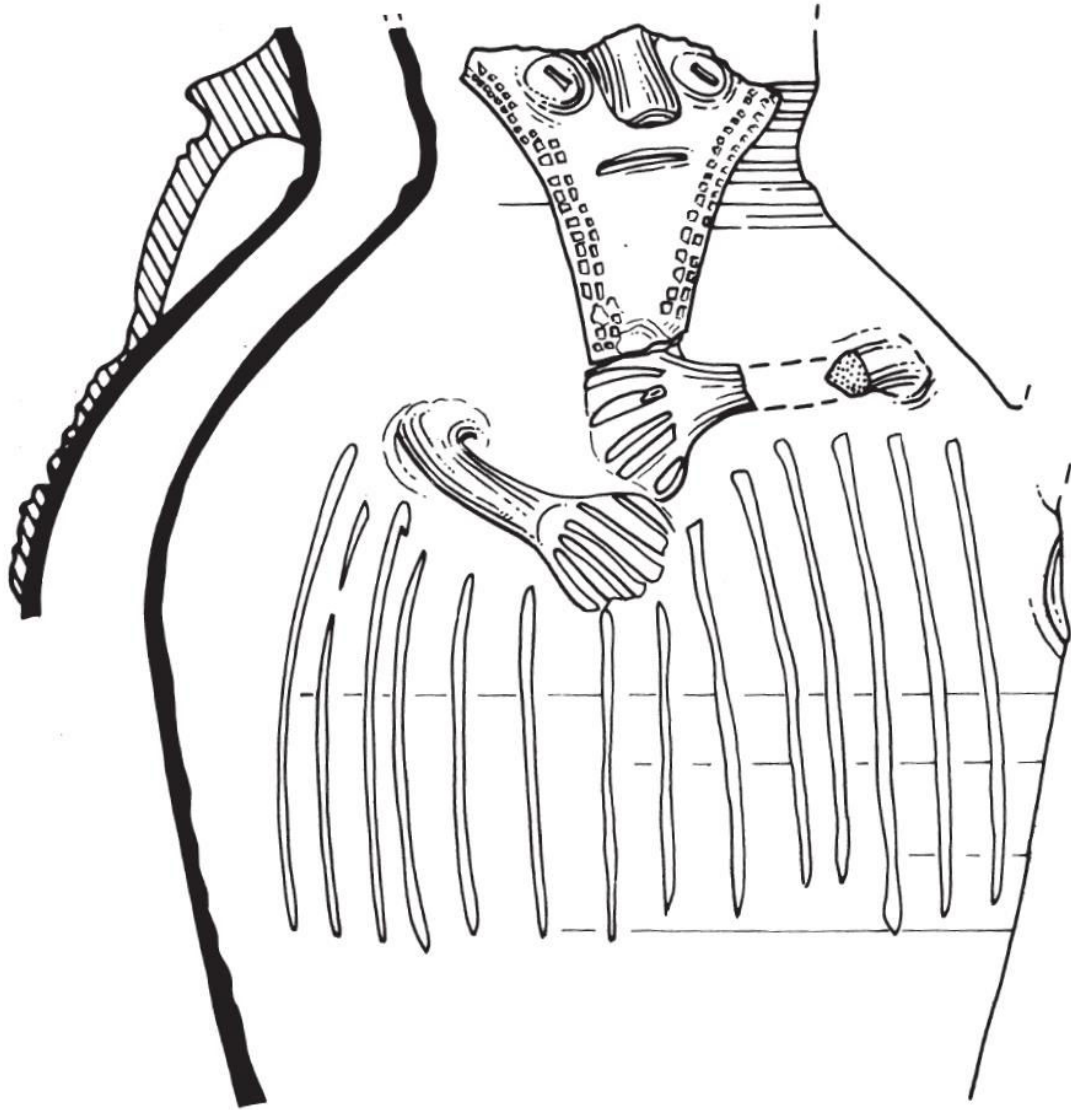


An introduction to the archaeological excavations carried out at Cartergate, Grimsby in 1994, 2009 and 2010

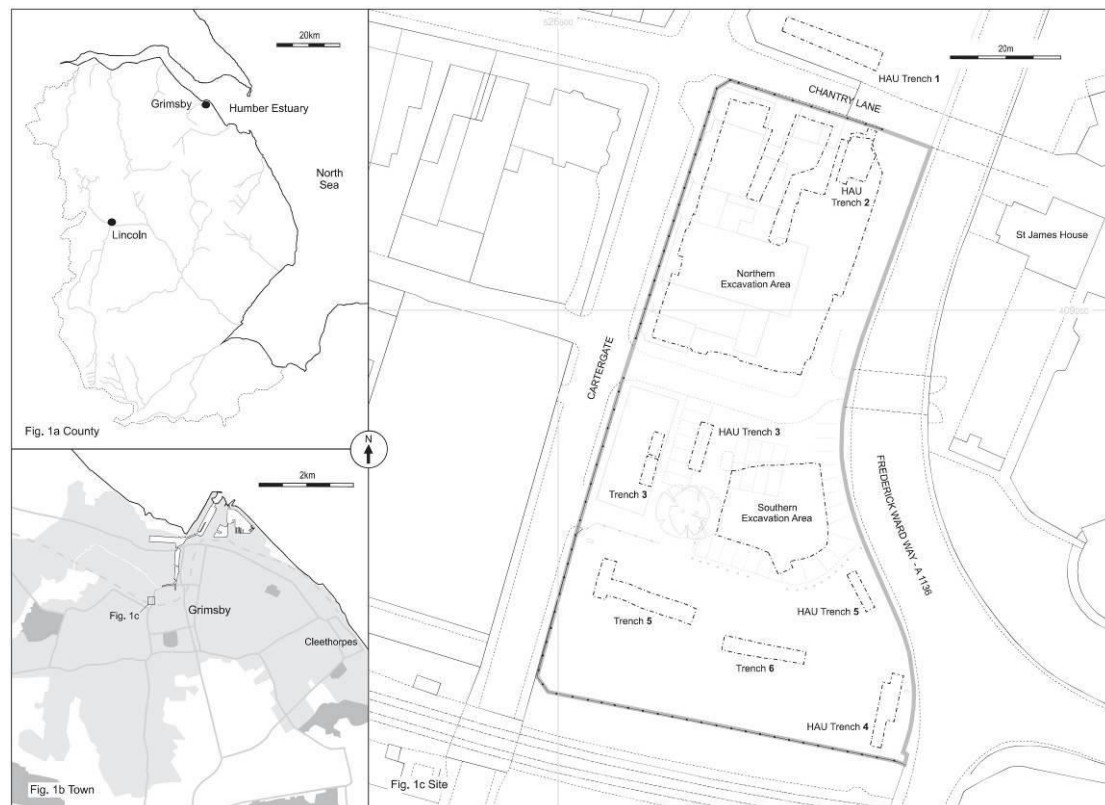


An introduction to the archaeological excavations carried out at Cartergate in 1994, 2009 and 2010

In 1994, 2009 and 2010 archaeological excavations were carried out on land adjacent to Cartergate in Grimsby. These excavations gave an unparalleled insight into the medieval borough of Great Grimsby, as well as preceding and later periods.

The 2009 and 2010 work was paid in part by Yorkshire Forward, the regional development agency for Yorkshire and the Humber (now dissolved), and North East Lincolnshire Council in order to reduce the barriers to development. The 1994 excavations were carried out by the Humberside Archaeology Unit, those in 2009 and 2010 by Pre-Construct Archaeological Services Ltd of Lincoln under the supervision of Entec UK Ltd

The full text from the 2009 and 2010 works has been published by the [Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology](#)



Site location plan with trench positions (1994 trenches prefixed with HAU)

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Prehistoric:

A small number of flint artifacts including a tool and manufacturing debris, dating from the Neolithic to Bronze Age (4000BC to 701BC), were found in archaeological deposits formed during later periods. The original deposits from which these artifacts were derived appear to have been entirely destroyed by later activity.

Roman:

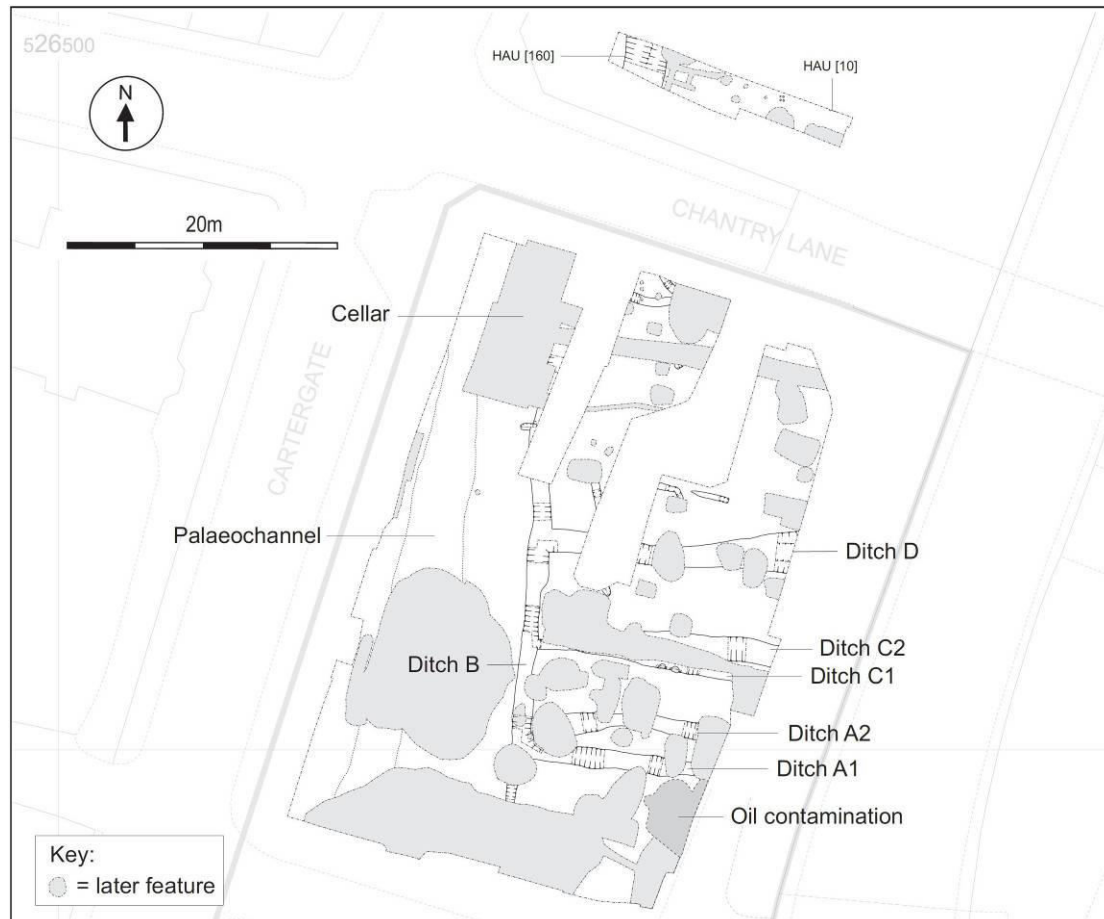
Enclosure ditches associated with the outer limits of a late Iron Age (800BC to 42AD), or more likely early Roman period (43AD to 409AD), agricultural settlement were discovered underneath the later medieval deposits.

Front Cover: *Illustration of a Scarborough Ware Face Jug from Cartergate*

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The settlement appears to have been in use for some considerable time. Evidence was uncovered for the occupants crops (Spelt Wheat and Barley), animals (cattle, sheep/goat, horse and/or donkey, pig and dog) and limited amounts of iron working debris.

The site forms part of a collection of similar sites from the late Iron Age and early Roman period that occupy land between the Wolds and the Humber Estuary with other known examples in Killingholme, Habrough, Stallingborough and the Weelsby area of Grimsby.



Plan showing Iron Age or Romano British features

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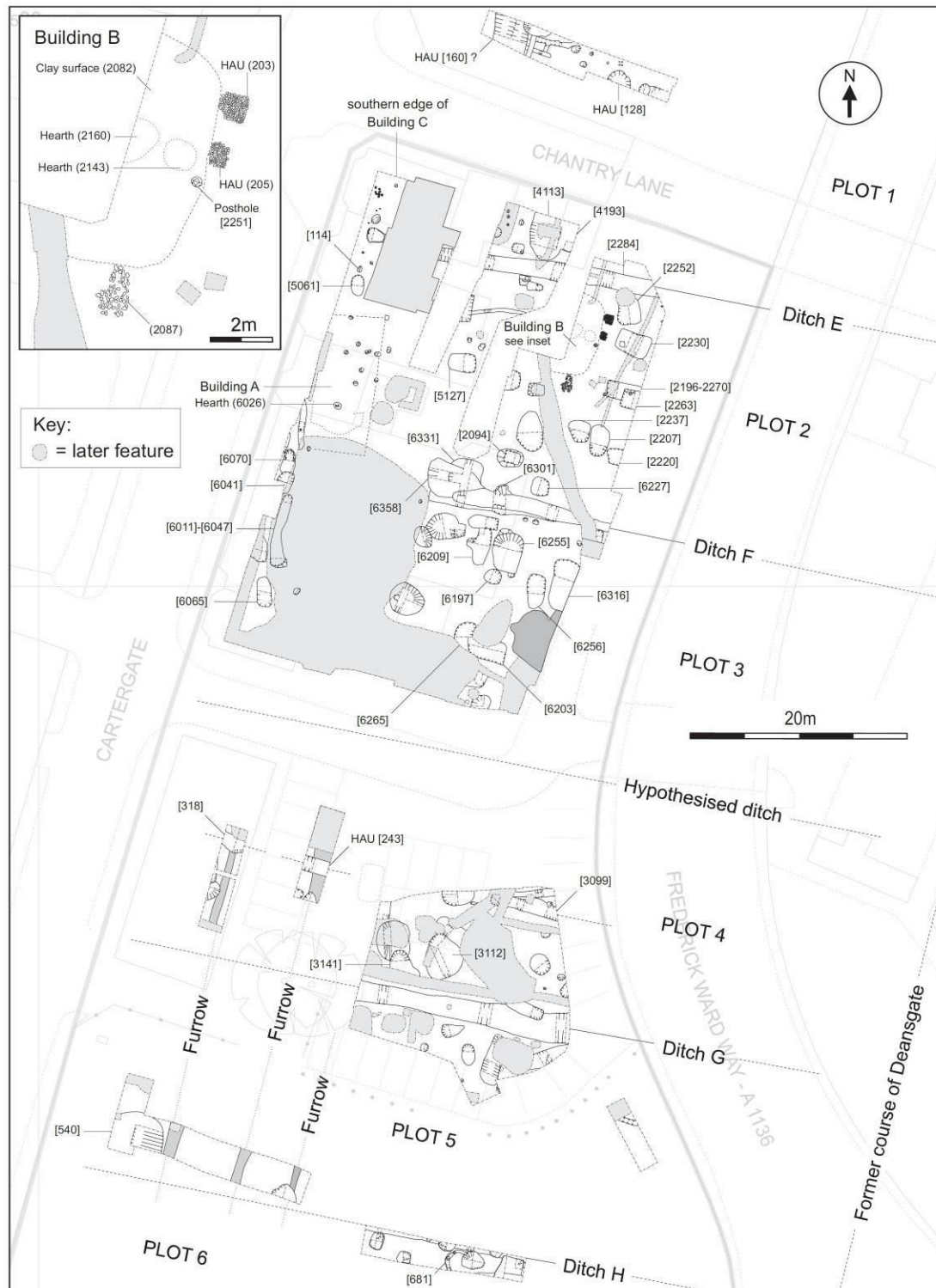
Medieval:

Evaluation work in 1994 and 2009, and open area excavations in 2010, uncovered deposits relating to 6 medieval burgage plots fronting onto Deansgate, running west to Cartergate.

The laying out of the burgage plots was preceded by agricultural use of the land from roughly the mid 11th to 12th centuries. The excavation uncovered several furrows from ridge and furrow based arable agriculture associated with Saxo-Norman pottery, although this may have been residual from earlier activity in the area.

In the late 12th century 6 long land parcels were laid out, each approximately 22 meters wide (the equivalent of a historic measurement called a Chain) and probably 60-70m long, with the still extant earthwork of a palaeochannel forming the rear boundary. Although it is not clear if Cartergate was in existence at this time, it is known that Chantry Lane was not. The establishment of the plots roughly coincides with the town's privileges as a

Borough, held informally from 1160-1 and confirmed in 1201 and 1227 by Royal Charter.



Plan of the 12th to 14th century features

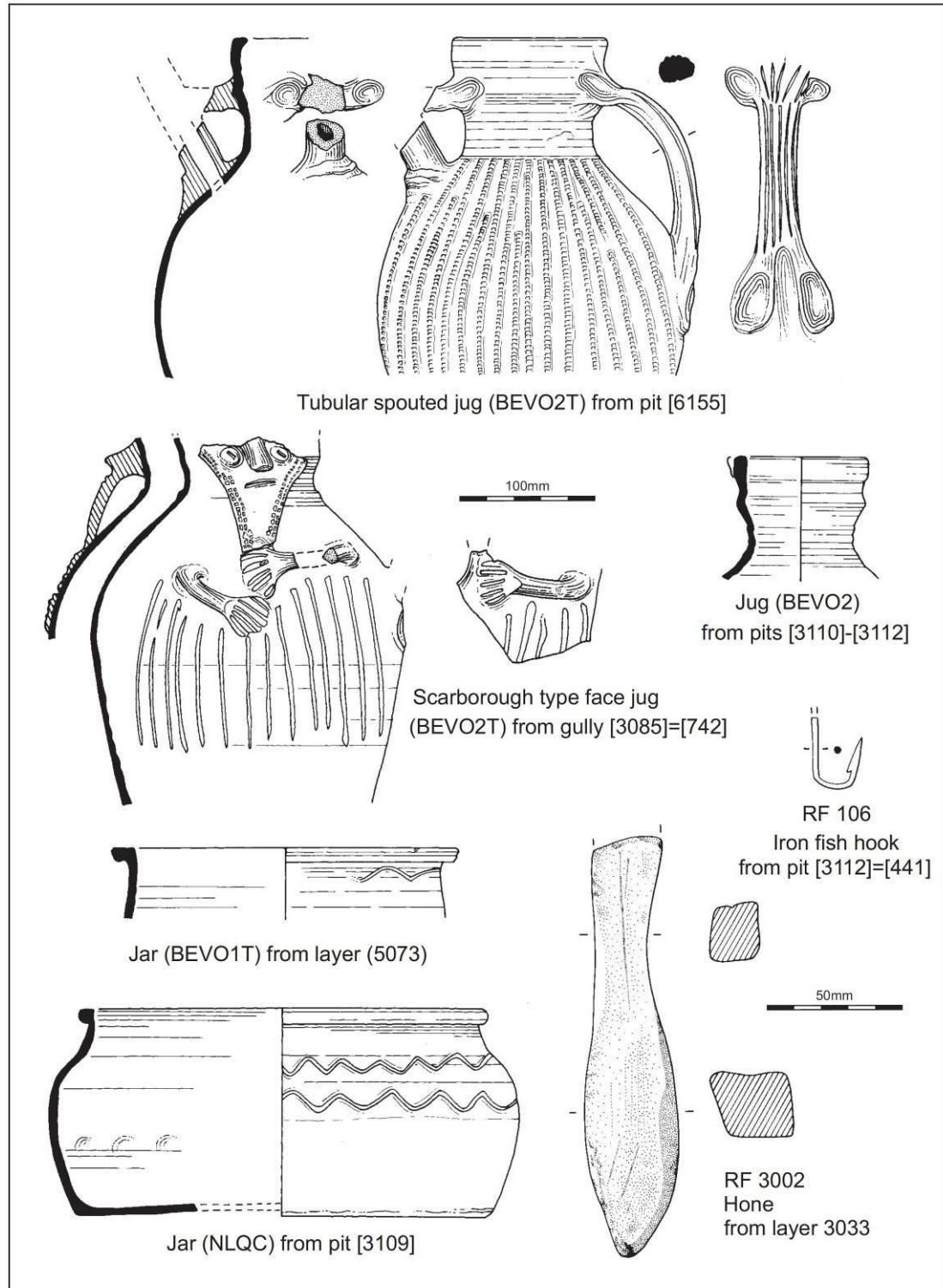
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Across the six excavated plots there are some definable similarities during the 12th to late 14th centuries:

3378 sherds of pottery were found, of which 63 date from the 11th to 12th centuries, 785 from the 12th to mid 13th and 1335 from the 13th to 14th. The greatest concentrations were of Beverly Orange wares, Humberwares,

Scarborough, Toynton, and North Lincolnshire Quartz and Chalk tempered wares.

Most of the wares that were found were produced in the region, some of which may have been made locally with only a small number of imports from the continent. The pottery is indicative of a reasonably affluent domestic context and there was little variation in pottery finds from across the plots.



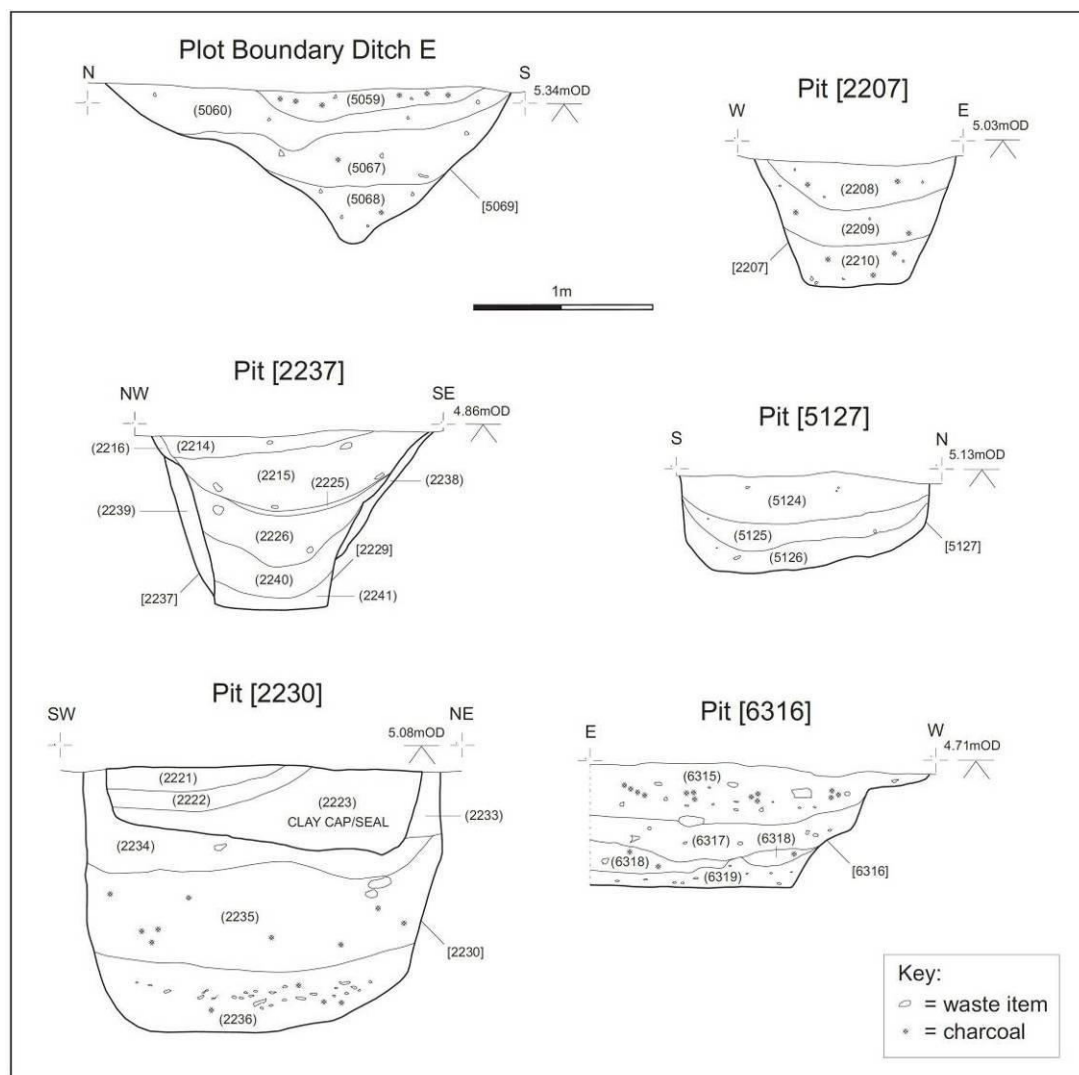
A selection of medieval finds

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In all six plots waste pits containing the remains of domestic refuse were found. These pits are mostly to the east of the site, closest to the presumed frontages along Deansgate.

The plots show evidence of small scale animal husbandry, perhaps keeping a milk cow, pigs and fowl, as well as the cultivation of legumes (peas, beans etc). Additions to this diet included cereals (mostly bread wheat but also oats, barley and rye), local fruit and nuts plus imported walnuts, figs and grapes. Meat animals were mostly sheep/goat but there was also consumption of cattle, pigs, domestic fowl and wildfowl. Horse and dog bones which had been butchered were also found, but this does not necessarily imply that the meat was used for food as dogs in particular could have been used by the furrier trade. Shellfish found on the site included oysters, whelks, cockles, mussels, periwinkles and dog-whelks. Fish bones were found in abundance, notably cod and ling but also herring and flatfish. However much of this may have been associated with the production of Stock-fish (see Plot 2).

The most common fuel used by the inhabitants of the plots appears to have been Alder charcoal. However, evidence of peat being used on the site, and chemical residues within metalworking debris which indicates the use of coal, show alternative fuels were also used.



Sections through medieval features

Plot 1 is the northern most of the plots investigated and is mostly overlain by Chantry Lane, which was probably constructed in the late 14th century. The plot was only partly excavated in 1994 which revealed evidence for possible clay extraction pits, dung heaps, a possible building platform and the later infilling of the palaeochannel in order to extend the plot westwards.



Medieval features shown during evaluation in Trench 6

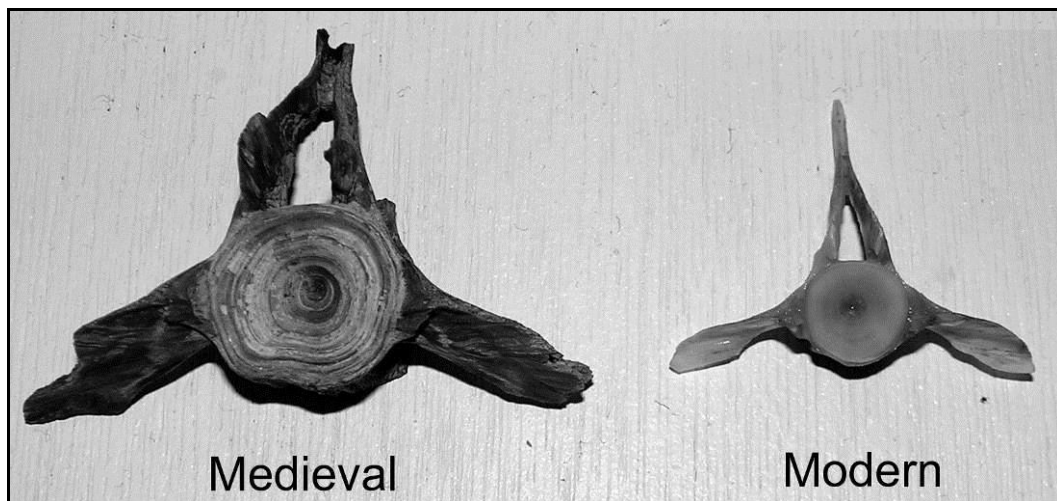
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Plot 2 was the most investigated of the plots. As well as the usual waste pits, the plot shows evidence for two separate industries taking place.

The production of Stockfish on the site for resale is shown by an abundance of head and lower vertebrae of large fish species such as Cod - the edible portions would have been taken off the site for sale. The production of this Stockfish appears to be related to a building and hearth which are located to the north east of the excavated area of the plot.

A significant quantity of leather waste from shoe making and cobbling is associated with the later period of occupation of the plot. A knife with a typical wear pattern for leather working and several butchered dog skeletons, probably stripped for their fur, are also likely to be associated with this use of the site.

A small quantity of hammerscale and fragments of smithing hearth base indicate possible ironworking on the site, but these could be residual finds from the earlier Roman settlement.



Comparison of a medieval cod bone from the 1980s Riverhead excavations to a roughly average modern cod.

Evidence for industries off site was found in the form of 2 timber planks which appear to have been re-used ship timbers – one of which is likely to be a manufacturing “second” as it does not appear to have been fully finished. The timbers are both made from high quality, locally grown Oak which was felled in approximately 1151 and 1185. These planks were within the deposits of one of the Cess pits and may have formed part of a floor or superstructure. The use of such high quality timber in this kind of structure, even second hand, suggests relatively easy access to these materials in the town and therefore the presence of shipyards.

Two cess pits within the plot have produced the remains of Whip and Maw worms, intestinal parasites which are associated with poor food preparation hygiene which allowed faecal matter to contaminate foodstuffs.

Plots 3 was well investigated but most of the early deposits were destroyed by 18th and 19th century excavations.

The most interesting features of plot 3 were the possible fragments of an oven or kiln and some metalworking debris. However, only a small amount of these artifacts were found so it cannot be confirmed that metalworking was undertaken within this plot.

Also found in this plot was a fragment of Norwegian Ragstone that had been used as a Hone or Whetstone, which was one of four found across the site and is the only firm link to Scandinavia found during the excavations.

Plot 4 was only partly excavated and had suffered greater damage by modern features. The plot appears to have been sub-divided, but it was not clear what purpose this division had.

Of interest was the very rare find of a medieval fish hook which had been plated to prevent corrosion.

Further finds of smithing hearth base were made but, again, this could be material left over from the Roman period enclosure underlying the medieval layers.

A small area of Plot 5 was excavated and it was found to have a higher natural ground level which had resulted in a greater level of disturbance of medieval archaeological deposits by post-medieval activity.

Plot 6 was the least well investigated but was noted to contained medieval waste pits similar to those of the other 5 plots.



Waste/cess pit 2230 showing clay capping of the fill

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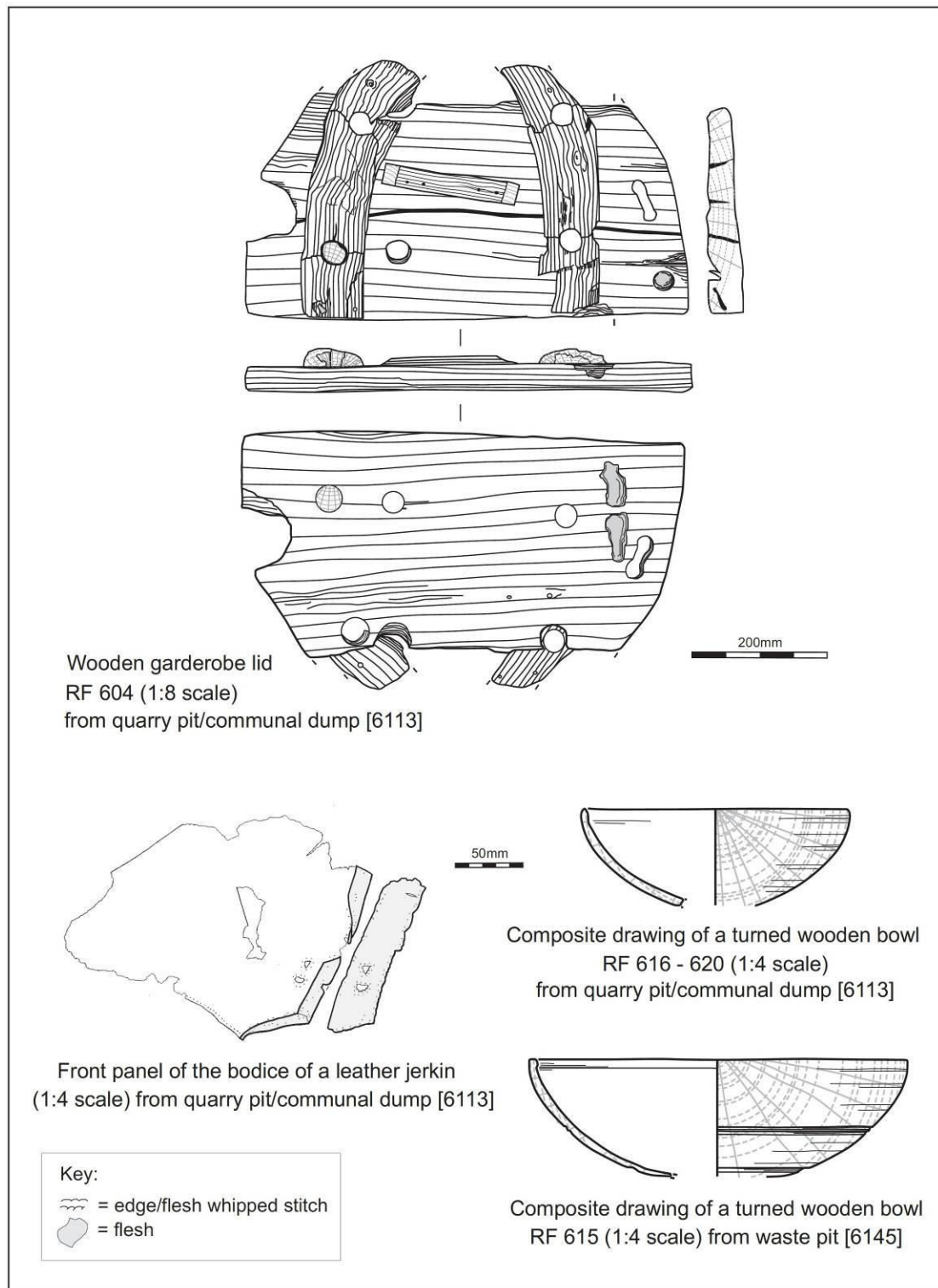
Late Medieval and Post Medieval:

From the late 14th century to the early 17th century the occupation of the plots appears to have been of a much lower density; the archaeological deposits are characteristic of levelling and clearing of the medieval buildings and the re-use of the back-plots for horticulture rather than craft and industry.

Plots 1 and 2 appear to have been merged together as the boundary ditch is no longer maintained. In the 16th century a brick silled and timber framed building was constructed. Unfortunately not enough was excavated to attempt to characterise the building further.

Plot 3 becomes associated with cobblers waste from the late 14th century. Finds include the relatively intact remains of a 16th century welshed shoe and part of the front bodice panel from a leather jerkin. Several wooden bowl fragments are also associated with this period of use.

In the 16th to early 17th century period substantial dumps of bone and horn cores were made. These are likely to be associated with documentary evidence of “illegal” dumping of animal remains south of Chantry Lane during the same period.

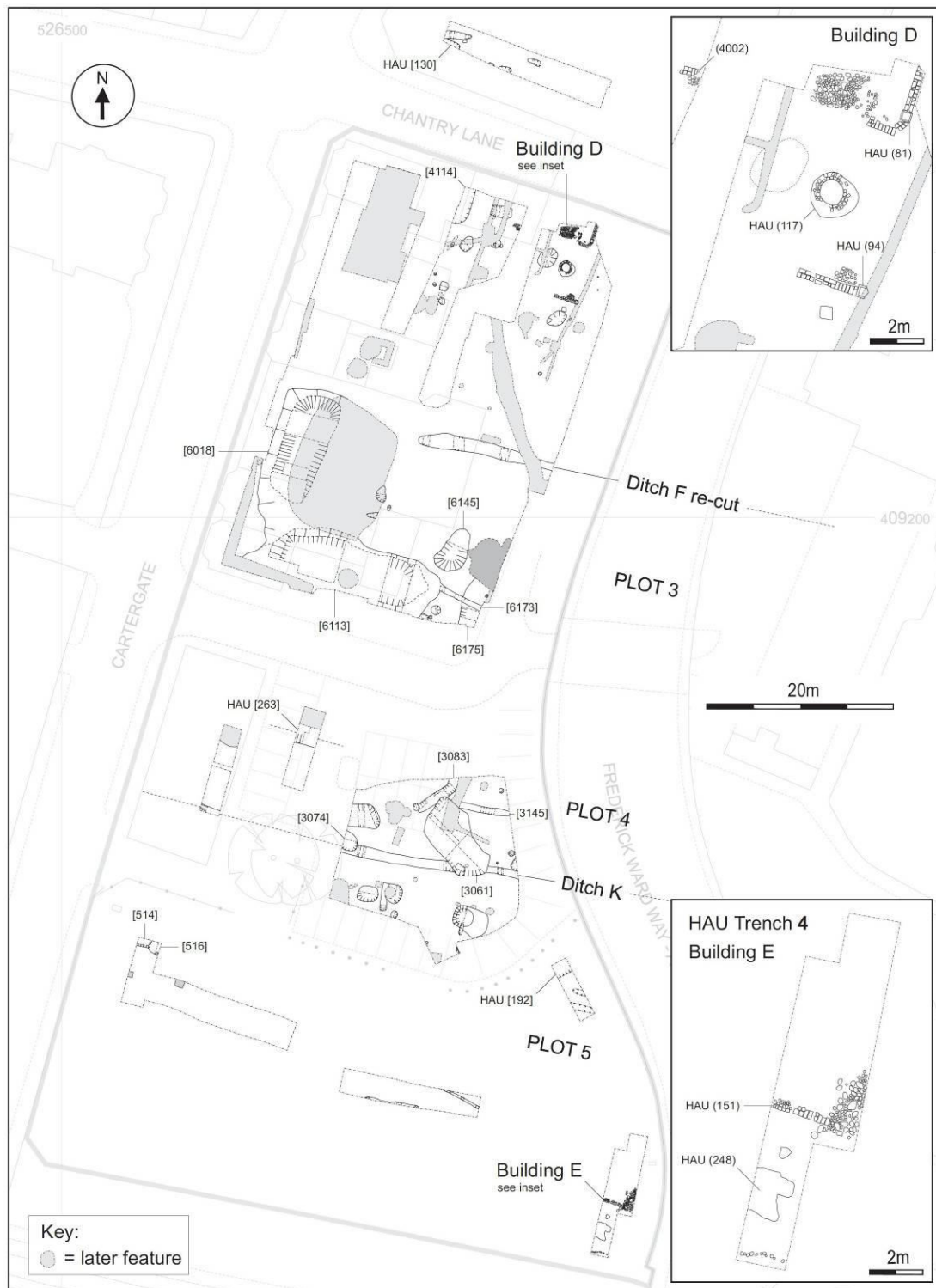


Rare wood and leather objects recovered from mid 16th century deposits.
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Clay extraction pits were also excavated during this period, indicating that there was still a requirement for clay to maintain the buildings in the area.

The boundaries of Plot 4 were re-established during the late 14th to 15th centuries which shows continued occupation. But, by the 16th to early 17th centuries the plot appears to have been abandoned or neglected. Plot 5 contains large pits which could only be loosely dated to the late 14th through to early 17th centuries. A brick and cobble floor is associated with this period but could not be fully investigated.

Plot 6 appears to have stayed in use during the 14th to early 17th centuries, evident by the continued dumping of domestic waste. A probable timber framed and brick silled building containing a hearth or kiln and dating to 16th or 17th century was found but could not be fully investigated.



Plan of the 14th to 17th century features

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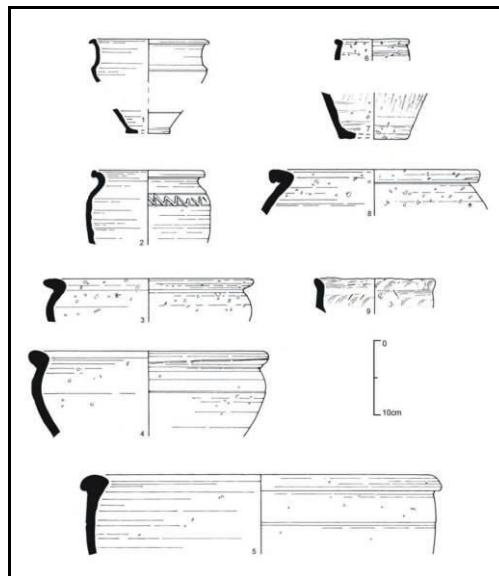
From the mid 17th to 18th centuries the site was re-organised wholesale into a paddock with a large pond.

Conclusion:

The excavations at Cartergate have produced the most complete picture of medieval Grimsby to date and add substantially to the archaeological understanding of East Coast ports.

Documentary evidence shows us that Great Grimsby was an important local port associated with the food and agricultural industries of northern Lincolnshire (although it was not involved in the wool trade in any significant way) and helped to supply a wide area around the North Sea. Documents also show that the fishing industry was important to the town, particularly the seasonal herring fisheries.

The archaeological excavations have helped to back up the written accounts of the town, as well as providing information that historical documents cannot, such as land divisions, personal hygiene, and specific details of diet. They have therefore significantly enriched our knowledge and appreciation of the town's past development.



Illustrations of some of the Romano British pottery found at Cartergate

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