

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED
ASSESSMENT
LAND AT SCHOOL LANE,
OLD LEAKE, LINCOLNSHIRE

NGR: TF 405 501

00/13



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Report Prepared for Brown & Co.
By Mark Allen BSc.
May 2000

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln)
61 High Street
Newton on Trent
Lincoln
LN1 2JP
Tel & Fax. 01777 228155

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Summary

- *An archaeological desk-based assessment was carried out on land off School Lane, Old Leake, Lincolnshire – central NGR TF 405 501.*
- *Previous archaeological fieldwork within the village, to the north and east of the study area, has produced Anglo-Saxon and medieval features and materials.*
- *The results of this study suggest that the archaeological potential of this site is moderate: it lies in the vicinity of the probable core of the medieval village, but appears to be situated at some distance from the late Saxon settlement.*
- *The north-east corner of the site has the highest potential for containing settlement or related remains as it fronts onto a probable medieval road.*
- *The potential for the recovery of archaeo-environmental materials is high, as the site and its environs are very low-lying; this implies that the water table will have remained high, preserving organic substances in an anaerobic atmosphere.*

1.0 Introduction

An archaeological desk-based assessment was carried out on land off School Lane, Old Leake, Lincolnshire (Fig. 1, Pl. 1 & 2). Brown & Co. commissioned the project to fulfil a condition attached to a planning permission for residential development (Planning Ref: B/00/0026/OUTL).

2.0 Outline of the proposed scheme

The intended development consists of residential and associated development.

The archaeological assessment will aim to determine the archaeological potential of the site, and assess the probable impact of the proposed development on the archaeological resource. This will assist the formulation of a strategy for further investigation and mitigation, if this is deemed necessary.

This report was prepared according to the requirements of the project brief drawn up by the Boston Community Archaeologist, and the specifications outlined in the *Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook: A Manual of Archaeological Practice* (LCC, 1998). The *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessments*, produced by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1999), was also consulted.

The archive for this report will be held at the Lincoln City and County Museum.

3.0 The planning background

Outline planning consent is sought from Boston Borough Council for residential development. In response to this application, the Community Archaeologist for Boston Borough has recommended the undertaking of an archaeological desk-based assessment in advance of possible field evaluation, to determine the archaeological potential of the site and the potential threats to any archaeological remains resulting from such development. This process is consistent with the guidelines set out in *Archaeology and Planning: Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (PPG 16).

4.0 Sources consulted for the desk-based assessment

The following sources of information were consulted during the course of the assessment:

- Archaeological data for the settlement of Old Leake and its surrounding environs held at the Lincolnshire County Council Sites and Monuments Record (SMR).

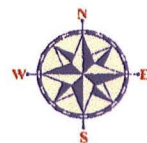
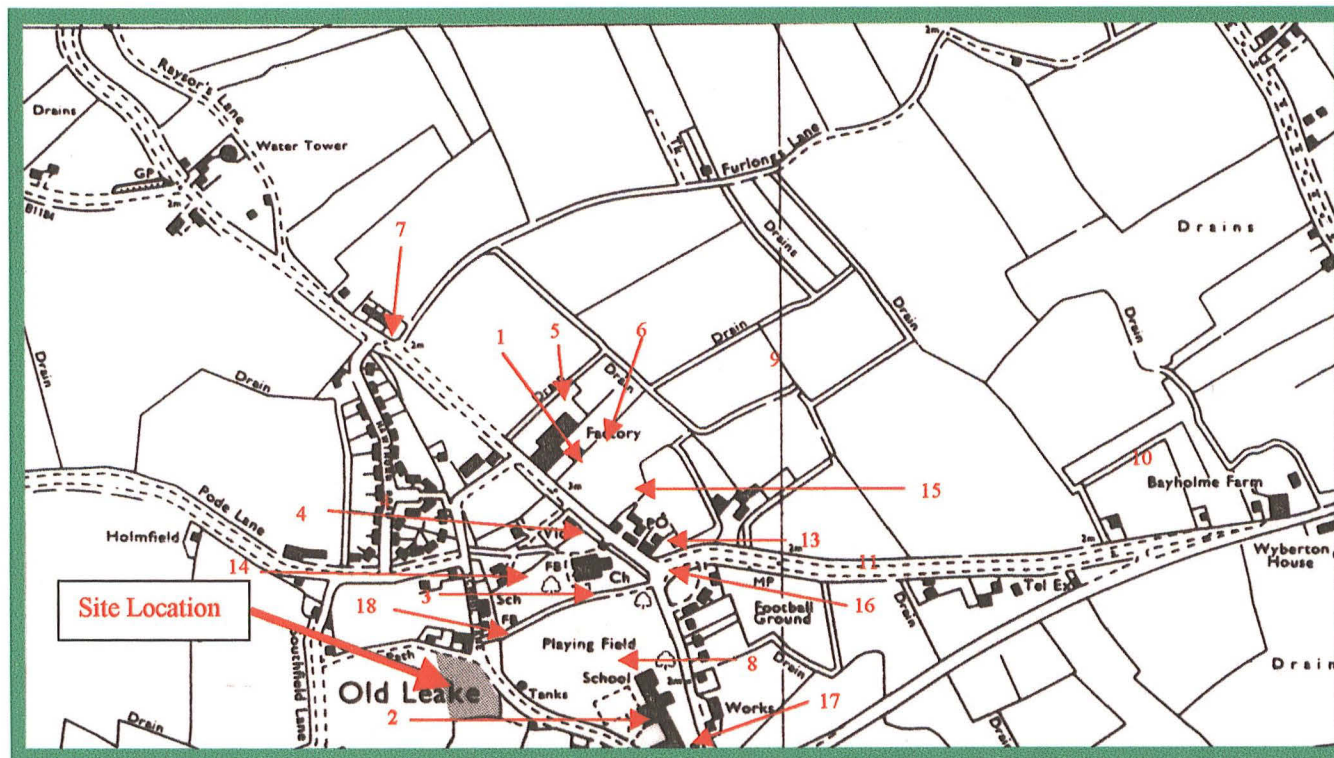


Fig.1: Location map of study area Scale 1:10000
 Figures relate to Table 1. (NB: The location of no.12 is unknown)
 (O.S. Copyright license no: AL 52521 A0001).

- Cartographic and documentary records held at the Lincolnshire Archives Office (LAO). This included tithe, Ordnance Survey and Enclosure maps.
- Records contained in the District Archaeological Database, which is maintained by the Community Archaeologist for Boston.
- Published and unpublished literature, including books and journals, and unpublished archaeological reports.
- Listed building registers compiled by the Department of the Environment and deposited at the Lincolnshire County Council SMR.
- Records held at the Boston Local Studies Library.
- Aerial photographs deposited at the Lincolnshire County Council SMR and the District Archaeological Database were consulted, but none were found to specifically relate to the site. The Royal Commission of the Historic Monuments on England (RCHME) aerial photographic records, compiled as a component of the National Mapping Programme and deposited at the SMR did not contain any data for the study area.
- Geo-technical information relating to the site or its environs was not encountered in any of the sources consulted.
- A site visit was undertaken by the author on 26th April 2000 to view the ground conditions, assess the site locality, and check potential constraints.
- A National Monuments Record (NMR) priority cover search has been undertaken. The NMR staff will be asked to provide details of oblique aerial photographs of the site that are held in their collection.

5.0 The geology and topography

Old Leake lies in the fens of south Lincolnshire, approximately 6.5km north-east of Boston; it is situated in the administrative district of Boston Borough Council. The proposed development site lies immediately to the west of School Lane. It is currently utilised as agricultural land and is under cultivation. The modern ground surface lies between 3.0 and 3.5m OD.

The Lincolnshire Fens are characterised by large fields divided by drains, dikes and canalised rivers. Land drainage and reclamation has transformed the area into one of the richest agricultural areas of Lincolnshire (Boutwood, 1998).

The geology of the Fenland Basin consists of a shallow depression in Cretaceous and Jurassic clays, overlain by glacial till and Flandrian marine and fluvial deposits. Locally, the soils are surface-water gleys; slowly permeable and seasonally waterlogged loamy clays (*ibid.*; Lane, 1993).

6.0 The archaeological and historical background

The existing archival record relating to Old Leake and its surroundings are summarised Table 1.

Record No	PRN	DADRN	Date	Description	Grid Reference
1	13400	-	C9th-10th	Ditch	TF 4075 5040
2	13347 & 13348	16/021	Saxon & Med	3 phases of ditch and pits	TF 4081 5006
3	12801	-	Med	St. Mary's Church	TF 4074 5027
4	13052	16/006	Med	Ditch surrounding Church	TF 4070 5030
5	12799	16/007	Med	Pottery scatter	TF 407 504
6	13396	-	Med	Pottery scatter	TF 4075 5040
7	-	16/004	Med	Pottery scatter	TF 405 506
8	-	16/011	Med	Pottery scatter	TF 4080 5015
9	-	16/012	Med	Dylings (earthworks)	TF 4115 5045
10	-	16/013	Med	Dylings (earthworks)	TF 415 504
11	13280	-	Med	Possible medieval road	TF 3315 4455 – TF 4510 5296
12	-	-	C15th	Gold Ring	Unknown
13	-	16/019	Tudor	Tudor date for Post Office	TF 4083 5030
14	12798	16/017	P-med	Pottery scatter	TF 407 503
15	13397	-	P-med	Pottery scatter	TF 4075 5040
16	-	16/018	C19th	Rubbish pits at Post Office	TF 4083 5030
17	13515	-	undated	Ditch and unidentified feature	TF 4087 5001
18	-	16/020	modern	No archaeological deposits	TF 4064 5016

Table 1: Pertinent archaeological data for Old Leake.

PRN = Primary Record Number (County Sites and Monuments Record).

DADRN = District Archaeological Database Record Number (at Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire).

6.1 Prehistoric and Roman

While a lot of evidence for Iron Age and Romano-British occupation does exist throughout the fens (e.g. Boston - Palmer-Brown, 1996a; Wrangle – Lane, 1993), currently, there is no indication of such activity within Old Leake or its immediate environs. However, it does not necessarily follow that the locality was not settled at this time. A marine regression significantly lowered the sea level in the early 2nd century AD. Consequently, occupation of the fens during the Roman period was more extensive than in preceding and succeeding periods (Hall and Coles, 1994). At the end of the Roman period, the sea level

rose again, changing the coastline and inundating many settlements, which became sealed beneath copious quantities of alluvium.

6.2 Anglo-Saxon

A settlement existed from at least late Anglo-Saxon times. This is known from both historical sources and recent archaeological investigations.

A number of late Saxon pottery sherds were recovered during field-walking to the north-east of Church Road (NGR TF 4075 5040) (Palmer-Brown, 1996b). Subsequently, an archaeological evaluation exposed a number of features dated to the 9th – 11th centuries AD (Record No. 1); this material suggests that a contemporary settlement lies nearby.

A single sherd of Stamford ware was found within a ditch (Record No. 2) during a watching brief at the site of an extension to the Giles School (NGR TF 4081 5006) (Tann, 1995).

6.3 Medieval

The village is recorded in the *Domesday Book* of 1086 as *Leche* (Morgan & Thorne, 1986), meaning '(place at) the brook' (Mills, 1996).

The *Domesday* survey mentions land owned by a Count Alan at Old Leake, stating '*In Leche there is soke (land) of Drait (Drayton), 12 carucates of land (assessed) to the geld. There is land for 10 teams, 32 sokemen and 30 villeins and 15 borders have 11 teams there, and 26 salt-houses, and 34 acres of meadow*'. The presence of salt-houses indicates the importance of this industry to the community, and also suggests that salt-making may have occurred in the Anglo-Saxon period.

The church is recorded in the Listed Building lists held at the County SMR (343.001). The adjacent lychgate is also listed (343.002); it dates from c. 1873 and was possibly designed by Temple Moore. A ditch surrounding the churchyard is commonly referred to as 'the moat' (Record No. 4).

The Church of St. Mary (Record No. 3) is a relatively large structure, with a nave of six bays. Although the arcades are constructed in a Decorated style (late 13th to 14th century), the associated responds are Norman (12th century) (Pevsner and Harris, 1995). While it remains possible that earlier stonework was reused in a 15th century (Perpendicular) reconstruction of the church, it is equally feasible that the Norman church was of similar proportions to the present structure. If this was indeed the case, then it implies that the settlement was relatively large and wealthy during the Norman period; it is conceivable that this affluence was founded upon salt production.

Within the church is an almsbox made from the hollowed-out trunk of an oak tree. The almsbox was probably manufactured in the 15th century and is thought to be one of only two such pieces surviving in England (Pevsner &

Harris, 1995).

Four scatters of medieval pottery have been found within the village. Three of these (Record Nos. 5-7) were located toward the north of the village, whilst the other (Record No. 8) was found at Giles Secondary School, approximately 150m east of the study area. The material included green-glazed wares, Stamford ware and a Thetford-type storage jar. The medieval road between Boston and Wainfleet passed through Old Leake (Record No. 11) (Platts, 1985). The pottery and other trade goods would have entered the village via this arterial route.

Dylings have been recognised in two areas to the east of the village (Record Nos. 9 & 10); these are remnants of medieval agricultural practices.

A single late medieval gold ring dating to the 15th century was found within the village, although record of its location is unknown (Record No. 12).

Neither the Lincolnshire County SMR, nor the Boston District Archaeological Database contained any records relating to manorial buildings. However, a manor was mentioned in documents held by the Local Studies Library in Boston. In 1426, Ralph, Earl of Westmoreland, is believed to have held what was referred to as the 'manor of Burteshall in Leake' (Thompson 1856). By 1475, the manor was owned by a John Leeke, a native of the village (Green, N.D.). However, it should be remembered that a 'manor' relates to the secular authority over an area of land and does not presuppose the existence of a manorial complex. Consequently, such a range of buildings may never have existed and control of the estate may have been exercised from some other location outside the parish.

A document dating to the early post-medieval period (1554) sheds some light on local conditions at the time. The document states that the people of the parish of Leake requested a commission to inquire into their rights by ancient charters and grants. The document goes on to claim the privileges '*to common pasture for cattle, and common of turbang, digging and graving of turf, and mowing and cutting of reeds and grass, in the fens and marshes of Her Majesty's waste grounds and marshes, called the East and West Fens, with their right to fish and fowl the said fens*'. The charter and grant were apparently kept in '*the chest in Leake Church*', but are now lost (Green, N.D.).

6.4 Post-medieval/modern

A watching brief at the village post office, undertaken in 1994, revealed a number of 19th century rubbish pits (Record No. 16). The owner of the building informed the Boston Community Archaeologist that the front part of the house was timber-framed (probably Tudor). He also suggested there was a burial beneath the 'old living room' floor (Record No. 13).

Two post-medieval pottery scatters are also known from the village. One, located toward the north of the village (NGR TF 4075 5040) (Record No. 15),

showed continuous occupation throughout the post-medieval period, apart from a hiatus during the 17th century, which possibly coincided with the Civil War (Palmer-Brown, 1996b). The second scatter (Record No. 14), consisting of three sherds of pottery, was found less than 200m from the study area.

A watching brief at 37 School Lane (Record No. 18), situated less than 30m to the north-east of the study area, uncovered no archaeological deposits.

6.5 Cartographic evidence

The following cartographic sources were consulted:

Holland Award 1 – Enclosure map of Leake. 1813.

1st edition Ordnance Survey Map of Great Britain: 6" to one mile. 1905.

2nd edition Ordnance Survey Map of Great Britain: 6" to one mile. 1906.

The map of 1813 (Fig. 2) related to the enclosure of the parish and showed the whole of the site and its surroundings in some detail. The southern boundary of the field was the same as it is today. School Lane also existed immediately to the east of the field, running north-south through the village. However, it is notable that the current footpath to the north of the site was more substantial in the early 19th century; this trackway ran east to west and linked Southfield Lane with School Lane, where it formed a junction to the immediate north-east of the site. Although no houses are marked within the study area, it is certainly possible that one existed at or near this junction, disappearing prior to the drafting of the enclosure map. A small strip field was situated to the west of the site; this is also evident on the 1905 map.

The 1905 map (Fig. 3) shows the road to the north had diminished in importance, having been transformed into the footpath that can be seen today. A small triangular paddock (labelled '1060' on the map) had been created by the alienation of the south-east corner of the field that contained the site. This had been accomplished by the digging of a ditch, which forms the south-eastern boundary of the proposed development area.

The 1906 map (not reproduced here) showed no evidence of changes within the study area.



Figure 2: A map of Leake 1813 (enclosure map)

7.0 Site visits

The Boston Community Archaeologist recently visited the site and recorded a quantity of post-medieval pottery and substantial amounts of brick and tile present across the surface of the site.

The author visited the site on the 26th April 2000, noting that it was situated on low-lying land, which rose gently toward the western boundary. Surface water was noted at the eastern side of the site, below the break of slope; this resulted partially from recent rainfall and poor permeability. The field was partially covered by an immature root crop, with the remainder comprising a weathered ploughsoil. Telegraph posts, supporting telephone wires, ran across the south-eastern corner of the site.

A number of slight undulations were situated immediately beyond the western edge of the study area; they may constitute the remains of a former boundary.

8.0 Aerial photographs

A priority aerial photographic cover search was requested from the English Heritage National Monuments Record (Swindon). This identified nine photographs of potential significance. Seven of these were vertical shots (see table below); these were not consulted. However, two oblique shots were also included, and a request was made for photocopies to assess whether or not it would be worthwhile requesting detailed printed copies.

The two oblique photographs (see Appendix 2) were taken in January 1969. This automatically prejudices their archaeological value as most cropmarks are visible only during the summer months. Furthermore, only one of the photographs appears to include the site area. There are no obvious soil stains or other forms of useful information indicated.

NMR archive details are presented in the table below.

Vert.	Oblq.	NMR Library No.	Accession No.	NGR Start	NGR Finish	Scale	Date taken
1.		466		TF409499	TF403498	9800	12/9/46
2.		8192		TF395494	TF406488	12500	22/4/44
3.		8192		TF405513	TF405513	12500	22/4/44
4.		9292		TF407498	TF407505	7500	14/4/68
5.		9292		TF397502	TF398495	7500	14/4/68
6.		10283		TF404494	TF404507	7500	13/7/72
7.		10657		TF411503	TF401495	7500	31/7/83
	8.		BBS450	TF409500	-	-	1/1/69
	9.		BBS450	TF406500	-	-	1/1/69

9.0 The archaeological potential

Given the location and number of archaeological sites identified, and the quantity of material recovered from the vicinity of the study area, it is

concluded that the archaeological potential for the site is moderate.

The potential for the prehistoric and Romano-British periods is considered to be low as no finds from either period have been found in this part of the fens. This does not rule out the possibility that such remains will be present beneath alluvial deposits.

A settlement appears to have existed in the immediate vicinity from the later Anglo-Saxon period. Material of this date has been recovered from sites less than 250m to the east and 300m to the north-east of the study area. However, the core of this settlement remains undiscovered and it is possible that contemporary deposits will occur on the current site.

The medieval church of St. Mary was built approximately 200m to the north-east of the site. The church is likely to have been situated at the heart of the village and it seems probable that the study area lies within the zone of medieval settlement.

10.0 The archaeo-environmental potential

The archaeo-environmental potential of the site may be high. The area is situated at a mere 3.0 - 3.5m above Ordnance Datum, suggesting that any archaeological deposits are waterlogged. The lowest point of the site lies adjacent to School Lane, and it is suggested that this area has the highest potential for *in-situ* residues of human activity.

11.0 Impacts to archaeological resources

The extent of the impact of development upon medieval and later archaeological deposits is likely to be high, if such remains are present. If there is earlier material on the site it is likely that it is buried beneath substantial alluvial deposits, which will provide some level of protection.

The study area appears to have been a field prior to 1813, and there is no indication of any structures having been erected after this time. Any plough damage to the archaeological resource is likely to be cumulative, and have taken place over a considerable period of time. Deposits sealed beneath alluvium will be unaffected by this form of attrition.

12.0 Conclusions and recommendations

It is presumed that the archaeological potential of the site is moderate and that archaeological remains are likely to be relatively undisturbed. Evidence relating to the medieval settlement of Old Leake or its Anglo-Saxon precursor may exist. This material may include preserved organic materials.

More detailed data may be obtained through the use of archaeological

geophysics. A gradiometer survey could indicate the presence of sub-surface archaeological features. However, it should be noted that alluvial deposits would tend to mask any earlier features, the presence of which could only be ascertained through the implementation of a programme of intrusive fieldwork.

13.0 Acknowledgements

Pre-Construct Archaeology would like to thank Brown & Co. for this commission. The author would also like to thank Mark Bennett and Sarah Grundy of the Lincolnshire County SMR, the Boston Community Archaeologist, the staff of the Lincolnshire Archive Office and the staff of the Boston Local Studies Library for their assistance during the research.

14.0 References

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15.0 Appendices

15.1 Plates

15.2 NMR oblique aerial photographs

15.1 Colour plates



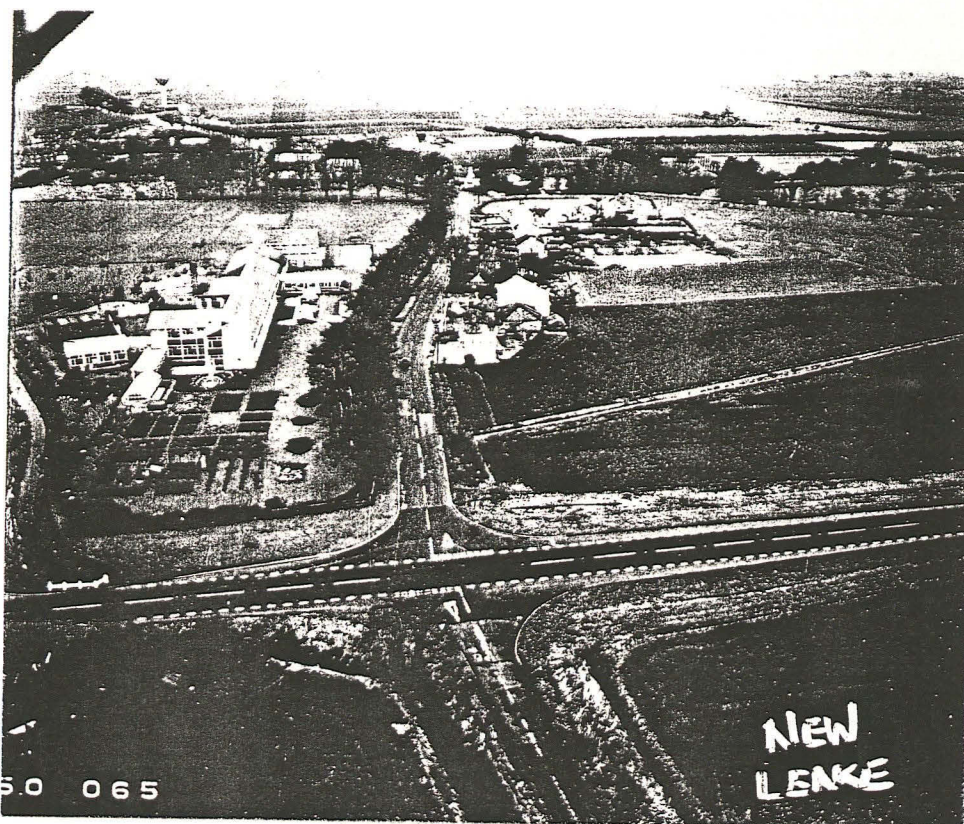
Plate 1. General view, looking north-west



Plate 2. General view, looking south-east

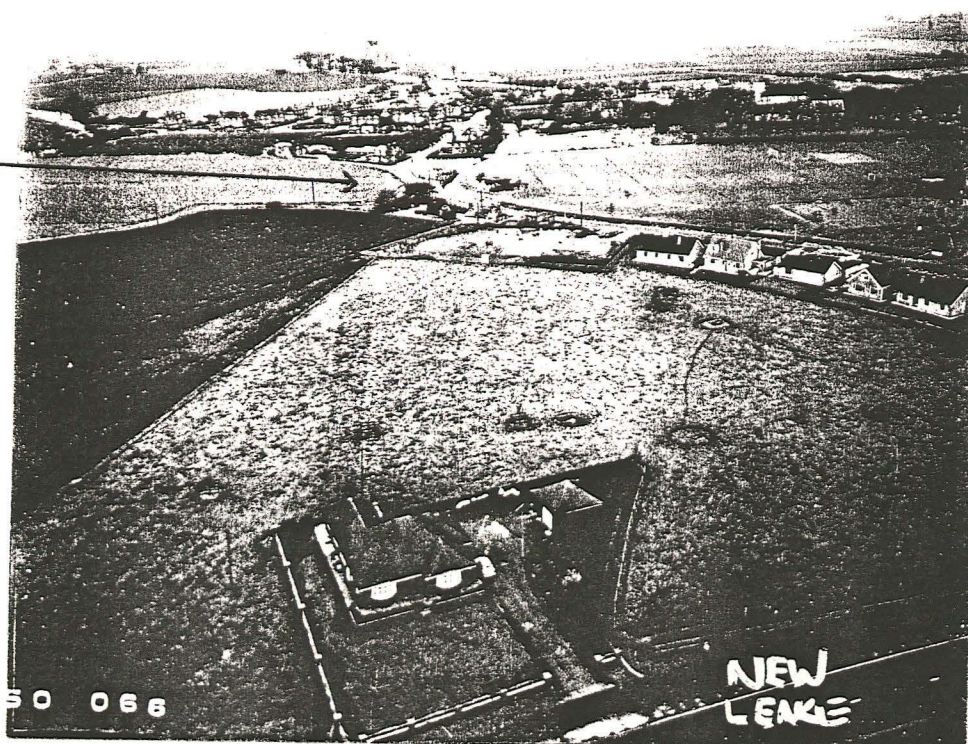
15.2 NMR oblique photographs

SITE



TF4050/1 BBS450/065 1969

SITE



TF4050/2 BBS450/066 1969