

THE CHURCH OF ST MARY THE VIRGIN, CHARLBURY, OXON, CHSM92

The Oxford Archaeological Unit was commissioned to conduct a watching brief at the Church of St Mary the Virgin, Charlbury, Oxon (SP 436219), during building work in the North Aisle.

The present church is of 12th Century foundation extensively rebuilt and enlarged in the 13th Century.

The site was visited on May 12th 1992, by which time the modern flagstone floor, which included three 17th Century grave slabs, had been temporarily removed from the North East corner of the Aisle. The underlying floor make up (1) had been removed to a depth of approximately 0.3 m, exposing the vaulted brick roof of the 20th Century boiler vault (2).

A drainage trench, approximately 0.8 m wide and 6.5 m long was dug from the North wall of the Aisle to the North wall of the nave, in a South East direction.

Most of the trench was too shallow to disturb more than the modern floor make up; however, against the aisle wall, the trench was 1.0 m wide x 0.75 m deep to accommodate a manhole. In this area (Plan 1) a number of grave cuts were identified, but only one (3) was shallow enough for a partially disturbed skeleton of an adult to be revealed, at a depth of 0.55 m below present floor level.

From the scatter of disturbed bones in this area, it can be deduced that there were at least four burials. A few fragments of coffin fittings suggest that none was earlier than the 17th Century.

Slight traces of a rough stone foundation for the North wall of the Aisle and the partition wall were also uncovered, (4) and (5).

Interpretation

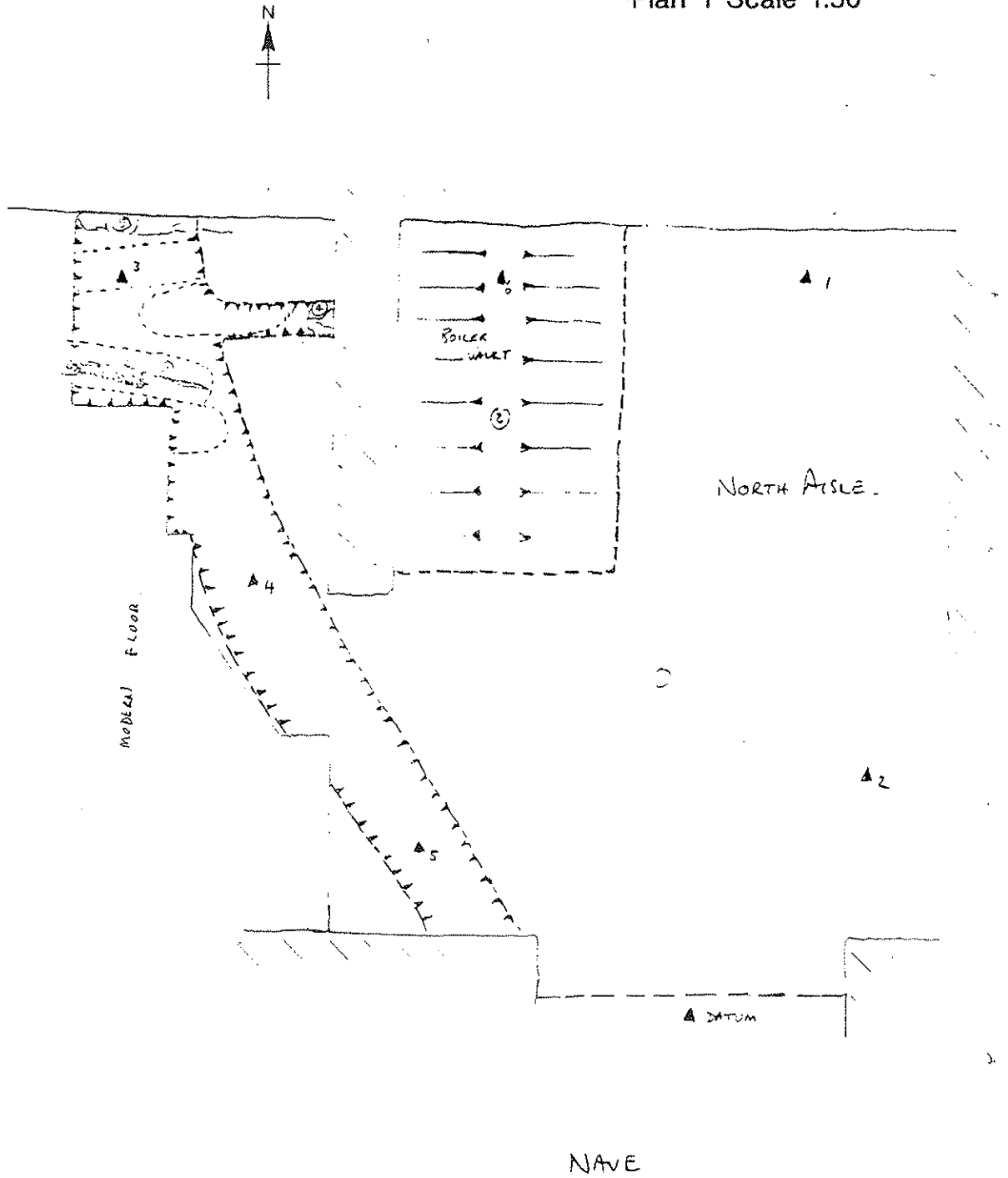
Fragments of the late 19th - early 20th Century pipework and debris suggest that most of the North East corner of the Aisle had been disturbed and re-instated during the construction of the boiler vault.

A considerable quantity of scattered bones was recovered from the excavated make up layer, suggesting that numerous graves had been disturbed during the laying of the floor. (These bones were retained by the church for re-internment).

The excavation was not deep enough to reveal any evidence of earlier structures or burials.

Oxford Archaeological Unit
July 1992

CHARLBURY CHSM 92
 Church of St. Mary the Virgin
 Plan 1 Scale 1:50



DATUM ▲ PRESENT NAIVE FLOOR.

- ▲ 1 -37cm
- ▲ 2 -55cm
- ▲ 3 -75cm
- ▲ 4 -80cm
- ▲ 5 -35cm
- ▲ 6 -25cm