St Peter’s Church, Holton-le-Clay, Lincolnshire

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SUMMARY
Traces of middle Saxon domestic occupation north of the church were overlain by a late Saxon cemetery. A trench cut across the western edge of the churchyard revealed a sequence of four boundary ditches and a pathway, dating perhaps from the late Saxon period to the nineteenth century.

There is no evidence to support the claim that the ground plan of the present church is late Saxon: the nave is probably twelfth century and the chancel sixteenth century. Only the lower stages of the tower and part of the nave foundations remain from the later eleventh-century church. The foundations of a former south porch, probably demolished in 1850, were uncovered.

CONVENTIONS
TF = north tower feature
CF = north chancel feature
BF = boundary trench feature
SF = small find
G = grave
All depths and heights given for the north tower and north chancel areas and for the church itself are measured from the bottom of the church plinth, unless otherwise stated, as no levelling equipment was available during the excavation. The site was dug using imperial scale, but metric equivalents have been added for selected measurements.

INTRODUCTION
Holton-le-Clay is about four miles south of Grimsby, just off the A16 road to Louth. St Peter’s church is near the centre of the village and is built on a mound of glacial boulder clay and sand, now much emphasised by man, which rises up to 12 feet above Church Walk to the east.

The rectory at Holton had been appropriated to the Benedictine abbey of Humberston (founded c. 1160) by the time of Bishop Hugh of Wells (1209-35). The first record of the institution of a vicar appears c. 1224-6, when the vicarage ordained in the church is described. After the Dissolution, the rectory passed into lay hands. Edward Elvington and Humphrey Metcalf, the original grantees in 1544, conveyed it at once to the Googe family, one of whom sold it in 1611 to Sir Nicholas Saunderson. It descended in the Saundersons, passing in 1723, on the death of James, earl of Castleton, to his cousin the Hon. Thomas Lumley, who succeeded as third earl of Scarbrough in 1740. The earls of Scarbrough were the lay rectors at the time of the nineteenth-century restorations of the church.

In 1973 rising damp inside the church led to the cutting of a trench around the outside to lower the ground level (Fig. 1). A section of this trench north of the tower was excavated by Mr David Redman and myself, and in 1975 a further area was examined north of the chancel and a trench dug across the churchyard boundary into the garden of Grainsby Cottage, no. 102 Louth Road.

EXCAVATIONS 1973-5
North Tower
The area excavated north of the tower is shown in Figs. 1 and 2. The drainage trench here removed the upper layers before they could be recorded, so there are no stratified finds from above TFs 4, 5 and 6. The destroyed layers, a total of 1ft 6ins. to 2ft thick, were only observed in section in the sides of the trench. The foundations of the tower and nave at this point are discussed in the structural study of the church; all other excavated features are described here.

The earliest features were the corner of a foundation trench or pit, TF 24, and a layer of crushed chalk, TF 23 (see Fig. 2). TF 24 was in the angle of the tower and nave foundations, and overlain by grave 1; both were cut by the tower foundations and overlain by the shallower nave foundations. The feature had an almost square corner, and survived to a depth of 9ins. below grave 1. It contained five chalk stones up to 11ins. long in its fill, which suggest that it could have been the corner of a foundation trench. The presence of these chalk stones and the absence of a body seems to exclude the possibility that it is the corner of a grave. The feature produced no finds and therefore cannot be dated except in relation to grave 1, which is perhaps ninth or tenth century.
western edge was irregular, but the eastern edge was nearly straight, aligned roughly NNE-SSW, and may have been an undisturbed edge to the feature. Resting on the surface of the chalk spread were several animal bones and oyster shells. More animal bones, oyster shells, and three sherds of a small jar (Fig. 10 no. 6 and Table 1) were found in a layer of dark brown soil about 6 ins. thick sealed by TF 23 and immediately above natural clay. The fabric of the pot is similar to Ipswich ware, but its form is cruder; it may be cautiously assigned to the eighth century. The relatively large number of animal bones and oyster shells found both above and below TF 23 suggest that it was associated with domestic occupation rather than with an earlier church; it may have been part of a pathway.

Twelve early graves were excavated north and west of the tower and three more—graves 5, 10, and 14—were located but not fully excavated. Nine skeletons or partial skeletons were removed for examination, from graves 1 to 4, 6 to 9, and 15. The burials were all fully extended and orientated approximately east-west; most either had their hands
Fig. 2 Features and burials north of the tower.

Fig. 3 Cross-section south-north along the west baulk north of the tower.

together over the pelvic area or their arms roughly crossed. Some care had been taken to ensure that they did not overlap to any great extent. All of the graves had fills of dark grey clay with patches of light brown clay and charcoal flecks, so similar that the outlines of individual graves did not usually show until just above the burial. The burials were at an average depth of about 2ft 8ins., the deepest being 3ft 2ins. (grave 14) and the shallowest 2 ft. 1in. (grave 2).

Grave 9 was exceptional in that the vertebrae and ribcage of its skeleton were entirely missing and remains of a pole or plank lay directly on top of the burial. Later disturbance can be ruled out because the plank, which survived as a carbonised band 2ins. wide running from the skull to the feet, was clearly defined in the area where the vertebrae and ribcage should have been; it is possible, therefore, that the body had been severely mutilated before it was buried.

Precise dating of the graves is difficult. Several contained potsherds, mostly from coarse, handmade cookpots occasionally with organic tempering (Fig. 10 nos. 2, 3, 7, and 9). This pottery can be assigned to the early to middle Saxon period and is probably residual,
as are the animal bone fragments found in most graves but unfortunately not kept. The only sherds that may be contemporary with the burials are the rim of a shelly ware jar (Fig. 10 no. 10) and a sherd of a Lincoln grey sandy storage vessel from grave 12 (not illustrated), similar to examples from Flaxengate, Lincoln, found in tenth-century contexts. One piece of metalwork may be associated with a burial, the faceted pin (SF 1) found a few inches from the left shoulder of the skeleton in grave 8 and possibly used to fasten a shroud or tunic; it is difficult to date more closely than to the eighth to tenth centuries. A broken pin (SF 2) of middle to late Saxon date came from an area of disturbance cutting through grave 3. A broad \textit{terminus post quem} in the middle Saxon period for graves 3, 8, 9, 12 and 13 is given by middle Saxon pottery and SFs 1 and 2. Graves 6 and 9 are later than TF 23, which may date from the eighth century, and probably considerably later as about 9ins. of soil accumulated above TF 23 before the graves were dug. A reliable \textit{terminus ante quem} in the later eleventh century can be given for graves 1 and 6, which were cut by the tower foundations.

The evidence of close spacing, similar depths and homogeneous fills suggests that most, if not all, of the graves were dug within a relatively short time of each other—perhaps a century or so, and it seems likely that they belong to the late Saxon period, between the ninth and earlier eleventh centuries.

A layer of lightish brown clay sealed graves 8 to 14 and contained a rim fragment from a late twelfth or early thirteenth-century bowl (Fig. 10 no. 14) as well as a sherd of Roman greyware. A small pit or large posthole about 2ft deep (TF 7), with a fill of brown clay and stones, had been cut through this layer and into the fill of grave 11; this feature was only observed in the section of the west baulk (Fig. 3). It still remained as a slight hollow when an extensive chalk spread (TF 5) was deposited: chalk fragments were used to level it off. TF 5 was composed of angular fragments of crushed chalk in a layer 2ins. to 3ins. thick, which covered most of the north tower area; its top surface was roughly level with the bottom of the
tower plinth. West of the tower it had been repaired or extended by a thicker layer of limestone and chalk (TF 4); a similar repair or extension was noted in section north of the nave (TF 6). The only dating evidence for these features is the bowl rim sealed below TF 5, which shows that TFs 4, 5 and 6 were laid down in the late twelfth century or later. At some point the compound surface formed by TFs 4, 5 and 6 went out of use, and a few inches of dark brown clay accumulated above it; following this a thin layer of crushed limestone, observed only in section, was deposited over much the same area as the earlier surface. This later spread, which cannot be dated as yet, was rather fragmentary in places and appears to have seen some wear. Above it some 18 ins. of soil accumulated up to 1793, obscur- ing all but the upper two orders of the tower plinth before excavations began.

North Chancel

![Diagram of North Chancel](image)

Fig. 4 Features and burials north of the chancel.

North of the chancel, a small area 6½ ft 8 ins. (2.0m) east-west by 7½ ft 6 ins. (2.3m) north-south was excavated in July and August 1975. Only the area in the angle between the north chancel and north-east nave walls was excavated down to natural clay (Fig. 4). The three phases of foundations encountered are discussed later; all other features are described here.

The earliest features noted were two postholes, CFs 6 and 7, immediately to the north of the chancel foundations. CF 6 had been truncated by grave 16, and CF 7 by grave 17; they were both c. 1½ ft 4 ins. in diameter and survived to a depth of c. 5 ins. below the burials.

Four graves, numbers 16 to 19, were wholly or partly excavated close to the church foundations; the presence of further graves to the north was suspected, but they were left untouched. The fills of all four graves were of dark grey clay with charcoal flecks and were similar to the fills of graves 1 to 15 north of the tower. Graves 16, 17 and 18 were 3½ ft deep on average; grave 19 contained two burials, the upper burial at a depth of about 3½ ft and the lower a few inches deeper. The lower burial was only partially uncovered but the outline of the grave was planned. The bones of the upper burial were badly disturbed, due either to subsidence of the lower burial or to the upper one being originally the earlier of the two. There was little to suggest later disturbance of the upper burial.

Graves 16, 17 and 18 produced sherds of coarse, black pottery (Fig. 10 nos. 4 and 8), five of which are grass-marked or grass-tempered. Like most of the sherds from graves north of the tower, this pottery is in an early to middle Saxon tradition and provides a probable terminus post quem in the seventh or eighth centuries. A terminus ante quem in the later eleventh century can be given for grave 16, which was overlain by the foundations of the Saxo-Norman nave (Plate 3 and Fig. 5B). Grave 18 appeared to have been cut by the foundation trench for the Norman nave, showing that it is twelfth century or earlier. The regular layout of the four graves, none of which interfere with each other, together with their homogeneous fills and similar depths suggest that they are all roughly contemporary with each other. A broad date bracket between the seventh and earlier eleventh centuries is all that the available dating evidence will allow, but as with the north tower burials it is probable that the middle Saxon pottery from the graves is residual and that they belong to the late Saxon period.

Much of the area excavated showed signs of medieval and late disturbance to a maximum depth of about 2½ ft; many random human bones were noted in this disturbed layer. Pottery from it included medieval and later wares along with a few sherds of Roman greyware and early to middle Saxon pot. One rim sherd with raised cordons from this layer (Fig. 10 no. 1) appears to be derived from early Saxon urn types and is possibly of seventh-century date.

Boundary Trenches A and B

In July and August 1975, two conjoined trenches were dug across the boundary of the churchyard west of the tower, into the garden of number 102 Louth Road. Trench A, begun first, was 6½ ft 7 ins. (2.0m) wide and 32½ ft 10 ins. (10.0m) long; trench B immediately to the north was 6½ ft 7 ins. (2.0m) wide and 23½ ft (7.0m) long (see Fig. 1). Trench B was dug down to natural clay throughout, but in trench A the pathways (Fig. 6, BFs 11 and 13) were left in place and the lower fills of two boundary ditches, BFs 4 and 14, were not excavated. The two trenches became in effect a single area and will be treated as such here.

The earliest features in the area appear to be a north-south ditch (BF 21) and a side ditch leading west from it (BF 20). The side ditch, although partly destroyed by a modern grave (BF 23), seems to have been V-shaped in section and cut to a depth of at least 2½ ft. Only the western edge of BF 21 could be excavated, as relatively modern graves lay to the east, so its profile and depth were not established. Both features were sealed by a layer continuous with the upper fill of a third ditch, BF 14, which contained no pottery later than the thirteenth century; the two earlier ditches had apparently been silted up by the time that BF 14 was dug, possibly in the later eleventh or twelfth century. No datable finds were recovered from BF 20 or BF 21, but a date in the
late Saxon period for both features would not be out of place. BF 21 is most reasonably interpreted as an early boundary ditch around the churchyard, with BF 20 acting as a side drainage ditch. It is possible, however, that they could mark pre-church boundaries of mid-Saxon date.

BF 14 represents a north-south boundary ditch a few feet to the west of BF 21; when first cut it was probably over 3ft deep and about 6ins. wide. Pottery from its primary silt includes fragments of a late twelfth to early thirteenth-century Humber type gritted cookpot (Fig. 10 no. 12), suggesting that the ditch was dug in the later twelfth century or soon after. Small sherds of thirteenth to fourteenth-century Humber type jugs were found in its upper fill, and it seems that the ditch was allowed to silt up during this period. Four postholes, BFs 16, 17, 18 and 19, cut into the clay plateau between BF 14 and BF 21, are probably fourteenth century.

The next main phase saw the construction of a pathway (BF 11) leading north-south, to the west of BF 14; a smaller side path (BF 13), which had been cut by a later ditch (BF 1), led westwards towards Louth Road. Both pathways were composed of pebbles, small stones, potsherds and other domestic rubbish in a layer 1in.—2ins. thick. The latest securely datable find associated with either is a clay pipe bowl made between c.1650 and c.1680 from the surface of BF 11.7 Pottery from this path (e.g. Fig. 10 nos. 16, 17, 18, 20 and 21) suggests that it was in use at least through most of the seventeenth century; it is quite possible, though, that both pathways were constructed during the sixteenth century.

After the paths fell into disuse, a third boundary ditch (BF 4), was dug, partly destroying the eastern edge of BF 11. This ditch, although about 6ft wide, was relatively shallow—under 2ft deep on average. Early eighteenth-century pipe fragments and an eighteenth-century bottle glass sherd were found in its fill,9 suggesting that the ditch was open during the eighteenth century. By the end of the century it had probably silted up to the point where it was no more than a slight hollow, visible in Fig. 6a, and was
ineffective as a boundary marker and drainage ditch. In consequence a fourth boundary ditch (BF 1) was dug to the west of BF 4, about 4ft wide and 1ft 6ins. deep. The upcast from this ditch was deposited in the hollow remaining from the earlier ditch, forming a layer of light brown clay. Pottery from the layer immediately above this redeposited clay is no later than the eighteenth century; a date around 1800 for the digging of BF 1 is therefore likely. Two rotted wooden posts—BFs 7 and 8—probably mark the line of a nineteenth-century boundary fence associated with this ditch. Early twentieth-century bottle fragments show that the ditch had either silted up or was filled in at this time, probably when Grainsby Cottage was built. The present boundary fence is on the line of the nineteenth-century ditch.

Discussion
Residual Roman pottery from the excavations suggests that the site was at least cleared during the Roman period. The relatively large number of early to middle Saxon potsherds and animal bone fragments from the late Saxon graves, combined with the evidence of TF 23, the fragmentary chalk surface, indicate the presence of a settlement on the mound before the late Saxon cemetery existed. Although much of the pottery could be either early or middle Saxon, the rim sherd sealed below TF 23 and the middle to late Saxon metalwork point to a middle Saxon date for the first settlement, around the seventh and eighth centuries.

It is interesting to note that the place-name Holton probably means in this case a settlement on a hoh or spur of land, and it is quite possible that this hoh can now be identified with the mound on which the church stands.

By the tenth century at the latest it seems that settlement had moved away from the mound, which was given over to a late Saxon cemetery presumably associated with an earlier church or churches not yet located. It may be significant in this context that the two postholes, CFs 6 and 7, are in line with TF 24, the possible foundation trench; these features may be vestiges of an east-west structure pre-dating the late Saxon cemetery. The early graves north of the church are remarkable for their almost intact survival: this is in marked contrast to the area south of the tower, where medieval burials were deposited in layers and appeared to have obliterated most, if not all, earlier graves. Obviously the north side was avoided for burial purposes during the medieval period, and perhaps later, presumably because of the popular superstition that the north side was an unlucky place to bury the dead.

The succession of boundary ditches shows that there was a gradual encroachment of the churchyard on the adjoining vicarage grounds to the west, between the twelfth and nineteenth centuries. The north-south path (BF 11) seems to have been an extension of a lane which now turns sharply to the east near the southern entrance to the churchyard. The side path (BF 13) would have doubt have led to the medieval vicarage, which probably lay on or near the site of Grainsby Cottage until it was demolished sometime between 1674 and 1694. The late seventeenth-century date for the abandonment of these pathways ties in with this. Holton at this time was a poor living which continued to be held in plurality by a non-resident vicar until 1926.

The two extensive chalk and limestone spreads found north of the tower show that this part of the churchyard was well kept for much of the medieval period; they also hint that the appearance of the medieval churchyard may have been very different from its present day aspect.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHURCH
Introduction
Until 1965, it was generally accepted that the earliest part of the church was the lower stage of the western bell tower, assumed to date from the later eleventh century. Fisher dismissed the remainder of the church as a 'plain fourteenth century building' H. M. and J. Taylor, however, claimed in 1965 that the lower courses of the nave and chancel were contemporary with the lower stages of the tower. With the publication of volume III of Anglo-Saxon Architecture Dr Taylor reiterated his view that the surviving masonry 'defines unambiguously' a late Saxon threecell linear plan; his arguments may be summarised as follows:

1 The fabric of the lower stage of the tower and of the lower courses of the nave and chancel is coursed, roughly squared, brown stone rubble.
2 The west wall of the nave is in bond with the tower.
3 Side-alternate quoins of similar form to those used in the tower are visible at all angles of the nave and chancel.
4 A clearly defined double plinth, the lower order square and the upper chamfered, runs around the whole of the church.
5 The walls of the nave and chancel are only 2ft 6ins. thick, close to the average width of Saxon walling.

All of these observations are incorrect, and can be dealt with in turn.
1 Stripping of rendering from the north wall of the nave has shown that its lower courses are of large, regularly coursed, ashlar blocks (Plate 4). The south wall of the nave was almost completely rebuilt above the plinth in 1850. The walls of the chancel are faced mainly with re-used ashlar.
2 The west wall of the nave is not in bond with the tower, but is clearly buttressed against it (Plate 2).
3 The quoins of the tower are irregularly shaped stones laid side-alternately. The quoins of the nave and chancel are also side-alternate but they are of well-dressed rectangular slabs.
4 Excavation has revealed that the tower plinth is of four, not two, orders, the lowest square in section and the upper three chamfered. The nave and chancel, in comparison, have plinths of one chamfered member only.
5 The south wall of the nave was rebuilt in 1850 only 2ft 6ins. thick; the north wall is 2ft 11ins. thick. The chancel walls are an average of 2ft 3ins. thick.

Plate 4 The north nave wall and blocked door.
These points show that Taylor was mistaken in several fundamental observations about the church, and suggest that its history is more complex than has hitherto been claimed. It remains to examine the surviving fabric, both above and below ground, in order to clarify the building sequence.

**Later Eleventh Century**

Excavations suggest that the Saxo-Norman tower and nave were probably built on a single rectangular foundation measuring about 53ft (16.2m) east-west by 22ft 9ins. (6.9m) north-south, shown in Fig. 7A. At the north-eastern corner, the foundations were only 2ft 3ins. deep and rested on the fill of grave 16 (Plate 3), but at the north-western corner they were about 4ft deep and were dug down to chalky boulder clay; this extra depth implies that they were intended to receive a tower. The tower and nave foundations are composed of igneous rubble, with some flint; north of the tower a layer of sand up to 6ins. thick was laid down near the top of the rubble to consolidate it. Around the tower the rubble base is capped on the outside with a course of large, undressed, limestone blocks. Chalky mortar was used to bond these footings and the tower plinth to the rubble core.

The walls of the tower are about 3ft 7ins. thick, and are faced externally with roughly coursed jurassic limestone rubble, with some igneous rubble used higher up. Two courses of rough ashlar in whitish limestone just below the belfry stage are suggestive of Norman work.

On the west face of the tower there are traces of the former existence of a doorway, now dismantled and the opening blocked. However, at least four stones visible in the blocking are almost certainly from the original door; two fragments of a tympanum, part of a chamfered, beaded impost and a stone from a chamfered hood mould in whitish, fine-textured limestone (Fig. 9A). In addition, two stones from the southern jamb of the door are apparently still in situ.
allowing the position of the door in the wall to be fixed. When all this evidence is combined, the doorway can be reconstructed with some accuracy, as Fig. 9B shows. It was about 2ft 5ins. wide, exactly in the centre of the west face and around 7ft high, with one row of voussoirs between the tympanum and the projecting hood mould.

On the eastern face of the tower, above the nave roof, there is the outline of an earlier, higher nave roof, shown in Fig. 8. This roof would have been too steeply pitched to have fitted the walls of the present nave, and must have belonged to an earlier, narrower nave, almost certainly the original Saxo-Norman one, contemporary with the lower stage of the tower. It was probably about 21ft (6.4m) wide externally, with side walls about 15ft 6ins. (4.7m) high; internally, it would have been the same length as the present nave, 31ft 10ins. (9.7m).

![Diagrams](image)

**Fig. 9** A—The blocked west door of the tower. B—Suggested reconstruction of the door.

Until 1869, there was a chancel arch at Holton similar to the tower arch; in that year a faculty was granted "to widen the chancel arch, which is at present very narrow."

A drawing of the arch is recorded as being in the portfolio of the Lincoln Architectural Society in 1851, but regrettably it has since disappeared. There is, however, a useful description of the arch by Matthew Bloxam, a noted Victorian authority on church architecture, who visited Holton.

He includes both the tower and chancel arches in a list of "very plain" arches, which all "consist of a single sweep or soffit and 'spring from square piers, with a plain abacus or impost intervening." He also records that both arches were only 5ft 3ins. wide. From these observations it is clear that the chancel arch must have been almost identical to the surviving tower arch. The main difference was that the chancel arch was apparently decorated on its face, for Bloxam comments that "some arches have round or semicircular mouldings rudely worked on the face, as in the chancel arch of Wittering Church, and of that at Holton-le-Clay."

The general impression gained from the later eleventh-century church is of an essentially Saxon construction with several Norman features. The long, narrow nave with steeply-pitched roof, the presence of a west door and the tall, narrow arches and windows—which all have or had height/width ratios around 3:1—are all suggestive of Saxon workmanship. However, details such as the complex tower plinth, the tympanum in the west door, the use of light, chamfered impost and the virtual absence of through-stones are more typical of Norman than Saxon work.

The half-round or round mouldings apparently used on the face of the chancel arch anticipate the Norman fondness for rounded mouldings. It is reasonable to suggest therefore that this phase of the church dates from a time shortly after the Norman conquest when Norman techniques were being increasingly adopted by Saxon masons. The term Saxo-Norman aptly describes this phase.

**Twelfth to Nineteenth Century**

At some point the Saxo-Norman nave was demolished and a new nave 27ft 6ins. (8.4m) wide constructed. On the northern side of the church, excavations suggest that the foundations of the earlier nave were left in place and a new foundation trench dug alongside them, c. 40ft 9ins. long, up to 2ft 6ins. wide and up to 3ft 3ins. deep. The same method was doubtless used to the south. The trench was filled with igneous rubble and capped on the outs/ide with a single course of irregular limestone blocks (Plate 3, Fig. 5B). The north wall of the nave rests partly on these foundations and partly on the re-used foundations of the Saxo-Norman nave.

The nave has no original openings, and its dating rests largely on an observation by H. K. Bonney in 1846 that the south nave door was Norman. As the present nave clearly post-dates the Saxo-Norman tower, a date in the twelfth century for the construction of the new nave is likely.

At some time between the construction of the nave and a probable sixteenth-century rebuilding of the chancel, a serious fire affected the church. Nearly all of the original fabric of the nave is uniformly fire-reddened, as is much of the south wall of the tower. The fire pre-dates the foundations and walls of the chancel, which contain re-used fire-reddened stones. It
also pre-dates the blocking of the west door, the insertion of the north door and the south porch. The fact that much of the nave plinth is burnt shows that the ground level had risen very little when the fire occurred; this argues for a relatively early date, perhaps in the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries.

In the later thirteenth or fourteenth century the Saxo-Norman or Norman belfry was demolished and replaced by a decorated style belfry with battlements.

The foundations of the present chancel where examined are at least 3ft 6ins. (1.1m) deep, and cut into natural clay. Though mainly of igneous rubble, they incorporate fragments of fire-reddened limestone ashlar, showing that they post-date the major fire which swept the church in the medieval period. The chancel footings are of two courses of squared limestone blocks, above which is a single member chamfered plinth. The plinth projects more from the wall and has a more pronounced chamfer than that of the nave. The west jamb only of a dismantled and blocked window survives in the south wall; it appears to have been rectangular in shape and may be original.

A lack of datable features in the chancel is balanced by useful documentary references. At the visitation of 1519, the chancel at Holton was said to be in a ruinous condition in both walls and roof ("Cancellus est ruinosus . . . in tectura et parietibus"), to the extent that the church ornaments were deteriorating. This was apparently because the abbot of Humberston had not carried out any repairs for fifteen years. Indeed, the visitation records that the churehe here ys well reparerad & kept dencely. But it also notes that the chauncel ys unseemly in the wyndowes weh are dwedwed up & stopped wth wisps. Again in 1611 and 1618 it was claimed that the chancel choir was out of repair, on both occasions in default of the lay rector, Sir Nicholas Saunderson.

The visitation record of 1519 suggests that by this date the chancel was in a state of near collapse. It would be tempting therefore to assign the building of the present chancel to the years immediately following 1519. The re-use of old masonry throughout would be entirely in keeping with the declining fortunes of Humberston Abbey, which in 1537 had a gross annual income of only £49 4s. 8d., nearly £7 less than in 1291. Certainly the re-building seems to have taken place by 1602: not only does the visitation of that year imply that the chancel was generally sound, but the references to 'wyndowes' suggests that the present chancel before the dismantling of the south window is being referred to. The blocking of the south window and the rebuilding of the south wall above the level of its sill only 1ft 11ins. thick probably occurred soon after 1618. The decay of the chancel choir may have been a consequence of its windows being plugged with wisps.

Outside the south door of the church, the foundations of a porch were excavated in 1978 (Plate 5). They are of chalk rubble, and were dug to a maximum depth of 1ft below the contemporary ground surface; their relative shallowness suggests that they may have been intended to support a partly timbered superstructure. Four stones from the chamfered plinth of the porch survive in situ on its eastern side. Both the foundations and the plinth are buttressed against the fire-reddened stones of the nave plinth, showing that the porch post-dates the fire. The base of the porch plinth is 8ins. above the base of the nave plinth, implying that the ground level south of the church had risen somewhat between the building of the nave and the addition of the porch. In the absence of any other dating evidence it would be unwise to date its construction more closely than to the late or post-medieval period.

A feature which also post-dates the fire is a small, now blocked, door inserted into the north wall of the nave (Plate 4). The door is 2ft 4ins. wide and only 5ft 6ins. high, with a continuous chamfer around its jambs and the head of the door; a post-medieval date seems reasonable for this simple feature.

There is no evidence of any important building work in the eighteenth century, but the nineteenth century saw major restorations in 1850 and 1869. No faculty exists for the 1850 repairs, but it is possible to work out what was done. The south wall of the nave was almost entirely rebuilt only 2ft thick, and a new south door was constructed. The uppermost walls were rebuilt in brick, implying that the roofs of the nave and chancel were replaced at the same time. The porch was almost certainly demolished at the same time as the south nave wall; the last reference to it is in the churchwardens' accounts for 1843-4, when on 9 August, 1843, 'a lock for the porch gate' was purchased for one shilling.

The faculty issued in July 1869 gave permission to reset the whole of the church and to widen the chancel arch; following which the Saxo-Norman arch was replaced by the present Early English style arch.

THE POTTERY
Lauren Adams

INTRODUCTION
Pottery occurred in fifteen contexts of the excavation, accounting for not less than 187 vessels. The findings have been summarized in Table I. The small quantity of (for the most part) secondarily deposited sherds cannot be used as dating evidence except in the very broadest sense, but nevertheless present an interesting picture of a site in use from Anglo-Saxon to recent times. Representative vessels of each period were chosen for illustration in Figure 10. Except in the case of the Anglo-Saxon pottery, discussion has been restricted to what appears in the Catalogue entries. The fabric descriptions are brief; fuller fabric analyses are available for study with the pottery at Welholme Galleries, Grimsby.
Fig. 10 1-21 The pottery.
CATALOGUE

Anglo-Saxon

1 Handmade jar in a soft black micaceous fabric tempered with fine angular sand and organic matter. On both surfaces a fine slip, smoothed on the inside and burnished on the outside. The form recalls Pagan Saxon ones.\textsuperscript{19}
North Chancel: Medieval and later disturbance.

2 Flat base and faintly biconical shoulder of a jar in a soft black fine fabric, organically tempered and 'grass marked'. Burnt cooking residue on the interior.
North Tower: Grave 13.

3 Thicker walled vessel, fabric identical to the preceding. Exterior smoothed and decorated with three oblique burnished strokes, perhaps the remains of devolved linear ornament.
North Tower: Grave 13.

4 Handmade vessel in a fine, dark grey organically tempered fabric with occasional fine pieces of shell. 'Grass marked' surfaces. Oxidised exterior; smoothed interior.
North Chancel: Grave 16.

5 Flat base of a handmade vessel in a soft black fine micaceous fabric, finger-pressed on both sides. Vitrification outside suggests use as a cooking pot.
North Tower: chalk and cloying TPs 4-6.

6 Handmade open-mouthed jar in a harder dark grey micaceous fabric with frequent fine sub-angular quartz. Rim added as a coil. Form and technique recall the earlier assemblages from Maxey, Northants.\textsuperscript{19}; fabric reminiscent of Ipswich ware. An 8th-century date is therefore suggested.
North Tower: pre-grave features.

7 Rim of a coil-made vessel in a very gritty black micaceous fabric with some calcite. Irregular horizontal finger marks cover both surfaces. Comparable to rims of Group II from Maxey,\textsuperscript{31} and to handmade pottery from St Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury, of the 7th century and after.\textsuperscript{32}
North Tower: Graves 7, 8 and 12.

8 Handmade jar in a gritty black fabric. Traces of burnt cooking residue inside. Middle Saxon parallels from Maxey,\textsuperscript{13} and from Waltham Abbey, Essex.\textsuperscript{14}
North Chancel: Grave 17.

9 Base in a fine black micaceous fabric with brown surfaces. Irregular horizontal finger marks on the interior suggest the vessel was made by hand and finished by turning. Comparable in fabric and technique to Middle Saxon Whithby-type ware.\textsuperscript{15}
North Tower: Graves 7, 8 and 12.

Late Saxon

10 Jar in a fine black shelly fabric with irregular roller-stamping on the shoulder. Used for cooking. Comparable to the products of the 10th-century Silver Street kiln in Lincoln,\textsuperscript{55} but poorer in quality.
North Tower: Grave 12.

11 Jar in a fabric like the preceding.
North Chancel: Medieval and later disturbance.

12 Cooking pot in a fabric resembling the 13th-century South Humberside group B1 defined by Hayfield.\textsuperscript{21} The rim form suggests a date not later than c. 1200.
Boundary Trenches: BF 14, plus silt of BF 14.

Medieval


14 Flanged bowl in a very shelly red-brown fabric, with diamond roller-stamping at the rim. Comparable to shelly wares of late 12th to early 13th-century date at Flaxenage, Lincoln.\textsuperscript{14}
North Tower: Sealing graves 8-14.

15 Jug in an orange sandy fabric with splashes of lead glaze at the rim, a Splash Glazed ware in Hayfield's South Humberside fabric D1.\textsuperscript{14} Boundary Trenches: pathways.

Post-Medieval

16 Bowl in Bolingbroke ware; like a chamber pot of the mid 17th century from Bolingbroke Castle.\textsuperscript{11}
Boundary Trenches: Pathways.

17 Chafing-dish in a fine orange micaceous fabric with thick red-brown glaze inside and under the rim. Outer surface rooted. A local production imitating 17th-century Dutch wares, e.g. pottery recently excavated from a kiln at Boston.\textsuperscript{12}
Boundary Trenches: Pathways.

18 Jar in a hard, sandy red-brown fabric, burnt in use as a cooking pot. A local ware; compare cooking pots found in 16th-century contexts at Somery, North Lincolnshire.\textsuperscript{43}
Boundary Trenches: Pathways.

19 Large storage vessel about 50cm in diameter, in a hard, finely sanded reddish to greyish-brown fabric, with a thick, dull yellow-brown lead glaze outside and over the rim, the scar of a handle and thumb-pressed decoration below the rim, and the scar of another vessel on top of the rim. This is a common form of the 17th century,\textsuperscript{44} in a local fabric.
Boundary Trenches: Silt of BF 1.

Continental Pottery

20 Costrel in a fine red-brown micaceous fabric, a Type III flask of the 17th century made at Martincamp in northern France.\textsuperscript{45}
Boundary Trenches: Pathways.

21 Mid/late 16th-century salt-glazed drinking jug from Cologne or Frechen.\textsuperscript{46}
Boundary Trenches: Pathways.

DISCUSSION OF THE ANGLO-SAXON POTTERY

One of the more surprising results of the excavations was the discovery of fragments of between nine and thirteen handmade vessels in crude fabrics, manifestly of Anglo-Saxon origin. Because at least one of the vessels (no. 6) was found in a context perhaps to be interpreted as primary, and because several showed signs of use as cooking pots (nos. 2, 5 and 8), the possibility of Anglo-Saxon occupation on or near the mound is raised.

The pottery can indicate the date of occupation only in the most general and relative terms. The 'type site' for Middle Saxon pottery in the region is at Maxey, Northants.\textsuperscript{19}; pottery similar to Group III, the most developed group from Maxey, has been found at
TABLE I  Minimum Vessel Analysis of Pottery from Holton-le-Clay Church, Lincolnshire, 1973 and 1975

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Roman</th>
<th>Angle-Saxon 13</th>
<th>Angle-Saxon sand-tempered</th>
<th>Late Saxon 8</th>
<th>Early Medieval 88</th>
<th>Medieval 51</th>
<th>Later Medieval 14</th>
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<tr>
<td>North Tower</td>
<td>Pre-grave features</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grave 13</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graves 7, 8, 12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sealing graves 8-14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chalk &amp; clay overlying TF 4-6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Chancel</td>
<td>Grave 16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grave 17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grave 18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medieval &amp; later disturbance</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 12</td>
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<td>Boundary Trenches</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2 15</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Discrepancies in several of the totals are accounted for by the fact that various vessels appeared in more than one context.

various sites in North Lincolnshire. Interestingly, there is nothing to compare with Group III in the Holton material, although several vessels find parallels among the earlier Groups I and II (nos. 6-8), suggesting a date earlier rather than later in the generally accepted period of currency of Middle Saxon pottery (AD 650-850). Added to this are the residual styles and techniques more typical of Pagan Saxon pottery, which may be observed in several of the vessels, i.e. biconical shoulder (nos. 1 and 2), organic tempering (nos. 1-4), burnishing (no. 1), the flat base (no. 2) and linear ornament (no. 3). On these grounds a date of late 7th/8th centuries is suggested.

SMALL FINDS

Copper Alloy

SF 1 (Fig. 11A) Complete pin 8.2cm long from grave 8. Facetted head with incised ring-and-dot motif on all four faces and an incised cross on the top; five closely spaced rings a third of the way from point. A virtually indetical pin and several similar examples are known from the Saxon monastery at Whitby. 8th to 10th century.

SF 2 (Fig. 11B) Pin broken at both ends, now 3.8cm long, from TF 8; flat, perforated head. Similar to a pin from Whitby. Middle to late Saxon.

SF 3 (Fig. 11C) Broken pin, now 1.8cm long, unstratified, found near south-west corner of tower. Cylindrical head, filed to a point. Similar to examples from Whitby. Middle to late Saxon.

SF 4 (Fig. 11D) Virtually complete strap-end, 3.7cm long, unstratified, found north of nave. A rivet joins the split end. Roughly incised criss-cross pattern within two lines in field, three transverse bars on terminal; decoration originally tinned or silvered. Crudely incised decoration is a feature of several 9th-century strap-ends from Whitby. Probably 9th century.

SF 5 (Fig. 11E) Broken pin now 4.1cm long from boundary layer 7. Probably medieval.

SF 6 (Fig. 11F) Part of a belt-chape 4.0cm long from boundary layer 2, with side-plate joined by single rivet to a forked piece; other side-plate missing. A similar piece from Gottho is 13th or 14th century; this one may be somewhat later.

SF 7 (Fig. 11G) Mount 1.9cm in diameter from boundary layer 7, in form of six-petal rosette
Stone
SF 11 (Fig. 11K) Mica schist whetstone 11.6cm long, from boundary layer 7. Rectangular section, 2.7cm by 1.6cm on average; ends rough, needle-sharpening grooves on two faces. Similar examples from King's Lynn are later 13th to 15th century. 35

ANGLO-SAXON GRAVE SLAB
Stripping plaster from the south jamb of the tower arch in 1973 revealed a fragment of a late Saxon grave slab built into the arch. The stone is 1ft 4½ins. high by 1ft 0¼ins. wide, and is probably part of a rectangular grave slab. A plain band 2ins. wide—probably the upright of a cross—runs down the centre, on either side of which is a strip of two-strand interlace, each strand having two grooves along it. A complete grave-slab from burial 2 in York Minster gives some idea of its probable original appearance. 53 The stone was already rather worn when incorporated into the Saxo-Norman tower arch; therefore a date no later than the tenth century may be suggested.

Fig. 11 A-K—Small finds: copper alloy, lead, iron and stone.
with small central hole. Similar to later 13th-century mount from Southampton. 56 13th or 14th century.

SF 8 (Fig. 11H) Incomplete purse frame or book cover frame from boundary layer 1; broken on longer, hinged side. The hinge has gently chamfered decoration on one side. Late or post-medieval.

Lead
SF 9 (Fig. 11I) Spindle-whorl, diameter 3.1cm, from boundary layer 7, with flattish band 0.5cm wide around edge. Late Saxon or medieval.

Iron
SF 10 (Fig. 11J) Door key loop with solid, collared shank from surface of BF 11. 16th or 17th century.

Plate 6 The late Saxon grave slab in the tower arch.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
Many people contributed either to the excavation or to post-excavation work; without their most generous help, freely given, this report could not have been written. They include Dr Lauren Adams, Mr R. W. Ambler, the Rev. N. D. Beamer, Dr Helen Clarke, Mr D. H. Cotterrell, Dr Mary Finch, Mr and Mrs C. D. V. Gosling, Mr J. A. Graham-Campbell, Mr F. A. Heath, Professor P. A. Rahtz, Mr D. Redman and the Rev. T. R. Shepherd.

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FOOTNOTES

2. F. N. Davis (ed.) Rota Hugonis de Welles 1209-1235, Lincoln Record Society (subsequently L.R.S.), 9, 1914, p.58.
4. Lincolnshire Archives Office (subsequently L.A.O.), M.C.D. 261, list of MSS of the earl of Scarbrough at Sandbeck, passim.
6. A report on the human bones by G. E. D. Grainger is included in fuller versions of this article deposited in Grimsby Public Library and the D.M.S. Watson Library, University College, London.
7. Information from Jenny E. Mann of Lincoln Archaeological Trust.
8. Information from Jenny E. Mann.
10. L.A.O. Terrier Bundle, Holton-le-Caye: 1674 — Vicarage house, one close containing 5 stong; 1684 — [no house] one little close of 1 half an acre; sandford on the church yard; Speculum dioecesum Lincolnensiis... 1705-23, L.R.S. 4, 1913, p.62; L.A.O.; Lindsey enclosure award 40; non-residence licences 1833-1906; Cor. B. 7/1/1377; L.D.T. III/5; Crockford's Clerical Directories.
18. Ibid. p.64.
19. Ibid. p.67.
23. L.A.O. VJ, 21, f.42.
26. Recorded in two books of churchwardens' accounts and vestry minutes 1768-1881, at present in the custody of the vicar. There is nothing here to suggest that Lord Scarbrough contributed to the 19th-century restorations, but see also L.A.O. M.C.D. 261.
27. Ibid.
29. J. N. L. Myres, Anglo-Saxon Pottery, Oxford, 1969, fig. 46 no. 2276 and fig. 42 (Sancton, Yorks.); fig. 21 no. 1470 (Fonaby).
31. Ibid. fig. 12 nos. 3, 7 (Group I); p.55 fig.13 no. 28 (Group II).
32. Ibid. p.55 fig. 13 no. 27.
34. P. V. Addyman, op. cit., p.48 (Group I).
38. C. Hayfield in J. Samuels, 'Cherry Lane, Barrow-upon-Humber, South Humberside', Lincolnshire History and Archaeology (subsequently L.H.A.) 12, 1977, p.30. The author is grateful to Mr Hayfield for his help.
39. Information from Glyn Coppack.
43. L.H.A. 4, 1969, p.76, fig. 9 nos. 74-9.
44. Comparable vessels were made at the 11th-century Woolwich kilns: Post-Medieval Archaeol. 12, 1978, pp.67-8.
47. See note 30.
51. Ibid. p.63, fig. 14.
52. Ibid. p.61, fig. 13, no. 3.
53. Ibid. p.57, fig. 11, nos. 3, 8, 11, and 13.