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## LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

# Ingoldmells Sewage Treatment Works

# **Archaeological Watching Brief**

Site Code: ITW 99 LCNCC Museum Accn. No. 126.99 NGR: TF 5599 6762

Interim Report for

**Anglian Water Services Limited** 

LAS Report No. 399

March 2000

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## Ingoldmells Sewage Treatment Works Interim Report (March 2000) Site Code ITW 99 LCNCC Museum Accn. No. 126.99 NGR: TF 5599 6762

Lindsey Archaeological Services monitored groundworks for an extension to the Ingoldmells Sewage Treatment Works during 1999 (Figs. 1 and 2). The works consisted of topsoil stripping, lime consolidation of the upper silt deposits, piling, excavation of inverted cones for three new Primary Settlement Tanks, and trenching for pipework between the new tanks and to a pumphouse.

The watching brief had been requested by LincoInshire County Archaeological Section because of the known density of salt-making (saltern) sites of different periods within this part of the LincoInshire Marsh. An Anglian Water Services pipeline excavated in 1993 between Burgh-le-Marsh and the Ingoldmells Treatment Works disturbed remains of eleven previously unknown salterns (Tann 1995). At that date, the nearest reported salterns to the Treatment Works were at 600m to the west and 600m to the SE near Bleak House Farm (Fig. 3).

No significant finds were made during topsoil stripping of the Treatment Works extension in 1999. By arrangement with LAS, Anglian Water excavated three exploratory test pits into the silt in advance of the lime consolidation, demonstrating that no archaeological deposits were present within the affected material, and the consolidation operation was not monitored. The consolidated surface remained firm throughout the construction phase.

On the first day of piling, two fragments of briquetage and some peat were brought to the surface when the operators agreed to lift a core from the first pile point (in the SE cone). The remainder of the piling process was not watched as underlying deposits were not revealed.

The SE cone was machined to shape, revealing a layer of dense briquetage overlying a 0.03m thick layer of peat. The shape of the excavation made identification and recording difficult as all deposits around the upper part of the cone were revealed on a slope, in between the disturbances of the new piles. It was impossible to determine whether the archaeological deposits were filling a shallow depression or were on an essentially level surface. At this stage, thicknesses of deposits were recorded and some, not all, of the disturbed briquetage was collected. Numerous photographs were taken as each part of the cone revealed more briquetage and peat.

In the northern part of the cone, a concentration of pottery sherds of considerable size was exposed. At first, these appeared to be within the layer of briquetage, and were collected as if from a layer. When it became clear that some sherds, if not all, were filling a feature, Anglian Water Services were asked to suspend activity in that quadrant so that salvage recording could take place. Despite pressures on time (anticipated concrete deliveries) they agreed to allow limited time, and a one-day investigation was conducted by two archaeologists while machining continued elsewhere on the same cone. Anglian Water Services printed a photograph and description in *Anglian Water News* (December 1999).

The pottery, since dated to the middle Iron Age, proved to be sherds from several vessels within the silt fill of a narrow gully or ditch (Fig. 4). The gully alignment was found to relate closely to the findspots of the previously collected pottery. A fortunate survival of all overlying deposits against a new pile (which had cut through the pottery-containing feature) enabled a full sequence to be established at one point (Fig. 5).

The sequence was:

topsoil (removed)

1.7m OD	0.35m stabilised slit
	0.05m grey/brown silt
	0.05m orange iron-panned silt
	0.2m grey/dark brown silt
1.05m OD	0.35m briquetage, burnt soil, lenses of blue/grey silt and dark brown silt
0.7m OD	0.03m black peat
0.67m OD	light blue/grey silt

Excavation of the NW and SW cones produced no further evidence of briquetage or peat, which suggests that the peat had formed within some form of depression, rather than as an extensive layer across the site. Trenches excavated between the cones were monitored as closely as possible, but trenches across archaeologically sensitive areas were excavated and backfilled between monitoring visits as a result of communication lapses. On one occasion, a short stretch of trench was mechanically excavated to allow a second opportunity to inspect ground at the limit of the briquetage.

Intermittent monitoring of the NE part of the site by Wendy Booth continued until January 2000. The extent of briquetage (and peat) exposed by the works is indicated on Fig. 2. The exposed archaeological remains were restricted to the area of the SE cone, and land within 6m of its SW edge. Archaeological deposits extended beyond its NE and southern edges into ground which was not disturbed during monitoring visits.

An area south of the 1999 extension is now expected to be developed as part of the treatment works.

### **Recommendations**

LAS considers that only a small part of the middle Iron Age saltern site has been disturbed by the 1999 treatment works extension. It does not extend to the west or NW, but may extend below the topsoil heap on the eastern side of the existing extension. The extent to the south has not been established. The finds have been processed, and environmental analysis has been arranged, but

post-excavation has not yet been undertaken in case a larger accumulation of material becomes available.

Most saltern sites are discovered during groundworks, and their sites are seldom known or predicted before damage occurs. Salvage recording of this type of site is difficult and the quality of the resultant information from the 1999 monitoring is less than an industrial site of this period warrants. As this site has already produced a well-stratified pottery assemblage, it would seem a candidate for examination before further damage occurs. The main questions at this stage include:

- What is the extent of the archaeological remains?
- Are the remains related to a creek?
- Are settlement features present?
- Are evaporation features, such as fire pits, present?
- Can good quality environmental information be recovered?

A ground investigation by geotechnical engineers took place on the field south of the new settlement tanks while groundworks were being monitored. No peat was encountered, although organic flecks were produced. Boulder-clay was reached at between 11.5m and 12.5m below the ground surface. LAS has not seen results of the test bores on the proposed extension, but from existing knowledge, the depth of topsoil and silt above any archaeological horizon would be about 1.5m. Manual investigation at this depth, or after topsoil stripping and lime consolidation, should be practical, although trench width would need to be flexible.

Geoff Tann Lindsey Archaeological Services 16th March 2000

#### **References**

Tann, G. 1995 Burgh-le-Marsh - Ingoldmells Rising Main: Archaeological Watching Brief. LAS Report No. 128, April 1995.

#### Figures and Plates

- Fig. 1 Location of Ingoldmells (c based on the 1960 Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 map, Sheet TF 56. © Crown Copyright, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS Licence No. AL 50424A).
- Fig. 2 Location and Layout of the Sewage Treatment Works (based on the Ordnance Survey 1:2,500 map. © Crown Copyright, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS Licence No. AL 50424A).
- Fig. 3 Saltern sites in the vicinity of the Treatment Works (as reported after completion of the Burghle-Marsh to Ingoldmells Rising Main in 1993). Reproduced from Tann 1995, Fig. 3.
- Fig. 4 Location of Archaeological Features (based on a plan supplied by Anglian Water Services Ltd, dwg. no. 9S/34331/C/002).
- Fig. 5 Section across Middle Iron Age feature 27.
- PI.1 Location of the archaeological site and proposed Treatment Works extension (looking south).



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Fig. 2 Location and Layout of the Sewage Treatment Works (based on the Ordnance Survey 1:2,500 map. © Crown Copyright, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS Licence No. AL 50424A).









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Fig. 5 Section across Middle Iron Age feature 27.



PI. 1 Location of the archaeological site and proposed Treatment Works extension (looking south).