



LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

St Mary's Church, Marshchapel

NGR: TF 360 989

Site Code: MC 99

LCNCC Museum Accn. No.: 136.99

Archaeological Watching Brief

Report prepared for
Marshchapel Parochial Church Council

by N. Field and G. Tann

LAS Report No. 519

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The Figures

Fig. 1 Location of Marshchapel. Inset C based on the 1956 Ordnance Survey 1:10,560 Landranger map Sheet TA 39NE. Crown Copyright, reproduced with the permission of the controller of HMSO. LAS Licence No. AL 50424A.

Fig. 2a Sketch plan showing the position of the monitored drain trench and soakaway (Field, based on a sketch provided by the architect).

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St. Mary's Church, Marshchapel, Lincs. Archaeological Watching Brief

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Summary

Excavation of a drain trench between the SW angle of the tower and a soakaway encountered no archaeological remains. Foundation detail of the fifteenth century tower was recorded.

Introduction

Lindsey Archaeological Services (LAS) was commissioned in June 1999 by Bond and Read (Chartered Architects), on behalf of Marshchapel Parochial Church Council, to inspect and record a drain trench leading south from a rainwater downpipe on the SW angle of the tower to a soakaway to the south of the church path (Figs. 1 and 2)

The purpose of the archaeological work was to establish the presence, extent and quality of any archaeological remains and record any archaeological features which were exposed by the groundworks. The recording brief was conducted by Naomi Field on November 11th 1999.

Archaeological Background

The settlement of Marshchapel, lies on the Lincolnshire Outmarsh and is first mentioned in thirteenth century documents. Marshchapel developed on land, probably reclaimed, which originally belonged to Fulstow parish (immediately to its west). The parish church is located towards the south end of the village, west of the A1301.

The Church of St. Mary presumably developed around a chapel built out on the marsh. The existing church is a large building in the Perpendicular style substantially of one build, of early fifteenth century construction (Pl. 1). It is thought to reflect the wealth created by the local salt industry and was formerly known as the Cathedral of the Marshes. The church comprises a nave with north and south aisles, tower and chancel.

The Watching Brief (Fig. 2)

The 0.4m wide trench was excavated for a length of about 6.85m, between the SW angle of the tower and the new soakaway (Pls. 2a and 2b). Beside the tower, the trench was 0.4m deep, falling to 0.55m deep beside the soakaway.

The 1m x 0.85m soakaway is sited to the south of the churchyard path. The final depth was 1m, but this had not been fully excavated when the monitoring visit was made. The 0.2m thick dark brown silt topsoil layer sealed a red/brown silty clay subsoil disturbed by tree roots (Pl. 4).

Against the tower, the trench crossed a recently installed french drain. The drain runs alongside the south wall of the tower, the west and south walls of the south aisle and porch, and beside the south aisle east of the porch.

The new drain trench revealed detail of the tower foundation (Fig. 2b). The chamfered plinths of the tower and buttress are identical and contemporary, but the upper plinth course at the angle of the buttress has been cut away in the position of a rainwater pipe (Pl. 5). This rainwater pipe now only survives at bell-chamber height. Below ground level, a vertical joint was exposed between the buttress and the tower wall. This appeared to be indicative of the construction technique, not an indication that the buttresses are later additions.

Conclusion

Archaeological monitoring allowed the buried foundation of the tower to be recorded, but otherwise produced no archaeological results.

Acknowledgements

LAS is grateful for the assistance received from Peter McFarlane (Bond and Read Chartered Architects) and their contractors.

The recording was carried out by Naomi Field. Illustrations were prepared by Mick McDaid, and the report was collated and produced by Jane Frost.

Naomi Field and Geoff Tann
Lindsey Archaeological Services
March 27th 2001

Archive Summary

Correspondence

Fax copy of architect's sketch plan

Field sketch and notes

Inked plan

Photographs: colour prints, LAS film no. 99/168/14-21

The Figures

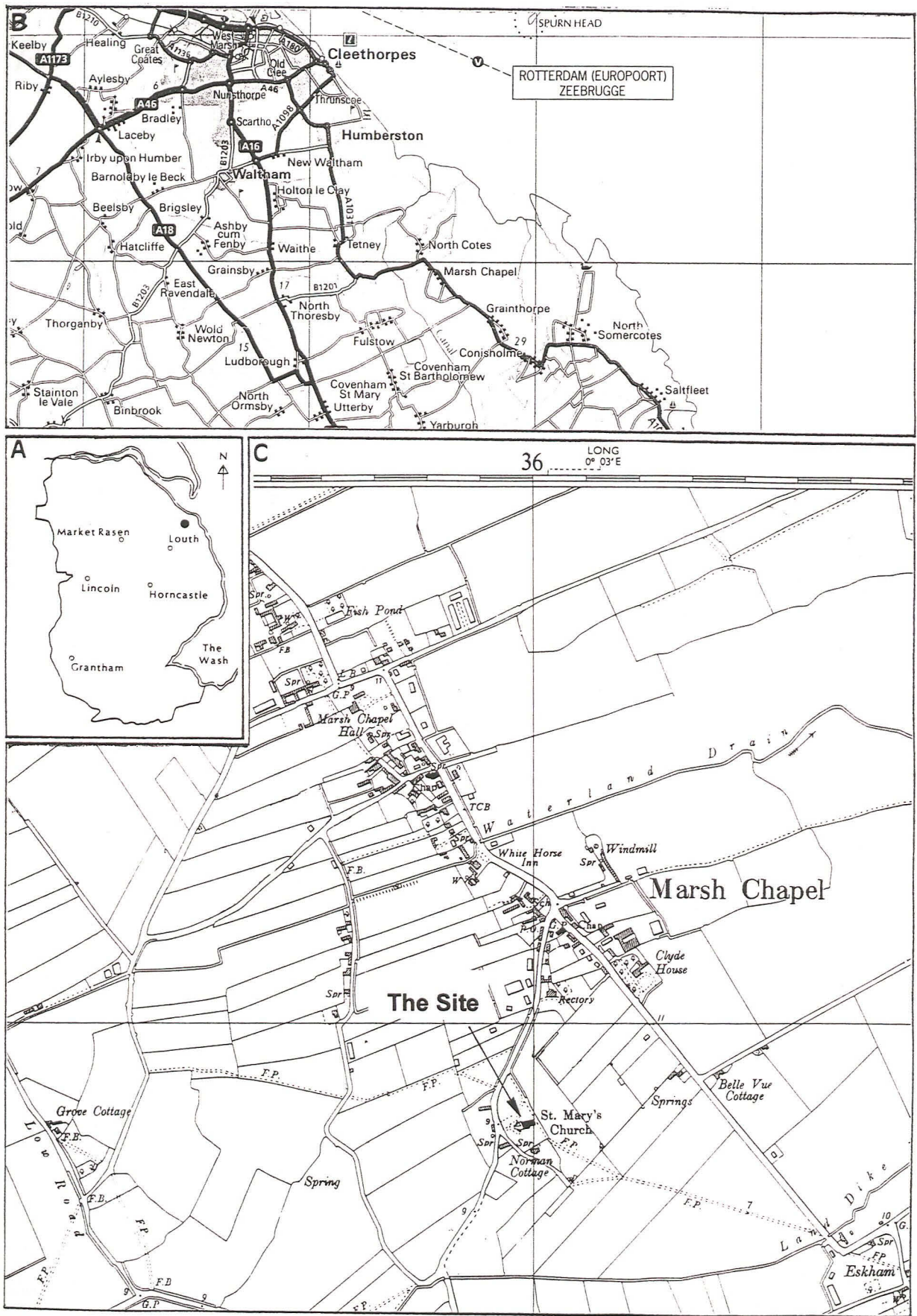


Fig. 1 Location of Marsh Chapel. Inset C based on the 1956 Ordnance Survey 1:10,560 Landranger map Sheet TA 39NE. Crown Copyright, reproduced with the permission of the controller of HMSO. LAS Licence No. AL 50424A.

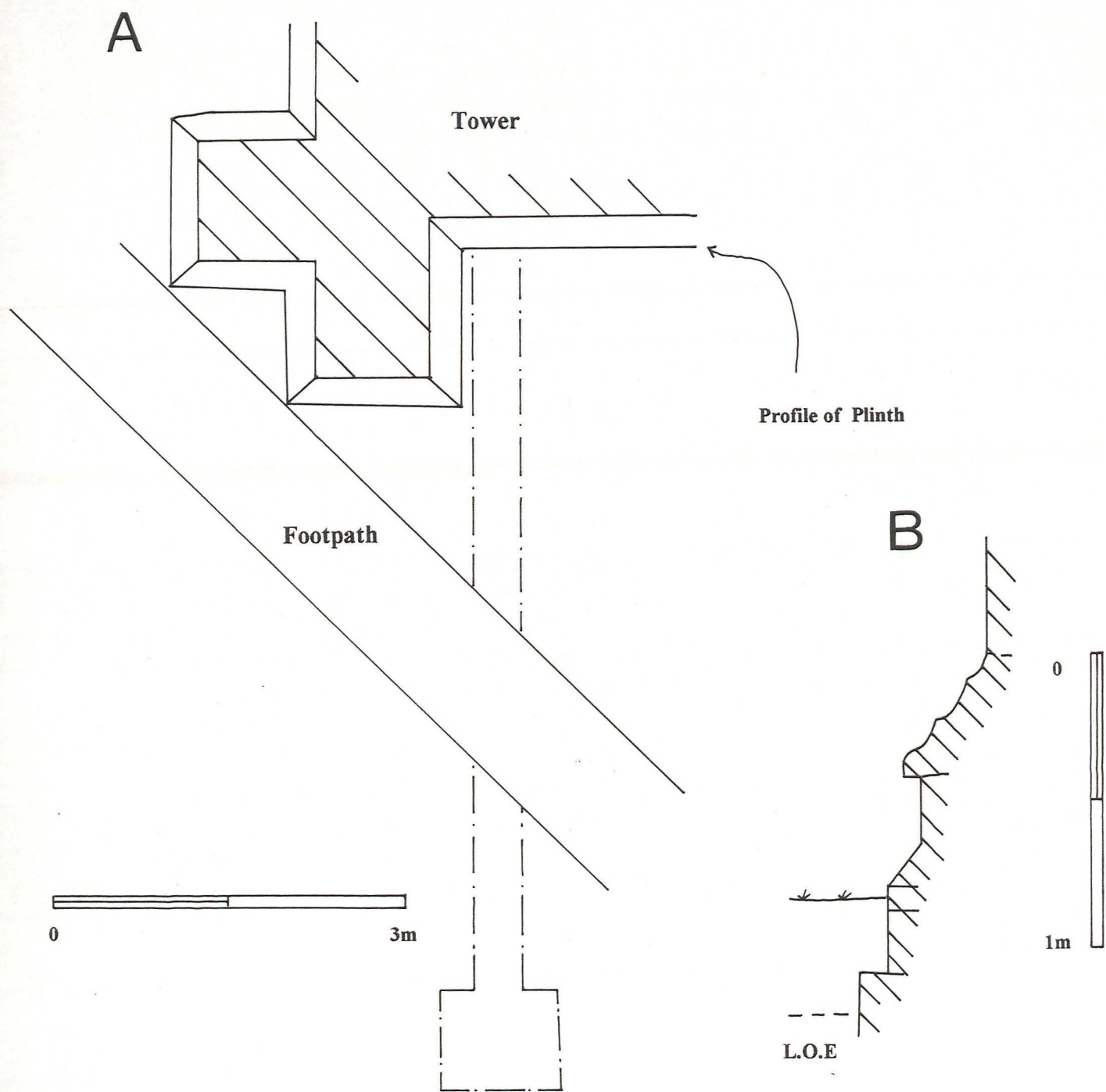


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Fig. 2b Profile of the tower foundation, SW angle (Field).

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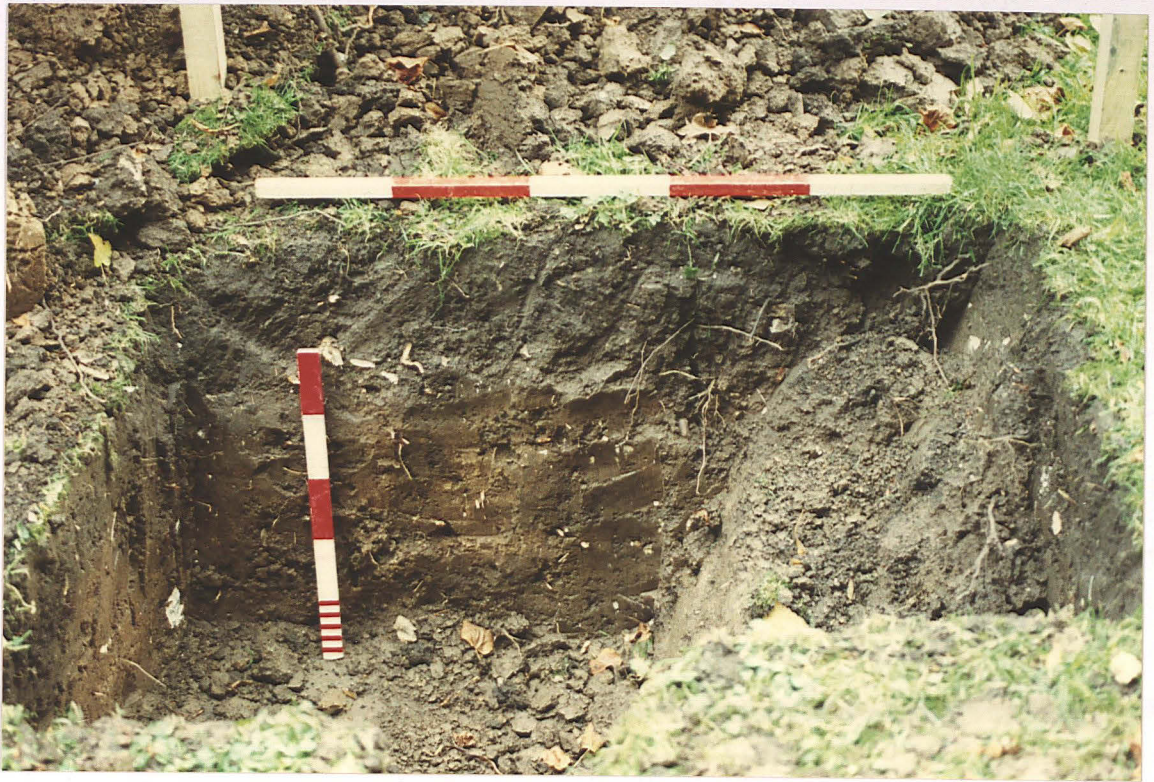
Pl. 1 Marshchapel Church, looking north.



PI. 2 SW angle of the tower, showing scar left by removed rainwater pipe.



PI. 3 The drain trench, leading from the SW angle of the tower to a soakaway (foreground).



Pl. 4 The soakaway, during excavation (scales 1m and 0.5m).

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