

EXCAVATIONS AT AYLESBY, SOUTH HUMBERSIDE, 1994



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Front Cover: Aylesby as it may have looked in the medieval period, reconstructed from aerial photographs and excavated evidence (watercolour by John Marshall).
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CONTENTS

EXCAVATIONS AT AYLESBY, SOUTH HUMBERSIDE, 1994	1
INTRODUCTION	1
SELECT DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE FOR THE PARISH OF AYLESBY	3
PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORK	8
THE EXCAVATIONS	10
Methodology	10
Results	11
Discussion of the buildings and other structures	25
THE POTTERY	28
Aylesby	28
Little London	32
Catalogue	33
THE OTHER FINDS	36
Objects of copper alloy	36
Objects of lead	36
Objects of iron	37
Catalogue	41
Object of stone	42
THE BIOLOGICAL REMAINS	43
Summary	43
The soil samples	43
Results	43
Discussion	44
Bone	45
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS	46
Settlement development	46
The layout of the medieval village	48
TRIAL EXCAVATION AND WATCHING BRIEF AT LITTLE LONDON	50
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	51
NOTES	51

EXCAVATIONS AT AYLESBY, SOUTH HUMBERSIDE, 1994

Ken Steedman and Martin Foreman

with contributions from Peter Didsbury, Anne Mitson, Lisa Wastling, Jon Watt, and staff of the Environmental Archaeology Unit, York

INTRODUCTION

Excavations were undertaken by the Humberside Archaeology Unit between 23 May and 6 July 1994, close to the village of Aylesby, South Humberside, in advance of the construction of a new water main by Anglian Water Engineering Building Services Limited, sponsors of the fieldwork and subsequent report production (Site Code HBS 94; National Grid Reference TA 2041 0711; Figs 1 and 2). The excavation followed a programme of assessment along the routes of a number of related pipelines - a distribution main and a nitrates scheme - which passed through the parishes of Habrough, Aylesby, Immingham, Stallingborough, Healing and Grimsby (in Humberside), and Riby (in Lincolnshire). An initial desk-based assessment, produced by the Unit in November 1993,¹ identified a number of areas of archaeological interest, and recommended further evaluation, commencing with geophysical survey;² unfortunately, a programme of fieldwalking intended to complement the geophysical survey could not take place due to crop cultivation. Trial excavations followed to refine the results of the geophysical survey, and these confirmed the presence of archaeological features south of Aylesby. Accordingly, two open areas totalling c.1300m² in area (East and West, here abbreviated to E and W), were excavated in advance of construction of the pipeline, and this report details the results of that work, and relevant trial trenches nearby (Fig. 3). A single trial trench at Little London, near Stallingborough, within which a small number of features were recorded, is also presented as an appendix to the report.

The village of Aylesby lies on the Lincolnshire Marsh, more specifically the Middlemarsh, an area, generally above 7m OD, which is slightly undulating. The land begins its steep rise to the Wolds a short distance to the west of the village. Aylesby lies at the intersection of two sub-glacial drainage channels, one represented by a band of fluvioglacial gravels which runs south-east from beyond Brocklesbury, while the other, descending from the Wolds, has an alluvium-filled channel running along another band of gravels, eventually joining the line of the Laceby Beck and the River Freshney.³ A watercourse follows the line of this latter channel above ground as far as Barton Street (the A18) west of Aylesby, and the much altered Little Beck runs along its line to the east, though between the two, south of the village, it has since been diverted through a series of field dykes. A stream may have run along this line in medieval times, part of the route of which survives as a dyke running east from Church Lane (defining the northern edge of the field containing the main excavations); this feature clearly divides two areas of ridge and furrow on contrasting alignments (see Fig. 4). Soil marks visible on aerial photographs hint at its continuance east and west of this.

Sand and chalky gravels were encountered in both excavation areas, for the most part overlain by calcareous coarse loamy soils.

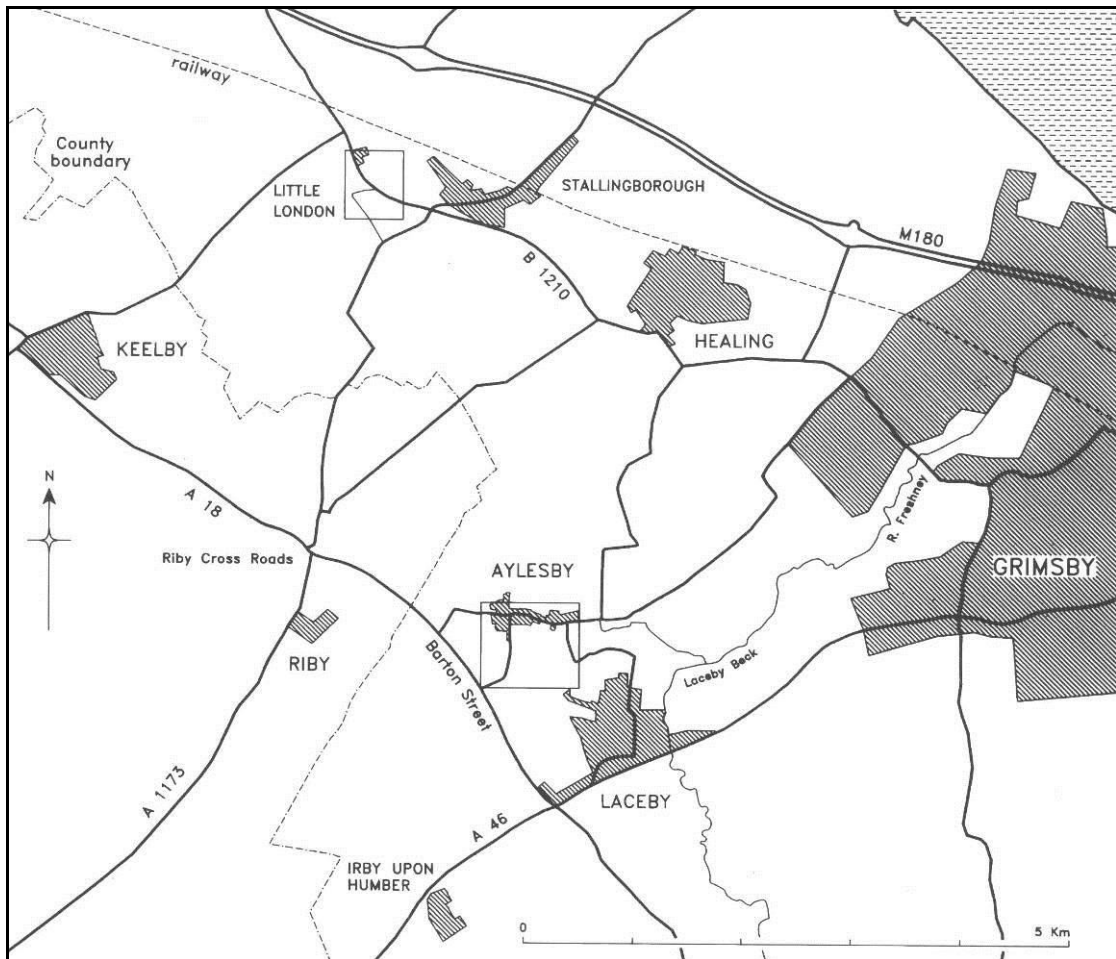


Fig. 1: Location map, showing sites mentioned in the text. Insets show areas covered by Fig. 3 (Aylesby) and Fig. 21 (Little London).

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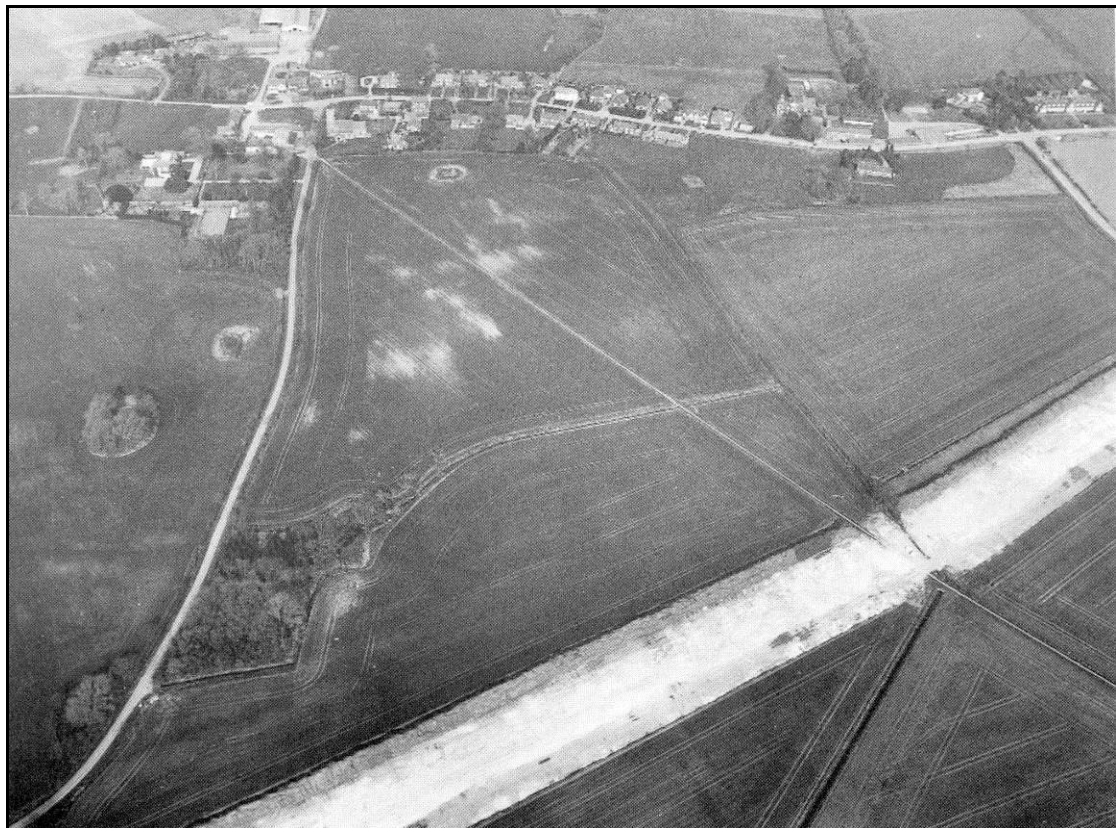


Fig. 2: The village of Aylesby viewed from the south, with the route of the water pipeline clearly visible in the foreground (© David Lee 1995).

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SELECT DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE FOR THE PARISH OF AYLESBY

Anne Mitson

The early history of Aylesby, like so many parishes not only in Lincolnshire, but throughout England, is obscure. Aylesby, however, lay within the Danelaw in the later Saxon period, the name suggesting a new settlement or a renaming by the settlers.⁴ At the time of Domesday, Aylesby was a community of some significance. The land was held by a number of tenants-in-chief: the Bishop of Durham, Count Alan, Alfred of Lincoln, and the Count of Britany, tenants who also had a considerable interest in neighbouring parishes.⁵ The Bishop of Durham continued to hold an interest in the manor of Aylesby, certainly as late as 1409.⁶

At the time of Domesday, however, few members of the Church held land in Lincolnshire, but this pattern began to change, initially with Benedictine foundations. Although these were small at first, the crusades brought a renewed enthusiasm for the founding of monastic houses, especially from 1150 onwards.⁷ There is evidence that some houses held land in Aylesby. An early reference comes from a dispute naming the Prior of Giseburne as having been granted land in Aylesby by Roger de Lascellis.⁸ Further references occur in 1253/54 to a holding by the Prioress of Caumpeseye,⁹ while the Newhouse cartulary contains copies of grants and donations of land at Aylesby, as well as Newsham and Brocklesby.¹⁰

A number of references have been found to 'temple', both in field names in glebe terriers,¹¹ and as the street name Temple Lane, which leads from Church Lane. The name refers to the religious military order of Knights Templars who, in the twelfth century, held land in Aylesby, as well as in the surrounding parishes of Irby, Great Grimsby, Great Limber, Cabourne and Stallingborough.¹²

No documentation was found which might indicate population size during the medieval period. Some Lay Subsidy Returns do survive for Lindsey, but a complete entry for Aylesby was not found in those returns examined.¹³ The 1334 subsidy, however, lists Aylesby as paying E4 6s 4d - a reasonably substantial amount.¹⁴

For the early modern period, there are a number of sources surviving which give some indication of population size, although for Aylesby there are figures from only three of these sources. The first of these is the 1563 ecclesiastical census which gives a total of 45 households for Aylesby.¹⁵ If a multiplier of 4.5 is used, this suggests a total population of some 202. In 1641-42 the Protestation Return is available and this lists 57 males taking the oath from Aylesby.¹⁶ When used with a multiplier of three to compensate for women and children, this gives a total Population of 171. There appear to be no figures surviving for Aylesby from either the 1603 ecclesiastical census or the later 1676 census.¹⁷ Hearth Tax Returns survive, covering the 1660s and 1670s, but, as for much of Lindsey, there is no complete return for Aylesby.¹⁸ Either of these sources could have provided a figure for estimating population for the end of the seventeenth century. However, there is an ecclesiastical census in the early eighteenth century which would suggest a considerable decrease in the population by that date.¹⁹

It is possible to calculate population figures from parish registers and these are reliable at the end of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth century.²⁰ Table 1 shows estimated population figures from all available sources from 1563 to 1851.

Table 1: Estimated population figures for Aylesby 1563-1861

1563 ¹⁵	1591 ²⁰	1610	1620	1641-2 ¹⁶	1700	1722 ¹⁹	1861 ²¹
x4.5	(PR)	(PR)	(PR)	x3	(PR)	x4.5	Census
202	216	258	234	171	106	66/54*	130

*The first figure is for an earlier visitation, possibly 1705 or 1715.

Clearly these figures are crude estimates. The parish registers are unreliable from the 1640s to the 1690s and have not been used. What these figures do suggest is a rising population at the end of the sixteenth century and into the early seventeenth century, a pattern which follows the national trend. But from the 1620s the population is declining and has decreased by some 50% in perhaps a hundred years. Although the national trend suggests a static or even declining population in England in the last quarter of the century, the dramatic decline at Aylesby suggested by these figures is unlikely to have been the result of natural causes.²² However, figures from the parish registers indicate a number of years of high mortality, particularly 1590, 1616, 1621 and 1636. Data after 1640 is patchy and therefore unreliable. The estimated population figures do not suggest that the mortality at this time played a significant part in the decline of the population.

One of the obvious factors to investigate, in the light of this picture, is the landowning pattern, in order to ascertain whether or not there is a deliberate policy of depopulation on the part of a landowner. There is no clear indication of an influential landowner until the final quarter of the seventeenth century, but glebe terriers for Aylesby refer to substantial land belonging to a Sir Phillip Tyrwhitt in 1638 and to a Dean and Chapter of Lincoln lease to the Tyrwhitt family of Stainfield in Lincolnshire in 1724.²³

In addition the Tyrwhitt family papers include two rentals for Aylesby in 1684 and 1685. These give the tenants' names and the amounts payable in rent. The number of tenants totals twenty-seven and twenty-eight respectively in 1684 and 1685. A survey and valuation of Aylesby in 1788 lists nine tenants and covers 2,098 acres, which comprises almost the total area of Aylesby.²⁴

This position is reinforced by the Land Tax Assessments of 1782 and 1790.²⁵ A Thomas Tyrwhitt Drake Esq. was the lessee of the rectory and owner of the tithes with the Dean and Chapter in 1839, when the Tithe Award was drawn up.²⁶ Although there is no evidence, it is possible that the Tyrwhitt family was responsible for any depopulation, if in fact this is what was happening. There is little indication of any member of the family actually residing at Aylesby, although there are two entries in the parish registers referring to Sir Phillip Tyrwhitt, one in 1633 and another the following year. They refer to the baptisms of two children born to Sir Phillip and Dame Anne Tyrwhitt.²⁷ This would suggest that Sir Phillip was resident in Aylesby for a short time, but there are no further entries.

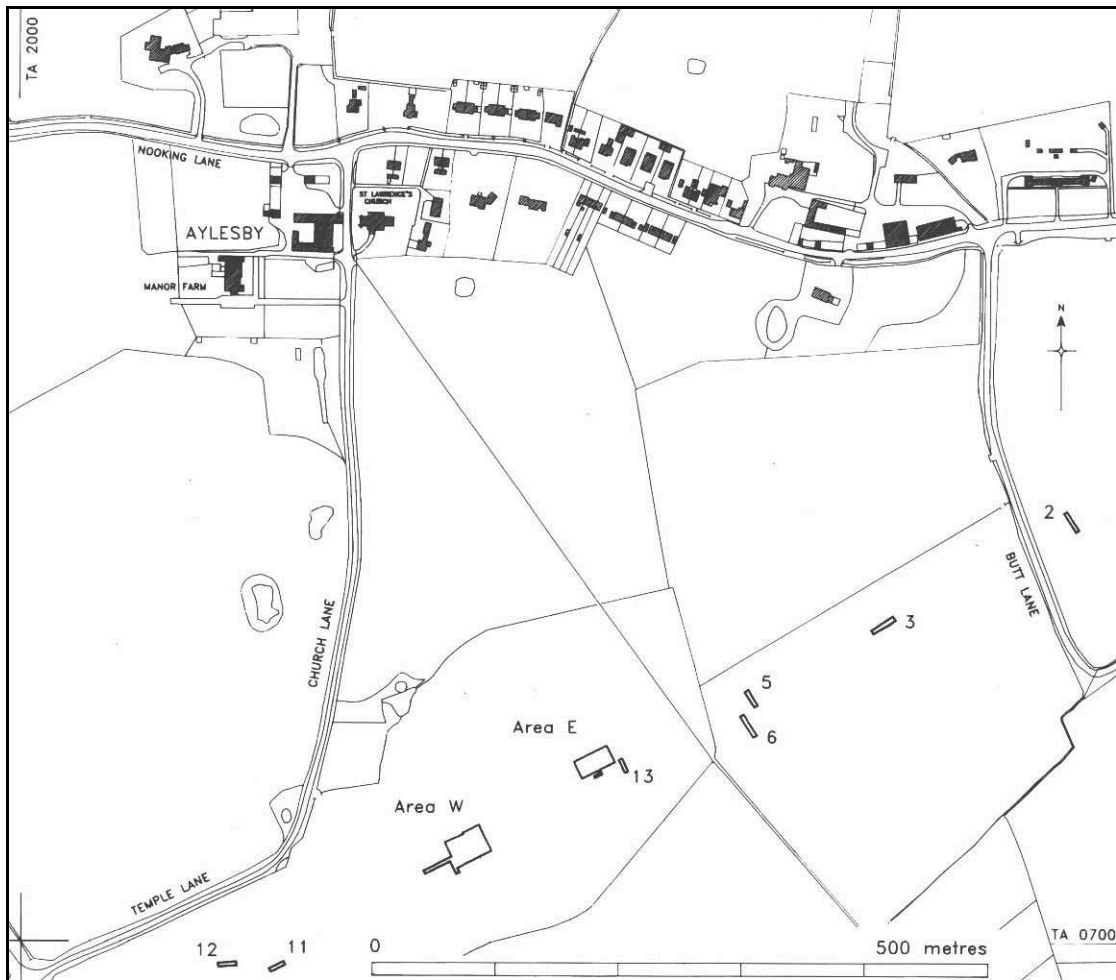


Fig. 3: The area south of Aylesby, showing location of the trial trenches and main excavation areas. Based upon Ordnance Survey 1:10,006 map © Crown Copyright.
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The date of the Tyrwhitts' first interest in Aylesby is not clear, although it was certainly before 1638, possibly at the beginning of the 1630s. It was believed by one historian that some enclosure was taking place in Aylesby between 1634 and 1664, according to evidence of glebe terriers.²⁸ It certainly appears from the 1684 and 1685 rents that by this date, the Tyrwhitts had a lease or ownership of most, if not all, of Aylesby. If this is so, and we use the rentals to reconstruct further the population, this would give an estimated figure of 121 and 126 inhabitants for 1684 and 1684, thus confirming the trend of a decreasing population from the 1620s.

Study of surviving probate inventories make it possible to learn something of the agricultural practices in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Details are set out in Tables 2a and 2b below.

Table 2a: % of inventories listing animals 1584-1724

Cattle	Horses	Oxen	Sheep	Swine	Poultry	Geese	Ducks	Turkeys	Bees	N
92	70	38	44	72	42	22	4	2	20	50

Table 2b: % of inventories listing crops 1584-1724

Barley	Wheat	Rye	Oats	Malt	Beans	Lentils	Peas	N
50	52	36	12	8	20	2	38	50



Fig. 4: Aerial photographic evidence - cropmarks and soil marks - from the area south of Aylesby.

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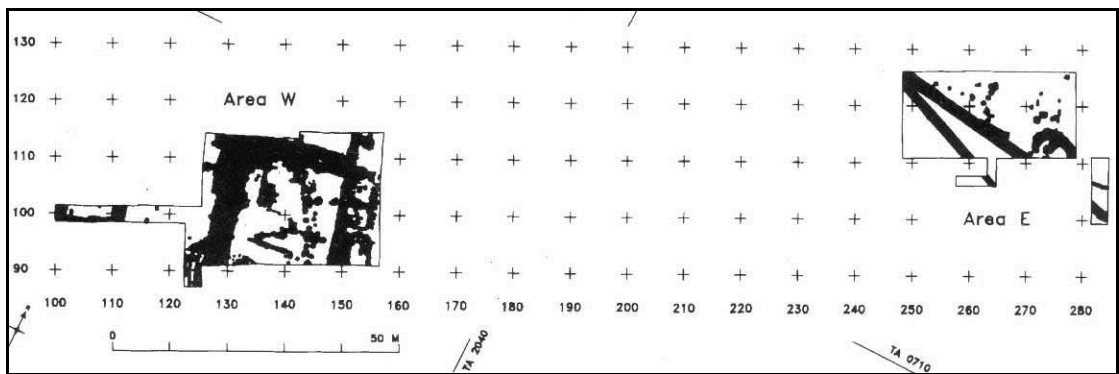


Fig. 5: The two excavation areas in relation to each other, with National Grid and site grid coordinates indicated. Archaeological features from each trench shown in black.

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From this it is clear that mixed husbandry was practised at Aylesby during this period. Animal husbandry was concentrated on cattle, horses and sheep. Although swine were listed in a high percentage of inventories they were kept in small numbers. Substantial numbers of horses were listed: eighteen inventories listed five or more. A number of inhabitants kept large numbers of sheep. This included a flock of 404 noted in Sir Paul Williams' inventory of 1696 and 220 in that of Edward Mansfield, a yeoman in 1694-5.²⁹ From the end of the eighteenth and throughout the nineteenth centuries sheep were important in Aylesby. At the end of the eighteenth century Philip Skipworth, a tenant farmer in Aylesby, was a leading sheep breeder. Skipworth's flock was sold in the 1840s for £1,500. Skipworth had paid 600 guineas in 1798 for the

hire of a ram for a season from its Nottinghamshire owner, a breeder of New Leicesters, who had purchased Bakewell's flock in 1796.³⁰

At the same time, however, cattle breeding was also important. In 1844 William Ton- began hiring bulls and became the most celebrated shorthorn breeder in the county. His herd was sold in 1875 with 84 head of shorthorns selling for an average of £500.³¹ The scale of such farming would suggest that by the nineteenth century Aylesby consisted of one or two large farms.

There is no Enclosure Award for Aylesby, which would suggest that either piecemeal enclosure had taken place or a much earlier private enclosure had occurred - possibly by the early eighteenth century, a supposition which might be supported by the fall in population at that time.

PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORK

Prior to the present fieldwork, there has been no systematic archaeological work in Aylesby parish, though a number of finds of artefacts have been made in the vicinity of the village. The earthworks of the abandoned parts of the shrunken village, mostly in an area south of the church and east of Church Lane, were levelled and ploughed in 1965-66, and while no remains are now visible on the ground, aerial photographs still show enclosure boundaries, trackways and the remains of buildings as soilmarks, as well as ridge and furrow (see Fig. 4).³²



Fig. 7: Area E. The curving gully defining the wall of Building 1, looking west (one-metre scale).

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Levelling of the earthworks and subsequent ploughing, has led to the discovery of Romano-British pottery, as well as medieval and post-medieval pottery, tile and glass.³³ More recently, metal detector users have found sixteenth and seventeenth century coins, and metalwork of Roman, Middle Saxon and Viking date, in the area of the village.³⁴ In addition, a number of cropmarks visible in the field west of Church Lane may represent traces of earlier settlement, perhaps of prehistoric or Romano-British date.

There have been significant archaeological discoveries in adjacent parishes. A short distance to the south, just within Laceby parish, an Anglo-Saxon inhumation cemetery was discovered during sand quarrying between .1934 and 1939. Finds included brooches, spearheads, a knife, a funerary urn and domestic pottery, indicative of a sixth- or seventh-century date. Bronze Age and Iron Age sherds have also been found in the same area.³⁵ A more recent excavation took place some 2km to the north-west, in advance of the construction of a gas pipeline at Riby Cross Roads. Here part of a Saxon settlement was recorded,³⁶ comprising a series of closely-adjacent sub-rectangular enclosures .

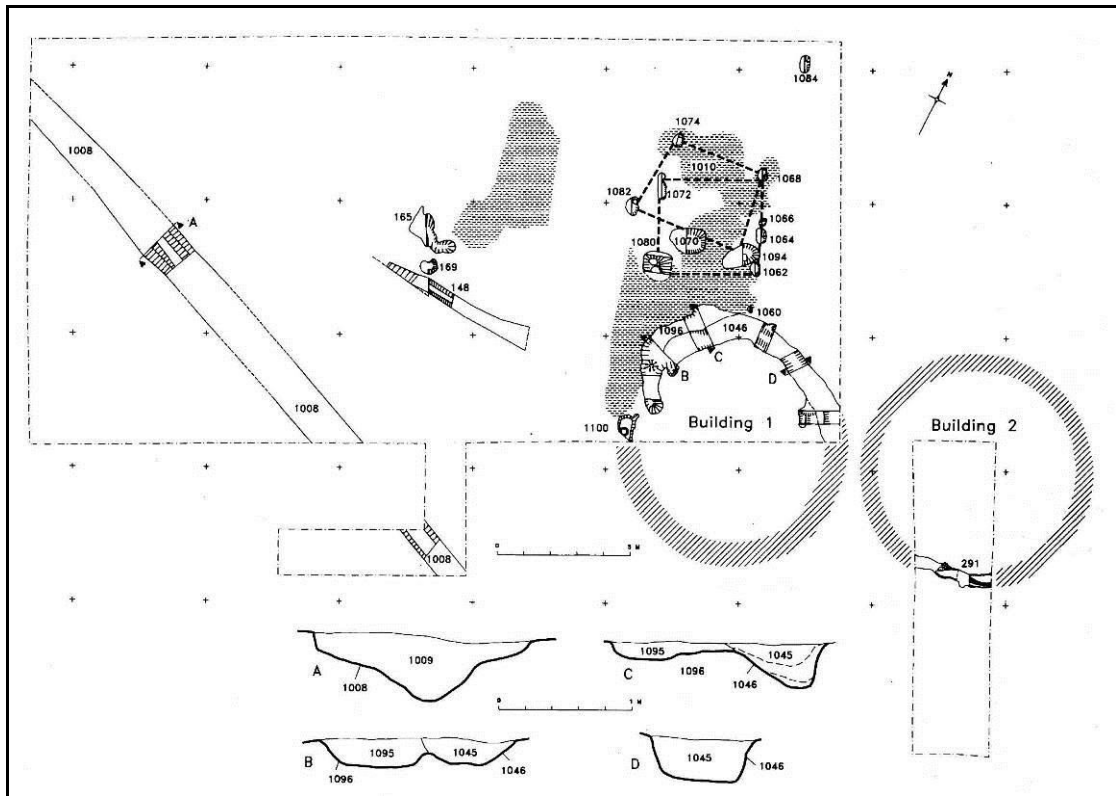


Fig. 6: Area E. Features of Phase 1, including area of dark soils (1100) shown as tone. Hatched lines indicate the possible extent of Buildings 1 and 2, and dashed lines show plans of possible four-post structures.

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THE EXCAVATIONS

Methodology

A total of twelve trial trenches (some of which were later incorporated into larger excavation areas) were excavated south of Aylesby, along a 1 km-long stretch of the pipeline route within the 40m-wide easement (see Fig. 3). All were targeted on specific geophysical anomalies suspected to be of archaeological origin. Two trenches in a field east of Butt Lane recorded a small number of features presumed to have been connected to agricultural activity of a relatively recent date, as well as traces of north/south running ridge and furrow, while a further three trenches in the field immediately west of the lane recorded further traces of medieval ridge and furrow, on a similar alignment; all of the targeted anomalies, however, appear to have been of geological origin. In the next field to the west - the site of the main excavations - there was a higher degree of correlation between the geophysical survey and recorded archaeological features, especially in the area later designated Area W, though many of the geophysical anomalies still appear to have indicated geological variation. Indeed, the Iron Age and Romano-British features subsequently recorded in Area E were not recognized on the geophysical survey, and were located by chance in a trench cut to investigate another anomaly. Caution is therefore urged in the interpretation of geophysical surveys on land where glaciation has introduced significant variation in the subsoil. Medieval ridge and furrow, east/west aligned, was recorded in a trial trench west of the main excavations.

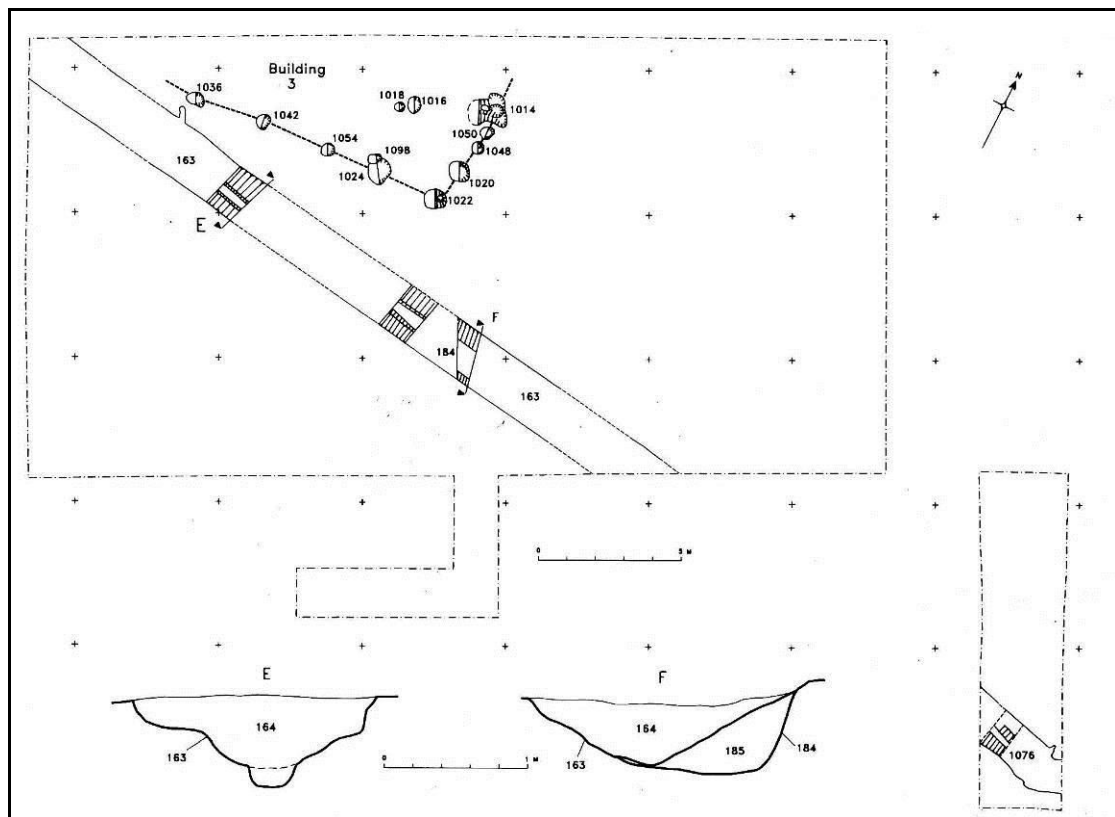


Fig. 8: Area E. Features of Phase 2.

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The main excavation areas were focused upon those trial trenches which had proved the most informative, and this necessarily influenced the shape and dimensions of these areas. The resultant areas, though relatively small, are

considered to contain representative samples of more extensive archaeological remains along this stretch of the pipeline.

In all cases, excavation trenches were stripped of topsoil by mechanical excavator down to the surface of the chalk gravel; in some places a layer of brown sandy loam, probably related to medieval cultivation, was also removed mechanically. The exposed surface was then cleaned by hand to define archaeological features, which were planned and subject to excavation where appropriate. Linear features, such as ditches and slots, were sampled at intervals, and their profiles recorded. Other features, such as pits or postholes, were half-sectioned. A programme of soil sampling was carried out, though the subsequent analysis was not particularly productive (see Biological Remains, below). Finds recovered from each feature were labelled accordingly and finds of special interest were allocated individual Recorded Find (RF) numbers.



Fig. 9: Area L. The postholes defining Building 3, looking west (one-metre scale). Image reproduced courtesy of the Society for Lincolnshire History & Archaeology © 1994

The tills of features have not been described below; they were generally sandy loamy, or sands with varying degrees of silt or loam as lesser components. Finds from the fill(s) of a feature are cross-referred to that feature in the finds reports.

Results

The excavated features have been assigned to four phases:

Phase 1 - later Iron Age

Phase 2 - Romano-British, second century AD

Phase 3 - early medieval, probably tenth to twelfth century

Phase 4 - medieval, probably twelfth to sixteenth century

Activity of Phases 1 and 2 was confined to Area E, while Phase 3 was recorded only in Area W. Activity of Phase 4 was present in both areas. Fig. 5 shows the relationship between the two excavation areas.

Area E

The trench lay on relatively level ground at a little over 17m OD. Excavation of 505m, incorporating trial trench 7, revealed a sequence of prehistoric, Romano-British and medieval activity. Stratigraphic relationships were established between ditches of the earlier periods and some other features, though the majority of features related only to the natural subsoils into which they were cut. Some are inferred, on the circumstantial grounds of their similar profiles and conforming alignment, to have related to each other or to linear features. Very few produced any finds.

Phase 1 *Later Iron Age* (Figs 6 and 7)

The earliest features are dated to the later Iron Age through association with a small number of pottery sherds. They included a ditch aligned north-west/south-east, penannular gullies, postholes, and a pit.

The ditch (1008) ran diagonally across the west side of the excavated area. It varied in profile from a U-shaped to a shallow V-shaped form, perhaps due to scouring or re-cutting. It had a maximum width of 1.3m, and a maximum depth of 0.6m. The excavated segments of this ditch yielded a total of five sherds of pottery and a little bone. A narrow gully to the north (148), on a convergent course with this ditch, also produced Iron Age sherds, as did an irregular hollow in this area (165). The gully was truncated by a Roman ditch (163 - see below).



Fig. 10: Area W during excavation, looking west (two-metre scales).
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About 8m to the north-east of the main ditch, in the corner of the excavation area, lay a penannular feature (Fig. 7). A flat-bottomed gully (1096), c.0.8m wide and c.0.2m deep, defined a semi-circular arc c.7.3m across. This terminated to the west, but was apparently continued by another feature (1100), which contained a porthole. The gully was recut by a similar feature (1046) with a maximum width of 0.9m and a maximum depth of 0.4m. This

ran into the south-east corner of the excavated area. It contained a little animal bone - the only finds from this complex of features. It is assumed that these features extended southwards beyond the excavation hints, and may represent two constructional phases of a roundhouse of c.8m diameter (Building 1). The gullies may represent wall trenches, perhaps with posts set along them. The break on the western side could mark the position of an entrance, sheltered from easterly winds coming off the North Sea. The stratigraphic evidence tends to confirm an early date for these features, as they are clipped by a Phase 2 ditch (163). Evidence for a second roundhouse (Building 2) was recorded in the adjacent trial trench 13; gully 291 was another possible wall trench, part of a building of similar size to the first and lying immediately to its east.

To the north of Building I lay an area of dark soils with frequent cobbles(1010), restricted to the eastern part of the trench. They masked a pit (1070) which included cobbles, a fragment of human bone, and sherds of Iron Age pottery. Around this lay nine other features, interpreted as postholes. Three of these, 1074, 1082 and 1094, were flat-bottomed with a deeper pipe 0.08-0.15m wide at one edge, while three others (1064, 1066 and 1068) were c.0.2-0.3m across, wider at the top; all had been widened by the withdrawal of driven posts. Features 1072 and 1080 had two posts apiece, and adjacent 1064 and 1066 may be comparable. The group included the corner posts of at least two rectangular structures, one superimposed over the other. They may represent a sequence of four-post structures accompanying the roundhouses which lay immediately to the south. The frequent cobbles in this area suggest that a metalled surface probably lay between the structures.

Phase 2 Romano-British, second century AD (Figs 8 and 9)

A ditch running west-north-west/east-south-east (163/1076) converged with Iron Age ditch 1008, cutting it at its north-west end. To the north-west this was c.2.5m wide and 0.72m deep, with a deep narrow central channel. In the central part of the trench the ditch was of a shallow V-shaped profile. Here it appeared to cut an earlier U-shaped or flat-bottomed feature (184). The fill of the ditch (164) contained nine Romano-British potsherds and some animal bone.

The generally comparable alignment of this ditch with its Iron Age predecessor argues that it fulfilled a similar function, and may have redefined an alignment of persisting significance. A group of portholes or post pits north-east of the ditch are considered, on the circumstantial basis of their alignment, to have been associated with the Romano-British ditch (Fig. 9). None produced finds.

Two alignments were noted. The longest ran alongside the ditch for a distance of c. 10m. From east to west it comprised: 1022, 1024, 1054, 1042 and 1036. Another group lay roughly perpendicular to these: 1020, 1048, 1050 and 1014, forming a more closely-spaced series c.4.5m long. A few other features in this area (1016, 1018) may have related to these major groupings. The features were typically steep-sided, 0.35-0.65m wide, usually 0.35-0.4m deep, occasionally markedly shallower or deeper. A flat-bottomed form was the most common. A few pits had an irregular V-shaped profile (e.g. 1022 and 1024); it is uncertain whether this arose from the driving of a timber, or merely from fissuring or disturbance of the subsoil. In one case a pit (1024) had been recut (1098). Although the pits are inferred to have been of Romano-British date, stratigraphic evidence was available in only one case (1054), where the pit

was cut by a medieval furrow. Others (1014, 1020, 1022 and 1016) were sealed by medieval ploughsoil.

The two post alignments are presumed to represent two adjacent walls of a timber building (Building 3). The posts on the east wall lay c.0.5m apart, while those on its longer side were c. 1.50m apart. Portholes 1016 and 1018 may mark the line of internal divisions within such a building. It is uncertain whether the structure they represent was positioned with reference to the ditch, or vice versa. While in the former case it is possible that they could relate to significantly later activity, they are here considered to be contemporary with the ditch.

Phase 4 *Medieval or later* (not illustrated)

Brown loams (161 and 283) masked the features described above, and were mostly removed by machine. This operation revealed three linear depressions - 1000, 1004 and 1052 - c.1.5-3m wide, running north/south across the trench. These lay between c.4.3 and 9m apart, and cut across the features of Phases 1 and 2. They are the relics of ridge and furrow cultivation.

The varied width and spacing of the furrows may argue that they represent two distinct episodes of cultivation. A slight undulation of soils was noted in the north excavation edge, and this may be the only evidence for the, now ploughed-out, ridges of soil which would have accompanied the furrows.



Fig. 11: Area W. The postholes and slots of Buildings 4 and 5 (Phase 3) and Building 6 (Phase 4A). Looking to the south (one-metre scales).

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These contexts yielded a total of nine sherds of pottery, a post-medieval iron buckle, a fragment of brick and a few fragments of bone. Furrow 1052 was cut by an unequivocally modern trench which contained a plastic water pipe.

Area W

This excavation area lay on fairly level ground at just over 18m OD, the ground having risen slightly between this and the eastern area. Excavation of 822m², incorporating trial trenches 8, 9 and 10, revealed a complex collection of archaeological features (see Fig. 10). In addition, hundreds of irregular patches of soil were subjected to varying degrees of investigation, but these were considered to be the results of natural processes: weathering of the subsoil; the burrowing of animals; or the penetration of the roots of trees or shrubs. A relatively small number of stratigraphic relationships was recorded between individual features, and these, along with consideration of similar characteristics, common alignment and proximity, have permitted arrangement of the features in a sequence upon which their understanding depends; the excavators' opinions as to relationships between features have been respected, though homogeneous soils made the secure determination of sequence difficult in some cases. Finds were rare.

Phase 3 Early medieval, tenth to eleventh century (Figs 11 and 12)

The earliest interpretable features comprised slots and postholes defining two rectangular timber buildings (Buildings 4 and 5) in the south-east corner of the excavated area (Fig. 11).

Building 4

The northernmost building was the more extensively excavated of the two (see Fig. 12). Both ends were discernible, marked by lines of posts (504, 642 and 644 to the north; 298 through to 369 to the south). The eastern wall was defined by shallow slots (508, 514 and 367) with a parallel row of posts (504 through to 594) a short distance to the east; the western wall had been removed by a later ditch on the same alignment. Another slot (392) marked the position of an internal division, splitting the building into two rooms, one slightly less than twice the size of the other. The building was c. 10m in length, and was at least 5m in width.

The slots were generally steep-sided and flat-bottomed. Their basal levels rose gently with the land surface. Aside from the slot dividing the rooms, which was 0.31 m deep, none was over 0.2m in depth. They do not appear to have held stone foundations, now robbed, nor were there any indications within their fills of upright timbers having been set at intervals along them, and while they may have held horizontal beams, there was no evidence for the decay of timbers in situ. The slots could represent a distinct constructional phase, but it is more likely that they functioned in conjunction with postholes; the building clearly had a complex structural history involving modification and repair.

The postholes were of modest width, usually c.0.3-0.35m, and rarely exceeding c.0.2m in depth; their profiles were either flat-bottomed or bowl-shaped. If untrimmed tree trunks had been used to furnish posts - an improbably prodigal use of resources - their size would probably be reflected in the dimensions of the postholes. If they had at least been squared, a scantling of c.0.15-0.25m would probably accommodate most. They were set at irregular intervals, rarely more than 1m or less than 0.5m apart. The plan view conflates evidence for the original construction with that relating to subsequent repairs; about half a dozen postholes cut others, suggesting the insertion of supplementary timbers. The fills of the postholes were uniformly devoid of any dating evidence. They included little in the way of large stones to have served as packing, and are therefore inferred to have functioned as

simple sockets, with adequate support afforded to timbers by the firm gravel subsoil. Their rounded form probably arose from the removal of the timbers when the building was dismantled. A small number of sockets showed differentiated fills which had perhaps resulted from their backfilling after the withdrawal of posts.

Both rooms included substantial internal fixtures. In the northern, larger room, rows of posts ran parallel to the longer walls; on the west side (552 through to 600), these were fairly regularly-spaced, while those to the east (646 through to 449), perhaps due to replacement or modification, appeared less so. In addition, a large sub-rectangular pit (471) occupied the north-west corner of the room; the near vertical sides of this feature suggest that it may once have had a timber-lining, and it was backfilled with virtually clean gravel following its dismantling. In the southern room, a slot (304) and a cluster of postholes (306, 365, 379, 381), may mark further sub-divisions. Floor surfaces did not survive in either room due to later agriculture, so the existence of hearths can only be guessed at.

Dating evidence is restricted to a single sherd of pottery from the fill of slot 304, which provides a late ninth to late tenth-century terminus post quem, and a single sherd of tenth to eleventh-century pottery came from the fill of pit 471.

Building 5

The southern building is less adequately understood. Like that to the north, it exhibited a combination of constructional techniques, utilising both slots and postholes. Its curving north end was defined by postholes (570 to 639), while the eastern side was represented by a single slot (473). The western side had been removed by a later ditch though the building would appear to have been c.4m wide. A small number of features inside of the building may mark internal fittings, notably slot 634. The slots and postholes were similar in character and dimensions to those of Building 4. Two postholes (578 and 581) showed a division in the fills which might suggest that timbers had decayed in place; a scantling or diameter of c.0.16m may be deduced from these. Traces of a plank lay between them.

No dating evidence was recovered from this building.

Phase 4 Medieval, twelfth to sixteenth century

The activity discussed above was followed by recurrent land division, with less well-defined building activity. Land division initially took the form of fences (Phase 4A), and a redefinition of boundaries was achieved by the digging of ditches (Phase 4B). This sequence is dated, broadly, to the twelfth to sixteenth centuries.

Phase 4A Twelfth to fourteenth centuries (Figs 13 and 14)

A scatter of post pits overlay the site of the early buildings, and may represent parts of a later building, albeit one which is less clearly defined in plan (Building 6; Fig. 13). An east/west alignment - 572, 574, 576, 621 (and outlying 617) - may mark the southern end of this structure, with a west wall defined by 621, 302, 396, 501 and 503, and an east wall by 572, 300 and 447; the northern wall may have lain on 518, though intercutting pits 563 and 565 further north may have been associated. The resulting building would have been at least 10m long and c.4m wide.

The pits showed a common steep-sided and flat-bottomed form, varying in depth between 0.17 and 0.36m, and were up to 0.77m across. Timber

uprights would have been set within them, packed around with the excavated soil. Some included cobble or rubble in their fills, perhaps selected as packing material, though none showed any trace of a post pipe, and the timbers had probably been withdrawn from the pits. Dating evidence was restricted to a single pottery sherd of thirteenth-to fourteenth-century date from 574. The coincidence of these features with the general position of their predecessors is striking, though the north/south axis of the earlier buildings had perhaps shifted a little.



Fig. 14: Area W. Post-pits attributed to fence-lines of Phase 4A, with Phase 4B ditches to rear. Looking to north (one-metre scales).

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About 6m west of the building was an alignment of further post pits, this time more convincingly attributed to fencing (Fig. 14). This ran north/south, and comprised a slightly wavering row of 12 pits from south to north: 464, 437, 435, 202, 181, 309, 355, 357, 183, 203 and 221. These features were of similar form to those considered above, generally a little wider, and often deeper. Over half included rubble in their fill. Again, these are considered as marking post pits from whence the timbers had been removed. Their spacing was somewhat irregular, the pits lying from c.1m to c.0.3m apart, perhaps indicating the intermittent replacement of individual posts, or of the fence itself. Three produced pottery from their fills, suggesting a thirteenth- to fourteenth-century date. A broad contemporaneity with the building to the east is suggested.

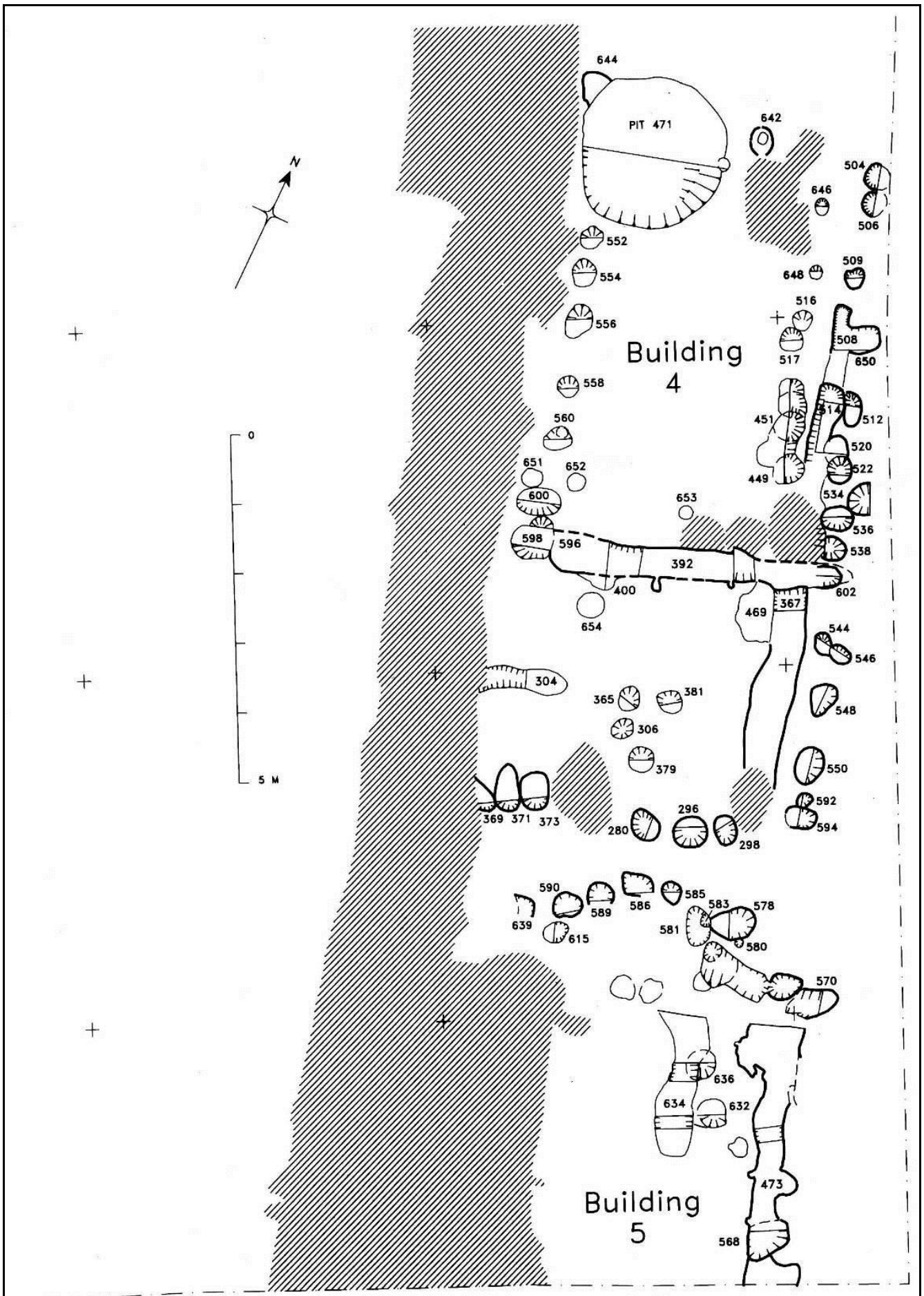


Fig. 12: Area W. The Phase 3 buildings, occupying the south-west corner of the excavation area. The main structural elements have been emphasised. Later features shown hatched. Image reproduced courtesy of the Society for Lincolnshire History & Archaeology © 1994

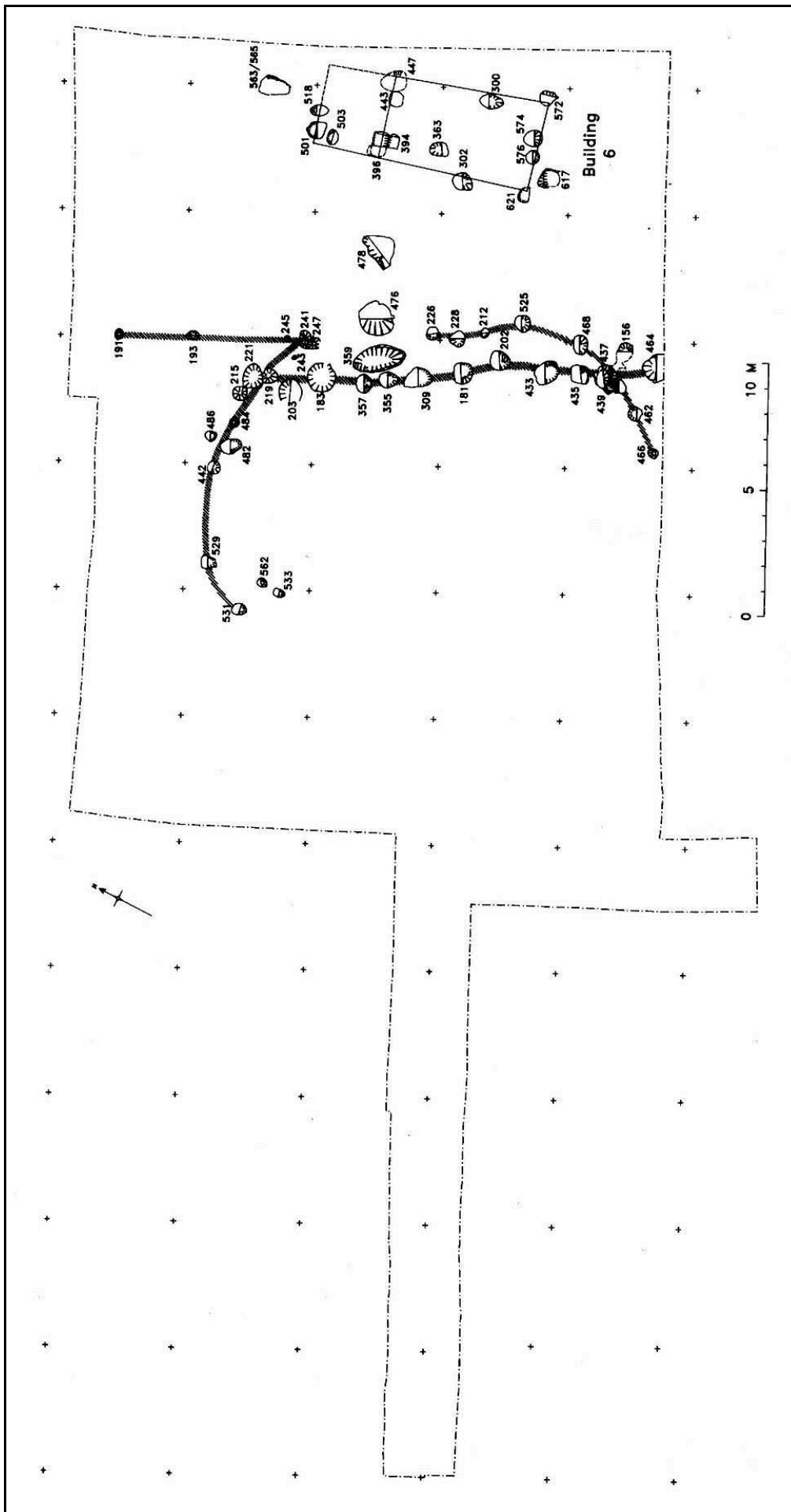


Fig. 13: Area W. Features of Phase 4A. The possible line of fences have been indicated. Image reproduced courtesy of the Society for Lincolnshire History & Archaeology © 1994

A second fence was erected. This probably continued to serve the building to the east, though its close juxtaposition with the earlier fence suggests it to have replaced, or at least substantially modified, this boundary; there was a single stratigraphic relationship between the two. The new fence described a curve, comprising the following features from south to north: 466, 462, 439, 468, 525, 212, 228, 226, 247, 241, 243, 219, 215, 484, 482, 486, 442, 529, 531, 562 and 533. A further run of post positions - 245, 193, 191 - may represent an extension northwards. The profiles of the post pits of this second fence were gently sloped, bowl-shaped or flat-bottomed, though a few to the north were more steep-sided or stepped. They were a little smaller than the earlier run of pits - mostly between 0.3 and 0.6m across, while in other respects, such as the frequent presence of rubble in their fills, they closely resembled them. Three pits produced pottery, dated to the twelfth century, the thirteenth to fourteenth century, and, broadly, to the medieval period. A break in the central part of the second fenceline was occupied by an east-west line of larger pits of unknown function, all fairly shallow (359, 476 and 478).

The second fenceline may have delineated an oval or near-circular enclosure, the western post pits of which were removed by the digging of later ditches.

Phase 4B *Fourteenth to sixteenth century* (Fig. 15)

The final sub-division of the site was accomplished by a series of ditches and/or gullies aligned north/south and east/west. They were recut, some repeatedly. Some structural activity accompanying these developments was recorded at the southwest corner of the excavations. The width and depth of the ditches permitted them to be traced beyond the limits of the excavated area; some of them are visible as cropmarks recorded by air photography (see Fig. 4), and others by geophysical survey. The excavated evidence therefore constituted a sample of a more extensive system of land division.

The broad contemporaneity of these features was suggested by limited stratigraphic evidence. A total of fifteen contexts yielded pottery, including residual early medieval material.

The following discussion deals first with north/south ditches, and then with those aligned east/west. This is followed by discussion of a number of gullies perhaps connected with use of enclosures defined by the ditches, and concludes with consideration of evidence for structures in the south-west corner of the excavation.

Ditches

The easternmost north/south ditch 278 ran across the excavated area, extending beyond its northern and southern limits. It was c.1.6m wide and 0.4-0.5m deep, with a shallow U-shaped profile. No gradations were recorded in its fill, though the variable slope to its west side may betray cleaning or recutting. At its south end it was cut by a similar feature 445, c.1.7m wide and c.0.37m deep, which apparently served to extend this alignment.

Ditch 278 met east/west ditches 154 and 159 at their east end. As these did not continue beyond this junction they are inferred to have been either contemporary with, or to have been positioned with reference to, ditch 278. The latter included 12 potsherds suggesting a thirteenth to fourteenth-century date. The ditches lay between 2.5 and 6m to the east of the fences (Phase 4A) whose function as a boundary they are thought to have taken over. Their initial position may have respected Building 6 at the east side of the site (see

above Phase 4A), though this no longer exercised any constraint when ditch 445 was excavated, as it cut away one of its post pits (617).

A little over 17m to the west a further series of ditches or gullies was identified, similarly extending north and south of the limits of excavation. The relationships between them were investigated by the cutting of four sections, which revealed six intersecting, near-parallel, alignments. All followed the north to south slope of the land surface. The sections suggest a progressive westward shift. This may, however, be misleading. It is equally possible that ditches or gullies may have run in pairs. A number of these features have been truncated by later ones, and others may have been entirely removed in this way.

The earliest ditch to the east was shallow, with a U-shaped profile (458/499). It had a maximum recorded width of 1.05m, and a base lying between 17.43m and 16.99m OD. It produced no finds, though environmental sampling provided limited evidence to suggest that fresh water had passed along it. Between 1.8m and 3m to the west of it lay shallow ditch or gully 421. Its surviving extent had a maximum width of 0.77m, a flat-bottomed or shallow U-shaped profile, and a basal level of 17.51 to 17.18m OD. This too yielded no finds. Contemporaneity of these ditches, though not provable, would agree with the modular system of land division perceived across the site as a whole (see Discussion), with a boundary - perhaps a hedge - lying between the ditches. Both were, at all events, early episodes in a complex sequence of activity.

The eastern ditch was replaced by a similar feature (427/460/497), with a maximum width of 1.05m. Its basal level was similar to that of the ditch it replaced, suggesting it fulfilled a similar function; a couple of nail fragments were recovered from its fill. No corresponding feature was identified to the west. The restatement of these alignments was accomplished by the excavation of wider features to both east and west. That to the east (425/496) was traced across the entire site, narrowing from a width of 2.8m to the north to 1.3m at its south end. It produced pottery dated to between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries (from fill 424). To the west, the earlier ditch was almost obliterated by a recut (419), with a width of 1.8m. Its depth varied from 0.17m to 0.21 m. It was not traced as far as the south excavation edge. At its north end it cut east/west feature 411. Both contained pottery dated to the thirteenth to fourteenth century. This feature was replaced by a V-cut ditch 423, with a maximum width of 1.19m and a basal level of 17.23-17.12m OD. Though deep and well defined to the north, at its south end it was itself to be replaced by yet another ditch (493/251). This achieved a maximum width of 1.05m at the south limit of excavation. Both ditches contained medieval pottery.

The remaining north/south ditches were seen only along a narrow trench running west from the main excavation area. About 16m west of the complex of ditches discussed above lay a narrow slot, perhaps a fence or hedge base (173); its fill included medieval pottery. A substantial V-shaped ditch 171, 1.75m wide and 0.73m deep cut its west side. This contained pottery dated to between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries.

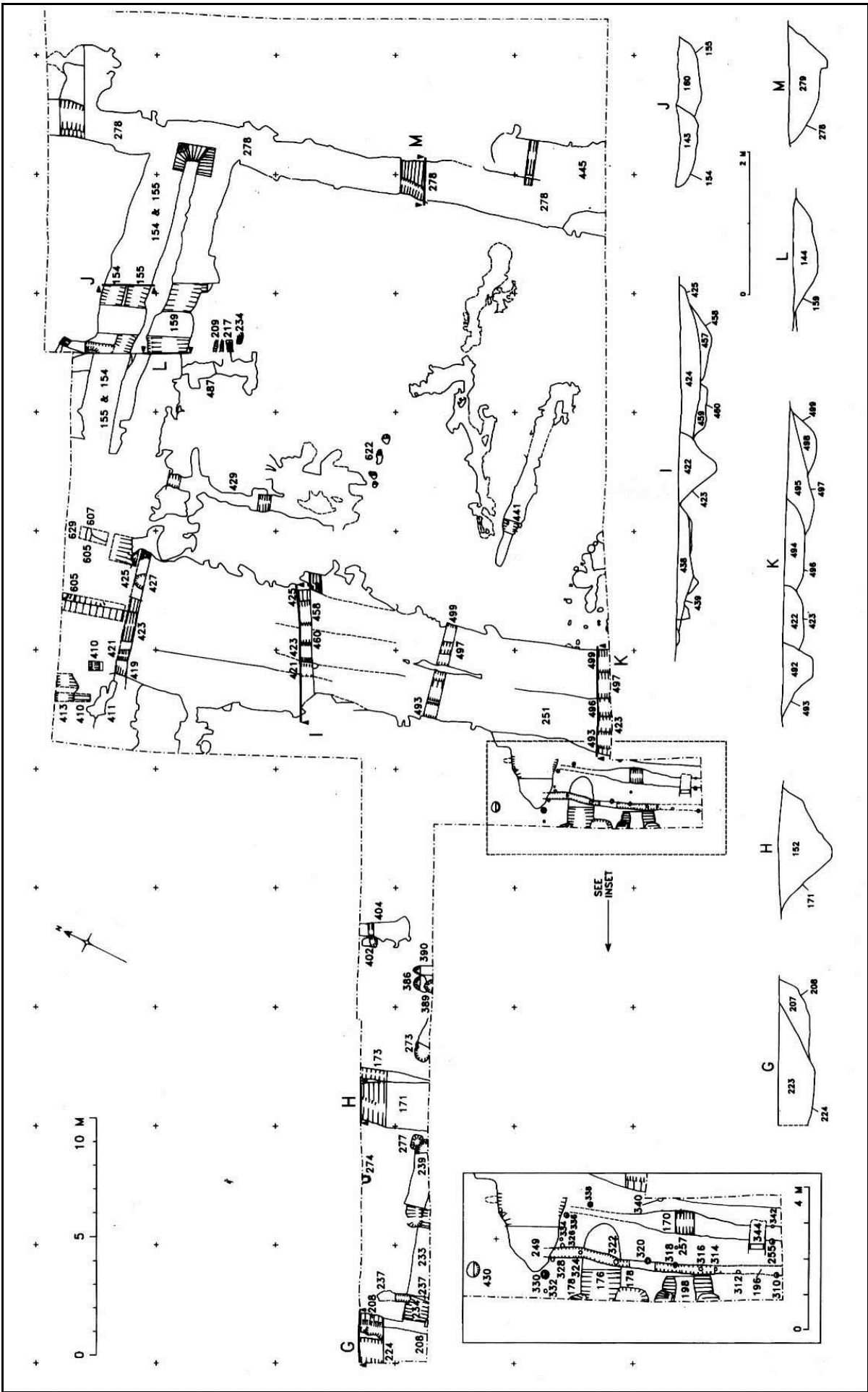


Fig. 15: Area W. Features of Phase 4B.

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Another Win to the west lay another ditch (208). This was steep-sided, with an irregular profile perhaps resulting from scouring, and a flat base. It was recut by 224 which was over 1.7m wide, its western lip lying beyond the excavation edge. Both these ditches yielded medieval pottery.

The most informative record of the east/west ditches was achieved for those running across the northern part of the excavated area. These were traced from a junction with north/south ditch 278, at their eastern end, to the north-west corner of the main excavation. It is not possible to establish a precise relationship between the developments of boundaries aligned north/south and those running east/west. Both finds and the stratigraphic record suggest their broad contemporaneity, though the fill extent of recutting or scouring operations has probably not been identified. The earliest alignments may be those glimpsed in sondages at the north-west corner of the site, e.g. 629 and 411. These were perhaps contemporary with some of the earlier north/south ditches. Ditch 411 included pottery of thirteenth- to fourteenth-century date in its fill.

A further three ditches ran across the site, redefining this significant and persistent alignment. The first, 155/607, was up to 1.75m wide and 0.55m deep, with a variable flat-bottomed profile. It cut a north/south ditch 496. It was superseded by two more features, both narrower, lying to the north (154) and south (159/605). The fill of the latter included thirteenth- to fourteenth-century pottery. The extent of these or similar features further west may be represented by 413 and 410; both had medieval pottery in their fills.

At the junction of north/south ditch 278 with the east/west alignments the plan view might show evidence for both the recutting of the former and the turning of the latter, while minor changes in the width of features, such as at the mid-point of ditch 159/605, may also be significant. They are best understood as marking further episodes in the intermittent maintenance of these boundaries, a process which has been extensively sampled rather than comprehensively investigated.

Further east/west ditches or slots lay in the narrow trench running west from the main excavation. Ditch 233, c. 1 m wide with a U-shaped profile and a maximum depth of 0.33m, was a possible return for north/south ditch 208; its fill included medieval or post-medieval pottery. It was cut, and perhaps extended, at its east end by narrower 239. Together these ran for c.7.7m. This alignment may have been picked up by another shallow slot 273, traced for a short distance along the south edge of the same trench.

Gullies and other features in the enclosures

A number of irregular linear features lay within the enclosure formed by the main north/south and east/west ditches in the excavation area. For the most part these shared the alignment of the surrounding ditches, and were presumably contemporary with at least some of them, perhaps representing a short-lived episode of land division. Recording of these shallow slots was not systematic, as a natural origin was considered likely. Their course was additionally obscured by myriad patches of soil, all ascribed to natural processes, which were especially numerous in the central part of the excavated area. North/south alignments were represented by slots 429 and, 5m to the east, 487. The former may have been continued southwards by unnumbered features. Two east/west alignments converged to the south: 441, recorded over an extent of c.7m, and an unnumbered 'root disturbance' lying

between 0.5 and 2.5m to its north. A line of small pits (622) may have been connected. Two of the more extensive features provided pottery dated to the thirteenth to fourteenth century. A group of smaller features (209, 217 and 234) lay immediately to the east of 487; they post-dated elements of the earlier fences.

A further group of features - 176, 198, 249 - was identified in the trench which extended south from the main excavation; they may represent the terminals of further east/west gullies. Two produced pottery of thirteenth- to fourteenth-century date. These gullies were overlain by a number of structural features (see below).

Structures

Further features related to structures or boundaries were identified in the trenches running from the south-west corner of the main excavation. These comprised narrow slots, some associated with stakeholes, and a scatter of small pits. They may indicate the presence or proximity of occupation broadly contemporary with the major ditches.

North/south slots 196 and 170 and a possible east/west slot 344 lay south of the main excavation. The latter was flat-bottomed, the others of a shallow U-profile. A run of small posts or stakes followed the line of 196, from south to north: 310, 312, 314, 316, 318, 320, 322 and 324. This line was crossed by another, from west to east: 332, 330, 328, 326, 334 and 336, and other unnumbered features continuing into the south part of the main excavation trench. Similar features 342, 255, 257 and 340 were associated with slot 170. It is possible that a building or buildings combining stakes and sills might have left such traces. The slots included pottery of medieval date, including residual early medieval material.

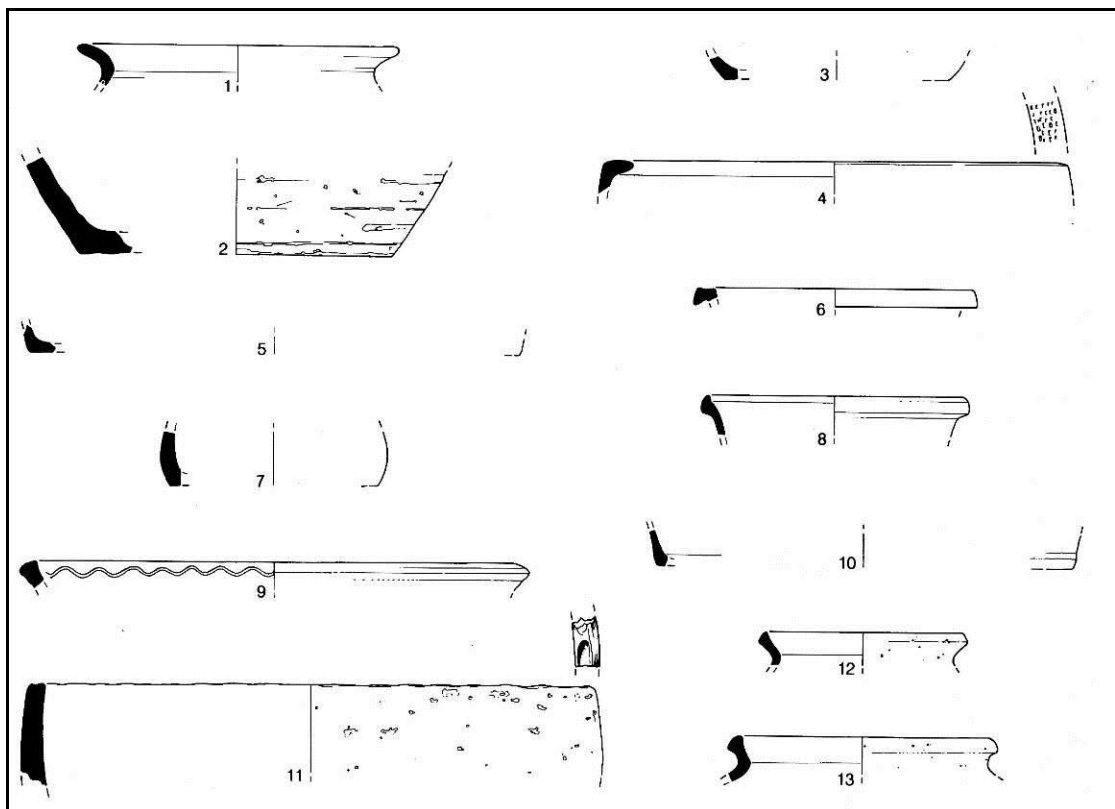


Fig. 16: Pottery from Aylesby and Little London (1/4 size).

(note – scale may be distorted by digitization process, please see original for accurate measurements)

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A scatter of pits was identified along both trenches: 274, 277, 386, 388, 402, 404 and 430, though only one - 274 - would support an interpretation as a post socket.

Discussion of the buildings and other structures

A range of structural forms has been identified or suggested from the evidence described above, spanning perhaps 1,500 years of rural settlement. Over this period, aspects of building practice remained remarkably consistent. In part this may arise from the setting of the site: low-lying, sometimes damp, with scant accessible stone. The levelling effect of arable agriculture has also conditioned the evidence, erasing occupation surfaces and leaving only negative features cut into natural subsoils.

All the structures were built or framed in wood. Walls may have been of clay or wattle between poles or posts, and roofs of thatch or shingle. There is no evidence for construction in stone or brick, nor of roofs clad with tiles. Structural ironwork is also rare.

Phase 1

The excavations have provided the first evidence of Iron Age activity to be reported from the area surrounding Aylesby. Its significance is enhanced by the combination of roundhouses, 'four post' structures, and a ditch. These illustrate the accommodation, storage and boundary features of an Iron Age farmstead. A cobbled yard lay between the buildings and the ancillary structures, pointing to a degree of settlement stability.

The foundation trench of Building 1 follows a slightly angular course. At Goltho, Lincolnshire, similar evidence has been interpreted as a trench for the setting of stave walling.³⁷ At Aylesby, hollows intermittently seen in the base of the trenches, and a porthole at the south-western edge of a gap in them, may show the position of posts framing walls and a doorway. The plan view suggests runs of walling 1-2m long, perhaps wattle or clay in this case.

At least two 'four-post' structures lay superimposed to the north of the buildings; a process of repair or replacement may have involved more, though all in a limited area. At least one is thought to have shared the alignment of the ditch to the south. The plan, size, and recurrent replacement of these structures finds parallels elsewhere.³⁸ The 'four-post' structure is usually interpreted as a raised grain or fodder store,³⁹ appropriate to a low-lying area where storage pits would be impractical due to groundwater.

The closest parallel for Aylesby, both morphologically and topographically, is the site at Weelsby Avenue, Grimsby. Here, an enclosure contained two roundhouse gullies and a 'four post granary', interpreted as an isolated farm. It was superseded by an industrial complex in the first century BC.⁴⁰

Phase 2

The rectangular form of Building 3 marks a departure from the native roundhouse tradition. Reconstructing the complete plan

of the building is problematic, however, and it is clear that not only had later ploughing obliterated further post positions, but that more of the building lay to the north, beyond the excavation area. Those post positions which were recorded define two walls of a building measuring c.10m by 4.5m. The

spacing of the posts might suggest that the end of the building was gabled, but without a north wall it is difficult to say anything more about its construction. The evidence available could permit a variety of reconstructions, of aisled or single-cell form, with outshuts or partitions at either end.⁴¹

No dating evidence was recovered from the postholes of the building, and its attribution to the Romano-British period rests on its juxtaposition with the ditch of that date. Excavated buildings of this date are rare in the area, but similar buildings with posts defining their wall lines have recently been recorded in a second- to fourth-century farmstead at Glebe Farm, Barton-upon-Humber.⁴² It is unlikely that the Aylesby building was anything other than agricultural in function, and was probably one of a small number of buildings within a single farmstead.

Phase 3

The construction of Buildings 4 and 5 saw the establishment of north/south alignments which remained important on the site throughout the medieval period. The buildings were of slightly different size and construction, perhaps reflecting a difference in function between the two buildings.

In Building 4, the juxtaposition of slots and postholes may indicate a type of construction which combined the two, such as upright timbers set in trenches with bracing posts,⁴³ or some combination of timber ground sills and posts, though any clues as to the jointing or inclination of the timbers were removed during dismantling of the building. The use of timber ground sills on later Saxon or Viking Age sites is well known,⁴⁴ and occurs together with posts in later Saxon buildings.⁴⁵ The use of sills, however, implies more sophisticated framing than might be expected in a lower status rural setting.⁴⁶ It is just as likely, however, that the different techniques of construction appeared in the same building through piecemeal rebuilding over a protracted period. A peasant building framed of poles of ash or other less valuable timber might be expected to have a life of only about twenty years,⁴⁷ though the use of heartwood timber could significantly extend this.⁴⁸ This might explain the intercutting of postholes. The irregularity in spacing of the posts tends to suggest that they were not set out in pairs, but supported a wall plate upon which a roof could then be built as a subsequent stage of construction (known as reversed assembly). It is of note that the internal span of Building 4, at around five metres, is greater than that recorded from early peasant houses at Goltho and elsewhere⁴⁹ indicating the use of larger, and therefore more expensive, timbers.

In its layout, Building 5 was simpler than Building 4. It was narrower, with an internal span of c.4m, and was bow-ended, a form more appropriate to a clay and post construction. A bow-ended form would suggest a hipped roof, presumably thatched.

The fact that any occupation deposits have been completely removed by later agricultural activity impedes identification of the function of these buildings. However, in the case of Building 4, the varied form and placement of internal fittings, and the differing spatial arrangement of the rooms tends to argue for some distinction between them. The northern room, with stalls along both sides, may have held animals, while the smaller, southern room may have served a residential function. The pit at its north end may relate to water collection or drainage.⁵⁰ Building 5 is less easy to interpret, though it may have been ancillary to Building 4.

Phase 4

Phase 4A is distinguished by the extensive use of earthfast posts. These defined fence-lines and Building 6, the latter erected on the site of the Phase 3 occupation. Building 6 is suggested to have been 4m wide and perhaps 8-10m long. It was apparently defined by posts, possibly paired, setting out irregular bays of 2.5-3.5m length. The three-bay hall was a common rural vernacular form c.1350-1500,⁵¹ though inexact spacing of posts weakens this interpretation, this could be explained either in terms of construction by 'reversed assembly',⁵² or by haphazard 'normal assembly'.⁵³

Earthfast post structures in the region have been identified as dating to between the later eleventh and the late thirteenth century,⁵⁴ though in peasant contexts in Lincolnshire the technique persisted into the post-medieval period.⁵⁵ The position of the building may suggest continuity from Phase 3. The building may have passed out of use in the thirteenth or fourteenth century; timbers of 0.15-0.25m scantling might last for 75 years when set in the ground,⁵⁶ so a twelfth- to thirteenth-century date for this building might be appropriate.

The use of timber fences may hint at improved access to materials, whether arising from peasant prosperity or investment by the landholder, and suggest an association with stock rearing.

In Phase 4B, both the gullies in the central part of the excavated area and the narrower slots, stakeholes and scattered postholes to the west might suggest the location of further structures, though the limited extent of the examination of these features precludes firm interpretation. Whether viewed as fences or as light structures, these were of a more ephemeral character than the Phase 4A structures. The multiplication of ancillary buildings and the shifting of occupied areas towards the position of tracks or roads are both characteristic of later, fourteenth-century, rural settlement.⁵⁷

THE POTTERY

Peter Didsbury and Lisa Wastling

This report covers the pottery from both Aylesby and the trial work at Little London. The two sites are discussed separately, though they are combined in a single catalogue and illustration.

Aylesby

A total of 188 sherds, weighing 1780 grams, and having an overall average sherd weight (hereafter ASW) of 9.5 grams, was recovered during the excavation. The material ranged in date from the first millennium B.C. to the early modern period. The chronological distribution of the pottery is shown in Table 3, below:

Table 3: Aylesby. Chronological distribution of the pottery.

Period	no.	wt (g)	ASW	% no.	% wt
Prehistoric	8	250	31.3	4.3	14
Romano-British	21	402	19.1	11.2	22.6
Late Saxon/Saxo-Norman	31	180	5.8	16.5	10.1
Thirteenth-sixteenth century	113	845	7.5	60.1	47.5
Seventeenth century & later	8	38	4.8	4.3	2.1
Undated	7	65	9.3	3.7	3.7
TOTALS	188	1780	9.5	100	100

Full and detailed identification, dating and quantification of the pottery is contained in the site archive, and significant results of these exercises have been incorporated into the excavation narrative. The rest of this pottery report concentrates on a discussion of the material under chronological headings.

The fabric and ware names employed in the archive and report are, for the most part, those used by the Humberside Archaeology Unit (hereafter HCCA⁵⁸). These have been Supplemented, in the case of shell-tempered wares, by the terms in use at the City of Lincoln Archaeological Unit (hereafter CLAD), and it is appropriate at this point to thank Jane Young, of that institution, for her kindness in providing a detailed identification of all the shell-tempered material from both Aylesby and Little London.

The source of all fabric terms is indicated upon first occurrence.

Late Prehistoric (none illustrated)

Apart from a small number of shell-tempered fragments which have been classified as 'Later Iron Age or Roman', limited ceramic evidence for prehistoric activity in the vicinity of the site is provided by a small number of body sherds from contexts 146, 164 and 1009. These are ascribed, with varying degrees of certainty, to the first millennium BC on fabric grounds alone (see the catalogue for description).

Romano-British (Fig. 16, nos 1-2)

Romano-British pottery accounted for some 11-23% of the assemblage, according to measure of quantification adopted (Table 3). There is no material that need be of first-century date, though there are several scraps of shell-tempered ware which can only be described as 'late Iron Age or Roman'. The common shell-tempered product of the third and earlier fourth centuries, i.e. Dalesware, is entirely absent, and only one vessel can be credited with confidence to the later Roman period, viz. a fragment of Polished Late Roman Redware such as was produced by many of the large late industries. The majority of the assemblage, in fact, consists of greywares in fabrics of Antonine to Severan appearance. The base of a large coarseware jar/bowl in a distinctive shell and grog-tempered fabric is also probably of second-century date (Fig. 16, no. 2). This fabric, which makes use of grog derived from sand-tempered greywares, is being recognised increasingly frequently on North Lincolnshire sites such as Glebe Farm, Barton-upon-Humber⁵⁹ and Nettleton Top.⁶⁰ It appears to have had an Antonine floruit and was almost certainly out of production by the earlier third century.

Late Saxon and Saxo-Norman (Fig. 16, nos 3-8)

The composition of the Late Saxon/Saxo-Norman component in the assemblage is as follows (Table 4):

Table 4: Aylesby. Composition of Late Saxon/Saxo-Norman pottery.

Type	% no.	% wt
York 'g'	3.1	2.8
Torksey	6.3	13.4
LKT	15.6	12.3
LSH	6.3	15.1
SNLOC	18.8	15.1
SNX	9.4	20.1
HLKT	6.3	3.4
LFS	34.4	17.9
TOTALS	100.2	100

(For Torksey and York 'g', see notes.⁶¹ The following GLAU codes are used in the above table:

LKT	Lincoln Kiln Type	?Late ninth - Late tenth
LSH	Lincoln Shelly Ware	?Late ninth - ?Early/mid tenth
SNLOC	Saxo-Norman Local	?Late ninth - Early thirteenth
SNX	Saxo-Norman Non-Local	?Late ninth - Early thirteenth
HLKT	Horncastle-type LKT	?Early/mid tenth - ?Late tenth
LFS	Lincoln Fine Shelled	Late tenth - ?Early thirteenth

These various shell-tempered wares are described elsewhere⁶²⁾

This is a small but interesting assemblage, showing the kinds of pottery in use on one rural site in North Lincolnshire during the Late Saxon and early post-Conquest period. The wares can all be contained within the period of the late ninth to early thirteenth century. Shell-tempered wares were dominant over most of the county at this time, though Late Saxon greywares and early medieval gritty wares did enjoy a measure of success on sites in the area to the north and west of Aylesby.⁶³ York Y sherd in this assemblage probably

therefore hints at a level of cross-Humber contact, while the Torksey ware probably also reached the site through contacts along the Humber-Trent river system, rather than overland. The only other non-Shelly vessel is a jar, tempered with greensand quartz, which may have been traded into Lincolnshire from the south (Fig. 16, no. 7). This has been categorized as Saxo-Norman Non-Local, though the greensand tempering tradition is a long-lived one, and the vessel could conceivably be from as early as the Early Saxon period.

Medieval (Fig. 16, nos 9-10)

The medieval (here defined as thirteenth to sixteenth century) component in Table 3 is made up as follows (Table 5):

Table 5: Aylesby. Composition of medieval pottery.

Type	% no.	% wt
MEDLOC	3.5	2.7
Orangeware*	46	40.1
Medium Sandy	14.2	12.3
Coarse Sandy	18.6	9
Humberware	13.3	32.4
Low Countries Highly Decorated Doncaster Hallgate Fabric 'A'	3.5	2.6
	0.9	0.8
TOTALS	100.1	99.9

*The Orangewares possibly include a very small amount of material from the twelfth-century splashed-glaze phase of the industry.

MEDLOC = Medieval Local Shelly Ware (CLAU); Medium Sandy the regional fabric tradition as defined by Hayfield;⁶⁴ for Hallgate 'A', see Buckland et al.,⁶⁵ other terms as used by HCCAUI (see above).

The majority of the material in this group consists of undecorated body sherds of low average sherd weight, and there is little deserving of intrinsic interest. Two MEDLOC vessels are illustrated, however, in the interests of publishing the entire range of shell-tempered wares from the site (Fig. 16, nos. 9-10).

In light of the distribution studies undertaken by Hayfield⁶⁶ the figures in Table 5 suggest that the pattern of pottery supply to Aylesby in the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries was a 'normal' one, given its geographical location. Thus, the major contribution of Orangewares and Humberware is exactly what one would predict, with Medium Sandy wares having far less impact on the site assemblage. As Hayfield shows, Medium Sandy products are only slightly represented in the coastal lowland to the north of the Lincolnshire Wolds, though they do tend to increase in importance a short way to the east of Aylesby.⁶⁷ Orangewares and Humberware span the periods c.1200-1325/50 and c.1325/50-1500+ respectively, and between them account for 59.3% or 73.5% of the medieval pottery, according to which measure of quantification is adopted. The Medium Sandy products under discussion here, which do not

appear to include any of the earliest (Lincoln) or latest (Toynton/Old Bolingbroke) wares within this fabric tradition, can only be safely regarded as of 'thirteenth- or fourteenth-century' date, and were thus probably in use alongside both Orangewares and Humberware. If this is so, and if we take quantification by number to be more accurate for these purposes than quantification by weight (on the grounds that Humberware is a very much denser fabric than Orangeware), then it is tempting to suggest that there may have been a reduction in activity resulting in ceramic deposition on the site in the second half of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

Existing expectations are not fulfilled to quite the same extent in relation to the kinds of coarseware in use on the site. Aylesby clearly lies close to the boundary between sand-tempering and shell-tempering traditions at this period, the former enjoying dominance in a small area of north-west Lincolnshire, in contradistinction to most of the rest of the county; one might, however, have expected the two types to have contributed in approximately equal proportions, as appears to be the case at such nearby sites as Stallingborough.⁶⁸ Hayfield postulates a number of sources, on both banks of the Humber, for coarse sandy products, and the fact that they are largely confined to north-west Lincolnshire suggest that a proportion of them, at least, were being traded into such havens and creeks as Goxhill and East Halton, from the north bank ports of Hedon, Hull and Beverley. It is worth recording that the majority of coarse sandy sherds at Aylesby (89.5% by weight) are in fact in fabrics indistinguishable from those commonly found on sites north of the Humber, including Hull and Beverley.

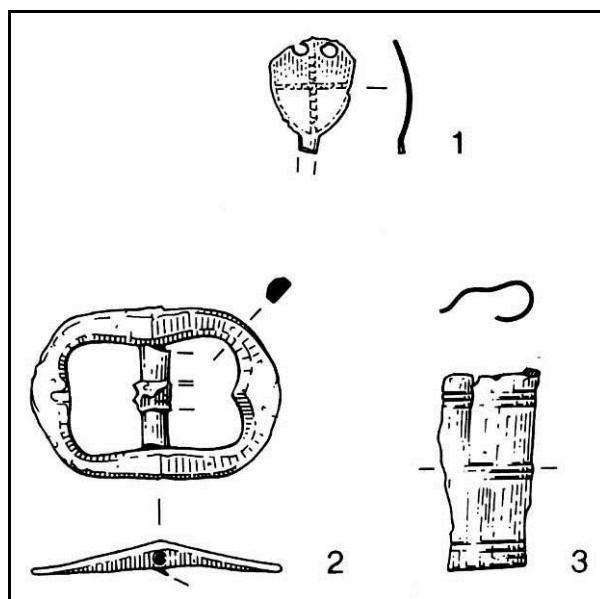


Fig. 17: Objects of copper alloy (actual size).

(note – scale may be distorted by digitization process, please see original for accurate measurements)

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The remaining medieval material comprises a single sherd of Doncaster Hallgate W fabric, and four sherds of Low Countries Highly Decorated ware. The first of these may be regarded as a regional 'stray', since the Doncaster product does not seem to have been much recognised in any quantity east of the Trent, though the Fine Sandy Ware tradition to which it belongs is certainly well represented within North Lincolnshire. As far as the Low Countries Highly Decorated Ware is concerned, in Lincolnshire it has hitherto only been recorded from Boston and Lincoln.⁶⁹ Its presence at Aylesby is thus interesting, but perhaps not too surprising in view of the site's proximity to

Grimsby, where maritime contacts are reflected in various other wares from the Low Countries.⁷⁰

Post-medieval and modern (none illustrated)

Negligible amounts of material of these periods were recovered (Table 3; full details are contained in the pottery archive).

Little London

The trial trench at Little London (Trench 4) yielded 23 sherds of pottery, weighing 461 grams, and having an average sherd weight of 20.0 grams. The earliest pottery-bearing deposits were the clay horizons (94, 96, 98) which lay above the clay natural (97) and were sealed by the medieval clay platform (see further below). Layer 94 contained a sherd of thirteenth- to early fourteenth-century Orangeware, perhaps deposited at the time of the platform's construction and providing a broad terminus post quem for this - vent. Contexts 98 and 96 contained a Late Prehistoric vessel with fingertip decorated rim (Fig. 16, no. 11), and a later third-or fourth century Romano-British flanged bowl (not illustrated), respectively. This material provides useful evidence of pre-platform activity in the vicinity of the site.

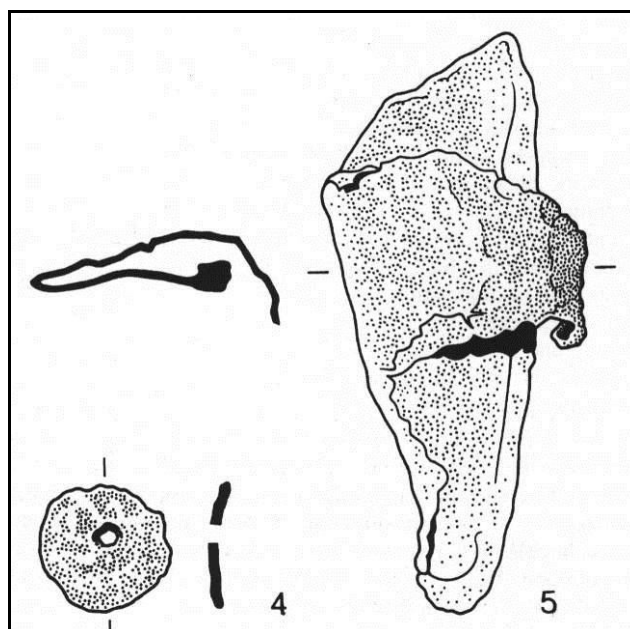


Fig. 18: Objects of lead (3/4 actual size).

(note – scale may be distorted by digitization process, please see original for accurate measurements)

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Most of the remaining pottery from the trench came from the medieval clay platform itself (72, 73, 78, 92). The maximum overall date-range of this material is from the late ninth to the sixteenth century. The earliest piece is a small sherd of shell-tempered Lincoln Kiln Type ware from 78 (Fig. 16, no. 12). It may have been re-deposited during construction of the platform, and its low weight (5 grams) would be consistent with such an interpretation. The latest material present is Humberware, characteristic of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, but continuing in production into the sixteenth. A construction date for the platform in the thirteenth or early fourteenth century, with ceramic deposition possibly continuing as late as the sixteenth, would be consistent with the limited ceramic evidence, though use of the platform could have been much more short-lived, terminating at almost any time in the later fourteenth or fifteenth century.

The remaining pottery consists of another sherd of Lincoln Kiln Type ware (Fig. 16, no. 13) from 74 (fill of ditch 95), and further sherds of Humberware from 89 (the fill of a modern posthole 90) and 71, the tilled topsoil horizon.

Catalogue (Fig. 16)

Aylesby

Prehistoric (not illustrated)

Erratic Tempered ware. Four joining sherds, 15mm thick, perhaps from the base of a large hand-built vessel, though irregular slight curvature makes it difficult to interpret. Dark grey core, with bright orange exterior, and greyish brown interior. Abundant angular temper, most in the 3-5mm range, but with sparse larger examples, the largest being a 9mm quartzite pebble. Mainly sandstone and angular fragments of an unidentified grey stone. Abundant ill-sorted 'background' quartz sand. Exterior fairly well-smoothed. with evident finger markings; unmasked temper on interior. First millennium BC. Context 1009, fill of ditch 1008, Phase 1.

Erratic Tempered Ware. One body sherd in same fabric as those from 1009 (see above). Context 164, fill of ditch 163/1076, Phase 2.

Three body sherds, 12mm thick, from the same hand-built vessel. Greyish brown body with light red margins and surfaces. Abundant well-sorted shell, quartz, crushed sandstone and other rock temper mainly in the 1-3mm range. The temper has been carefully masked by wiping on both surfaces. Later Iron Age? Context 146, fill of hollow 165, Phase 1.

Romano-British

- 1 Greyware. Jar or wide-mouthed bowl. Probably late second or earlier third century. Context 1(')75, fill of ditch 16311076, Phase 2.
- 2 Coarse greyware, with shell and grog. Jar/bowl. Probably Antonine. Context 164, fill of ditch 16311076, Phase 2.

Late Saxon/Saxo-Norman

- 3 LKT. Jar. Shell. Late ninth or tenth century. Context 424, fill of 4251496, Phase 4B.
- 4 LSH. Bowl with inturned rim. Square rouletting. Shell. Early/mid tenth century. Context 177, fill of gully 176, Phase 4B.
- 5 LSH. Jar. Shell. Context 279, fill of ditch 278• Phase 4B.
- 6 SNLOC. Jar. Shell and quartz. Eleventh/twelfth century. Context 377, .fill of gully 487, Phase 4B.
- 7 SNX. Bowl? Shell with greensand. Could be as early as Early Saxon. Context 375, above junction of several ditches, Phase 4B.
- 8 SNX. Jar. Greensand. Eleventh/twelfth century. Context 494, fill of ditch 4251496, Phase 4B.

Medieval

- 9 MEDLOC. Bowl. Incised scroll on interior below rim. Shell and quartz. Early thirteenth century, just possibly eleventh or twelfth century. Context 153• ill of slot 170.
- 10 MEDLOC. Jar. Shell. Probably twelfth century. Context 376, fill of post pit 442, Phase 4A.

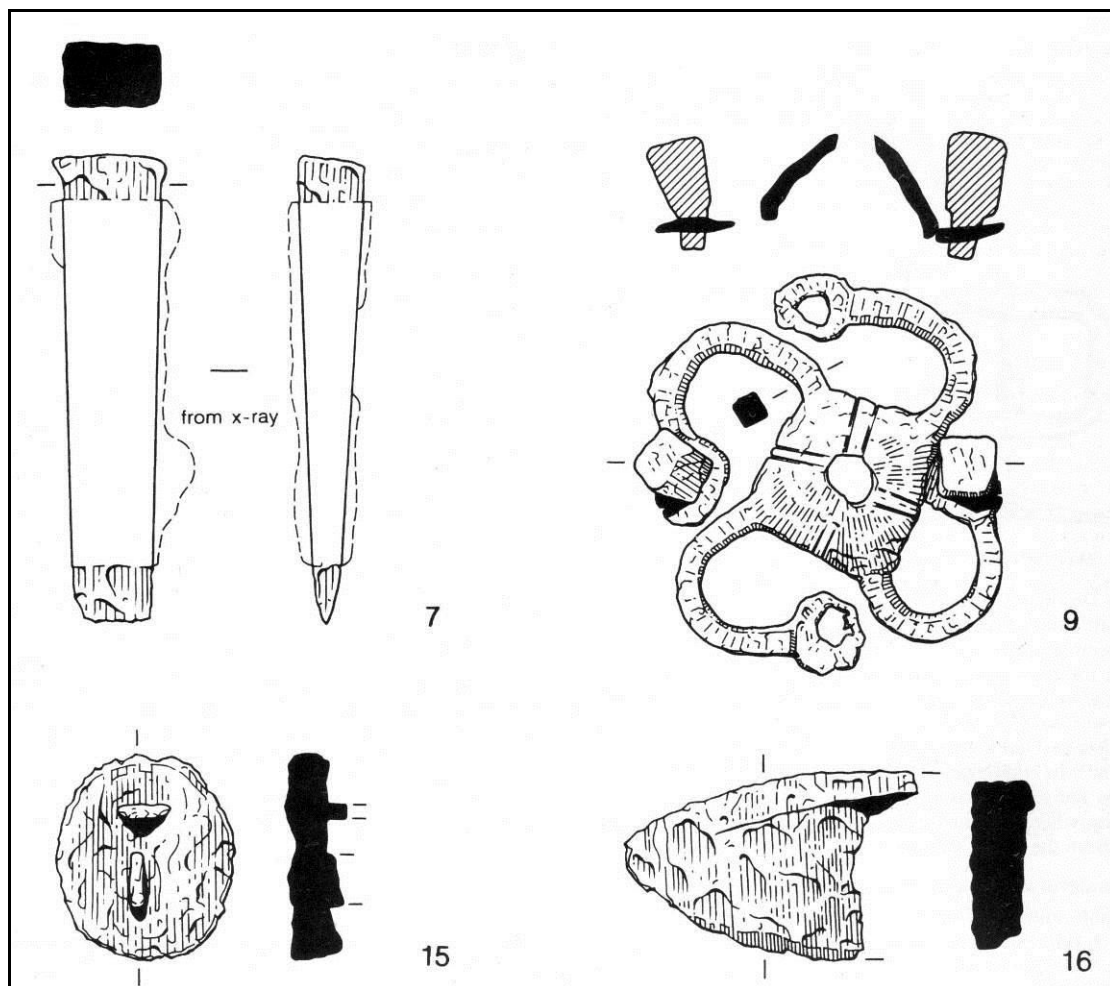


Fig. 19: Objects of iron (actual size).

(note – scale may be distorted by digitization process, please see original for accurate measurements)

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Little London

Prehistoric (not illustrated)

3 body sherds from a hand-built vessel with 11mm walls. Reddish-orange surfaces, brownish-grey core. Abundant fine shell (to c.1mm), and moderately frequent larger fragments (c.3mm). Occasional other temper up to 8mm, including flint, sandstone, and ironstone. Neatly potted, with careful masking of temper on both faces. Late Iron Age? Context 98.

- 11 Large barrel-shaped (?) vessel - though the rim orientation is uncertain. Hand-built. Neat fingertip decoration on top of square-cut rim. Dark grey core and exterior, brown interior. Fairly well levigated fabric, with moderately abundant well-sorted quartz c.0.5mm. Abundant irregular voids on the exterior, in the range 1-10mm, but fewer and smaller ones in fracture. Interior well smoothed. Sonic voids are certainly of shell, others may be vegetable in origin. General combination of form and decoration suggest that an Early to Middle Iron Age date may be most likely. Context 98.

Late Saxon

- 12 LKT. Small jar. Shell. Late ninth or tenth century. Context 78.
 13 LKT. Medium jar. Shell. Late ninth or tenth century. Context 74.

THE OTHER FINDS

Jon Watt

The excavations produced a small assemblage of finds, the bulk of which were of medieval or post medieval date; the earliest features excavated, in Area E, produced only pottery and bone. The earliest non-ceramic objects, both from Area W, were a small hooked tag and an Anglo-Scandinavian strap-distributor of tenth- or eleventh-century date.

Objects of copper alloy

A small hooked tag (No. 1), made from thin sheet metal and with a decorated sub-circular plate, was recovered from the fill of ditch 418 in Area W. Hooked tags first appeared in the seventh century; examples with triangular and sub-circular plates occur in the eighth and ninth centuries, but during the tenth century the sub-circular form appears to predominate. Finds from Winchester suggest their use continued into the eleventh century, but probably did not continue long after the Norman conquest.⁷¹ They reappear again in the late medieval period, often with openwork plates and a rectangular slot in place of the two attachment holes typical of the earlier forms. No. 1 is probably of tenth/eleventh-century date, and was residual within the late medieval ditch in which it was found. Finds of hooked tags from graves and in association with coin hoards suggest they were used as fasteners for a variety of purposes, both to fasten clothing and to secure purses or small bags.⁷² No. 1, like other examples, is very flimsy and would have been incapable of taking any great strain. Similar examples with decorated sub-circular plates are illustrated from Fishergate, York and Porchester, the latter with an incised cross design.⁷³

The two remaining copper alloy objects came from the fills of medieval plough furrows in Area E. No. 2 is a small double-framed buckle. While double-framed buckles of medieval date are common, this example is reminiscent of post-medieval forms.⁷⁴ A short length of thin copper alloy sheet (No. 3), now crushed and distorted, was probably a binding or reinforcing strip, for attachment to leather or wood.

Catalogue (Fig. 17)

- 1 Hooked tag. Sub-circular plate decorated with rouletted cross and border around circumference; two perforations at top of head; hook missing. Length 15mm, width 11mm, thickness 0.32mm. RF 62
- 1 Context 418, fill of ditch 419, Phase 4B.
- 2 Buckle. Double rectangular frame with moulded pin rest; separate copper alloy bar held in place by iron rivets; remains of iron pin loop. Length 32mm, width 23mm, thickness 4mm. RF 27 Context 1005, fill of furrow 1004, Phase 4.
- 3 Strip. One square end other broken; one face has three groups of decorative grooves running parallel to the edges; crushed and distorted. Length 26mm, width 12mm, thickness 0.26mm. RF 37
- 4 Context 1001, fill of furrow 1000, Phase 4.

Objects of lead

The three pieces of lead recovered during the excavations are all likely to be offcuts or scrap derived from sheeting used as flashing, cladding or roofing

material, salvaged from a major building in the vicinity. The lead could be stripped by cutting around the nails fixing it to the roof,⁷⁵ and No. 4 is probably a piece of sheeting from beneath such a nail, its shape and perforation simply reflecting the size of nail used to fix it to the roof. All three objects were recovered from Area W - No. 4 was unstratified, whilst Nos 5 and 6 came from the fills of medieval ditches.

Catalogue (Fig. 18)

- 5 Disc. Sub-circular disc of thin sheet with a central oval perforation. Diameter 22.5mm. thickness 2mm, dimensions of hole 3 x 2.5mm. RF 30 Unstratified from Trench 13.
- 6 Offcut. Large roughly triangular piece with a thickened edge; folded and distorted. Length 100mm, thickness at edge 5mm. thickness 1mm. RF 33 Context 252, fill of ditch 251, Phase 4B.
- 7 (not illustrated) Offcut. Small triangle cut from the corner of a larger sheet. Thickness 2mm. RF 28 Context 207, fill of ditch 208, Phase 4B.

Objects of iron

The excavations produced a total of forty-two iron objects, the majority of which were unstratified, having been recovered during metal detecting of the machine-excavated spoil from particular trial trenches; with a few exceptions, this material could not be dated and is likely to be of relatively recent date.

The assemblage included twenty-seven carpentry nails, all of similar construction, with rectangular or oval heads and rectangular-sectioned tapering shanks typical of handmade nails of the Roman to late post-medieval period. Over half were unstratified, with the remainder largely from late medieval or post-medieval features, such as the plough furrows in Area E. None have been catalogued and the full listing can be found in the site archive.

Evidence for late medieval or post-medieval smithing activity in the vicinity of the site is provided by a punch, a piece of smithing debris and a scattering of slag recovered from the topsoil and plough furrows in Area E. No. 7 is a small punch or chisel. Held with a pair of tongs, it would have been used by a Smith to cut small strips and plates, or for more delicate work such as cutting grooves. Three iron objects held together by a lump of slag (No. 8), are presumably debris from a smithing hearth and represent pieces of scrap iron collected for recycling. Two of the objects are strip fragments while the third may be part of a large rectangular staple or joiners' dog.

A small assemblage of horse equipment was recovered from both excavation areas. No. 9 is an Angle-Scandinavian fixed arm strap-distributor and was probably one of a pair attached to a bridle.⁷⁶ Fixed arm strap-distributors are uncommon in Britain and No. 9 is particularly unusual in having hooked loops ending in terminals pierced by large rectangular headed rivets - other British examples have straight arms ending in simple looped terminals. No direct parallels for this object could be found, however Goodall states that fixed arm strap-distributors are more common in Scandinavia, a few of which have hooked loops.⁷⁷ Examples with looped terminals include a tinned pair from Lurk Lane, Beverley,⁷⁸ a pair from Thetford,⁷⁹ and two incomplete examples from Winchester.⁸⁰ The pair from Beverley were residual within a later feature, but those from Thetford and Winchester came from tenth- to eleventh-century

contexts. No. 9, presumably of a similar date, was recovered during machining in Area W.

Nos 10 to 14 are horseshoe nails of various forms. Nos 10 and 11, with flat semi-circular heads, are 'fiddle key' nails, a long-lived form in use from the tenth to the thirteenth century.⁸¹ No. 12, with an expanded head and pronounced ears, is of a type current in the late-thirteenth to mid-fourteenth centuries.⁸² Nails with square or rectangular heads, Nos 13 and 14, are a late medieval form in use from the mid-fourteenth century onwards. All are likely to be accidental losses; Nos 10, 13 and 14 came from the fill of a plough furrow in Area E, whilst Nos 11 and 12 were unstratified.

No. 15 is interpreted as a plate from the bolt of a barrel padlock. The oval plate retains the bases of two spines, set at right angles to each other, to which would have been attached a pair of leaf springs. The bolt would be inserted into the padlock case, passing through a plate at the end of the lock bolt or shackle thus securing it. A padlock with this type of separate bolt is illustrated from King's Lynn.⁸³ Padlocks of this type were amongst the most common forms in use during the medieval period.⁸⁴ No. 15 came from the fill of a late medieval ditch.

A shield-shaped plate, No. 16, from a plough furrow in Area E, resembles the tip of an iron plough share, though it appears far too small and fragile to have been used for this purpose. It may be part of the shoe or sheath from a hoe or similar agricultural tool.

The remaining five objects are strip and plate fragments, whose use or function is uncertain. The pierced objects may be fragments of binding or reinforcing, while No. 17 could be a suspension loop from an object or tool such as a key.

Table 6: The soil samples - results of the investigations. The following abbreviations are used: RES - GBA residue; W/O - washover; XS -residue from sieving excess material; FL - flot.

Phase	Context	Sample	Process	Results
1	1069, fill of pit 1070	24	XS	A few land snails, including <i>Lynmaea</i> sp., <i>Vallonia excentrica</i> and <i>Trichia hispida</i> - and a fragment of ?cockle shell (<i>Cerastoderma</i> sp.).
		25	XS	A single <i>Cecilioides acicula</i> .
2	164, fill of ditch 163/1076	20	XS	Two small fragments of burnt bone and a few snails - <i>Vallonia excentrica</i> , <i>Papilla muscorum</i> , <i>Helicella itala</i> , <i>Trichia hispida</i> and an incomplete <i>Cochlicopa lubrica</i> .
4A	180, fill of porthole 181	15	W/O	Abundant modern rootlets, a few fragments of charcoal (less than 5mm) and a single "?modern seed (<i>Stellaria</i> sp.).
				Insects were represented by remains of three adult beetles, a larval head capsule and some unidentifiable remains. There were also some mites, a few soil nematodes, and large numbers of earthworm egg capsules. The snails were all terrestrial species - mostly <i>Cecilioides acicula</i> , with two <i>Vallonia excentrica</i> and a single <i>Trichia hispida</i> .
			RES	Mostly sand with some gravel and larger fragments of chalk and flint.
	477, till of pesthole 478	16	W/o	A small group of invertebrate remains (mostly snails), some modern rootlets, a few tiny fragments of charcoal (less than 5 mm), one ? <i>Carex</i> sp. seed and two indeterminate seed fragments. A single pselaphid fragment and some earthworm egg capsules were also present. Snail species represented were <i>Vallonia excentrica</i> , <i>Trichia hispida</i> , and lesser numbers of <i>Cecilioides acicula</i> .
			RES	Mostly chalk and flint with some gravel and sand and a few snails - mostly <i>Cecilioides acicula</i> , with <i>Discus rotundatus</i> and incomplete representatives of <i>Vallonia excentrica</i> , <i>Cochlodina laminas</i> and <i>Helicella itala</i> also present.
			XS	Contained a broken vole (microtine) tooth and a few snails. The snails were again mostly <i>Cecilioides acicula</i> , with <i>Trichia hispida</i> , <i>Vallonia excentrica</i> , <i>Cepaea</i> sp. and incomplete <i>Cochlicopa lubrica</i> also represented.

4B	143, fill of ditch 154	10	FL	A small group of invertebrate remains including fragments of three beetles, fragments of ?larval/pupal cases, mites, a single ?modern false scorpion and a large number of earthworm egg capsules. Snail species represented were several Vallonia sp., many Cecilioides acicula and fragments of Trichia hispida. Three seeds (Chenopodium spp.) and large numbers of modern rootlets were also noted.
			RES	Mostly chalk and flint gravel and sand with ^a few snails - two <i>Papilla muscorum</i> and a single individual of each of <i>Cecilioides acicula</i> and <i>Helicella itala</i> .
			X	Some snails, one fish bone (a cyprinid urostyle) and an indeterminate small mammal vertebra. The snails were mostly <i>Cecilioides acicula</i> with some <i>Trichia hispida</i> and single representatives of <i>Cochlicopa lubrica</i> , <i>Oxychilus cellarius</i> and <i>Vallonia sp.</i>
	144, fill of ditch 159	8	XS	Some snails and three unidentified bone fragments. The snails present were mostly <i>Cecilioides acicula</i> and <i>Trichia hispida</i> with some <i>incomplete Vallonia sp.</i>
	152, fill of ditch 171	4	XS	No biological remains.
	207, till of ditch 208	2	XS	Some land snails and a fragment of ?cockle shell (<i>Cerastoderma sp.</i>). The land snail species represented were <i>Cochlicopa lubrica</i> , <i>Papilla muscorum</i> , <i>Vallonia costata</i> , <i>V. excentrica</i> , <i>Aegopinella Pura</i> , <i>A. nitidula</i> , <i>Cecilioides acicula</i> and <i>Trichia hispida</i> .
	232, fill of ditch 233	3	XS	No biological remains.
	498, fill of ditch 499	7	XS	Some snails, three frog (<i>Rana temporaria</i>) fragments (two identifiable as scapulae) and tiny fragments of charcoal. The snails were mostly terrestrial - two <i>Vallonia excentrica</i> , two <i>Trichia hispida</i> and an incomplete <i>Cochlicopa lubrica</i> - with a single operculum of the freshwater species <i>Bithynia tentaculata</i> .

Catalogue (Fig. 19)

- 7 Punch. Rectangular in section, splayed head, tapers to a wedge point. Length 69mm, Width 13mm, thickness 9.5mm. RF 15 Unstratified from Trench 7.
 - 8 (not illustrated) Smithing debris. Two fragments of rectangular sectioned strip and a rectangular sectioned object with a tapering arm broken at both ends; adhered together within a matrix of slag. Length 52mm, width 49mm, thickness 28mm. RF 35 Context 1005, fill of furrow 1004, Phase 4.
 - 9 Strap-distributor. Rectangular pyramidal boss with central sub-rectangular perforation; decorated with four pairs of incised lines; at the corners of which are four curving square sectioned loops ending in expanded oval terminals with square perforations, two of which retain large rectangular headed iron rivets; white metal plated. Length 59mm, width 52mm, thickness 18mm. RF 21 Unstratified from Trench 9.
- (Nos 10-14, not illustrated)
- 10 Horseshoe nail. Worn flat semi-circular head; tip of shank missing. Length 26.5mm. RF 40 Context 1005, fill of furrow 1004, Phase 4.
 - 11 Horseshoe nail. Flat semi-circular head; tip of shank missing. Length 28mm. RF 19 Unstratified from Trench 9.
 - 12 Horseshoe nail. Expanded head with pronounced ears. Length 27mm. RF 16 Unstratified from Trench 7.
 - 13 Horseshoe nail. Rectangular head; tip of shank missing. Length 34mm. RF 38 Context 1005, fill of furrow 1004, Phase 4.
 - 14 Horseshoe nail. Base of heavily worn 'rectangular head; tip of shank missing. Length 28mm. RF 41 Context 1005, fill of furrow 1004, Phase 4.
 - 15 Barrel padlock. Bolt fragment; oval plate with the bases of two spines set at right angles to each other; in poor condition. Length 30mm, width 25.5mm, thickness 7mm. RF 44 Context 252, Jill of ditch 251, Phase 4B.
 - 16 Object. Plate; metal at centre of plate thins at broken end one side retains part of a rectangular-sectioned projection; sides curve to a point at the other end. Length 44mm, width 28mm, thickness 9mm. RF 65 Context 1051, fill of furrow 1052• Phase 4.
- (Nos 17-21, not illustrated)
- 17 Looped terminal. Incomplete; rectangular-sectioned strip rolled to form oval bow. Length 38mm, width 22mm, thickness 5mm. RF 34 Context 252, fill of ditch 251, Phase 4B.
 - 18 Strip. One rounded end, broken across square hole at other. Length 45mm, width 24mm, thickness 3mm. RF 48 Context 1001, fill of furrow 1000. Phase 4.
 - 19 Strip. Incomplete; rectangular-sectioned curving strip with one rounded terminal. Length 24mm, width 14mm, thickness 7mm. RF 10 Unstratified from Trench 12.
 - 20 Strip. Rectangular-sectioned curving strip broken at both ends. Length 35mm, width 11mm, thickness 6.5mm. RF 14 Unstratified from Trench 9.
 - 21 Plate. Fragment of thin plate broken down centre through two 'circular holes. Length 48mm, width 19mm, thickness 3mm. RF 23 Unstratified from Trench 9.

Object of stone

A fragment of a whetstone made from a fine-grained micaceous sandstone, probably from the Upper Carboniferous Coal Measures of the South Pennines, was recovered from a plough furrow in Area E.

Catalogue (not illustrated)

22 Whetstone. Tapers from an irregular end, one face and other end broken off; fine-grained micaceous sandstone. Length 91mm, width 47.5mm, thickness 20.5mm. RF 59 Context 1001, fill of furrow 1000, Phase 4.

THE BIOLOGICAL REMAINS

John Carron, Brian Irving, Michael Issitt, Deborah Jaques, Harry Kenward, Frances Large, Barrie McKenna, and Annie Miller

Summary

Twenty-five sediment samples and a single box of hand-collected bone were submitted for examination. All of the sediment samples were assessed visually and eleven were then processed to recover biological remains. The hand-collected bone was quickly assessed and then recorded to an appropriate level. Very few biological remains were recovered from the samples and the hand-collected bone assemblage was of little interpretative value.

The land snail assemblage provided a general interpretation of the site as having been set in grassland with some variation from dry, open to moist, shaded areas represented by remains from different contexts.

The soil samples

Twenty-five general biological analysis samples (GBA⁸⁵) from excavations at Aylesby, Humberside, were submitted for analysis of their content of biological remains. All of the samples were inspected in the laboratory and a description of their lithology recorded using a standard pro forma. No further analysis was undertaken on fourteen samples which were regarded on the basis of inspection as unlikely to produce useful biological remains.

A 1kg voucher was retained from each of the eleven samples and the remaining sediment bulk-sieved to 1mm, primarily to recover small bones and artefacts. The residues from the processing of this excess material were all mostly chalk and flint with some gravel and sand. Other components of these residues, if any, are recorded in the text below.

Subsamples of 1kg were taken from three of the samples for extraction of macrofossil remains.⁸⁶ A 'washover' was performed on two of these subsamples (context 180, sample 15 and context 477, sample 16) and paraffin flotation was used on the third (context 143, sample 10).

None of the samples were deemed suitable for examination for the eggs of parasitic nematodes.

Results

The results of the investigations are presented in Table 6, below, by Phase and in context number order. Bone recovered from sieving of excess material from GBA samples is recorded in the relevant entries. Detailed sediment descriptions of the samples can be found in the full report on this assemblage.⁸⁷



Fig. 20• Aylesby as it may have looked in the medieval period, reconstructed from aerial photographs and excavated evidence, from the same viewpoint as Fig. 2 (watercolour by John Marshall).

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Discussion

The samples contained very few biological remains, only snails being sufficiently abundant to allow a general interpretation of the site. Worm egg capsules and modern rootlets were frequently recorded, and it may be that the deposits had been much disturbed by post-depositional biological processes. The material apparently preserved by anoxic waterlogging may all be modern, having entered too recently to have decayed yet.

The snail species, though present in only modest numbers within any one context, together suggest grassland with some variation from dry, open to moist, shaded areas represented in the assemblages from different contexts.

The presence of frog and freshwater snail remains within context 498 (sample 7) may indicate that this ditch contained water for long enough to allow limited colonisation. The ?marine mollusc fragments from contexts 207 and 1069 (samples 2 and 24 respectively) and the fish bone from context 143 (sample 10) seem likely to be remains of food items transported to the site.

Bone

The animal bones recovered represent a very small hand-collected assemblage. All of the forty-six bone-bearing contexts were recorded, but not in great detail, as most contained too few fragments.

Most of the medieval material is fairly well preserved, ranging from fawn to brown in colour. However, the Iron Age/Romano-British bone (only 10 identifiable fragments) is very poorly preserved, all fragments being heavily eroded. Butchery and dog gnawing is evident on the remains in most contexts but not extensive. Fresh breakage is also evident on many of the bones due to ground conditions during excavation.

The identifiable animal bone, from all phases, includes remains of cattle (16 fragments), sheep/goat (21 fragments), pig (2 fragments), horse (16 fragments), dog (3 fragments) and fowl (2 fragments). Most of the horse remains are teeth, the remainder comprising metapodials, astragals and carpals. Only 8 fragments from the entire assemblage are measurable and only five mandibles and four loose teeth are represented.

A heavily eroded antler fragment, tentatively identified as red deer (*Cervus elaphus* L.), was recovered from context 1009 (fill of a Phase 1 ditch), and there was a human femur shaft from context 1069 (till I of a Phase 1 pit).

Determining the range and relative frequencies of species is problematic because of the small numbers of bones and the lack of systematic quantitative recovery procedures. Similarly, little information concerning site activity can be reconstructed; most of the bones were doubtless remains from food, while the antler may represent waste from a craft process.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In the absence of systematic research and survey, information regarding the archaeology of a particular area can be relatively sparse and of variable quality. The results of archaeological work instigated by a large scale development such as this pipeline, therefore, can provide valuable insights into the early landscape. The fieldwork reported on here has produced evidence for settlement in the Aylesby area from the first millennium BC to the sixteenth century.

Settlement development

The discovery and subsequent excavation of Iron Age and Romano-British features at Aylesby represent an important addition to our existing knowledge and understanding of the history and development of settlement in this area. Excavated sites of this date here are few and far between, and while the structural evidence recorded is not particularly extensive or complex, its value lies in what it implies about the nature of early settlement in this and similar locations. Widespread settlement of the relatively low-lying land east of the Lincolnshire Wolds in the prehistoric and Romano-British periods is suspected, but a number of factors have conspired to limit the availability of evidence. In particular, aerial reconnaissance, a useful technique in determining the extent of early settlement in some areas has, due to the unresponsive nature of the soils on the Lincolnshire Marsh (Outmarsh and Middlemarsh), proved a less than satisfactory tool.⁸⁸ Additionally, farming of large parts of the area during the medieval period - manifested as ridge and furrow - has obscured evidence of earlier settlement, making it less liable to detection by aerial reconnaissance or such techniques as geophysical survey.

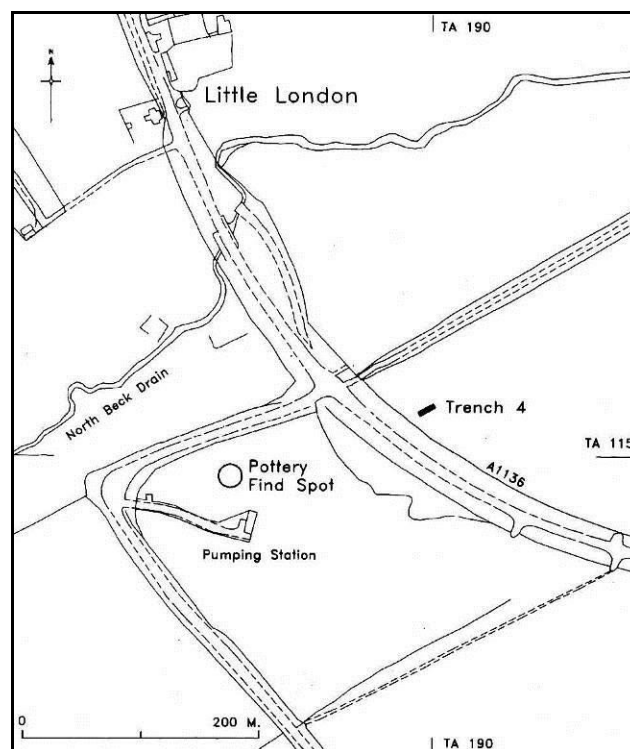


Fig. 21: Little London. Position of trial trench 4 and find spot of pottery.

Based upon Ordnance Survey 1:10,000 map © Crown Copyright.

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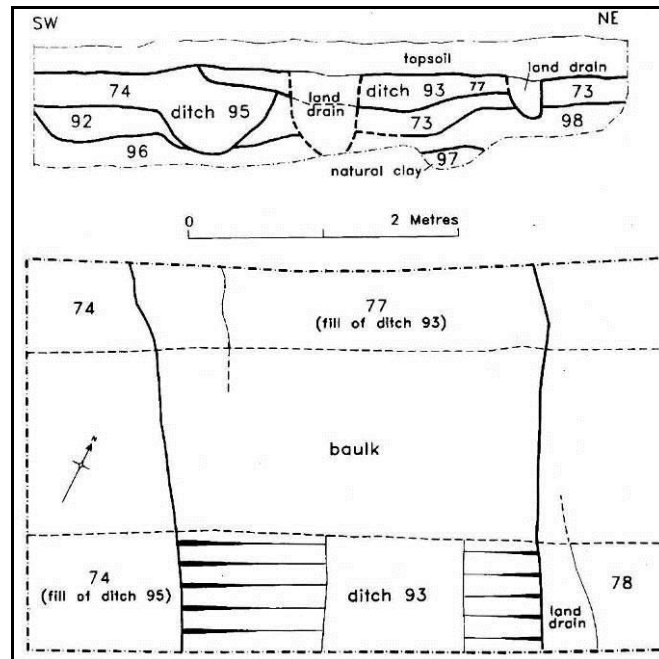


Fig. 22: Little London. Features at the western end of Trench 4 in plan and section. Image reproduced courtesy of the Society for Lincolnshire History & Archaeology © 1994

The remains found at Aylesby are likely to be typical of the character and status of Iron Age settlement sites in the coastal lowlands; a scattering of dispersed farmsteads of modest size.⁸⁹ It is possible that another such site lies within the complex of cropmarks south-west of the village (see Fig. 4). The juxtaposition of features of late Iron Age and early Romano-British date also makes it likely that some degree of settlement continuity is represented. By the later Roman period, however, the focus of occupation was elsewhere, and the finding of Roman artefacts and pottery nearer the modern village may hold clues as to its location; on purely morphological grounds, some of the cropmarks already mentioned are also likely candidates for a settlement of this date. It is assumed that through much of the Roman period, a dispersed settlement pattern of small farmsteads was to be found over much of the Lincolnshire Marsh, and a number of such sites have been excavated in recent years.⁹⁰

Though no evidence was found of Saxon occupation during the fieldwork, there was certainly settlement of that date nearby, as testified by the early Saxon sites at Laceby and Riby (see Archaeological Background, above). It is possible that settlement was focused on Barton Street in this period.⁹¹ The village of Aylesby, itself, was probably a later Saxon foundation, though the place-name is of Scandinavian origin, and contains a Scandinavian personal name.⁹² It is to the Anglo-Scandinavian period, following the creation of the Danelaw, that the buildings of Phase 3 at Aylesby are best assigned. As such, they represent valuable additions to a small but growing stock of buildings of this date from the north of England.

Pottery and finds suggest that this phase of occupation commenced in the tenth century. Aside from two sherds from Building 4, most of the early medieval pottery was scattered haphazardly in later contexts in Area W, with a single sherd of this date coming from a plough furrow which cut across the Phase 2 building in Area E. The two pieces of tenth- or eleventh-century metalwork were also recovered from later contexts in Area W. The sparsity of finds in direct association with the Phase 3 buildings may have more to do

with the contemporary rubbish-disposal regime - perhaps the spreading of manure on adjacent fields - than any reflection of site status.

It appears that the two excavated buildings may have lain on the periphery of a more extensive tenth- or eleventh-century settlement, with its focus nearer to that of the present village; the finds of Saxon and Viking metalwork in the proximity of Aylesby may confirm this. Furthermore, Domesday records a church at Aylesby in the eleventh century, implying a settlement of reasonable size. Its layout at this date can only be guessed at, though given that the alignment first observed in the placing of Buildings 4 and 5 remained influential upon later medieval buildings and land divisions, it is reasonable to assume that it may have occupied an area similar to that covered by the string of village plots running south from the church, and visible on aerial photographs (see Fig. 4); further discussion of this follows below. Much of the surrounding ridge and furrow may have been established by this time. To judge by the features of Phase 4A, there was little change in this pattern in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

The fourteenth century saw the setting out of new boundaries defined by ditches (Phase 4B), with a westward shift in the focus of occupation. The regular spacing of some of these features offered circumstantial evidence to confirm that they related to an episode of replanning. This was suggested by consideration of the four parallel north/south alignments. The centre-to-centre spacing of these may suggest that they were set out at intervals, from east to west, of c.21 in, c.20m and c. 1 Om. This may hint at the modular definition of plots, possibly employing multiples of a standard measure of length. This regularity may represent some form of imposed replanning of this part of the village by the landowner; the growth of sheep farming around this time, which required small enclosures for lambing, breeding, shearing etc., may have provided the impetus for the various subdivisions. Whatever the case, by the sixteenth century, or even earlier, the ditches appear to have silted up, and ridge and furrow is visible on aerial photographs running across the site of Area W (though none had survived modern ploughing by the time of the excavations), indicating conversion of village plots to arable use; this change has been noted elsewhere.⁹³ The documentary research shows a rise in population in the parish at the end of the sixteenth century, but a marked decline during the seventeenth century.

The layout of the medieval village

An extensive survey of the aerial photographic evidence for Aylesby (see Fig. 4) has revealed a wealth of detail about the former extent of the medieval village. At first glance the plan of the village appears fairly simple, with a two-row arrangement of plots along the main east/west street, and a single row ranged along Church Lane. However, while it is clear from their alignment that the plots along the main street were laid out with reference to it, those along Church Lane diverge from its line the further south they extend. Here, their edges are marked by another road, discernible on aerial photographs, which continues the line of the northerly part of Church Lane. This relatively regular arrangement of enclosures extending south from the church - in contrast to the more haphazardly arranged examples on the main road - reflects an alignment shown by excavation to have been prevalent in the tenth or eleventh centuries, and may represent a planned settlement block, distinct from those properties ranged along the main road. The excavated features

probably lay in the southernmost property in this block, the southern edge of which was defined by a stream or dyke, still extant; the medieval ridge and furrow respected the line of this watercourse (see Fig. 4). A recent survey of medieval villages in West Lindsey found that significant numbers displayed evidence of some sort of planning in their street systems, house sites and associated crofts or closes.⁹⁴ The fourteenth-century replanning noted in the excavations at Aylesby may have served to sub-divide a pre-existing arrangement of plots.

The scant documentary evidence suggests multiplicity of tenure at Aylesby, and the village plan may have resulted from the juxtaposition of separate holdings. For instance, the aerial photographic evidence implies that Temple Lane once continued further east than it does now; the twelfth-century holding of the Knights Templars may therefore have lain in this Southern part of the village.

The proximity of the church and manor house suggest that they were in some way connected, though the early date of the first church mentioned at Aylesby (Domesday) - presumed to have occupied the site of the present St Lawrence's - is not complemented by any information regarding the manorial site; they do, however, occupy a position pivotal to the two possible settlement blocks. On the manor site, beneath the present Manor Farm, the probable line of the moat and fishponds can be discerned amongst later garden features, while west of there, areas of ridge and furrow lie beneath the avenues of trees in Aylesby Park.

A painted reconstruction of the village in the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries, incorporating both the aerial photographic evidence and that derived from the excavations, has been prepared (Fig. 20). A new photograph was taken of the modern village (Fig. 2) and this was used as the viewpoint for the reconstruction. Assumptions have necessarily been made as to the position of buildings within the various plots where no evidence survives. Likewise, the physical appearances of the church and the moated manor as depicted in the painting are purely conjectural. The function of the various enclosures can only be guessed at, though horticulture and stockholding are likely. Areas used for arable farming - the ridge and furrow - are more obvious. The agricultural activities portrayed reflect the mixed farming regime assumed to have been practised at the time.

TRIAL EXCAVATION AND WATCHING BRIEF AT LITTLE LONDON (Figs 21 and 22)

The watching brief

In early May 1994, at the commencement of the pipeline construction, the Unit were called in to monitor the stripping of topsoil and ground preparation for the contractors' compound immediately north of the water pumping station at Little London, near Stallingborough. A number of medieval earthwork features, mainly ditches and banks, were levelled during the operation. A published survey of the earthworks shows these to be defining occupation plots along the south side of a track running west from the core of Stallingborough village.⁹⁵ A few sherds of pottery were recovered from the surface of the underlying clay subsoil (see find spot on Fig. 21). These comprised three conjoining body sherds of a late prehistoric handmade vessel, and a basal sherd of a thirteenth-to early fourteenth-century Orangeware jug.⁹⁶ This pottery is not included in the published pottery report.

Trial trench 4

As part of trial trenching undertaken to test the results of geophysical survey, a single trench was excavated at Little London, a short distance east of the A1136 (see Fig. 21). The trench, aligned roughly east/west, measured 15m by 3m and was machine-excavated down to the surface of the clay subsoil. A number of features were investigated, most of which turned out to be associated with relatively modern agriculture, though two successive ditches of medieval date were encountered (see Fig. 22), cut through layers of redeposited clay. A number of pottery fragments were recovered, discussed in the published pottery report (see above).

The earliest of these layers (94/96/98), overlying natural clay, contained medieval pottery, as well as residual late prehistoric and Romano-British pottery. This was sealed beneath a further deposit of clay (72/73/78/92), assumed to be a platform laid prior to occupation of this area in the medieval period; the platform may have been constructed in the thirteenth or fourteenth century and used into the sixteenth century. An extremely worn Roman coin was found in clay 73, identified as a sestertius, probably having Victory on the reverse, with a possible date range from the second half of the second century through to the middle of the third century.⁹⁷ The ditches cut through this platform, the earliest - 95 - being replaced by 93. The ditches marked the boundary of two adjacent medieval plots on the south side of a track leading west from Stallingborough (see under watching brief, above). Interestingly, no trace was found of the ridge and furrow recorded in the published earthwork survey, presumed to represent conversion of these plots to cultivation during the later medieval period. This may well have been the result of modern ploughing.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The excavations reported on here were sponsored by Anglian Water Services Ltd., and grateful thanks are extended to them, in particular Mr Les Davies, while their assistant resident engineer for the scheme, Miss Emma Broadbent, gave invaluable assistance throughout. Gifford and Partners were engaged as archaeological consultants for the project, and Ms Anne Thompson, Senior Archaeologist, monitored the work and undertook the necessary negotiations to enable its successful completion. Specifications for the various stages of evaluation and excavation were prepared by the County Sites and Monuments Officer, Ms Gail Falkingham.

The fieldwork itself was carried out by permanent and temporary staff of the Humberside Archaeology Unit, under the direction of Ken Steedman. Martin Foreman supervised the trial trenches and excavation of Area E, while Dave Tomlinson had responsibility for Area W. Jon Watt was Finds' Supervisor for the duration. The excavation team comprised: Austin Ainsworth, Roderick Dale, Phil Lings, Irene McGrath, Peter Makey, Wayne Playford, Tony Walsh, and Martin Wright. The site grid was laid out by surveyors from the County Estates Office.

Post-excavation work was carried out using both in-house and external specialists. Authorship of individual parts of the report are credited, but those involved would like to extend thanks to the following: Dr Rod Ambler (documentary research); Dr Johan Richards and Dr Martin Milieu (comments on the early buildings); Patrick Ottoway (comments of the horse trapping); Dr Martyr Pedley (petrology); Gail Drinkall (comments on buckle); Bryan Sitch (Roman coin); Jane Young (identification of the shell-tempered wares). In addition, the Environmental Archaeology Unit wish to thank English Heritage for allowing Annie Milles and Harry Kenward to work on the material from this site. Mike Hemblade plotted information from numerous aerial photographs of Aylesby.

The published illustrations are the work of Mike Frankland and John Marshall, while the latter also painted the reconstruction of medieval Aylesby. The excavation photographs were taken by Ken Steedman and printed by Bill Marsden.

This paper is fully grant-aided by Anglian Water Services Ltd.

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