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# LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

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HARMSTON AND COLEBY REPLACEMENT WATER MAINS:

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING PROJECT

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#### Introduction

A replacement water main was laid through the Lincolnshire villages of Harmston and Coleby during 1993 by contractors working for Anglian Water Services Ltd. (Fig.1). Lindsey Archaeological Services was commissioned to monitor the works and to record all traces of archaeological remains exposed or disturbed in the process. The engineering operations were conducted as two separate schemes but the projects were combined for archaeological purposes. An assessment of previously recorded sites and findspots in the vicinity was prepared in advance of the work but the route was not anticipated to pass through any known archaeological sites apart from the medieval or earlier curtilages of the village centres. Site observation was maintained on an intermittent basis by N. Field, C. Palmer-Brown and the author between 4.5.93 and 15.9.93.

Coleby and Harmston are both settlements sited on the edge of a pronounced scarp, with the land falling away abruptly to the west (Pl.1). The edge of the hilltop has restricted the spread of settlement (Pl.2); each village consists of several narrow village streets with a single road leading down the hill. A minor communication route along the edge of the scarp may have linked Coleby with Harmston (and perhaps Waddington) in the medieval period but only short stretches of this are metalled, including Hill Top Road in Harmston.

#### Desktop Assessment

Prehistoric finds have been reported from Harmston, including a Neolithic perforated stone adze (SMR 96SE L), a Bronze Age flint arrowhead (SMR 96SE B) and a cushion macehead (LAS). These indicate a continuing level of human activity but need not suggest any contemporary settlement or funeral site. No Iron Age material has been reported.

Substantial quantities of Romano-British settlement material have been located in the vicinity of the two parishes, especially at Coleby. Some of these finds have been made during large-scale limestone quarrying, but more recent metalwork discoveries have reflected the use of metal detectors. A large 3rdC Roman coin hoard located during 1975 in Coleby (SMR 96SE AD) was removed and dispersed by the finder in an attempt to avoid legal consideration of the find (Higginbottom 1976). A series of almost coincidental occurrences alerted the local museum and much of the hoard of 15-20,000 coins was recovered. A successful prosecution of the unauthorised finder followed the Treasure Trove verdict. Further hoards were located nearby at Waddington in following years, producing a cluster along the route of Ermine Street. It is likely that unreported removal of metal

artefacts continues, affecting the completeness of the Sites and Monuments Record for the area.

Romano-British occupation material has been found in quantity close to a former quarry in Coleby on several occasions since 1954 (SMR 96SE H). A possible building has been noted in a field to the west of the quarry. Romano-British building foundations had been claimed for an earthwork site in Dovecot Lane, Coleby but this interpretation was discounted after a site visit by archaeologists assessing a planning application in 1981.

The Roman road to the Humber, Ermine Street, passes to the west of both Harmston and Coleby but neither settlement has developed beside its metalled surface. The route remains as a landscape feature about 1.4km from the village cores; a network of parallel and linking roads has developed to replace it. It is likely that the two village centres became established on a direct linking route, probably along the hill crest, which has since become redundant. The present Navenby to Bracebridge Heath road, the A607, represents a successor to the Roman road but one which avoids the narrow streets of each village.

The placename evidence of the two parishes suggests very different influences during the late 9th-10th centuries. Coleby is thought to indicate Danish influence, close to Boothby and Navenby, but Harmston is an English placename beside Waddington and the Hykehams (Hill 1990, 24).

An Anglo-Saxon cemetery was disturbed in the grounds of the Old Park by Coleby Hall in about 1833. 80 human skeletons were recorded, together with ceramic vessels and metalwork identified as spears and brooches. A further Anglo-Saxon cemetery from Coleby is listed on the Heritage Trust for Lincolnshire (HL) files as found in 1897 but no more precise location is known (HL 19.10). These entries may refer to the same site, possibly to further discoveries at a later date. Both parish churches have the same dedication to All Saints and contain Anglo-Saxon architectural features. Saxon cross fragments are known from each village, incorporated into later buildings on manorial sites.

During the 1350-60s the Coleby manorial buildings were described as ruinous, following plague and consequent greater labour mobility (Platts 1985, 170). This record is likely to apply generally to the economic condition of the village.

Harmston parish was enclosed in 1758; a contemporary period of rising cereal prices provided an opportunity for land rents to be raised on two occasions; similar action occurred in Coleby (Hill 1966, 112). The rises were the subject of complaint but reflected a better return on arable farming and possibly a slightly wealthier community. No plan of the Enclosure survives.

The existing village layout is of a network of narrow village streets at the hill top, with stone buildings and property walls except where modern housing infilling has taken place.

Harmston Hall and grounds became a Colony for Mental Defectives by 1933 and continued in use as a hospital until the mid 1980s.

### Results

#### Harmston (Fig.2)

Four wall foundations were exposed in the pipe trench to the west of the School Lane/Hill Top Road junction. These were all observed in section and after disturbance by the machine bucket; the alignment was not clear but all seemed to be approximately parallel, suggesting that they were contemporary and perhaps served similar functions. Wall 3 lay close to the abrupt bend half-way down Station Road. The foundation was 0.3m wide and survived to a height of about 0.4m, 0.7m below the present road surface. The wall was at a NW-SE alignment and had been cut into grey silty clay underlying successive layers of stone and pebble road metalling (Pl.3). The foundation fabric consisted of small lumps of limestone, mortar and red broken bricks (dimensions: 110mm x 70mm x ?mm) with no frog. Unfortunately there was no reliable dating evidence for the wall or the overlying surfaces. Wall 4 crossed the trench 4.5m higher up the slope. Very little remained of this stone foundation in the trench sides (Pl.4).

It appeared that these two wall foundations might represent a defined path or trackway across the hillside; it was noted that a hollow-way survives in the field to the north of the road, providing access to farmland. It is likely that the track originally continued further to the SE beyond the position of the present road. This might be associated with a narrower precursor of Station Road, or date to an entirely different road system before landscaping and emparking of the hillside.

Another wall footing, 5, was observed higher up the hill, about 38.5m SE of Wall 3. These foundations were 0.28m wide and survived to a height of at least 0.25m, extending lower than the trench base. The stone rubble remains were cut into, but also covered by, a thick deposit of black clay below the stone metalling of the road foundation. The black clay extended up the hillside towards the hilltop junction. Another stone rubble wall foundation, 6, was identified 13m SE of wall 5. The foundation was 0.3m wide but had not been dug as deep as the other walls (Pl.5).

These foundations of four demolished walls pre-date the existing north edge of the road and may reflect a pattern of land definition preceding the landscaping of this hillside. The narrow spacing between these parallel walls may be indicative of medieval crofts of which no other

trace remains visible on a steep hillside no longer used for housing.

A pit, ditch or other localised disturbance (7) was seen in section 4m SE of wall 5, extending 2m along the trench as a deposit of limestone brash mixed in a dark brown sandy loam matrix under the earliest road metalling layer (Pl.6). The trench section was not informative but the feature was thought to extend lower than the pipe trench base, cutting into the black clay.

A stone lined drain, 8, was truncated by the water trench, where it joined Station Road from Hill Top Road in a N-S direction (Pl.7). The stone slab cover for this drain lay 0.6m below the present road surface and the culvert had been cut into the orange loam mixed with ironstone which was interpreted as a hillwash deposit (Pl.8). The original rubble road foundation material partly filled the drain construction trench; the drain pre-dated the earliest metalling for the road up Station Road but it may have been inserted immediately before the rubble was laid.

A very similar drain, 9, entered Station Road from School Lane, in an E-W direction (Pl.9). It was 0.35m wide and had been cut into orange sandy loam. It lay 0.65m below the present road surface and 0.2m below the base of the road foundation material (Pl.10). There was no visible sign of the original trench for inserting the drain but it pre-dated the earliest surviving road metalling. It was assumed that both drains 8 and 9 were contemporary and represented a post-medieval road improvement project. Both drains were close to an existing but disused village pump and may have removed excess water from it.

The sequence of soils revealed in section on Station Road proved to be very different from that on the hill top where the minor village streets passed through the centre of the post-medieval and modern settlement. Along School Lane and the other lanes there was no evidence of any accumulation of settlement deposits; the tarmac road surface lay immediately above undisturbed limestone platelets. The trenches were slow to excavate mechanically and produced no evidence for archaeological activity. The level of archaeological input was reduced but the contractors remained vigilant and on occasion reported possible items of interest.

A pit or trench (1) visible in the trench section in Church Lane, close to the former Harmston Hospital, was investigated and found to contain a very small sherd of Saxon pottery (identified as probably Maxey Fabric B), several pieces of animal bone and teeth. The assemblage appeared to include domestic rubbish; slight butchery marks were evident on some of the cattle bones. The feature was 0.6m W-E and over 0.75m deep, cut into natural limestone. The west side was vertical but the east face was less clearly defined (Pl.11). No trace of

the disturbance was found in the southern side of the pipe trench but the the contractors described the 'softer' ground as if much of the trench width had been through the fill. The northern extent is not known. The lower fill was a soft silty clay with limestone lumps, several mussel shell fragments and some charcoal flecks. The lenses of soil interspersed with limestone pieces reminded the recorder of a building wall 'robber trench' and was not thought to have been a rubbish pit.

#### Coleby

The street surfaces of tarmac had been laid onto natural limestone with virtually no intervening rubble foundations of earlier metalling, even close to long established buildings (Pls.2 and 12). A restricted area of disturbance was noted in the trench section close to the west end of Church Lane (Pit 12) but no datable material was seen (Pl.13). The road had previously been excavated for other services and this might have represented part of the fill of an adjacent trench viewed at an angle.

One small sherd of Saxon pottery (10) was found in excavated spoil close to the All Saints Churchyard, but no features or further artefacts were visible in the trench sections.

#### Finds Summary

HP 93	1	SK9716 6223	Rubbish pit in trench section: 1 small sherd Saxon pot: Maxey fabric B; cattle bones and teeth, some with butchery marks; fragments of natural ironstone conglomerate and dark red (?burnt) sandstone, sometimes used for quernstones(H)
HARMSTON	2	9748 6222	post-medieval pot sherd(H)
	3	9695 6241	post-medieval field wall foundation (H)
	4	9695 6242	post-medieval field wall foundation (H)
	5	9698 6240	post medieval field wall foundation (H)
	6	9700 6239	stone field wall foundation (H)
	7	9700 6238	pit or trench (H)
	8	9702 6238	stone lined drain (H)
	9	9702 6237	stone lined drain (H)
COLEBY	10	9748 6055	1 sherd shell-tempered pot: Lincoln kiln, late 9-L10thC (C)
	11	9762 6060	1 sherd late 18th-19thC pot (C)
	12	9740 6054	small ?pit (C)

#### Acknowledgements

The possible robber trench of a Saxon or later building at Harmston was recorded by C. Palmer-Brown; the pottery sherds were identified by specialists at City of Lincoln

Archaeological Unit. Both teams of contractors (M.P. Burke plc) were helpful throughout the project.

Geoff Tann

Lindsey Archaeological Services

25.11.93

#### References

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Lincolnshire Sites and Monuments Record Summary  
OS sheet 96SE

SMR (HL)	NGR		Description
B (30.4)	9686	6178	Bronze Age barbed and tanged arrowhead and some flakes; Roman pottery and coins
C (30.8)	970	620	Roman coin (Faustina) found pre 1936 (OS)
E (19.5)	975	605	13thC pot frags found near Tempest Arms, pre 1964
F	974	607	glass bead, etc. Cf. M. (OS)
H (19.7)	9791	6029	Roman pottery, coin and figures found on edge of quarry, 1953/4
J (30.5)	9721	6235	Roman pottery, coarse ware, 1955
K	98	62	Cropmarks of parallel banks, 1930
L (30.7)	9726	6225	Neolithic perforated stone adze (OS)
M (?19.10)	9748	6121	Anglo-Saxon cemetery, 80 skeletons, also pots, spears, brooches, found in Old Park (N and E of Coleby Hall) c.1833 (OS)
AD (19.6)	978	601	Roman coin hoard (15-20,000) dated 260-281AD found by metal detector user at rear of quarry 1975. Found in large Swanpool kiln vessel
AI	971	632	Roman pottery and 'considerable quantity' of coins; lead weight and post-medieval button found in fields mainly S of gravel pit, 1977
AJ	973	608	Saxon cross shaft frag., found in back wall of stables at Coleby Hall, 1879
AK			Medieval copper alloy object with ring and dot motif decoration found 'in field at Harmston' 1981
AL	987	610	Roman 'dragon-esque' brooch
AN	9751	6058	Saxon architecture in Coleby All Saints church
AO (30.9)	9726	6226	Saxon 11thC tower Harmston All Saints church; cross frags. found built into Old Manor House, moved into church 1910
Coleby:			
	(19.8?)	9800 6014	Romano-British pottery found near quarry, 1954; possible building in field to W of quarry. Scatter extends to 979 603. Medieval pottery in field to W of quarry
		9813 5993	Romano-British (2-3rdC) pottery and lead loom weight/spindle whorl, found 1958
OS Sheet TF06 SW			
	006	615	Flint 'button' on field next to Sleaford Road, 1966
	0068	6148	Circular spread of stone in field, noted 1966 but not investigated

Additional Sites and Finds Data: Heritage Trust for Lincolnshire

Coleby:

19.5	974	604	13thC pottery near Tempest Arms
19.10	unlocated		Anglo-Saxon cemetery, found 1897
	978	603	Earthworks in field next to Threave House, Dovecot Lane; claimed to be Roman building foundations, but this discounted after 1981 site visit.

LAS Additional Sites and Finds Data

Harmston	97	62	Bronze Age cushion macehead
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Fig. 1. Location of Harmston and Coleby villages. Based upon the O.S. 1:25,000 survey of 1955 with the permission of HMSO. Crown copyright (licence no. AL30425A).

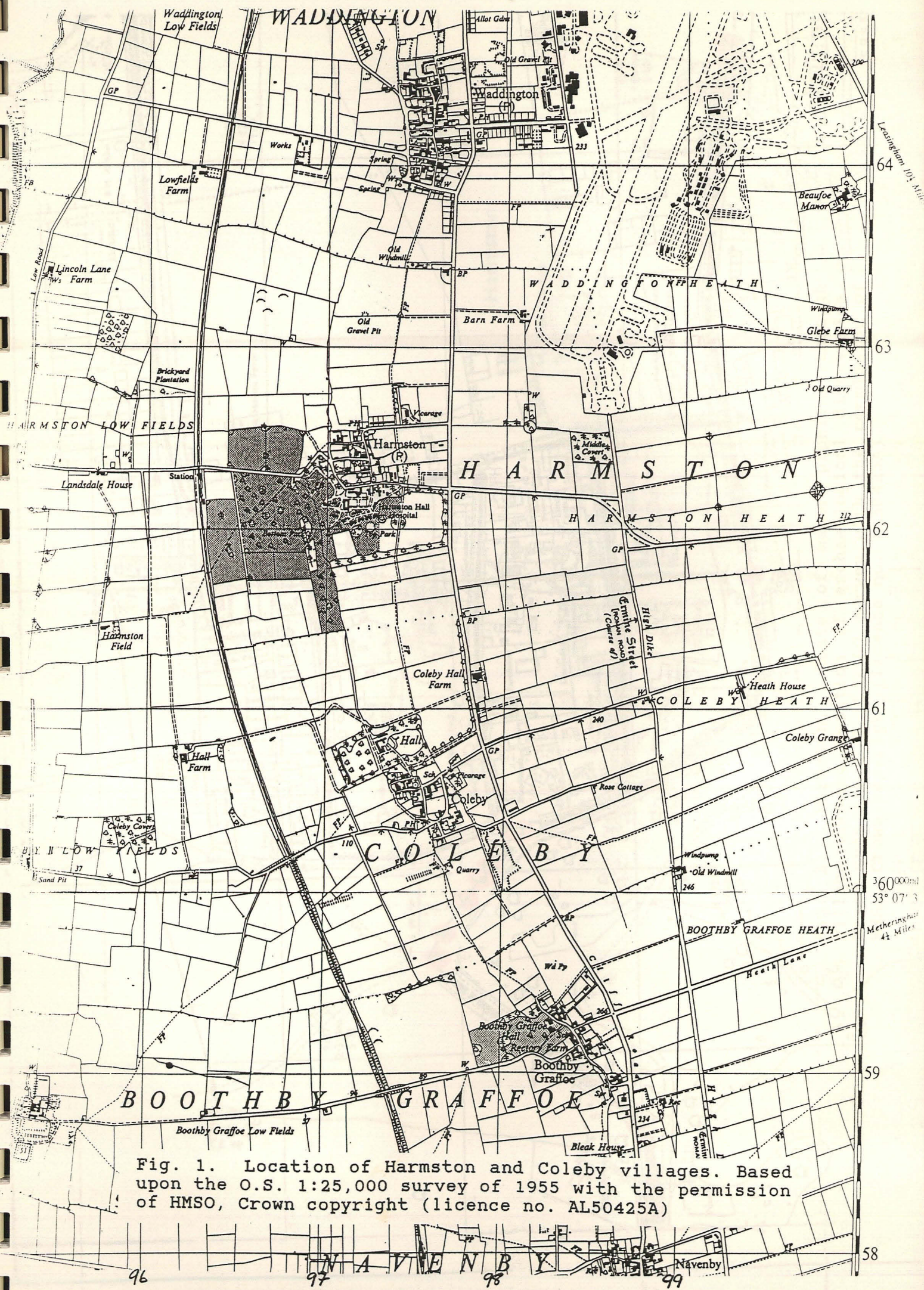


Fig. 1. Location of Harmston and Coleby villages. Based upon the O.S. 1:25,000 survey of 1955 with the permission of HMSO, Crown copyright (licence no. AL50425A)

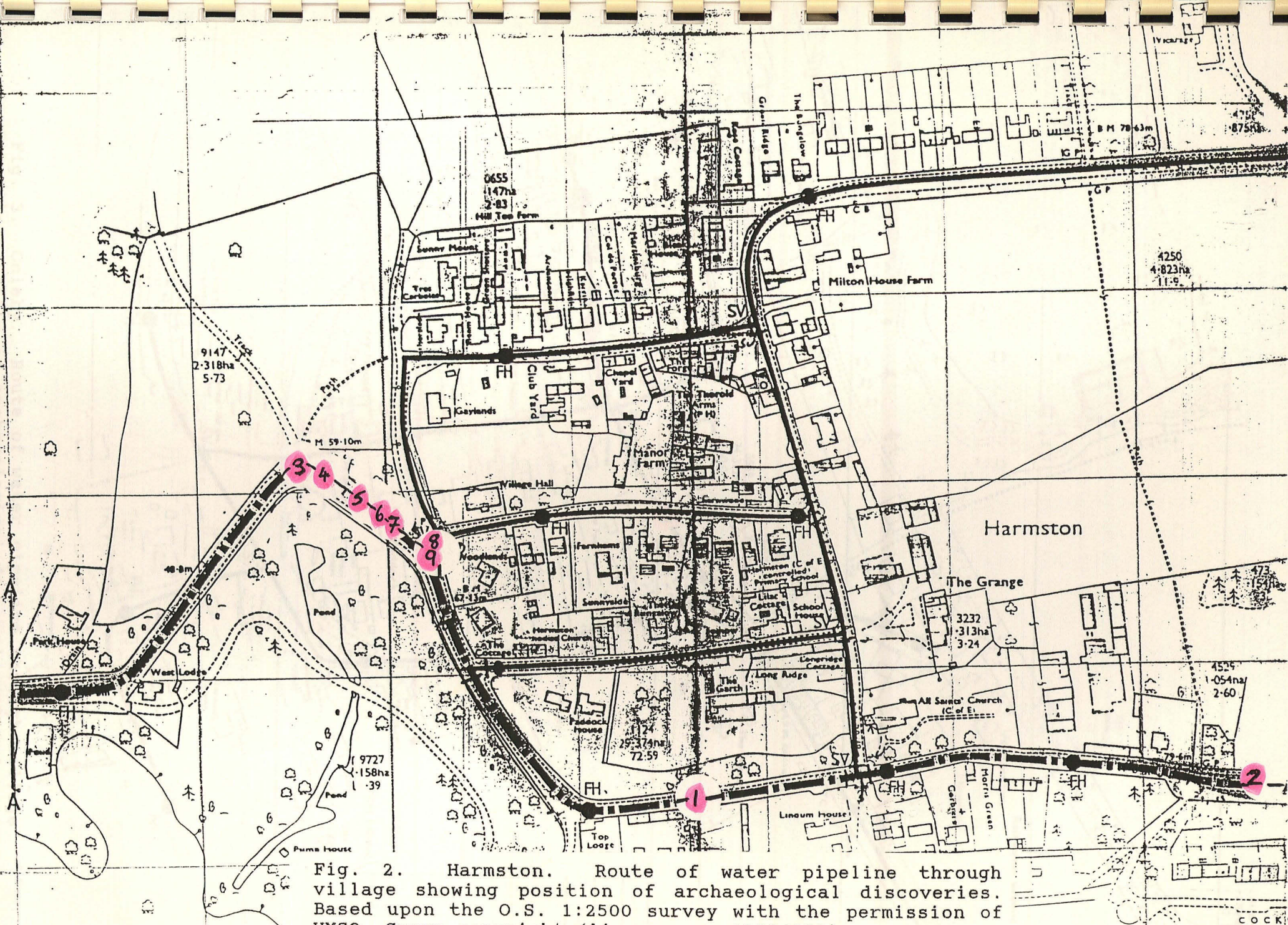


Fig. 2. Harmston. Route of water pipeline through village showing position of archaeological discoveries. Based upon the O.S. 1:2500 survey with the permission of HMSO, Crown copyright (licence no. AL50425A)

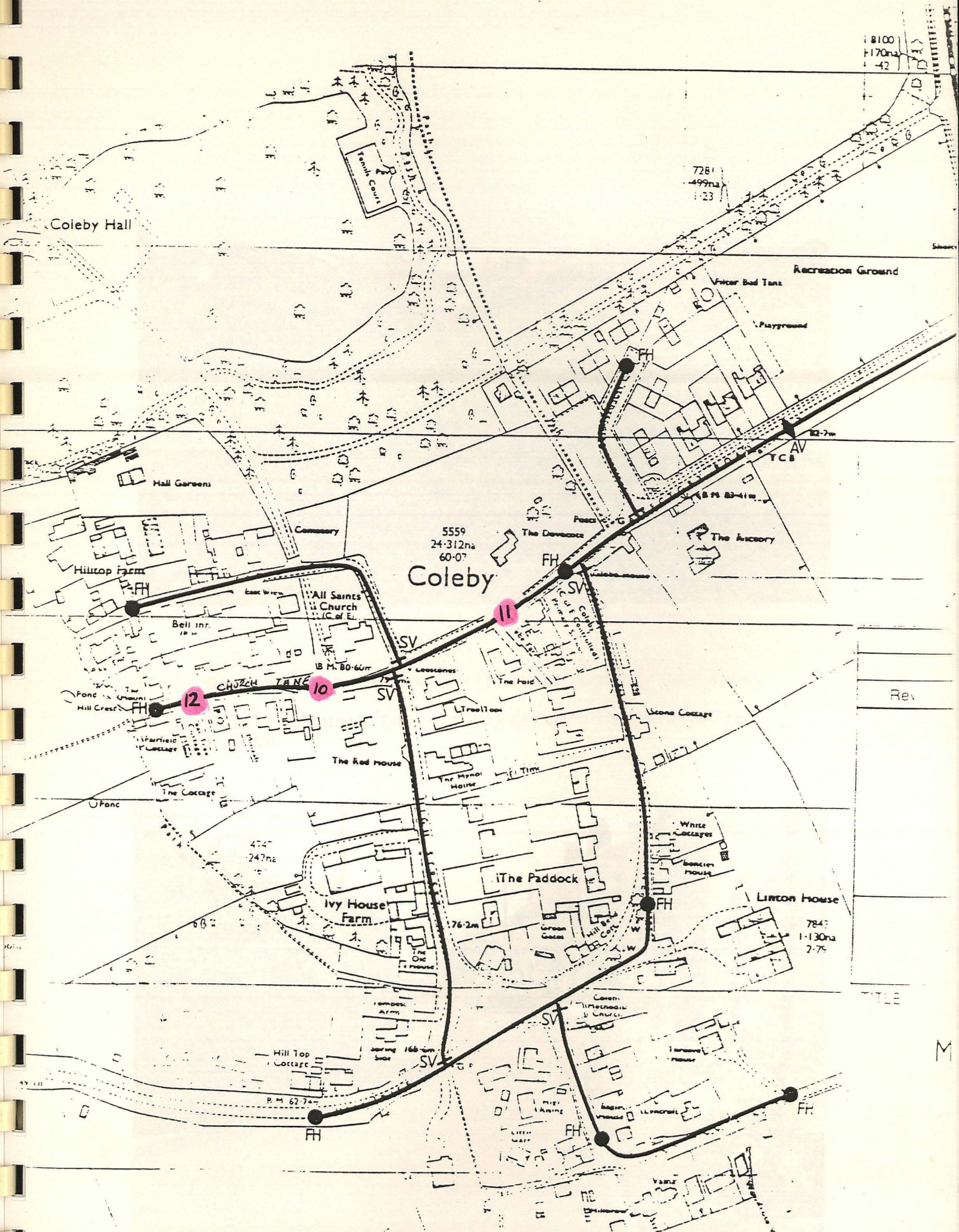


Fig. 3. Coleby. Route of water pipeline through village showing position of archaeological discoveries. Based upon the O.S. 1:2500 survey with the permission of HMSO, Crown copyright (licence no. AL50425A)



Pl.1 General view of the hilltop settlement of Coleby

Pl.2 Coleby, Church Lane. Contractor's cones mark the hilltop edge





P1.3 Harmston, Station Rd. Wall foundation (3)

P1.4 Harmston, Station Rd. Wall foundation (4)





Pl.5 Harmston, Station Rd. Wall foundation (6)

Pl.6 Harmston, Station Rd. Pit (7)





Pl.7 Harmston, Junction of Station Rd and Hilltop Rd.  
Position of stone-lined drain (8), looking up  
Hilltop Rd.

Pl.8 Harmston, Junction of Station Rd and Hilltop Rd.  
Stone-lined drain (8)





Pl.9 Harmston, Junction of Station Rd and Hilltop Rd.  
Position of stone-lined drain (9)

Pl.10 Harmston, Junction of Station Rd and Hilltop Rd.  
Stone-lined drain (9), stone cover in position





Pl.11 Harmston, Church Lane. Pit/gully (1)

Pl.12 Coleby, Church Lane. Road makeup immediately overlying limestone brash





Pl.13 Coleby, church Lane. Pit (12)