Archaeology in Lincolnshire and South Humberside 1985

Edited by Tony Page and Naomi Field

Looking back over past Archaeological Notes and comparing them with this year's, there is no doubt that the quality, particularly of the excavation reports, has improved. Their number, however, has sadly declined. In 1965 there were 149 entries; in 1975 124; and this year less than 50. This is, I think, due to two reasons. Firstly the financial restrictions imposed upon the Trust for Lincolnshire Archaeology and secondly the disappearance or alienation of the amateurs.

The remedy for the first of these lies with central government and is therefore rather outside our competence. The second is a different matter altogether. 20 years ago the amateur involvement in archaeology was enormous. Amateurs conducted field research and excavation (admittedly of varying quality) and felt themselves to be in the forefront of archaeology, as indeed they were. However the rising cost of excavations and publication and the growth of professional units gradually pushed them further and further into the background. The news media stress the professionalism and complexity of modern archaeology, persuading erstwhile and would-be amateurs that there is no place for them in mainstream archaeology.

Another aspect of this is the alienation of that large body of amateurs known as 'metal detectives'. This is a problem which has never been properly tackled in Lincolnshire. I am afraid that the Museum must accept a large part of the responsibility for this situation through its former involvement in S.T.O.P. which caused far more harm to the Museum than it did to the metal detector users.

There are few angels on either side of this barrier and probably few devils but as usual it is the conduct of the devils which colours ones attitude to the rest. I feel that the time is long overdue for the professionals to realise the great potential for archaeology which lies with amateurs of all types and to make positive efforts to harness this energy for the common good.

There are many problems to be ironed out but that can only happen through co-operation. The damage to archaeology by the action of amateurs is minute compared to our major problem, the destruction of our heritage through agriculture, industry and communications.

Tony Page

SITES AND FINDS

Finds from NORTON DISNEY include two palaeolithic flakes and a neolithic stone axe, stone adze and flint axe. A Bronze Age socketed axe was found at STIXWOULD.

Roman coins were reported from LINCOLN, AUNSBY and DEMBLEBY, OSBOURNBY, NAVEENBY, TORKSEY and GAINSBOROUGH and Roman pottery from BURGH-le-MARSH, NORTON DISNEY, CAYTHORPE, CAISTOR and Cecil Street, LINCOLN.

The post-Roman period was represented by a penannular brooch from OSBOURNBY, two zoomorphic strap ends from RAITHBY-CUM-MALTBY, several brooches from LANGTOFT and a goldsmith's die from KETSBY.

Three medieval ring brooches were found at AUNSBY and DEMBLEBY, a copper alloy brooch from WEMS-WELL, a lead spindle whorl from FISKERTON and several horse pendants from RAITHBY-CUM-MALTBY, CASTLE CARLTON, KETSBY, ULCEBY, HAUGH and LOUTH. Medieval coins were found at AUNSBY and DEMBLEBY, OSBOURNBY, SLEAFORD and DUNHOLME.

Six 17th century buckles were found on the site of the Civil War action at WINECEBY.

1. Mr. P. Stopp
2. Mr. N. Hogg
3. Mr. R. Sly
4. Mr. E. J. Camm
5. Mr. C. J. Marshall
6. Mr. J. Brownlow
7. Mr. R. Taylor
8. Caistor Grammar School
9. Mr. Cropley

COVENHAM ST MARY (Fig. 1)

Tony Page

A previously unrecorded Roman site was reported to the Museum and after a site visit by a member of staff, it was decided to conduct a trial excavation to test the state of preservation. The landowner had only been ploughing the land for two years. Before that it had been grass since the 1930s when his father had ploughed it once, found large chalk blocks which damaged his plough, and returned it to grass.

It was obvious from the start that the plough had cut into the Roman levels over most of the excavated area and in one place had begun to disturb the natural clay (1).

There was a surface spread of chalk rubble and Roman pottery of some 3,000 square metres with no evidence of later material. It was decided to excavate an area on the edge of the site where it was hoped to gather the information required without damaging the presumed central core of the complex.

Two main features were revealed in the excavation, (2) a shallow foundation trench with the remains of a wall constructed of small water worn boulders and (3) the footings of a small building of chalk blocks. Their full extent could not be traced in the small excavation. The natural clay was close to the surface in the eastern part of the trench, but dropped sharply on the western side. It was not possible to decide whether this was a natural decline or a man-made feature. The pottery associated with the western end of the wall (2) was fragmentary, but included a small sherd of 'Parishian' ware, samian and rusticated ware, giving a probable late-2nd century date.

The field is continuing in cultivation and unless further excavation is undertaken it is inevitable that the archaeological levels will be lost within the next 2-3 years.

I would like to thank Mr. Mike O'Bea for bringing the site to my attention and for help with the excavation, and the farmer Mr. Motley, for his permission to excavate and his helpful interest in the work.

FENLAND SURVEY

T. Lane and P. Hayes

The Trust for Lincolnshire Archaeology's Fenland Officers have continued their programme of field survey. Work has
Saxon origin for the siltland villages to the east and the relationships of these communities with the newly found dispersed settlements are currently being investigated.

Another unlikely find in Pinchbeck was that of an early Bronze Age pottery scatter. This was found where the under-lying land surface emerged from the surrounding marine deposits to form a fen island. On the fen edge the Iron Age and Roman salterns were found to be abundant, the earlier ones particularly so between Rippingale and Bourne.

In 1986/87 fieldwalking will be limited to infilling unsurveyed gaps in this block and efforts will be concentrated on completing the final report for publication.

References

ARCHAEOLOGY IN LINCOLN 1985 (Fig. 2)
Trust for Lincolnshire Archaeology (City of Lincoln)
M. J. Jones

Excavation continued throughout the year, with major activity at Michaelgate (continued from 1984), Hungate, and St. Benedict's Square. Trial work also took place at Chapel Lane and the Lawn Hospital.

At Michaelgate, the excavation of a third trench to the west of those dug in 1984 revealed part of the rear range of successive medieval buildings of 13th-15th century date which had fronted on to Michaelgate (the medieval Parcheminate). As in the other two trenches, these structures were only encountered at a considerable depth beneath the modern surface, suggesting that the major terrace which must have existed lay on or immediately west of Michaelgate. Earlier medieval features were also uncovered, including fragments of buildings on the Roman alignment and traces of metalworking.

The western boundary of the paved and stepped construction of the Roman Ermine Street (found in 1984; see LHA 20, p. 70) was represented by a north-south wall, to the west of which was a ramped cobble surface. Study of the dating material from here suggests that this had been used, or possibly even resurfaced in the 10th century. From this fact it is inferred that the Roman line did survive, although shifted slightly westwards, through to that date, and that the origin of Parcheminate lay in the 11th-12th centuries. Further examination of the frontage when a new drain is inserted in the near future should help to resolve the problem.

The large-scale excavations at Hungate were planned to take place in two phases. Unfortunately, delays in demolishing the Grand Cinema meant that the second, larger phase, did not materialise. The work was therefore confined to an expansion of the trial trench dug in 1983 (see LHA 19, p. 102-3) to a length of 16m. The buried deposits survived well thanks partly to hillwash, and the earliest Roman surface - a north-south lane? - was c.6m below the modern level. The identification of this possible street of no later than early 2nd century date needs verification by further investigation beneath the Cinema, but appears to lend weight to the idea that the lower town was planned at an early date.

The earliest definite structure encountered was a 2nd century stone building on the east of and probably in use at...
the same time as the lane. It was succeeded by a substantial building, whose walls survived to a great height of 2.5 m. This building overlay an earlier wooden water pipe and incorporated two similar pipes (an iron collar survived) plus a sealed SIGNORELLO LATERA glass drain. The latter is further evidence of the problems encountered to this day in draining the steep clay hillside in Lincoln. The ‘rooms’ excavated contained metal or wooden floors, and the building’s plan is uncertain without further excavations beneath the cinema.

Like many such structures it underwent a number of modifications, one involving the insertion of a wooden double door into the most northerly wall found, before going out of use in the late 4th or 5th century. Its floors and some of its walls were subsequently buried to a depth of 2.5 m by ‘dark earth’, whose composition suggested that it had been dumped there rather than accumulated, but natural factors cannot be excluded. This material is being studied by Dr. Richard MacPhail, as is a humic layer which sealed it indicating a period of desertion. Immediately on top of the ‘turtle line’, however, were remains of timber buildings apparently lying along the Hungate frontage and dating to the late 9th-early 10th centuries. Was this the origin of the street?

Remains of successive floors, partitions, stone pads and holes for timber posts, and eavesdrip gullies showed that the Hungate timber buildings were rebuilt several times, while to the rear (east) rubbish pits were located. Stone became the standard building material from the 13th century and the new house dating to this period lasted until a 16th century redevelopment.

One disappointment of the 1985 season was the failure to locate the Roman east-west street that ran hereabouts between the west gate of the lower city and Ermine Street. Presumably it lies to the south of the trench, beneath the cinema.

This was more than compensated for, however, by the quality of the finds made on the site. Among the 1500 or so small finds, (excluding pottery and animal bones), were some outstanding items: a more or less complete medieval stone mortar, a Roman bronze bowl, many fragments of evidence for Anglo-Scandinavian industrial activity. The two objects of greatest interest, however, are a Roman limestone relief and an 11th-century ivory seal matrix (Notes on these two finds will appear in The Antiquaries Journal). The relief measured 35 cm high by 38.5 cm wide, and is 9.5 cm thick; its upper and lower edges are broken and the lower left face badly chipped. It depicts two figures seated on a couch; on the left is a naked winged male, sitting slightly askew. His right leg has broken off but a faint scar shows its original position. A female, clad in stola and undershirt, sits on his left holding an object - possibly a box or casket - on her knee. Her right hand cups his chin while he clasps her wrist with his right hand and supports her elbow with his left. The gesture seems to be one of affection rather than restraint!

The seal-matrix is quite remarkable, being at the same time an excellently preserved example and also quite unlike any similar find. It was found in a medieval rubbish pit, so that the circumstances of its being lost or discarded remain uncertain. It has been studied by T. A. Heslop of the University of East Anglia, an expert on seals of this period.

The matrix is 4 cm in diameter plus a protruding handle (see photo), and is made of walrus ivory. The legend reads SIGNOE SIGNILLATUR LEGATIO l – l, ‘the legend is sealed by the sign’ – with space for rivet-holes and for a replaceable plate or for mounting. The term legatio suggests a papal representative.

The central scene, which is inverted, shows an ecclesiastical figure before an altar and gazing up to heaven, whence a blessing hand emerges from a cloud. The figure has been identified as a sub-deacon on the basis of the interpretation of the vessels on the altar as those received at a sub-deacon’s ordination.

The final exciting element of the story is that there was a papal legate in England in the 1070s who was a Cardinal subdeacon. His name was Hubert, and he could well have been one of those legates cited by William the Conqueror as advising on the transfer of the See from Dorchester on Thames to Lincoln - this led to the building of Lincoln Cathedral from 1072. Is this then Hubert’s seal-matrix, made when he came to England and hence conforming to the English rather than Continental style, and lost (or given away?) when he came to the city of Lincoln? The blessing hand sanctioned his mission but did not ensure the long-term security of the seal-matrix!

At St Benedict’s Square, the Trust was permitted a period of two months for investigation between demolition of the former offices of the Lincolnshire Echo and the start of building work. The archaeological objectives were therefore necessarily limited - as they were by scarcity of funding - but within these constraints were successful. The edge of the Brayford Pool in both the 2nd-3rd century and the 10th century was located at the point where it turned eastwards for the Witham Outflow.

The Roman foreshore was defined by a series of three mooring posts. The waterfront was later advanced by the dumping of rubbish material, and the excavation trench contained one wall of a riverside stone building of 4th century date. By the 10th century there had been incursion over the late Roman waterfront, and an impressive network of wicker fences was laid down. From the study of their relationship and of the silt deposits, these have been provisionally interpreted as a fish-farm. Again they were covered by dumping for further reclamation in the 11th century. The waterlogged levels preserved a large number of artefacts of organic material, and these together with the environmental samples, have yet to be examined.

At the site of the former Corporation Depot between Chapel Lane and West Bight, the Trust excavated two trial trenches to determine the depth and extent of survival of the archaeological deposits. This is potentially an area of great significance for the Roman and early medieval periods. No post-Roman structures were encountered, but there were at least four periods of Roman building, the first two probably associated with the legionary fortress. The
colonia buildings provided hints of some quality, but had been disturbed by medieval pits. The areas opened were too small for the function of any of the buildings to be identified. The residential development planned for the site is being designed so that no damage will occur to these buried remains.

The Trust also did some work at the site of the Lawn Hospital, supplementing that carried out by the Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology. In particular partial excavation of two long trenches (to be completed in 1986), revealed features of 11th-12th century date and produced a group of Middle Saxon pottery. Extensive excavation is obviously merited should the grounds be partially developed for housing.

Much effort also continued on post-exavcation work. The substantial report on St Mark's Church and cemetery is now ready for press, and work is well advanced on major reports dealing with medieval houses, the Roman suburbs, and early medieval pottery.

LINCOLNSHIRE CHURCHES 1985
Naomi Field

Members of the Trust for Lincolnshire Archaeology act as archaeological advisors on two church committees in the Lincoln diocese. The Diocesan Advisory Committee deals with all applications for alterations and repairs to church buildings in use. Archaeological disturbance may occur when new drains are inserted or a new extension to the church is built. The Redundant Churches Uses Committee tries to find alternative uses for churches which are no longer required for worship. In some instances a church may be demolished and an archaeological record is desirable. Monitoring of work on churches is carried out on an ad hoc basis when other commitments allow as there is no official funding for this type of work. With nearly 600 parish churches in the diocese (which includes South Humberside) an enormous amount of work is generated and could easily occupy somebody full-time. Until such a time as this is possible a less satisfactory system must be followed where only the more important sites can be recorded in any detail. This may range from observation of earth-moving and making a photographic record to small-scale excavation. The following accounts are of just two of the churches visited in 1985.

Fotherby St Mary (Fig. 3)

Excavation work for the construction of a vestry and meeting room on the north side of the church revealed the foundations of the medieval north aisle. The footings trenches lay, quite coincidentally, over the foundations of the earlier building. These foundations comprised a layer of chalk, flint and sandstone rubble which ran parallel to the present nave wall and about 2.50m north of it. The full internal length of the aisle was 14.27m. At the west end of the aisle a sandstone chamfered plinth lay on top of the rubble foundations, surviving for a length of 3.93m. The Plinth comprised blocks of irregular length but all were 74cm wide and 20cm high. The remaining length of wall had presumably been robbed out. No evidence for associated floors was found in the trenches except for two medieval floor tiles. Large numbers of yellow clay roof tiles, probably dating to the 17th century, were found just below the turf line.

Little is known about the medieval church at Fotherby because it was demolished in 1862. A photograph of the old church may still be seen in the modern church but it shows the south side of the building. It is unknown whether the north aisle was demolished at the same time as the rest of the church or if it had gone at an earlier date. There is no documentary record of the demolition and subsequent construction of the new church and the small excavation in 1985 helped to record a long-forgotten feature of the previous church.

Keelby St Bartholomew (Fig. 4)

An area approximately 12m x 8m was cleared on the south side of the church for the construction of a Sunday school room by an MSC team. This had revealed a pitched chalk foundation some 1.10m south of and parallel to the modern south aisle of the church and appeared to belong to the medieval aisle. About 2.50m of the foundation was exposed and further cleaning established that the wall ran the full length of the modern aisle, about 13.80m. Unfortunately, spreads of chalk and flint, the infill of later graves, cut through the foundations in several critical places and had obliterated the evidence for a return wall at both the west and east ends of the medieval aisle. Concrete footings had already been laid when the site was visited making investigation of certain parts impossible.

The best preserved section of the medieval aisle lay in the third bay east of the tower where two courses of pitched chalk, laid from east to west, were observed. The foundation was between 1.40m -1.60m thick and the infill contained large water-worn pebbles. At the west end the foundations were bonded with a soft pink mortar.

The medieval aisle arcade is still to be found inside the church and assuming that the aisle wall was parallel to the arcade the estimated internal width of the medieval aisle is
4.08m. The aisle was probably constructed in the 12th-13th century, according to the likely date of the piers. At an unknown date the aisle was demolished and the arcade blocked up. In 1906-7 the church was heavily restored and the south aisle was opened up once more, the new walls being built within the long-lost medieval aisle. At the same time a ‘false’ aisle was built on the north side of the church, perhaps to balance with the new south aisle. The north aisle piers match those on the south aisle in style but are clearly of a different modern finish. The fabric of Keelby church reveals a complex history of alterations which would benefit from much closer study.

Finds were few but included a piece of painted medieval window glass, one piece of pagan Anglo-Saxon pottery and a fragment of glazed medieval floor tile.

Acknowledgements
I should like to thank M. Clark for his help in recording both churches and the Revd. D. Lambert, D. Stocker and A. Smith (Fotherby church); the Revd. R. W. J. Hoggett, Mrs. D. Tyszka and G. Willerton (Keelby church).

SHORT NOTES
BRONZE AGE URNS FROM BLANKNEY
Tony Page

This is an appendix to the note on these urns which was published last year.1 The fourth urn has now been traced to the Yorkshire Museum, York, and a drawing will hope-
Fig. 6 Coptic bowl from Loveden Hill (M. Clark)
COPTIC BOWL FROM LOVEDEN HILL (Fig. 6)
Tony Page
A Coptic bowl was found by Mr. M. O' Bee on the site of the Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Loveden Hill in the parish of Hough on the Hill. It lay in the area between the two excavations which were carried out in the 1960s by Dr. K. Fennell and Nigel Kerr. Only twenty five examples of this type of bowl are known in England and this is one of the most northerly. Perhaps the best-known bowl is the one found in the princely burial at Sutton Hoo. The discovery at Loveden Hill emphasises the importance of the cemetery in a local and possible regional context. It is undoubtedly the most important casual find from the county for many years. A full account of the bowl will appear in the report on the cemetery excavations being prepared by Nigel Kerr.

CRESSET-LAMP FROM KETSBY (Fig. 7)
Tony Page
Cresset-lamps were one of the most common forms of artificial lighting during the early medieval period. The form and fabric varies, some are plain bowls, others have feet or spikes for insertion into a bracket and some were designed for hanging. They are found in ceramic, metal and stone.

The example from Ketsby is very simple in form. It is a vertical-sided, flat-based, chalk bowl, 6.5 cms in diameter and 5 cms high. The interior base is divided into four by two intersecting lines which are probably constructional rather than decorative. On the exterior of the base, however, there is a roughly carved Maltese Cross which is certainly decorative and there are two thumb sized depressions on the surviving exterior sides which may also be decoration.

This interesting little find from Ketsby is very similar to one found in London on the site of the Old General Post Office and now in the Museum of London.

Notes
1. There is a bronze example of the hanging type in the City and County Museum.
2. London Museum Catalogue, p. 176, Fig. 54-4.

STONE MORTAR FROM LONG BENNINGTON (Fig. 8)
Tony Page
A small mortar of, as yet, unidentified limestone was found at Long Bennington and presented to the Museum. It is a simple type with two solid handles and two lugs, one of which is grooved for pouring. At some time subsequent to its manufacture the lugs have been carved to represent two simple faces. Decorated mortars are known from the 12th to the 14th centuries, but in the majority of cases the faces on these examples are part of the original design. Cherry mentions one from Rochester where the decoration is secondary, but, as that was also found in a non-archaeological context, it is impossible to put a date to the carving. The faces on the Long Bennington mortar are in many ways similar to examples from London and Birdham, Sussex, illustrated in Cherry’s article and may well represent an attempt to improve the look of the mortar by a medieval owner, but, of course, could equally have been executed in more recent times. The solid handles of the mortar date its manufacture to the late 13th or 14th century.

Notes
1. By the finder, Mr. Carter J.M. 1985, 1

TWO MEDIEVAL POTTERY COSTRELS FROM LINCOLNSHIRE (Fig. 9)
R. H. Healey
A costrel is defined as being a general purpose liquid container having perforated lugs or handles which act not only as a means for suspension but also to secure a cover or stopper in the mouth of the vessel. Although more often thought of as a round-bottomed container, intended, in the main, to be carried, there are examples with flat bases which can stand by themselves.

Over 20 years ago G. D. Dunning published an article on medieval pottery costrels from Winchester in which he classified the common forms and described a number of finds from both the Continent and the British Isles. None
of the latter group was found very far ‘north of Watford’! Other examples have been published in the intervening years, for example from Knighton, I.O.W., Cheam and Bosworth (Dunning, 1969) and from Farnborough (Holling, 1977) but nevertheless this type of vessel remains a rarity and largely confined to Southern Britain. In Lincolnshire none have been published other than the Saxo-Norman ones from the Stamford kilns (Kilmurry, 1980, 290-1). There exist, however, two almost complete examples in museum collections in the county, one in Lincoln and one in Spalding, and it is hoped that this note may lead to others being recognised in the future.

It is hardly surprising that pottery costrels are uncommon. In such a mobile existence a clay container, even with the added protection of a straw or wicker carrier, has every disadvantage compared with its wood or leather counterpart. If breakages occurred literally in transit the remains are not likely to be found amongst domestic refuse on the average excavation site. Lastly, and this must always be an important consideration, the costrel would have taken much longer to make than the average piece of hollow ware. With most pots the main stages of manufacture would be the throwing, application of handles etc., followed by decoration and/or glazing. A costrel would require additional time to join together the various parts. From the potter’s point of view this would not be cost-effective and a piece of this kind would have been a special order rather than a regular item on the production line.

The two Lincolnshire costrels are quite dissimilar in appearance and construction. The Lincoln one, found on the site of the Art School and Technical College in 1885 (City and County Museum accession number 9621-06) falls into Dunning’s general classification of ‘cylindrical’ although it is not closely paralleled in any of his illustrations. The body is made from a wheel-thrown cylinder some 11cm in diameter and about 18cm long when complete. The open end of the vessel would have been capped and sealed with a clay disc, but this end is now missing. Prior to sealing and when the clay had hardened slightly, the cylinder would have been laid on its side, causing a slight flattening of the curved surface, and a hole 3 cm across was made in the centre of the uppermost side. A mouth piece like a small tubular spout (probably wheel-made, but trimmed off with a knife) was then fitted into this hole; it stands only 1.5 cm proud of the surface and is 2 cm across externally. Two lugs cut from flat pieces of clay and with a hole of 1cm diameter cut through each are attached longitudinally on either side of the mouth although on a slightly different alignment from it; this is unusual as is also the fact that the lugs are not directly joined to the mouth opening. At the time of attaching the lugs the body was further distorted from its original shape as the end view shows. The missing end was probably reinforced by having an applied thumbed strip pressed over the join, a common practice in medieval pottery making. This is suspected because part of such a strip remains at the other end, the
original base, where one would not have thought it essential and therefore it may have been made to match. The body also features four parallel ridges formed during the throwing process which may be in imitation of bindings on a wooden container, or more probably (from the appearance), joins on a leather one. The external olive green glaze extends over some of the broken edges, this may be the result of it having run into crevices but it also gives rise to the suggestion that this piece is a kiln waste. The slightly oxidised sandy fabric appears to be Lincoln ware. Both these pots have acquired something of a ‘museum patina’ and it has not been possible to examine the clay microscopically.

The Spalding costrel was found in Red Lion Street (no date indicated) and is now in the museum of the Spalding Gentlemen Society, the gift of the not inappropriately named Lt. Col. G. J. Barrell. Its form is one for which no parallel could be found at the time of writing, and although it might very loosely come into Dunning’s ‘flat spherical’ category the term ‘flat cylindrical’ might be more suitable for the time being. It consists basically of a flat-bottomed shallow cylindrical dish only 9cm deep, with one side flattened to make the dish D-shaped rather than O-shaped in plan. This flattened side then becomes the base with the addition of two small strips of clay to make it more stable. The mouth-piece once again, has been inserted in a hole on the side opposite the base, is a wide one, also wheel-thrown, just over 6cm diameter and some 3cm deep. This costrel would also have been closed in by sealing the open part of the original bowl shape with a flat plate or ‘lid’ of clay, but again, as in the Lincoln example, weak joins have caused this part to break away. The handles, which link the mouth and shoulders of the vessel, are of the pulled strap type commonly found on jugs and could have been added after the body of the pot was completed. The reconstruction here of the missing side as a flat plate may be incorrect. The Cheam Costrel (Dunning, 1969, 108) is also basically a dish shape on one side (the back) with the opposite side (the front) mammiform, an arrangement common amongst the flattened spherical types (Dunning, 1964, 127). However, the Spalding costrel being based on a vertical sided dish presents a very different appearance and there is no indication in the surviving parts that the missing side was other than symmetrical. The fabric is grey brown, sandy textured and not immediately recognisable as a local product. It is glazed a dull olive green externally apart from the base. Although Dunning notes that only the Continental costrels have strap handles, all his forms are different from the Spalding one and therefore comparison cannot be taken very far, and an English origin seems more likely. Recently a mouth piece which may come from a similar vessel to the Spalding one has been seen in Lincoln (D1 II).

Dating information is equally elusive. The costrels cited by Dunning appear to belong to the 13th and 14th centuries. Recent publications on East Anglia (Jennings, 1981 and Wade-Martins, 1983) show that the standing, upright type of costrel was widely produced in the region from the 16th century. This form is much simpler to make than any of those described above, being basically a narrow necked thrown vessel, i.e. a bottle with handles or lugs linking neck and shoulders. Similar standing costrels have been found in Lincolnshire at Burgh (Wilson, 1971, 11 and fig. 4) and amongst undated kiln waste on sites at Toytonton All Saints, Old Bolingbroke and Coningsby (Healey, 1975). If these pieces were being made in Lincolnshire from the 16th century then it is likely that they replaced other types including the two described in this article. This unfortunately still gives us several centuries within which to place our costrels and at present it can only be suggested that they were made sometime 100 years or so either side of the 14th century!

Acknowledgements
Thanks are due to the Lincolnshire County Council and the City and County Museum and to the Spalding Gentlemen Society for permission to examine, draw and publish these items from their collection. I am also grateful to Steven Moorhouse for bringing to my attention some additional references.

References
Healey, R. H. 1975, Medieval and Sub-Medieval Pottery in Lincolnshire. Unpublished M. Phil. thesis, Nottingham University, 80
Holling, F. (1977), ‘Reflections on Tudor Green’ Post-Medieval Archaeology II, 61-66. Fig. 62.

A MERIDA-TYPE STANDING COSTREL (Fig. 10)
Tony Page

This object has posed a problem for the Lincolnshire Sites and Monuments Record being dredged, some 30 years ago, from the eastern side of the Cleaver banks.

It is an example of a late medieval Spanish import, or perhaps one should say putative import, considering its find spot. Merida-type ware has been fully discussed by John Hurst and this piece would seem to be one of his late medieval series. It is what is known as a standing costrel, a vessel used to hold drink for travelling or working out of doors, similar to the later harvest bottles. It was complete and undamaged except for the loss of one of the two handles which had broken, leaving only the scars where it had been joined to the body.

Note

Fig. 10 Merida-type standing costrel (T. Page)
A NUTTY PROBLEM (Fig. 11)

R. H. Healey

Two incomplete metal objects found recently in Swineshead have now been identified as nutcrackers, a class of artifact perhaps better known to bygone enthusiasts than to archaeologists.

Fragment no. 1 (Fig. 11), made of copper alloy, consists of an arm 10.2 cm long with one end flattened and the other tapering to an acorn knob. The flattened piece becomes part of a hinge from which a second arm has broken away. A series of more or less parallel grooves has been filled across one surface of the flattened area. Fragment no. 2 is less complete, being only 6.5 cm long and broken off just beyond its flattened part, so that there is no evidence for either a hinge or a second arm. The flat part has been treated by having minute pieces of metal partly gouged out with the point of a chisel or similar tool which leaves tiny pieces of metal standing slightly proud of the surface. Handle no. 2, which appears to be steel, is of a different type from no. 1; the straight part has a series of mouldings across it and it is then once more flattened and bowed out, slightly tapering towards the end of the arm, the tip of which is also missing. In both objects it is evident that the roughened flat surface is intended to improve the grip of the implement as in a pair of pliers and that they operate on a lever principle. The suggested identification of these items was initially the result of comparison with a pair of nutcrackers belonging to the writer’s family (no. 3) on which the gripping surface is identical to that of fragment no. 2. This pair is at least 100 years old and would have been of local fenland origin, although that may not be significant. It is also made of steel, is 14.3 cm long, has a gripping surface on both sides and a more sophisticated hinge mechanism which allows the handle to be turned completely over in order to accommodate different sizes of nut.

Comparative material from archaeological sources is sparse. Victor Gay’s Glosaire Archéologique du Moyen Age (Paris 1867) carries illustrations of two examples, both the lever type but with ornate decoration and projections in the form of birds, dogs and human features. The Museum of Fine Art in Boston, Mass, has a similar pair, originating from France or the Netherlands and dated to the 14th century; this is published in the Secular Spirit: Life and Art in the Middle Ages (New York, 1975). There is one example in the British Museum (Reg. no. 89, 12-16, 6) on which the handles terminate in heads, near the hinge is a bird and hound and the nippers are engraved as lions’ heads. However, all these are so elaborate as to bear little relation to the Lincolnshire ones. The only other references found to date come from Chats on Household Curios by F. W. Burgess (London 1914) and Iron and Brass Implements of the English House by Seymour Lindsay (London, 1927, revised 1964, 1970). Burgess illustrates some early wooden examples which he describes as medieval. Several have carved faces (a natural extension of the common practice of breaking nuts with the teeth, he suggests) and there is also one of a man in a ruff (his no. 34), others have more elaborate carved figures, but none bears a close resemblance to the highly decorated bronze Continental ones. According to Burgess, the screw type nutcracker was introduced in the 17th century, replacing the lever (which in fact must have been easier to make) but the latter came back into its own, eventually emerging as the ‘simpler form at present in use’. His no. 39, in a group which he describes as ‘early metal nutcrackers modelled on more modern form’ is almost identical to Swineshead no. 2. There is no scale on Burgess’ drawings and they appear to be smaller than life, but those of Lindsay seem to be actual size. Lindsay shows two more pairs of Swineshead no. 2 type, one somewhat longer, one about the same proportions, which he describes as brass and dates to the late 18th century. Once again we have no corroborative evidence for the date and his text occupies only a few lines. He regards the screw variety as the earliest, although he does not refer as far back as the Middle Ages, and illustrates two 17th-century pieces from the Victoria and Albert Museum. He also shows two pairs of steel lever types from the 18th century (one with a date of 1757) in which the nippers are set on the far side of the hinge as in a pair of pincers. The interest here is that one of them has arms ending in acorn knobs. On such a late piece this feature must be seen as the survival of a traditional design; the acorn was a popular terminal for metal spoon handles from the 15th century, as shown in the London Medieval Catalogue (p. 131). However, Swineshead no. 1 not only has acorn knobs but also carries a small stamp with the initials RV, another characteristic shared with 18th-century spoons. It is therefore suggested that this

Fig. 11 Lincolnshire nutcrackers, (R. H. Healey)
particular example is of 15th century date, and that no. 2 belong to the 17th or 18th century.

Both pairs of Swineshead nutcrackers are relatively small and could only have been of practical use on small nuts. Despite the fact that the American publication remarks on the popularity of almonds in the medieval diet, fen woodlands such as they were would have produced a plentiful supply of hazel, and one can imagine that this would be a common nut in much of rural England. There is an area to the south-east of Swineshead known as Taumberland, a name which suggests former woodland, although the antiquity of this name has not been investigated.

It is surprising that nutcrackers are not more common in late and post-medieval excavations. Perhaps small fragments have yet to be identified or perhaps they were objects which frequently ended up as scrap and were melted down. It is hoped, that this note will lead to the recognition of further examples, some in well stratified contexts.

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