

A Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) survey was conducted at St Peter's Church, in Saint Albans, Hertfordshire. The survey encompassed the nave and two external areas around the north-west and south-east corners of the church. The survey objective inside the nave was to search for evidence of burials. In the two external areas around the north-west and south-east corners of the church. The survey objective inside the nave was to search for evidence of burials. In the two external areas around the north-west and south-east corners of the church. The survey objective inside the nave was to search for evidence of burials. In the two external areas around the northore was carried out in the survey areas at a spacing of 1.0 X 0.5 metres, subject to available access.

Most ground conditions contain electrically contrasting layers, which produce reflection events on the Ground Probing Radar (GPR) profiles. Features such as soil or fill boundaries provide the background signals around unusual features such as voids or pipes. Processing and interpretation procedures are designed to separate the reflection various target categories, and then map the different reflection types on to a plan diagram. This process involves the interpretation of each individual radar profile, followed by an areal interpretation of all the radar profiles. Features identified across several profiles are interpolated in areas where the data is well constrained.

The confidence levels placed on a plan interpretation depend on the spacing of the survey grid. A target such as a void or pipe must be intersected by at least one radar profile to be detected. Ideally, the profile spacing should allow any target to be intersected by several profiles. It is not usually possible to obtain total survey cove Consequently the survey line spacing is selected to provide a good indication of site conditions and allow for available access.

In a typical church, unmarked burial features could be either individual graves or larger vaults. Radar reflections produced by such features will dependant whether the coffin or vault is intact and has an internal void, or if it has collapsed internally. The method used to detect voids depends on identifying the strong electrical change: with void targets. The large electrical contrast between solid material and air generates a high amplitude response, which should stand out clearly against the background reflections. Void reflections may also be associated with ringing, caused by reverberation of the radar pulse within the void. In some cases strong diffractions are the corners of the grave, which produce a characteristic crossover effect.

Many older graves and vaults are likely to have collapsed internally, causing the reflection amplitude to diminish significantly and the reflection characteristics to change laterally. The presence or absence of a grave slab is also likely to effect the resultant reflections. Closely spaced burial areas are likely to produce zones of compos neterogeneous reflections

The data interpretation identified six significant categories of reflection targets:

) Possible burial

- i) Conductive surface associated with grave slabs
- iii) Possible high void ratio ground
- iv) Disturbed ground
- v) Possible service
- vi) Conductive surface

i) Possible burial

reas identified as possible burials inside the church generally appear as discrete zones of moderate amplitude, irregular, reflections. The plan dimensi these anomalies is approximately 1 x 2m, with an east-west orientation. Both characteristics are suggestive of burials inside a church. Most of the possible burials were not associated with clear open voids or crossover diffractions. Some examples of possible burials are shown in Example Radargrams 3, 4 and 5.

ii) Conductive surface associated with grave slabs

The reflections from a linked series of grave slabs running down the centre of the nave display discrete planar top surfaces and crossover diffractions, but with no evidence of an internal void or disturbed ground. This can be seen in Example Radargram 3. The evidence suggests these features could be empty graves, although the surface could be masking features beneath it.

iii) Possible High Void Ratio Ground

ossible high void ratio ground appear on the external profiles as dense zones of high amplitude reflections, in some cases displaying evidence of pulse ringing. A characteristic chaotic structure is evident caused by complex interference between numerous small, high amplitude reflections. These reflection characteristics are gener of loose, high void ratio ground and may be associated with demolished structures or poorly backfilled excavations. Radargram 1 presents an example of high void ratio ground. The area of high void ratio ground appears as a linear, east-west orientated strip along the northern edge of the outside wall of the church. This feature m sociated with a linear feature such as a service trench.

iv) Disturbed around

Areas identified as disturbed ground generally appear as zones of moderate amplitude, irregular, reflections with broken layering. In some cases there is evidence of a slightly chaotic internal structure, resulting from interaction between individual reflections. Radargram 6 presents an example of the disturbed ground reflection categ Disturbed ground can be caused by localised disturbance of the ground or by discrete changes in ground composition.

Possible service

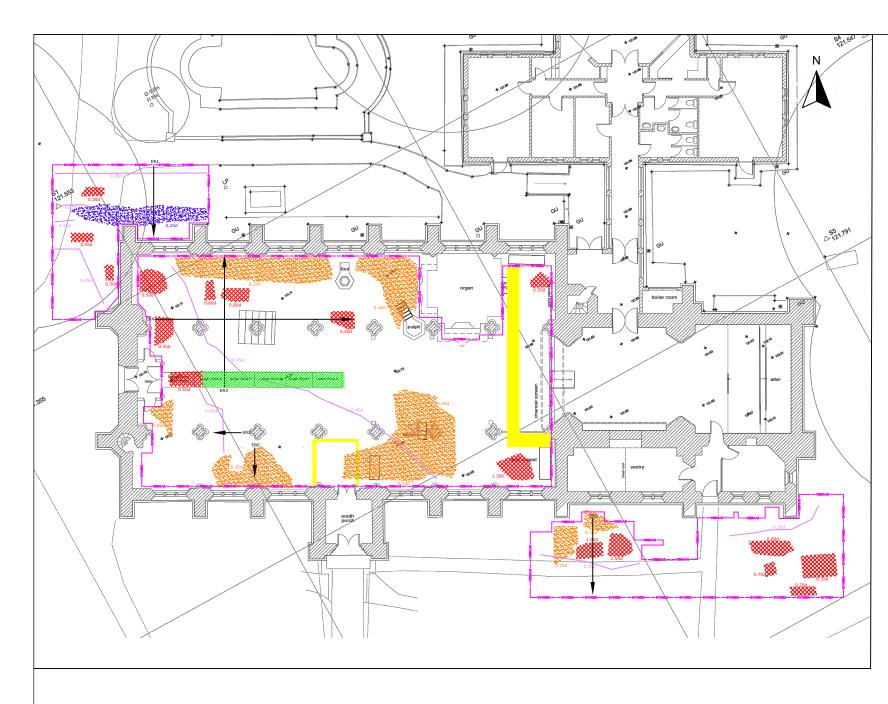
A GPR profile either orthogonal or at a high angle to a length of service typically produces a steeply curved or hyperbolic reflection of moderate amplitude, which should be discernible against background reflections. The service position is located at the apex of the hyperbola. Pine tracks are identified by the recognition of alignment reflection between adjacent parallel profiles. At low angles of intersection between survice tracks, the resultant planar reflection response is more ambiguous and can be difficult to identify. Examples of the possible service reflection are given in Radargrams 1,2, 4 and 5. Though the possible services in the south are not characteristic of drainage channels it is possible that they may relate to them.

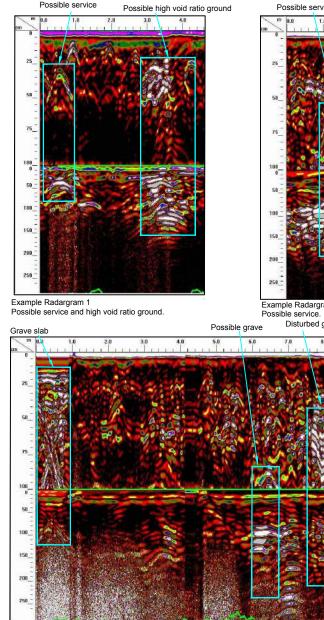
vi) Conductive surface Two conductive surfaces were identified by the survey. The small area around the main entrance appears to be related to metal carpet grips and is unlikely to have an archaeological origin. The conductive surface reflection to the east appears as very high amplitude, near surface reflections associated with pronounced ringing ca everberations. No signal penetration was possible through this conductive layering. The cause of the conductive surface is uncertain, but appears to correlate to a change in the floor surfacing that is intersected by an inspection cover. This suggests this feature may be related to a drainage channel.

Conclusions

The GPR survey identified features that may be associated with burials, voids and drainage channels. Not all of this evidence is clear due to large areas of disturbed ground throughout the survey area. Possible burials and possible services were present throughout all survey areas. In the north west area a linear area of high void rat identified but no obvious voids were present in the data. Whilst there was evidence of possible services to the south east of the church there was no clear evidence of a typical drainage channel; the conductive surface found in the eastern interior of the church may mask a drainage channel but there is no evidence of a void here.

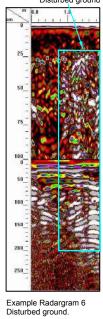
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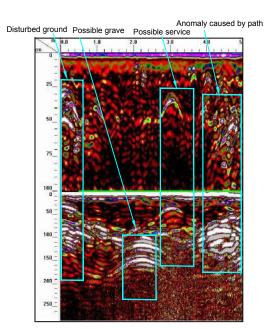
Possible service

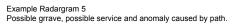
Example Radargram 3 Conductive surface associated with grave slab, possible grave and disturbed ground.



Possible grave Possible grave Possible service 2.0 3.0 6.0 8.0 9.0 10.0 11.0 12.0 4.0 5.0 7.0 10 25

Example Radargram 4 Possible graves and a possible service.





Disturbed ground

vice	The performance of the technologies employed in non-invasive surveys can be adversely affected by factors outside of Sumo's control. Whilst Sumo uses all due diligence and reasonable endeavours it does not warrant that 100% detection can be achieved. Irrespective of the information provided by a geophysical survey, any ground works should be undertaken with extreme caution. Dual Frequency GSSI radar is collected with 300MHz and 800MHz antennae simultaneously. The example radargrams show data from both frequencies. The top section shows the high frequency (800MHz) data, while the bottom section shows the low frequency (300MHz) data.								
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