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LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

**Bourne Grammar School, Lincs**

09781 19515  
**NGR: TF ~~09834 19520~~**

Site Code: BOGS 01

LCNCC Accn No: 2001,101

**Archaeological Excavation and  
Watching Brief**

**for**

**Hyder Business Services**

**on behalf of**

**Lincolnshire County Council Property Services**

**May 2001**

**LAS Report No. 533**

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**Bourne Grammar School, Lincs**  
**Archaeological Excavation**

**NGR: TF 09834 19520**

Site Code: BOGS 01

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**Summary**

*Archaeological investigations at the above site revealed evidence of Roman drainage features. Also found was a single burial which had been heavily disturbed, probably by modern activity. Roman pottery from the site proved to be very interesting with a range of forms present, the majority of which dated to the period 140 – 200 AD. At least one of the sherds appeared to be a waster and adds more weight to a suggested 2<sup>nd</sup> century start date for the Roman pottery industry at Bourne.*

**Introduction**

Lindsey Archaeological Services was commissioned by Hyder Business Services on behalf of Lincolnshire County Council Property Services to carry out an archaeological investigation at the above site. The works were carried out in accordance with the general requirements set out in the *Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook* (Lincolnshire County Council Archaeology Section, 1998) and after informal discussions with Lincolnshire County Council Senior Built Environment Officer on 16th January 2001. The excavation was carried out in the week beginning Monday the 22<sup>nd</sup> January and the watching brief in the week beginning Monday 29<sup>th</sup> of January 2001.

**Site Location and Description**

The development site is located within the grounds of Bourne Grammar School, South Road Bourne. The school is situated on the west side of the A15 to Peterborough south of the town centre. The excavation area was within the footprint of new classrooms being constructed to the rear of the existing building.

**Planning Background**

Permission was granted under the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992 to Lincolnshire County Council for the construction of new classrooms, art suite and drama suite as an extension to existing buildings, subject to undertaking an archaeological scheme of investigations prior to construction.

**Archaeological Background**

In 1959 pottery kilns were discovered during the building of an extension to the school, east of the present proposed development. A watching brief in 1995 recorded further features of 1-3<sup>rd</sup> century date including pits and ditches. The site lies south of a housing development (on South Road) where archaeological excavations in 1997 revealed extensive Roman clay pits with later occupation remains.

An evaluation carried out in December 2000, although hampered by existing services, did reveal evidence of ditches containing pottery of probable 1st or 2nd century date which places the features prior to the date conventionally given for the kiln site.

### **Aims and Objectives**

The purpose of the excavation was to:

- Determine the nature and extent of features discovered during the evaluation.
- Determine if further features exist within the area.
- Establish the function of these features within a local regional and national context.

### **Excavation**

The specified area (measuring 15m x 25m) was machine excavated, using a 360° excavator with a toothless dyking bucket, to the top of the first recognisable archaeological horizon. All machine excavation was supervised by an archaeologist.

The excavation area was hand-cleaned to reveal features in plan and carefully selected cross-sections through the features will be excavated to enable the maximum information about form, development, date and stratigraphic relationships to be recorded.

### **Watching Brief**

A watching brief was carried out on the remainder of the site which consisted of supervision of the remainder of the groundworks by an experienced archaeologist. Liaison was maintained with the Lincolnshire County Council Senior Built Environment Officer.

### **Results**

The area of excavation consisted of an area 25m by 15m. Between the evaluation and the excavation phase of the project the overburden was removed to a depth of 0.80 to 0.85m below the surface and then backfilled with uniform gravel. This was necessary due to the nature of ground conditions with standing water over the site making any work whether construction or archaeological impossible (Pl. 1).

Although the topsoil and overburden had been removed prior to the excavation, the evaluation had revealed 0.20m of topsoil over 0.60m of a grey silty material, probably relating to a flood deposit.

A large ditch (1021, Pl. 2, Fig. 4D) ran from north to south across the centre of the site. It had a rounded profile and a single fill 1022. Its most likely function was as a drain and there were two smaller drains entering it. One from the east (1008, Pl. 3, Fig. 4B), was a ditch with three fills, 1009, 1024 and 1023). It had a steep northern side which seems likely to be the result of collapse at the

edge of the feature represented by 1024. The second ditch 1012, to the west was smaller but with a similarly rounded profile (Pl. 4). These seem likely to be of the same date as they run into the main ditch and do not extend beyond it on the opposite side, although the relationship between 1012 and 1021 was obscured by modern pit 1014 (Pl. 5). This pit was backfilled with material which included fill from the Roman ditch so contained Roman pottery. It was probably this feature which was identified in the evaluation as a second ditch. Although this would make the pit very irregular it is the only real explanation for the presence of feature 104 recorded in the evaluation trench.

A fourth ditch 1017 (Pl. 6, Fig. 4C) was located in the south-eastern part of the site. This feature was severely truncated but may have been a drainage ditch similar to 1012 and 1008, although this interpretation is conjectural and there was no dating evidence from 1018. Within the upper part of this ditch was recovered human remains, a right tibia shaft and a fragment of skull. This bone, almost on the excavated ground surface seems to have been disturbed by the initial ground clearance by the contractor prior to the depositing of gravel and so it is impossible to determine whether the burial was whole or disarticulated body parts. As there were no artefacts found in either the ditch or with the burial there is no way to determine whether the burial was in fact Roman.

1010 (Pl. 7, Fig. 4E), a small cigar shaped feature, cut through ditch 1012 and was filled with a dark grey soft silty clay (1011), unlike the fills of the other features on the site and it may have been modern.

In the north-west corner of the site was a thin deposit of grey silty clay (1019, Pl. 8) cut by ditch 1021. This material appeared to be a flood deposit and indicated that the area was prone to flooding prior to the digging of the ditch.

The only other features found were small, natural depressions (1002, 1004 and 1006), initially thought to be post holes but were very shallow and formless in profile and their lack of structures gave no indication of human origin (Pl. 9 and 10).

### **The Watching Brief**

Due to the presence of the burial in the northern part of the site it was decided that a watching brief should be carried out on the site (Pl. 11). The area watched comprised the foundation trenches around the location of the burial (Fig 1). The trenches flooded quickly, but visibility upon initial excavation was good. Features located during the excavation continued eastwards into the foundation trenches but flooding prevented detailed investigation. No further burials were found during the watching brief.

### **Discussion**

The three ditches recorded during the excavation are likely to be drainage features. The drainage problems encountered during the evaluation and excavation are testament to their necessity,



especially with the suggested higher water table of the Roman period. The flood deposits both above and below the level of the ditch cuts reinforces this interpretation.

The presence of a single burial in the south-east corner of the site is difficult to interpret. There was no dating evidence from the burial although its location within a ditch with a similar fill to the Roman ditches on site is suggestive of a Roman date. There is no evidence of Roman burials located elsewhere in the area and it may be an isolated instance or part of a very small group. Evidence of widely dispersed burials comes from other sites in Lincolnshire e.g. Greetwell near Lincoln and Barrow on Humber.

With hindsight, the results from the excavation phase of the project show that the features identified in the evaluation were the large north south-ditch 1021 and part of the modern pit 1014 identified in the excavation. The modern pit was backfilled with material from 1021 which meant it was misidentified as a Roman ditch within the small space of the evaluation.

Excavations to the north of the school, at South Road (McDaid 1999) showed evidence for Roman settlement remains spanning the 2-4<sup>th</sup> centuries. The range of pottery and artefacts such as coins was indicative of an urban rather than a rural settlement which had developed in an area previously used for clay extraction associated with pottery production. The kiln found in 1959 at Bourne Grammar school is the only one so far identified and it is not possible to assess the full extent of this industry. It is clear from the various investigations in and around the grammar school that this area was on the periphery of the Roman town and was located within the industrial area.

#### **Acknowledgements**

The excavation was carried out by Sue Farr, Rob Armour-Chelu together with the author. LAS would like to thank Hyder Business Services for their help on site. LAS would also like to thank the Lincolnshire County Council Senior Built Environment officer for his help and advice on site. A Home Office Licence (No. 26891) was obtained for the removal and storage of human remains.

Mark Williams  
Lindsey Archaeological Services  
May 4, 2001

**APPENDIX 1**

## Appendix 1:Context Summary (BOGS 01)

Context No	Type	Description	Pottery
1001	Overburden	Hardcore	
1002	Natural	Hollow	
1003	Fill of 1002	Natural accumulation	
1004	Natural	Depression	
1005	Natural	Depression	
1006	Natural	Depression	
1007	Fill of 1006	Natural	
1008	Cut	Ditch	
1009	Fill of 1008	mid grey clay	7 sherds (roman)
1010	Cut	Linear (modern?)	
1011	Fill of 1010	Dark grey soft silty clay	
1012	Cut	Ditch	
1013	Fill of 1013	Light grey soft clay	22 sherds (roman)
1014	Cut	Pit Modern	
1015	Fill of 1014	Soft grey clayey silt	3 sherds (roman) 2 pieces land drain (modern)
1016	Fill of 1016	Soft dark grey silty clay	
1017	Cut	Ditch	
1018	Fill of 1017	Soft grey clay	
1019	Deposit	Possible ridge and furrow.	
1020	Fill of 1019	Grey brown silty clay	
1021	Cut	Ditch	
1022	Fill of 1021	mid brown silt sand	
1023	Fill of 1008	Soft mid grey clay	
1024	Fill of 1008	Soft orange grey silty clay	

## APPENDIX 2

## The Roman Pottery from Bourne Grammar School (BOGS01)

B J Precious (\*formerly Davies)

06/03/01

*The pottery has been recorded to the basic archive level according to the guidelines laid down by the Study Group for Roman Pottery using the computer codes and pottery recording system of the City of Lincoln Archaeology Unit, and sherd count and weight in grams as the measures. The site archive has been collated using Microsoft 95, excel 5.0 (BOGS00.XLS).*

### Dating

This site, including the evaluation trench, is of prime importance as it is situated adjacent to the Bourne Grammar School kiln site excavated in 1959, for which there is little secure, external dating evidence (LCCM Accession No 24.61). A small assemblage of Roman pottery was excavated from BOGS00, giving a total of 40 sherds weighing 1336 grams from six contexts. Although the groups are small, with only one context with over 10 sherds (1013 - 21 sherds), there are sufficient diagnostic fragments to provide good dating evidence.

Probably the earliest sherd from the site is a flagon sherd from the evaluation trench, Context 107, in a soft fabric which is likely to be of 1st century date. A fragment of Dressel 20 amphora in an early gritty fabric from the same context is probably of the same date. Smaller contexts can only be broadly dated to the 2nd century.

Table 1, below, shows that the bulk of the pottery is dated to the Antonine period, c AD 140-200. This is based on the presence of a Nene Valley grey ware (NVGW) jar and a Nene Valley colour-coated, bag-shaped beaker with roughcast decoration (NVCC) both from Context 1009. A wheel-made, cooking pot with lattice decoration in the style of black-burnished ware types (BBT), from Context 1022 and a sherd from a NVCC beaker with crossed hairpin, barbotine decoration from Context 1013, are also generally dated to the Antonine period.

*Table 1: BOGS00 - Roman pottery dates as a percentage of sherd count.*

Sherds	%	Date
3	7.50%	70-200
2	5.00%	100-200
35	87.50%	140-200
40	100.00%	TOTAL

Swan, 1984 (Fiche 3.436) suggests a late 3rd - 4th (possibly late 3rd) century date for the Bourne assemblage, which is similar to the products of Greatham (Rutland Fiche 4.576). However, recent re-examination of the Bourne kiln material would suggest a 2nd century date, probably the mid to the later 2nd century, for the wares. There is no secure dating evidence other than typological associations for these wares, but Hartley in (Petch 1962, 103-104 & fig 2 no 1) reported on a mortarium stamp found with the Bourne Grammar School kiln pottery. 'This stamp, LVGV DV is from one of at least eight dies or sets of dies used by ALBINVS', who was operating at Verulamium and whose dies are generally dated to c AD 65-90. The exact association of this mortarium with the kiln material, other than it being amongst the kiln pottery, is uncertain, and it may or may not be contemporary.

The date of two sherds from BOGS00 (Context 107) could be as early as the date of the stamped mortarium. Most importantly, the bulk of the Roman pottery from this site is definitely of Antonine date, the re-assessed date proposed for the Bourne kiln material. Although the pottery from BOGS00 is not directly associated with the kilns the assemblage provides good dating evidence for occupation within the close vicinity.

## Condition

The pottery came from several seemingly unrelated ditches and gullies, and there are no obvious sherd joins. Almost all of the sherds are quite fresh and in good condition with no sign of abrasion, and the average sherd weight of 33 gms suggests that there has been little or no redistribution of the pottery. The exceptions are a small oxidised sherd from Context 1022 in an orange-coloured fabric, very similar to the matrix of the majority of Nene Valley products (NVOX), and a flagon sherd from 107 which is soft and inclined to fracture. This is due to the firing temperature which produced a soft powdery fabric rather than soil conditions or taphonomic processes. A tar-like deposit on the shoulder of a shell-tempered sherd from Context 1022 may be the result of depositional factors, or was deliberately applied in antiquity.

A shell-tempered sherd from Context 107, virtually identical to those manufactured in the kilns, appears to have been burnt over the broken edge which could be the result of having been broken during firing. Further, but inconclusive, evidence for nearby kiln activity is suggested by the presence of two bases from flagons in South Lincolnshire cream ware, occasionally with a grey exterior wash, (SLCR & SLCRG) which were clearly blown during firing (Fig 5a - c). In addition several body sherds from flagons are discoloured which may be the result of close proximity to the heat source during firing, or fuming due to soot in the kiln.

**The pottery** - see Tables 2 and 3, below

It is curious that the most common fabric present is one that is almost exclusively used for flagon forms (SLCR & SLCRG). This fabric was first noted on the South Lincolnshire site at Hangman's Lane, Stainfield (Davies, 1994). This fabric is very similar to Nene Valley cream wares but the source is uncertain, and chemical analyses is required to determine whether the fabric was produced locally or within the Nene Valley area. A maximum of ten separate flagons are represented. The surviving bases of which do not appear to have been used and, as mentioned above, both appear to have blown during firing. One sherd with a handle scar is flattened, possibly by the addition of the handle and has a grey-washed exterior - SLCRG (Fig. 5e). This colouration is unusual and may be either a deliberate wash, or the result of fuming or being over-close to the heat source during firing.

South Lincolnshire shell-tempered ware (SLSH), which is virtually identical to the shell-tempered wares excavated from the adjacent kilns, is the next most common fabric and represents four vessels. The fabrics contain sparse amounts of the distinctive punctate brachiopods associated with shell-tempered wares in this area. Five sherds, at least two vessels, from jars used either for cooking or liquid storage, are also in a distinctive, but reduced and sandy South Lincolnshire fabric (SLGY - Fig 5d). This fabric appears to be a precursor to the mainstream Nene Valley grey ware (NVGW), but until chemical analyses is undertaken remains speculative. Nevertheless, two sherds which share the characteristics of both fabrics came from Context 1013. All three of these South Lincolnshire fabrics are described in Davies in Lane and Morris (eds), April 2001.

Nene Valley products are represented by two colour-coated beakers one with clay roughcasting and one with barbotine, hairpin decoration, together with jars in Nene Valley grey ware (Fig 5f). Another colour-coated and clay, roughcast beaker, from an unknown source is very high fired and quite brittle with a brick red core and dark brown margins (Fig 5b). The fabric is of silt-size quartz with occasional larger rounded quartz of <0.6mm. It resembles the reduced fabric of SLGY and may be a local product.

Only one example of imported ware occurred at the site, a single sherd of probably 1st century Dressel 20 amphora. Other fabrics represented by single sherds consist of a wheel-made, grey ware sherd in black-burnished tradition with acute lattice decoration, and a fragment from a mortarium in a gritty fabric with quartzite and red ironstone trituration grits. This vessel is of indeterminate source, but may be an early Nene Valley product.

Table 2: BOGS00 - Roman pottery fabrics as a percentage of sherd count and weight.

Sherds	%	Weight	%	Fabric
1	2.50%	7	0.52%	BBT
2	5.00%	90	6.74%	CC
1	2.50%	61	4.57%	DR20
1	2.50%	101	7.56%	MORT
3	7.50%	54	4.04%	NVCC
3	7.50%	47	3.52%	NVGW?
1	2.50%	7	0.52%	SAND
16	40.00%	361	27.02%	SLCR
2	5.00%	70	5.24%	SLCRG
5	12.50%	68	5.09%	SLGY
1	2.50%	6	0.45%	SLOX
4	10.00%	464	34.73%	SLSH
40	100.00%	1336	100.00%	TOTAL

Despite the small size of the assemblage almost all the principal forms generally present on a Roman site of moderate, but not rural status, are represented. Olive oil in amphora from the Baetican coast of Spain was used by the occupants of the site, and a mortarium was used for preparing food cooked in at least two cooking pots (CP & J). A large jar in shell-tempered ware with a grooved shoulder, identical to products of the adjacent kiln, was probably used for storing ingredients (Fig 5g. There is a distinct absence of bowls and dishes which were used either for cooking or serving food. Evidence for drinking liquids is provided by at least three beakers and there seems to be a concentration of flagons used for storing and pouring liquids. However, as mentioned above, there is some evidence that these vessels may have been 'seconds' or 'wasters', possibly manufactured in the vicinity.

Table 3: BOGS00 - Roman pottery forms as a percentage of sherd count and weight.

Sherds	%	Weight	%	Form
2	5.00%	20	1.50%	
1	2.50%	61	4.57%	A
17	42.50%	416	31.14%	F
1	2.50%	15	1.12%	F?
1	2.50%	2	0.15%	BK
4	10.00%	142	10.63%	BKBAG
1	2.50%	7	0.52%	CP
5	12.50%	67	5.01%	J
1	2.50%	25	1.87%	JBL
4	10.00%	65	4.87%	JCUR
1	2.50%	21	1.57%	JNN
1	2.50%	394	29.49%	JS
1	2.50%	101	7.56%	M
40	100.00%	1336	100.00%	TOTAL

### Potential and Further Work

This well-dated assemblage is of crucial importance for its location to the adjacent Roman pottery kilns. The freshness of the material, the large size of the sherds, and the homogenous dating of the group suggests that it is primary debris. It could conceivably be the remnants of the wares used by the potters working at the kilns, and then disposed of in nearby gullies and ditches.

Although inconclusive, there is sufficient evidence that some of the flagon bases have been blown during firing, and are clearly unused suggesting that they may have been produced locally. A small programme of chemical analyses should be undertaken to compare these sherds, and the overfired, colour-coated roughcast beaker with known products of the Nene Valley kilns to determine the source. Sherds of the shell-tempered wares from the site should also be included in this analyses for comparison with the pottery from the adjacent Bourne Grammar School kiln. The mortarium sherd should be sent to K. Hartley for identification and dating.

The *Research Frameworks for the Study of Roman Pottery*, (Willis, S., (ed) 1997), welcomed and approved by English Heritage, stipulates the importance of the publication of kiln groups. Although the Bourne Grammar School kilns were excavated in 1959 they have yet to be published. The products of this kiln group are frequently found on sites in South Lincolnshire, and as far afield as the Nene Valley (Perrin, 1996) where they are grouped together as Bourne/Greetham shell-gritted ware. These are clearly two different (although similar) products emphasising the necessity of publishing the Bourne material. Interim studies of this material have been undertaken in the past and more recently by the author of this report. It is therefore urgently recommended that this report should be prepared for publication and integration into a definitive study of the Bourne Grammar School, and the Greetham kilns. An appropriate publication would be the *Journal of Roman Pottery Studies* of the Study Group for Roman Pottery (SGRP).

The pottery should be retained for further work. As the flagon sherd from Context 107 is fragile it should be protected with appropriate packing.

#### References

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## BOGS01 Bone Report

*Richard Moore*

Nine animal bone fragments, with a total weight of 450 g were retrieved from four contexts.

Although fragmentary, the bone is reasonably well preserved, and is mostly quite dense, with a slightly greasy feel, indicating that a relatively high proportion of organic material has survived. Where long bones are present, their ends have been damaged, probably by animal gnawing suggesting that they were exposed for a period of time before burial. Together with the sparse and random nature of the assemblage, this implies that they were stray waste that has been accidentally included within fills rather than components of deliberately dumped material. A fairly high proportion of the bones showed knife marks.

The bulk of this small assemblage came from ditch fill (1013), including a cattle shoulder blade and a pig radius. Other contexts yielded a cattle sacrum in (1022) a horse radius in (1009), and a small rib fragment in (1015). The epiphyses of the cattle sacrum in (1022) had not fused, indicating that it came from an individual less than approximately 7 years old (Schmid, 75).

In addition to the animal bone, the gully fill (1018) yielded two human bones. These were a right tibia shaft with substantially complete distal end, and a fragment of frontal bone including the upper and medial margin of the right orbit and the nasal bone. This appears to have a healed break across the top, the result of an injury which would have left the nose displaced upward and bent slightly to left side of the face. The condition of these bones was similar to that of the animal bone.

Ditch fill (022) also yielded a single shell. This was the lower valve of an oyster (*Ostrea edulis*) weighing 15g. Its small size indicated that it came from a young specimen, perhaps from an over-exploited fishery, or had been heavily eroded.

### Bone List

The table lists all the bones found. The species of animal has been given where there is reasonable confidence about its identification. An indication of the general size and robustness of bones is given in uncertain cases, as, for instance, 'cow-sized'. Small fragments that defy even this level of identification are listed as 'unidentified'. Uncertain identifications are generally indicated in the comments column. This is also used to record the parts of the bone present where it is incomplete, its size where this is significant, and also whether there are signs of burning or of butchery marks.

Context	Animal	Bone	Side	Comments
1009	Horse	Radius	Right	Proximal end and part of shaft including fused ulna shaft.
Weight (1009): 205g				
1013	Cattle	Scapula	Left	Part of glenoid, lateral knife cut.
1013	Cow-sized	Vertebra		Base of neural spine.
1013	Pig	Radius	Left	Shaft, rodent gnaw marks at ends.
1013	Cow-sized	Scapula		Fragment of blade margin, lateral knife cut.
1013	Cow-sized	Innominate	?Left	Internal margin of iliac-ischial region.
1013	Cow-sized			Fragment of ?mandible
Weight (1013): 100 g				
1015	Cow-sized	Rib		Fragment of articular end.
Weight (1015): 5g				
1018	Human	Tibia	Right	Proximal end missing

Context	Animal	Bone	Side	Comments
1018	Human	Skull		Medial part of right orbit
Weight (1018): 335g				
1022	Cattle	Sacrum		1st and anterior part of 2nd sacral vertebrae, recently fused, unfused anterior epiphysis missing.
Weight (1022): 140g				

## References

Schmid E, 1972 *Atlas of Animal Bones*, Elsevier, Amsterdam.

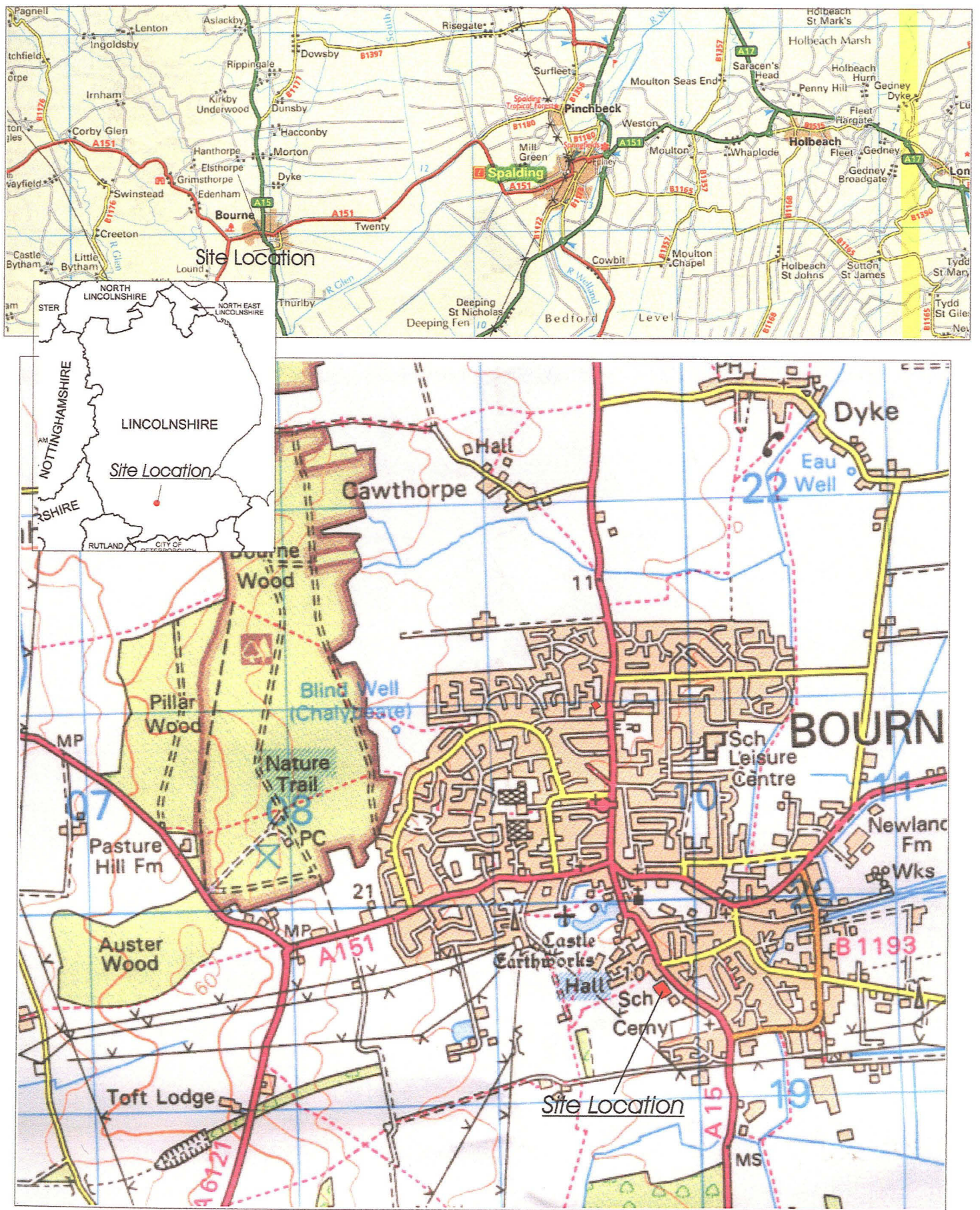


Fig. 1: Location of Bourne Grammar School, Inset c reproduced from O.S 1: 50 000 Map with the permission of HMSO Controller map Licence no AL 50424A.

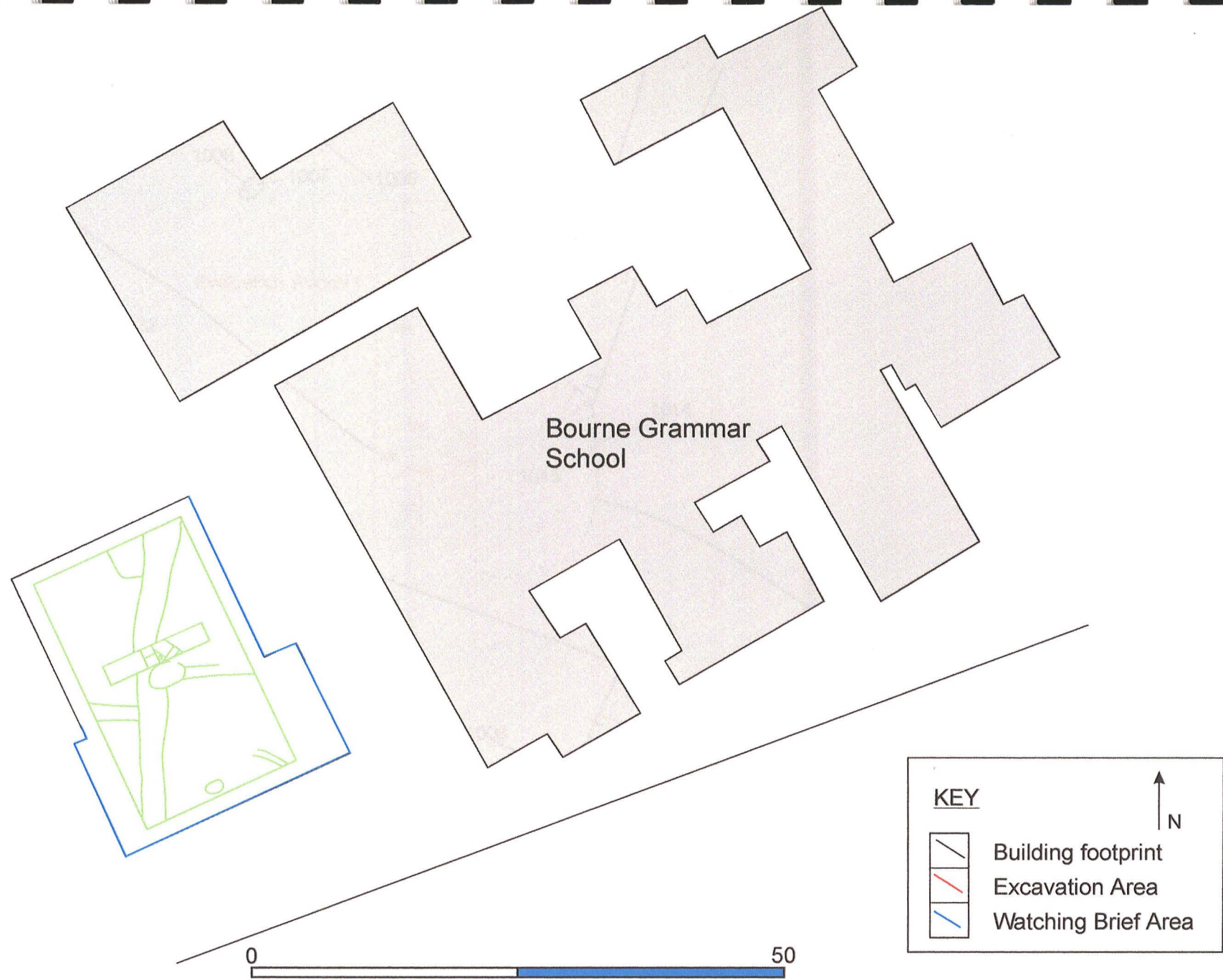


Fig.2: Location of Excavation Area.

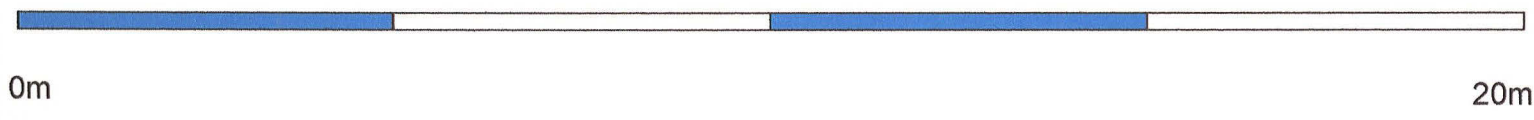
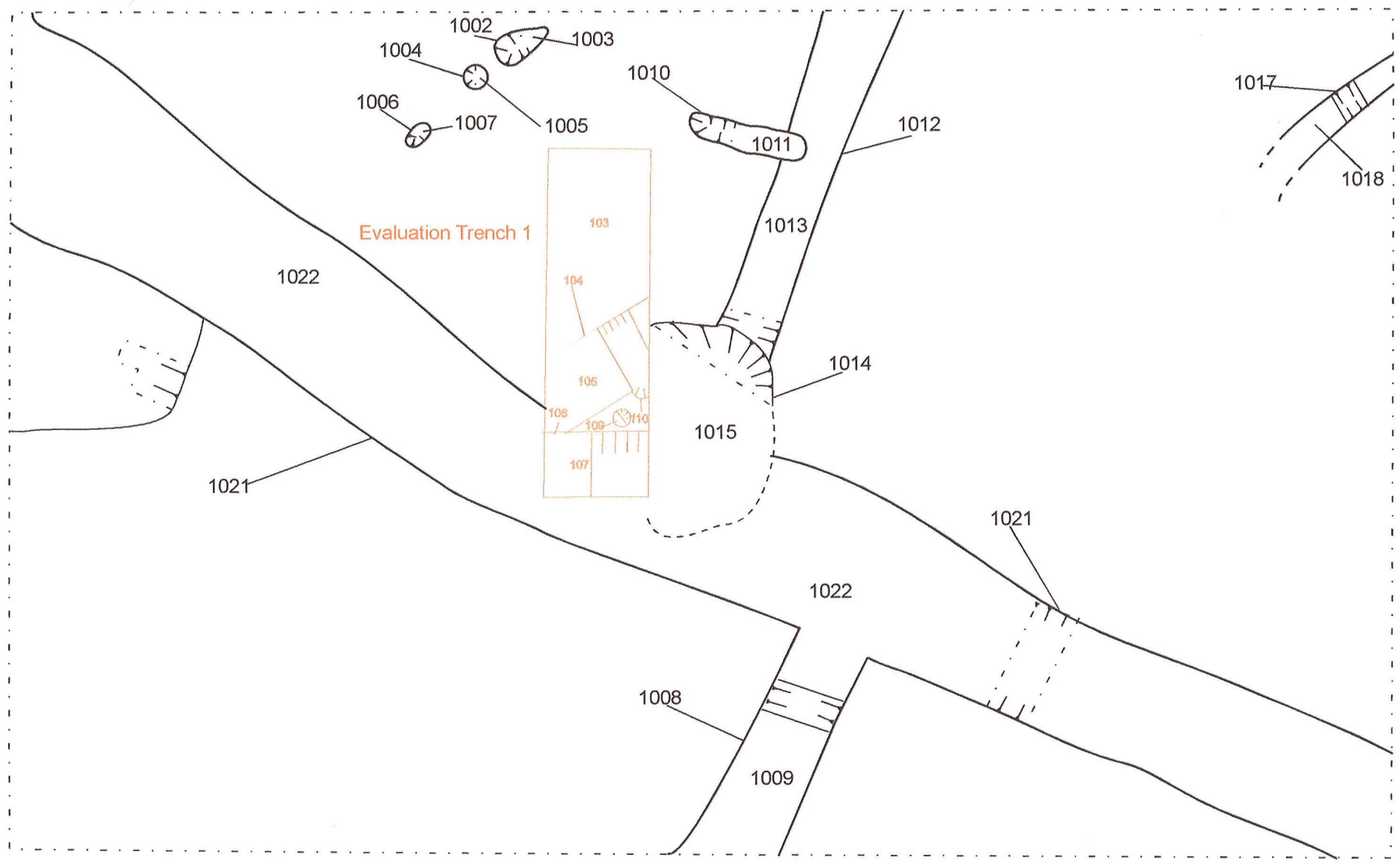


Fig. 3: Site Plan

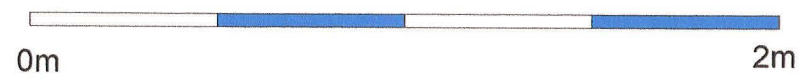
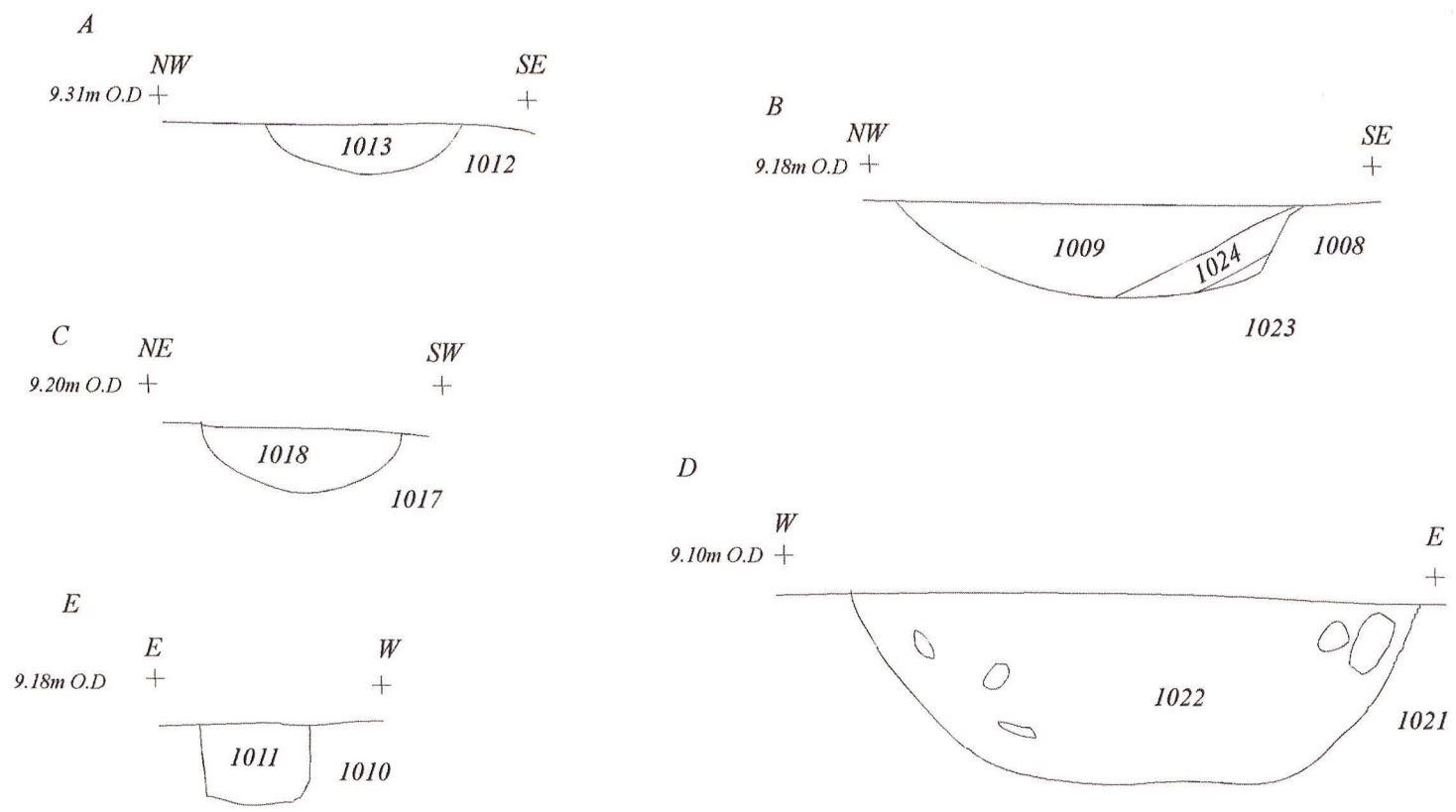


Fig. 4: Sections

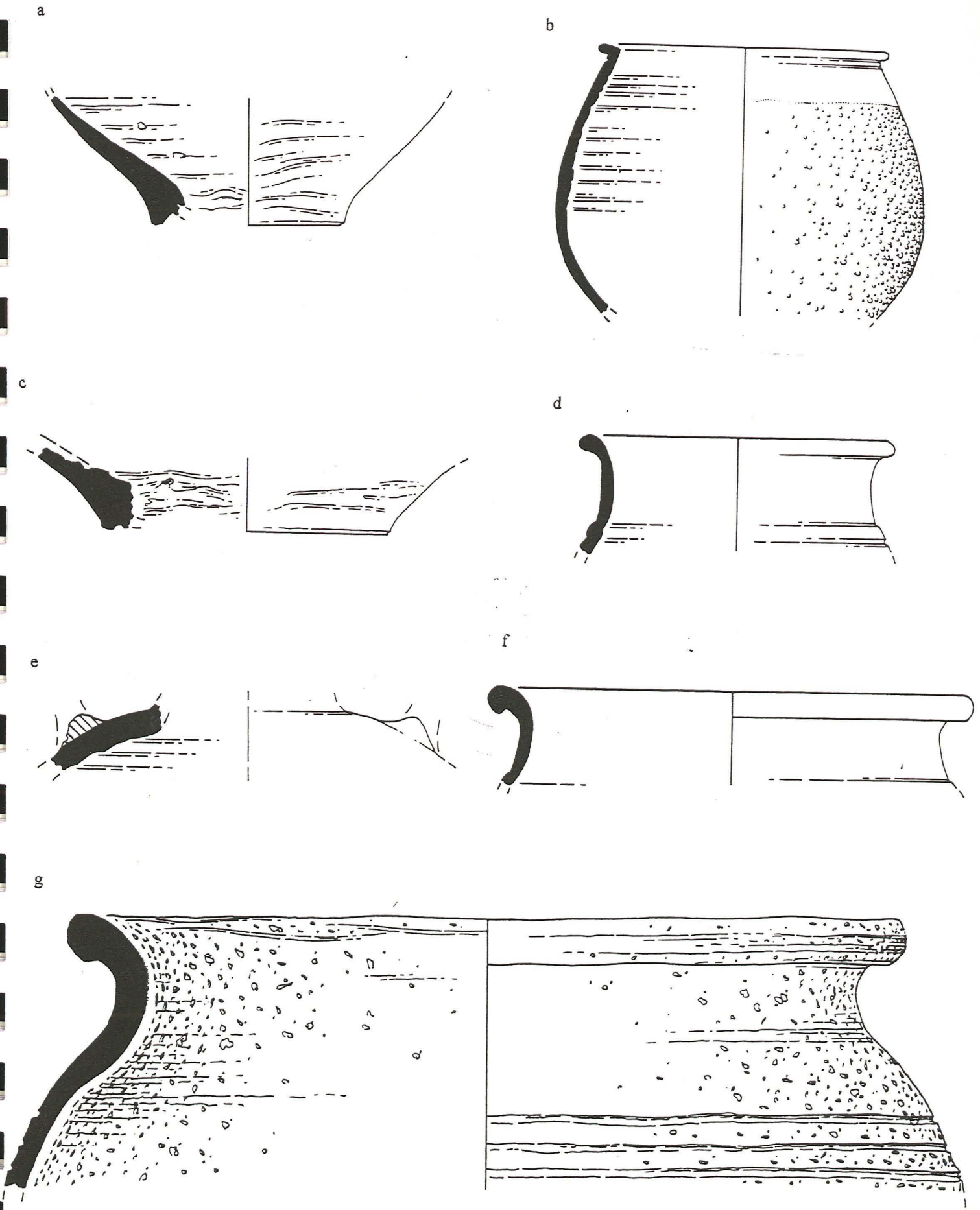


Fig. 5: Pottery illustrations

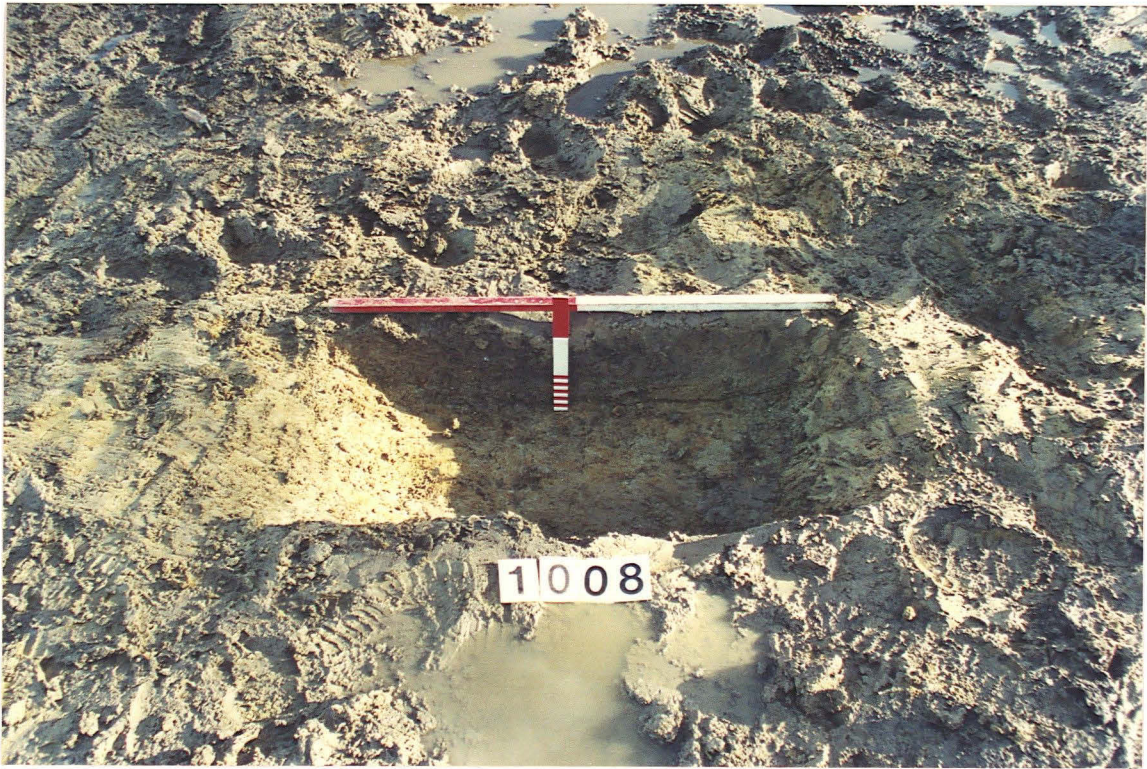




Pl. 1 General View of the site looking north – west

Pl. 2 Section of ditch 1021





Pl. 3 Section of ditch 1008

Pl. 4 Section of ditch 1012





Pl. 5 Section of ditch 1014

Pl. 6 Section of ditch 1017





Pl. 7 Section through feature 1010

Pl. 8 Section through deposit 1019





Pl. 9 Section through 1002 and 1004

Pl. 10 Section through 1006





**Pl. 11 Flooded foundation trenches during the watching brief**