Archeology in Lincolnshire and South Humberside 1986

Edited by Tony Page

Finds Recorded at the City and County Museum, Lincoln.

A flint adze was found at Torksey and a wide range of Neolithic/Bronze Age flints and flakes at Salmonby. A very worn Iron Age silver stater was found in the Washingborough area.

Roman coins were reported from several sites in the county. Bardney produced a fantail brooch and a lozenge shaped plate brooch and a disc brooch was found at Old Sleaford. Roman pottery of the 2nd and 3rd centuries was found at Mablethorpe and Sutton on Sea.

A set of copper-alloy linked pins from Navenby and a strap-end with niello decoration from Bardney of Saxon date were found.

There were several interesting medieval discoveries including a 11th century staff head from Bardney, a trefoil brooch from Old Sleaford, a pre-1340 woolweight from Keelby and a silver hinged clasp from the Louth area.

Information from the following people, indicated in the text is gratefully acknowledged.

1. Mr. Eatch
2. Mr. Bee
3. Ms. Taylor
4. Mr. Hallom
5. Mr. Goodin
6. Mrs. Gregory

The Excavation of Ermine Street at Coleby, Lincolnshire (Figs. 1-6)

Peter Chowne

A green lane, now part of the Viking Way, follows the route of the Roman Ermine Street along the Jurassic Limestone ridge between the Ancaster Gap and the Witham valley (Fig. 1). During the summer of 1980 a service trench for a pipeline was cut across the Ermine Street in Coleby parish, ten km south of Lincoln. The construction of the pipeline was observed by the South Lincolnshire Archaeological Unit as a watching brief. This involved fieldwalking of the marked out route before and after topsoil removal and the inspection of machine excavated test pits. Three such pits cut by the contractors across the green lane failed to locate the Roman road. It was not until topsoil was removed from the field immediately west of the green lane that the road was recognised. Emergency excavations were mounted by the South Lincolnshire Archaeological Unit using labour from a Youth Opportunity Scheme.

The excavation was carried out in far from ideal circumstances (Fig. 4). Only 4m of the road could be investigated and the continuous passage of heavy earth-moving equipment created clouds of dust which obscured areas cleaned by trowel. As the arrival of a pipe laying machine was imminent our primary objective was to record a section cut through the road by pickaxes. A previously installed water main prevented investigation of the eastern limits of the road. Two phases of road construction were identified (Fig. 3).

Phase One

This phase consisted of an agger 15.60m wide, with a mixture thickness of 85cm. It was constructed from...
Fig. 3 Section of Ermine Street at Colchester, facing north. (Unpublished. M. Clark).
compacted limestone rubble (6) some of which was probably quarried during the digging of boundary or drainage ditches found flanking the road. For reasons cited above it was not possible to excavate fully the eastern ditch. The western ditch was dug into the Jurassic Limestone (9) to a depth of 70cm and was 2.30m wide. Little variation could be seen in the ditch filling which was a clay loam (8) with pockets of limestone (7). These small stones probably found their way into the ditch filling as a result of weathering or the passage of traffic.

**Phase Two**

The uneven surface of the first road was covered by a layer of loam with small stones (5). This was overlaid by limestone rubble (4) subsequently truncated by ploughing (Fig. 5). On both sides of the road the rubble was partially covered by deposits of clay (3). A layer of clay loam with stones (2) overlaid with western ditch, the edges of the **agger** and the clay deposits. This layer was also found at the eastern edge of the road (Fig. 6).

The excavations of Walshaw and Baker were restricted by the modern usage of the highway and are of limited value for comparison with Coleby. However, at Ingham Lane it was possible to establish the width of the road at 6.11 metres and that it had been surfaced with irregular limestone blocks. At the edge of the road some blocks had been laid vertically thus forming a kerb; this feature was also recorded at Appleby. There was no evidence for a kerb at Coleby, Scampton or Stamford. Whilst the road at Coleby was not paved it had a compacted limestone rubble surface with some irregular grooves possibly the result of wear caused by the passage of wheeled traffic. Similar wear was observed at Scampton and Stamford.

The section across Ermine Street recorded at Coleby was substantially wider than any previously observed. However, when making a comparison between these dimensions the limited extent of the early excavations must be considered.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Width (m)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Broughton</td>
<td>6.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appleby</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ingham Lane</td>
<td>6.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scampton</td>
<td>12.52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Discussion**

In 1936-8, G.R. Walshaw and F.T. Baker recorded sections of the Ermine Street in the parish of Appleby, South Humberside. Two sections were examined south of the station, near Haverholme House. A further section was investigated at the junction of Ingham Lane and Ermine Street (Walshaw and Baker, 1937). More recent excavations have taken place at Stamford and Scampton (Green and Rahtz, 1959).
Stamford
Coleby

7.54m
15.60m

Whilst there can be little doubt that the phase 1 road at Coleby was constructed shortly after the Roman Conquest there is no firm evidence for the date of phase 2 although contexts (3) and (5) are partially overlain by (2) which is contemporary or earlier than the field boundary hedge. In the post-Roman period Ermine Street in this area became of secondary importance to Cliff Road which passes through the villages along the Lincoln Edge. The main route across the heath is now the A15 from Stamford to Lincoln. This road also serves as the parish boundary between Coleby and Dunston.

It is probable that phase 2 of Ermine Street at Coleby represents continuous use of the road as a major route from the Roman period until realignment of the green lane perhaps as part of the enclosure of the heath.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the Property Services Agency for permission to carry out the excavation and for access to the pipeline during earthmoving, I am indebted to Tom Lane, Michael Clark and Naomi Field for assistance with the excavation and to Brian Simmons for reading and commenting on the report.

References


EXCAVATIONS AT NEW BAXTERGATE, GRIMSBY, 1986.

J. B. Whitwell

The earliest references to Grimsby occur in material of Viking origin such as the Orkneyinga Saga when the natural Haven may have provided the reason for the first occupation of the site. The medieval period is better documented indicating a growth in the town and port south and west of the angle of water formed by River Head and the Freshney Haven. River Head survives today only in somewhat truncated form; it originally continued southwards towards the abbey and would have formed the haven and port in early medieval times. The Freshney Haven is in fact an artificial feature resulting from a diversion of the River Freshney which originally entered the Humber to the north-west; this work was probably undertaken in the 14th century to increase the capacity of the port as the old haven, south of River Head, silted up. Subsequent to this, competition from other ports on the Humber caused a decline in Grimsby's prosperity and importance. It was not until the late 18th century that any attempt was made to reverse this trend with the creation of the Haven Company resulting in a widening and deepening of the Freshney Haven and River Head as well as an extension of the port facilities northwards towards the Humber.

The two trenches excavated were situated in the angle formed by River Head and the Freshney Haven at the north-east extremity of the medieval town where activities associated with the port would have been concentrated.

The waterfront timbered structures associated with the 18th century widening and deepening of the haven were the first features encountered on stripping of the car-park and road surfaces immediately west of River Head. The insertion of this waterfront, situated some 12m west of the present day water's edge, must have resulted in considerable disturbance to earlier waterfronts and associated features. An earlier timbered waterfront did become evident during the removal of back-fill material behind the 18th century timbers, and this had indeed been disturbed; the upper part having been lost altogether, and the lower element pushed or collapsed over to the east. However, sufficient survived to ascertain its original alignment, being some 3m west of the 18th century waterfront. In the trench cut south from the Freshney Haven further evidence of the late 18th century widening and deepening lay close to the surface. Here, however, only the tie-back timbers were encountered, the actual waterfront lying to the north beyond the excavated area. No earlier timbers were found in this trench, only a bank of clay rising to the south and forming a ridge extending along the east-west trench. Tiled and cobble set into this ridge suggests it was a road or trackway leading to the water's edge at the corner formed by River Head and Freshney Haven. Pottery and leather, including complete shoes and soles, recovered from organic deposits lying against this ridge indicate a 13th to 14th century date.

The absence of early timbers towards Freshney Haven suggests there was no continuous waterfront here in medieval times, though it is possible that the excavated area coincided with a stretch of muddy bank between individual straths and plait extending out into the river. Certainly this pattern existed on River Head in comparatively modern times as shown on late 19th century photographs of the area, and is still evident today though the projections out into the river have been re-constituted in modern materials and the banks in-between cobbled over.

The 13th to 14th century trackway was sealed by a substantial deposit of clay presumably brought in to raise the ground level and prevent flooding. Some time after this, in the late or post-medieval period, cobble surfaces were laid down presumably performing a similar function to the earlier trackway; providing a firm firm surface adjacent to the water's edge. With the silting up of the river and accumulation of dumped material the water's edge was now somewhat further north, however, the cobbled surfaces in fact continued above the 13th century river's edge and bank. Unfortunately the insertion of the late 18th century waterfront timbers had disturbed these surfaces to the north and so it is not possible to say whether they continued to form an area of hard standing against the river bank, or if a waterfront was constructed at this time. The absence of any tie-back timbers here, which would extend some way back from the waterfront, perhaps suggests the former continued to be the case.

At present it is unclear whether the medieval waterfront timbers towards River Head are associated with the earlier trackway and clay bank of the Freshney Haven, or with the subsequent clay dump.

Further excavations are planned for 1987 in the car-park areas adjacent of the River Head Centre, before redevelopment in 1988. The last remaining part of the medieval borough is here, including the Austin Friary. It is hoped that documentary research will be possible to help pinpoint priorities.

Acknowledgements

The 12 weeks of excavation between August and November, 1986, was undertaken by the Archaeology Unit of the Humberside County Council Architect's Department, and was funded by the Hantmson Group, Humberside Technical Services, and Great Grimsby Borough Council.
ARCHAEOLOGY IN LINCOLN

M. J. Jones

The city office of the Trust for Lincolnshire Archaeology was active on four principal sites in 1986. Several months were spent investigating the southern fringes of the Carmelite Friary between the platforms of St Mark’s Station, which closed in 1985. During the summer a team uncovered the remains of a medieval chapel on the north side of the choir in Lincoln Cathedral. Work began in the autumn on the excavation of the passageway through the bank adjacent to the west gate of Lincoln Castle. Here, only 19th century dumps were encountered, and the medieval road surface will not be reached before mid 1987. Over the winter further work took place in the grounds of the Lawn Hospital. Fuller reports on these investigations can be found in Archaeology in Lincolnshire 1985-6, the Trust’s Annual Report.

Throughout the year, the restoration work at St Mary’s Guildhall was regularly monitored and further discoveries recorded: the work at the west range is now complete and was opened by HRH the Duke of Gloucester in November. In addition, recording of the walls of Monks Abbey and of several fragments of the Roman city wall was undertaken on behalf of Lincoln City Council in advance of consolidation work on the masonry. Among the watching briefs carried out, the most significant discoveries were made at 211-15 High street, immediately north of High Bridge, which produced information about the line of the river in the medieval period.

Reports on the various excavations conducted on the waterfront, especially those around Brayford Pool have now been drafted and are expected to be published during 1988. As progress on the backlog of publication continues, other volumes are likely to appear in the next year or so on the Flaxengate pottery, the Silver Street early medieval kiln, medieval houses in the lower city, and the lower western defences. St Mark’s Church and Cemetery, the most substantial report to date in The Archaeology of Lincoln series, was published at the end of 1986. [See Review p. 50]

For the next few years, the work in the city will be divided between the post-excavation programme and the investigation of a number of large sites scheduled for redevelopment. In the 1990s the emphasis will probably be on further writing up and on interpreting the discoveries for the public.

BRONZE AGE CREMATION CEMETERIES AT OLD SOMERBY AND ROPSLEY AND HUMBY. (Figs. 7-10)

Peter Chowne and Tom Lane

During 1980 the South Lincolnshire Archaeological Unit (now part of the Trust for Lincolnshire Archaeology) undertook small rescue excavations on two Bronze Age cremation cemeteries in the Kesteven uplands some 5km east of Grantham. Though situated in separate parishes, Old Somerby and the adjacent Ropsey and Humby, the sites in fact lie less than 300m apart. Both cemeteries were discovered during field surveys conducted by the Unit.

The cemeteries are situated on the Jurassic Limestone ridge which extends north-south through central Lincolnshire. Locally the ridge attains heights in excess of 120m O.D., though the sites themselves lie on a broad plateau at approximately 112m. Soils on the limestone are generally shallow, stony and easily worked. South and west of Ropsey the limestone is covered by glacial drift material. A precise junction of these soils is difficult to map here, the drift cover being variable, though generally thin, and in places “ploughed out”. However it is on this broad limestone/till interface that the cemeteries are situated (Fig. 7.2).

In 1979 a field survey, funded by the Manpower Services Commission as part of the Special Temporary Employment Programme, was undertaken by the second author and three colleagues. This work was aimed at recording human activity on the limestone uplands of Kesteven - an area hitherto little known to archaeologists. Ropsey and Humby was selected for survey as a parish of manageable size (1843ha.) with soil variations broadly representative of the region. Bronze Age pottery in particular was found to be abundant here suggesting extensive occupation, perhaps of the region as a whole (Chowne, 1980). Figure 7.3 shows surface finds of Bronze Age pottery in the vicinity of the sites. Pottery from the excavated cremation sites is remarkably similar to that from domestic contexts (see below). Calcinied bone fragments noted on the surface of these excavated sites was not apparent at any other finds spot.

During April 1979 the survey team examined a field in the north-west corner of the parish by means of line-walking at 5m. intervals across the field in the direction of the crop rows (in the figure overhead). A surface scatter of Bronze Age pottery covering c.25sq.m. was located. Finds included the complete base of an urn, as well as other base and body sherds. Careful examination of the field surface revealed additional finds in the form of tiny calcined bone fragments.

The Unit’s interest in the uplands did not end with the completion of the survey in 1979. Another M.S.C. funded scheme (this time through the Youth Opportunities Programme) enabled further limited investigation of the area. During this scheme land to the west of the Ropsey cemetery site was fieldwalked. Here, in March 1980, on warm weathered ploughland that had been prepared for drilling a similar discrete concentration of Bronze Age pottery sherds and burnt bone fragments was found. Though the finds on both sites suggested a funerary context no surface evidence was present to indicate the sites had been mounded, and no crop marks relating to the site were visible on aerial photographs. By chance a ploughed out round barrow had been identified some weeks earlier on a similar terrain some 5km to the east (Lanc and Chowne, 1981). Here surface bone and pottery was accompanied by a distinct circular spread of limestone fragments, a mound constituent and upcast from a circular ditch which was, itself, visible from the air as a cropmark. Neither the Old Somerby or Ropsey sites displayed those characteristics thus suggesting flat cemeteries as an original context for the finds.

THE EXCAVATIONS

Though both sites had clearly sustained some plough damage they were of sufficient significance to warrant limited rescue excavation. This was undertaken first at Somerby in order to establish the nature of the sub-surface remains and to record the degree of preservation.

Old Somerby

Excavation uncovered an area of 36sq.m. centred on the surface finds. The positions of the surface finds (Fig. 8) were recorded and related to excavated material. Topsoil was removed (20cm) and removed by hand revealing the incomplete remains of at least six vessels. Of these, two (Nos. 8 & 10) had been placed upright in shallow pits and contained substantial quantities of cremated bone. These
Fig. 7 Location map and location of excavations (open triangles) and surface finds of Bronze Age pottery (closed triangles). Area of intensive survey enclosed by dashed line.
vessels survived intact to a height of c.8cm. The remaining pots had also been positioned upright on the surface of the subsoil and subsequently had suffered almost total destruction by ploughing. All three vessels lay between furrows created when the field underwent medieval ploughing. Any vessels in the line of the furrows would not have survived this event. No grave goods were contained in the vessel remains though a bronze bangle was found during topsoil removal (Fig. 10). No evidence of burning or other features was found in the excavated area. A trench, 1m. wide, was excavated for a distance of 16m. leading away from the main site area in order to locate any ditched feature which may have delimited the cremations. No such features or further burials were encountered.

**Ropsley and Humby**

Excavation took place in September of the same year (1980). Its purpose was to compare the nature of the two sites and to establish their relationship and chronology. It was also hoped that preservation may have been better on the slightly more clayey soils at Ropsley. In fact the depth of topsoil was only marginally greater (i.e. 30cm. compared to 28cm.) and the site more extensively damaged than at Old Somerby.

Fig. 8 Old Somerby excavation plan.

Fig. 9 Ropsley and Humby excavation plan.

Finds were concentrated in the north-west corner of the excavated area and took the form of fragmentary remains on Bronze Age vessels and cremations. A minimum of 10 vessels was represented. Damage by the plough was extensive and its course marked by lines gouged into the subsoil. The material tended to lay in groups with little in situ (Fig. 9). A complete base (no. 5) appeared to be in an original context. One feature not encountered at Old Somerby was a cremation situated in a small pit without associated pottery (no. 15). Originally this may have been deposited in an organic container (e.g. of wood or leather), now decomposed. A collection of bone (no. 1) without pottery lay on the periphery some 2m. from the main group of finds, which was limited to an area no more than 4m. x 2m. No evidence was found to suggest the bodies underwent cremation on the site. Both excavations revealed sites of similar character - small (possibly family) cremation plots. Apart from the cremation placed in the pit (Ropsley no. 15) the methods of deposition seem to be uniform - i.e. in upright undecorated vessels.

**THE POTTERY** (Fig. 10)

**Old Somerby**

Nine burials at Old Somerby were associated with pottery representing a minimum of six vessels. All were severely disturbed by ploughing. No rims or body sherds with decorative features were recovered.

**Ropsley and Humby**

Thirteen burials at Ropsley and Humby were associated with pottery representing a minimum of ten vessels. All were disturbed by ploughing. No rims or body sherds with decorative features were recovered.

**Thin Section Analysis of Pottery Fabrics**

by Carol Allen

**Explanation of Terms**

*Grog* relates to clay inclusions within the pottery, which appear as discrete pieces of varying sizes. Usually such entities are assumed to be crushed parts of pre-existing pots.
Fig.10 Pottery and bronze from Old Somerby (OS); pottery from Ropsley and Humby (RH).
The sizes of quartz, grog, or other inclusions referred to in the analysis, concern measurements taken on the longest axis of the grain or piece. In each case the maximum measurement quoted is the longest seen in that particular section, and does not infer that other grains in the sample were all of this size, unless stated.

The percentages of materials shown as included in the clay matrix are estimates expressed by area using the comparison charts of Flügel (1982).

Old Somery

Burial 3
Inclusions
10% grog, 10% quartz.
Clay Matrix
The matrix contains mostly fine quartz below 0.05mm. in size, with occasional larger grains to 0.25mm. One piece of fine sandstone is seen 0.65mm. long.
Grog
This is generally large to a maximum size of 6mm. and appears infrequently.

Burial 11
Inclusions
30% grog, 10% quartz.
Clay Matrix
The matrix consists of mainly fine quartz less than 0.05mm., with some occasional larger grains to 0.6mm.
Grog
The grog is of three types. There is one piece containing shell to 0.8mm. size; grog size 1.2mm. sandy grog up to about 4mm. (5%), and grog which contains other grog, up to 6.5mm. maximum length (25%).

Ropsey and Humby

Unstratified A
Inclusions
5% grog, 15% quartz.
Clay Matrix
Mainly fine quartz, less than 0.05mm. with occasional larger grains to 0.4mm.
Grog
Infrequent, with a maximum size of 3.8mm.

Unstratified B
Inclusions
25% grog, 10% quartz.
Clay Matrix
Mainly fine quartz, less than 0.05mm. with occasional larger grains to 0.4mm.
Grog
Mainly contains quartz; some grog contains other grog; maximum grog size 3.25mm.

Unstratified C
Inclusions
15% grog, 5% quartz.
Clay Matrix
Mostly fine quartz, with occasional larger grains to a maximum size of 0.8mm.
Grog
Quartz grog with a maximum size of 3.75mm.

Unfortunately, none of the sections examined exhibited diagnostic inclusions, for example, of particular minerals or limestones, which could assist in suggesting a source of the clay. Such diagnostic features are not always apparent to the eye, but can be seen in thin section.

The pottery from Burial 11 at Old Somery held one piece of grog containing shell, and this is the only limestone fragment seen in the collection of pottery. Considering the proximity of the sites to the Lower Lincolnshire Limestone this is perhaps surprising, if the pottery was locally made. All the sections contained grog and quartz in varying quantities, suggesting that the local boulder clay may have been used.

Plant Impressions
by Bob Alvey

The base of burial urn 5 from Ropsey and Humby has on its exterior surface three cereal grain impressions. These have been identified as:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cereal Grain</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Width</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hordeum sp. Hull (Barley)</td>
<td>8.0mm.</td>
<td>3.4mm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.2mm.</td>
<td>3.5mm.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cereal grains were probably incorporated into the pottery fabric during the manufacturing process and provide an indication of at least one of the crops being grown locally in the Bronze Age.

The Cremated Human Bones
by Alison Cameron

Old Somery

Five small samples of cremated human bone were examined in the laboratory. The minimum number of individuals was estimated as two as the other samples were not definitely identified as human. There were two adults present, but no other observations were possible for demography, anthropology or pathology.

Burial 2
The bone fragments could not be definitely identified as human.

Burial 5
Eight fragments of bone which could not be definitely identified as human.

Burial 8
20 human bone fragments.

Burial 9
Bone preservation: moderate, most of the skeleton was represented.
Sex: --
Age: adult
Stature: --
Pathology: --
Weight: 985g.

Burial 10
Bone preservation: good, most of the skeleton was represented.
Sex: --
Age: adult, based on the size of the bones
Stature: --
Pathology: --
Weight: 615g.

Ropsey and Humby

Thirteen groups of cremated bone were examined in the laboratory; the minimum number of individuals was estimated as 13, as it was assumed that the surface scatter was from one individual. All the cremated remains were well burnt and were mainly well fragmented, being under 20mm. in length. The fragments came mainly from the skulls and vertebrae, but it was impossible to determine if there had been any systematic retrieval of particular parts of the skeleton for inclusion in the urn. Of the 13 cremations, eight could be aged approximately. There were two subadults, one middle-aged adult, one older adult, and four which could be aged as adult only. None of the individuals could be sexed as the relevant criteria were not present.

Surface
This contained eight human bone fragments and 15 other bone fragments.

Burial 1
This was a sample of about 50 fragments of human bone under 5mm. in length.

Burial 2
This was a small sample of well fragmented human bone from an adult, based on epiphyseal fusion (Brothwell, 1981).

Burial 3
This was a small sample of human bone.

Burial 8
Bone preservation: moderate, most of the skeleton was represented.
Sex: 7subadult, based on the size of the bones
Stature: 
Pathology: 
Weight: 210g.
Burial 9
Bone preservation: moderate, most of the skeleton was represented
Sex: adult, based on epiphysial fusion
Stature: 
Pathology: 
Weight: 480g.
Burial 11
Bone preservation: poor, most of the skeleton was represented
Sex: adult, based on epiphysial fusion
Stature: 
Pathology: 
Weight: 546g.
Burial 14
Bone preservation: poor, about half the skeleton was represented
Sex: adults, based on the size of the bones
Stature: 
Pathology: 
Weight: 275g.
Burial 15
Bone preservation: moderate, most of the skeleton was represented
Sex: subadult, based on the size of the bones
Stature: 
Pathology: 
Weight: 693g.
Burial 16
Bone preservation: moderate, most of the skeleton was represented
Sex: middle-aged adult, based on endocranial sutural fusion
Stature: 
Pathology: 
Weight: 616g.
Burial 17
This consisted of five long bone fragments. It was not possible to identify definitely as human, and no other observations were possible.
Burial 18
This consisted of 10 small human bone fragments. No other observations were possible.
Burial 20
Bone preservation: moderate, most of the skeleton was represented
Sex: older adult, based on endocranial sutural fusion
Stature: 
Pathology: 
Weight: 92g.

The Metalwork

Part of a bronze bangle was discovered during the removal of topsoil at Old Somery (Fig. 10). Although unstratified, there can be little doubt that this object was deposited during the use of the cemetery. The bangle exhibits no trace of burning and it seems unlikely to have been incorporated in a funeral fire. It was, however, broken by twisting in the central section opposite the terminals: such a breakage is unlikely to occur accidentally and it is suggested that this was a deliberate act prior to deposition.

Plain bangles with flattened terminals are not particularly common individual finds and are more usually present in 'Ornament Horizon' hoards of the Middle Bronze Age, e.g. Ebsborne Wake, Wiltshire (Smith, 1959). The Ornament Horizon is now considered to be part of the Taunton industrial phase which took place in the 14th-13th centuries B.C. (Burgess, 1979, 270).

Discussion

Although in a fragmentary state the pottery from Old Somery and Ropshly and Humby has clear affinities with vessels from the phase one settlement at Billingborough (Chowne, 1978) and sherds found during field survey elsewhere in south Lincolnshire (Chowne, 1977). In form they are simple bucket-shaped urns with no evidence for decoration. The fabric, in common with the Billingborough examples, is hard and it is almost impossible to distinguish between sherds from these two sites with the naked eye. However, the vessels from the cemetery sites are not as well finished as those from Billingborough. Whether they were rejects from domestic sites or manufactured specifically for burial purposes remains a matter for speculation.

The similarities between the Old Somery and Ropshly and Humby pottery and vessels from phase one at Billingborough suggests that they are broadly contemporary. The phase one enclosure at Billingborough had been abandoned by 1198 ± 57bc (BM-1410). When calibrated according to the scheme proposed by Ralph, et al. (1973) this date falls in the range 1400 - 1380 B.C. and compares favourably with the 14th - 13th century dates suggested by Burgess (1979) for the Taunton industrial phase.

Acknowledgements

This report brings together the sum efforts, expertise and co-operation of numerous people. To name all the individuals involved would prove lengthy, to name none would be unjust. Special appreciation therefore to the Trustees of Welby Estates (landowners at Ropshly) and their tenant Mr. John Pick, and to Mr. F. Jenkinson of Harrowby (landowner at Old Somery) for permission to survey and excavate should be acknowledged. Messrs. Pick and Jenkinson also undertook to backfill the excavations. As previously stated the Manpower Services Commission financed the work. Mr. Brian Simmons carefully instigated and directed operations and his colleague Miss Hilary Healey lent her impressive skill and expertise to the Ropshly excavation. The 'Archaeological Trainees' of both S.T.E.P. and Y.O.P. schemes practised their new found skills with enthusiasm, humour, and above all capability. Thanks are also due to Carol Allen who carried out the petrological analysis of the pottery, to Bob Alvey for his identification of the cereal and to Alison Cameron for reporting on the bones.

References

Chowne, P., 1977, 'Some recent finds of Bronze Age Pottery from South Lincolnshire', South Lincs, Arch., 1, 24-5.
NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE TRANSECTION SURVEY: A
SUMMARY (Figs. 11 and 12)

D. Jones

Work began in 1985 on a pilot study of archaeological
cropmark sites in West and East Lindsey funded by the
Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of
England (RCHME) in collaboration with Nottingham
University. The survey, currently being written up for
publication, adopted a sample approach, examining a
representative cross-section of the landscape of north
Lincolnshire on the basis of a corridor 5km deep, extending
west-east across the full breadth of the county from the
river Trent to the North Sea (see location map, Fig. 11).
A fieldwork element was included in the survey to examine
‘new’ cropmark discoveries, almost 50% of which were
investigated during the winter and spring of 1985-6.

The aims of the survey were threefold - to assess the
state of the air photographic record, to evaluate the
cropmark potential of the corridor (and thereby the northern
half of the county as a whole), and to examine the
photographic evidence as source material for recording the
archaeology of the pre-medieval landscape. As a corollary,
analysis would provide data enabling a proper strategy for
aerial reconnaissance to be formulated for north
Lincolnshire, an area which has received sparse attention
from aerial photographers hitherto. Such a programme was
intact initiated by RCHME’s own Air Photographic Unit in
1986, together with a more limited programme of locally
based reconnaissance of a selected area (the Bain Valley)
carried out under contract.

The evidence from the survey indicates the
archaeological richness of the prehistoric and Romano-
British landscape and hints at a potential not generally
appreciated. A brief summary of the evidence will illustrate
this point and reveal the diversity of the archaeology which
exists.

Within the corridor the cropmark evidence of prehistoric
settlement is concentrated on the upland areas, on the
Jurassic limestone ridge and the chalk Wolds. Notable
amongst these are encountered on the limestone are
fragmentary linear ditches in Hemswell and Willoughton
parishes, and examples of pit alignments in Bishop Norton.
On the chalk Wolds the most conspicuous features are a
series of funerary monuments comprising ring ditches and
elongated enclosures scattered along the summit of the west escarpment, and groups of
ploughed out round barrows on the edge of the eastern
escarpment.

The cropmark evidence of settlement during the
Romano-British period, on the other hand, is far more
widespread, extending across both upland and lowland
areas. The distribution of sites shows a well-dispersed
pattern with occasionally, more dense, localised groupings
for e.g. on Segsimo at the foot of the dip slope, and along
the High Street on the chalk Wolds. Noticeably absent from the heavier soils of the Middle Clay
Vale, though Romano-British occupation of this area is well
attested by surface finds, particularly south of Osobyh. At the
eastern edge of the Vale clusterings of small enclosures
are found on the windblown sand deposits on Otby Moor in
an area which has yielded abundant surface evidence of
industrial activity (iron smelting and pottery manufacture)
on a major scale. Precisely what function the enclosures
fulfilled is uncertain, but that they are associated with this
industry is highly likely.

On the chalk, of major interest are two ‘ladder’
complexes in the vicinity of the Kirmond le Mire villa site
covering extensive areas, 4.5ha. and 2.7ha. Fieldwalking
has confirmed an R-B date but failed to provide evidence to
indicate function. A reasonable assumption is that both are
in some way connected with the economy of the nearby
villa. Further east at Binbrook Walk House (Fig. 12) a
complex of similar proportions, though totally different in
character, is found. It forms an isolated feature in an
otherwise largely barren archaeological landscape and is
recorded, rather unusually, from a field of permanent
pasture known not to have been cultivated for thirty years
at least. Consequently, the archaeological deposits ought to
be in a good state of preservation, a condition which might
be indicated by the readings obtained during a very brief,
cursory, geophysical examination of the site carried out in
February 1986. A Romano-British date is proposed from the
evidence of a single potsherd (greware beaker with
everted rim) discovered in a molehill, and from the site’s
proximity to the presumed Roman road running north-east
from Ludford (Margy 272) which lies within 1km.
to the south.

No cropmarks have been recorded from the coastal
marshland where the presence of boulder clay, deep marine
silts, and vegetal ridge and furrow cultivation may prove
too inhibitive to permit their development. Our knowledge
of the early archaeology of this landscape as a whole is
sadly wanting, and would benefit greatly from a programme
of ground investigation and aerial reconnaissance. Romano-
British sites do occur, however, and have been recorded
both on the surface, e.g. at Conisholme, and at depth, e.g.
at South Somercotes where the archaeological levels were
encountered 12ft. down. The possibility exists therefore
that cropmarks or soilmarks could develop on the former,
TWO NEOLITHIC AXES FROM SNITTERBY (Figs. 13 and 14)

D. Jones

While carrying out a limited programme of fieldwalking in the Ancholme Valley and adjacent areas during the winter of 1985, as part of a wider survey of cropmark sites along a transect across the north end of the county (report on p.41) I was informed of the existence of two, previously unrecorded, neolithic axes. Both are retained by the finders who kindly gave permission to publish these notes.

The first, a stone axe (Fig. 13), was discovered in the early 1970s by Mrs. S. Cooper of Ancholme Farm in a field on Snitterby Carr, situated on the west side of the Ancholme (at about 2m O.D.), 1 km north-west of Harlam Hill Lock (at approximate N.G.R. TF 013 951). The find was suspected of being of some antiquity, being in fact the second such discovery made by the family in that same field! The axe is large, broad-based, measuring 258 mm long and 83 mm wide (maximum), slightly tapering towards the butt end, weight 1.6812 kg. Its surface is a light grey colour (range: blue 5Y.7/1 - 5YR.7/1 - 10YR.7/1); ground smooth except where deep flake scars occur, and pitted where inclusions exfoliated. The blade is ground to a fine edge and shows no obvious traces of use. One side is partly faceted, with a facet 2 mm wide extending around the butt. It has a broad cross section, oval-shaped, with a prominent spine on one side.

 Petrological analysis2 reveals that the stone does not belong to any of the established petrological groups. It is described4 as ‘... an ungrouped andesitic rhyolite, coarse grained and iron rich. The opaque iron occurs both as angular small grains liberally scattered throughout the rock, and as less common, larger rounded patches, but not as leucoxene. Large corroded fragments of feldspar occur but not with spherulite grains which is usual. Small grains of epidote and small birefringent flakes also occur infrequently. Chlorite is the most common accessory mineral. Although not distinctive in this section, the rock has an interesting macro-feature of pale, rounded inclinations which are probably inflowed vesicles composed of similarly textured materials as the whole rock from a possible source in North or South Wales, South West Scotland, Cumbria, or the Midlands.’

Fig. 12 Scale 1:5000, Binbrook Walk House (TF 242 927), A computer rectified drawing derived from oblique air photographs (RCHME Air Photographs Unit: Archive nos, TF349/4 and TF349/10, black and white, and false colour infra-red, respectively). The site extends along the flat summit of a Wolds spur bounded by dry valleys to the north and south, and appears to be overlaid by faint ridge and furrow cultivation. The archaeological features revealed as barrows in pasture during the exceptional drought conditions of the summer of 1976 (photographed on 21st July) and is formed as a result of the more rapid loss of moisture from the areas of disturbed chalk. (D. Jones)

which probably represent outcrops of higher ground in the Romano-British landscape.

A full report of the findings of the survey is planned for the next issue of this journal.

Notes.

3. Idem, fig. 4, which shows one of the two examples known.
4. Idem, p. 34, fig. 2, illustration one of possibly four recorded in the vicinity of the High Street.
6. Aerial photographs have produced similar evidence from other industrial complexes e.g. Holme upon Spalding Moor, Humberside, in V.G. Swan, The Pottery Kilns of Roman Britain, RCHME Supplementary Series, 5 (1984), fig. 41, 678-684. A discussion of the evidence for the association of pottery manufacture with other industrial activity in general appears on pp. 49-50 of the same volume.
8. O. S. Antiquity no, TF 39 SE 7 which records 3rd-4th C. pottery ‘from both sides of the road’ at TF 3919 9467 and TF 3924 9462.

Fig. 13 Stone axe from Snitterby Carr (¼ actual size). (D. Jones, P.M. Sinton).
Typologically the axe has affinities with the products of the Great Langdale-Scafell axe factories (petrological group VI, epidotized tuff), falling within the size range, and displaying, in part, the characteristic lateral faceting, and the asymmetrical cutting edge of those axes, but not the distinctive ‘fish-tail’ of the classic ‘Cumbrian’ type axe.

Numerous other examples of axes of ungrouped tuffs are known from the East Midlands some of which also display faceted sides, and a petrology close to Group VI, but their precise source, as that of the Snitterby Carr axe, cannot be determined, though the Lake District remains a possibility. The situation may become clearer once the results are available from a current programme of geological sampling of the Langdale sources which aims to re-examine and broaden the present petrological definition of Group VI, long recognised as being too narrow to include all its variations.

The second axe (Fig. 14) is of flint, and was discovered in ‘about 1982’ by Mrs. J.C. Kee of Pinfold House, Snitterby, while hoeing sugarbeet in a field 0.5km to the south of Moor Lane and the village of Snitterby (at N.G.R. SK 9873 9426). The findspot lies some 3km west of the river Ancholme on higher ground on the dip slope, at about 15m O.D. The axe is wedge shaped, tapering to a point at the butt, with a convex profile, and a wide crescentic blade, damaged at the corners; dimensions 132mm long by 51mm wide, maximum; weight 161.75 gms. The surface of the axe is flaked, and the blade end polished. The flint is variegated, light grey to brown, and is probably of glacial origin.

A classification of East Midlands flint axes produced by Moore identifies three distinctive forms of body-flaked, blade-polished axes. The Snitterby axe, however, does not fit readily into any one of these categories, and may represent a hybrid form, specifically of class 1 and 2. It has the characteristic pointed butt of class 2, but a more squat shape in comparison (ratio of body length to width, 2:6:1), a feature which is more closely associated with class 1 axes (ratio of 2:4:1) than with the more slender form (ratio of 3:4:1) of the less common class 2 type.

Altogether, in excess of four hundred Neolithic axes of flint and other stone have been recorded from the historic county (pre 1974 boundaries), with a distribution which extends to both the upland and lowland zones. They occur in significant numbers in the Ancholme valley and in other lowland areas, sufficient to suggest that forest clearance, cultivation, and general settlement was taking place there during the Neolithic, in parallel to the upland areas where the burial and settlement sites of the period are found.

Notes
1. The earlier find, the butt end of an axe was discovered in 1965 by Mr. J.B. Cooper; L.H.A., 1 (1966), p. 42.
3. The thin section was prepared by A.R. Jones, and reported on by R.V. Davis, Dept. of Education, North Riding College of Education, Scarborough, who retains the slide for the National Implement Petrology Collection.

Fig. 14 Flint axe from Snitterby, a) top side b) back, (D. Jones).

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6. Fell, op. cit., fig. 1.
10. J. May, Prehistoric Lincolnshire (Lincoln, 1976), fig. 29, p. 55.
11. A further nine examples are recorded from this part of the valley alone, from the area of Sleaford Carr, Atterby Carr, and Cross Lane (O.S. Antiquity nos. TF 09 SW 1; SW 2, two axes; SW 6, four axes: SW 18, two axes).

STAMPED MORTARIUM FROM SOUTH KYME, LINCS.
(Figs. 15 - 16).

Kay Hartley and Hilary Healey

In 1984 an almost complete Roman stamped mortarium was brought into the Sleaford offices of the T.L.A. It is 31cm in overall diameter in a fine cream fabric with angular red grits, probably grog made from once-fired clay. The base is missing. The mortarium was found near the Car Dyke in South Kymer parish and we are grateful to the finder for allowing publication.

Mrs. Kay Hartley has seen drawings, rubbings and photographs, although not the vessel itself. In August 1986 she sent the following notes:

The mortarium is stamped once across the rim, to each side of the spout with a died of Similis, which gives the name in a contracted form with reversed S, IMI, and LI ligatured, and F written as II for SIMILIS FE (similis fecit).

The two stamps are from the same die, one of four with ligatured letters, which are all similar in character. Similis is a most interesting potter but many details of his career are still obscure. Twenty-two mortaria are now known from these four dies, from: Carlisle (probably 2); Caster; Kirkby Thore; Legby, Lincs; Leicester; Mancetter; Maryport; Meering, Notts; Meols, Cheshire; Mill Hill, March; Northwich; Lynch Farm, Orton Longueville; South Kyme, Lincs; Stritloe, nr. Buckden, Hunts; Water Newton(4); Whittlebury, Northants; and Wroxeter. At least two and probably three fabrics were used in conjunction with these dies; a red-brown one which appears only in the north and is likely to have been made there; a cream fabric, sometimes with grey core, probably made in the Lower Nene Valley, and a fine-textured, cream fabric almost certainly produced in the Mancetter-Hartshill potteries, which can sometimes be difficult to distinguish from fabric produced in the lower Nene valley in the second century. It is always essential to see Similis’s work and without doing that I can only guess that the South Kyme mortarium is marginally more likely to have been made in the Nene Valley than at Mancetter.

The distribution of these stamps fits with production mainly in the lower Nene valley, perhaps at or near Water Newton, but the mortaria found at Mancetter, Leicester and Wroxeter are likely to have been made at Mancetter.

This potter is probably the same Similis who undoubtedly worked at Mancetter in Warwickshire, using seven dies which differ in character from the four mentioned above. The mortaria stamped with these seven dies have an entirely normal distribution for a Mancetter potter, in Scotland, northern England and the Midlands; in Scotland from Balmuildy; Newstead; and Old Kilpatrick (3); and in England from Alcester, Warks; Benwell; Bilborough, Northants; Carlisle; Colehill, Warks; Corbridge (5); Leicester (6); Mancetter (Many); Margidium; Saltersford, Lincs; Templeborough; Wall (2); Wiltspool; and ?York (3). It is worth noting that no stamps from the first four dies mentioned have appeared in Scotland.

The mortaria stamped with the two different sets of dies are often very similar but two points of difference are noticeable. First, that some of the known Mancetter products have rim-profiles which are likely to be as early as A.D. 135, among the mortaria stamped by the dies with ligatured letters, none are necessarily so early and three (Caster; Lynch Farm, Orton Longueville; and Mill Hill, March) are unusual types probably later than A.D. 150 if not A.D. 160.

Fig.15 Mortarium from S. Kymer (½ scale). (R.H. Healey).
If all of the work is that of one man, which seems likely, then his production began in the Mancetter-Hartshill potteries and he may well have moved to the lower Nene valley soon after he started to use the first of his dies with ligatured letters; at some later date he may have moved to north-west England, perhaps in the Carlisle area.

Activity within the period A.D. 130-170 would fit his work and his move to the lower Nene valley might reasonably be assumed to be about A.D. 150-155 to allow for the sale of his Mancetter products to forts on the Antonine Wall and to allow for some difference in the products of the two workshops to become noticeable.