



Trinity Church Excavation, St Andrews, Fife

Built on top of a medieval cemetery, it was no surprise that skeletons were uncovered when refurbishment works recently started at the Hay Fleming reference library in the centre of St Andrews. Indeed, in a single pit excavated to accommodate a new lift shaft, more than 70 articulated and approximately 15 disarticulated skeletons were recovered.

The earliest burials in this cemetery date from around 1410-1415, the period during which the Trinity Church was actually constructed. Indeed, the angular sandstone rocks in the cemetery soil matrix are in fact waste chippings from the construction of the church.



Note the regular east-west alignment of the burials. Christian dead tend usually to be buried with their feet to the east, the belief being that on the day of judgement when both the quick and dead are judged, all Christians will stand up, and face east, the direction from where the Resurrected Christ will come.

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(left) Trinity Church - from a bird's eye view of St Andrews. Detail from a manuscript held in St Andrews University Library: *S. Andre sive Andreapolis Scotiae Universitas Metropolitana* and produced by Geddy around 1580.