Archaeology in Lincolnshire and South Humberside 1990

Edited by Naomi Field

The lack of archaeological notes this year is perhaps a reflection of the changes in the funding for archaeological work in the county (as elsewhere). The majority of projects have been evaluations undertaken for developers as a condition of planning consent. There have been few larger-scale excavations either in the city or county. However, further information is eagerly awaited on the excavations of the Middle Saxon monastic site at Flixborough, a site of international importance, which has had the dubious distinction of being the first site in the area to require 24-hour security surveillance to combat theft and vandalism.

Further consolidation of archaeological services took place in the county during the year with an expanded team at the City and County Museum to support the County Archaeological Officer. The Government launched its new Planning Policy Guidance document on archaeology at the Historic Towns conference in Lincoln in December 1990, which provides for increased archaeological access to sites due for development.

CITY OF LINCOLN ARCHAEOLOGY UNIT

M. J. Jones

For Lincoln’s Archaeology Unit, 1990 will be remembered principally for the official opening by HRH the Prince of Wales of the Archaeology Centre and other parts of the Lawn Complex. Throughout the year, however, our normal work continued, and important new information was still emerging from both work in the field — although this only took place on a limited scale — and from analysis of site and finds data. Progress on publications was intermittent, but solid.

Like many units, most of our new site projects these days involve either ‘evaluations’ normally test digs, or watching briefs during construction, or both. The ‘preservation ethic’ current policy was stressed in the Government’s policy guidance on archaeology, launched at the Historic Towns conference held in Lincoln in December. It is further encapsulated in Lincoln City Council’s new guidance leaflet for developers of archaeologically-sensitive sites.

Combined with the economic recession and its effect on commercial development, the policy has meant that no large scale digs took place in the city in 1990. At the same time new discoveries were made throughout the year, arising from various contexts. The continued monitoring of the Waterside shopping centre yielded further evidence of the site’s development, as well as part of an early medieval boat reused as a wharf structure. At 170 High Street, a lane running back from the High Street was found to be flanked on its south by later medieval buildings. Further down High Street, test trenches dug in advance of the construction of the County Court (behind the new Magistrates Court) produced remains of dumping in the late Roman period (when the river level was rising) and material associated with the fourteenth-fifteenth century pottery industry found nearer to High Street.

Traces of Roman buildings were found both inside and outside the upper city in Wesgate and Langworthgate respectively. Close to the former site, part of the Roman legionary defences was uncovered in Cutlifers Yard, while observations carried out during engineering investigations into the stability of the Castle Banks yielded much of interest about their structural detail and sequence. Towards the end of the year, we began survey work at the Bishop’s Old Palace in advance of a repair and presentation programme by English Heritage.

Computerisation of the data from past sites and production of Level III reports are proceeding, with only the upper city to be completed during 1991 before work commences on a series of publications. New discoveries emerge regularly during post-exavation analysis; an iron object found at Flaxengate now appears to be a tenth-eleventh century coinage, a rare find for the period. We are optimistic that English Heritage will continue its generous support for this work.

The Unit has produced a guide, already in its second edition, to all the sites dug in the city. Final reports to appear during 1991 will include the definitive account of St. Mary’s Guildhall, provisionally identified as the Palace built for Henry II’s crown-wearing ceremony in 1157, and a substantial tome on the defences of the Lower City.

A ROMAN BUILDING IN ROMAN WAY, ANCASTER

Tom Lane

Introduction

Excavation of foundation trenches for a bungalow at the south end of Roman Way, Ancaster, uncovered a human skull. Lincolnshire Police were notified who contacted the then South Lincolnshire Archaeological Unit (now Heritage Lincolnshire).

During a visit made to the site by the author no further human remains were noted but the lower courses of the limestone walls of a Roman building were observed in a foundation trench. These had been truncated during the trench excavation. The landowner, Dr. L. M. Harris, gave permission for a small excavation in an area intended for landscaping lying adjacent to the bungalow. The excavation, undertaken by a team funded under the Youth Opportunities Programme, took place during December 1980.

Location

The site lay close to the Roman town of Ancaster, some 50m outside the eastern defences (Fig. 1). The building was aligned north-west/south-east, at an angle of c.45° to the defences.

Ancaster itself is a well-known Roman small town strategically sited in a gap in the ridge of Lincolnshire limestone which extends through the county from the south to north. The generally sandy nature of the soil within the gap has attracted settlement from the Mesolithic period onwards. Iron Age settlement along the valley floor (May 1976) was superseded by Roman military activity – the construction of a marching camp, a fort and Ermine Street. The town which then developed received defences in the latter part of the third century. These consisted of a rampart of earth, gravel and sand, fronted by a stone wall 2.5m thick at the base. An inhumation cemetery containing over 300 adult burials is known from the west of the town and an Anglo-Saxon cemetery lies outside the southern defences (Todd 1975, 217, 221). Numerous small excavations have taken place within the town. Few are fully published but some have been summarised by Todd (1981).

Limited rescue excavations have also taken place outside the line of the eastern defences (May 1968, 10) during the construction of bungalows along Roman Way (these lie to
the north of the doctor’s house). During this work two buildings, a well and eleven inhumations were recorded.

**The Excavation**

An area c.7m x 4m was excavated (Figs. 2 and 3) adjacent to the foundation trenches of the bungalow, in a part of the grounds due to be landscaped. The area was excavated to natural except where external walls were left to form features of the landscaping. Parts of two superimposed Roman buildings were recorded. These overlay Roman ploughsoil [14] which sealed a series of re-cut ditches or gullies [26-31]. A section through the buildings was recorded (Fig. 4). The walls of the earlier Roman building lay on a slightly different alignment to those of the later building. Three posthers, all second century in date, came from within the northermost wall of the early phase. Following the demise of the earlier building a large pit [24] was dug adjacent to the northern wall. It contained building debris but little dateable material. However, the pit did cut the plough soil [14] which contained mid-to-late third-century pottery. The pit was sealed by a layer, c.12cm thick, chiefly composed of mortar [13].

Two rooms of the later Roman house were seen. Only a small area (1 x 1.5m) of the southern room was excavated. Nevertheless, this was enough to reveal a difference in character between the two rooms. The mortar floor make-up of the southern room was a thicker (c.20cm) and denser deposit than that of the northern room. It supported a thin (c.3cm) layer of solid mortar floor. The thin floor above the mortar and rubble make-up was composed of compacted clay and was discontinuous.

Another mortary layer (c.15cm thick), to the north of the northermmost wall, was less dense than the floor foundation of the northern room and contained building rubble and pottery. It is doubtful whether this represented a third internal room and is most likely to be an external yard surface. Two layers of a possible wall foundation lay above this mortary layer (Fig. 4 no. 1).

In places, painted plaster adhered to both sides of the late phase of the southernmost wall [7]. Traces of a red geometric design were evident. The northern wall may have been similarly decorated but there is little surviving stonework above floor level. In addition to the painted plaster some glass vessels fragments were present along with domestic pottery. It is highly likely that the building was a dwelling.

There is clear and substantial evidence that the later phase of the building was destroyed by fire. Layers 8 and 9, directly above the floors of both the northern and southern rooms, contained considerable amounts of charcoal and other burnt material, including limestone rubble. Lack of evidence for burning north of the northern wall further suggests that this area lay outside the building.

Many fragments of plaster which had originally been rendered on a wattle or reed base were present within the destruction layers of the house. Some may have derived from the ceiling but others may equally have been from the walls for the building is likely to have been half-timbered on a stone foundation. Iron nails, generally 70mm in length, were numerous. A hole, 25cm in diameter, for a supporting post was incorporated into the northern wall (Fig. 4, no. 1). A few roof-tiles were found, including tegulae and imbrices.

The nature of buildings within and around Ancaster Roman town is little understood. A pattern of fairly close-packed buildings, both on and away from the Ermine Street, is known to have existed in the town (Todd 1975, 221). The most complete building plan so far published shows a complex of ‘agricultural buildings’ on the south-eastern fringe of the settlement, some 200m outside the defences (May 1968, 11; Todd 1975, 221). The plan published by May shows postholes within the walls of an early fourth century building. This was also a feature of the fourth-century external wall at Roman Way. However, the latter building appears to have had a different function to the example quoted by May and Todd.

A common feature of Roman houses is the presence of infant burials in the walls and floors. Infant inhumations, both complete skeletons and isolated bones, were found at
Fig. 3  Roman Way, Ancaster, excavation plan (D. Taylor).
Roman Way. Grave 34 (Fig. 3; burial no. 5 in bone report) was situated directly above the early phase of the northern wall [18]. The grave [34] on was sealed by the floor make-up of the later building. Nearby, a small stone-lined grave [19] was incorporated into the mortar floor [13]. The infant was crouched on its left side with its head facing east. Disarticulated bones from burial 7 were incorporated into the central wall of the later building. Disarticulated bones representing two young babies (nos. 1a and 1b) were found within the plough-soil sealed by the southern room. A crouched burial (no. 2), again with head to the east, was recovered from the same layer, but beneath the northern room. Burial 4 lay extended with head to the west. It was two to three months pre-term and also lay directly below layer 13, the floor make-up.

Given the general orderliness of adult inhumations in the Roman period the frequent, haphazard and apparently uncereemonial deposition of infants is surprising. Whether the quantity of such interments in Roman dwellings is a reflection of the rate of infant mortality remains unknown. The possibility of more furtive reasons for their presence, such as ritual sacrifice or infanticide cannot be discounted. All but two of the Ancestor infant burials were in situ before the floors of the later phase were laid. One exception is burial 6 which lies in a grave [35] cut through the burnt debris of the fire-damaged building. Was this a child killed in the fire? After the grave was filled the whole area was covered by building rubble.

The Finds

A precise date for the final destruction of the building cannot be determined although the broad chronology of the site is recorded below. Seven bronze coins were found; all were illegible. Pottery was generally plentiful. Much of it is of second-fourth century character, with colour-coated wares, predominantly from the Nene Valley, calcite-gritted and grey-wares well represented. Jars, beaters and dishes were present but were not obvious storage vessels. In this respect the site is more typically urban in character, bucket-type vessels being more a feature of rural Roman sites in Lincolnshire (J. Samuels pers. comm.).

Of special note was a sherd of Parisian Ware with incised and stamped decoration (Fig. 5), probably of the late second century, and an early second century sherd of Rhenish ware, an import from the Rhineland. The latter was found within the burnt material overlying the floor of the southern room. Several fragments of copper alloy were found; all were beyond identification. The only substantial metal object recovered was a copper-alloy rod of indeterminate use.

A perforated limestone collar c.28cm in diameter with a chamfered edge and a central hole c.9.5cm in diameter was found among the charred remains overlying the latest phase of the northern room. It is made of limestone (probably locally) and may well have been structural in purpose.

Discussion

The earliest features are the series of inter-cutting ditches [26-31]. Although finds from them are sparse a date in the second century A.D. can be suggested. Overlying these was a layer of soil [14] similar in character to the modern plough soil. This suggests a phase of arable use of the area, either as a field or garden, which, from the pottery evidence, terminated in the mid-late third century, around the time when the town defences were erected. The construction of the defences may have been part of a re-planning, one which saw buildings erected east of the enclosed part of the town. A date for the construction of the early building phase in Roman Way remains uncertain but is likely to belong to the late third century. The early building may have had a short life for the make-up of the floor of the later phase contains no pottery that obviously post-dates the late third century. The later, more grandiose, building was in use during the fourth century until fire caused its destruction.

The dwelling is one of many extra-mural buildings known from the vicinity of Ancestor. Much of the area north of the Roman town has been developed, increasingly so over the last 20 years. Sadly little archaeological input has been possible and the true extent of the Roman settlement may not be known. Reports suggest that during the latest housing development, some 400m north of the defences and adjacent to Ermine Street on the west side, foundations of stone buildings have been exposed and numerous finds of Roman material made, none of it recorded archaeologically.

It is hoped that publication of the small excavations and watching briefs conducted in the 1960s, and in particular the large and important cemetery, may enable a thorough review of the archaeology of this significant Roman town.
Human Remains

Frances Lee

A minimum of seven infants was retrieved from a Romano-British building at Ancaster, Lincolnshire during excavation. The presence of infant burials within buildings is not uncommon during the Romano-British period.

Six of these burials were neonatal, aged by the dentition and long bone measurements to be between birth and six months, while the long bone measurements suggest that they were in the earlier part of this age bracket (Marshall 1955). Burial no. 4 was not well term and the development of the jaw combined with the long bone measurements suggest an age around the sixth to seventh month of intra-uterine life.

Position and Orientation

Two of the burials were crouched lying on their left side with the head pointing east (nos. 2 and 3). The foetal remains (Burial 4) were found in an extended position. The head was absent, but the position of the body suggests that it would have been facing west. Burial 1 was in a disarticulated state and contained the remains of two infants. The attitude and orientation of burials 5, 6 and 7 could not be determined.

Preservation

The preservation of the infant bones ranged from good to excellent. Burials 1a and 1b, from the Roman ploughhoil were incomplete. Burials 2, 3 and 4 were reasonably complete most parts of the body having survived. Burial 5, found in the section, was incompletely excavated, and Burial 6 was left in situ. Infant 7 was represented by a single bone, although it is understood additional bones were present.

A bone inventory and details of deciduous denture are incorporated into the site archive.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The site was investigated with the good grace of the landowner Dr. L. M. Harris. The Youth Opportunities Programme financed the excavations, which were conducted by the author, Suzanne Clarke and Nigel Smith. English Heritage funded the publication. Tony Page of the City and County Museum, Lincoln cast an expert eye over the metalwork as did John Samuels and Maggi Darling over the pottery. Illustrations are by David Taylor and Dave Watt. I would like to thank past and present colleagues at Heritage Lincolnshire (and its predecessors) for help and advice.

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A LEAD COFFIN FROM THE ROMAN CEMETERY AT ANCASTER (Fig. 6)

Tom Lane

Introduction

In October 1984 metal detector user Mr. Bob Merchant of Denton discovered a Romano lead coffin and kindly informed the then Trust for Lincolnshire Archaeology, now Heritage Lincolnshire, of his discovery. The coffin lay west of the Roman town, adjacent to the modern extension to Ancaster cemetery, the site of the previously excavated Roman ceme-

tery. The earlier excavation had yielded in excess of 300 adult burials (Todd 1975, 221). A number of the excavated graves had been lined with stone, some contained burials in stone sarcophagi (Todd 1975, 221), others in wooden coffins which have since perished. However, this was the first lead coffin to be identified within the cemetery and it was decided to excavate the coffin and its immediate surroundings. The work was undertaken on the weekend of 20/21 October 1984.

The Excavation

An area 4m x 2m was excavated. Upon exposure the coffin, which was orientated west-east, was found to comprise a rectangular lid, c.25cm below the field surface, made of a single sheet of lead lapped over at the east and west ends, and a main chamber which was manufactured from a second lead sheet. The corners had been cut and the ends and sides folded up to form a rectangular box. There appear to have been no binding agents or clamps used to keep each side flush to its neighbour. The sides themselves were crumpled or twisted, especially on the long sides. It is uncertain if this is the result of the 'compacting' effect of the overlying soil or if it occurred during the burial. The lead itself is extremely pliable.

In many cases lead coffins were, in fact, inner linings for wood or stone coffins (Toller 1977, 1) but no such evidence was found at Ancaster. Certainly no stone sarcophagus surrounded it and no iron nails were present in the grave fill to indicate the former presence of a wooden outer, or indeed, inner coffin. Neither was any staining visible around the coffin that might suggest a wooden surround once existed. There was no decoration evident on the coffin.

The lid was removed to reveal the extended skeleton of an adult male lying with the skull at the west end of the coffin, tilted on one side and facing north. The upper left arm lay parallel to the trunk with lower arm across the stomach region. The right arm could not be recorded due to crumpling of the coffin. Skeletons laid out on their backs with arms crossed over the waist are common in the Ancaster cemetery (Todd 1975, 221). No grave goods were found within the lead coffin.

A sample of lead from the coffin lid has been submitted for analysis at the University of Oxford, Department of Nuclear Physics. The results are still awaited and will be reported at a later date.

A number of limestone blocks were located at the eastern end of the grave fill. These had been repositioned from a second east-west orientated grave, disturbed during the original grave digging for the lead coffin.

This earlier grave was lined with rectangular limestone blocks placed on edge. Two thin limestone slabs formed capstones for the grave near to the eastern section of the excavation. Capstones were absent where disturbed by the grave for the lead coffin. Although the earlier grave was not
fully examined because it extended beyond the limit of the excavation, bones could be seen where the capstones had been dislodged.

Human Remains

Frances Lee

A lead coffin, excavated at Ancaster, Lincolnshire, during 1984 was found to contain the remains of an adult male aged by the dentition to be over 35 years (Brothwell 1972). His stature was estimated by the long bone measurements of the femur and tibia to be 171.29 ± 3.74 cm (5’ 7⅛”) (Trotter and Gleser 1952).

The individual suffered two incisions on the skull, inflicted by a sharp instrument such as a sword or spear. The larger incision is on the right parietal bone close to the sagittal suture. The blow had been struck from the left and almost certainly the force was from behind. A second, smaller lesion was present on the occipital bone in which a sliver of bone had been removed exposing the diploe. This type of wound is characteristic of tangential swipes at the head by a sharp instrument. Both of the lesions showed signs of healing and they were undoubtedly inflicted months or even years before his death.

An osteomyelitic lesion, the result of an infective process, is present on the pelvis, and the spinal column exhibited degenerative disc disease which is not an uncommon feature of this age.

A full report on the skeleton is included in the site archive.

Conclusions

The lead coffin represents an important addition to the known information from the Roman cemetery at Ancaster. The cemetery, excavated in the 1960s, awaits publication, but Todd (1975, 221) has provided an interim summary.

By its orientation and attitude the skeleton resembled many in the cemetery. Only the coffin, despite its lack of decoration, elevated this burial above the ordinary. The method of manufacture is the most common within the known lead coffins from Britain (Toller 1975, 11) but the absence of evidence for an outer wooden coffin lining is unusual. It is possible that an outer coffin once existed but no trace survived. The deliberate placement of mineral substances such as lime, charcoal or gravel in lead coffins is known elsewhere in the country (Jones and Mattingly 1990, 305) but nothing of this nature was found at Ancaster.

Lead coffin inhumations are spread widely over Britain. Some 55% of the known examples are, like that from Ancaster, directly outside walled urban centres, or on roads leading from them (Toller 1977, 2).

As the only known lead coffin from the Ancaster cemetery the excavated example is important but the status of its occupier remains undetermined. From his injuries it is clear that his life was not without incident and drama but, apart from his greater than average wealth, or status, as implied by his coffin, little more can be added. The position of the lead coffin within the overall extent of the cemetery is unknown. The area excavated in the 1960s was that under immediate threat from modern grave-digging and the Roman graves may extend much further than previously assumed.

No dating evidence was forthcoming in the excavation. A date of late third and fourth century AD has been indicated for the remainder of the cemetery (Todd 1975, 221) and there is no reason to place the lead coffin outside these chronological parameters.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Mr. J. G. Wood, the landowner and Mr. Baker, the tenant, for permission to excavate; Mr. Bob Merchant discovered the coffin and kindly informed the Trust; Frances Lee produced the bone report. The excavation was conducted by the author, Brian Simmons, Peter Chowne and Gary Brown.

REFERENCES


A ROMANO-BRITISH INHUMATION FROM TRENT ROAD, GRANTHAM (Fig. 7)

Tom Lane

Introduction

In September 1981 a warehousing complex was constructed
adjacent to Trent Road, Grantham. During excavation of a 150cm wide drainage trench, (Fig. 7) Mr. Fred Archer observed human limb bones in the bucket of the mechanical excavator. Fellow workman, Mr. Patrick Buglass, identified sherds of Romano-British pottery and both the Lincolnshire Police and the then South Lincolnshire Archaeology Unit (now Heritage Lincolnshire) were notified.

With kind permission of the site owners and contractors a small salvage excavation was mounted. The bones were part of a damaged female skeleton in a grave 1.50m below the modern ground surface (Fig. 7). Because the time allowed for excavation was limited and the area adjacent to the pipe trench heavily damaged the upper fill of the grave was removed by mechanical excavator. The grave was 240cm in length but, due to the presence of the trench, of undetermined width. It was aligned approximately north-south and cut through the blown sand and into the ironstone below.

The skeleton lay extended with the head to the north (Fig. 7, ‘A’). Approximately 40 iron nails were retrieved, indicating interment had been in a wooden coffin. Remains of two pottery vessels, a flagon and a greyware cup, were found in the spoil heap adjacent to the grave. The neck of the flagon, which had been broken in antiquity, was found in the grave near to, and north of, the skull (Fig. 8.1). The second vessel, a greyware cup, was more fragmentary and only the base and some rim sherds were recovered (Fig. 8.2). Both vessels probably date to the second century AD.

The grave cut through another feature, aligned west-east (Fig. 7, ‘C’), which may have been a ditch or gully but it is possible that it was a second grave. A large stone (Fig. 7, ‘D’) lay above feature ‘C’ and was embedded in the section. No time was available for further investigation.

A third feature, possibly a ditch or pit 0.40m deep, was visible directly below the plough soil at the end of the trench, c.5m north of the grave. Three sherds of greyware and an unidentified bone were present in the fill.

After removal the skeleton was examined by Mr. A. T. Spencer of the Lincoln Area Department of Pathology, who concluded that the skeleton was that of a relatively young adult woman, approximately 1.59m in height. The surfaces of the left arm long bones were roughened, suggesting a bone disease, possibly some form of periostitis.

There had been no previously reported evidence of Romano-British settlement on the site of the factory. However, during the construction of the Grantham By-pass, which lies immediately west of the factory site Richard and David Haw picked up Iron Age and Romano-British pottery sherds within 250m of the excavated burial (Manterfield and Smith n.d., 26). Romano-British sherds were not plentiful on the by-pass site but included a second century AD flagon. The remaining sherds also dated from early in the Roman period. It is possible that the excavated burial was a former member of the nearby community noted by the Haws.

Cremation was the dominant practice during the first and second centuries AD and inhumation during the third, fourth and fifth. This, however, is by no means exclusive. From the early fourth century the practice of orientating graves west-east and interring bodies with the head to the west and without grave goods became widespread. The provision of grave goods in Roman burials is common in the pre-Christian period (Alcock, 1980).

From the excavated evidence it seems likely that the Trent Road burial was from the pre-Christian Roman period and probably dates to the second century AD. It may have been part of a small inhumation cemetery related to a nearby settlement.

The Pottery

John Samuels

Fig. 8.1. Flagon with two handles. Light brown fabric with small grit inclusions and occasional red fragments. Polished brown exterior surface, lighter brown to orange patchy interior surface. Well-turned and hard fired. Wire marks on base. ?Mancetter/Hartshill, Warwickshire. ?second century. No direct parallels found in available literature.

Fig. 8.2. Beaker with everted rim. Light grey fabric with occasional small black grits. Darker grey surfaces. Hard fired with wire marks on base. Probably of Nene Valley origin. ?second century. No direct parallels found in available literature.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
Fred Archer and Patrick Bugloss initially identified the site. Excavations were carried out by kind permission of the site owners Haulage and Storage of Birmingham and the main contractors Mears, Simons of York. Mr. A. T. Spencer identified the bones and Dr. J. Samuels compiled the pottery report. The excavation was conducted by the author, Brian Simmons and Adrian Williams.

REFERENCES
NORTH KILLINGHOLME, CHASE HILL FARM  
(Figs. 9 and 10)  
D. Evans

Geophysical survey in advance of the construction of a new power station by National Power plc located a ladder settlement in a field to the north of the modern farm buildings. Subsequent trial excavations by Dave Evans for the Humberside Archaeology Unit established that this settlement lay on a north-east—south-west alignment and probably continued into the fields to the north and east. A series of rectilinear enclosures were defined by ditches leading back from a well-drained ridge on the above alignment. Most of the ditches appear to have been kept in good repair, being infilled only when a change in the alignment or the disposition of an enclosure was implemented.

Substantial quantities of pottery from this settlement indicate activity from the first half of the second century AD to the very end of the fourth, or even the beginning of the fifth century. Other finds include six coins, one brooch, a lead spindle whorl, a double-sided bone comb with ring-and-dot decoration, an iron spearhead, and fragments of a quern and two hones. The faunal assemblage was dominated by cattle (45%) and sheep (39%), but pig, horse, dog, domestic fowl, red deer, water vole and thornback ray were also present; oyster and mussel shells were found in most of the ditch fills. A solitary hearth was located. Large quantities of daub bearing substantial wattle impressions point to the former existence of timber buildings on this site. Rubbish was present in the upper fills of most of these ditches, but the quantities of rubbish and the proportion of primary deposit waste amongst this increased in contexts closest to the central ridge. Hence, it is inferred that the main buildings lay to the north, beyond the excavated area. A detailed Level III site report is held in archive by the Humberside Archaeology Unit.

FLIXBOURGH, MIDDLE SAXON SETTLEMENT

Rescue excavations by the Humberside Archaeology Unit and Scunthorpe Museum on the west facing slope of the limestone escarpment overlooking the River Trent to the north of Scunthorpe have revealed a Middle Saxon settlement. The site was identified by Scunthorpe Museum after initial quarrying and subsequent trial excavations during which a number of Christian burials and coffin fittings of Anglo Saxon type were recorded.

Excavation of the area threatened by quarrying has so far revealed the foundation trenches of several substantial buildings, ovens, pathways and a large ditch (Fig. 11). At the southern edge of the excavated area three building plots have been recorded with at least three phases of construction represented. This is most clearly evident in the westernmost plot where the construction trenches for successive phases of building were offset slightly from the preceding ones. These structures also represent the general form and dimensions of buildings with the uprights set in sockets or on limestone pads within trenches creating a structure approximately 13.00m by 6.50m and aligned east-west. To the west lies a building not at all characteristic of the site with the uprights set in individual post pits linked by cobble and limestone sills. Associated with this building were five burials and a lead plaque inscribed with seven personal names came from its occupation deposits. The function of this building is uncertain as otherwise it is of similar form and dimensions to most of the others so far recorded with a central passageway running between the centres of the longer walls and, during its latter phases, a sequence of hearths and occupation debris in its eastern half.

These buildings were set on the top of a dune of sand lying against the escarpment to the east. Immediately to the north the ground falls away into a hollow and a pathway of cobbles runs down the slope skirting round the west edge of the hollow before the ground gradually rises again to the north. There is some evidence to indicate that a building occupied this area during the early phases of occupation but excavation is far from complete here. Certainly this hollow seems to have subsequently been used as a midden with large quantities of animal bone, general occupation debris and ash being deposited in it from both north and south. The pathway is possibly associated with this phase of dumping allowing access across or round the area, linking the buildings to the south with those to the north. Subsequent to the dumping and laying of the path a further building phase took place with the construction of the largest building so far recorded being approximately 19.50m by 6.50m.

North of the hollow the ground again levels out and there is evidence for a sequence of buildings and ovens here though excavation is far from complete. There is no evidence to indicate the function of the ovens which appear to be associated with lighter, smaller structures and may form a phase of activity between the erection of more substantial buildings. This area has also been disturbed by the cutting of a substantial ditch in the later medieval period of unknown function.

It is clear from the east excavation edge and from trial trenches cut across the later medieval ditch that occupation continues to the east and north, beyond the area under threat with the likelihood of further substantial buildings to the east where the ground levels out before rising up to the escarpment.

To the west a substantial ditch up to 5.00m wide and 1.75m deep runs westwards before gently curving to the south-west. This, unlike the ditch further north is contemporary with the settlement and may have formed a boundary around the west side of the dune where the ground slopes away to what would probably have been the marshy or seasonally flooded area associated with the River Trent.

Fig. 9 Chase Hill farm, North Killingholme, cropmarks.
Fig. 10 Chase Hill farm, North Kellingholme, excavation plan.
Preservation of the archaeology, in particular the finds and animal bone is quite remarkable possibly resulting in part from being buried by up to 2.00m of sand which accumulated after abandonment of the settlement as the dune grew and shifted. Many of the finds are of high quality and include numerous silver and copper alloy pins (Fig. 12), some gilded, buckles, strap ends, rings and tweezers. Activities undertaken within the settlement are represented by loom weights, spindle whorls, needles, querns, knives, shears and iron slag. Literacy is indicated by the inscribed lead plaque and over twenty styl of iron, copper alloy and base silver.

Dating evidence from the coins and other finds suggests the settlement was occupied from the late seventh century to the late ninth century with no evidence for any earlier or later period of occupation.

The excavations, which arc due to end in mid 1991 are funded by English Heritage, Humberside County Council, Scunthorpe Borough Council, Glanford Borough Council and British Steel.

**Fig. 12 Flixborough, copper alloy pin.**

**FLIXBOURGH EXCAVATIONS, 1989-91**

**SCHEMATIC PLAN OF MAJOR FEATURES**

**Fig. 11 Flixborough, excavation plan.**
THE DOVECOTE AT MANOR FARM, BASTON
(Figs. 13 and 14)

Garland Glynn Grylls

A survey of the dovecote was undertaken by the author in association with Tony Hurley of the Trust for Lincolnshire Archaeology (now Heritage Lincolnshire) in 1990. The dovecote is one of a pair of early nineteenth-century farm buildings, both constructed in splendid coursed sub-ashlar faced stonework with tooled quoins. The barn is in good condition, with a sound roof but the dovecote is on its way to dereliction, and the interior filled with shrubs. The dovecote provided about 1100 nesting boxes and was probably originally roofed in pantiles. Further surveys of dovecotes are planned, with those in poor repair a priority. A survey at Haddington has already been completed.

Fig. 13 Manor Farm, Baston, dovecote (G. G. Grylls).
Fig. 14 Manor Farm, Baston, dovecote details of construction (G. G. Grylls).