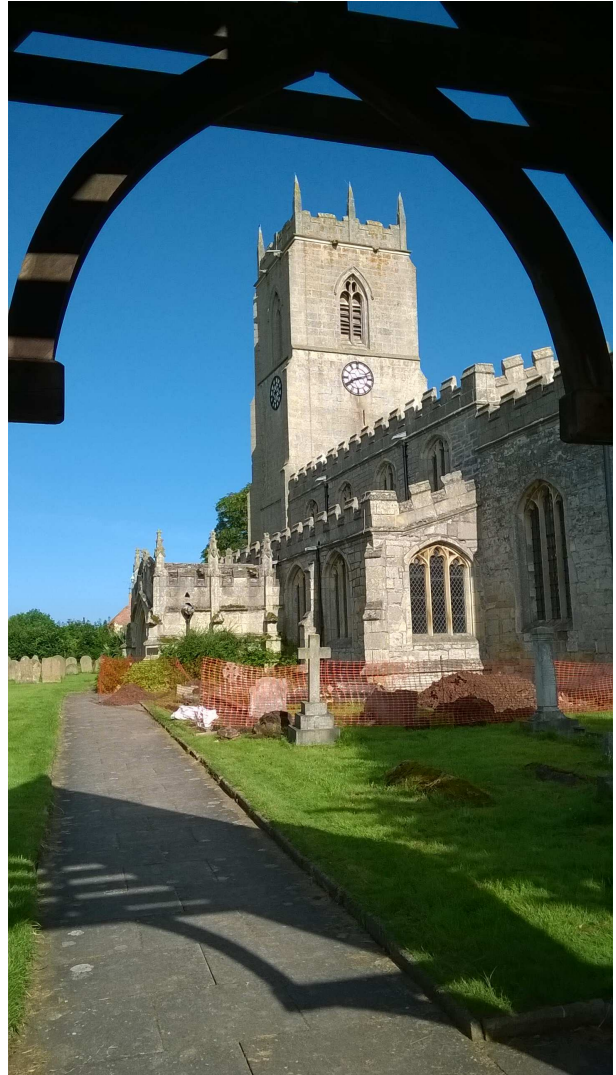


ST. PETER'S CHURCH, EAST DRAYTON
**Drainage improvements: Archaeological
monitoring and recording**



Network Archaeology



for

East Drayton PCC

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CONTENTS

Summary	1
Introduction	2
Description of Works	2
Objectives.....	3
Findings.....	4
The area bounded by the path, the porch and aisle and chancel walls	4
The main soakaway.....	5
The smaller soakaway and western porch trench.....	6
Discussion	7
References	9
Pottery Archive, East Drayton Churchyard, Nottinghamshire (EDC 16)	11

Figures

Figure 1: Location of East Drayton village in relation to River Trent and A57 (Google Earth)

Figure 2: Google Earth view of the St Peter's and the churchyard

Figure 3: Plan of excavated trenches

Figure 4: Headstone of Samuel Musgrave (101), as found

Figure 5: Inscription on headstone of Samuel Musgrave

Figure 6: Grave kerb (102), on north side of grave of Harriet Musgrave

Figure 7: Grave kerb (103), between path and headstone of Joseph Newton

Figure 8: West trench, showing grave kerbs (107) either side of memorial to Henry Salmon

Figure 9: South trench, fully excavated

Figure 10: Reconstruction of grave cuts in the main soakaway

Figure 11: Skeleton 123

Figure 12: Skeleton 116

Figure 13: Skeleton 119

Figure 14: Skeleton 120

Figure 15: Skeleton 115

Figure 16: Skeleton 114

Figure 17: Bones from a young infant (125)

Figure 18: Piece of worked stone (124) in the main soakaway

Figure 19: Worked stone (124) showing location in the north-western corner of the soakaway

Figure 20: Skeleton 127

Figure 21: Skeleton 128

Appendices

1 Numbers used

2 Pottery Catalogue (Jane Young)

3 OASIS form

SUMMARY

During monitoring of the installation of drains in the churchyard of St Peter's Church, East Drayton, Nottinghamshire, eight human inhumations, together with quantities of disarticulated human bone, were recorded. Dating evidence was scarce, but single sherds of medieval pottery were present in the backfills of two of the graves.

INTRODUCTION

Archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken during installation of new drains in the churchyard of St Peter's Church, East Drayton. The work was carried out under the provisions of a faculty from the diocese of Southwell.

East Drayton lies 4km west of the Trent crossing at Dunham Bridge, and 1.5km north of Darlton village on the A57 (Fig. 1). The earliest surviving fabric of the Grade I listed St Peter's Parish Church (NHLE 1212946) dates to the late twelfth or thirteenth century and is of dressed coursed rubble. An enlargement and remodelling in the fifteenth century included much ashlar stonework. Since that time, restoration work has been carried out in 1857, by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, with further work on the nave and aisles in 1873. The nave roof was restored in 1982, but further work on the aisle and porch roofs was carried out recently.

The church lies in a well maintained churchyard occupying the north-western angle of the crossroads that form the focal point of East Drayton village (Fig. 2). Although the village has seen some small-scale housing development in recent years, it still has several working farms and has retained much of its traditional rural character. Continuity within the village population is reflected in the churchyard, with the graves grouped in family plots, especially those closer to the church.

Some of the memorials have inscriptions which are no longer legible, but surviving grave markers date back to the first half of the eighteenth century. Notable early examples include the gravestones of Sulanna Woodall (died 27th May 1725) and John Gabb (died 9th July 1735), located to the south of the path, which are grade II listed (NHLE 1045688), and the memorial to the 92 year old William Theaker (died January 1736) close to the south east corner of the chancel.

A lych-gate, renovated in 2004, gives access from North Green, the road to the east of the church, to a 1.5m-wide paved path. This path, which is at a slightly oblique angle to the axis of the church, continues to the porch, beyond which it is continued by a narrower path, a single paving slab wide, which then turns north past the tower at the west end of the church.

Description of Works

The installation of new drains followed restoration work on the roofs and guttering of the south aisle, chancel and porch of the church. The gutters empty into four downpipes, located on the centres of the south walls of the chancel and south aisle, and on the east and west walls of the south porch. A 1.5m square soakaway, 1.2m deep, was dug under the path along the south side of the church, to receive the water from the three new drains leading from the downpipes to the east of the porch, while the drain from the west side of the porch empties into its own smaller soakaway, partly under the smaller path that extends around the west end of the church (Fig. 3).

The siting of the main soakaway beneath the path was intended to ensure that no recent graves were disturbed. Although the current surface of the main path, three paving slabs wide, is new and its installation commemorated by an inscribed plaque set into the south-east corner of the porch, it replaced an earlier metal surface. The detailed siting of the drains was determined on site, with the intention in each case of avoiding visible grave markers and, as far as possible, the inferred positions of recent graves.

The drains from the east side of the porch and from the aisle wall both ran directly to the main soakaway, while that from the chancel wall connected to a newly installed inspection chamber close to the path, then alongside the path to the soakaway. The 100mm-diameter plastic drain pipes were laid in trenches 0.3 to 0.4m wide within a bed of pea gravel.

Monitoring was carried out over seven working days, from 23rd June to 1st July 2014. All of the excavation was done by hand, and was monitored by the attending archaeologist. Where human remains were uncovered, excavation of that part of the trench was halted. The full extents of the remains within the limits of the trench were exposed by the archaeologist, allowing them to be recorded and photographed. The remains were then lifted so that excavation of the trench could continue. Articulated remains were kept together, while disarticulated human bone was bagged by

trench. All of the human remains were reinterred, as close as practicable to the location in which they were found. Handling and treatment of remains followed English Heritage guidance (Mays 2005).

Network Archaeology acknowledges the support of East Drayton Parochial Church Council, and the help and cooperation of Matt King of CEL Group, Carl Andrews of Soul Architects and the workforce from Trio Construction.

Objectives

The method statement listed the prime objective of the archaeological works as mitigating the impact of the development on the archaeological resource, by:

- establishing the presence or absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains;
- locating, investigating and recording archaeological deposits;
- recovering, recording and conserving significant archaeological finds;
- producing a site archive and report for submission to the receiving museum and Nottinghamshire HER, as appropriate.

FINDINGS

A similar sequence of deposits was present in the upper layers throughout the excavated trenches. The turf layer (100) was underlain by a rich dark greyish brown loamy silt topsoil up to 0.15m deep. A clear horizon separated this from a much more heterogeneous dark, rather loose, humic layer with frequent inclusions of brick and fragments of limestone (105), which extended to a depth below the surface of 0.40m or more. This graded down into an increasingly clay-rich layer: still disturbed and with inclusions of brick and limestone, but with large patches of clay, generally red but with streaks of reduced blue colour. The trenches were distinguished as labelled on Fig 3.

The area bounded by the path, the porch and aisle and chancel walls

Grave furniture, not apparent on the surface, was revealed immediately below the turf layer. Particularly unexpected was a complete headstone (101; Fig. 4), commemorating Samuel Musgrave (died 22nd July 1880), lying so that its top was between the upstanding headstones of Harriet Musgrave (died 7th March 1910) and Joseph Newton (died 2nd Jan. 1926). It was clearly designed to have been set upright, with a large foot bearing the mason's name, Sharpe, close to ground level. However, the crispness of the carving suggests that it has not been exposed to the atmosphere for any extended period.

Of the grave markers with inscriptions still legible in this part of the churchyard, this is the oldest, and it may be that the stone was laid flat as part of a late nineteenth- or early twentieth-century landscaping of this area. On the rich loamy topsoil, it could have been rapidly buried by worm action if it was not actively maintained.

Stone kerbs around several of the graves had similarly become buried, leaving no visible trace on the surface. A matching pair, one metre apart, to the north of Samuel Musgrave's headstone, were in a fine-grained limestone with rectangular cross-section, 170mm wide by 60mm deep (Fig. 6). Although only a small length of each was exposed in the trench, their position implies that they form a surround for the grave of Harriet Musgrave.

Close to the north edge of the path, a 1.98m-long kerb of similar dimensions, cracked into two pieces, was exposed (103). This was in a fine polished limestone with almost marble-like appearance. At its western end, a return to the north was partly exposed (Fig. 7), and a possible counterpart crossed the trench to the south of Samuel Musgrave's headstone. These kerbs probably marked the grave of Joseph Newton, whose headstone they surrounded, although the headstone was positioned to the north of the central axis of the enclosed area, raising the possibility that the kerbs were survivors of an earlier grave.

Crossing the western trench, two rough concrete beams (107), aligned either side of the headstone of Henry Salmon (died 14th March 1910) are perhaps best interpreted as the foundations for stone kerbs, which have subsequently been lost (Fig. 8). To the south, a similar, though even more roughly finished, concrete beam (108) was probably a foundation for a similar kerb around the grave of his eldest daughter Mary (died 2nd April 1906). Fragments of concrete of similar appearance noted in the trench to the north were probably the remains of a northern counterpart to kerb 108, possibly disturbed when Mary's father's grave was dug. Kerb 108 was removed to allow the installation of the drain, but the other features described above were left *in situ*, with the trench being excavated beneath them.

The eastern and western trenches, passing to the east of extant headstones, clearly cut through the upper fills of graves, but at a maximum depth of no more than 600mm were not deep enough to disturb these relatively modern, early twentieth-century graves. Both of these trenches produced small quantities of disarticulated human bone (104 and 110 respectively). Readily identifiable pieces included a femoral head, fibula shaft, innominate fragments, humerus shaft and rib fragments (104), and a small unfused humeral shaft, a metacarpal and rib fragments (110).

The assemblage of disarticulated human bone from the east porch trench, which did not impinge on any extant graves, produced a similarly small assemblage (112) that included a clavicle, mandible fragment and a tibia shaft.

The southern trench, running alongside the path from the inspection chamber to the main soakaway, produced rather more disarticulated human bone (109). To some extent, this is a reflection of the greater depth of this trench, especially at its western end, where its base was up to 900mm below the level of the path (Fig. 9). A skull and jaw (111), found 5.30m from the eastern extremity of the trench and at a depth of 800mm, may have been part of an articulated skeleton, probably of a young child, the rest of which was beneath the base of the trench. On almost the same alignment, an earlier cut (130) of similar depth, for a ceramic horseshoe drain, had disturbed the south side of the southern trench.

The main soakaway

The main soakaway pit was 1.5m square and 1.2m deep. Six articulated skeletons were recorded within this space, along with a considerable quantity of disarticulated bone.

Grave cuts were not visible, until cut into the natural deposits at the base, and no attempt was made to distinguish fills, except in three cases where finds close to the human remains could be fairly confidently attributed to the fills of the graves associated with those remains.

Three earliest skeletons, 123, 116 and 119 (Figs.11, 12, 13) had no stratigraphic relationships between them, and it is therefore not possible determine their order of burial, but all three were laid at a similar depth, of around 0.85m to 0.90m below the level of the path. They were also fairly evenly spaced, which might suggest that they belonged to the same phase of use in this part of the churchyard.

The skull, neck and left side of the body, from the right shoulder to the left knee, survived from skeleton 116. Around the skull, the remains of at least four tiny copper alloy pins were noted, only one of which was sufficiently robust to be lifted, the others being little more than green carbonate stains.

The position of the vertebrae of skeleton 119 corresponded to the northern baulk of the soakaway pit, beneath the edge of the path. Although the left side of the skeleton could therefore not be seen clearly there were indications that the skeleton had been truncated just behind this baulk, probably when drain 130 had been dug. Only the rib cage, clavicle, scapula, mandible and skull fragments survived of the right side of the body.

Between skeletons 116, north of the centreline of the soakaway, and skeleton 119, in the northern baulk, a later grave, for skeleton 120, was deeper, to 1.10m. Skeleton 120 was the best preserved of the six recorded in the soakaway and was largely complete (Fig. 14), although its neck and skull, beneath the western baulk of the soakaway, were not exposed. A sherd of a mid- to late-eleventh- to mid- to late twelfth-century Stamford Ware pitcher (Young, Appendix 2, below) was found immediately above (fill 121) the left humerus of skeleton 120. A loose femur (122) beside the right leg of the same skeleton was probably deliberately placed, after having been disturbed during the digging of the grave, and may have originally belonged to skeleton 119.

Only the lower part of skeleton 115, lower vertebrae down through the hips and legs, was exposed, the upper body lying beyond the south-west corner of the soakaway pit (Fig. 15). The alignment of this skeleton was slightly oblique to the others, which were all on a nearly exact east-to-west alignment. As a result, the grave for skeleton 115 had truncated skeleton 123 from the neck to the left hip and had also probably truncated the lower right side of skeleton 116.

In the south side of the soakaway pit and lying above skeletons 115 and 116, the skeleton of a young child, 114, was barely 0.70m below the level of the path (Fig. 16). The grave had probably disrupted the earlier graves, probably, for instance, accounting for the loss of arm bones from skeleton 115. The whole extent of skeleton 114 was exposed within the soakaway, the length from the top of the skull to the feet being no more than 1.10m. A ferrous metal object, possibly a clasp or coffin fitting, was found in the left shoulder region of the skeleton. A sherd of a late thirteenth- to fifteenth-century Humberware jug (Young, Appendix 2, below) was also recovered from the fill (118) just above the skeleton.

Among the disarticulated human bone recovered (113), a group that almost certainly belonged to the same individual, a young infant, were present. These were re-bagged and re-buried together, as skeleton 125 (Fig. 17). Although care was taken during digging of the soakaway, it is possible that this

skeleton had been disturbed in the course of the excavation, but the bones could equally have been disturbed during the original digging of one of the graves and incorporated into the grave backfill.

Close to the north-west corner of the soakaway, a tooled limestone slab (124), split into two, was visible in the top of the western baulk (Fig. 18, 19). Its upright position suggests that this may have been the surviving base of a broken-off headstone or similar memorial.

The smaller soakaway and western porch trench

Two further articulated skeletons were recorded in the smaller soakaway, to the west of the porch. Skeleton 127 lay largely beneath the western baulk of the pit, near the south-west corner of the pit, at a depth of 0.90m. Only the lower legs were visible (Fig. 20). The right tibia appeared to have been truncated just below the knee, presumably by another grave to the south-west.

Deeper, at around 1.05m, the skull, jaw and cervical vertebrae of skeleton 128 were exposed running into the eastern baulk (Fig. 21). The grave for this skeleton may have been responsible for truncating the left foot of skeleton 127, but a group of metatarsal and toe bones within the disarticulated bone (126) could indicate that this was disturbed during the excavation of the pit.

The trench from the west side of the porch was relatively shallow, being less than 0.60m deep at its outfall into the smaller soakaway. The upper subsoil layer here had a more disturbed appearance than that to the east of the porch, and had a noticeably higher proportion of brick rubble, suggesting that there may have once been a brick-built structure here.

DISCUSSION

The drainage works affected less than 20m² of the churchyard, considerably less than one per cent of its total area, and afforded only a limited opportunity for archaeological recording. The full depth of deposits, to the underlying geological strata, could only be seen in the main soakaway. Nevertheless there were some useful observations made, and tentative conclusions can be drawn from them.

There was surprisingly little disarticulated human bone from the trenches to the north of the path. These trenches clearly crossed the upper fills of late nineteenth or early twentieth century graves, as shown by the surviving headstones, but were not sufficiently deep to risk disturbing burials, normal practice, by that time, being interment at a greater depth.

Separate grave cuts were not readily visible, and, in a monitoring situation, it was not practical to systematically clean sections or surfaces in an attempt to distinguish cuts. The fairly consistent stratification of deposits throughout probably implies that it was a deliberate policy of the church sextons to keep different layers separate, so that deposits could be backfilled in reverse sequence. The tendency to homogenisation of layers would have been reinforced by the effects of bioturbation, particularly by worm action. The power of this activity is demonstrated by the thick, organically rich, inclusion-free turf layer throughout the churchyard, as well as the buried headstone of Samuel Musgrave. Presumably this originally was laid on the surface, for whatever reason, and was lost from sight, perhaps quite rapidly.

At the time that the latest graves in this part of the churchyard were dug, there would certainly have been an expectation that human remains disturbed during digging of graves should be treated reverently. The scarcity of charnel from earlier graves may be an indication that the sextons were assiduous in collecting human bone, in order to deal with it with due sensitivity.

It could also be the case that this part of the churchyard was not previously much used for burials. The southern side of the church is generally the most favoured part of a churchyard for burials, so it might be expected that this would be the most densely occupied. However, this preference could also result in greater exclusivity, with only a limited number of individuals, perhaps only the parish priests, being buried here.

It is also possible that the area was cleared in the course of nineteenth-century restoration work or landscaping of the churchyard. It is notable that no human bone was recovered from within the trench leading from the western side of the porch. The quantity of brick rubble noted in the upper layers in this area possibly suggests that there was a brick-built building here at one time. It is beyond the scope of this report to consult historical records, but further study may allow the source of this brick waste to be identified. It may be of relevance that the Byron family graves in this area form a particularly tight, coherent group, perhaps suggesting that the land was newly available for burials in the mid-nineteenth century.

The contrast with the two soakaway pits was striking. Although the greater depth of these pits over-emphasises the difference, there was certainly more charnel in the upper layers beneath the path than immediately to the north of it. This can probably be explained by the path to the south porch of the church having been in its current position for some time, perhaps from the eighteenth or earlier nineteenth century. There would therefore have been no disturbance by more recent graves since this time, allowing the survival of earlier and probably shallower inhumations.

In the absence of direct, scientific dating methods, such as radiocarbon determinations, dating of Christian burials is difficult as there are generally very few finds that can be clearly associated with the burial. The only potentially datable finds that could be fairly unequivocally associated with the burials were the probable shroud pins from skeleton 116 and the ferrous metal object from child burial 114. The recovered pin shaft, however, does not display any diagnostic features, quite apart from its fragile condition, and the possible shroud clasp from the skeleton 114 is in a very corroded state.

The only two dated finds are the small pottery sherds, from the graves of skeletons 114 and 120. Although both were found close to their respective skeletons, they could easily be residual.

Nevertheless, they are consistent with the medieval origin of the church, and presumably its churchyard.

Apart from the pins around the head of skeleton 116, indirect evidence for probable shroud burials is provided by the positioning of the intercutting burials in the main soakaway. This shows that the graves were narrow, not wide enough to accommodate anything much more than a winding sheet. The widespread and general use of coffins is relatively recent, but their apparent lack of use for any of the burials in the main soakaway probably indicates that none of these interments date to later than the mid-nineteenth century.

The burials in the two soakaways were both broadly consistent with the maintenance though time of a coherent pattern in the layout of the graves. All of the skeletons were aligned in the normal east-to-west orientation, with the head at the western end, apart from skeleton 115, which was slightly oblique to the others. All were supine and extended, with hands typically on the upper femora or crossed to the opposite side of the pelvis. Although the later adult skeletons in the main soakaway were displaced to the west compared to the earlier three, there was an impression of regular spacing and roughly similar positioning across phases.

As a more general observation, soil conditions within the churchyard were fairly good for preservation of bone, which was quite dense and coherent except where it had been disturbed by later intrusions. This indicates that both the mineral and organic content was fairly high. This could have implications for the archaeological research potential should any larger scale work be carried out within the churchyard at any future time.

REFERENCES

Mays, S. 2005. Guidance for best practice for treatment of human remains excavated from Christian burial grounds in England, English Heritage

FIGURES

Figure 1: Location of East Drayton village in relation to River Trent and A57 (Google Earth)

Figure 2: Google Earth view of the St Peter's and the churchyard

Figure 3: Plan of excavated trenches

Figure 4: Headstone of Samuel Musgrave (101), as found

Figure 5: Inscription on headstone of Samuel Musgrave

Figure 6: Grave kerb (102), on north side of grave of Harriet Musgrave

Figure 7: Grave kerb (103), between path and headstone of Joseph Newton

Figure 8: West trench, showing grave kerbs (107) either side of memorial to Henry Salmon

Figure 9: South trench, fully excavated

Figure 10: Reconstruction of grave cuts in the main soakaway

Figure 11: Skeleton 123

Figure 12: Skeleton 116

Figure 13: Skeleton 119

Figure 14: Skeleton 120

Figure 15: Skeleton 115

Figure 16: Skeleton 114

Figure 17: Bones from a young infant (125)

Figure 18: Piece of worked stone (124) in the main soakaway

Figure 19: Worked stone (124) showing location in the north-western corner of the soakaway

Figure 20: Skeleton 127

Figure 21: Skeleton 128



Figure 1: Location of East Drayton village in relation to River Trent and A57 (Google Earth)



Figure 2: Google Earth view of the St Peter's and the churchyard (Google Earth)



Figure 4: Headstone of Samuel Musgrave (101), as found, scale 0.5m

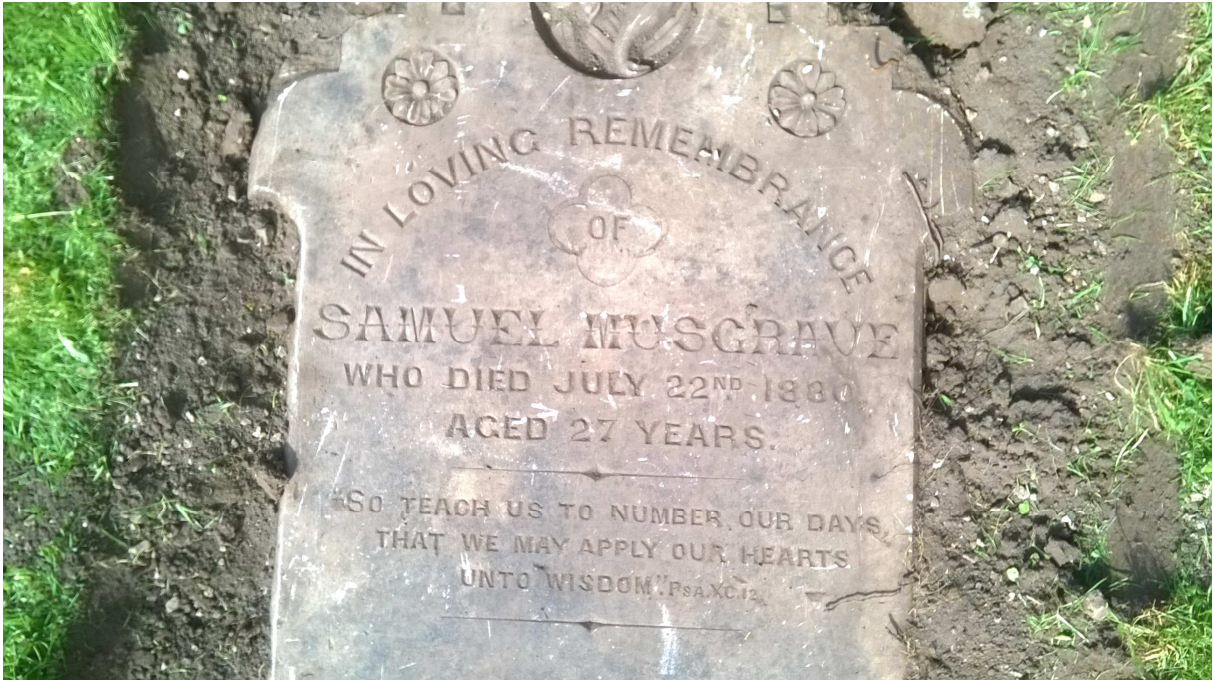


Figure 5: Inscription on headstone of Samuel Musgrave



Figure 6: Grave kerb (102), on north side of grave of Harriet Musgrave



Figure 7: Grave kerb (103), between path and headstone of Joseph Newton, scale 0.5m



Figure 8: West trench, showing grave kerbs (107) either side of memorial to Henry Salmon



Figure 9: South trench, fully excavated, the south side of base disrupted by drain (130), scale 0.5m

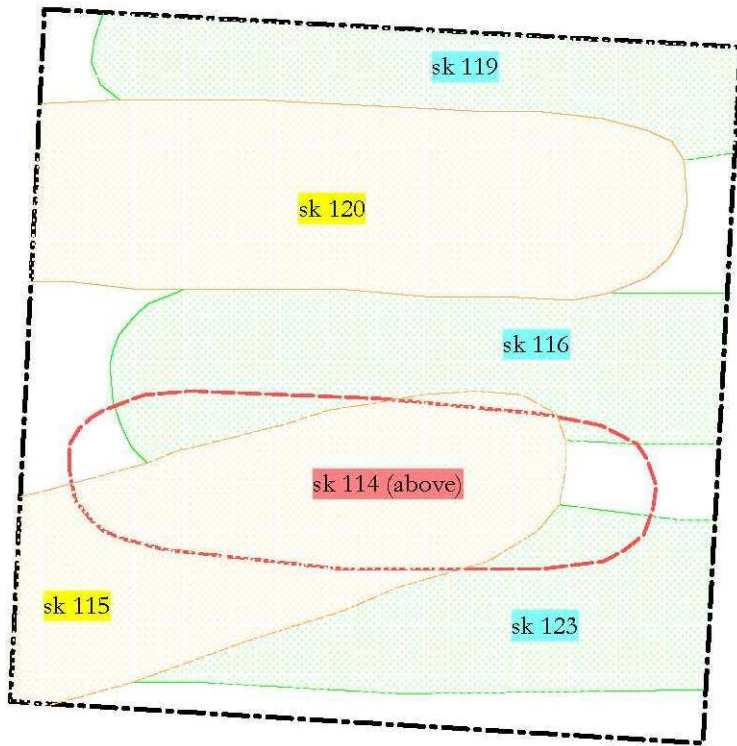


Figure 10: Reconstruction of grave cuts in the main soakaway showing their sequence, scale 1:20



Figure 11: Skeleton 123, showing truncation from right shoulder to left hip by grave of skeleton 115, scale 0.5m



Figure 12: Skeleton 116: showing truncation from right humerus to left femur, by grave of skeleton 115 and probably another grave to the east, scale 0.5m



Figure 13: Mandible, right clavicle, scapula, ribs and vertebrae of skeleton 119, exposed in northern baulk of main soakaway pit, scale 0.5m



Figure 14: Skeleton 120, the deepest of the burials within the main soakaway pit, with disarticulated femur (122) to the south of the scale, scale 0.5m



Figure 15: Skeleton 115 (with partially exposed skeleton 116 to the north and skeleton 123 unexcavated beneath the spoil in the south-east corner of the soakaway pit), scale 0.5m



Figure 16: Skeleton 114, the shallowest of the burials uncovered in the main soakaway pit; the damaged skull of this infant skeleton was lifted in order to facilitate the excavation of the rest of the skeleton, scale 0.5m



Figure 17: Bones from a young infant (125) found within the disarticulated bone collected during excavation of the main soakaway pit; these were clearly from a single individual and were reburied together



Figure 18: Piece of worked stone (124) visible beneath the path in the north-western corner of the main soakaway pit



Figure 19: Worked stone (124), probably the remains of a headstone or other grave marker, showing its location in relation to the north-west corner of the soakaway pit, scale 0.5m



Figure 20: Skeleton 127, in the south-west corner of the smaller, western soakaway pit, scale 0.5m

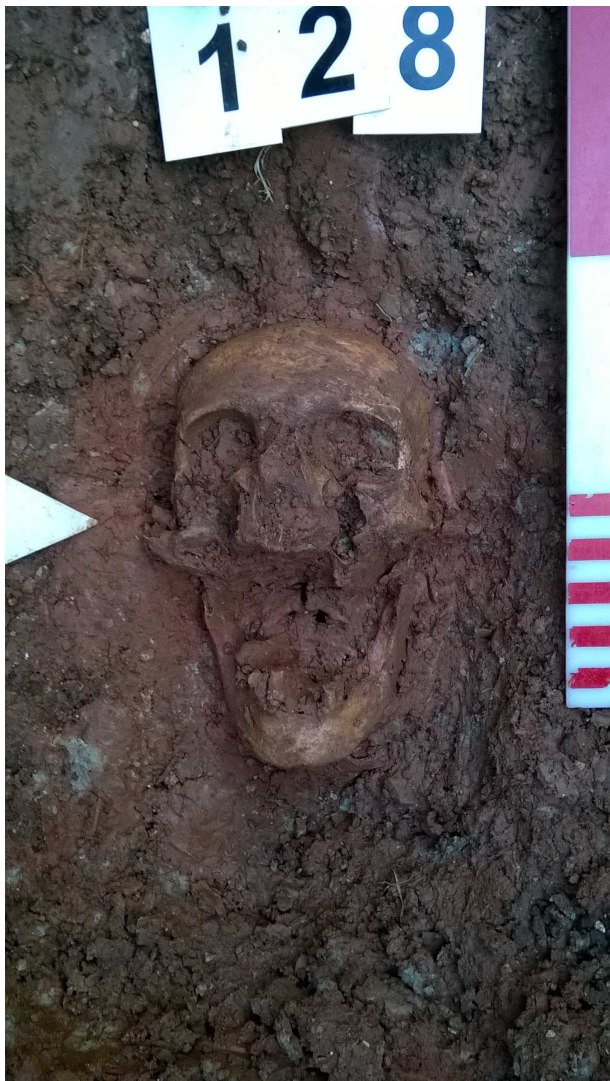


Figure 21: Skeleton 128 in the smaller, western soakaway pit; the hyoid and all of the cervical vertebrae were present below and to the east of the mandible; the rest of the skeleton lay beneath the eastern baulk of the pit

Appendices

1 Numbers used

2 Pottery Catalogue (Jane Young)

3 OASIS form

APPENDIX 1: Numbers used

Context	Description
100	Turf and topsoil
101	Gravestone: Samuel Musgrave
102	Stone grave kerbs: Harriet Musgrave
103	Stone grave kerbs: Joseph Newton
104	Disarticulated human bone: west trench
105	Disturbed subsoil layer
106	Clay-rich subsoil layer, underlying 105
107	Concrete grave kerbs/kerb foundations: Henry Salmon
108	Concrete grave kerb foundation: Mary Salmon
109	Disarticulated human bone: south trench
110	Disarticulated human bone: east trench
111	Skull and jaw: possible articulated skeleton in base of trench
112	Disarticulated human bone: east porch trench
113	Disarticulated human bone: main soakaway
114	Child skeleton: toward south west corner of main soakaway
115	Lower half of skeleton; south side soakaway, slightly oblique
116	Skeleton: skull and left side of body, toward north side of soakaway
117	Fill of grave for sk116: number for finds
118	Fill of grave for sk114: number for finds
119	Skeleton: ribs and vertebrae in northern baulk of main soakaway
120	Skeleton: complete from shoulders down, in N side of soakaway
121	Fill of grave for sk120: number for finds
122	Single human femur, complete, ?placed in side of grave for sk120
123	Skeleton: towards S side of soakaway; truncated left hip to right shoulder
124	Stone, split in two: probable base of headstone: top of W side of main soakaway
125	Skeleton: found as matching bones of young child among disarticulated bone 113
126	Disarticulated human bone from smaller western soakaway
127	Skeleton: left femur, tibs and fibs, exposed in south-west corner of small soakaway
128	Skeleton: skull, jaw and cervical verts exposed in east side of small soakaway
129	Fill of drain 130
130	Cut for horseshoe drain, visible in southern trench
131	Brick red sandy natural deposit exposed in main soakaway

APPENDIX 2: Pottery

Pottery Archive, East Drayton Churchyard, Nottinghamshire (EDC 16)

Jane Young 08 August 2014

Two sherds were presented for examination. The small and slightly abraded sherd from deposit 121 is from a glazed pitcher in Stamford ware Fabric B. This vessel is of post-conquest mid/late 11th to mid/late 12th century date. The other sherd found in deposit 118 comes from a late 13th to 15th century Humberware jug.

context	cname	full name	sub fabric	form type	sherds	weight	part	description	date
118	HUM	Humberware		jug	1	5	BS	fairly fresh condition	late 13th to 15th
121	ST	Stamford Ware	Fabric B	pitcher	1	4	BS	yellow ext glaze; edge of lower handle join	mid-/late 11th to mid-/late 12th

Both sherds should be retained for future study.

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View 2	2	Richard Moore	richardm@netarch.co.uk	12 August 2014

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