

**All Saints Church
Cockermouth
Cumbria
UK**

**A report of archaeological
evaluation of ground east of the
church by test pits**

February 4 2026

Report précis

An archaeological evaluation of ground east of All Saints Church, Cockermouth (NGR: NY 1235.3052) was conducted via test pitting on February 4th 2026; in advance of the implanting of a water pipe.

Four test pits were dug to a depth of 92cm each. The presence of a substantial gravel path, grave monuments, stone steps and stone walls affected the locations of these.

The results from the excavation of the pits are given in Section 2 of the report text.

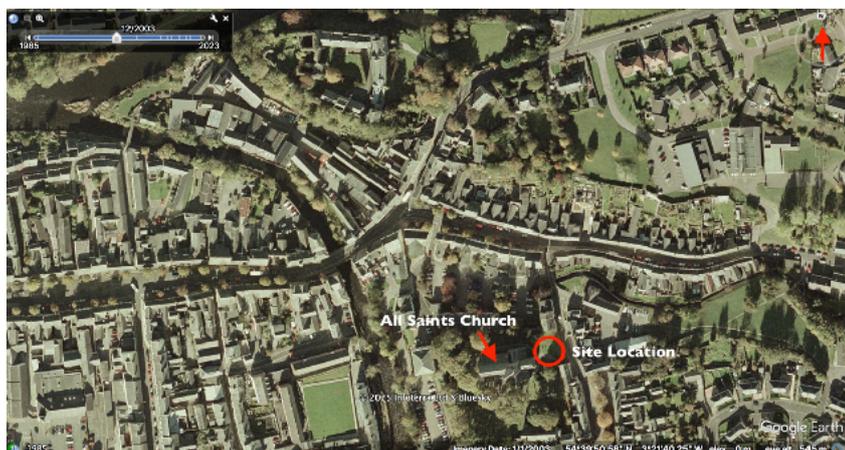


Fig 1: Google Earth satellite image showing the evaluation site location in relation to All Saints Church and the medieval core of Cockermouth.



Fig.2: Cockermouth plan, showing the evaluation site location in relation to Cockermouth Castle (in red).

I. All Saints Church: context

The present All Saints Church was erected in 1852-4, following the burning down of a previous church (erected 1709-11) in 1850. The previous church had replaced a medieval chapel. The present church is set near the edge of a promontory overlooking (to the north) Bitterbeck Car Park, the Market Place, and what were originally medieval burgage properties, in Cockermouth (see Fig.1, Fig.2).

2. Test pit results



Fig.4: Test pit I

Test Pit I

0-20cm depth: Dark grey loamy topsoil with root inclusions and small stones.

20-30cm depth: Light grey clay band with occasional small stones.

30-52cm depth: Dark clay band with medium sized stones.

52-92cm depth: Light brown clay.



Fig.5: Test pit 2

Test pit 2

0-20cm: Dark grey loamy topsoil with root inclusions.

20-35cm: Light grey gritty clay.

35-55cm: Dark grey clay with small stones.

55-92cm: Dark grey-brown loam with small stones.



Fig.6: Test pit 3

Test pit 3

0-25cm: Dark grey loamy topsoil with root inclusions, small-medium sized stone fragments, (some angular) a bone fragment.

25-50cm: Light grey gritty clay and gravel with occasional small-medium sized stones, (some angular).

50-92cm: Dark grey-brown loam.



Fig.7: Test pit 4

Test pit 4

0-40cm: Dark grey loamy topsoil with root inclusions.

40-65cm: Light brown to dark orange clay with organic loamy dark brown patches and small stones.

65-75cm: 3 large cobblestones c.10-12cm long and c. 7-8cm wide, set in dark brown loamy clay .

75-92cm: Light brown clay.



Fig. 8: Test Pit 3 at an early stage of excavation, from the west

3. Pit excavation methodology

All pits were excavated using hand-shovels and a post-holer, with a large crowbar used where the soils and clays at depth proved intractable.

4. Results of the evaluation

The results of this evaluation are those to be expected of an area of a churchyard that has been disturbed in the past by groundworks, including burials, the creation of a flight of stone steps and associated walling, and church building. Given the disturbed nature of the ground, and a lack of deeply stratified/contexted datable small finds, it is not possible to provide a secure chronology for the sequences of soil and clay deposition where the pits sampled the subsurface deposits.

The survival of a small section of cobbling (Test pit 4) at 65cm depth indicates an earlier path or surface at this point. No small finds were associated with the cobbling.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Stuart Hoddinott and the churchwardens at All Saints, and to Ed Mooney for his help with the excavations.

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09:02:2026

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