

**Report on Works under Archaeological Supervision and Control at  
'Saint Mary's Church, Cranworth, Norfolk'**

**ENF142481**

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**Archaeological Report**

**CB551R v.1.0**

**St Mary's Church, Cranworth,  
Norfolk'**

**ENF142481**

Prepared for:

Angela Cook

*on behalf of*

Cranworth Parochial Church Council



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**Plate 1.** General view of the excavation areas, looking southwest

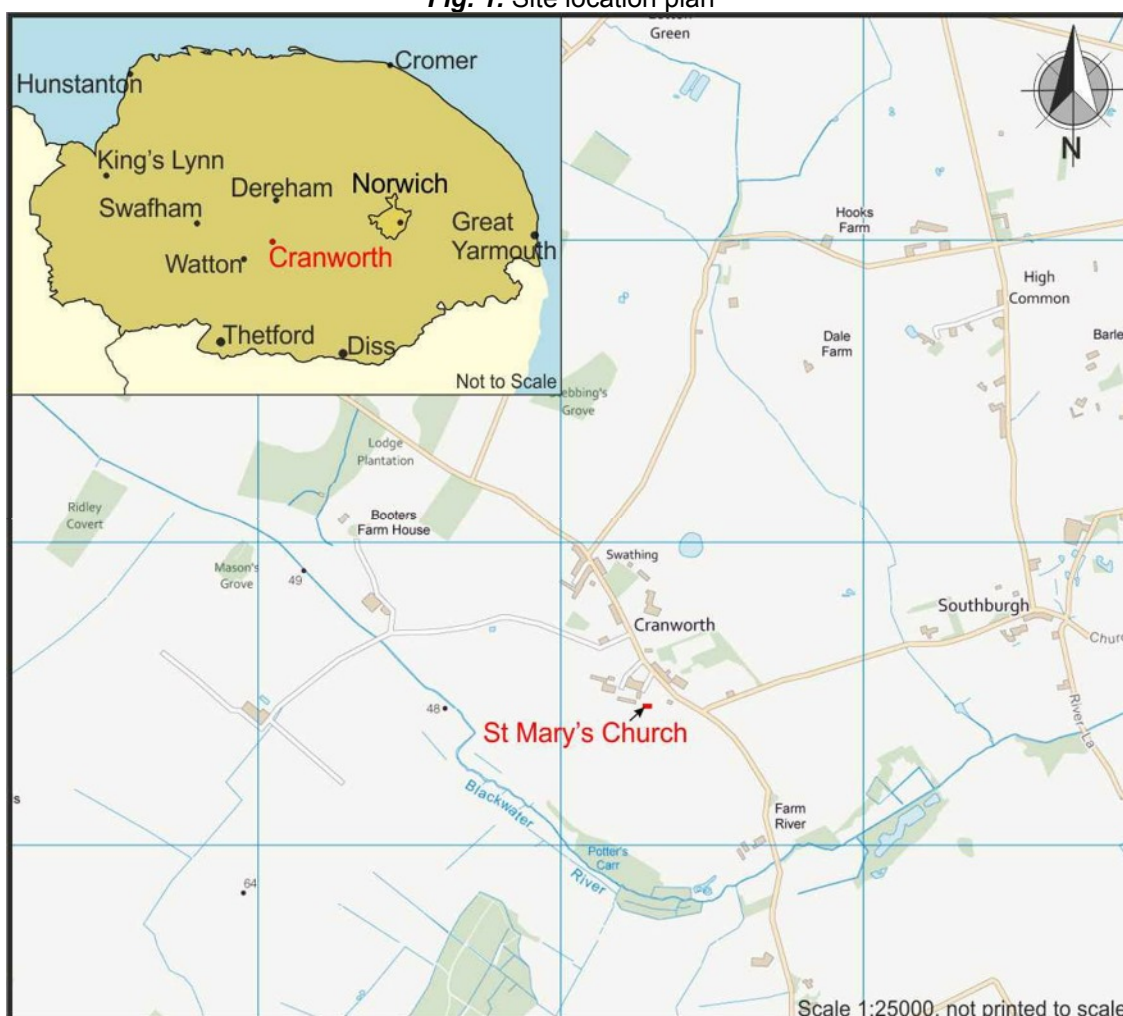
## Summary

Groundworks associated with repairs to the tower floor at 'St Mary's Church, Cranworth, Norfolk' (Norfolk Historic Environment Record event number ENF142481) were carried out under archaeological supervision and control in August 2017. Pew foundations and a flue structure were recorded, possibly part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century restoration of the church.

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 A programme of Works under Archaeological Supervision and Control resulting from development proposals at 'St Mary's Church, Cranworth, Norfolk' (grid reference TF 9828 0446, Fig. 1) has been requested by the Norfolk County Council Historic Environment Service and a Generic Brief was issued.
- 1.2 This report, CB551R v.1.0, details how Chris Birks undertook these works and summarises the results and a copy has been submitted to the Norfolk County Council Historic Environment Service.

**Fig. 1.** Site location plan



## 2.0 Project Background

- 2.1 A proposal for repairs to the tower floor at 'St Mary's Church, Cranworth, Norfolk' was approved subject to a condition for a Programme of Archaeological work. Works under Archaeological Supervision and Control (also referred to as "archaeological monitoring" or "Watching Brief") were required at a level of constant attendance.

- 2.2 Works under Archaeological Supervision and Control were required to record the presence/absence, date, extent, state of preservation and significance of any archaeological layers or subsoil archaeological features in accordance with *National Planning Policy Framework (2012)*, (paras 128, 129, 132, 134 and 141). They were undertaken in accordance with a generic Brief issued by the Norfolk County Council Historic Environment Service and a generic Project Design and Generic Written Scheme of Investigation for Works under Archaeological Supervision and Control (Birks 2016). Specific aims of the project are to determine the presence/absence, date, extent, state of preservation and significance of any archaeological layers or subsoil archaeological features. This forms part of the research agenda for the eastern counties of England in *Research and Archaeology Revisited: A Revised Framework for the East of England* (Medlycott 2011). Full details of research aims, methodology and standards are provided in the Written Scheme of Investigation.
- 2.3 The *Code of Conduct (2014)*, *Regulations for Professional Conduct* (January 2015 revision) and *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief (2014)* by the Chartered Institute of Field Archaeologists (CIFA) were adhered to.
- 2.4 Works were carried out according to guidelines set out in *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003) and *Management of research projects in the historic environment. The MoRPHE Project Manager's Guide* (Historic England 2015).
- 2.5 Norfolk Historic Environment Record event number ENF142481. Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) ID: chrisbir-299061 (*Appendix 2*).
- 2.6 The archive will be prepared, including a form suitable for microfilming if required, consistent with the principles of *Management of research projects in the historic environment. The MoRPHE Project Manager's Guide* (Historic England 2015) and submitted to the Norfolk Museums Service for long-term storage.

### **3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background**

- 3.1 A search of Norfolk Historic Environment Records (NHER) within 1km of St Mary's Church (hereafter, the church) was carried out on 24 July 2017 and produced 30 entries. A summary of entries is provided and further details of these and all other entries can be seen at the Historic Environment Record office at Gressenhall near Dereham by prior appointment.
- 3.2 **Prehistoric**
  - 3.2.1 Two ring ditches, probably dating to the Bronze Age, and a square enclosure of unknown date to the northeast of the church (NHER 36388) and a ring ditch to the southwest of the church (NHER 25987) are visible as cropmarks on aerial photographs.
  - 3.2.2 The site of a ring ditch of probable Bronze Age date, and several linear features of unknown date, lies to the southwest of the church and is also visible as cropmarks on aerial photographs (NHER 36699).
- 3.3 **Roman**
  - 3.3.1 The site of Woodrising Roman villa lies to the southwest of the church, revealed during deep ploughing in the 1940s when large scatters of tile, brick and pottery were found, as well as Roman glass, tesserae and coins (NHER 8798). Several pot boiler sites have also been discovered, which seem to be associated with the villa, although these are usually attributed to the prehistoric period. The cropmarks of a rectangular enclosure are visible on aerial photographs.
- 3.4 **Medieval**
  - 3.4.1 St Mary's Church dates mainly from the 14<sup>th</sup> century and was restored during the 19<sup>th</sup> century (NHER 8828). It is constructed of flint with ashlar dressings. The west tower dates to the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries with a Y-traceried west window and quatrefoil sound holes. There is a crenelated

parapet and a short octagonal spire. A 14<sup>th</sup> century ogee-headed and cusped tomb recess is in north aisle and there are Baroque and Neoclassical monuments to the Gurdon family and a 14<sup>th</sup> century font.

- 3.4.2 St Nicholas' Church, Woodrising, lies to the southeast of the St Mary's Church, a medieval parish church, dating mainly to the 14<sup>th</sup> century with a ruined west tower (NHER 8829). The skeleton of a young man in the churchyard has been dated to the Late Saxon or medieval period. In the churchyard is a detached bell-cote reusing the late-medieval bell-frame from the ruined tower. Inside is the 16<sup>th</sup> century tomb of Sir Richard Southwell, who is immortalised with a full-size alabaster effigy.
- 3.4.3 A medieval moated site lies to the west/southwest of the church, comprising a rectangular moat that may have been the site of a medieval hall or manor (NHER 8827). Medieval pottery, thimbles and the foundations of buildings have been found on the site.
- 3.4.4 The site of the deserted medieval settlement of Letton lies to the northwest of the church, mentioned in the Domesday Book but abandoned by the 16<sup>th</sup> century (NHER 2769). The earthworks of the village were visible in the landscape park surrounding Letton Hall (see NHER 2775), as were the remains of the medieval parish church of All Saints'. Medieval and Post-medieval coins and other metalwork have been found on the site through metal detecting.
- 3.4.5 The site of a medieval farmstead, consisting of a series of enclosures and a possible toft, lies to the south/southeast of the church and is visible on aerial photographs (NHER 35051).
- 3.4.6 Metal-detecting to the southeast of the church in 2011 recovered a medieval lead seal matrix (NHER 55300).
- 3.4.7 Woodrising Wood, an ancient wood of probable medieval to Post-medieval date, surrounded by early-medieval wood banks, lies to the southwest of the church (NHER 40178).

### 3.5 **Post-medieval**

- 3.5.1 Clay Cottage lies to the east/northeast of the church, a mid-17<sup>th</sup> century (though possibly originally late-16<sup>th</sup> century) timber-framed cottage built on a lobby entrance plan (NHER 41860). In 1709, a two-storey extension with its own chimney stack and staircase was added to the property.
- 3.5.2 School Farm lies to the north of the church, a 17<sup>th</sup> century timber-framed and thatched farmhouse built on a lobby entrance plan (NHER 41859). The farmhouse is set within a mid-19<sup>th</sup> century farm complex including an unusual barn with a York stone threshing floor.
- 3.5.3 Jubilee Farmhouse lies to the northeast of the church, a 17<sup>th</sup> century timber-framed and thatched former blacksmith's workshop and house (NHER 41858). The house is built on a lobby entrance plan, with dormer windows and an off-centre chimney stack.
- 3.5.4 Wood Farm, a 17<sup>th</sup> century timber-framed house with later alterations and a 19<sup>th</sup> century crenelated porch lies to the southeast of the church (NHER 36530).
- 3.5.5 Rectory Cottage, an 18<sup>th</sup> century timber-framed house, lies to the southeast of the church (NHER 42739). It is a small two-cell timber-framed house of circa 1700-1720 with a central stack and rear catslide. It was later altered in brickwork.
- 3.5.6 Letton Park, a landscape park created around Letton Hall in the late-18<sup>th</sup> century and extended in 1794, lies to the northwest of the church (NHER 30515). In 1882, Edward Boardman laid out new formal gardens in the park and created a small ornamental lake.
- 3.5.7 Church Farm lies to the immediate northwest of the church, a farmstead comprising an early-18<sup>th</sup> century brick barn, an early-19<sup>th</sup> century riding stable and a cart lodge dating to the later-19<sup>th</sup> century (NHER 42747).

- 3.5.8 Cranworth House lies to the northeast of the church, a large early-19<sup>th</sup> century former rectory with elegant classical architectural details, and probably incorporating parts of an earlier building (NHER 21608). An 18<sup>th</sup> century icehouse is in the grounds of the house.
- 3.5.9 Cranworth County Primary School lies to the northwest of the church, a small school dating to the 1840s, closed 1983 and since converted to domestic use (NHER 56690). It was built in 1844 by T.T.D. Gurdon and originally had two classrooms, a main one for pupils, and a smaller one for infants. In 1925 the school had the capacity to teach 114 pupils, but by 1947 there were only 36 children in attendance and the school was scheduled to close in 1958-1959, although it stayed open until finally closing in 1983.
- 3.5.10 Chase Farm lies to the east of the church (NHER 41857). The farmhouse dates to the early-19<sup>th</sup> century and has a clay lump service wing. A timber-framed barn may date to the early-17<sup>th</sup> century and the rest of the farm complex dates to the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 3.5.11 Post-medieval stocks, marked on a 1902-7 first edition Ordnance Survey map and restored in the 1960s, lie just outside St Mary's churchyard, to the northeast of the church (NHER 22797).
- 3.5.12 A Post-medieval weight was found through metal-detecting to the east/northeast of the church in 1996 (NHER 31919).
- 3.5.13 A ditched enclosure of probable Post-medieval date on the edge of a former common to the southeast of the church is visible on aerial photographs and is probably a stock enclosure (NHER 35052).

### 3.6 Multi-period

- 3.6.1 Multi-period finds were recovered through metal-detecting of an area to the immediate south of St Mary's Church in 1995/6 (NHER 31641). Finds include Roman coins and metalwork, Saxon strap fittings, stirrups and other metalwork, medieval and Post-medieval coins, tokens, buckles and other metalwork.
- 3.6.2 Multi-period finds were recovered from an area to the northeast of the church in 2002/3 and include a prehistoric flint core, borer and flake, and metal working debris which may date to the late-prehistoric period or the Bronze Age, and Roman pottery (NHER 37698). To the north, a Roman coin, part of a Late Saxon harness fitting, a medieval strap fitting and a Post-medieval coin were found by metal detecting in 1998 (NHER 33912).
- 3.6.3 To the east of the church, multi-period finds were found between 1995 and 2003 (NHER 31497). Finds include Roman brooches, coins and pottery, part of an Early Saxon brooch and other Saxon metalwork, and medieval coins, buckles and a heraldic harness pendant, and other medieval and Post-medieval metalwork and pottery.
- 3.6.4 Multi-period finds have been recovered to the east of the church through metal-detecting (NHER 40434). In 2004, Roman and Post-medieval coins and medieval pottery were found and further detecting in 2008 revealed a Middle/Late Bronze Age socketed spear head. In 2010-11, a Post-medieval Norwich silver paten was found and subsequently acquired by Norwich Castle Museum.

### 3.7 Undated

- 3.7.1 A series of linear features, of unknown date and purpose, to the west of the church are visible as cropmarks on aerial photographs (NHER 36701).

## 4.0 Geology and Topography

- 4.1 The parish of Cranworth lies upon a solid geology of Upper Chalk with areas of overlying Boulder Clay (Funnell 2005) The soil landscape is characterised as that of Central Norfolk Claylands (Williamson 2005).
- 4.2 The church is located on the south side of Cranworth village and north of the Blackwater River on relatively level land at an elevation of c. 57m OD.

## **5.0 Results**

### **5.1 Introduction**

- 5.1.1 Site conditions were good and access was gained from Woodrising Road to the northeast of the church. The weather remained overcast with rain showers.
- 5.1.2 Archaeological monitoring was carried out on 09 August 2017 during excavations associated with repairing a section of the tower floor. Context numbers are summarised in *Appendix 1*.

### **5.2 Observations**

- 5.2.1 Observations are recorded on the archaeological monitoring record sheet on page 6.



Archaeological monitoring record sheet

Summary

Excavations revealed probable 19th century pew foundations [2] and [4] and flue [9] and ledger stone [8] whose inscription was illegible.

Context No.	Type	Description	Finds	Date (century)
1	D	Dark greyish brown silty sand	-	-
2	M	Brick foundation	-	?19 <sup>th</sup>
3	D	Dark greyish brown silty sand	-	-
4	M	Brick foundation	-	?19 <sup>th</sup>
5	M	Pamment tiles over cement base	-	-
6	D	Dark greyish brown silty sand	-	-
7	D	Mid brownish yellow sandy gravel	-	-
8	M	Ledger stone	-	-
9	M	Flue pipe structure	-	?19 <sup>th</sup>

Excavations to the north of the chancel arch measured c. 1m by c. 0.96m to a depth of c. 0.31m beneath present floor level removing dark greyish brown silty sand (1). Red brick foundation [2] measured c. 0.11m wide and 0.16m deep and extended c. 1m north-to-south and c. 0.95m east-to-west.

Excavations to the south of the chancel arch measured c. 1.3m by c. 1.28m to a depth of c. 0.33m beneath present floor level removing dark greyish brown silty sand (3). North-to-south orientated brick foundation [4] measured c. 1.02m long, c. 0.11m wide and c. 0.06m deep.

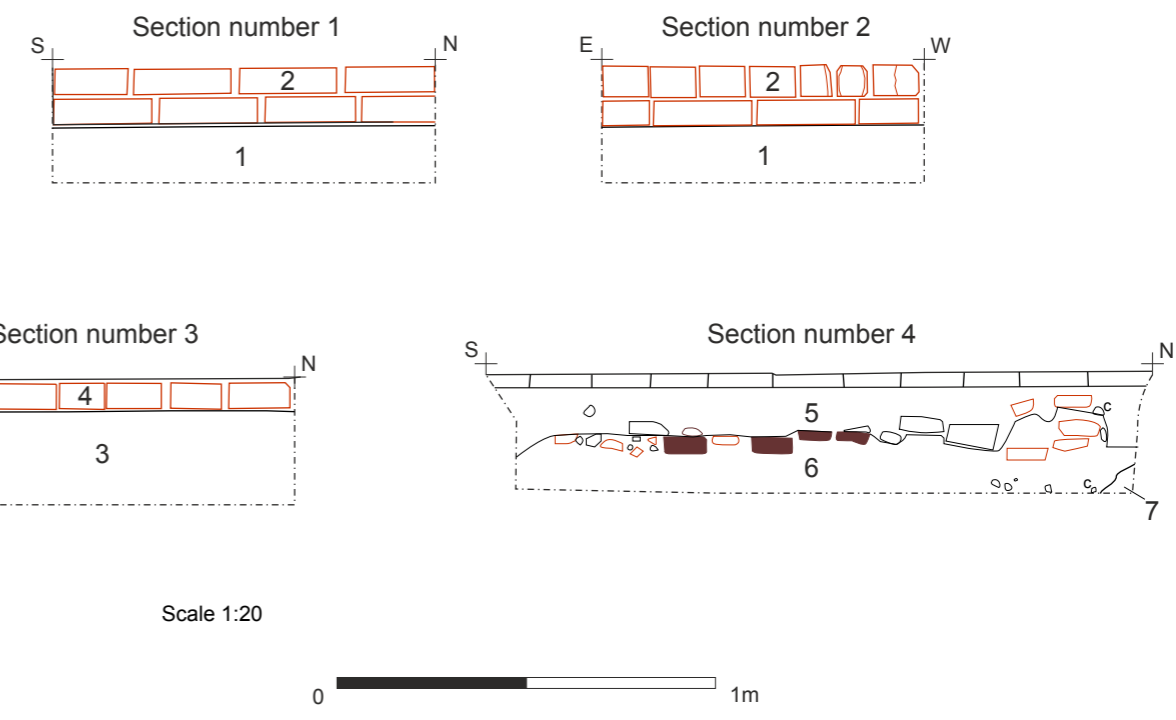
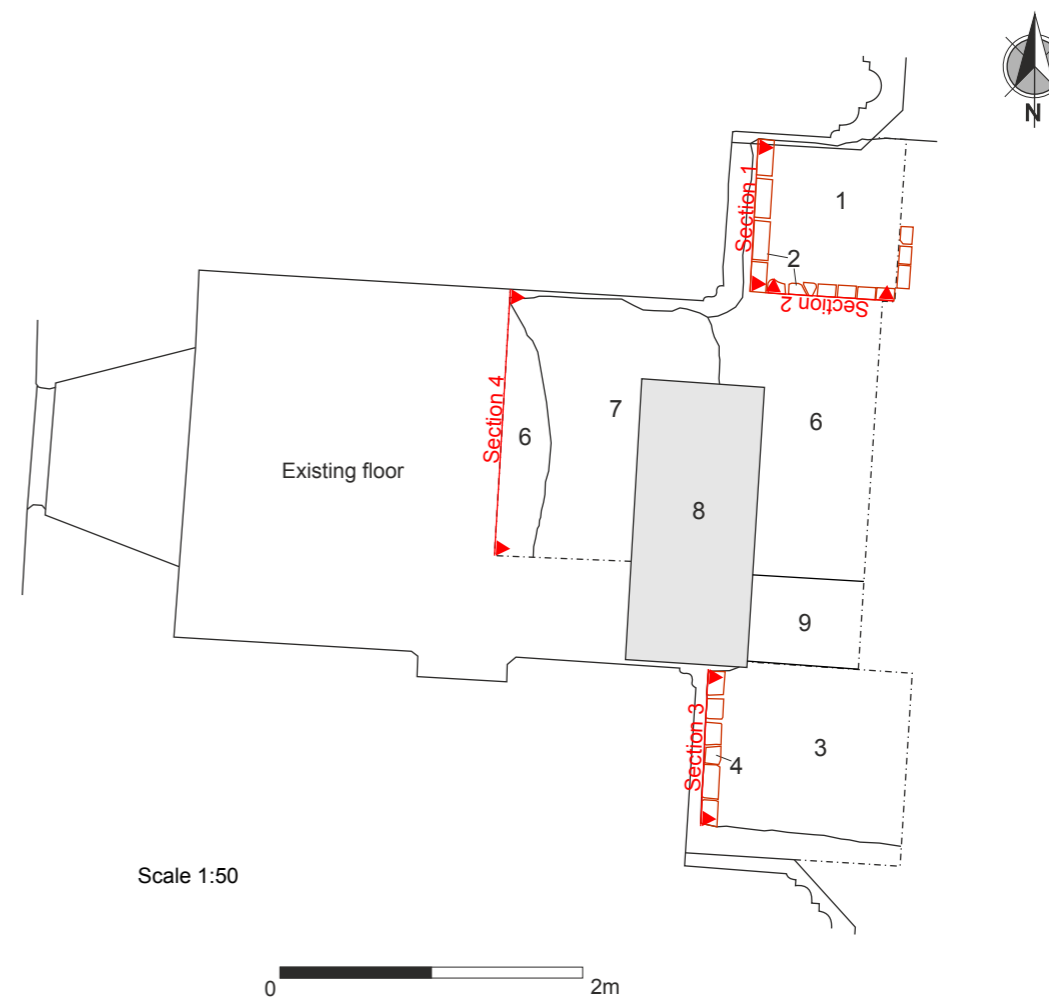
Excavations within the east side of the base of the tower measured c. 2.45m by c. 1.75m to a depth of c. 0.31m beneath present floor level removing pamment tiles on a cement and brick base (5) above dark greyish brown silty sand (6) that partly exposed compact mid brownish yellow sandy gravel (7). Timber joists from the former organ base were removed. Ledger stone [8] measured 1.86m by 0.81m and remained *in situ*. East-to-west orientated brick structure [9] measured 0.77m long and 0.58m wide and contained a flue pipe conduit.

The bricks are of probably 19<sup>th</sup> century in date.

Plate 1. General view of the excavation areas, looking southwest



Scale is 2m in 0.5m intervals



- Flint
- c Chalk
- Brick
- Wood

## **6.0 Conclusions and Discussion**

- 6.1 The author has a high confidence rating of the results. The minimal depth of excavations revealed few remains. The red brick walls of probable 19<sup>th</sup> century date most likely functioned as foundations for pews removed prior to the commencement of the excavations. A brick flue is probably of the same date and these may relate to the restoration of the church in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. No finds or further features of archaeological significance were present.

## **Acknowledgments**

The project was undertaken by Chris Birks on behalf of Cranworth Parochial Church Council who also funded the work. Many thanks to Angela Cook, churchwarden. Fieldwork was undertaken by John Simmons and the report was written by Chris Birks with contributions by John Simmons.

Many thanks to Heather Hamilton and Peter Watkins at the Norfolk Historic Environment Record office based at Gressenhall. Thanks also to Dr James Albone, Steven Heywood, Steve Hickling, Charlotte Jarvis, Xenia Paula Kyriakou, John Percival, David Robertson and Andrew Rogerson at the Norfolk County Council Historic Environment Service.

## ***Bibliography***

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### **Appendix 1** Context Summary

<b>Context No.</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Initials/date</b>	<b>Date (century)</b>
1	D	Dark greyish brown silty sand	JS/09 Aug 2017	-
2	M	Brick foundation	JS/09 Aug 2017	?19th
3	D	Dark greyish brown silty sand	JS/09 Aug 2017	-
4	M	Brick foundation	JS/09 Aug 2017	?19th
5	M	Pamment tiles over cement base	JS/09 Aug 2017	-
6	D	Dark greyish brown silty sand	JS/09 Aug 2017	-
7	D	Mid brownish yellow sandy gravel	JS/09 Aug 2017	-
8	M	Ledger stone	JS/09 Aug 2017	-
9	M	Flue pipe structure	JS/09 Aug 2017	?19th

**Key**

D - deposit

JS - John Simmons

M - masonry

## Appendix 2 OASIS Record

### OASIS ID: [chrisbir1-299061](#)

#### Project details

Project name	WUASC at 'St Mary's Church, Cranworth'
Short description of the project	Archaeological monitoring was carried out during repairs to the tower floor. 19th century remains were recorded.
Project dates	Start: 09-08-2017 End: 09-08-2017
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	ENF142481 - HER event no.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Listed Building
Current Land use	Other 4 - Churchyard
Monument type	FOUNDATION Post Medieval
Monument type	FOUNDATION Modern
Monument type	FLUE Post Medieval
Monument type	FLUE Modern
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF

#### Project location

Country	England
Site location	NORFOLK BRECKLAND CRANWORTH St Mary's Church, Cranworth, Norfolk
Study area	5 Square metres
Site coordinates	TF 9828 0446 52.601242888051 0.928258021518 52 36 04 N 000 55 41 E Point

#### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Chris Birks
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Chris Birks
Project director/manager	Chris Birks
Project supervisor	John Simmons
Type of sponsor/funding body	Parochial Church Council

#### Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive Exists?	No

Paper Archive recipient	Norfolk Museums Service
Paper Archive ID	ENF142481
Paper Contents	"none"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Plan", "Report", "Section", "Unpublished Text"
Paper Archive notes	Report includes colour digital images

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### Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Report on Works under Archaeological Supervision and Control at 'St Mary's Church, Cranworth, Norfolk'
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Date	2017
Issuer or publisher	Chris Birks
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Description	Digital .pdf format

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Entered by	Chris Birks (chris@chrisbirksarchaeology.co.uk)
Entered on	20 October 2017

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## OASIS:

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