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AN  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF  
AT  
**TOYNTON ALL SAINTS**  
LINCOLNSHIRE  
REPORT BY  
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April 1991



TOYNTON ALL SAINTS 1991:

**Archaeological Watching Brief on Site of Car Park and Playground  
Extension at Toynton County Primary School**

Report by Hilary Healey, NDD, M.Phil, FSA

**INTRODUCTION**

**Toynton All Saints: the Medieval Pottery Industry**

Toynton All Saints is one of only two places in Lincolnshire at present known to have been the home of a major medieval as well as a post-medieval pottery making industry, the other being the small market town of Bourne. Pottery was manufactured at Toynton between the late 13th and the 17th century, a remarkable instance of continuity not evidenced in any other Lincolnshire village. The craft was carried out only during the summer, the rest of the year being given over to agriculture.

The village lies on the southern edge of the Lincolnshire Wolds, with its main street descending from above the 45m contour down to the fen edge at 15m OD. The soil is sandy, overlying Spilsby sandstone and clay, the latter being the raw material for the medieval pottery industry. Peat for fuel was available in the fen due south of the village.

Because pottery manufacture took place here over so many centuries there are few parts of the present village where there is no evidence of the activity. Observation and recording, especially by the late Mrs E.H. Rudkin and by Dr. P. Hayes for the Fenland Survey Project, has identified at least sixteen sites where pottery 'wasters' from kiln firings have been found, all of which lie close to the main village street. Three kilns of different dates were excavated in the 1950s and 1960s (Fig. 1).

**THE SITE**

The watching brief was necessitated due to plans by the Lincolnshire County Council to extend the school playground and car park facilities north of the school, on the west side of the High Street. Proposals involved some removal and relocation of soil to create a level area for the laying of hardcore and tarmac. Service and drainage trenches were also to be dug.

Quantities of medieval pottery 'wasters' had previously been recorded in the former school garden south of the school (1911), in the same area after it became a private garden (1928) and in the grass field to the rear of school and house (1960s), where mounds described as 'long waste heaps' were also noted. It was anticipated that the north side of the school might produce evidence of one or more pottery kilns, or traces of associated medieval buildings.

The site lies just on the 30m contour. Before work started there was a slight downward slope from the road westwards towards the playing field at the southern foot of the hill. A small, relatively modern bungalow on the site was demolished prior to redevelopment.



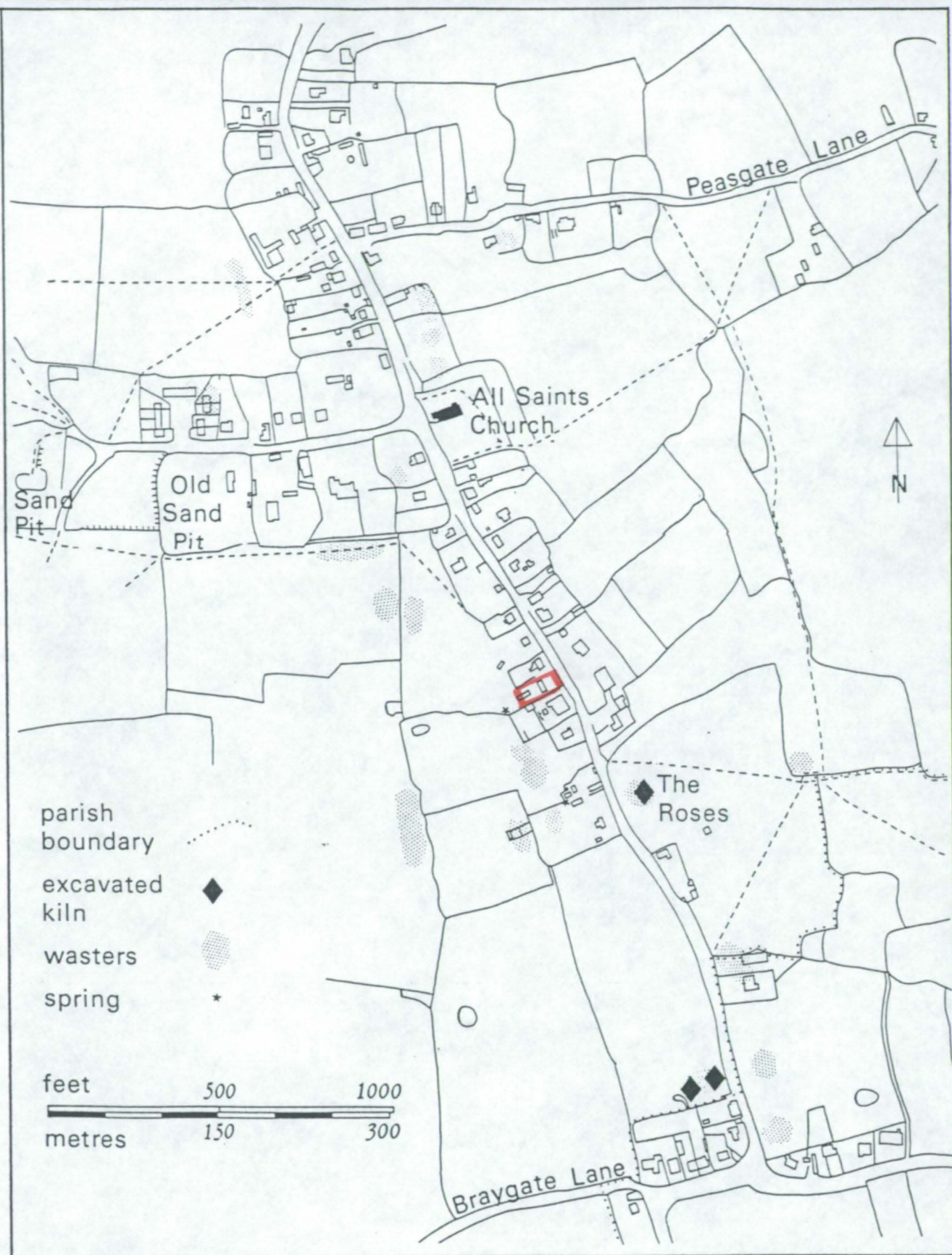


Fig.1. Toynton All Saints, Lincolnshire



## RESULTS

Lincolnshire County Council arranged for the watching brief to be carried out and observation began on 5 February, 1991, the week which heralded the beginning of the worst weather of the 1990-1991 winter season! Subsequent visits took place at intervals during February and March, the length of visit depending on the nature of the work in progress. In addition to observation on the main site the opportunity was taken to look at a water pipe trench being laid across the west end of the site and continuing northwards uphill. Spoil from the site which had been deposited in the field west of the school was also examined. Where found, examples of the typical reddish pottery with its olive green glaze were collected for washing and labelling off site, and a selection of the forms retained.

Only a few potsherds were recovered from the garden soil even after removal of vegetation, with more pieces being collected as soil was moved around the site. The bungalow's brick foundations, to a depth of approximately 80cm from ground level, had been dug into natural sand and sandstone, large lumps of which were turned up by the JCB. No signs of earlier buildings on the site were present, although the traditional 'mud and stud' construction characteristic of the area would not necessarily leave traces.

The deepest drainage works at the rear of the site cut straight through the sand into blue clay. The remaining service trenches, which were less than 1m deep, were mainly dug into disturbed or made up soil and produced no information apart from a few potsherds both to the front and rear of the school building.

Two slight concentrations of pottery were noted, one alongside the existing playground opposite the north-west corner of the school, the other close to the northern boundary of the site, centred 22.2m from the road edge (Fig. 2). Both consisted of a scatter of sherds over an area of no more than two metres across. A number of sherds were found in the removed and dumped soil. At no time was any soil discoloration seen, such as black ash or reddened and burnt earth, as might be expected in the vicinity of a kiln.

## FINDS

No finds other than ceramic material were recovered. Several pieces of medieval flat clay roof tile were collected, one with a large tapered hole (from 15mm diameter) made to take a wooden peg.

The locally made pottery consists chiefly of rims of pancheon (milk pan) of types ranging in date from the 15th to the 17th century, with a few jug bases, rims and handles, as well as fragments of pipkins.

Two items of non-Toynton ware of the 17th century were recovered, a fragment of pipkin probably made in Boston, and part of a saltglazed jug. A selection of the pottery was photographed. Finds, colour transparencies and colour prints of the site will be deposited with this report at the City and County Museum, Lincoln.



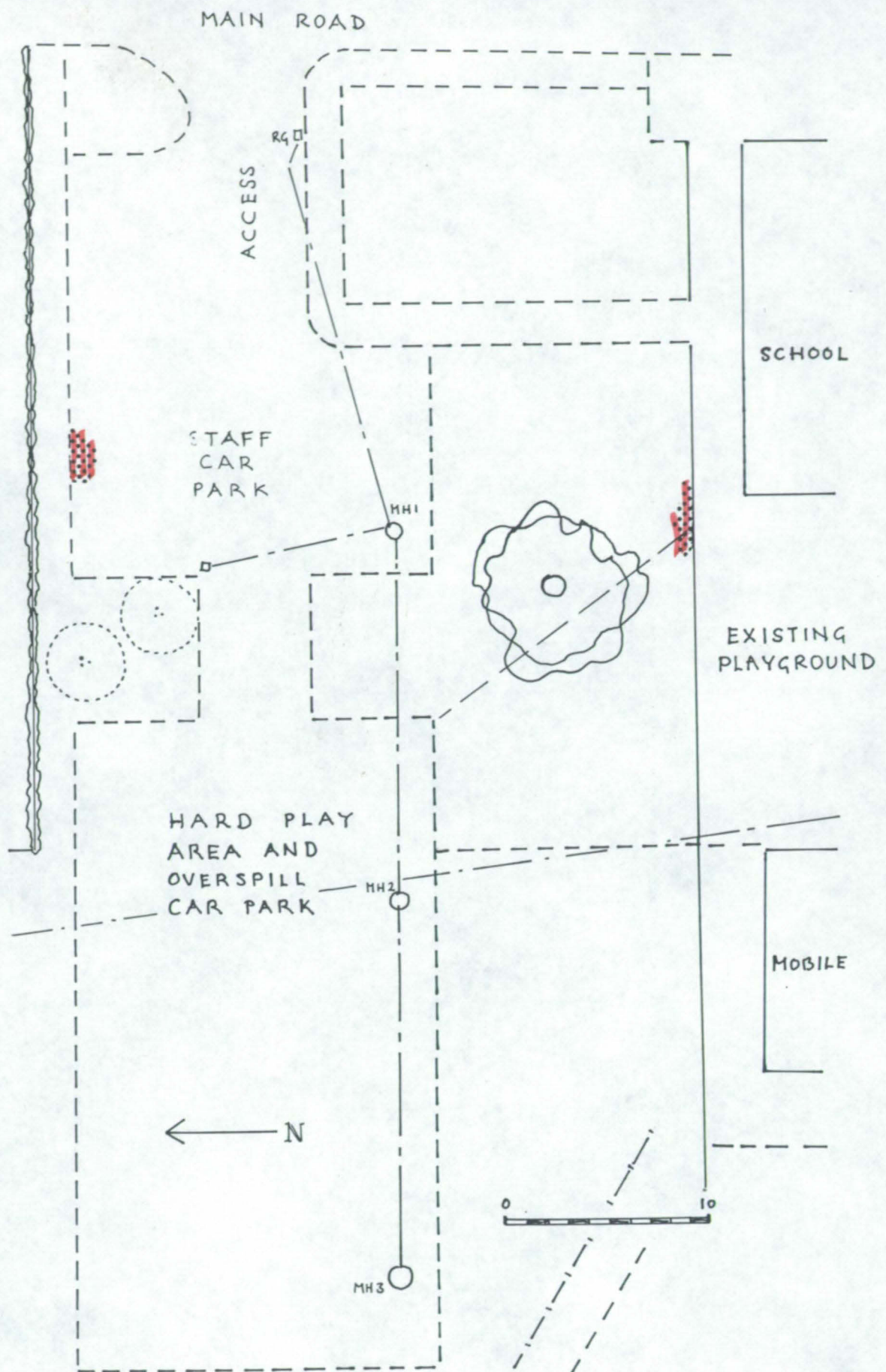


Fig.2. Sketch plan of site, Toynton All Saints  
Pottery concentrations shown in red over dots.

## CONCLUSION

The site itself produced less archaeological material than had been expected, a marked contrast to the dense concentrations of pottery fragments known from elsewhere in the village. However, although no actual kiln was found, the opportunity to watch these works has provided hitherto unrecorded evidence of possible roof tile manufacture at this important centre. It is already known that decorated floor tiles were made here in the 13th century. The forms of pottery vessel from the site indicate manufacture or during the 15th century onwards.

## POSTSCRIPT

Two useful records were made as a result of watching works connected with the site. During examination of site material dumped in the pasture west of the school mentioned earlier it was noted that a recently constructed pond (approximate National Grid Reference TF 393634) had brought up large quantities of sherds.

The water pipe line at the rear of the site extended back up the hill, and a small group of sherds, some belonging to one vessel, were found with traces of burning at a depth of just under half a metre at NGR TF 3932 6357. This was west of the boundary of the nearest garden (immediately north of 'Southview') but could suggest debris from a nearby kiln site. Remains were of jugs and coking pots of 14th century date.

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## REFERENCES

Healey, R.H. (1976) The Medieval and Sub-medieval Pottery of Lincolnshire (unpublished M.Phil. thesis, University of Nottingham)

Healey, R.H. (1984) Toynton All Saints: Decorated Jugs from the Roses Kiln in A Prospect of Lincolnshire, ed. N.Field and A.White.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Toynton All Saints: View of site looking south, with the East Fen beyond



Toynton All Saints: examples of pottery and tile