



ADVANCING LINCOLNSHIRE'S PAST



Event LI1580  
Source LI 6382

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF  
ON LAND NEXT TO THE  
WATER PUMPING STATION,  
BRANSTON BOOTHS,  
LINCOLNSHIRE**

Work Undertaken For  
Anglian Water Services Ltd

January 1994

Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire  
28 Boston Road,  
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Charity No: 1001463. Company No: 2554738 (England)

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## 1. SUMMARY

*An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during soil stripping and excavation of foundation trenches on land adjacent to a water pumping station at Branston Booths, Lincolnshire. Several Romano-British sites and findspots, including the Car Dyke Roman waterway, are located in the vicinity of the pumping station. Prior to the commencement of the construction operations, the site had been subjected to a geophysical survey which revealed several linear anomalies. Subsequent excavation proved these to be caused by field drains. Additionally, those excavations recovered a quantity of flintwork of late Mesolithic date.*

*Several areas of apparent burning were identified. However, no artefactual evidence was recovered and these burnt features could be natural in origin. A field drain, not located by the geophysical survey, was also revealed. No distinct archaeological remains associated with the Mesolithic flintwork, or with the nearby Roman features, were encountered.*

## 2. INTRODUCTION

Between July and October 1993, an archaeological watching brief was undertaken on land adjacent to a water pumping station at Branston Booths, Lincolnshire (NGR TF 057 696 centre). This examination was carried out during soil stripping and the excavation of foundation trenches for a new water treatment plant, and in accordance with a brief set by the North Kesteven Community Archaeologist.

Branston Booths pumping station is located 8km east of Lincoln in the civil parish of Heighington, North Kesteven district, Lincolnshire (Fig. 1). At a height

of approximately 3m OD, the site lies at the western edge of the Witham valley, close to the scarp of the Lincoln Edge. Upper Jurassic Kellaways beds, overlain by Oxford Clay provide the solid geology. The investigation area is located on soils of the Adventurers' 2 association, earthy eutro-amorphous soils, immediately adjacent to their boundary with the Beccles 1 association, typical stagnogley soils (Soil Survey 1983). Both these soils are developed on glaciofluvial sands (Hodge *et al.* 1984, 86). North and east of the investigation site flows the River Witham, approximately one and a half kilometres distant.

Adjacent to the water pumping station at Branston Booths is the Car Dyke (Fig. 2), a Romano-British waterway that connected the Witham near Lincoln with the Nene east of Peterborough (Whitwell 1970, 57). Within a kilometre of the investigation area are tile kilns (to southwest and northwest) and an occupation site (to northwest), all of Romano-British date. Several crop- and soilmarks close to the investigation area have been recorded on aerial photographs.

Evidence of earlier human activity in the vicinity is provided by two Neolithic stone axes found at separate locations to the northwest, and an assemblage of late Mesolithic flintwork recovered during an evaluation excavation of the site (Heritage Lincolnshire 1993, 1).

A borehole survey encountered occasional pockets of peat within the alluvial sandy, uppermost natural geological layer (A F Howland Associates 1993).

Geophysical examination revealed a large number of predominantly linear magnetic anomalies crossing the site (Shiel 1993). On excavation, these were found to correspond to the locations of field drains (Fig. 3).

### 3. AIMS

The aims of the watching brief were to locate and, if present, preserve by record archaeological deposits prior to their destruction by the development work. Such recording would supplement earlier discoveries and permit previously identified archaeological remains to be placed into a wider landscape context.

### 4. METHODS

Soil stripping and excavation of the foundation trenches were undertaken by the site engineering contractors using a mechanical digger. Following clearance and excavation, the area was examined. Selected deposits were investigated by hand and recorded according to standard Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire practice. No relationship to Ordnance Survey datum was established.

### 5. ANALYSIS

Records of the deposits and features identified during the watching brief were examined. Phasing was assigned based on the nature of the deposits and recognisable relationships between them. A total of three phases was identified:

- Phase 1 Natural deposits
- Phase 2 Undated deposits
- Phase 3 Modern deposits

#### Phase 1 Natural deposits

Natural deposits of banded sands and silts (214), which were occasionally pebbly or clayey, were encountered across the area. Deep excavations through the sand layers revealed deposits of green-grey clay (215).

#### Phase 2 Undated deposits

Located approximately 15m east of evaluation trench 5 were patches of dark grey, apparently burnt, sand (200, 201; Fig. 3). Each of these contained frequent flecks of charcoal. Toward the northern limit of investigation area were two hollows (203, 206) containing charcoal and ash flecked soils (202, 204, 205). Alongside these were patches of charcoal flecked soil (207, 211; Fig. 4). All of these features, which were apparently caused by burning, were amorphous and no finds were recovered from any of them.

#### Phase 3 Modern deposits

Cut into the natural sands was a northeast-southwest oriented linear feature (210). Located near the centre of the development area, this feature was over 2m wide and 0.7m deep and contained a ceramic pipe (209). Consequently, this is interpreted as a drain trench.

Crossing the northern limit of the investigation area was a cut linear feature (213) containing dark soil (212). Aligned east-west, this feature paralleled geophysical anomalies confirmed as field drains by the evaluation excavation. This feature is, therefore, explained as a land drain.

Surviving around the perimeter of the site, though elsewhere generally removed during machine clearance, was a topsoil deposit (216) that constituted the present ground surface.

### 6. DISCUSSION

Natural deposits of sands (Phase 1) were seen across the development area. Where deeper trenches were excavated, green-grey clay was observed beneath the sands.

Essentially identical natural deposits were recorded in the preceding evaluation excavation.

Areas of apparent burning (Phase 2) were located on the east and north sides of the investigation site. All the features were amorphous and without finds and may have been caused by vegetation clearance or even geochemical effects. They are not definitely archaeological in origin and, in consequence, are of uncertain function and associations.

Land improvement associated with agricultural use of recent date (phase 3) was represented by the provision of land drains, corresponding to results obtained on the excavation. One large drain trench, traversing the site from northeast to southwest, had not been apparent on the geophysical survey. However, the location of this particular gully coincides with, and may be responsible for, a band devoid of geophysical anomalies that crosses the site.

The modern ground surface was redundant ploughsoil that had recently been taken out of agricultural service under the set-aside policy.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

This watching brief identified the presence of localised areas of apparent burning of unknown date and associations. These burnt spreads and patches may, in fact, be natural in origin. No deposits of Mesolithic date, as identified on the evaluation excavation, were encountered. Similarly, Roman deposits were absent, confirming the evaluation results. Arable use was represented by recent field drains. Such agricultural processes may have effectively erased any surface deposits associated with the Mesolithic remains identified by the earlier excavations.

## 8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Heritage Lincolnshire would like to thank Andrew Page (Anglian Water Services Ltd.). Steve Haynes coordinated the work and Dave Start edited this report. Examination of the relevant parish files was permitted by Nicola Nuttall, the North Kesteven Community Archaeologist. Access to the County Sites and Monuments Record was provided by Ian George of the Archaeology Section, City and County Museum, Lincoln.

## 9. PERSONNEL

Project Manager: Steve Haynes  
Supervisors: Gary Trimble, David Brown  
Finds Processing and Illustration: Denise Buckley  
Post-excavation Analyst: Gary Taylor

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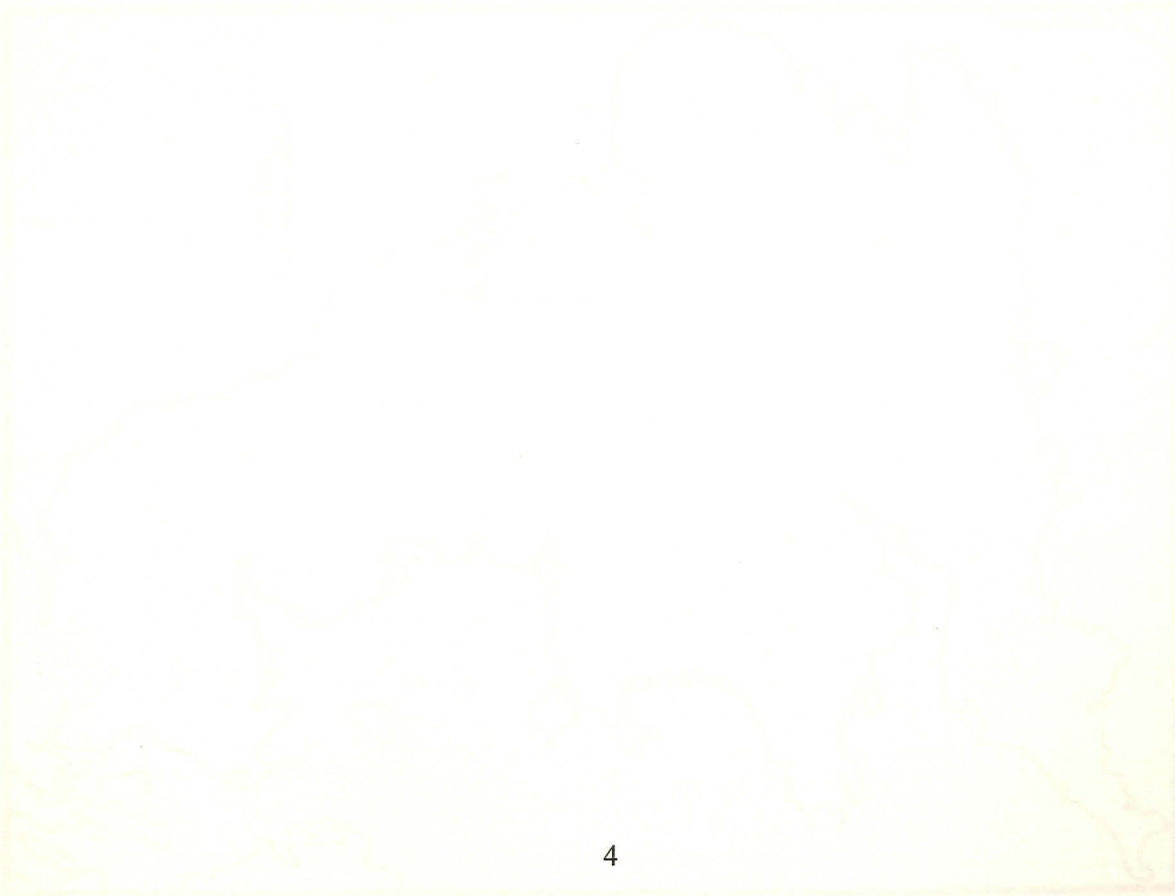
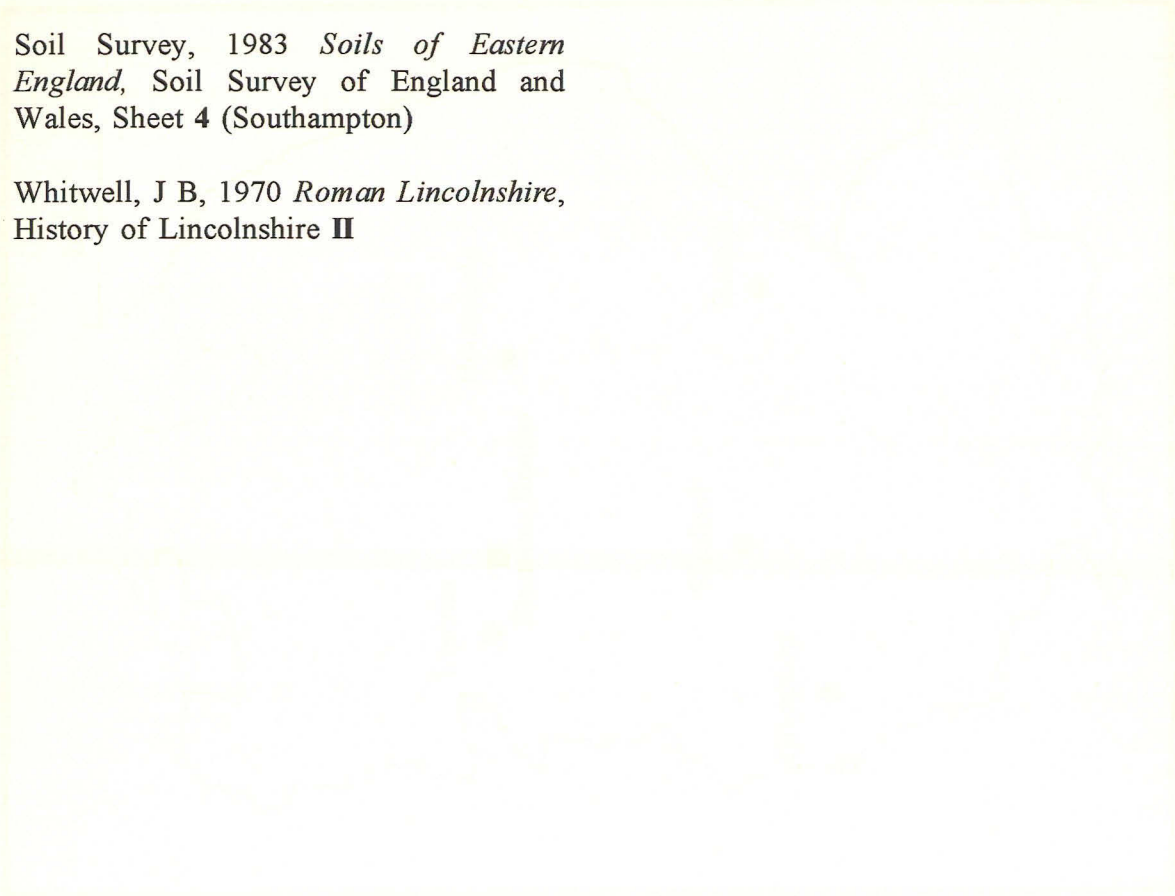
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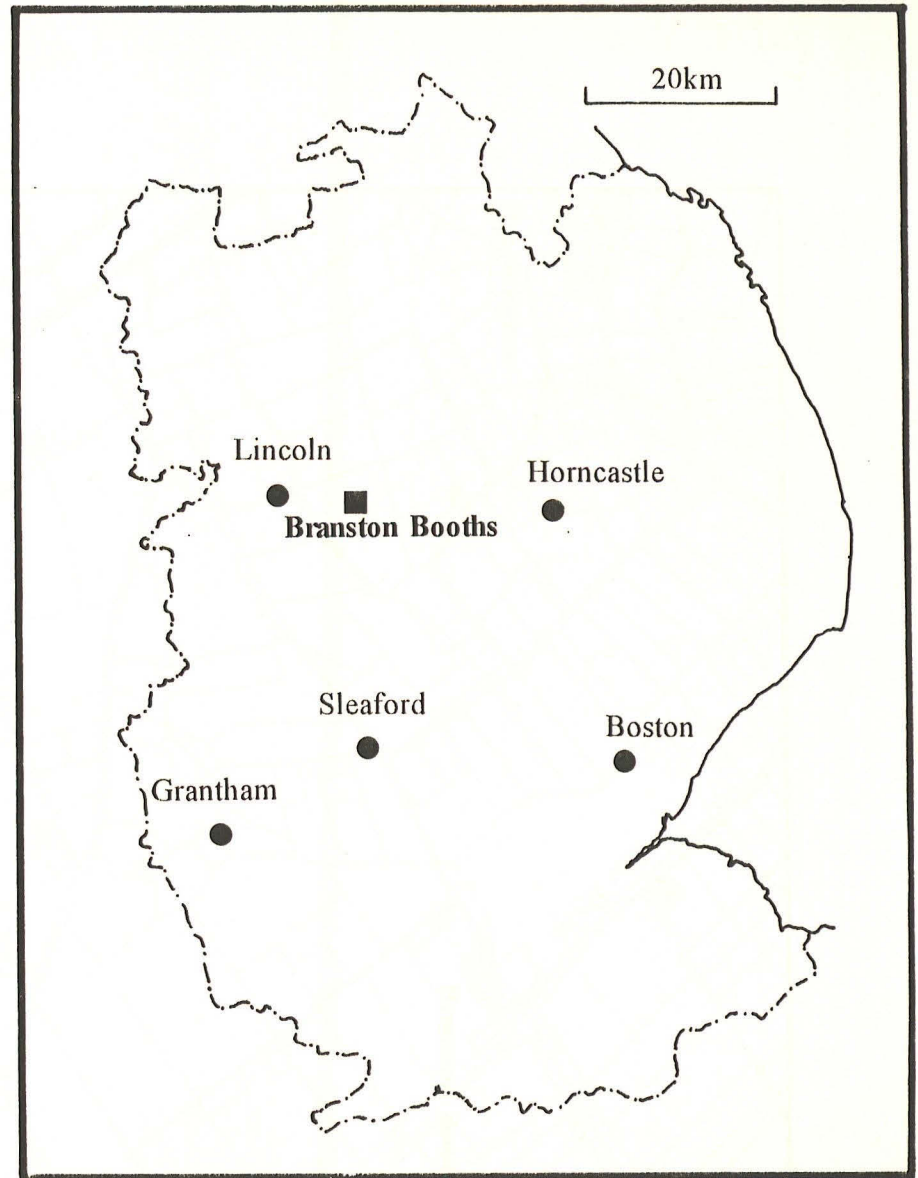
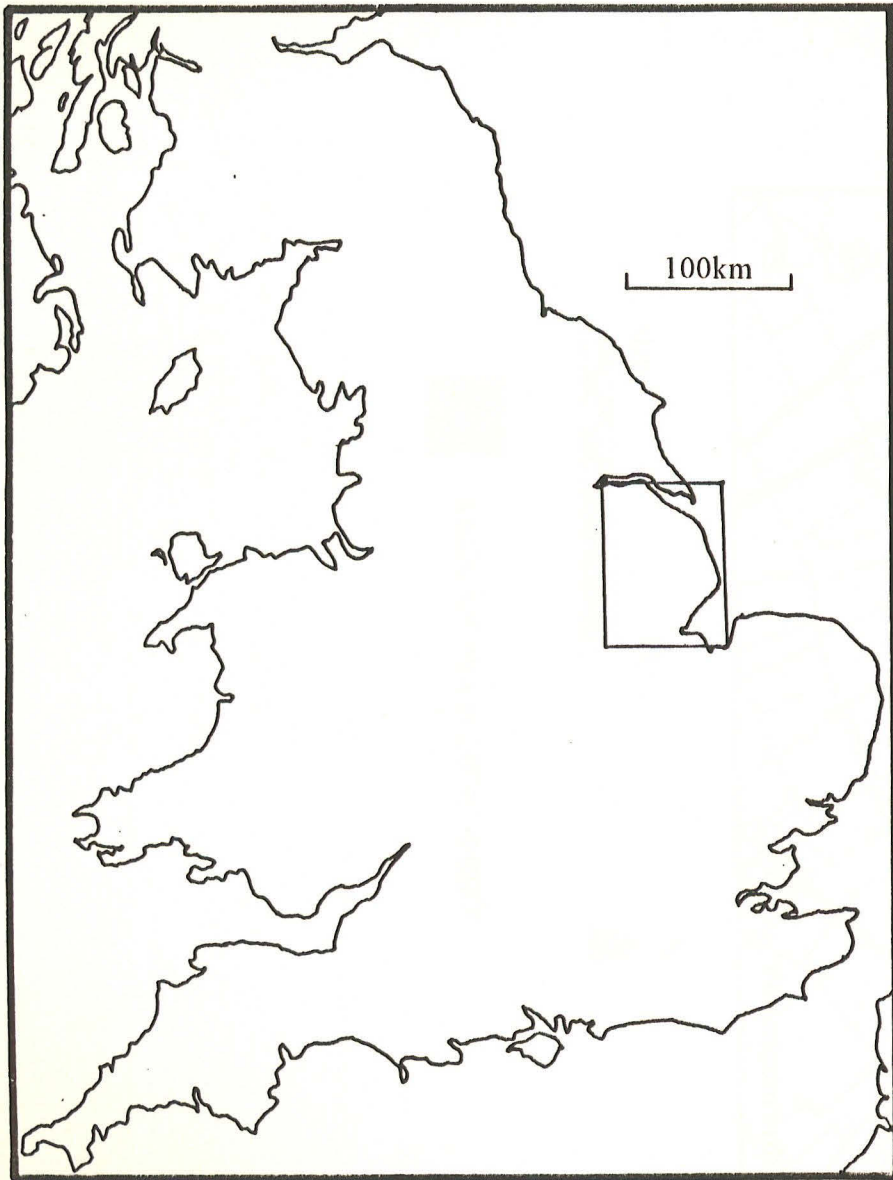
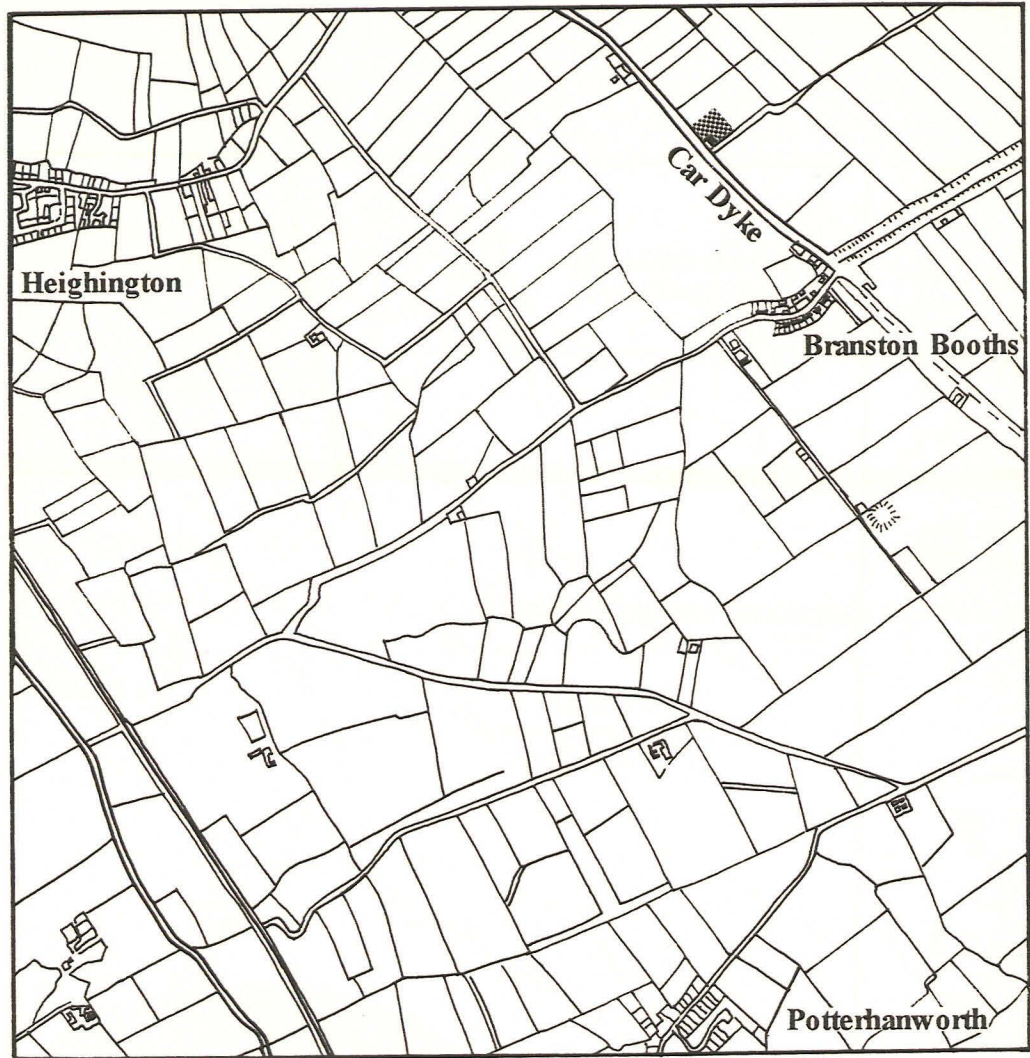


Fig. 1 GENERAL LOCATION PLAN

Fig. 2 SITE LOCATION PLAN



AREA OF WATCHING BRIEF

**Fig. 3 WATCHING BRIEF OBSERVATIONS, SUPERIMPOSED ON RESULTS OF GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY AND EVALUATION TRENCHES**

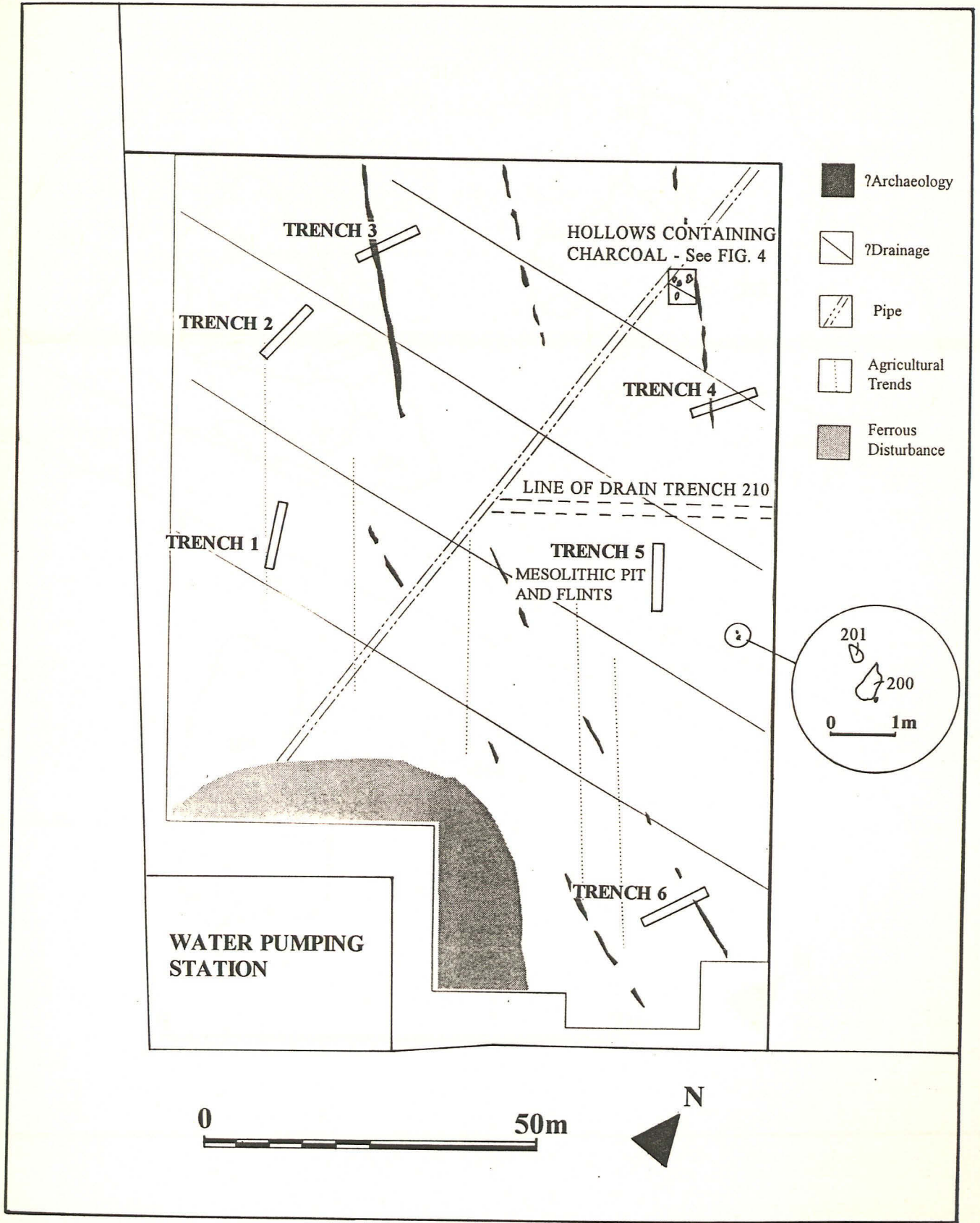
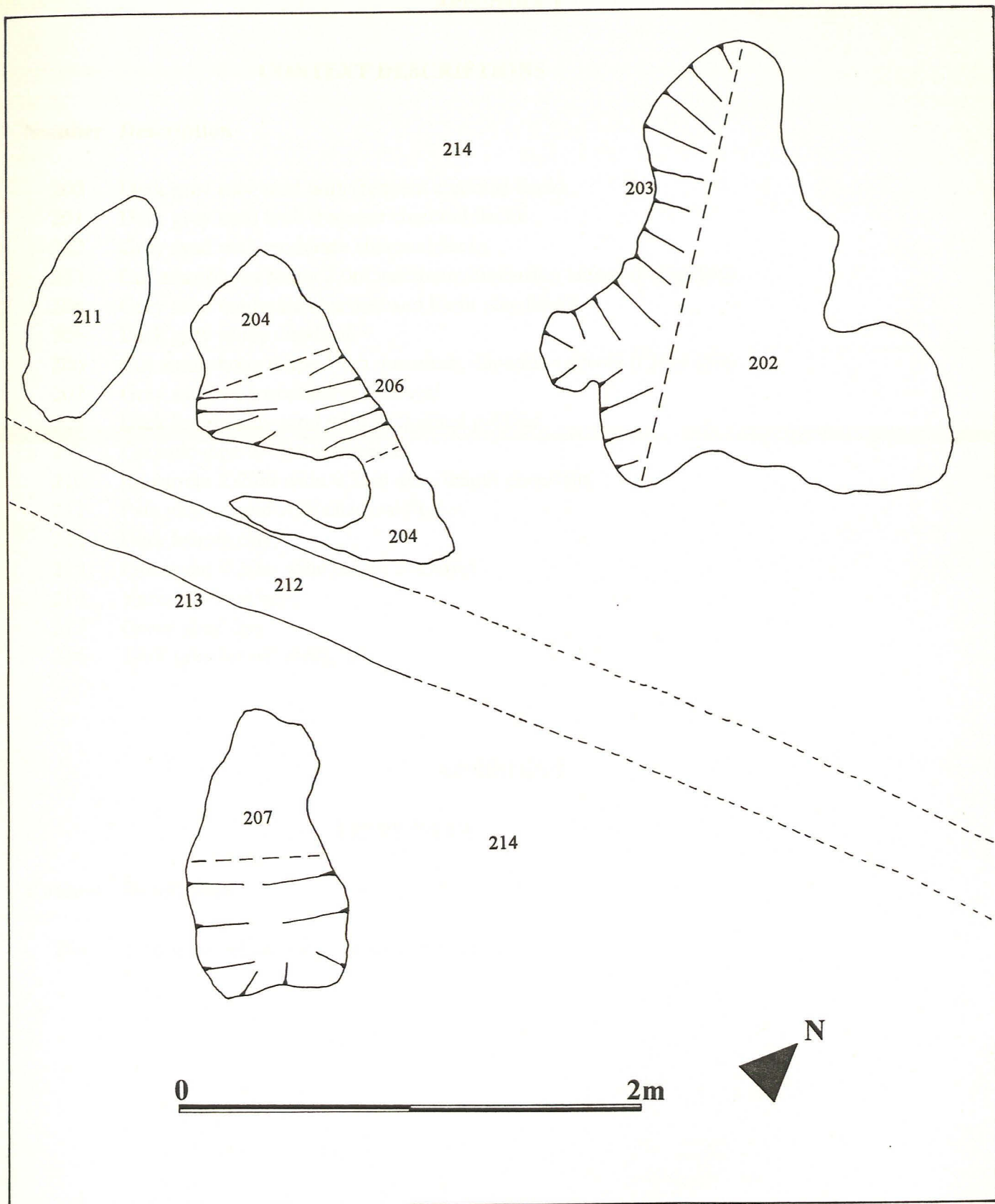


Fig. 4 HOLLOWES CONTAINING CHARCOAL



## APPENDIX 1

### CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

| <b>Number</b> | <b>Description</b> |
|---------------|--------------------|
|---------------|--------------------|

|     |   |
|-----|---|
| 200 | Dark grey silty sand with frequent charcoal flecks.           |
| 201 | Dark grey sand with frequent charcoal flecks.                 |
| 202 | Grey sand with moderate charcoal flecks.                      |
| 203 | Cut amorphous shape 2.0m maximum dimension across 0.10m deep. |
| 204 | Grey sand moderate charcoal and burnt clay flecks.            |
| 205 | Dark grey sandy charcoal.                                     |
| 206 | Cut amorphous shape 1.0m maximum dimension across 0.30m deep  |
| 207 | Grey sand with occasional charcoal.                           |
| 208 | Dark brown silty sand with occasional pebbles.                |
| 209 | Ceramic pipe 0.18m in diameter                                |
| 210 | Linear cut 2.20m wide 0.70m deep length uncertain.            |
| 211 | Pale yellow sand with charcoal flecks.                        |
| 212 | Dark brown clay.  |
| 213 | Linear cut 0.20m wide length unknown.                         |
| 214 | Yellow brown sand.  |
| 215 | Green grey clay.  |
| 216 | Dark grey brown sandy silt.                                   |

## APPENDIX 2

### FINDS DATA

| <b>Context</b> | <b>Description</b> |
|----------------|--------------------|
|----------------|--------------------|

|     |   |
|-----|---|
| 204 | Two unidentifiable fragments of charcoal. |
|-----|---|

### Appendix 3 The archive

The archive consists of:

- 17 Context records
- 2 Photographic records
- 8 Scale drawings
- 1 Box of finds
- 1 Stratigraphic matrix

All primary records and finds are currently kept at:

Heritage Lincolnshire  
28 Boston Road  
Sleaford  
Lincolnshire  
NG34 7ET

City and County Museum, Lincoln Accession Number: 56.93