

Bartosch & Stokes

**The Church of St Peter & St Paul, Church Hanborough,
Oxfordshire**

NGR SP 426 128

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

Oxford Archaeological Unit

October 1999

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Oxford Archaeological Unit

October 1999

Summary

In October 1999 the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) undertook a watching brief at the Church of St Peter & St Paul, Church Hanborough, Oxfordshire (NGR SP 426 128). No archaeological features were seen and no finds were retrieved.

1 Introduction

The development proposal involved the excavation of a sewer trench from the south porch of the church to join an existing sewer main pipeline in fields to the south-west. The proposed pipe trench ran diagonally across an area of graveyard, passed beneath the drystone wall marking the boundary of the churchyard and then ran diagonally across an area of rough pasture to join the existing main.

The watching brief was commissioned by Bartosch & Stokes, the project architects, on behalf of SS Peter & Paul Parish Council. It was undertaken to a brief set by and a WSI agreed with the DAC Archaeological Advisor.

2 Background

The archaeological and historical background to this project has been extensively covered in the Written Scheme of Investigation (see Appendix 1) and is not repeated here.

3 Aims

The aims of the watching brief were to identify any archaeological remains exposed on site during the course of the works, and to record these to established OAU standards (Wilkinson 1992), in order to secure their preservation by record.

4 Methodology

Site works were monitored by means of separate inspection visits; all excavation was by Kubota mini-digger, supplemented by occasional hand-digging.

Within the constraints imposed by health and safety considerations the deposits exposed were cleaned, inspected and recorded in plan, section and by colour slide and monochrome print photography. Written records were also made on proforma sheets. Soil description utilises standard charts for the approximation of percentage of inclusion types in soil deposits.

5 Results

At its south-western end the trench was dug to a depth greater than 2 m in order to connect with the existing sewer main, which was sealed by reworked natural clay under topsoil. Elsewhere in the open field the trench was dug to a mean depth of 1 m, with the section displaying 0.90 m of natural gray/brown clay sealed by 0.10 m of mid gray silty clay loam topsoil, as before.

Within the churchyard, the trench shallowed from 1 m depth at the boundary wall to c. 0.50 m at the south porch. The construction trench for the boundary wall was seen, measuring 0.40 m wide by 0.85 m deep and cut from directly below the topsoil; the cut was backfilled with a mixture of the subsoil and ill-defined lenses of yellow sand with some fragments of human bone. The trench section featured disturbed graveyard soil to the base of the cut, sealed by topsoil as before. The graveyard soil comprised a mixed mid gray/brown silty clay loam with 10% fine-coarse subrounded gravel and odd unworked limestone pieces. Small fragments of human charnel were disturbed from within the subsoil and were reburied at the conclusion of works.

Much modern disturbance was encountered within the trench to a distance of c. 6 m from the south porch. The disturbance comprised a builder's dump featuring a backfilled breezeblock soakaway, various lengths of badly corroded scaffolding pipes, rotted wooden fence posts, lengths of wire, plastic piping etcetera.

6 Finds

No finds were retrieved during the course of the watching brief.

7 Environmental results

Due to the absence of any significant archaeology, no environmental soil samples were taken,

8 Discussion

The limited nature of the excavations disturbed only relatively modern deposits; nothing relating to any previous phases of the church was seen. All human remains disturbed during the course of works were disarticulated fragments, all of which were reburied as near as possible to where they were found at the conclusion of works.

References.

Wilkinson, D (ed) 1992 Oxford Archaeological Unit Field Manual, (First edition, August 1992).

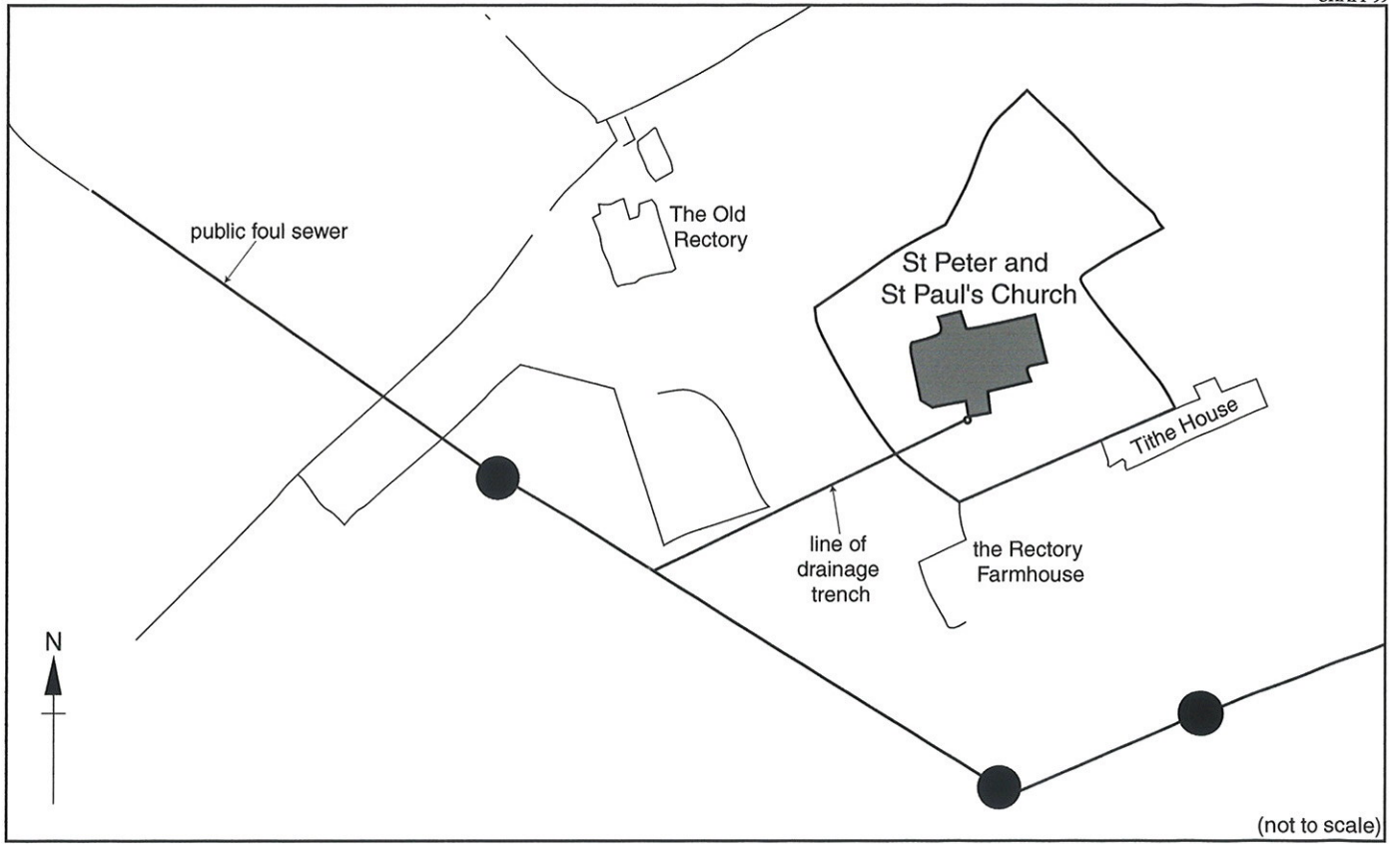


Figure 1: drainage plan of the site

**The Church of St Peter and St Paul,
Church Hanborough
Archaeological Watching Brief
Written Scheme of Investigation**

1 Introduction

- 1.1 It is proposed to excavate a sewer trench from the south porch of the Church of St Peter and St Paul, Church Hanborough to join an existing sewer pipeline in fields to the south-west. The proposed pipe trench runs diagonally across an area of graveyard, passes through a drystone wall and then runs diagonally across an area of rough pasture. Due to the potential of archaeological deposits relating to the church and its environs the archaeological advisor to the DAC has requested that a watching brief is carried out whilst groundworks are in progress.
- 1.2 The church of St Peter and St Paul is situated on the south-western side of the small village of Church Hanborough. The village lies *c.* 6 miles north-west of Oxford and about mid way between the Market Towns of Witney and Woodstock. Topographically it lies on the southern extent of a small T-shaped ridge formed by the Hanborough (4th) Gravel Terrace of the River Thames. The river lies approximately 1.5 miles to the east of the village while to the north lies the River Evenlode. These rivers form the eastern and northern boundaries of the parish and the parish contains a small area of the Summertown-Radley (1st) Gravel Terrace in its southern extremity. The field through which the sewer line will run is generally level at its northern half but then falls away sharply towards the road which runs across its southern edge. The existing Public Foul Sewer runs along the edge of the slope. No earthworks were observed along the projected line of the pipeline although the field was noted to contain a large depression, probably the remains of a small gravel pit. The projected line of the pipeline will not cross this feature.
- 1.3 Church Hanborough and Long Hanborough are first mentioned in Domesday (1086) but the area around the village contains evidence of multi-period activity suggesting that the area has been a focus of settlement since the prehistoric period. A Palaeolithic hand-axe found during gravel extraction at Long Hanborough is important for the dating of the Hanborough terrace but the first evidence of settlement in the parish dates from the Bronze Age when a barrow cemetery and a henge monument were constructed on the Summertown-Radley gravel terrace at the southern tip of the parish (Case et al 1964/5, 53-5). Flints of the same date have been found at Long Hanborough, suggesting that the Hanborough Gravel Terrace also attracted early settlement. Two Iron Age farmsteads, one occupied in the 2nd or 3rd century BC and the other about the 1st century AD were established near the Eynsham boundary (VCH XII 161).
- 1.4 Closer to the village (*c.* 2 km to the north-west) lies the site of two early Iron Age and two early Roman kilns discovered at Cooks Corner. This site is located on a small outcrop of gravel to the east of the main gravel terrace and surrounded on all sides by an area of clay, the raw material needed for the pottery. The claylands would also have provided the large quantities of timber

needed for the firing of the kilns and the excavators suggest that this siting may also have implications in terms of the landuse and progress of land clearance for agriculture during the Iron Age and early Roman period, since the necessary supplies of wood and clay would have been most easily available in areas of uncleared land where competition from other forms of landuse would have been minimal (Sturdy & Young 1976, 56).

- 1.5 It has been suggested that the road from Church Hanborough to Long Hanborough, which continued to Eynsham until inclosure in 1773 when it became a footpath was part of the prehistoric route from the North Oxfordshire Iron Fields to the Uffington Castle on the Berkshire Ridgeway (Case et al 50-1) but the evidence is a little speculative.
- 1.6 The fields around the village also contain a number of cropmarks which suggest the presence of evidence of prehistoric activity. These include a ring ditch (SMR PRN 4905) situated on a spur 600m to the south of the church, an area of rectilinear and circular cropmarks (SMR PRN 15092) c. 1km to the south of the church and a large cropmark complex, containing 2 ring ditches, a trapezoidal enclosure, linear features and possible pits which lies c. 900m to the north-east of the church (SMR PRNs 4904 and 15057).
- 1.7 The fields immediately to the north of the village have produced evidence of Roman settlement activity (SMR PRNs 4977, 8797). This includes an area of a dozen or so pits associated with a boundary ditch, a single male inhumation, 'several KGs of Roman pottery', the chance findspot of a Roman ring and a complete storage jar which had been carefully set into the ground. These finds were all made during fairly insubstantial ground intrusion associated with the construction of a small horse shelter, suggesting that more substantial investigation would produce further evidence of the nature and location of any settlement.
- 1.8 No evidence of early Anglo-Saxon settlement has been uncovered in the parish although during the pagan period the area of the Bronze Age cemetery at the southern tip was again used for burials. Early settlement was presumably also on the gravels, perhaps on the site of Church or Long Hanborough. Hanborough is mentioned in Domesday, suggesting that at least one of the villages was in existence prior to the Conquest and there is further evidence of settlement within the parish in the early 11th century. A 1005 survey of the boundaries of a manor granted to Eynsham Abbey (which matches fairly accurately the ancient boundaries of Eynsham Parish, VCH XII 98) mentions a swains croft on the far eastern boundary of Eynsham, perhaps at Cooks Corner (VCH XII 159).
- 1.9 The Church of St Peter and St Paul at Church Hanborough dates from the early 12th century, suggesting that this village may have been the primary or manorial settlement within the parish. The exact date of its construction is uncertain: both Sherwood and Pevsner (1974, 543) and the DoE Listed Building description describe the church as containing elements dating to the early 12th century . It was certainly in existence in 1130 when Henry I granted it to Reading Abbey, who retained the advowson until the Dissolution.

- 1.10 Apart from the church there is further evidence, both archaeological and documentary of medieval settlement within the vicinity of the village. Evidence of medieval activity, in the shape of two 12th century sherds and a stone built hearth were uncovered in the grounds of Osborne House, 100m to the east of the church, during drain digging and to the south of the church lie the remains of a fishpond, supposedly built on the lands of Eynsham Abbey by Henry I or II (VCH XII 165). The manor of Hanborough has a demonstrated connection with the Plantagenet Kings: Henry I stayed in the manor-house in 1105 and three of his charters are dated from this stay. There is no evidence that the house was used as a royal residence after 1105 although the manor remained as a separate part of the Royal demesne until it was combined with Woodstock Manor in 1375.
- 1.11 The location of the manor house is not entirely certain (although, as indicated above, it would appear likely that it lay in or close to the village of Church Hanborough). Sources quoted by the VCH indicate that the manorial buildings included, in the early 13th century, a hall, at least one grange and a stable and there are records of repairs to the buildings from as late as 1471 (VCH XII 165).
- 1.12 The earliest map of the parish is a map of the lands of Corpus Christi College dating from 1605. The college had quite extensive estates in the parish in the 17th century and the map showing the fields around Church Hanborough village is only one of four such maps of parts of the parish drawn for the college in this year. This map gives a useful insight into both the early post-medieval (and probably medieval) layout of the fields of the parish and a more specific insight into the nature of the field crossed for a short length by the pipeline. The fields to the west of the village, which include those crossed by the pipeline are shown as small irregularly shaped fields, often with names such as 'croft' or 'close' which are symptomatic of early, probably medieval, enclosures. The two fields immediately abutting the graveyard to the west, which will be crossed by the pipeline, are marked as Berry Close and Abbeye Crofte, at least one of the field names suggesting that it was in the ownership of Reading Abbey, which held the advowson of the church, from the 12th century until the Dissolution in the 16th century. The 1605 map suggests that in the early 17th century the fields lay within the holding of the Rectory, which lies immediately to the south of the church and it is likely that this arrangement reflects the medieval ownership of the fields. The VCH suggests that Reading Abbey maintained an active interest in the living of the church by building a rectory and fighting off a number of attempts to remove the privilege from their hands (VCH XII 174).
- 1.13 The medieval Rectory house stood to the south of the church on or near the site of the later rectory farmhouse, and there are records of repairs to the house from 1255 onwards. The north-south range of the surviving house is of later 16th century origin.

2 Aims

- 2.1 To preserve by record any archaeological remains (if present) which the ground works will remove or damage within the development area.

2.2 If significant archaeological remains are discovered, the OAU will signal to all parties that an archaeological find has been made, for which the resources allocated are not sufficient to support a treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard. All building work will be halted until the remains have been suitably investigated.

2.3 To make available the results of the investigation.

3 Strategy

3.1 The watching brief will comprise monitoring of all ground works, specifically the sewer pipe, by an archaeological supervisor in accordance with the contractors programme.

3.2 Any features exposed will be hand excavated and recorded. Site recording and sampling levels for archaeological features will be as defined in Appendix 7. Where burials are encountered their location, condition and bone type shall be recorded. The bones will then be removed and handed to the church incumbent for reburial.

3.3 Any significant archaeological features encountered that require works to be halted will be recorded as Appendix 9.

4 Report and Archive

4.1 The report will be completed within three months of the end of on-site work. Copies of the report will be forwarded to Bartosch and Stokes, the archaeological advisor to the DAC and the County SMR Office.

4.2 The content and style of the report will be as defined in Appendix 8.

4.3 The site archive will be deposited with a suitable museum in agreement with the County Archaeologist and the County Council - see Appendix 8.

4.4 Should significant deposits be encountered then proposals for the analysis, preparation and publication will be determined in the light of the aims and results of the fieldwork. See Appendix 9.

5 General

5.1 Appendix 11 is relevant.

1998 Appendices apply

OAU
July 1999



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