The Parish and the Housing of the Working Class in Lindsey, 1790-1850

J. A. Perkins

The later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in Lindsey witnessed the emergence of a substantial degree of parochial involvement in the provision of housing for the working class. This took the form not only of the establishment of parish workhouses to accommodate the 'impotent poor', including unmarried mothers and on occasions able-bodied labourers who were unable to find or unwilling to look for work. It also involved the provision of family and individual dwellings both for those on relief and for those in employ. As such, and until its demise from the later 1830s as a consequence of pressure exerted by the Poor Law Commission established under the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834, the engagement of the parish in the housing question was a precursor, albeit a rare one, of that public involvement in the provision of working class housing which is a feature of all the modern industrial economies of Europe. Moreover, there are a number of similarities in the motives underlying these two movements, which were separated by a comparatively brief period occupying the middle decades of the nineteenth century when the attempt was made to solve the housing question by adherence to pure market criteria.

Primarily, parochial authorities in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Lindsey were forced, or felt that they had no alternative but to become involved in the provision of accommodation for the working class, by the pronounced pressures that were then exerted upon the building industry and upon the private sources of housing finance. On the supply side, from the 1780s onwards rapid agricultural progress, involving enclosures and the relocation of farmsteads from the villages to newly-enclosed farms on the Cliff and the Wolds, competed with cottage accommodation for available supplies of building materials and labour. The period as a whole, from the 1770s to the 1840s, witnessed a substantial expansion of institutional building programmes, to provide houses of correction, 'lock-ups', sessions houses, workhouses and chapels. Some of these, admittedly, provided accommodation of sorts for a portion of the working class; but the amount was small in proportion to the materials and labour consumed in their construction. During the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, from 1793-1815, the demands of the armed forces placed additional pressure upon residential construction in Lindsey, by diverting restricted supplies of imported timber to naval construction, and by inducting into the services much of the casual and migratory labour upon which the building industry depended.1

On the side of demand for working class accommodation in Lindsey, the hundred years after 1750 witnessed substantial and continuous population growth, within which the rate of growth accelerated until the 1820s and did not decline significantly until the 1850s. Within this overall demographic expansion, local and district variations exacerbated the pressures placed upon the building industry. A limited number of market towns grew rapidly in size while others declined and yielded surplus accommodation, as a result of the concentration of market functions and of industries providing farm inputs and processing farm produce. 'Close' parishes that were the property of single persons or of small numbers of co-operative individuals tended to expand only slowly in size, because the owners limited the construction and occupancy of working class dwellings in order to contain expenditure on poor relief. At the same time, the large numbers of small freemen of the 'open' parishes attempted to meet and profit from the distorted demand for accommodation by building and letting tenements. And district variations in agricultural development, in particular the faster rate at which the acreage of labour intensive tillage expanded on the Cliff and the Wolds in comparison to the lowland clays, caused district variations in the rate of growth of demand for labour and in the extent of pressure on housing supply.

Apart from the necessity to provide accommodation for a rapidly growing population in the face of strong competing demands for building materials and labour, other considerations appear to have motivated parochial authorities to become involved in the provision of working class accommodation. For the parish to assume such a role may have been a means of shifting part of the burden of outlays on housing from landowners and employers of labour, especially farmers, to the general body of ratepayers. The operation of the 'close' parish system certainly had this effect in transferring the burden between parishes; to the 'open' parishes where a greater proportion of the poor rate was collected from those employing little or no wage labour. At the same time, the provision of working class accommodation by parochial authorities may have been undertaken in order to moderate pressures for increased money wages, which would have been engendered in conditions of rising demand for accommodation where the market was left to determine rents. At 6d., the parochial provision of accommodation from the rates represented a disguised subsidy in aid of wages and a source of pauperism, which is largely the reason for the later efforts of the Poor Law Commission to eradicate the practice.2

In many instances, the housing provided or paid for by the parish was used as a means of enforcing labour and social discipline upon the tenants. At Bilsby in the Inner Marsh, according to one resident in the 1840s: 'The best [parish] cottages and gardens are appropriated . . . to the use of the most influential farmers — to enable them to exercise an influence over such labourers as may best suit them'.3 The tenants of parish cottages were often called upon to perform services for the parish that could not have been demanded of the tenants of private landlords. In 1824, for instance, the vestry of St. Paul-in-the-Bail, Lincoln, required a widow to 'take in' and lodge other paupers in lieu of rent. On one occasion, the widow was called upon to undertake 'the maintenance, washing and lodging of Charlotte Mawer', an insane pauper whom the vestry decided to remove from the expensive care of the local asylum. On other occasions, the widow was forced to accommodate the wife and children of an overseer who absconded with parish funds and an orphan who was too young to enter domestic service.4

As a poor law provision subsidised housing certainly accustomed labourers and paupers to accept minimal standards of accommodation. The sites of parish cottages were acquired at little or no cost, consisting as they commonly did of land that was assumed to have belonged to the parish 'since time immemorial' or was of little use for any other productive purpose. As one writer observed in the 1840s: 'the site is . . . frequently determined by the opportunity of occupying a piece of ground which would otherwise be of little account'.5 At Ludford Magna on the Wolds the parish contained a 'chaired pit' that had been abandoned.6 At Grainsby in the Middle Marsh they were 'built on land taken off from the sides of the road'.7 At Theddlethorpe in the Outer Marsh a number of parish cottages were built upon a strip of land that was 'originally as appears by its length and breadth an old boundary bank which was used as a parish bridge road'.8 In general, in the words of a Louth attorney in the late 1830s: 'the houses have been built upon waste land, for
which no acknowledgement has been paid, and... uninterrupted possession for upwards of twenty years is the title. 9

Many of the sites selected for the construction of parish cottages were extremely inconvenient and some were even public health hazards. At one village in Kesteven the cottages were placed on the borders of the stream (an arrangement which... constituted a prolific source of ague and rheumatism). 10 In 1848, according to a deposition, in many parish cottages the floor was of straw 'so low as to be in a very damp state, and very often flooded so much, as to require boards to be placed down to enable the occupiers to pass about',11 The cottages themselves were 'commonly very badly constructed, small, with one bedroom only'. At Stow in Lindsey in the 1840s, the 'houses of the poor' belonging to the parish formed 'a square of Irish-looking cabins near the church' that the vicar was eager to see removed. 12 In the great majority of instances it would appear that the total supply of accommodation, was made to the occupiers, albeit perhaps the most important one, was that of their being rent-free or let at merely nominal rents in terms of the market price of working class accommodation.

II

Parochial involvement in the provision of working class housing in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries essentially took two forms: that of building or acquiring cottages with funds derived from the poor rate and other monies allocated to the poor, and that of paying the rents of cottages belonging to private landlords but occupied by labourers and paupers. Generally speaking, the former practice predominated up to the end of the Napoleonic wars, and the latter during the following twenty years until the reorganization of the system of poor relief in the later 1830s. Parish investment in cottage building survived longest after 1815 on the Wolds and in the marshland, the regions with the most acute housing shortage. In 1825 the parish of Trusthorpe in the Outer Marsh paid for the erection of six brick and tile tenements that were thereafter 'commonly called or known by the name of the poor houses'. 13 The parish of Fulstow in the Middle Marsh expended between £80 and £100 'shortly before the passing of the Poor Law [Amendment] Act in the erection of several parish houses'. 14 In 1834 the parish of Elsham used £100, that was bequeathed to the poor by a parishioner, towards the cost of building 'ten new poor houses'. 15 However, in total the number of parish cottages built after 1815 represented a minute addition to the housing stock and an insignificant proportion of the homes built before the introduction of the New Poor Law.

A number of additions to the stock of parish cottages, but not to the total supply of accommodation, was made during the period from 1780 to 1830 by the purchase of tenements originally erected by the occupants or their ancestors. A cottage at Binbrook on the Wolds 'was purchased by the Parish off some poor person who built the cottage on waste ground'. 16 Parishes acquired this kind of property either in return for the grant of poor relief to the owner, usually when he or she became too old to work, or in return for the advance of a capital sum to keep the owner off the rates and to enable the property to be repaired. The fact of the builder and his descendants after him 'being relieved from the poor rates at several times', was the sole basis upon which the parish of Binbrook disposed of a cottage by sale in 1838. 17 Normally, however, a deed of assignment was drawn up in which the occupier relinquished his ownership of the property in exchange for relief or a capital sum. The cottage of 'Widow Moody' at Winthorpe in the Outer Marsh was, 'Purchased off John Moody her husband in the year 1820 for about £40 and conveyed to the parish officers on a proper stamp and properly witnessed, but they paid no rent'. 18 Another instance of such a 'proper' assignment is that left by William Beech, a Teteney weaver, who in 1804 having a house and garden... which I hold under John Harrison Esq., lord of the manor... for a certain sum of money, annually paid in consideration of leave given me to build the said house... do hereby resign the said house into the possession of the churchwardens and overseers of the said parish for their sole and proper use, ... to be disposed of as shall think proper; and also all my furniture that I have, or belongs to me, I also give and resign unto the aforesaid churchwardens and overseers, ... I having not wherewithal to relieve myself or maintain my family without the assistance of the parish by collection'. 19

After Beech's mark, and before the signatures of the parish officers, provision was made 'for the redemption of the cottage, etc., if William Beech can repay all the money he shall have received'. 20 But this did not take place.

After 1815, and particularly during the 1820s, many Lindsey parishes became extensively committed to the payment of the whole or a portion of the rents of parishioners occupying under private landlords, as an alternative to the construction or acquisition of parish cottages. And by the 1830s, parish rent payments had become a pronounced local deviation from the 'sound principles' of relief advocated by poor law reformers in being a wage subsidy for a section of the working class fortunate enough to reside in such dwellings. It was most prevalent in the market towns, where relatively little waste land was available for the building of parish cottages. At Grimsby by the early 1830s, 'the rents of about 40 houses were paid out of the rates'; and at Horncastle, the parish was in the habit of 'becoming responsible' for the rents of thirty-two cottages. 21 In consequence of rising rents, the vestry of Horncastle in the early 1830s began 'building cottages for paupers to live in rent free'. 22 But the parish of Louth continued until late in the decade to spend nearly £500 a year on the payment of rents. 23 Moreover, the rents of a number of other Lindsey parish parishes but residing in nearby towns were paid by their parishes. Waltham paid the rent of at least one parishioner residing at Hull in the early 1830s. 24 The vestry of Legbourne recorded the payment of the rent of one 'Dobs at Lincoln' in 1835. In April 1834 the vestry sent £2 'in part of rent' to 'Dobs' and resolved to 'send word no more to be paid'. But in October the rent was again paid by the parish. 25

Although the practice of parishes paying the rents of tenements was most prevalent in the market towns, with a supply for settled and non-settled poor, it also existed in the countryside. In fact, particularly in eastern Lindsey, it was in the rural parishes that the practice extended furthest in the direction of paying the rents of labourers in employ. The large lowland parish of Coningsby spent 'above £200 a year' on cottage rents in the early 1830s, or about 10 per cent of the total amount collected from the poor rate. 26 The small Wold parish of Ophamsthorpe, with a population of only 28 in 1821, was 'acustomed from year to year to hire, and pay the rent for, 5 or 6 Cottages in which they put labourers and others belonging to the Parish', but not actually residing in it. 27 Of eastern Lindsey generally, it was said that: 'The rents of the whole labouring population appear in many parishes to have been paid from the rates'. 28

III

From the later 1830s, largely as a consequence of the application of the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 to Lindsey, a rapid and continuous decline occurred in both the provision of parish cottages and the payment of cottage rents by parishes. The Poor Law Commission, established under the Act of 1834 to implement the 'New Poor Law', replaced the former autonomous parochial administration of poor relief with its new power to enforce uniform principles through boards of guardians elected by the rate payers to administer relief in groupings of parishes forming poor law unions. Primarily, the 'New Poor Law' was implemented in
response to ‘abuses’ in the parochial administration of relief in southern England, of which the Speenhamland system of directly subsidizing the wages of able-bodied labourers according to the size of their families was the most outstanding. At the same time, however, the attention of the Commission focused upon the particular Lindsey deviation from ‘sound principles’ in the administration of relief: namely, the indirect subsidy of wages in the forms of parochial provision of accommodation and payment of cottage rents. Moreover, in the opinion of the Commission, the involvement of parishes in the provision of accommodation, other than in the form of contributing to the establishment of a well-regulated union workhouse in order to apply the ‘Workhouse Test of Destitution’; the origin of the abuse of pauperism, in that it made the position of the pauper provided with such accommodation preferable to that of the independent labourer, and by guaranteeing rents it caused the conversion of cottages to become the object of speculation. 29

At first, the commissioners moved with extreme caution. In December 1837 the auditor of Louth union informed the Poor Law Commissioners that:

In the parochial accounts for this union for the past quarter, I expect to find several items for rents paid by parish officers... and I shall be glad to know whether I shall for this time be justified in allowing such items, or whether they must strike them.

In reply, the Poor Law Commissioners left the decision to the auditor’s discretion, but they suggested that ‘it may appear equitable ... to sanction on the distinct understanding that no such payments will be permitted in future’.31 The caution of the Poor Law Commissioners on this and on subsequent occasions is to be explained by the desire to establish the popularity of the new system of poor relief amongst ratepayers, many of whom saw little wrong and much in favour of existing practices in regard to housing, by not causing the break with the past to appear too sudden or dramatic.

When the union auditors began to delete payments for cottage rents from parochial accounts, many overseers resorted to the magistrates to have them reinstated. The justices at their annual audit held for the examination of overseers’ accounts under the Act 50 Geo. Ill. c. 49, which was not superseded by the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834, retained much of their former power in poor law matters.32 And in the late 1830s a number of them were prepared to exercise that power to circumvent the full implementation of the ‘Principles of 1834’. According to Edward Senior, the assistant commissioner responsible for the Lindsey unions, writing in October 1839:

The justices have moreover advised the overseers... to bring their accounts to them previous to the union audit with the assurance that their accounts having been passed by them... will have no further power to exercise his discretion as to the allowance of the items contained in them.33

A number of overseers took advantage of the loophole in the law which the magistrates were willing to countenance. Some responded to pressures from influential ratepayers, to whom the payment of cottage rents by the parish was a cheaper and more practicable mode of accommodating the poor than by the union workhouse. A means of ensuring pressures for higher wages from labourers forced to pay high rents to private landlords. Some, in the light of the experience of the early 1830s, when arson and cattle-maiming had been widespread, acted from a fear of antagonizing the poor. More immediately, however, many overseers welcomed the assistance of the magistrates in this matter from a belief that they were legally responsible for obtaining the vacant possession of the cottages, in a state of ‘tenantable repair’, if parochial rent payments were discontinued. According to the clerk to the Spilsby board of guardians in May 1839, when the owner of a cottage at Willoughby threatened to sue the overseers for rent outstanding after payments by the parish ended, the assistant commissioner on one occasion stated to this board that overseers were not liable to pay rent, which has, in a great measure, influenced the parish officers of Willoughby in their refusal not only to pay the rent but not to take any notice of the landlord or the pauper since the expiry of the notice to quit.34

That this advice was incorrect or misinterpreted became evident to all overseers in December 1839, when the overseer of Usselby claimed 50s. from the Calister board of guardians: ‘the value of a pig seized and sold by the bailiff of the Wisbech court of assistance for a debt against the overseer for the lodgings of Joseph Jolland a pauper’.35

The concern of the owners of cottages let to parishes at the change of poor law policy was entirely confined to obtaining vacant possession of their property, preferably in a state of ‘tenantable repair’. They certainly did not entertain any fears that the property would be left on their hands, or have to be let for a lower rent, once the parishes vacated it. As a medical practitioner assured the Poor Law Commission regarding five of his cottages occupied by paupers for which the parish of Alford paid a total of £11 per annum, he was ‘quite willing, indeed should be glad to take the cottages off their hands as they would readily let for more money’.36 All the doctor insisted upon was that the overseers ‘remove the objectionable tenants, and have the premises in tenantable repair’.37

By the end of the 1830s the payment of cottage rents by parishes appears to have ceased in the market towns where the dominant middle classes generally favoured the policy of the Poor Law Commission, and in some of the rural parishes where the ratepayers considered it to be advantageous to bring the practice to an end, and were able to do so without the threat of legal proceedings by the cottage owners. In the early 1840s, the system declined further as the magistrates, who were becoming increasingly identified as ex-officio guardians with the operation of the New Poor Law, became more and more reluctant to act against the wishes of the Poor Law Commission. There was, according to one estate owner in the county, ‘no doubt that in practice the weight given to ex-officio members, and to large proprietors, has tended to reconcile country gentlemen to the system’.38 From 1845, when district auditors with increased powers replaced individual union auditors, and the power of the magistrates to examine overseers’ accounts was removed, the payment of cottage rents survived only in a few small parishes where it was possible to collect private rates for this purpose. But by the 1850s, it would seem that the practice no longer existed even in this circumscribed form.

The maintenance of parochial cottages continued longer than the payment of cottage rents by the parishes; but it too declined markedly from the later 1830s onwards. Up to the mid-1840s the most important stimulus to dispose of parish property was the necessity for the parishes to meet their share of the cost of the newly-opened union workhouses. Parishes were encouraged by the Poor Law Commission to divest themselves of their property for this purpose because it was deemed to be one that was ‘permanently beneficial to the parish’; even though in general the Poor Law Commission was opposed to the burdening of the existing generation of ratepayers with the entire cost of the union workhouse.39

The material state of sales of parish property in the late 1830s to provide funds to meet parochial contributions to the costs of building workhouses, the rush to dispose of such property had petered out by the early 1840s. In part the decline was a consequence of the interest that the sales aroused amongst lords of the manor, who in many cases considered that the property, often originally forming part of the lord’s waste, was legally theirs. Many vestries, like that of Strubby in 1844, decided to retain the property: ‘the cottages having being claimed by the lord of the manor they thought it would be an act of imprudence to enter into an expensive lawsuit to establish their rights’.40

It would seem that lords of the manor became interested in the property not only for its intrinsic value, which had been created by the growing pressure of population upon a limited volume of available accommodation, and which had
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been evidenced by the sales. Some acted out of fear that a purchaser might add to the future poor rate burden of the parish by building more cottages on the land, and from an awareness that with the introduction of the New Poor Law system the property was to be made to yield its full annual value. In the case of two cottages on the lord’s waste at Wainfleet in the Outer Marsh claimed by the Duchy of Lancaster, which were leased to the parish on payment of a quit rent for the land:

As long as the enjoyment of the advantage of very low rents was enjoyed by the parish, the lord was satisfied; but now that the commissioners of the Poor Law had thought proper to extract a rack rent, the lord thought it expedient to put in his claim. The Poor Law Commissioners began to enforce the payment of rent for parish cottages from the early part of 1841. ‘Until 1841’, according to the auditor of Louth Union:

I was not in the habit of charging those rents against officers who assured me that they never received any, but when Mr. Senior the Assistant Commissioner took the averages in that year and found that several parishes had cottages for which they never received rents, he wrote me suggesting that it was within the line of my duty to make the overseers account for them whether they received them or not, and by a letter [from the Poor Law Commissioners] dated 15th January 1842 No. IIIIB I was instructed to charge such overseers as failed to account, with the omission. When the auditor attempted to carry out his instructions at the audit of March 1842, a number of overseers protested vigorously. In July 1844 the auditor complained to the Poor Law Commissioners that:

I have had great difficulty and endless discussions with the overseers in carrying into effect these instructions. They urge the hardship of compelling the occupiers of cottages to pay rent, when they have been permitted to live in them, for many years, rent free. They say it is not the work of the publicans that they should pay any thing, and wonder that they are not allowed to do as they like with their own. They state further that it is a saving to the parish to keep paupers in these cottages rather than send them to the union workhouse. I meet their objections by telling them that the union workhouse is the only house that the parishes ought to have in which to place their paupers. I endeavour to show them that the injustice of placing one pauper in a cottage rent free, and obliging another pauper in equal circumstances to hire one house because the parish does not happen to have another house in which to put him. I point them to the several parishes which have no cottages and assure them that no complaints arise for the want of them. But all is without avail, and they think me unnecessarily severe.

It would be exceedingly desirable if anything could be done to avoid the constant annoyance of which these rents are a source both to the overseers and myself, but I apprehend there will be no end to it, until the parishes are compelled to dispose of their cottages... The overseer of the parish of Strabby was particularly vociferous in his opposition to the Poor Law Commissioners policy on parish property. Strabby owned seven ‘parish Houses’, five of which were ‘occupied by labourers who have large families’, one ‘by a Widow Woman with a family’, and one ‘by an aged couple’. The overseer, who was surcharged 10s. for the rent of each cottage in 1844, complained to the Poor Law Commissioners that:

one reason [the auditor] alleged for charging them was the parish had been at some expense towards erecting the union house at Louth but that appears to be of no use to our labourers who are wanted to live and labour in the Parish. The union house is situated at least 11 miles from us. The labourers are in general well employed at wages from 10/- to 12/- a week and are cheerful and contented excepting when they cannot get employment which does not often happen. The parish wishes to keep them in the same state [but] we think it no difficult matter to make bad labourers of good ones by acts of oppression and cruelty. Nevertheless, the Poor Law Commissioners ignored this and other pleas against surcharging for the rents of parish cottages and the amount of the surcharge was gradually increased to stimulate the parishes to charge market rents to the occupiers or dispose of the property.

One result of the Poor Law Commissioners’ policy of surcharging rents for parish cottages was that by the later 1840s there were no longer a cheap form of accommodation for paupers and labourers with large families. In 1844 a labourer was paying 20s. per annum for the occupation of a ‘small tenement’ in the worst state of repair, that had belonged to the parish of Tetney ‘beyond the memory of man’. And the rents increased further as the decade progressed. At the same time, the refusal of the Poor Law Commissioners to permit the income derived from rents to be applied to the repair of the cottages ensured a continual deterioration in the condition of parish property. In 1837 the parish of Fulstow was prohibited from applying the proceeds from the sale of part of the parish property to the repair of the remainder. From 1843 the Poor Law Commissioners refused to allow the parishes of Louth union to apply income from rents to the repair of cottages. And in 1849 the Poor Law Board declined to permit the parish of Grimoldby in the Middle Marsh to spend £7, to improve the drainage of three cottages belonging to the parish and also to build a privy and cesspool for the use of the tenants.
The inevitable and intended consequence of such a rigid interpretation of the ‘Principles of 1834’, even at the cost of the health of the tenants, was that, as the clerk to the Louth board of guardians pointed out, ‘many parish cottages must inevitably go to ruin’, in response to pressures from the Poor Law Commissioners a number of Lindsey parishes disposed of their property in the mid 1840s; and from the later 1840s much of the remaining property was sold for reasons not directly connected with the poor law. The vicar of Saltfleetby in the Outer Marsh asked the overseers by the vestry to use ‘a piece of land... occupied by some cottages immediately opposite the vicarage’, as a site for a school. In 1850 the parish of Tetney sold a plot of land ‘covered with filthy pig styces’ for the site of a Temperance Hall; which, it was urged, was necessary ‘for the improvement of the morals of the Parish’. The parish of Scothern on the Cliff sold its parish houses in 1870 to provide funds for improving the drainage of the village. After the ‘unhealthy state’ of the parish, ‘arising from bad water, defective drainage, etc. etc.’, had become a matter of discussion in the press, the Privy Council ordered the vestry to remedy the situation. In the process, as elsewhere in Lindsey during the early and mid-Victorian decades, a relic of what had once been an extensive public commitment to the housing of ‘the poor’ disappeared; and the accommodation of the pauper in the union workhouse and the labourer in the cottage of a private landlord became entirely distinct.

FOOTNOTES
2 Public Record Office (hereafter P.R.O.), MH 12. 6707, 7 April 1841.
3 Ibid., 18 May 1840.
6 P.R.O., MH 12. 6781, 7 June 1850.
7 P.R.O., MH 12. 6789, 8 June 1839.
8 Ibid., 30 July 1838.
9 Ibid., 16 January 1838. To establish title to such property the clerk was of the opinion that: ‘A declaration... by some old respectable person or persons as to the fact of possession will be the best evidence’.
11 P.R.O., MH. 12. 6740, 11 November 1840.
work on the geomorphology of the site (pp. 311-4). Flashmore contains no Humber Alluvium which would have
built up if it was a harbour. This suggestion is that the haven
may have been half a mile or so further south, to the east
or south-east of Eastfield Farm.

The first ten seasons of work at Winterton are dealt with
in Chapter II (pp. 20-94). The initial objective to relocate
the mosaics was quickly achieved, and, though the threat
of open cast ironstone quarrying became less immediate,
the Department of the Environment wisely decided to
continue the excavations to obtain as complete a picture as
possible of the buildings on the site. The result is that the mosaics can
now be more fully appreciated as adornments to the floors
of the main living quarters of the villa and of the aediles
building to the north-east. David Neil's painstaking drawings
of the mosaics show that the earlier engravings were
inaccurate in some cases, while David Smith's detailed
discussion (pp. 250-72) indicates that the most famous of the
pavements, depicting Orpheus playing his lyre to an
encircling zone of animals, and the mosaic of the same
subject at the neighbouring villa of Horkestow are both
products of a local fourth century school of mosaicsists,
perhaps with workshops at Brough (Petauria), formed as
an offshoot from the earlier fourth century school at
Cirencester (Corinium).

The sequence of buildings excavated is traced from the
decade of round huts, constructed in masonry, to the
developed rectilinear buildings standing on the site by c. A.D.290,
in which aediles buildings containing living quarters with working space formed the north
and south sides of a rectangle whose western side was occupied
by the main living quarters with a detached bath building.
The main house faced east, into the courtyard, and was
approached by two roads from the hill slope to the east.
In the fourth century the main living quarters faced west;
a triclinium was added to the east side over a former
approach road and the porch where the main entrance had
been. A further building is now known to the west of the
main house, and in Roger Goodburn's appendix on work
between 1968 and 1971 (pp. 315-19), this and other
important discoveries are summarised. The system of ditches
encountered under the main buildings extends to the south
and west of them. The size of some ditches indicates that
they formed part of stock enclosures, and the period of use
is from the later Iron Age to the second century, suggesting
continuity from the Iron Age to the Roman occupation.

Comparatively little evidence emerged during the first
decade of work concerning the farm economy of the villa,
an aspect of the site which is receiving especial attention in
the continuing programme of excavation. From the bone
remains, there is evidence that cattle were more important
than sheep or goats, and that they were over-wintered; pig
bones formed a smaller group (pp. 302-3). The only
grain sample published was from the aediles building (D)
north-east of the main house; it contained 93.5% wheat
(pp. 904).

Chapter III (pp. 95-101) deals with the pottery industry
of the area and includes old discoveries such as South
Ferrybridge and Winterton and recent excavations at Roxby,
Dragonby and Messingham. Among several excellent
specialist reports which together comprise the final chapter
IV (pp. 102-510), the account of the pottery from the
kilns and from stratified groups of Claudian to Antonine
wares at Old Winterton and of Antonine to fourth
century wares at Winterton (pp. 136-190) stands out as
forming an invaluable type series for the region, where
previously none existed.

This report is a most important event in the study of
Roman Britain, and the account of Goodburn's on-going
work at Winterton will in due course form an equally
important sequel. However soaring printing costs mean that
an increasing number of vital workshops of scholarship are
going to sell at a price beyond most pockets; the present
volume, at £25, is sadly not going to command the wide
sales it deserves.

BEN WHITWELL
BARROW-UPON-HUMBER

EXCAVATIONS AT WINTERTON ROMAN VILLA AND
OTHER ROMAN SITES IN NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE,
1958-1967 by J. M. Stead, xviii + 524 pp., Illus.,
Department of the Environment Archaeological Reports
No. 9, H.M.S.O., 1976, 825.

The bulk of this volume deals with Ian Stead's excavations
of the villa, widely known through the eighteenth century
engravings of the mosaics, but reports of important
excavations at Old Winterton and on the sites of several
local pottery kilns are included.

The Old Winterton excavations are described in
Chapter I (pp. 1-19); these produced evidence for timber
buildings of a Claudian military installation and an ensuing
civil settlement which flourished up to the end of the
Roman period. Once the threat of ploughing was removed,
excavations had to cease, and, though the potential of the
site had been tested, much may still remain to be discovered,
as Stead points out. The moving of Legio IX from Lincoln
to the north in A.D.71 may well have necessitated the
building of a large fortress close to the Humber crossing.
The civil settlement may have had continued importance
because of its harbour, but we now have to correct Stukeley's
suggestion that this was at Flashmore, in view of Allan Straw's
Book Review