Archaeology in Lincolnshire and South Humberside 1984

A. B. Page

From April to October 1984 the City & County Museum housed the Lincoln Comes of Age exhibition, the culmination of three years work. The discoveries by the former Lincoln Archaeological Trust over the past ten years were used to show the great advances made recently in our knowledge of the history of the City of Lincoln. The exhibition was a watershed for both the Trust, which has combined with the other county units to form the Trust for Lincolnshire Archaeology, and the museum giving it the chance to redisplay the archaeology galleries on a modern thematic basis.

Abbreviations used in text:
CCM City and County Museum, Lincoln
LAASRP Lincolnshire Architectural and Archaeological Society Reports and Papers
LHA Lincolnshire History and Archaeology
PPS Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society

SITES AND FINDS
Ashby by Partney perforated axe-hammer, Halton Holegate leaf-shaped arrowheads, other worked flint and possible Neolithic pottery, human remains comprising parts of three skeletons were found in blue clay exposed on the beach at Skegness, possibly Bronze Age.

57 Roman coins, ranging from Domitian to Constantius II, possibly the remains of a hoard, were found at Potterhanworth, at Skegness saltmarsh debris was found together with R-B greywears, mortaria and a samian base stamped IANVARIS. A stamped samian base was also found at Welton le Marsh marked AIISTIV. Several Roman coins, including a 5th century minium of FEL-TEMP-REPARATIO type were found at Lincoln along the route of the by-pass. At the same site there was also a Roman copper-alloy harness mount. A coin of Alfred the Great, struck at Canterbury mint was found at Torksey. 50 sherd of a Soutongue green glaze jug, together with various German stonewares were found in a service trench cut through playing fields in Boston, a copper-alloy annular brooch of 13th/14th century date was found near the castle at Lincoln. In Market Rasen the foundations for a new church hall cut through the edge of the graveyard revealing burials 1.5m below the present ground levels. At Navenby a single inhumation, orientated E-W, was found near the parish boundary, the only associated find being an iron belt-buckle, possibly post-medieval in date. A silver penny of Henry VIII and a tin farthing of Charles I were found at Welton le Marsh.

1. Mrs B. Kirkham 5. Mr Derry
2. W. D. Jackson 6. Mr Payne
3. B. Bellamy 7. J. Magilton
4. J. Kirkby

EXCAVATIONS AND FIELDWORK

3-5 BRIDGE STREET, HORNCASTLE

Naomi Field

Excavations in June 1984 were carried out in advance of building at the back of a new restaurant. Detailed evidence for the construction of the Roman wall was found and confirmation of its late-3rd/early-4th century date obtained. A large rampart found inside the wall constructed of the natural sands and gravels with tip-lines of mortar in the make-up. The mortar was identical with that used in the construction of the north wall and it is certain that the rampart was contemporary with the wall construction, being enlarged progressively as the height of the wall grew. Although the rampart was identified in earlier excavations at the library in 1968, its full extent was not uncovered. At Bridge St the width of the rampart at its base was 10m. If this is representative of its width around the whole wall then the usable area within the defences must have been very small indeed.

Beneath the rampart were spreads of mortar, presumably where it had been mixed on the ground before use. In turn the mortar over lay an old ground surface which was criss-crossed with ancient plough marks. Beyond the mortar mixing areas all evidence for ploughing had been destroyed by animal and root disturbance. Early Neolithic flints were found in pits sealed by the plough surface.

Notes
1. The Trust for Lincolnshire Archaeology is grateful to the owner, Mr Dagley, for permission to excavate and for his help during the excavations.
2. For a full account of earlier excavations see L.H.A. 18, 1983, 47-88.

GAINSBOROUGH OLD HALL

Naomi Field

Gainsborough Old Hall is one of the finest examples of a late-medieval timber-framed manor house in Lincolnshire. There has been a major programme of repairs in recent years carried out by the Department of the Environment. The final stage was repair of the West Wing and prior to this work the North Lincolnshire Archaeological Unit undertook a detailed survey of the standing building as well as excavating part of the interior. (See L.H.A 18 (1983) p. 97 for further details). A further season of excavation took place in the courtyard in the summer of 1984. A series of court yard surfaces was found to be especially well preserved at the north (Hall) end of the site. The ground originally sloped upwards towards the south end of the courtyard but the later surfaces had been removed during levelling operations, leaving 17th century deposits immediately below the turf.

Scanty remains of a brick wall with associated stone footings for a gate were located and probably belonged to the wall known to have been built by Sir William Hickman in the first years of the 17th century to separate the inner courtyard from the Mart Yard to the south.

Beneath the earliest courtyard surface was a series of large post holes, belonging to a building 4.5m wide and at least 20m long. The posts had been removed and the holes back-filled with brick and stone roof slates. One of the post holes lay beneath the external spiral stair of the West Wing so the demolition of this large timber building clearly pre-dates the construction of the West Wing.
Just south of the Hall lay the brick footings of a porch; the brick and mortar used in its construction were identical to those used in the spiral stair footings. It is likely that the porch was built when the West Wing was constructed to provide covered access between the two buildings.

A chamfered stone plinth, sitting on a buttressed stone foundation, similar to that still visible on the north side of the Great Hall, was revealed beneath a series of brick repairs which now underpin the timber frame of the Hall. (Only the latest of the brick repairs is above the modern ground surface on the south side.) The footings probably belong to an earlier stone building and were then re-used as a foundation for the 15th-century Hall (Fig. 1).

![Image](image1.png)

Fig. 1. Gainsborough Old Hall. North end of excavations showing courtyard surfaces cut through by later drain (569). Modern pit against wall has revealed the stone footings and chamfered plinth beneath the 16th century hall. (F. N. Field)

No evidence for a fourth (south) range of buildings, within the limits of the East and West Wings, was found nor was there any indication of a moat. However, subsidence in several modern buildings around the hall suggests that there was a moat outside the area excavated.

LINCOLN ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST REPORT

M. J. Jones

On 1 April 1984 the three units in Lincolnshire Archaeology to form the Trust for Lincolnshire Archaeology under the Chairmanship of Professor J. S. Wacher. The creation of the new organisation will allow an integrated approach to be adopted for the first time to the problems of the County's archaeology. For the time being, however, staff of the former Lincoln unit will be preoccupied with the backlog of post-excavation work and with important sites in the City which warrant investigation.

As in 1983, most staff in Lincoln were concerned primarily with post-excavation work, and several large and some small reports are coming to fruition. Another fascicle in The Archaeology of Lincoln series, a substantial report on Roman pottery, was published in the autumn. Editing of the next reports to appear, on St Mark's Church and the Flaxengate medieval pottery, is being done on a word-processor, and in future the printer will work from a disk. The Trust's Sirius computers have also been employed on a number of data storage and analysis projects.

A small excavation team was in the field throughout much of the year. Following up the discoveries in 1983 at Spring Hill which included the largest area of a Roman town-house yet excavated in the city, work at nearby Michaelgate (SK 977 717) revealed the line of the Roman Ermine Street on the steepest part of the hillside. The street, the principal artery of the Roman city, was at least 9m wide and was constructed of a series of monumental steps alternating with paved ramps: no parallel is known for this feature in Britain. (Fig. 2) It apparently went out of use soon after the end of the Roman period.

![Image](image2.png)

Fig. 2. Lincoln, Michaelgate. Stepped and paved construction of Roman Ermine Street on steep hillside. (K. Cambridge)

At the request of the Dean and Chapter, trenches were dug on the north and south sides of Lincoln Cathedral (SK 978 718). That on the south was of particular interest, in demonstrating the close relationship of the Early English church to the Roman city wall. The latter, still standing at least 3.5m high at the end of the 12th century, had been utilised as a foundation. (See article by D. Stocker pp. 15-19 in this volume).

During the summer the fill of the Roman well at St Paul-in-the-Bail (SK 976 719) was excavated with the 'blessing' of Lincoln City Council. Important information was revealed about the structure and capacity of the shaft and about local geology. The only disappointing feature was the fact that the sump had been cleaned out and recut in the 15th-16th centuries, so that none of the 1500 artefacts recovered (some of wood and leather and excellently preserved) dated to before this time. The whole operation was at the same time a dangerous one, involving the use of much safety equipment, and spectacular overhead scaffolding. Public notice-boards were erected, and a video camera and monitor (provided free by a local firm) enabled visitors to watch the work in progress.

Interim reports on all these excavations are published in the Trust's Annual Report.

The year also saw the major exhibition Lincoln Comes of Age which attracted a record number of visitors to the Museum and created much good publicity for the City and its historical and archaeological attractions. Long-term spin-offs included a colour booklet produced by the Trust, Lincoln: 21 Centuries of Living History, which has now become a standard introduction. Further publicity campaigns are likely in the next few years with the development of a long-term archaeological programme at Lincoln Castle in conjunction with Lincolnshire County Council, and several other large city-centre sites coming up for redevelopment from 1985. The next few years are therefore likely to be hectic in terms of rescue excavations, possibly the last period for which large-scale excavation funding will be necessary.
THE LINCOLN BY-PASS

Naomi Field

Construction work finally began on the much awaited Lincoln by-pass in the spring of 1984 (Fig. 3). The easternmost section was built by the Lincolnshire County Council and the route was walked by Naomi Field. Particular attention was paid to the area near the Nettleham Road by the line of the Roman aqueduct (6). No evidence for the aqueduct was seen, reinforcing the view that its origin was indeed the Roaring Meg spring which rises just south of the by-pass. The by-pass route crosses the line of a prehistoric triple ditch system (7), a section of which was excavated in 1979. There is also a small Roman settlement near the roundabout at Wragby Road (8), but no archaeological remains were seen.

The major part of the road has been built by the Department of Transport and a more detailed watching brief was kept along these sections by Geoff Tann, on a voluntary basis, on behalf of the Trust. The discoveries are described in order from west to east.

1. An extinct course of the River Till lies just west of the Foss dyke and pre-dates it. The peat deposits, up to 3.5m deep, were an unsuitable base for the new road and had to be removed. A core sample of the peat was taken and examination of the plant remains and the pollen will be made. The River Till originally emptied into the Brayford Pool at Lincoln and it is hoped that the environmental results will be linked with the work being carried out there. The waterlogged conditions had preserved the plant remains and many twigs, leaves and seeds could be seen in the deposits. The only other find was a Bronze Age flint scraper.

2. An area south of Long Leys Road has been known for some time as a Roman site but its exact nature was unclear because the field was under pasture. Earth moving revealed the pitched limestone footings of two substantial buildings which may have been part of a small farmstead. Associated with the buildings were pieces of 3rd-century pottery and various types of tile. One of the roof tiles found had a crude inscription which has been identified by Mark Hassall of the Institute of Archaeology in London. All that remained of the inscription were the following letters VIIR which may represent part of the names of two men, perhaps those of the tilemakers.

3. Not far from the Roman buildings further Roman discoveries were made. The ground was waterlogged at this point and three well preserved timber coffins were found by the JCB driver. Unfortunately, two were almost completely destroyed but the third remained intact (Fig. 4) and was
removed from the site by inserting a timber cradle beneath it in order to lift the coffin from the ground. The coffin was so heavy, because of its waterlogged condition, that it took seven people to carry it off the site. The contents of the coffin were carefully sieved, but all that remained of the body inside were three teeth from the upper left jaw. These were kindly identified by a local dentist, Derek Mould, as probably belonging to an adult male of between 30 and 40 years old, according to the wear on the teeth. Subsequent cleaning of the coffin revealed the impression of a skeleton on its base. Roman timber coffins are extremely rare so the coffin was sent to the Ancient Monuments Laboratory in London for conservation (Fig. 5). The wood has been ‘freeze-dried’ to prevent it from shrinking and deteriorating and the coffin will soon be on display in the City and County Museum, Lincoln.

4. At the Burton Road crossing a number of pits containing late Iron Age shelly pottery representing at least five vessels were uncovered. The pottery has been examined by Sheila Elsdon of Nottingham University who dates the material to the early part of the 1st century AD.

5. Burials were found in a drainage trench on the west side of the Riselholme Road. The bones had already been disturbed, perhaps at the time when a Victorian house (demolished to make way for the by-pass) was built on the site. At least twelve graves were seen in the trench sides. It was Roman practice to bury the dead along roads outside the city boundary and these burials probably date to that time.

The Trust is very grateful to Geoff Tann as well as organisations which co-operated with the archaeological work, especially the County Surveyor’s Department, Lincolnshire County Council, Department of Transport, Mr Scally of Burrows Engineers and the contractors, Budge.

EXCAVATION AND SURVEY AT SWINHOPE

Patricia Phillips

Two well-known long barrows, Hoe Hill and Ash Hill, face each other across a valley in the parish of Swinhope, east of Market Rasen. In the summer of 1984 the Department of the Environment and the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission gave permission for the sectioning of part of the ditch at Hoe Hill (Fig. 6). This excavation, which forms part of a continuing programme of surface survey and selected excavation in the Lincolnshire Central Wolds by Sheffield University, was undertaken to obtain environmental and dating evidence from the lowest levels of the ditch fill. This information would refer to a period only slightly post-dating the time of construction of the long barrow.

The barrow is approximately 50 metres long by 17 metres wide. Its west end has been damaged by badgers. It is now covered by trees, and circled by an enclosure hedge. The orientation of the mound is roughly East-West, with the west end dipping towards the valley. It is believed locally that there was once a second barrow downhill from the first, on the same alignment, where a gap now occurs in the hedgerow; so far, however, our geophysical surveys cannot confirm this.

The 1984 excavation trench across the barrow ditch was excavated on the north side of the mound. Figure 6 illustrates the profile of the east wall of the excavation, and one of several resistivity runs carried out parallel to the excavation by Mr Arnold Aspinall, of Bradford University. Mr Aspinall has pointed out the higher resistance over the chalk bedrock, and the lower resistance over the main ditch. There is also a smaller ditch, lying closer to the mound.

The fill of the ditches was extensively sampled for environmental information; in addition, the south end of the excavation revealed a bright brown silty-clay layer, tentatively identified as the old ground surface, which has also been sampled. Dr. David Gibbon has kindly confirmed that the soil had not been weathered or exposed to any extent, and has identified a snail shell from this level as belonging to the genus Vallonia, which favours grassland or light shrub covering.

The chalky fill of the ditches meant that animal bone was in a very poor condition; however, a few pieces of cattle bone have been identified from the ditch fill, and one vertebra from the basal levels has been sent to Harwell for radiocarbon dating. Other finds included numerous broad flint flakes, in chalk flint, and a tanged-and-barbed arrowhead in the same raw material. In contrast, field-walking in the neighbouring field produced many retouched artifacts, such as scrapers, the majority in translucent till flint. The tanged-and-barbed arrowhead was found just above a ringsherd of Bell Beaker, probably an N/NE type. Roman sherds appeared in higher levels. Many ‘erratic’ stones were also collected from the ditch fill, and a 180 x 120cm² pecked stone was found lying against the old ground surface near the edge of the mound.

Fig. 6. Hoe Hill, Swinhope. Long barrow ditch section.
The survey programme will continue in the summer of 1985, and a similar excavation will be carried out at Ash Hill in 1986.

Thanks are due to the owner of the land on which the Hoe Hill long barrow is situated, Mr Cottingham, and his manager, Mr Borthwick, for permitting access to the site, and to Simon Probert, supervisor, and students of Sheffield University for carrying out the excavation.

Note
1. LHA 19, 1984, 105.

TEXTILE IMPRESSIONS ON BRIQUETAGE FROM LINCOLNSHIRE

Betty Kirkham

Many hundreds of small pieces of baked clay, known as briquetage, are found on prehistoric salt-making sites. These pieces may come from fire bars, trough supports and other salt-making equipment. Broken from the original artifact they may not tell us much about salt-making technology but can still be a valuable source of information. Many fragments show grass, grain and small seed impressions. Others show extremely clear finger and thumb impressions, including the actual whorls thereon or even the nail, if it needed cutting. This note is concerned with the much rarer occurrence of impressions from textiles. One such example was found at Ingoldmells in 1972 (Fig. 7). The fragment was examined at the Nottingham University Museum where a plaster cast was made which revealed the regular weaving. Saltman material from Ingoldmills already in the museum was re-examined and a further impression was discovered (not illustrated). A plaster cast was made from the second piece and both were submitted to Elizabeth Crowfoot who kindly made the following comments:

1. (Fig. 7) Fragment of baked clay, impression 20 x 19mm overall. Thread Z spun in both systems, rather uneven and showing loose surface fibres; weave plain, count 4/5 threads per cm.

2. Fragment of baked clay, impression 25 x 24 mm overall (Nottingham University Museum). Thread fairly even but spinning direction not clear. However, there is a general impression that spinning is Z in one system and S in the other; plain weave, count 6-7/5-6 threads per cm.

These two impressions are very different in appearance, though both come into the category of coarse, plain weaves. That in fragment 1 is very clear-cut, the outline of every thread precise, showing distinct matting of the surface fibres, suggesting that the fabric was wool.

The impression on fragment 2 is comparatively poor, though it is clearly a plain weave; if the spinning is mixed Z and S, as suggested, then its late Iron Age/Roman associations would indicate a wool fabric. It is of finer quality than the first example, consistent with its possible later date.

Another impression, on the base of a hand-brick found at Orby, was dated by association with pottery to the 1st century BC-1st century AD. A plaster cast of the impression was examined by J. P. Wild who described it as 'a very coarse plain weave, no spin detectable, count of 3-4 threads per cm. in each system'. J. P. Wild also examined a textile impression from a piece of briquetage of Iron Age date found at Helpringham Fen and kindly provided the following comments:

A negative impression of moderately coarse, plain weave; the impression reflecting about 4cm² of the fabric.

System 1. Spin direction uncertain, count 9 threads per cm., maximum length count 2cm.

System 2. Spin direction uncertain, perhaps 6 threads per cm., maximum length count 4cm.

The quality of the cloth resembles sacking. Its original purpose and the way in which it came into contact with the briquetage during the making of the latter is obscure. I know of no precise parallels from the Iron Age, but Roman tiles also occasionally carry similar impressions, presumably accidental. The best goups of contemporary material come from the salt mines at Hallstat, there are very few textiles of Iron Age date known from Britain.

Fig. 7. Ingoldmells. Briquetage with textile impression. (T. Barker)

Given the scarcity of actual fabrics surviving from this early period textile impressions from briquetage are clearly an important source of information. The impressions not only reveal a variety of different weaves and cloths in use but also contribute evidence for salt-making practice. In the medieval period salt was sometimes made in large blocks and wrapped in woollen cloth for transportation. For example, Jocelin of Brakelond remarks that the cellarer of Bury used to summon the fullers of the town of Bury to provide him with cloth for the carriage of his salt. It is possible that the impressions described above came from cloth intended for wrapping the salt, suggesting that this practice dates from at least the Iron Age.

Notes
3. Manchester University.

Acknowledgements
I would like to thank Brian Simmons for permission to include the Helpingham impression in this note, Jeffrey May for permission to include the one from Nottingham University Museum and E. Crowfoot and J. P. Wild for their reports.

A DATED ROMANO-BRITISH JAR FROM WALCOT, ALKBOURGH, SOUTH HUMBERSIDE.

K. A. Leahy & V. Rigby

The Walcot jar was found in January 1931 by Mr. Frederick Bradley when digging out a rabbit burrow in a field behind Walcot Hall. Harold Dudley, who was at that time the Curator of Scunthorpe Museum, recorded that 'just above the pot, the top of which was two feet below the surface of the sandy soil, a Roman city coin of Constantine was found.' When Dudley visited the site a couple of days later he himself, 'secured seven more coins, all of the fourth century, five of which were embedded in the soil which the rabbit seekers had tipped out of the jar.' The vessel remained in private possession until 1984 when it was donated to Scunthorpe Museum by Mr Bradley’s grand-daughter (AKBE 1). In addition to the pot the donor also had six of the coins found with it which allow a re-assessment to be made of the vessel and its dating.

Description. (Fig. 8)

The vessel has a mean height of 345mm and a maximum diameter of 320mm. It has an out-turned rim, beneath which is a narrow raised cordon and there are two further cordons, delimited by parallel grooves, on the shoulder. The exterior is profusely decorated, much of it is in burnished lines on a deliberately reserved matt background to provide tone contrast. There are four zones of burnished designs, three bearing simple scrolls while the fourth comprises a series of superimposed scrolls. The shoulder cordons are each decorated with a line of oval impressions made with a narrow tool.

[Diagram of the vessel]

The pot is in a fairly hard sandy textured fabric, blue-grey in section with a black outer surface which is occasionally discoloured with grey patches. It exhibits a number of defects, but is probably to be considered as a 'second' rather than a waster, since it would have been usable for the storage of dry goods. On its side are two indentations, while a large spill has also flaked away. More seriously, practically the whole of the lower surface of its base has spalled during firing leaving it very thin and weak.

As a 'second', it was probably not traded far from its source of origin and although it cannot be paralleled in the repertoire of the known local potteries, its fabric is consistent with a local source, possibly Messingham. The use of profuse but simple burnished decoration appears characteristic of pottery in the region in the third and fourth centuries AD, the well deposit at Norton Disney being a good example. Typologically, the vessel belongs to the period from the mid-third to the mid-fourth centuries and it is unlikely to have been made after AD 350. Its weak and unreliable condition rules out a long and vigorous period of use before it was buried with the hoard; therefore the vessel could have been new at that time.

The coins

Of the eight coins mentioned by Dudley only six have remained in the possession of the Bradley family, these being:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reverse type</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Mint</th>
<th>Obverse type</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. GLOR-IAEXERCT-ITVS</td>
<td>330-1</td>
<td>Trier</td>
<td>7(B)</td>
<td>R.C.(VII)520,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Two soldiers facing each other, between them two standards)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. GLOR-IAEXERCT-ITVS</td>
<td>332-3</td>
<td>Arles</td>
<td>7(B)</td>
<td>R.C.(VII)566,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(as above)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. –</td>
<td>333-4</td>
<td>Trier</td>
<td>Cp(N)1</td>
<td>R.C.(VII)563,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Victory with spear and shield, l. sdg. on prow of galley)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. –</td>
<td>333-4</td>
<td>Trier</td>
<td>UR(31)</td>
<td>R.C.(VII)553,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(She-wolf sdg. l. suckling twins)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. GLOR-IAEXERCT-ITVS</td>
<td>335-7</td>
<td>Trier</td>
<td>7(B)</td>
<td>R.C.(VII)586,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Two soldiers hdg. a single standard)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. SECVRITAS- REIPVBLCÆ</td>
<td>364-7</td>
<td>Rome</td>
<td>l(A)</td>
<td>R.C.(IX)77a,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Victory advancing l. hdg. a palm and a wreath)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

It is likely that the five coins found in what is a fairly large pot are the residue of a much larger hoard that was recovered by its owner in antiquity.

Discussion

When the Walcot find was first published Dudley described the vessel as containing coins of Constantine the Great, Constantine II and Valentinian I. In his paper on Lincolnshire coin hoards Higginbottom listed the Alkborough hoard as being Valentinian but had some reservations. It now seems that these reservations were justified.
With the exception of the coin of Valentinian the Walcot coins form a chronologically tight group closing in AD 337. It is notable that while all of the earlier coins are in an 'as struck' condition the coin of Valentinian I is very worn and exhibits a different patination. It is likely that this coin was not one of those found in the fill of the pot and that it is intrusive. On these grounds we would suggest that the Walcot hoard be given a closing date of AD 337 and not 367. This date is also more compatible with the established typological dating of the vessel.

Even when a pot has been used as a receptacle for a coin hoard there are still some difficulties remaining in its dating, we cannot be sure in most cases how old the vessel was when the coins were placed in it or how long the coins had been in circulation before their deposition. In the case of the Walcot find however, we have unworn coins placed in a 'second' vessel and the balance of probability points to the pot having been made within a few years of AD 337.

Notes
1. H. E. Dudley 1949, Early Days in North-West Lincolnshire, Scunthorpe, 173 fig. 61.
5. J. W. Pearce 1933, Roman Imperial Coinage, vol. IX, Valentinian I—Theodosius I.

BRONZE AGE URNS FROM BLANKNEY

A. B. Page

Four urns were discovered in 1882 during construction of the Blankney-Metheringham section of the Lincoln to Spalding railway. They were removed by R. W. Campion who later presented two to Derby Museum and a third to St Albans Museum. The fate of the fourth urn is not known. All three surviving vessels are now in the City and County Museum, Lincoln, thanks to the generosity of the two museum authorities concerned.

A short report on these urns appeared in the Archaeological Notes for 1959 and 1960 but as the cremated bone has now been examined it would seem appropriate to republish them in the light of recent research into this type of urn.

**LM-20-59**
- Ht. 30.5cms; Rim d. 24.4cms; Max d. 26.5cms;
- Base d. 15.5cms. (Fig. 1.1)

This urn has a red grog-tempered fabric with a buff surface. The decoration consists of two rows of fingernail impressions; one just below the rim, each impression being about lcm apart and one on the carination where the impressions are more widely spaced. There is a slight pinched cordon around the carination.

**LM-14-61**
- Ht. 26.5cms; Rim d. 23.6cms; Max d. 25.7cms;
- Base d. 16cms. (Fig. 1.2)

Brown, grog-tempered fabric with buff to black surface. The decoration is confined to the area above the carination. Two lines were incised to form a band 3.8cms deep, filled by a lattice decoration which in places strayed outside the confines of the band.

CL 2.83 Ht. 21.5cms; Rim d. 17.4cms; Max d. 20.25cms;
- Base d. 12.7cms. (Fig. 1.3)

Black grog-tempered fabric with buff surface. The decoration consists of a line of fingernail decoration on the carination, each impression about 1.4cms apart.

The three surviving urns are all of the biconical type. In the past this group has been considered to be a native development from either Grooved Ware or Food Vessel antecedents. It was also suggested that they were a major influence in the development of the continental Hilsum series. Recent work on the continent, however, has shown this to be false. Continental C14 dates for this type of urn are considerably earlier than the British examples and they are now seen as evidence of immigration from Northern France and the Middle Rhine during the Wessex II period.

Tomalin sees an 'Intrusive Biconical Urn Tradition' with heavy quartz or flint tempering and a native response producing biconical forms in a food vessel fabric. The Barkney group falls into this second category and may be classified as Tomalin Form 3.

The implications of Tomalin's work for Food Vessels and Collared Urns is enormous, leading to a rejection of Longworth's thesis. It will be interesting to reinterpret the considerable collection of Bronze Age pottery in the Lincolnshire Museums service in the light of this recent work.

The cremated bone was all in urn LM 20-59, but the presence of three individuals leads one to think that they may have been amalgamated since their discovery and that we are looking at the contents of all three urns.

The Cremated Bone

Mary Harman

The cremation deposit, which weighs 910g, consists of many pieces of well calcined bone, some being quite large, up to 106mm in length. Most of the pieces are long bone shaft fragments, but there were also a number of skull vault and some facial fragments, a few vertebral fragments, parts of the articular ends of limb bones and pelvic fragments, and metapodials and phalanges.

The presence of three left petrous temporal bones shows that at least three people are represented. None of the skull vault fragments had recognisable joined sutures and there was no evidence of degenerative disease on the bones; it seems unlikely that any aged individuals are represented, and the presence of fragments of the humerus or femur head which were not fused and parts of the illium with the iliac crest not fused show that at least one person was less than 23 years of age, as these are normally joined by about that age (Ferembach et al. 1980, 531.) Most of the bones have fused epiphyses and there is nothing to suggest that there are children or young adolescents represented.

A large piece of occipital bone and part of an axis are not obviously male, but there is no clear indication of the sex of any of the individuals. A few alveolar fragments show no evidence of ante mortem tooth loss.

If this group of bones is all that was originally deposited, since it does not include all the remains of three whole individuals, then either the collection of fragments for deposition was not very thorough or only a token quantity was deposited. It is not possible to tell whether all three were cremated together or whether ashes were reserved on different occasions or in different places so that ultimately remains of all three could be interred together.
Fig. 9. Blankney. Cremation urns. (A. B. Page)
A ROMAN CREMATION FROM BOURNE

Nigel A. Kerr

During March 1984 workmen digging a drainage trench found sherds of a Roman pot. It was found about 75cm. below the ground surface in the south side of the trench. These finds were picked up by the men’s employer, Mr James Measures of the Cottage, Dowsby who leases the land from Mr T. Jones of Bourne. Mr Measures brought the discovery to my attention and on further inspection of the site small fragments of burnt bone were noticed in the top of the backfilled trench together with further sherds from the pot illustrated (Fig. 10). This cremation pot is a greyware jar 207mm. in height with a narrow neck and everted rim. It is made from a well-fired sandy, grey fabric with fine black grits. The surface is very abraded as are some of the sherd breaks, showing that the jar had been broken before its disturbance in 1984. The jar is about ¾ complete. It probably dates to the second century AD.

A cursory inspection of the surface of the trench revealed a scattering of Roman and later sherds. At a point further along the trench line, approximately 15.50m east of the original findspot, a nucleus of sherds was encountered which all appear to come from a single vessel. These sherds were all found lying in the top of the backfilled trench. No fragments of human bone were noticed at this point. At present, the field is under permanent pasture and it is likely to remain so for the foreseeable future. Substantial traces of ridge and furrow in the field suggest that it has not been extensively cultivated in modern times and it has certainly never been ploughed in living memory.

A ROMAN BOWL FROM FISKERTON

A. B. Page and F. N. Field

An almost complete late Roman copper alloy bowl was found by Mr V. Stuffins in a field bordering the River Witham (Fig. 11). It lay only 150m east of a similar bowl found by Mr Stuffins in 1981 near to the excavations of an Iron Age timber causeway (see LHA 17, 72). Both are ‘Irchester type’ bowls named after a bronze bowl hoard found at Irchester, Northamptonshire. These are characterised by an omphalos base, rounded body and inturned rim although the bowl illustrated displays only a slight incised line beneath the rim. In most cases, including both Fiskerton examples the bowls have been raised from a single sheet of metal. The bowl found in 1981 is 250mm in diameter and 110mm high; the bowl illustrated is slightly smaller being 201mm in diameter and 110mm high. The larger bowl was in poor condition and had been repaired in antiquity, the other bowl was found in good repair with only one small hole near its rim.
AN IRON AGE BONE COMB FROM KIRMINGTON, SOUTH HUMBERSIDE

Kevin Leaky

When in 1964 Hodder defined his Woodbury Culture as the basis for regional developments in the British Iron Age he chose as one of his type-fossils for the period the ‘weaving comb’. Although Hodder’s hypothesis has not found general acceptance it is interesting that weaving-combs could be considered a common enough object to be taken as a distinctive mark of the British Iron Age particularly, from our point of view, as they were apparently not found in Lincolnshire. A recent surface find from Kirmington has, however, shown that weaving-combs were used in Lincolnshire/South Humberside (Fig. 12).

![Fig. 12. Kirmington. Iron Age bone comb. (K. Leaky)](image)

The Kirmington comb is made from a section of rib from a large animal. Its surviving length is 63mm but damage to both ends means that no estimate can be made of its original length. The comb’s width tapers from 31mm to 20mm and its form follows the natural shape of the bone although on the undecorated side of the comb the surface of the bone has been removed to reveal its cancellous interior. On the broader end of the bone are cut a series of seven teeth. These vary in width between 2mm and 3mm with broader 4mm wide teeth at the ends. The gaps between the teeth are all a little under 2mm wide, the evenness of this measurement may represent the width of the saw with which the teeth were cut. It is notable that the saw cuts forming the teeth are not parallel but are cut radially following the curvature of the top (decorated) surface of the bone. This decoration consists of two broad grooves cut across the top of the comb’s teeth.

The distribution of bone combs is interesting. They were thought to be an exclusively British phenomenon but recently finds have been noted in north-west France. The main concentrations of finds are in Somerset and the Orkneys with a widespread scatter over the rest of Britain and a few in Ireland. Before the discovery of the Kirmington comb none was known from Lincolnshire or South Humberside. This must be seen as odd in view of our rich Iron Age cultures.

Weaving-combs are known from North Humberside with examples being found at Garton and Wetwang Slack and on the Roman villa site at Rudston. Close dating of weaving-combs is not possible in view of the long period of time over which these objects remained in use. The earliest dated find comes from the Middle Bronze Age settlement at Shearplace Hill, Dorset although the stratigraphic context in which it was found it not entirely secure. A comb found at Eldons Seat, Dorset comes from a securely dated late Bronze Age context. Following this start weaving-combs then became a very common object in some areas of Iron Age Britain as is witnessed by the discovery of, for example, 130 of them at the Meare lake-side village. This site dates from the 2nd and 1st centuries BC. Weaving-combs have been found in Roman contexts but these may be residual. The Orkney weaving-combs appear to be later than the southern examples starting only in the Broch period during the early centuries AD, but then continuing perhaps into the 5th century AD.

Weaving-combs have most recently been studied by Hodder and Hedges who set up a typology of them based on shape and decorative detail. Unfortunately the loss of the end of the Kirmington comb and the absence of more elaborate decoration makes it impossible to assign it to any of Hodder’s types.

Throughout this note I referred to the Kirmington find as a ‘weaving-comb’ but this identification of these objects is not universally accepted. Experimental work carried out by Rothy and repeated by Hedges and Rance led them to believe that the radial cut teeth on the combs made them an impractical tool for packing down the weft threads on a warp-weighted loom. However, this conclusion was not supported by a recent experiment carried out at Danebury. Grey noted that there was wear between the teeth of many of the combs from Meare and that houses containing large numbers of combs (up to 27 in one case) also had large numbers of other objects used in the manufacture of textiles (bobbins and spindle whorls). Wear which exists between the teeth of the Kirmington comb would be in accord with its use as a weaving-comb.

Acknowledgement
The Kirmington comb was donated to the Scunthorpe Museum by its finder, Mr Alan Harrison, and is now in the collection of Scunthorpe Museum, Reg. No. KMAA 331.

Notes
4. Stead I. M. Rudston Roman Villa (1980) p. 105 Fig. 68/71.
AN IRON AGE RIBBED BRACELET FROM ROXBY, SOUTH HUMBERSIDE

Kevin Leahy

The bracelet (Fig. 13) was found in 1980 by Mr Bob Fotheringham while field walking on arable land at Roxby some three miles north of Scunthorpe. It was, by the generosity of Mr Alan Maw the landowner, donated to Scunthorpe Museum (code RXVC3).

![5cm

Fig. 13. Roxby. Iron Age ribbed bracelet. (K. Leahy)

Only one half of the bracelet survives with the patina on the fracture suggesting that the break occurred in antiquity. The bracelet is made from a cast copper alloy and has an outside diameter of 72mm. It has an inside diameter of 60mm and a width of 7mm. Around its outer edge are a series of narrow transverse grooves which define the ribs. Some faint striations in some of the grooves may point to their being cut out with a file after the bracelet had been cast. The section of the bracelet is asymmetric with one of its sides rounded and the other flat. One of the two ends of the fragment terminates not in a fracture line but in a flat surface showing that the bracelet originally had a penannular form with its terminals simply butted together. The finish of the bracelet is not of a high order and there are slight variations in its shape and section.

We do not need to look too far to find parallels for the Roxby bracelet as this type is well known in the Arras culture of East Yorkshire an example from Arras itself being identical to the Roxby find.1 Having found parallels for the bracelet there remains the problem of dating it and unfortunately these bracelets do present some difficulty even in their Arras context.

Stead2 pointed out that the best parallels to be found for the Arras bracelet on the continent were at Hallstatt but he was not happy to see the Arras culture starting as early as the seventh century BC preferring a La Tène I dating.

The presence of ribbed bracelets in Britain at an early date is suggested by the find from Castle Hill, Scarborough which Challis and Harding3 dated to Hallstatt C2 in the second half of the seventh century BC. Pottery found on the nearby site would support this dating, but the link between the two is by no means certain.4 We are left then with a very broad date range for the Roxby bracelet spanning almost the whole of the British Iron Age from Hallstatt C to La Tène III.

Notes
1. Stead, L. M., The Arras Culture York, (1979) p. 75 Fig. 28/2.
2. Ibid. p. 92.
3. Challis, A. J., & Harding, D. W., Late Prehistory from the Trent to the Tyne. Brit Archaeol Rep No 20 (1975) p. 44 Fig. 42/19.
4. Stead, Ibid. p. 76.
5. May, J., Prehistoric Lincolnshire Lincoln (1976) p. 125 Fig. 66, 4 & 5.