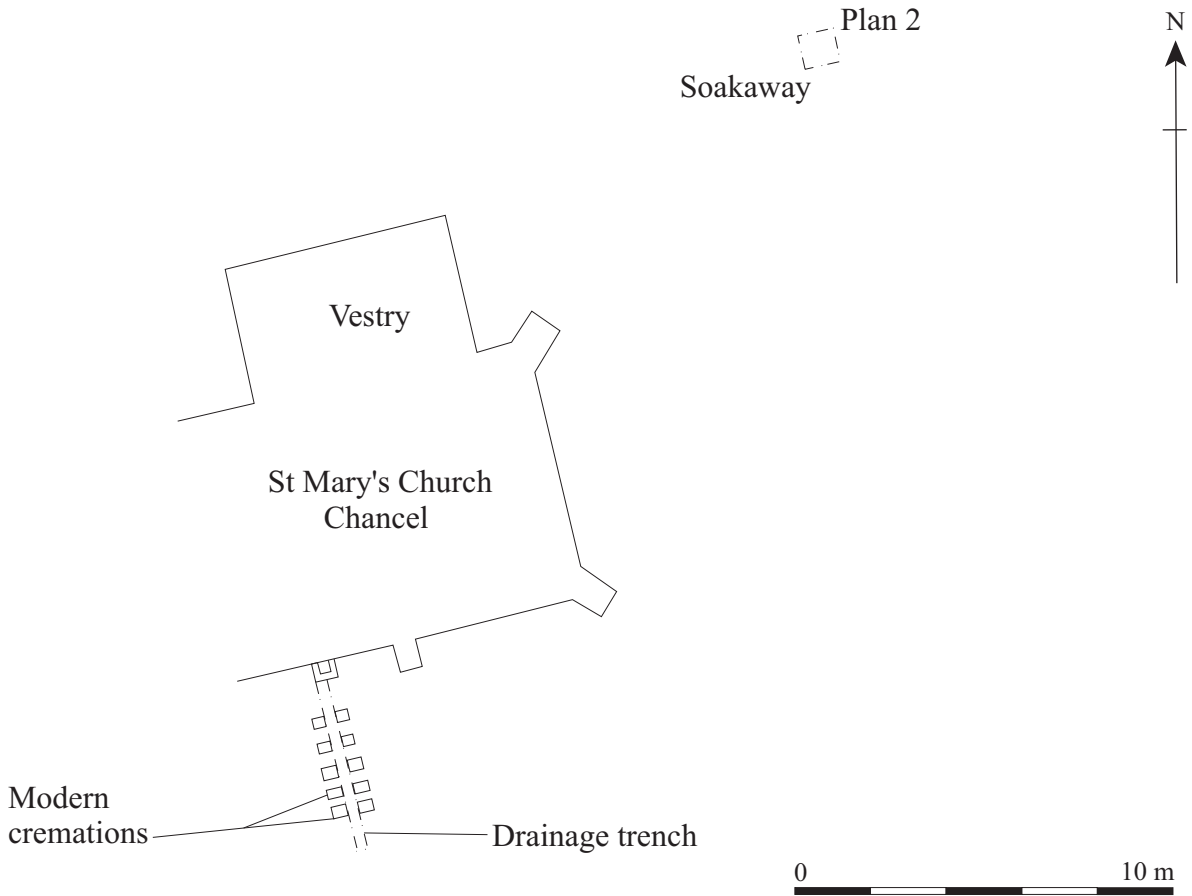
All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers without brackets indicate features i.e. pit cuts; while numbers in ( ) show feature fills or deposits of material.

### **4.1 Human Remains (Plan 2.)**

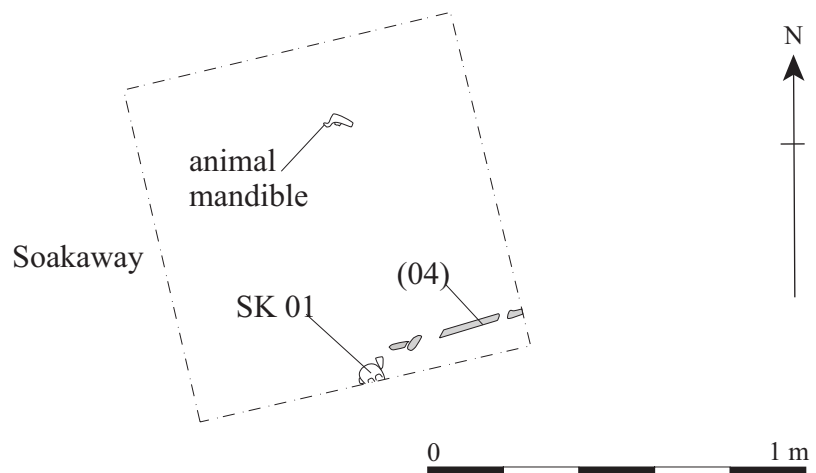
The watching brief located one human inhumation SK1 that was buried in a partially intact wooden coffin (04). An osteoarchaeologist estimated *in situ* the approximate age of the individual at the time of death to be a juvenile (Scheuer & Black, 2004). The inhumation was not marked by a gravestone, but was surrounded by other burials dated between AD 1914 and AD 2005 with the majority being dated to the 1960's and 1970's. Initially the soak-away was planned to be 1.5m deep, however on discovering human remains at the depth of 1.3m it was agreed that the depth of the soak-away would be reduced by 0.3m to a total depth of 1.2m below the current ground level. The excavation therefore was stopped, the exact location of the inhumation recorded, and the burial itself left intact *in situ* covered by a sheet of plastic and 0.10m of soil.

Small amounts of disarticulated human remains were also been found in the shallow perimeter drainage trench. Disturbed, disarticulated skeletal material is of limited scientific value, 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 the time constrained nature of this watching brief this material was not analysed *in situ*.

No pottery or other artefacts were recovered during the watching brief.



Plan 1. Location of monitored trenches



Plan 2. Location of human remains SK 01.

Figure 2. Location of monitored trenches and human remains.

#### **4.2 Burial Practices** (*Plan 2.*)

Although the burial SK1 was only partially exposed, as the majority of it extended beyond the excavation edge, it was possible to establish the orientation of the inhumation. The burial at St. Mary's Church reflected the predominant Christian beliefs and was 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.

#### **4.3 Animal Remains**

One mandible of a pig was recovered from the graveyard soil (03) in the soak-away. The remains have not been retained.

#### **4.4 Environmental Samples**

No environmental samples were taken.

### **5. DISSCUSSION**

In the course of watching brief at St. Mary's Church in Wavendon, Buckinghamshire, only a small percentage of the churchyard was disturbed, however the watching brief was successful in locating one unmarked inhumation.

### **6. BIBLIOGRAPHY**

English Heritage, (1991), *Management of Archaeological Projects*

Institute for Archaeologists. (2008), *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs.*

Pevsner, N., Williamson, E., (1994), *The Buildings of England. Buckinghamshire*, Penguin Books, London

Scheuer, L and Black, S., (2004), *The Juvenile Skeleton*, Elsevier Academic Press, London