# Archaeological Watching Brief
# All Saint's Church
# Pocklington
# East Riding of Yorkshire

Site Code: ASCP 16

NGR: SE 8025 4898

Report No 2816

November 2016

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**Summary**

In October 2016 York Osteoarchaeology Ltd was commissioned by On-Site Archaeology/PPIY Architects+ Ltd to carry out an archaeological watching brief at All Saint's Church, Pocklington, East Riding of Yorkshire (SE 8025 4898) during ground works associated with drainage modifications on the north side of the church.

Both trenches had been located over existing Victorian drains, which had, for the most part, destroyed any earlier archaeological sequences. Trench 1 did, however, reveal a short sequence of archaeological deposits potentially relating to the churchyard burial soil and the construction of, or repair works to, the chancel. Small quantities of disarticulated human remains were encountered during the excavations, as were fragments of 18th-19th century pottery. The lack of articulated human remains is not surprising considering that the trenches were largely located over existing drainage channels, which would have disturbed any in-situ remains.

**Acknowledgements**

York Osteoarchaeology Ltd would like to thank the ground workers, Bob and Gary from Wilson Services Ltd, for their help and support.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In October 2016 York Osteoarchaeology Ltd was commissioned by On-Site Archaeology/PPIY Architects+ to carry out an archaeological watching brief at All Saint's Church, Pocklington, East Riding of Yorkshire (SE 8025 4898). As part of a renovation programme at the church it was decided that current drainage system required upgrading, which involved the insertion of two inspection chambers. The scheme of work involved the archaeological monitoring of the excavation of two small trenches, located in the graveyard to the east of the church (Figure 1).

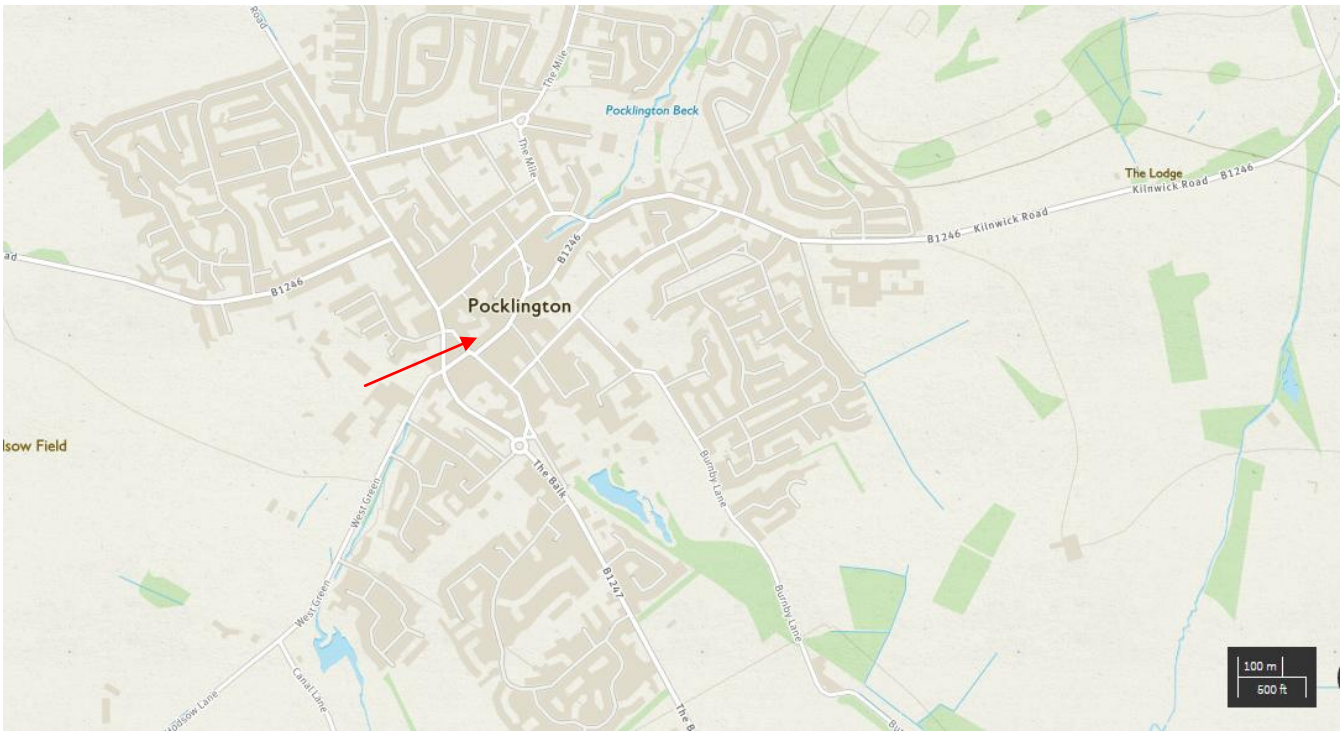


**Figure 1** Site location (OS MAP), arrow pointing to Pocklington Church

The ground works had the potential to encroach upon previously undisturbed portions of the cemetery, in particular late medieval and post-medieval burials. A Faculty from the Diocesan Advisory Committee authorised any ground disturbing work at All Saints Church and under the auspices of the faculty an archaeological watching brief was authorised. Under the terms of the watching brief archaeological remains disturbed were to be recorded prior to their destruction and the appropriate analysis was to be carried out once excavated.

A site visit was made by a representative of York Osteoarchaeology Ltd to All Saints Church in Pocklington on the 24th of October 2016. The visit was undertaken in order to monitor the ground works, excavate any archaeological features including skeletons that would be disturbed by the drainage trenches and to osteologically assess these *in situ*. Once assessed, the human remains were re-interred within the graveyard.

## 2.0 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Pocklington is situated at the foot of the Yorkshire Wolds in the East Riding of Yorkshire, located immediately north of the A1079, approximately sixteen miles (25.7 km) east of the city of York and seven miles (11.3 km) northwest of the market town of Market Weighton. It is a small market town and civil parish in the East Riding of Yorkshire, England.

The church is Grade I listed, with a nave that dates back to the 12th century or earlier, 13th century transepts, a tower and chancel constructed in the 15th century, and a porch, which was rebuilt in the 19th century (https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1162006).

Recent archaeological excavations in Pocklington reveal activity dating back to the Iron Age (OSA, MAP & ASUD forthcoming). The town is recorded in the Domesday Book as having a church and priest (Leadman 1897, 88). One of the earliest recorded burials at All Saints Church was that of Thomas Chalmer in 1397 (*ibid,* 85), while burial ceased in 1857, when the municipal cemetery was opened (Ainley *et al*, 2013, 14)

## 3.0 RESULTS OF THE WATCHING BRIEF

### *Trench 1*

Trench 1 was located immediately to the northeast of the sanctuary (Figure 2) and measured 1.0m by 0.95m and was excavated to a depth of 0.82m. The earliest deposit encountered was an archaeologically sterile mid grey brown silty clay (107) with frequent inclusions of chalk/limestone pebbles (Plate 1). The deposit was evident across the entire base of the trench and had a minimum depth of 0.1m, which extended beyond the limit of excavation. It is likely that Context (107) was part of the graveyard soil, although an absence of human remains does not substantiate the theory. Sealing the possible graveyard soil was a layer of sandstone chippings (106). The deposit covered the entire trench and was approximately 0.32m deep. The chippings may have been the result of debris from construction of the sanctuary, or may have been an intentional deposit to form a hardstanding or pathway. No datable evidence was recovered from Deposit (106).

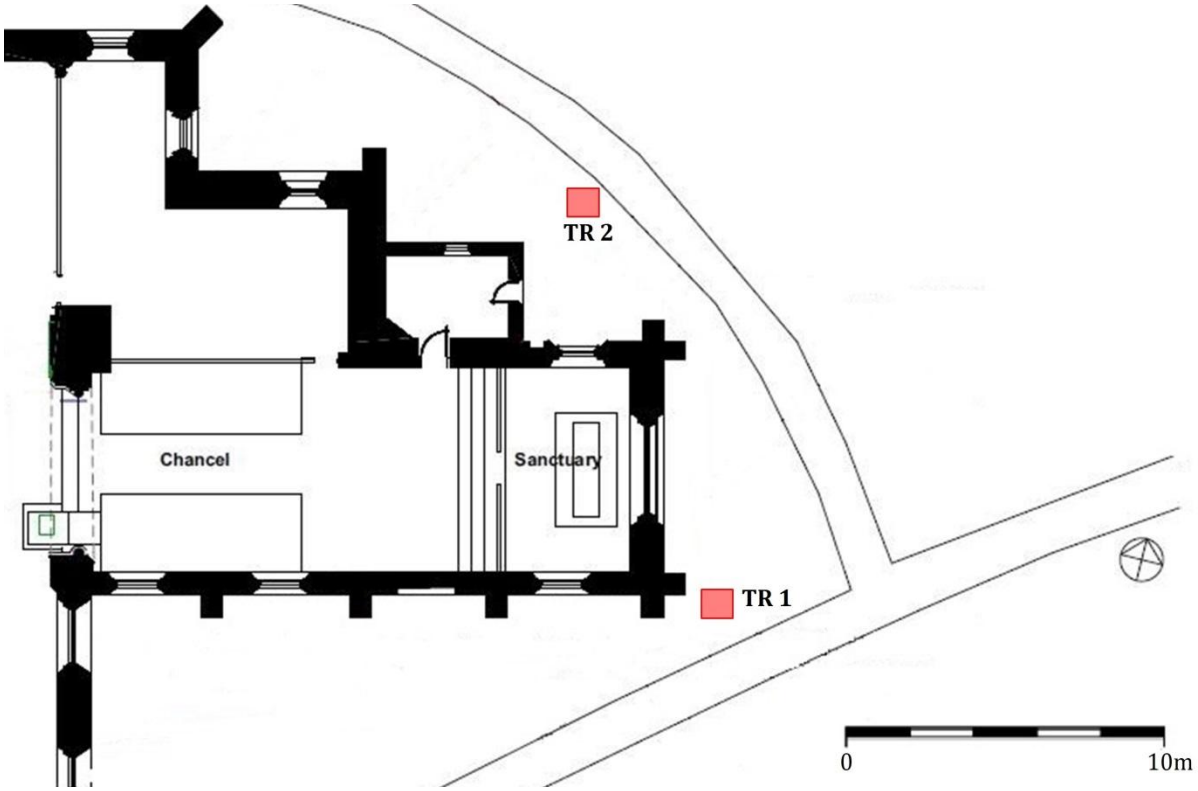


**Figure 2** Trench locations

Sealing the stone chippings was a layer of mid brownish grey silty clay (105), with frequent inclusions of clay building material (CMB), and moderate sized stone fragments. The layer spanned the entire trench and was approximately 0.30m thick. A number of fragments of 18th to early 19th century blue and white transfer print pottery along with numerous clay pipe stems (18th-19th century) and a small quantity of disarticulated human bone were recovered from the deposit. Cut through Context (105) was a drainage trench [104] containing a 6" diameter salt glazed pipe (103), and the drainage trench backfill (102), which ran through the trench on a northwest-southeast alignment. Further fragments of 18th to early 19th century blue and white transfer print pottery, a clay pipe stem, and a small quantity of disarticulated human bone were recovered from the drainage trench backfill. Sealing the drain cut was a thin layer of tarmac, measuring 0.02m thick (101), which had formed part of a now defunct pathway that had lead from the main northeast to southwest pathway, round to the northern side of the church. Sealing the tarmac, and forming the latest deposit in the sequence was a layer of turf (100).

***Trench 2***

Trench 2 was located to the north eastern corner of a utility room, which was appended to the north wall of the chancel, and eastern wall of the Lady Chapel (Figure 2). The trench measured 1.1mm by 0.95m and was excavated to a depth of 1.02m The trench had been located entirely over the junction of an existing drainage trench [204], which contained a 0.15m salt glazed drain (203). Within the backfill of the drainage trench (202) was a small quantity of 18th to early 19th century blue and white transfer print pottery and fragments of disarticulated human bone. Sealing the drainage cut was a layer of dark greyish-

brown silty clay(201) with frequent inclusions of ceramic building material and stone fragments (Plate 2). Sealing (201), and forming the latest deposit in the sequence, was a layer of turf (200).

A further drainage trench had been proposed; however, after the excavation of the inspection chambers it was discovered that a functioning drainage system existed beneath a layer of plastic sheeting and pea-gravel, which had been lain along the length of the southern chancel wall. The plastic sheeting had been preventing the drainage of rainwater into the existing drains, causing it to collect in the gravel layer along the southern chancel wall. Removal of the gravel and plastic sheeting meant that the existing drains could be re-used without excavating a new drainage run.

## 4.0 OSTEOLOGICAL AND PATHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

Osteological analysis is concerned with the determination of the identity of a skeleton, by estimating its age, sex and stature. Robusticity and non-metric traits can provide further information on the appearance and familial affinities of the individual studied. This information is essential in order to determine the prevalence of disease types and age-related changes. It is crucial for identifying gender dimorphism in occupation, lifestyle and diet, as well as the role of different age groups in society.

No intact burials were encountered during the excavations; however, a small quantity of fragmentary disarticulated human bone was recovered from both Trenches 1 and 2

### 4.1 PRESERVATION

Skeletal preservation depends upon a number of factors, including the age and sex of the individual as well as the size, shape and robusticity of the bone. Burial environment, post-depositional disturbance and treatment following excavation can also have a considerable impact on bone condition. Preservation of human skeletal remains is assessed subjectively, depending upon the severity of bone surface erosion and post-mortem breaks, but disregarding completeness.

Preservation was assessed using a grading system of five categories: very poor, poor, moderate, good and excellent. Excellent preservation implied no bone surface erosion and very few or no breaks, whereas very poor preservation indicated complete or almost complete loss of the bone surface due to erosion and severe fragmentation.

The majority of bone, from both Trenches 1 and 2 was in very good condition.

### 4.2 MINIMUM NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS

A count of the 'minimum number of individuals' (MNI) recovered from a cemetery is carried out as standard procedure in osteological reports on inhumations in order to establish how many individuals are represented by the articulated and disarticulated human bones (without taking the archaeologically defined graves into account). The MNI is calculated by counting all long bone ends, as well as other larger

skeletal elements recovered. The largest number of these is then taken as the MNI. The MNI is likely to be lower than the actual number of skeletons, which would have been interred on the site, but represents the minimum number of individuals, which can be scientifically proven to be present.

The MNI was four and consisted of two adults, one juvenile and one adolescent, which were represented by two fused proximal right tibiae belonging to adults, an unfused distal left tibia belonging to an adolescent and a unfused proximal right tibia belonging to a juvenile.

## 4.3 ASSESSMENT OF AGE

Age was determined using standard ageing techniques, as specified in Scheuer and Black (2000a; 2000b) and Cox (2000). Age estimation relies on the presence of the pelvis and uses different stages of bone development and degeneration in order to calculate the age of an individual. Age is split into a number of categories, from foetus (up to 40 weeks in *utero*), neonate (around the time of birth), infant (newborn to one year), juvenile (1-12 years), adolescent (13-17 years), young adult (ya; 18-25 years), young middle adult (yma ; 26-35 years), old middle adult (oma; 36-45 years), mature adult (ma; 46+) to adult (an individual whose age could not be determined more accurately as over the age of seventeen).

Age was rapidly assessed and based on as many criteria as possible. Among the disarticulated bone the age of the adult remains could not be accurately assessed due to the absence of the necessary skeletal elements. However, the fact that two right proximal tibiae had fused suggested that the individuals were at least fourteen years of age when they died, but were probably considerably older.

A third proximal right tibia was unfused and must have belonged to an individual under twenty years of age due to the size of the bone it was felt that the individual would have been a juvenile between one and twelve years old. Finally, an unfused distal left tibia belonging to an individual under eighteen years of age was present. Due to the size of the bone it was felt that the individual would have been an adolescent, between the age of thirteen and seventeen.

## 4.4 SEX DETERMINATION

Sex determination was carried out using standard osteological techniques, such as those described by Mays and Cox (2000). Assessment of sex in both males and females relies on the preservation of the skull and the pelvis and can only be carried out once sexual characteristics have developed, during late puberty and early adulthood.

It was not possible to determine the sex of any of the disarticulated bone fragments.

## 4.5 SKELETAL PATHOLOGY

Pathological conditions (disease) can manifest themselves on the skeleton, especially when these are chronic conditions or the result of trauma to the bone. The bone elements to which muscles attach can also provide information on muscle trauma and excessive use of muscles.

The skeletons were briefly scanned for pathological lesions, however, the fact that they were unwashed and assessed *in situ* meant that subtle pathological lesions would have been missed. Rapid assessment of the skeletal remains did not reveal any pathological lesions.

## 5.0 DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY

The excavations at All Saint's Church, Pocklington, have provided limited information into the lives of the members of this market town. Without consulting the burial register it is not possible to reliably determine how frequently the burials occurred, and what implications this may have had in terms of the density of burials within the churchyard. The absence of intact human burials encountered during ground disturbance works is not surprising, considering that both trenches were at least partly located over existing Victorian drains, which would have disturbed any earlier burials. A sequence of deposits potentially relating to the churchyard burial soil and the construction of, or repair works to the chancel were identified in Trench 1, located immediately north east of the sanctuary.

**References**

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**APPENDIX A PLATES**

**Plate 1** Northeast facing section of Trench 1, 0.5m scale

**Plate 2** Northeast facing section of Trench 2, 0.5m scale

## APPENDIX B Context Register

**Trench 1**

| Context No. | Description | Dimensions (m) | Depth (m) | Init/Date |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 100 | Turf, modern ground surface | 1mx 0.95m | 0.02m | KK 24.10.16 |
| 101 | Tarmac, path | 1mx 0.95m | 0.02m | KK 24.10.16 |
| 102 | Mid brownish grey silty clay, drain fill. | 1mx 0.45 m | 0.72m | KK 24.10.16 |
| 103 | Salt glazed drain pipe | 0.15m diam | - | KK 24.10.16 |
| 104 | Drain cut | 1mx 0.45 m | 0.72m | KK 24.10.16 |
| 105 | Mid brownish grey silty clay, CBM & stone inclusions | 1mx 0.95m | 0.3m | KK 24.10.16 |
| 106 | Sandstone chippings. Construction debris | 1mx 0.95m | 0.32m | KK 24.10.16 |
| 107 | Mid grey brown silty clay with frequent stone incs. Graveyard soil. | 1mx 0.95m | 0.1m+ | KK 24.10.16 |

**Trench 2**

| Context No. | Description | Dimensions (m) | Depth (m) | Init/Date |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 200 | Turf, modern ground surface | 1.1m x 0.95m | 0.02m | KK 24.10.16 |
| 201 | Dark greyish-brown silty clay (201) CBM and stone incs | 1.1m x 0.95m | 0.02m | KK 24.10.16 |
| 202 | Mid brownish grey silty clay, drain fill. | 1m x 0.95m | 0.76m | KK 24.10.16 |
| 203 | Salt glazed drain pipe | 0.15m diam | - | KK 24.10.16 |
| 204 | Drain cut | 1mx 0.95 m | 0.76m | KK 24.10.16 |

## APPENDIX C Photograph Register

| Jpeg No. | Description | View | Scale | Inits/Date |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4146-50 | Church yard to south of chancel | East | 1m | KK 24.10.16 |
| 4151-54 | Church tower | East | - | KK 24.10.16 |
| 4155-56 | Porch tiles | - | - | KK 24.10.16 |
| 4157-60 | Church yard to east of chancel and Lady Chapel | North | 1m | KK 24.10.16 |
| 4161-62 | Church yard to south of chancel and southern boundary | South | - | KK 24.10.16 |
| 4163-65 | West facing section of trench 1 | East | 0.5m | KK 24.10.16 |
| 4166-69 | West facing section of trench 2 | East | 0.5m | KK 24.10.16 |

## APPENDIX D Catalogue of Disarticulated Human Remains

| Deposit | Bone Element | Bone | Side | Age | Sex | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 102 | Hand phalanx | Proximal hand phalanx, complete | - | 18+ | - | - |
| 102 | 1st metatarsal | Complete | Right | 18+ | - | - |
| 105 | Radius/ulna | Shaft fragment | - | 18+ | - | - |
| 105 | Rib | Shaft fragments x2 | - | 18+ | - | - |
| 202 | Foot phalanx | Proximal ,unfused | - | Ado | - | - |
| 202 | Femur | Distal 3rd | Right | 18+ | - | - |
| 202 | Femur | Head and neck | Right | 18+ | - | - |
| 202 | Os Coxa | Acetabulum, part of ilium | Right | 18+ | - | - |
| 202 | Tibia | Proximal 3rd, un fused | Right | Juv | - | - |
| 202 | Hand phalanx | complete | - | 18+ | - | - |
| 202 | Tibia | Proximal articulation | Left | 18+ | - | - |
| 202 | 3rd metatarsal | Complete | Left | 18+ | - | - |
| 202 | 5th metatarsal | Proximal 3rd | Left | 18+ | - | - |
| 202 | Vertebra | Lumbar (upper order) | - | 18+ | - | - |
| 202 | Tibia | Proximal articulation | Right | 18+ | - | - |
| 202 | Hand phalanx | Complete | - | 18+ | - | - |
| 202 | Humerus | Distal articulation | Left | 18+ | - | - |
| 202 | Tibia | Distal articulation | Left | 18+ | - | - |
| 202 | Rib | Shaft fragment (upper) | - | 18+ | - | - |
| 202 | Clavicle | Medial ¼ missing articulation | Right | 18+ | - | - |
| 202 | Tibia | Distal end ¼ unfused | Left | Ado | - | - |
| 202 | Fibula | x 2 shaft fragments | - | 18+ | - | |
| 202 | Femur | Shaft fragment | - | Juv | - | - |
| 202 | Tibia | x 2 Shaft fragments | Right | 18+ | - | - |
| 202 | Tibia | x 4 Shaft fragments | - | 18+ | - | - |
| 202 | Radius | Mid-shaft | - | Juv | - | - |
| 202 | Mandible | Inferior margin only | Left | Juv? | - | - |
| 202 | Os Coxa | Ilium, apex only | Left | 18+ | - | - |
| 202 | Parietal | Sutural vault fragment | - | - | - | - |