



Highland Archaeology Services Ltd

Bringing the Past and Future Together

Cromdale Church, Cromdale, Grantown



Archaeological Metal Detecting Survey & Watching Brief

Final Report

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Summary

An archaeological project was undertaken by Highland Archaeology Services on behalf of Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks to mitigate the impact of ground works for the installation of a replacement underground electricity supply to Cromdale & Advie Church, Cromdale.

The project involved preliminary probing of the construction corridor combined with a metal detecting survey of the same. Archaeological work culminated in a Watching Brief undertaken during the excavation of the trench for the new underground supply. A small assemblage of artefacts were recovered by metal detecting along the corridor of the cable trench in the field adjacent to the churchyard. These included a possible fragment of a medieval ring-brooch and a post medieval copper alloy button. No artefacts were recovered from the part of the cable route that ran through the churchyard.

Occasional fragments of disarticulated human bone were revealed by the cable trench in the churchyard. These were recorded and immediately re-interred at the same location beneath the new electricity cable duct. No other significant archaeological deposits or finds were located during the course of the fieldwork.

No further archaeological mitigation is considered necessary.

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Legislation and Policy

The common principles underlying international conventions, national legislation and local authority planning policies are that cultural heritage assets should be identified in advance of development and safeguarded where practicable; if disturbance is unavoidable appropriate recording of features and recovery of portable artefacts should take place. These have been set out in international and European Union agreements, and UK and Scottish legislation, as well as national and local planning policies¹.

Professional standards maintained throughout the present project adhered to the Codes of Conduct and Approved Practice and Standards of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists².

Acknowledgements

This document was written by Emma Malone and edited by Lynne McKeggie. The project was commissioned and funded by SSE. Fieldwork was directed by Emma Malone. Background mapping has been reproduced by permission of the Ordnance Survey under Licence 100043217. Historic mapping is courtesy of the National Library of Scotland.

Glossary of terms

DBA – Desk Based Assessment
HER – Historic Environment Record
NGR – National Grid Reference
OSA – Old Statistical Account
OS – Ordnance Survey
NSA – New Statistical Account

¹ A summary of relevant international, EU, UK and Scottish legislation and policies is available from the HAS office on request.

² Chartered Institute for Archaeology (CIfA) Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological Excavation.

Location

The route of the new underground electricity supply to Cromdale & Advie Church is located within the churchyard and an adjacent field located immediately to the southeast (Figures 1, 2 and 3). The site also lies within the designated area of Cromdale Battlefield (BTL20), which is centred at approximately NGR NJ 067 289. The study site and the entire curtilage of the Grade B Listed Cromdale Church and burial ground (MHG6824 and 31374) is located approximately centrally within the designated battlefield area whilst the adjacent Old Parish Manse (MHG15358), built in 1834, is also Grade B Listed.



Figure 1: General Site Location

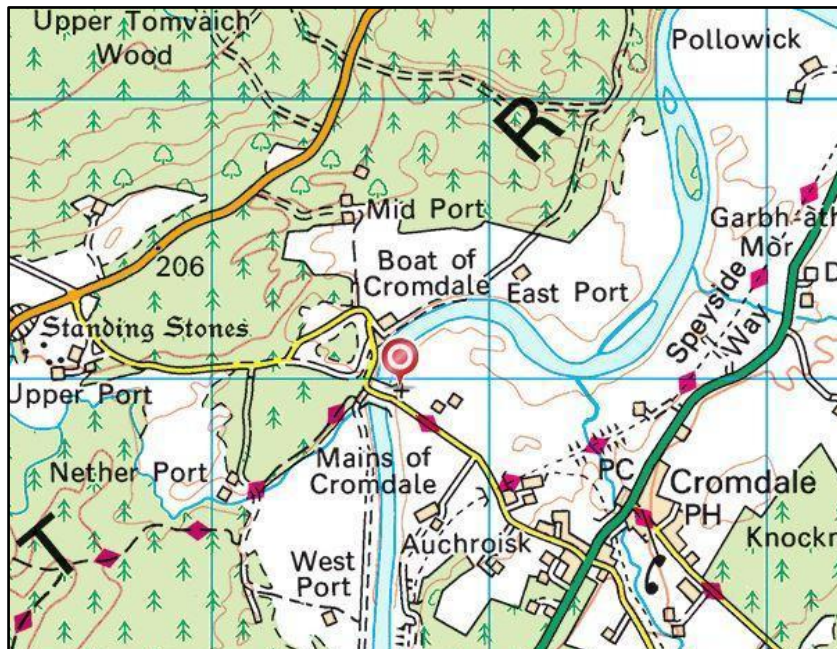


Figure 2: Site Location

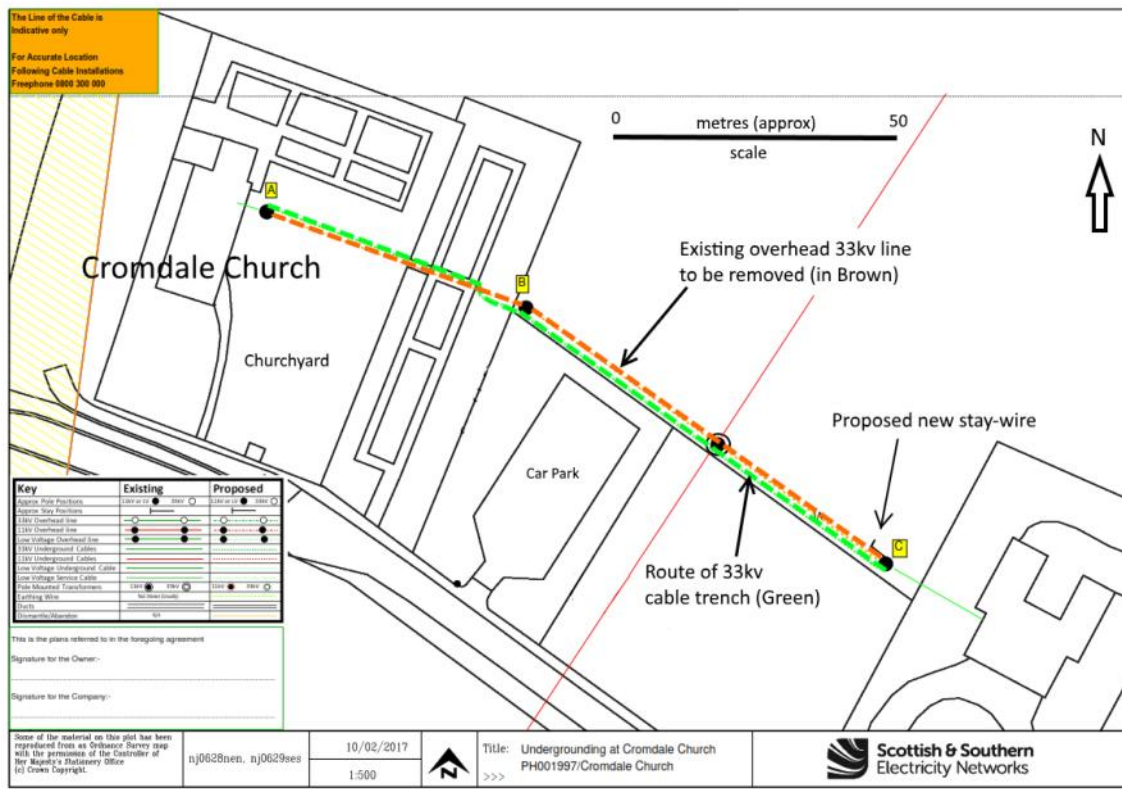


Figure 3- Route of the SSE cable trench (scale shown)

Introduction

A preliminary archaeological probing and metal detecting survey and subsequent watching brief was undertaken between the 19th and the 25th October 2017 by Highland Archaeology Services for Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks, in advance of and during trenching work to relocate an existing overhead electricity cable to an underground duct. The work was carried out due to the high likelihood of uncovering human remains within the churchyard, coupled with the significance of the adjoining field and its connection to the Battle of Cromdale (see below).

The underground trench was located directly underneath the existing overhead line, which traversed Cromdale churchyard and passed through the adjoining field to the manse house (Figure 3). The cable trench was sited along the existing churchyard path in order to minimise the likelihood of disturbing articulated human remains and through the adjoining field. The ground work was carried out by Inverness Paving Contractors on Behalf of SSE. Preliminary archaeological probing and metal detecting survey was undertaken by Andrew Young and Eric Soane whilst the watching brief monitoring was undertaken by Emma Malone PCIFA.

Archaeological & Historical Background

Historic Environment Record

The features of historical interest in the vicinity of the development largely relate directly to the church itself and its associated structures.

Cromdale Parish Church, Burial Ground and Watch House are category B Listed Buildings (**DBA1**, LB352). Whilst the Church itself was constructed in 1809 earlier stones can be found on the site, including one dated 1602. It is believed that the current church was built on the site of an earlier church (Canmore ID 75139, HER no. MHG6824 & MHG31374).

Cromdale Old Parish Manse, Steading and Gatepiers are also in the vicinity of the development, located just south west of the church, and are category B Listed Buildings in their own right (**DBA2**, LB5106). This handsome building and outhouse was founded in 1834 to serve as the manse for the church (Canmore ID 110244, HER no. MHG15358, MHG44094 & MHG44096)

The development area falls within the Designated Battlefield area for the Battle of Cromdale, which took place in 1690 (**DBA3**, BTL20, HER no. MHG6797). Cromdale is significant as the final battle of the first Jacobite Rising within Scotland. It was fought between a small force of Jacobite Highlanders under the command of Major-General Thomas Buchan and a Government army of dragoons and infantry under Sir Thomas Livingstone. The Government troops inflicted a crushing defeat upon the Jacobite forces, and they would subsequently disperse. Cromdale Church played a significant role in the battle, as the government force crossed the Spey at the ford located downstream from the church (thought to be approximately where the modern road bridge crosses the river) at 3 a.m., their advance shielded by the darkness and tree cover, before attacking a Jacobite outpost stationed at the church; the church's bells sounded the alarm, but with too little time for the Jacobites to react effectively (Livingstone 1690). This attack may have served as a diversion for the crossing, drawing the Jacobite guards away from the ford to support their comrades at the church (Hopkins 1998; 217). Cromdale Church is therefore key to the historical narrative of the battle, and this section of the Designated Battlefield area is specifically drawn to accommodate it.

In the wider vicinity of the development are other historic sites from the last few centuries, including the site of the Boat of Cromdale bridge suspension footbridge (**DBA4**, Canmore ID 167333, HER no. MHG36142) and a military bridge (**DBA5**, HER no. MHG23728). Also a 'holy well' known as Tobar Ma Luaig, a natural spring that served as a water source for users of the crossing (**DBA6**, Canmore ID 15678).

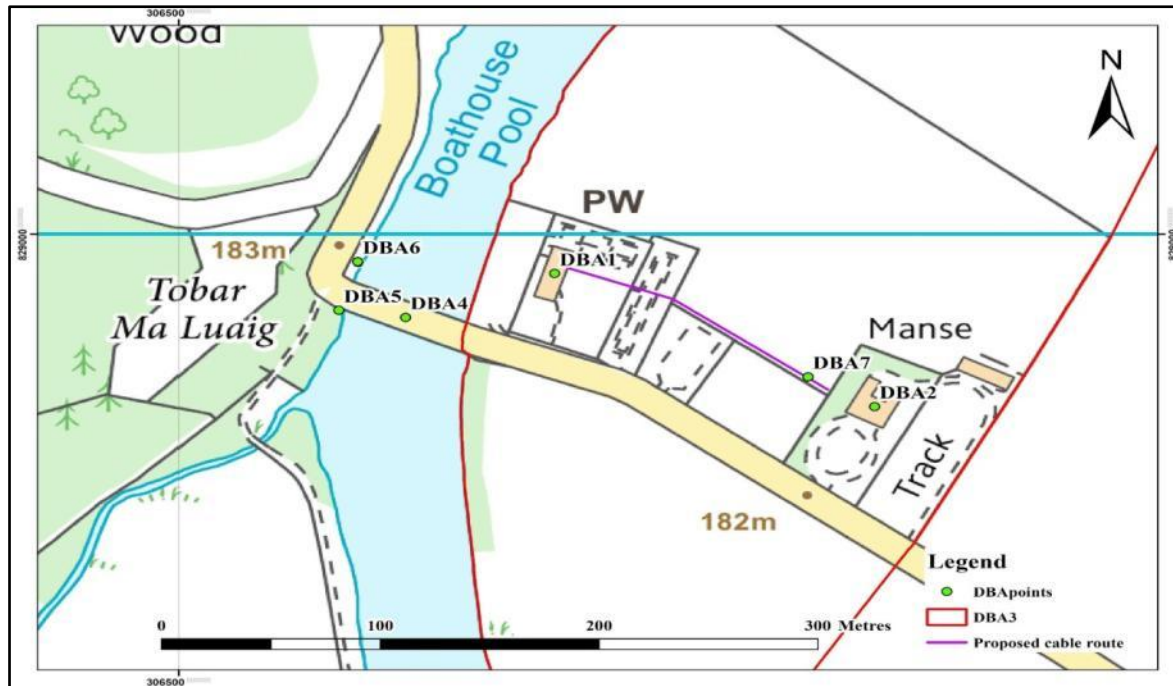


Figure 4 – The study site showing DBA Locations and the route of the cable trench (scale shown)

Historic Maps



Figure 5: Extract from the 1st edition OS 25" map surveyed 1874 with the boundary of the study area.
Cromdale, Inverallan & Advie XXXIII.2

The 1st edition 25-inch map shows the church as a rectangular building with churchyard to the east. There are formal gardens between the church and the manse to the south east (see Figure 3). There

is also a small, square, roofed building that is depicted just to the north of the ‘formal garden’ wall (DBA7). This lay in the direct path of the proposed underground cable route.

Statistical Accounts

Both the New and Old Statistical accounts were investigated (see below) to see if any relevant information could be sourced relating to the trenching area. Nothing hitherto unknown was uncovered, apart from a differing date from the HER for the building of the manse house, which the Rev. Lewis Grant states “the Manse was built 70 years ago” giving a date of 1723 as opposed to 1834, suggesting that an earlier manse once stood at the same location.

- Cromdale, County of Inverness OSA Vol VIII 1793 Rev. Mr Lewis Grant
- Cromdale, County of Inverness NSA Vol XIV 1845 Rev. James Grant

Project Aims and Objectives

The principal aims of the Watching Brief were to:

- Establish the presence or absence of significant buried archaeological deposits, including human remains, within the study area and, if present, to determine their character, extent, date and archaeological significance and to record them to professional standards, in line with current legislation and policy.
- To ensure that all human remains revealed during the course of the fieldwork were treated with respect and in accordance with the guidelines issued by Historic Scotland³ and the Church of England Advisory Panel⁴.
- Minimise any possible delay or cost to the development by anticipating archaeological requirements as far as possible, timetabling and integrating archaeological recording work with the project, and dealing with any issues arising quickly and efficiently.

Methodology

Preliminary survey of the proposed trench route was undertaken by means of ground probing and metal detecting. The ground probing was undertaken to a depth of approximately 500mm within a 2 to 3m wide corridor in the churchyard. The aim of the survey was to identify and thereby avoid any substantial buried masonry or features, in particular buried grave ledger slabs or other funerary monuments.

Metal detecting was undertaken by specialist Eric Soane using a Whites DFX machine within a 10m wide corridor in the field and a 2 to 3m wide corridor in the churchyard. The principal objective of the survey was to identify and recover artefacts possibly associated with the 1650 Battle of Cromdale and to identify any locations within the churchyard corridor where strong

³ Historic Scotland 1997 (amended 2006) – *The Treatment of Human Remains in Archaeology*

⁴ The Advisory Panel on the Archaeology of Burials in England 2017 - Guidance for Best Practice for the Treatment of Human Remains Excavated from Christian Burial Grounds in England (Second Edition)

signals could indicate buried coffin furniture or alike. The locations of all metal finds discovered within the detecting corridor were recorded and located using a survey grade GPS, lifted and examined by the project archaeologist. Objects of obviously modern date were discarded. Older or unidentified objects were taken off site, cleaned and identified as far as possible.

The cable trench was opened using a narrow four-inch ditching bucket attached to a small tracked excavator. The narrow bucket afforded enough room for the cable trench to be opened without opening any more ground that was necessary. Underneath the church yard path was a layer of geotextile fabric, which was peeled off and left to the side for repositioning during backfilling. Tree roots marred the progress within the field.

Once identified all human remains and archaeological finds were photographed and surveyed in at their exact location. Human remains were then re-interred under the cable at their original location. Photographs were taken using a Pentax digital SLR camera and their points plotted using a Thales Mobile Mapper GPS unit.

Fieldwork Results

Ground Probing

Subsurface probing was undertaken in the church graveyard by Andrew Young using a narrow diameter probe in advance of the development work and before the route of the 33Kv trench was finalised. The survey did not detect any significant buried obstructions either directly along the existing gravel path or in the grass alongside. It was noted that it was possible to insert the probe to a depth of 1m with little resistance in the adjoining grass.

Metal Detecting Survey

The metal-detecting survey was undertaken by specialist Eric Soane using a high sensitivity Whites DFX machine. A 10m wide corridor was surveyed in the field and a 3m wide corridor in the churchyard. Finds were retrieved from the field but signals were not excavated in the churchyard.

A small number of metal objects were recovered from the survey corridor in the field (see **Figure 6** & Appendix 1 for locations). The collection consisted of the following:

1. *F164 – fragment of lead splash*
2. *F165 – complete copper alloy button*
3. *F166- fragment of curved Copper alloy object with faint possible engraving – Eric Soane suggested it may represent part of a ring brooch*
4. *F167 – fragment of a spoon bowl, possibly pewter*
5. *F168 – unidentified copper alloy object*

The finds (Appendix 1) were retained and notified to Treasure Trove.

Watching Brief

The topsoil directly beneath modern geotextile along the churchyard path consisted of loosely compacted dark brown sandy silt, friable with frequent large angular and rounded stone inclusions measuring up to 0.45m in length. The topsoil revealed in the field was texturally quite similar except slightly darker due to decaying leaf matter from the surrounding trees shed seasonally and creating a rich organic mulch. The natural substrate was not revealed in the churchyard but was in the field where it consisted of a dark yellow/orange fine sand. The trench cut through a modern post-war midden (judging from the bottles and fire-place fragments uncovered) close to the field boundary wall (Figure 6), which had likely been fly-tipped there within the last 50 years. The collection (Photograph 5) was not deemed to be archaeologically significant due to its relatively modern date and was not retained.

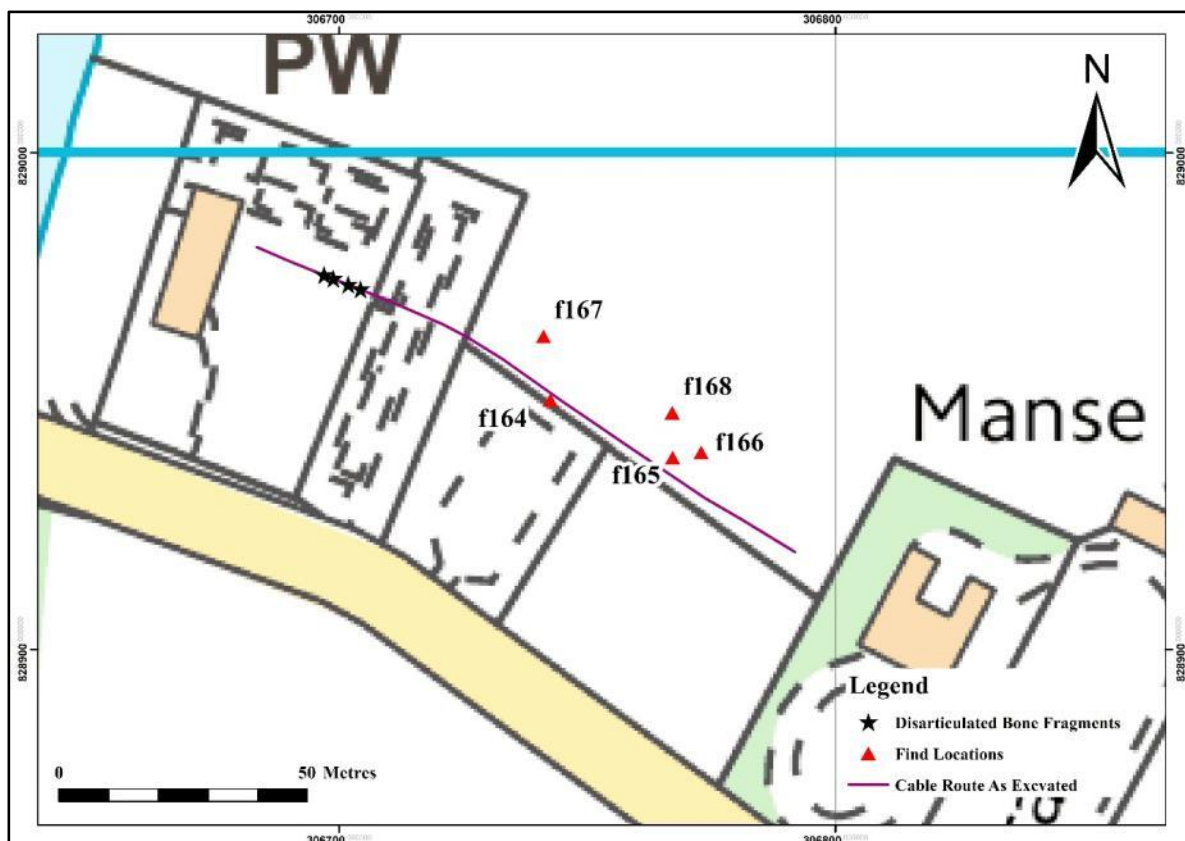


Figure 6: Plan showing the cable trench route and location of finds (scale shown)

Occasional fragments of disarticulated human bone were revealed in the section of the trench opened through the gravel path in the church graveyard. The remains were mostly revealed at a depth of 0.45m, considerably shallower than anticipated. Their presence at this shallow location might be attributed to animal burrowing activity or material reworked as a result of several hundred years of grave digging. The grave markers located closest to the line of the trench were of mostly mid-19th century date. The human remains were fragmentary, and included a small piece of cranium, a small rib bone, pieces of ulna / radius and one vertebrae bone. No associated artefacts or items of coffin furniture were revealed.



Photograph 1- Trench excavation along the church yard path



Photograph 2 – Human bone revealed in the churchyard trench (scale in cms)



Photograph 3: The cable trench through the churchyard with ducting installed



Photograph 4: The cable trench alongside the field wall showing masonry of DBA7 (left, 1m scale)

Summary of Finds

The small collection of metal objects recovered by the preliminary metal detecting survey and retained are noted above. Significant numbers of modern metal rubbish were also identified but not retained.

No significant archaeological finds were uncovered during the watching brief. Modern (post 1940s) household waste including stoneware and glass (Photograph 5) was identified although the objects were not deemed to be archaeologically significant and were not retained.



Photograph 5: Modern finds from the field trench spoil

Discussion & Conclusions

The small collection of metal objects recovered by metal detecting appear to reflect casual losses of a wide date range. All appear to be of base metal and only one, the possible ring-brooch fragment (F166), is considered to be archaeologically significant.

No significant buried archaeological features or deposits were revealed during the course of the watching brief. The small number of disarticulated human bones identified in the church yard were to be expected – the remains were noted and re-interred in their exact discovery location.

Recommendations

No further archaeological mitigation is considered necessary.

Bibliography and References

HAS 2017 *Project Design & RAMS – Cromdale & Advie Church, Cromdale*. Unpublished client report

Hopkins, P. 1998. *Glencoe and the End of the Highland War*. Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers

Livingstone, T. 1690. *A true and real account of the defeat of General Buchan and Brigadeer Cannon, their High-land Army, at the Battle of Cromdale upon the 1st of May; 1690*. Edinburgh: Printed by the Heir of Andrew Anderson

Grant L. 1793 *Cromdale, County of Inverness OSA Vol VIII*. Edinburgh

Grant J. 1845 *Cromdale, County of Inverness NSA Vol XIV* Edinburgh

Archive

A copy of this report will be stored within the HAS office and uploaded into HER. A report will be deposited with Discovery and Excavation Scotland and final archive will be deposited with Historic Environment Scotland (intended).

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Register of Metal Detecting Finds

Find No.	Description	Location
F164	<i>Fragment of lead splash - undated</i>	NGR NJ 06742 28950
F165	<i>Copper alloy button – post medieval</i>	NGR NJ 06742 28950
F166	<i>Fragment of curved Copper alloy object with faint possible engraving – possibly part of a ring brooch</i>	NGR NJ 06772 28939
F167	<i>Fragment of a spoon bowl, possibly pewter</i>	NGR NJ 06741 28963
F168	<i>Unidentified copper alloy object</i>	NGR NJ 06767 28947

Appendix 2 - Photographic Register

Photo No.	Camera Point	Direction	Direction (Facing)
2030	A	View along preliminary survey corridor in field	SE
2031	A	View along preliminary survey corridor in churchyard	NW
2032	B	View along preliminary survey corridor in extension to churchyard	SE
2033	A	View along footpath route in churchyard	NW
2034	A	View along survey corridor in churchyard	NW
2035	A	View along field survey corridor	SE
2036	B	View along churchyard path corridor	SE
2037	A	Churchyard path with Eric undertaking metal detecting	NW
2038	B	Eric undertaking metal detecting survey	SE
9908	1	Site over-view pre-ex	E
9909	2	Site over-view pre-ex	W
9910	1	Site over-view pre-ex	E
9911	3	Trenching post-ex	W
9912	---	Working shot	---
9913	4	Trenching post-ex	W
9914	5	Trenching post-ex	W
9915	6	Disarticulated human remains within trench	E
9916	7	Disarticulated human remains within trench	E
9917	7	Trenching post-ex	E
9918	8	Disarticulated human remains within trench	E
9919	9	Disarticulated human remains within trench	E
9920	10	Trenching post-ex	SE
9921	11	Trenching post-ex	W
9922	11	Pipe laid within open trench	W
9923	12	Trenching post-ex	E
9924	---	deleted	---
9925	12	Trenching post-ex	E
9926	13	Field area pre-ex	NE
9927	14	Field area pre-ex	W
9928	14	Field area pre-ex	E

9929	15	Church from field	NE
9930	16	Trenching post-ex	NE
9931	17	Trenching post-ex	NE
9932	18	Trenching post-ex	NE
9933	19	Location of modern dump – joint bay.	W
9934	---	Items from modern dump	---
9935	20	Trenching post-ex	NE
9936	21	Trenching post-ex	NW
9937	22	Trenching post-ex	NE
9938	23	Trenching post-ex	E
9939	24	Trenching “stay” post-ex	E
9940	25	Trenching post-ex	E

Appendix 3 – Camera Point Locations

