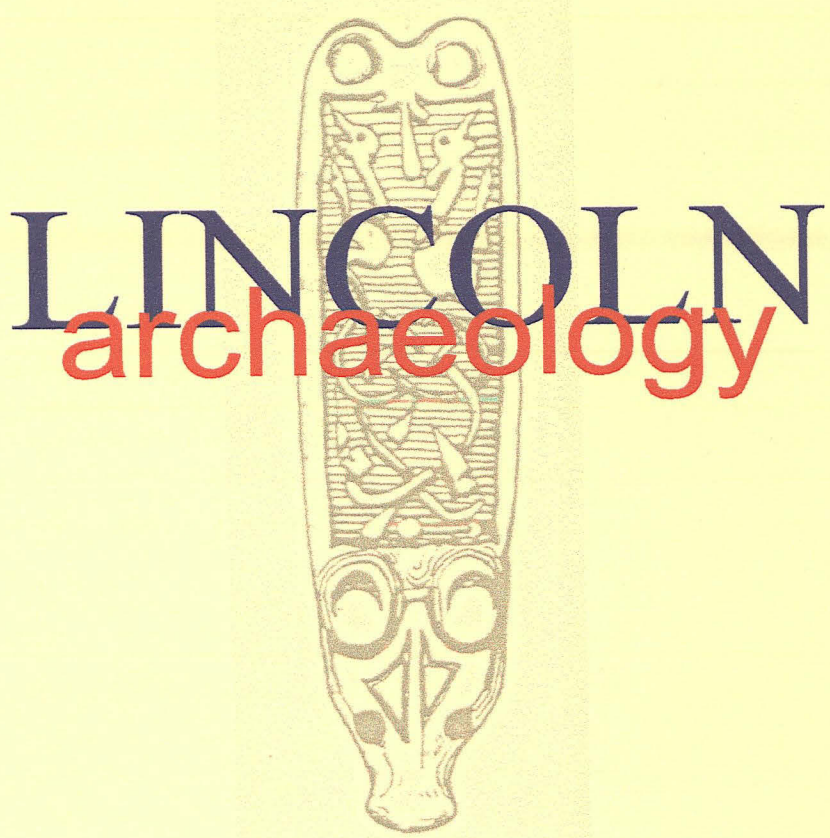


10/12/01

**A Report to Tithe Barn Club (Aldwick) Ltd  
- Mr J F Mannion**

**January 2001**



**Land at Little London Caravan Park,  
Torksey Lock, Torksey, Lincolnshire**

**Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment**

*By R Trimble*

EIGHT L1539  
SOURCES L16334  
L16335

# LAND AT LITTLE LONDON CARAVAN PARK, TORKSEY LOCK, TORKSEY, LINCOLNSHIRE

Site Code: TLL01  
LCCM Accession No.: 2001.15  
Planning Application No.: -  
NGR: SK 8392 7780



## *Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment*

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Fig.4 OS 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition OS Map (Surveyed 1885, revised 1916)

# LAND AT LITTLE LONDON CARAVAN PARK, TORKSEY LOCK, TORKSEY, LINCOLNSHIRE

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

### **SUMMARY**

*This report describes the results of an Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment undertaken by the City of Lincoln Archaeology Unit (CLAU) for land at Little London Caravan Park, Torksey Lock, Torksey, Lincolnshire. The project was commissioned by the proprietor, Tithe Barn Club (Aldwick) Ltd - Mr J F Mannion, in response to a request by West Lindsey District Council.*

*The village of Torksey has a rich history, which has already been well-documented. For the purposes of the Desk-Based Assessment it was decided that the principal focus of attention should be the Little London site and its immediate environs, with particular emphasis upon establishing the exact whereabouts of a group of Roman kilns found during excavations on the site in the 1930's.*

*The Desk-Based Assessment highlights evidence for Roman settlement in the immediate vicinity of Little London. In addition, the discovery of late Iron Age coins from adjacent arable land hints at a possible late Iron Age origin for the settlement. There is, however, no evidence for significant post-Roman settlement in the area - the late Saxon and medieval centre having apparently developed in the area to the north of the Foss Dyke.*

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This report describes the results of an Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment undertaken by the City of Lincoln Archaeology Unit (CLAU) as part of an application for outline planning permission to build 88 new houses on land at Little London Caravan Park, Torksey Lock, Torksey, Lincolnshire. The project, which commenced 10 January 2001 and was completed on 26 January 2001, was commissioned by the proprietor, Tithe Barn Club (Aldwick) Ltd - Mr J F Mannion, in response to a request by West Lindsey District Council.

The information in this document is presented with the proviso that further data may yet emerge. Lincoln City Council cannot, therefore, be held responsible for any loss, delay or damage, material or otherwise, arising out of this report. The document has been prepared in accordance with the Code of Conduct of the Institute of Field Archaeologists, the document *The Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-based Assessment* (IFA 1999), and the *Lincolnshire Archaeology Handbook*. (Lincolnshire County Council 1998)

### **2.0 SITE LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY & GEOLOGY**

The Little London Caravan Park (NGR SK 8392 7780) lies on the northern edge of Fenton parish and in the administrative district of West Lindsey, c.10km west of Lincoln and immediately south of the village of Torksey (Fig.1). Torksey Lock, c.200m to the north-west, lies at the confluence of the Foss Dyke Navigation, which passes just to the north of the site, and the River Trent c.600m to the west.

The c.2.5 hectare block of land comprising the Little London Caravan Park is densely covered with caravans and their hardstandings, associated amenities, and access roads leading from the main entrance to the south. Original farm buildings and more recent structures including an indoor swimming pool are situated in the north-eastern part of the site but are excluded from the proposed development. The site is bounded to the south by the A156 from Lincoln, by arable land to the east, and by a broad drain (recut in the 1950's) running parallel with the Foss Dyke to the north (see Fig.2).

The original Little London buildings stand upon an area of slightly raised ground, above the probable flood level of the Trent. At this point the solid geology of Mercia mudstone is overlain by wind-blown sands, giving way to alluvial clay further to the north in the vicinity of the Foss Dyke.

### **3.0 AIMS & OBJECTIVES**

In accordance with a CLAU specification of 5 January, 2001 this Desk-Based Assessment is designed to:

- provide information from documentary sources placing the site in its historical context and to record prevailing site circumstances
- provide site specific archaeological information which (if necessary) would allow for the design of any further archaeological investigation which might be required.
- produce a project archive for deposition with the appropriate museum.
- provide information for accession to the County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR).

### **4.0 METHODOLOGY**

The village of Torksey has a rich and well-documented history (refer to Bibliography) which need not be recounted in detail for the purposes of this report. Accordingly, the principal focus of research was the site itself and its immediate environs including the southern part of Saxon and medieval Torksey. A particular emphasis was placed upon establishing the exact locations of Roman kilns found within the boundaries of the proposed development site during excavations in the 1930's (Oswald 1937).

#### **4.1 Desk-Based Assessment**

In accordance with the CLAU specification, the following sources of information were consulted as appropriate.

- The Lincolnshire County Sites & Monuments Record
- Historical documents such as charters, registers, wills, deeds, etc. In particular those held in Lincolnshire Archives Office
- County Archives - Historic Documents
- Archaeological Reports and County Journals
- Aerial Photographs (if available)
- Maps and other pictorial documents
- Unpublished reports and archives

Contact was made with the Lincolnshire County Museum and with the University of Nottingham as part of an attempt to locate Oswald's primary site archive and thus to identify the precise locations of the Roman kilns. Unfortunately, these efforts were unsuccessful. A search for relevant documents contained in the Lincolnshire Archives Office produced a single Ordnance Survey Map (6 inch, Second Edition - Surveyed 1885, corrected 1916) but no other cartographic material of interest.

#### **4.2 Walkover Survey**

A visual survey of the site was carried out on 17 January 2001. During this visit a photographic record was made, showing current land-use and prevailing site conditions. Information concerning the recent history of the site was obtained from the current owner, Mr J F Mannion, and an assessment was made of the appropriateness of various options for further evaluation.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS (See Fig.2 & Appendix)**

This section, organised by chronological period, represents a summary of known or potential archaeological interests within and in the immediate vicinity of the site. Figures in bold denote site locations as displayed on the sites location map (see Fig.2 & Appendix)

Previous archaeological work on or in the immediate vicinity of the Little London site includes the aforementioned excavation of Roman kilns, field walking during the 1960's by University of Nottingham students on land to the east, plots by RCHME (Monument Protection Programme) of cropmarks visible on aerial photographs, and finds reported by metal detectorists on land to the east and south.

A recent trial trench evaluation (SMR No. 54509, **26**, LAS 1999) in the southern part of Torksey village resulted in the discovery of a single sherd of Anglo-Saxon pottery and of some large cut features of probable post-medieval date, while a geophysical survey in the same general area (SMR No. 54522, **25**, Oxford Archaeotechnics 2000) produced evidence for a possible track and pit (undated).

#### **5.1 Prehistoric (to AD43)**

Evidence for prehistoric activity in the area is limited to a small number of stray finds. These include a neolithic polished greenstone axe (SMR No. 50115, **19**) from Little London and a neolithic stone axe from the scheduled part of Torksey village (SMR No. 52541, **3**).

Later prehistoric activity is represented by coins reported by metal detectorists in fields east and south of Little London - namely, an Iron Age silver coin of the Corieltavi (SMR No. 50107, **12**), a gold coin dated to 80BC (SMR No. 50108, **13**), and two debased silver staters (SMR No. 50106, **13**).

#### **5.2 Romano-British (AD 43 - c.AD 450)**

The Foss Dyke Navigation, which passes just north of the site, is generally accepted as being a Roman canal in origin. During the Roman period, Torksey's position at the confluence of the Foss Dyke and the River Trent would have provided control over river traffic between the midlands and the Humber Estuary and thence to York, and east through Lincoln to link with the Witham and then the Wash. A major trading centre probably developed at this time, but its precise location and extent is not known (refer to LAS 1997). However, limited evidence of Roman settlement has been found both in Torksey and at Little London and its immediate surroundings.

##### *General Evidence of Romano-British Activity*

Roman occupation on the Little London site is attested by the pottery kilns excavated in the 1930's (SMR No. 50113, **18**, see Figs.2 & 3), a 2nd-century dolphin brooch and coin (SMR No.50111, **21**), a stone weight and bronze ring (SMR No. 50117, **20**) and a 'floor' of green clay reported by Oswald c.10m north east of the kilns (Oswald 1937). Slightly further afield to the east, metal detector finds included pottery, coins and a 3rd-century silver ring (SMR No.50110, **14**), while 2nd-century pottery was recovered during recutting of a nearby drain (see below, SMR No. 50118, **15**). A large assemblage of pottery (SMR No. 53798, **17**) was found during fieldwalking by the University of Nottingham on land to the east of the same drain. The scatter may relate to a possible Roman cropmark trackway

(SMR No.53799, 16) visible on AP's plotted by RCHME. The combined finds in the area have been interpreted as a possible Roman settlement (SMR No.50114, 22)

Evidence for Roman settlement north of the Foss Dyke consists of Roman pavements of an 'ornamental character', which have been encountered on various occasions since 1878 (SMR No.50570, 6) on the site of the Cistercian Fosse Nunnery.

#### *Excavations at Little London*

The 1930's excavations (Oswald 1937), which included the insertion of a number of test holes, appear to have been centered around the buildings at Little London. Although Oswald did not include a location plan for the pottery kilns in his report, he commented that they lay at a distance of about 50 yards (45m) south of the Foss Dyke. It is also stated that Kiln 1 lay c.3m south of Kilns 1 and 2 which lay immediately adjacent to one another.

An illustration published in a 1960's report on later fieldwork in the area (Barley 1964, see Fig.3) indicates Roman pottery kilns at two locations - one at the north-east corner of the site, just at or just beyond the present day northern site boundary (see Section 5.6 below), and another c.10m west of the westernmost of the original farm buildings (Figs.3, 4 & 5). This would place the site within the line of, or in close proximity to, the existing access road leading west from the buildings (now used for offices and other site facilities). The County SMR locates the kilns at SK 8396 7786, placing them more or less at the latter position, but it is not clear what information was used to reach this conclusion. According to the site owner, Mr Mannion (pers comm), the second site lies slightly further to the west.

The kilns were of the updraught variety with a stoke-pit and flue leading into a lower chamber or furnace area, separated from the upper firing chamber by a fired clay floor, hot gases being admitted to the upper chamber through holes in the clay floor (Oswald 1937).

From wasters found in a trench excavated across an area of approximately 18m surrounding the excavated kilns, Oswald surmised two separate phases of pottery production - Phase I (c.AD 150 to c.AD 180) and Phase II (c.AD 230 - c.AD 250). A re-evaluation of the material (Todd 1968), however, concluded that the kilns were more likely to have been in operation contemporaneously (c.AD 250) - differences in the composition of the assemblages, instead reflecting outputs from individual kilns.

A section drawing in Oswald's report shows the brick-built chamber walls of Kiln 1 (attributed by Oswald to Phase I) standing to a height of c.0.75m. The oven floor had apparently collapsed into the lower chamber but the tile roof and floor of the flue were reported to be intact. Little remained of the 'crudely constructed' clay superstructure of Kiln 2 (Oswald's Phase II) c.3m to the north but Kiln 3 (Oswald's Phase II), a further 0.75m to the north, was well preserved with an intact oven supported by a central pillar. It shared the same stokehole as Kiln 2 and may have been superceded by a kiln constructed directly above.

The depth of the kilns below the modern surface is not explicitly stated by Oswald, but illustrations showing cross-sectional views through Kilns 2 and 3 suggest depths of less than 200mm below ground level. It is not clear, however, whether the overlying deposits represent the full depth of stratigraphy or only archaeologically significant deposits.

According to Oswald, traces of Roman occupation were encountered in trial holes over an area of approximately 0.8 hectares around the Little London buildings. One of these holes, located c.9m north-east of Kiln 1, revealed a green clay (c.75mm thick) interpreted as the floor of a timber building. It was sealed by a layer of charcoal (c.150mm thick), thought to represent destruction by fire at around AD 250, and then by a humic deposit c.200mm thick. The latter might represent modern topsoil but this is not clear from the site report. Beneath the 'floor' lay a c.150mm thick deposit of brown soil covering a pit (attributed to Phase I), which was sealed (or filled?) by c.150mm of clay and then by c.75mm of charcoal.

The excavation of the area surrounding the kilns revealed a primary deposit of grey silt c.100mm thick, overlain by a layer of black sooty soil, c.100mm thick, containing 'Phase I' pottery and wasters. It was in turn sealed by c.75mm of brown 'wind-blown' soil before the deposition of black sooty soil,

c.150mm thick, containing 'Phase II' pottery and wasters. An overlying brown soil (topsoil?), c.450mm thick, probably extended to ground level but the precise nature of the stratigraphy is once again not clear from the report.

### *5.3 Anglo-Saxon/Scandinavian (c.AD 450 - AD 1066)*

Small quantities of early Saxon pottery have been found within and around Torksey village but there has been no evidence for associated settlement remains (LAS 1997).

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records that in AD 872/3 the Danish army camped at Torksey for the winter. The extent of Danish influence upon the subsequent development of Torksey is unclear but it has often been suggested that, in general, the arrival of the Danes encouraged the growth of urban centres in England. By the 10th century the town had a mint and had passed into royal ownership, remaining in royal hands after the Norman conquest of 1066 (LAS 1997b). Torksey had developed into a thriving port with a major pottery industry by the late Saxon period; a number of Late Saxon kiln sites have been found in the village, including a site displaying evidence for pottery production c.600m north-west of Little London (SMR No.52531, 5).

Stray finds of Late Saxon date include a caterpillar brooch (SMR No.52546, 29) from the southern end of Torksey, while Saxon coins dating to between AD650 and AD849 have been found by metal detectorists at various as yet undisclosed locations in and around the village (SMR No. 52530, Blackburn, 1993).

The only indicator of Anglo-Saxon or Scandinavian activity in the immediate vicinity of the site consists of a coin of Offa (c.792-6) found in the Foss Dyke to the north. (SMR No.50089, 24).

### *5.4 Medieval (c.AD 1066 - c.AD 1540)*

Occupation in medieval Torksey covered a much larger area than the modern village, extending south to the line of the Foss Dyke (SMR Nos. 52542, 52529, 52533, 52543, 52540, 54207 - see Fig.2 2, 27, 1, 28, 30, 12 & Appendix A). During the 11th century the settlement, located at the confluence of the Foss Dyke and the Trent, was a valuable outpost for Lincoln and was one of only three mints in Lincolnshire along with Stamford and Lincoln. At the time of the Domesday survey of 1086, the population of Torksey was approximately one sixth that of Lincoln but was larger than that of Nottingham and twice that of Newark. The liberties and privileges of the Torksey burgesses were confirmed by Henry II and the town's prosperity was reflected in the number of parish churches (three) and its two monastic houses (LAS 1997b). In 1121 the Foss Dyke was reopened to traffic, having been closed for several years. This revitalised Torksey, which was already benefiting from the growth of Lincoln (Platts 1985, 192-3).

In the twelfth century, the pottery industry in Torksey was producing a range of pots, jars and pitchers which were distributed via the Trent and Ermine Street to adjacent parts of Nottinghamshire and to south Lincolnshire (Platts 1985, 129).

Commercial stagnation in Lincoln from around 1300 had a severe impact upon the prosperity of Torksey, which had already entered upon a process of decline. The pottery industry had disappeared at c.1200 and the two surviving parish churches had been united in c.1240. The closure of the Foss Dyke through silting was an increasing problem (Platts 1985, 220).

Although title deeds for Little London can be traced back to the 14th century (Oswald 1937, 3) a heraldic horse pendant (SMR No.50109, 14), found by metal detectorists on arable land immediately to the east, represents the only evidence for medieval activity in the immediate area of the site.



### **5.5 Post-Medieval (c.1540 - c.1800)**

During the post-medieval period Torksey continued its decline to its present status as a small village.

It is beyond the scope of this report to chronicle the later history of Little London, but it should be noted that the buildings shown on the Second Edition OS map (Surveyed 1885, revised 1916 - Fig.4, also *Plates I & IV*) are mostly still standing. The buildings are not listed and are not mentioned in standard architectural reference works. It is considered likely, however, that they date to the 18th or 19th century.

### **5.6 Modern**

The 6 inch, Second Edition (surveyed 1885, revised 1916) OS map depicts the Little London grounds extending to the line of a drain running parallel with the Foss Dyke. The drain was rerouted to the south during the mid 1950's (Mr Mannion, pers comm) resulting in the loss of the northern part of the grounds, to accommodate both the drain and a tract of land along its southern bank. It is possible that finds reported in the SMR (SMR No.50118, see also above) derive from this activity, which could have impacted upon the Roman kiln site.

Within the boundaries of the present day site, a number of works have been carried out, providing services and amenities (including an indoor swimming pool constructed in 1984) as part of its current use as a caravan park (see *Plates II & III*). Much of this work, including the excavation of the swimming pool immediately east of the kilns (as indicated by the NGR given in the SMR) was carried out under the present ownership. Mr Mannion (pers comm) reports that no obvious finds or features were discovered during this work.

## **6.0 CONCLUSION**

The results of the Desk-Based Assessment indicate the presence of a Roman settlement in the Little London area, extending into the Caravan Park (as evidenced by the pottery kilns and possible associated settlement remains) and across adjacent land to the north and east. Although, the precise character of this settlement cannot be determined from the available evidence, it could represent a subsidiary development relating to the historically more favoured area to the north of the Foss Dyke, where evidence for higher status Roman occupation (see above) has been found. If so, the presence of the pottery kilns might suggest a more industrial function for the site in the immediate study area. In the light of the foregoing discussion, it can be concluded, that the proposed area of development might contain further remains associated with Roman pottery production as well as evidence for Roman occupation.

Late Iron Age coins from adjacent arable land hint at a possible late Iron Age origin for the settlement. It is becoming increasingly clear that many of the larger Roman settlements in Lincolnshire developed from Iron Age predecessors.

The assessment produced no significant evidence for post-Roman activity either on or in the immediate vicinity of the site. It would appear, therefore, that settlement from the Anglo-Saxon period onwards was concentrated in the area to the north of the Foss Dyke.

The state of preservation of any deposits associated with the Roman pottery kilns and associated settlement may have been affected by groundworks for recently installed services and structures (see discussion above). Oswald's excavation report (1937) indicates that the remains may have lain at relatively shallow depth, in which case, the aforementioned works might have had a severe impact upon the survival of deposits. The present owner of the site (Mr Mannion), reports no discoveries of archaeological interest during these works.

Options for further evaluation of the site, in particular geophysical survey techniques, may be circumscribed by the presence of tarmac and concrete surfaces, closely spaced caravans, and a complex network of services.

## 7.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author of this report would like to thank Mr Mannion (proprietor of the Little London Caravan Park) for information provided during the site survey, the staff of the County Archaeology Section for assistance in locating information in the Sites and Monuments Records, the staff of Lincolnshire Archives, and Professor Roger Wilson of the University of Nottingham and Mr Thomas Cadbury of the County Museum for information relating to the whereabouts of the Adrian Oswald archive. Thanks are also due to Jenny Mann of CLAU, for editing of the report.

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## **9.0 PROJECT/ ARCHIVE DETAILS**

### **9.1 LHA NOTE DETAILS**

CLAU CODE: TLL01

PLANNING APPLICATION No.: -

FIELD OFFICER: R Trimble

NGR: SK 8392 7780

CIVIL PARISH: Fenton

SMR No.:

DATE OF INTERVENTION:

TYPE OF INTERVENTION: Desk-Based Assessment

UNDERTAKEN FOR: Tithe Barn Club (Aldwick) Ltd - Mr J F Mannion

### **9.2 ARCHIVE DETAILS**

PRESENT LOCATION: City of Lincoln Archaeology Unit, Charlotte House, The Lawn, Union Road, Lincoln, LN1 3BL

FINAL LOCATION: The City and County Museum, Friars Lane, Lincoln

MUSEUM ACCESSION No.: 2001.15

ACCESSION DATE: -

#### ***The Archive Consists of:***

Colour Print Photographs	3
Site Visit Notes & Plan	1
Research Notes	1

*It is intended that transfer of the archive, in accordance with current published requirements, will be undertaken following completion of this project.*

## COLOUR PLATES



Plate I - Original buildings at Little London (looking E)



Plate II - Access road and caravans viewed from Little London buildings (looking NW).

**COLOUR PLATES (Cont.)**



*Plate III - Possible location of 1930's excavation near the NE corner of the caravan park (looking E).*



*Plate IV - Original buildings at Little London (looking SW).*

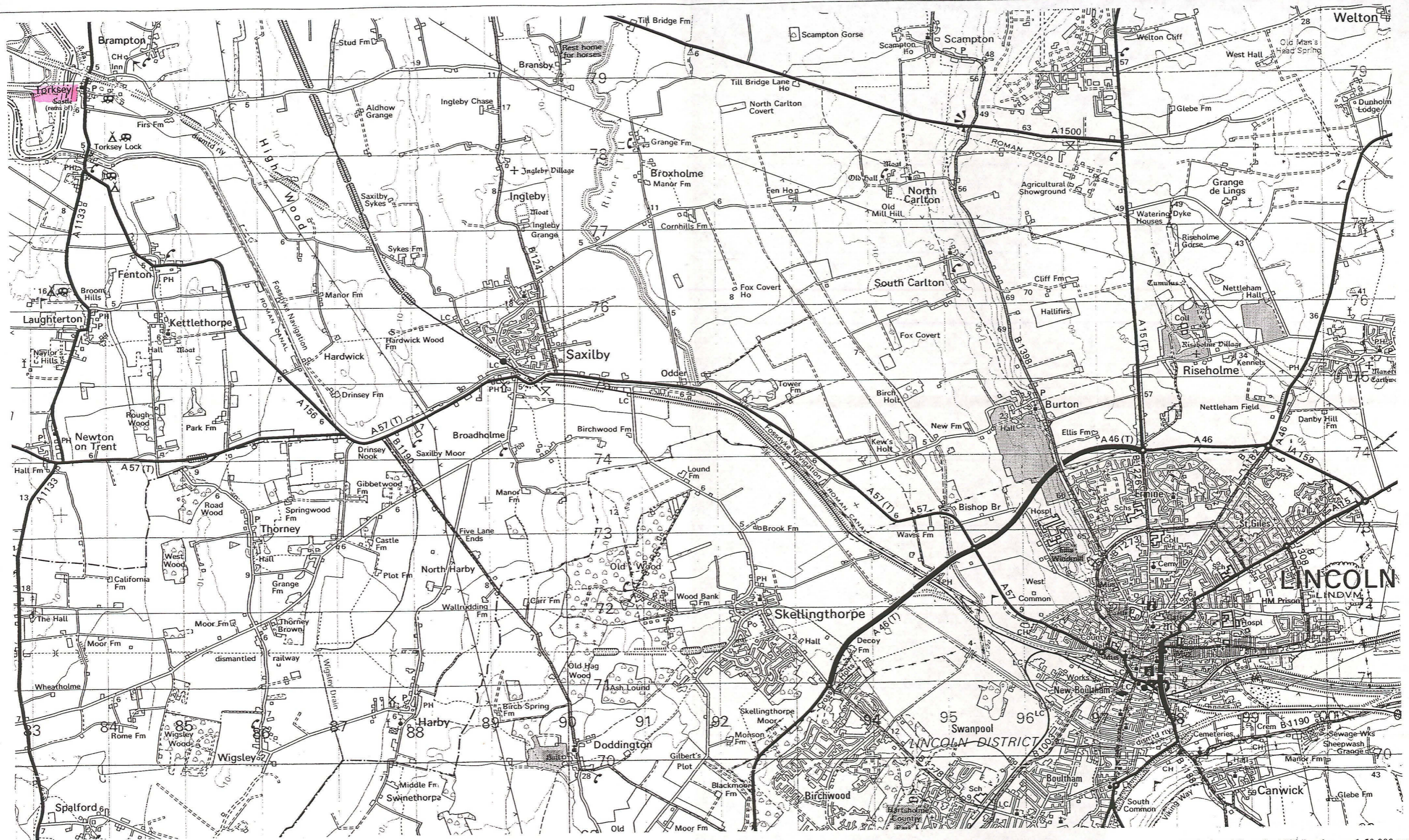
## APPENDIX - GAZETTEER OF SITES

### List of records contained in the County SMR

Plan No.	SMR No.	NGR	Period/Date	Description
1	52533	SK 8362 7855	Medieval	Cemetery found in Torksey
2	52542	SK 8361 7850	Medieval	Site of former church of All Saints
3	52541	SK 8358 7844	Neolithic	Stone Axe
4	52545	SK 8370 7890	Medieval	Early medieval settlement of Torksey
5	52531	SK 8357 7833	Anglo-Saxon	Late Saxon pottery (AD850-AD1065)
6	50570	SK 8363 7823	Roman	Site of Roman building
7	52560	SK 8365 7812	Post Medieval	Torksey Lock
8	53800	SK 838 775	Undated	Coins and a statuette found over a field
9	53797	SK 836 774	-	possible mound cropmark - perhaps a windmill
10	50338	SK 8430 7710	Undated	Linear cropmark (boundary?)
11	53796	SK 8452 7713	Undated	Potential/possible boundary ditch and trackway
12	50107	SK 8410 7750	Iron Age	Silver coin of the Corieltauvi
13	50108	SK 8420 7760	Iron Age	Gold coin dated to 80BC
13	50106	SK 8420 7760	Iron Age	Two debased silver staters
14	50109	SK 8410 7770	Medieval	Heraldic horse pendant
14	50110	SK 8410 7770	Roman	Pottery, coins and a 3rd century silver ring with gemstone engraved with a male charioteer
15	50118	SK 8412 7780	Roman	2nd century pottery found in cut for drain
16	53799	SK 8428 7781	Roman	Possible Roman cropmark trackway
17	53798	SK 842 779	Roman	Pottery found during fieldwork by Nottingham University. Possible relationship with supposed Roman road.
18	50113	SK 8396 7786	Roman	Three kilns north of Little London
19	50115	SK 8390 7780	Neolithic	Polished greenstone axe
20	50117	SK 8401 7784	Roman	Stone weight and bronze ring associated with the settlement
21	50111	SK 840 778	Roman	Sherd of Samian pottery, coin, and a dolpin brooch of 2nd century date
22	50114	SK 8408 7780	Roman	Roman settlement dated 2nd to late 4th century
23	52273	SK 8340 7810 SK 9380 7295	Roman?	Foss Dyke canal
24	50089	SK 8400 7800	Anglo-Saxon	Coin of Offa (c.792-6) found in Foss Dyke
25	54522	SK 8395 7818	Undated	Possible pit and trackway found by geophysical survey
26	54509	SK 83799 78160	Anglo-Saxon	Single pottery sherd found on evaluation north of The Elms
26	54510	SK 83799 78160	Medieval	Single sherd of 14th-15th century jug found on evaluation
26	54511	SK 83799 78160	Post Medieval	Large cut features found during evaluation
27	52529	SK 8375 7833	Medieval	Kiln producing early 12th century pottery
28	52543	SK 83817842	Medieval	Undated cropmark of probable field boundaries/field system
29	52546	SK 8380 7850	Anglo-Saxon	Caterpillar brooch
30	52540	SK 8364 7823	Medieval	Site of Cistercian Fosse Nunnery

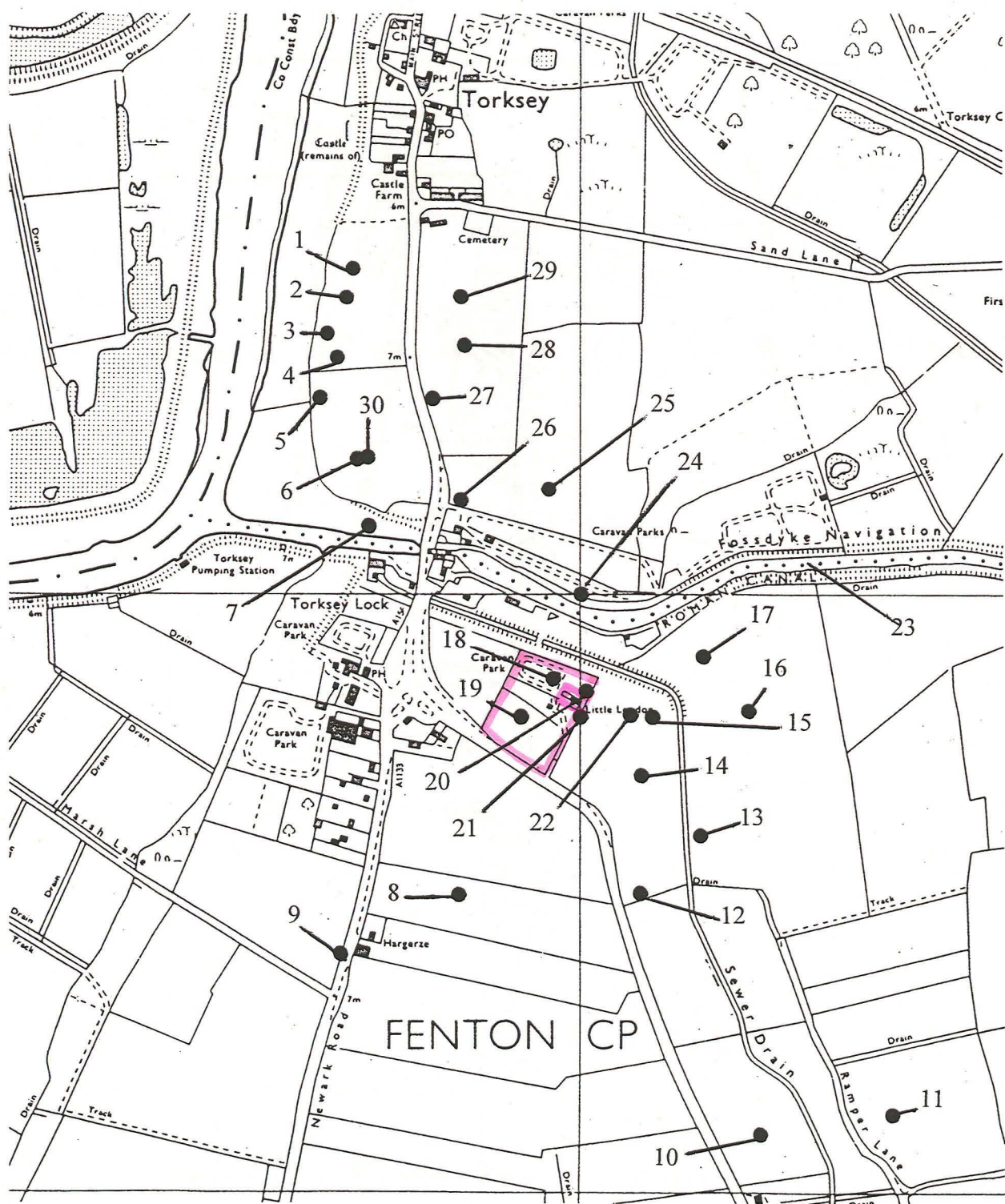
-	52530	Not given	Anglo-Saxon	Coins from various locations dated AD650 - AD849
-	54207	SK 8360 7840	Medieval	Site of Torksey medieval town



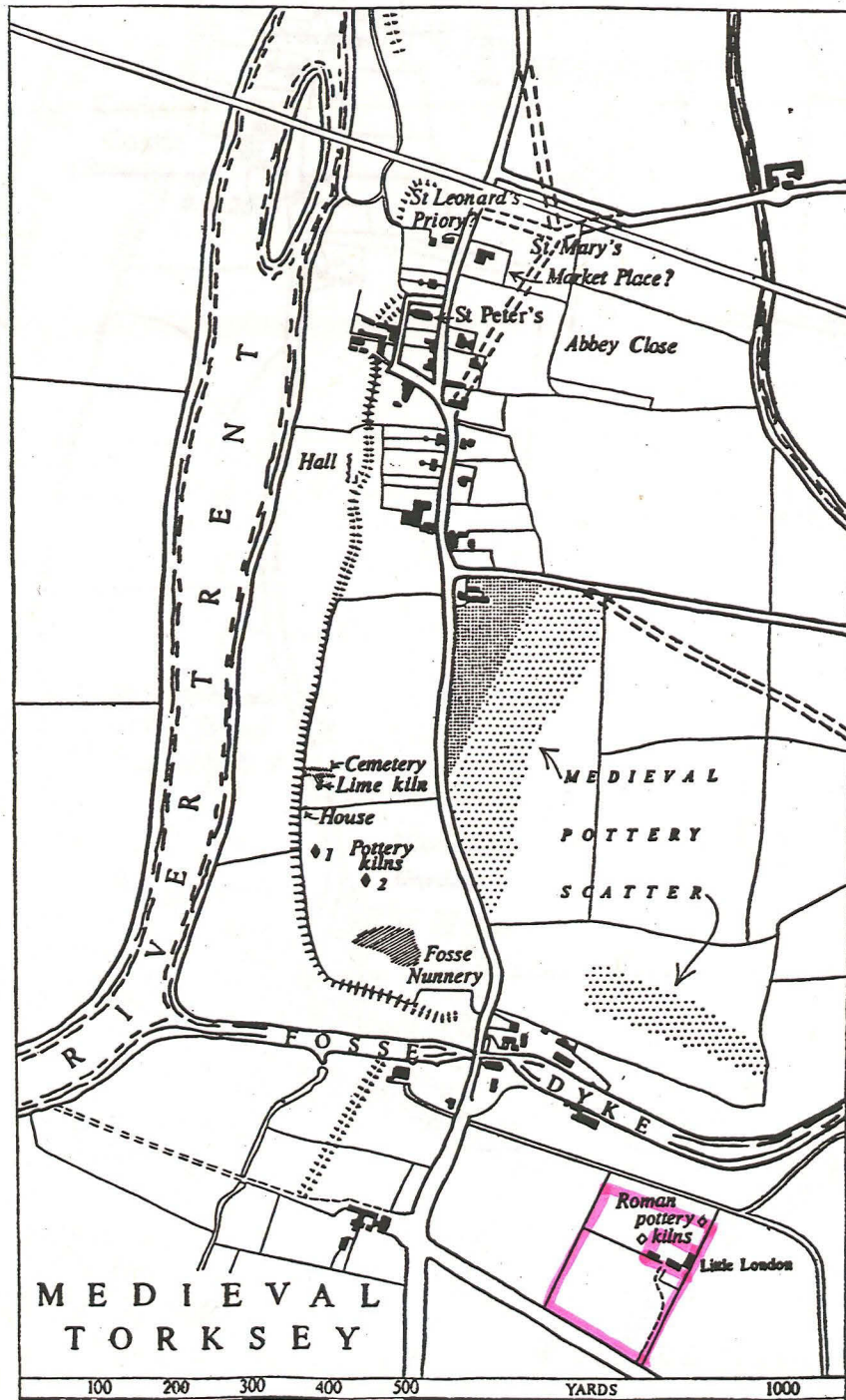


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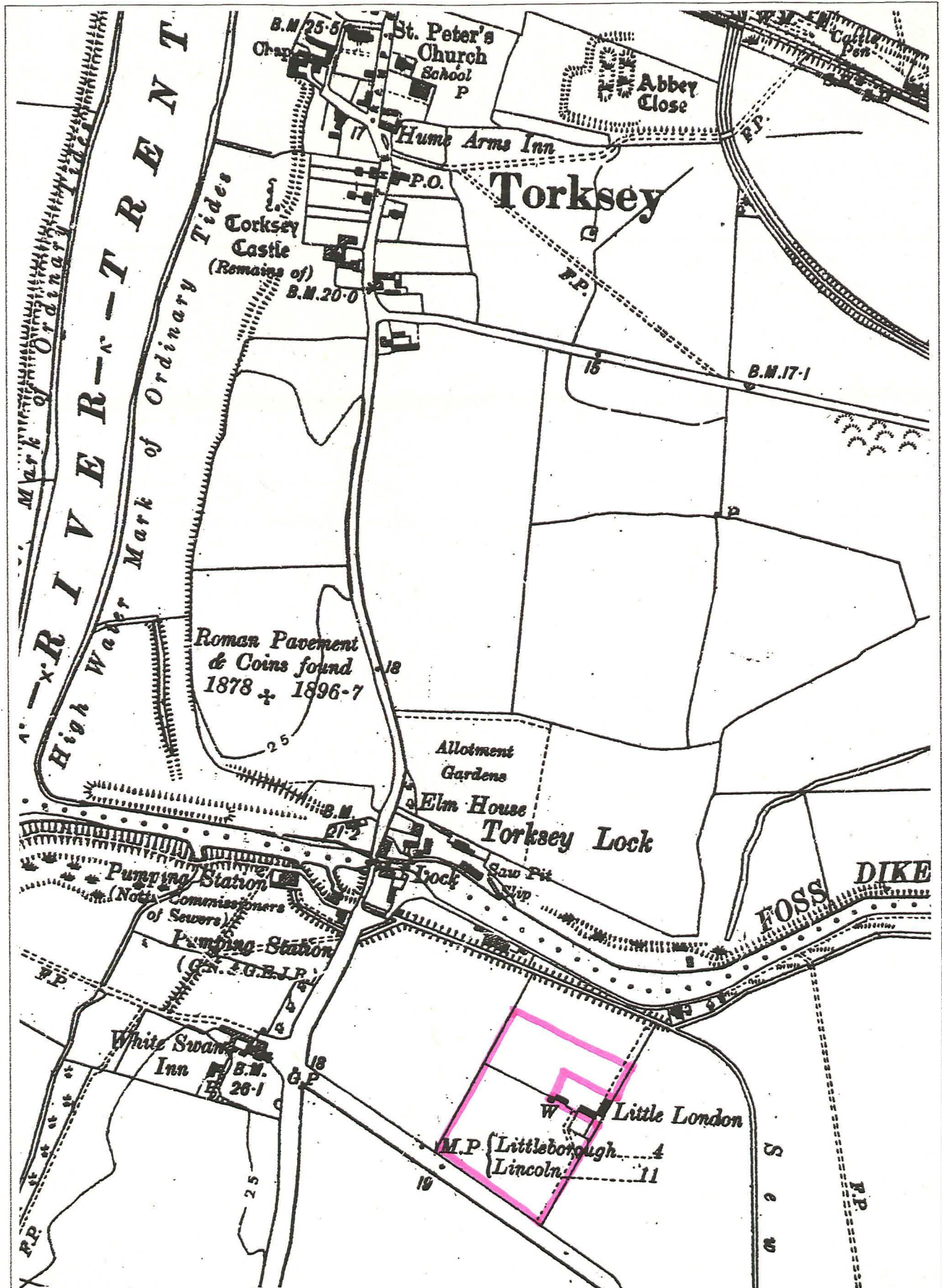
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