

# All Saints Church Great Bourton Oxfordshire

## Archaeological Watching Brief Report



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Great Bourton, Oxfordshire*****ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT*****CONTENTS**

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## SUMMARY

*In January 2007, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at All Saints Church, Great Bourton, Oxfordshire (NGR: SP 456 455). The work was commissioned by Acanthus Clews in advance of the installation of a new kitchen and lavatory within the church, installation of under-floor insulation within the nave and excavation of an external service trench. The watching brief revealed an external buried soil horizon relating to the 1863 rebuilding of the church, an internal buried soil horizon, possibly the original topsoil level and probable evidence for earlier box pews dating to the 1863 rebuild but subsequently replaced.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 In January 2007, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at All Saints Church, Great Bourton, Oxfordshire (NGR: SP 456 455). The work was commissioned by the Acanthus Clews in respect of a proposal to install a new kitchen and lavatory, install underfloor insulation in the Nave and to excavate an exterior service trench.

1.1.2 A project brief was set by Julian Munby, the Diocesan Archaeological Advisor, detailing the requirements for an archaeological watching brief during the period of the groundworks (J. Munby, 2006).

### 1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The village of Great Bourton is situated in North Oxfordshire, 4.5 km north of Banbury (Fig. 1). The Church of All Saints is located within the centre of the village on an island of raised ground north of the main thoroughfare at approximately 140 m above OD. The site occupies an area c0.4 hectares and the underlying geology is clay over Marlstone Rock, clay and silts (Geological Survey of Great Britain, sheet no 201).

### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The archaeological background to the watching brief was prepared for the project using published sources and is reproduced below.

1.3.2 Great Bourton stands on high ground between the 400 and 500 foot contours with the land falling sharply into the Cherwell Valley. The water supply came from wells and springs, and there is no stream nearby. The place-name “*Tun by a Burh*” first occurs between 1209 and 1212, and Great Bourton in 1265.

1.3.3 The church occupies a central position in the village. The original All Saints Church was built in the 13th-century, but when it fell into disrepair the building was turned

into a school and worshippers were designated their own part of the church in Cropredy.

- 1.3.4 The building was eventually almost entirely rebuilt in 1863 by William White, leaving just the west wall of the original nave and an arch relating to earlier piscina in the chancel. A north aisle was also added at this time. The bell tower was constructed separately from the church in 1882 (also by William White). This was constructed in the form of a Lychgate with a tall openwork timber bell tower with a steeply pitched roof built above, and is sited at the south-west corner of the churchyard at the junction between Manor road and the main road through the village.

## 2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 To identify and record the presence or absence, extent, condition, quality and date of archaeological remains in the areas affected by the development.
- 2.1.2 To preserve by record any such remains (if present) that may be disturbed or destroyed during the course of the work.
- 2.1.3 To make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

### 2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The watching brief was conducted as a series of site visits during work likely to disturb or intrude upon potential archaeological deposits. All excavations and any spoil was closely examined for archaeological deposits and dating evidence. All works were hand excavated.
- 2.2.2 A plan showing the extent of the excavations and the location of the sections was maintained at a scale of 1:100 (Fig. 2) and any recorded sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20. All excavations and recorded sections were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. A general photographic record of the work was also made. Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OA Field Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson, 1992).

## 3 RESULTS

### 3.1 Description of deposits

#### ***Exterior Sewer Pipe Trench***

- 3.1.1 This consisted of approximately 30 m length of 0.5 m wide by 0.6 m deep trenching running parallel to the north wall of the church with 2 side spurs to connect with the interior of the church (Fig. 2, plan). The stratigraphy observed was uniform throughout the length of the trench.

3.1.2 The underlying natural, a grey-brown silt clay (3), containing occasional ironstone fragments was encountered at a depth of 0.35 m below the current ground level (Fig. 2, section 1). This was overlain by a 0.15 m deep layer of dark yellow-brown silt clay (2) which produced charcoal flecking and fragments of red clay roof tile. Overlying this was a 0.2 m deep layer of dark brown clay loam (1), the present day topsoil and turf.

### ***Internal Floor Reduction***

3.1.3 An area within the northern side of the nave measuring approximately 5 m by 8 m, was reduced in depth, in order to install insulation and under-floor heating (Fig. 2, plan).

3.1.4 The excavation was sited within the north-western corner of the nave and comprised removal of the original wooden parquet flooring and reduction of the ground level by between 0.3 m and 0.4 m in depth.

3.1.5 The base of the excavations cut 0.19 m deep into the surface of a dark grey-brown clay silt (5) (Fig. 2, section 2). This layer contained sub-angular fragments of red clay tile and some charcoal flecking. This was overlaid by a 0.15 m deep layer of dirty white mixed silt and lime mortar (4), which formed the bed for the original parquet flooring. Cutting into the surface of this deposit were a series of voids (6 -13), 0.12 m square forming 2 parallel lines running parallel to the north wall of the church. These voids were sealed below the parquet flooring.

### **3.2 Finds**

3.2.1 Fragments of roofing tile, fragments of pottery and 2 Fe objects were recovered from layer 2.

### **3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains**

3.3.1 No deposits suitable for palaeo-environmental sampling were observed during the course of the watching brief.

## **4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

4.1.1 The excavations for the sewer pipe trench show that this area had not been used for inhumations, with no grave cuts being visible in either the sides or base of the trench.

4.1.2 Layer 2 is an earlier phase of churchyard soil with the tile fragments probably relating to the intensive rebuild of the church in 1863. Layer 1 represents a later accumulation of grave yard soils probably deposited when the churchyard was brought back into use.

4.1.3 Within the church the deposit of dark grey-brown clay silt (5) probably represents a buried soil horizon below the floor of the church, possibly the original topsoil. Layer 4 is a modern levelling layer laid as a base for the wooden parquet flooring. The

voids 6 to 13 are probable evidence of earlier pew structures (box pews ?) that were removed during the laying of the parquet flooring. Since these voids are within the levelling layer for the parquet flooring both they and their associated structure would probably date after the 1863 restoration of the church.

## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Width</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i> Finds</i>	<i>Date</i>
1	Layer	0.2 m	-	Modern topsoil and turf	Roof tile	C20th
2	Layer	0.15 m	-	Buried soil horizon	Roof tile, pottery, metal	C19th
3	Layer	>0.25 m	-	Natural clay	-	-
4	Layer	0.15 m	> 5 m	Mixed lime and soil, base for the wooden parquet flooring	-	C19th
5	Layer	> 0.2 m	> 5 m	Buried soil horizon, possible original topsoil	-	-
6	Hole	0.3 m	0.12 m	Void left by removal of wooden post.	-	C19th
7	Hole	0.3 m	0.12 m	Void left by removal of wooden post.	-	C19th
8	Hole	0.3 m	0.12 m	Void left by removal of wooden post.	-	C19th
9	Hole	0.3 m	0.12 m	Void left by removal of wooden post.	-	C19th
10	Hole	0.3 m	0.12 m	Void left by removal of wooden post.	-	C19th
11	Hole	0.3 m	0.12 m	Void left by removal of wooden post.	-	C19th
12	Hole	0.3 m	0.12 m	Void left by removal of wooden post.	-	C19th
13	Hole	0.3 m	0.12 m	Void left by removal of wooden post.	-	C19th

## APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

IFA, 2001 *Standard and Guidance for archaeological watching briefs*

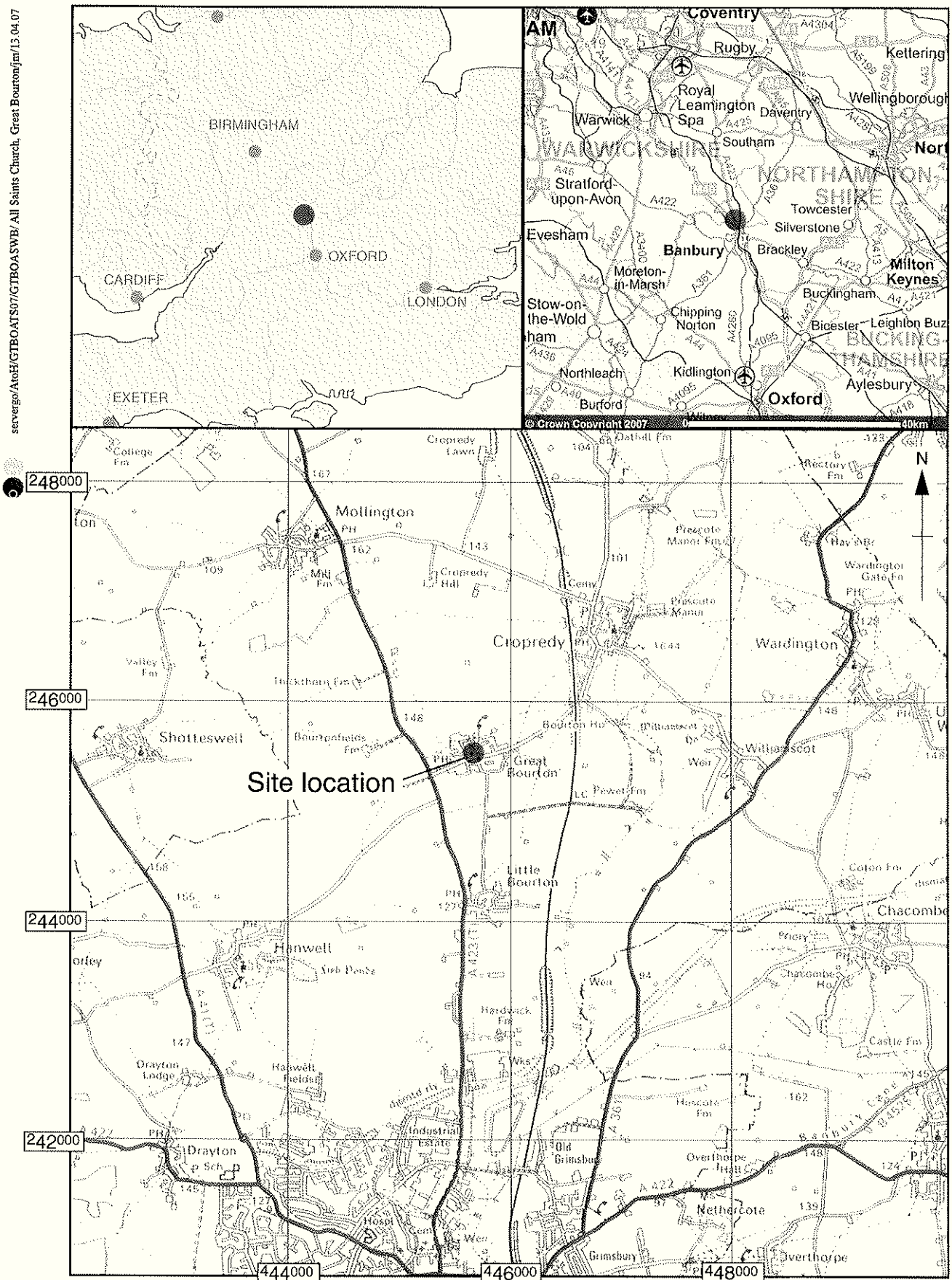
J. T. Munby, 2006 *All Saints Church, Great Bourton: Archaeological recording Specification*

OA, 2000 *OA Environmental Guidelines for sampling*

OAU, 1992 *Field Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson)



**APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS****Site name:** All Saints Church, Great Bourton, Oxfordshire**Site code:** GTBOAS 07**Grid reference:** SP 456 455**Type of watching brief:** Hand excavation of service trenches and hand reduction of internal floor levels.**Date and duration of project:** January 2007, 3 site visits**Area of site:** c0.4 hectares**Summary of results:** External buried soil horizon relating to the 1863 rebuilding of the church, internal buried soil horizon possibly the original topsoil level and probable evidence for earlier box pews dating to the 1863 rebuild but subsequently replaced.**Location of archive:** The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museums Service in due course, under the following accession number: OXCMS:2007.11



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Figure 1: Site location

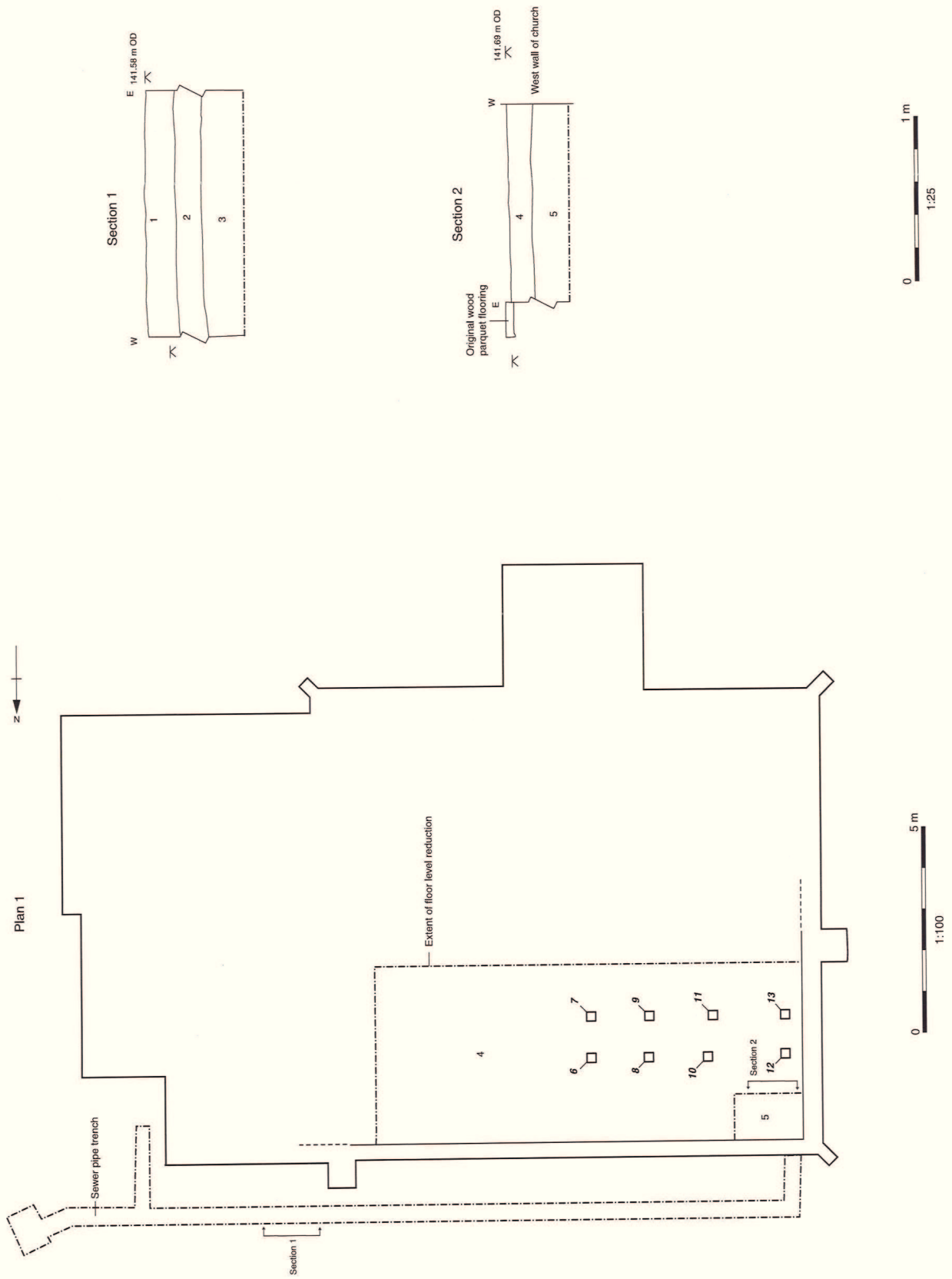


Figure 2: Site plan and sections



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