

LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

Osgodby-cum-Kirkby S101A Sewerage Scheme

NGR: TF 0700 9300 (centre) Site Code: OSK 02 LCNCC Museum Accn No.: 2002.224

Archaeological Watching Brief

Report for Anglian Water Services Ltd

by G. Tann

LAS Report No. 590 June 2002

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Osgodby cum Kirkby S101A Sewerage Scheme, Lincs.

Archaeological Watching Brief NGR: TF 0700 9300 (centre) Site Code: OSK 02 LCNCC Museum Accn No.: 2002.224

Summary

A single sherd of seventeenth century pottery was found associated with a backfilled ditch forming part of a complex of earthworks close to the stream between Washdyke Lane and Osgodby Road. Other features were found to be up to 0.7m deep. Although some appeared to be of natural origin, representing stream meanders, others were artificial and may have served drainage functions or been used to hold floodwater on the meadowland beside the stream. At least two phases were present, the earliest of which may have been medieval. The very narrow pipe trench prevented detailed archaeological recording.

Introduction

Lindsey Archaeological Services (LAS) was commissioned by Anglian Water Services Ltd in December 2001 to conduct a watching brief during trenching for a replacement sewer between Osgodby Road and Washdyke Lane, Osgodby, Lincs. (Fig. 1). Archaeological monitoring had been requested by Lincolnshire County Council Conservation Section in case the works disturbed archaeological remains associated with the nearby deserted medieval settlement site and the earthwork features along the line of the new sewer. The watching brief formed the third element in a programme of archaeological recording by LAS; a combined report on the previous earthwork survey and evaluation trenching has been produced (Field and Williams 2002).

Trenching across the specified area was monitored by Geoff Tann on February 21st and 22nd 2002.

Site Location and Description

The village of Osgodby is situated in the Lincolnshire Clay Vale, about 4km NW of Market Rasen. It lies at about 21m OD, on Cover Sands overlying Till. The present settlement runs east-west along Main Street, with more recent development to the north along Washdyke Lane.

Of the monitored pipe trench route, all but the easternmost field adjacent to Washdyke Lane are pasture. The land is bounded to the north by a stream, known further downstream as Kingerby Beck. A large dyke bisects the monitored area NW of Manor Farm.

Archaeological Background

The settlement of Osgodby is mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086, and is of Saxon or earlier origin. At that time Osgodby was one of a group of four settlements, now all within Osgodby parish. It was a dependent settlement within the parish of Kirkby, whose settlement lay to the west.

Fields to the NW of the present Osgodby settlement contain earthwork remains of the medieval village of Osgodby and its associated field systems. Some of the earthworks are suspected to represent former channels of the watercourse which forms the northern parish boundary. Other features may relate to later enclosures or drainage works. Records in the Lincolnshire County Sites and Monuments Record indicate that remains other than those represented by the earthworks may also be present, including undated iron slag and medieval stack stands..

The earthwork survey conducted by LAS in December 2001 found no obvious archaeological features in the fields closest to Osgodby Road and Washdyke Lane (Field and Williams 2002). It highlighted a rectilinear arrangement of features in the second field east of Osgodby Road (Field 2) which were interpreted as drainage channels, and a series of channels leading to the stream edge in the next two fields to the east. At the request of the Senior Built Environment Officer of Lincolnshire County Council, five evaluation trenches were opened to examine features in Fields 3 and 4, in order that mitigatory arrangements could be made if necessary. The trenches identified archaeological features, but found no dating evidence (Field and Williams 2002). The report concluded that most if not all of the features were related to land drainage, and argued that little would be gained by moving the line of the pipe trench.

The Watching Brief (Fig. 2)

The 0.3m wide trench was excavated by a land drainage machine within a 15m wide easement across five fields, for a distance of c.850m. Close examination of the soil sequence in the trench face was not possible because of frequent collapse, with slumping of the ground alongside. The upcast heap, along each edge of the trench, posed a further obstacle to safe inspection and recording of the trench faces.

Excavation of the trench across farmland began at Washdyke Lane, and progressed westward to Owersby Bridge. The pipe was laid across a further field to the west of the bridge, as far as the Kirkby pumping station west of Osgodby Road. Trenching in this field was not monitored; the field surface was inspected, but no archaeological artefacts were seen.

In order to maintain consistency with the earthwork survey, the observations are described here in reverse order, using the Field Numbers previously assigned by LAS for recording purposes.

Field 1

The easement occupied the northern side of the field, and the pipe trench was excavated about 5m from the stream edge. Across much of the eastern side of this field, the topsoil covered a grey/white clay 1, which may have been ancient alluviation or a former course of the stream. A very different grey alluvium was seen in the curvilinear depression at 2, and this seems to mark the backfilling by sediment of a former natural tributary or artificial watercourse to the south of the stream, probably relatively recently. To the east of the depression the ground was a yellow/brown sandy clay 3,

identified as probably glacially deposited Till.

The hawthorn hedge boundary to the south of the pipeline easement (about 30m from the stream) is at the top of a slight slope. This may be a post-medieval flood bank, reducing the risk of extensive flooding from the stream close to the bridging point.

Field 2

The pipe trench crossed the northern ends of a series of regularly spaced SE-NW aligned linear depressions, identified from the earthwork survey as drainage ditches. No further information could be obtained from the pipe trench, as sandy deposits 4 caused the trench to be particularly unstable. Variations in the colour of the sand from the trench indicated the presence of channels and banks, but the cutting chain of the trenching machine deposited upcast material a short distance west of its source (Pl. 1). Beside the eastern field boundary, the sand became a brown sandy loam 5, 0.7m thick, with a grey sandy clay beneath it.

Field 3

At the western side of Field 3, the trench cut through a localised area of clay **6**. The clay coincided with the land bounded by the stream and a curvilinear depression; the material is probably alluvium deposited beside a former stream meander. This supports the interpretation of the earthwork survey.

To the east of this meander, the soil was a sandy clay loam 7, with the sand content fluctuating across the field to the east. In the vicinity of NW-SE aligned linear depressions, the trench cut through upcast banks 8, but no distinct ditch fill was visible between the banks. This suggests that the undulations may have been associated with water meadow management, at spacings of about 7m.

Field 4

The trench revealed a 1.5m wide and 0.7m deep ditch **9** on the eastern side of the hedge boundary between Fields 3 and 4 (Pl. 2). This backfilled ditch appeared to be on the same north-south alignment as the existing residual ditch alongside the hedge, and is therefore contemporary with the existing field arrangement. It has been excavated across an earlier, roughly east-west aligned, channel which is present in both fields about 20-30m from the stream edge. To the east of the ditch the turf overlay sand.

A large piece of smooth weathered sandstone or limestone **11** was seen beside the modern bridge across the stream (Pl. 3). The stone is either a glacial import, or has been deliberately introduced to the site. In its present position it has been used either for construction of the twentieth century bridge, or for rubble in the farm track leading to the bridge. This was the only piece of potential building stone seen during monitoring of the pipe trénch.

A small curvilinear depression 45m from the western side of this field proved to be a 10m wide ditch **12**, with its base below the base of the 0.9m deep pipe trench (PI. 4). Immediately to its east, the topsoil covered sand **13**, but within about 7m there was an intervening 0.2m thick deposit of clay which could be traced for a further 25m to the east **14-16**. At its eastern limit, the sand was 1.1m deep, and it appeared that an earlier ditch had been filled and overlain by the existing bank. Collapse of the pipe trench occurred before this could be investigated. After excavation and recording of two trenches across features here (prior to the pipe trenching) the interpretation of the earthworks remained uncertain, although that at **12** was suspected to be for drainage. Reconsideration of the complex suggests that a 45m diameter relict natural stream meander has been bifurcated by the eastern return arm of the extensive west-east ditch. Anomalies evident on the northern bank of the stream, opposite the putative meander points, give added credence to this interpretation.

The eastern hedge boundary of Field 4 is about 50m east of the relict meander, and is aligned NW-SE. To the west of this the topsoil covers a layer of yellow clay **17**, with yellow and white sand deposits below. Where the field boundary meets the stream, the southern bank **18** is eroding, with an abrupt scarp on the northern bank showing that the stream is in the process of creating a further meander. The pipe trench ran parallel to the hedge for about 60m, revealing a thick brown sandy loam **19** at about 30m from the stream. This material became clayier to the SE, with its base at first only 0.3m below the surface **20**, but within 3m had dropped below the 0.7m deep trench base **21**, presumably filling a ditch. The feature was seen in the trench for about 15m but, without knowing its alignment, this measurement is unhelpful.

A narrow SW-NE aligned ditch earthwork, recorded in the survey, approximately coincided with the southern limit of the ditch **21**, but no corresponding feature could be seen below the visible earthwork **22**. This earthwork was sectioned during the archaeological evaluation (Trench 2), and the depression barely showed in the surface of the subsoil layer. A second investigated bank and ditch earthwork around the corner of the field, proved to reflect a 3m wide and 0.7m deep ditch **23** underlying its western bank, with a 1m wide and equally deep ditch recut **24** 1m to the east. This confirmed the sequence recorded in Trench 1. As the present north-south aligned field boundary is parallel, and about 15m to the east, this recut ditch is likely to be of post-medieval rather than earlier origin. One sherd of seventeenth pottery was found in the mixed spoil beside **23** (Appendix 1).

Field 5

The topsoil at the western edge of this field overlay about 0.5m of clay, with sand 0.8m below the field surface **25** (Pl. 5). This field is used for arable crops, and no earthworks remained visible within the area of the easement. A 2m wide, and 0.8m deep ditch **26** was seen in the trench face 50m east of the field boundary subsoil, but its alignment remains unknown.

To the east of ditch **26**, the topsoil covered a sandy loam which extended to the trench base. No further features were observed.

Conclusion

The narrow pipe trench afforded little opportunity to examine below-ground deposits, but the minimum of damage was caused to the earthwork features in its path. The combined results of the earthwork survey, selective evaluation trenching and subsequent monitoring indicate that the earthworks close to the stream are of more than one period, and probably include naturally occurring features which have been affected by farming. The absence of significant quantities of medieval pottery seems to indicate that these features are not outliers of a medieval settlement, but are directly related to the close proximity of the stream.

The suggested natural meanders could have been filled naturally, but the straightness of the present stream course suggests active management has taken place. To judge by the direct corellation between the stream course and the parish boundary between Washdyke Lane and Owersby Bridge, the management may have occurred at an early date.

It remains unclear how the land along the stream margin was being used during the medieval and post-medieval periods. Despite the regular alignment and spacing of some of the features, they end too close to the stream bank to allow for turning of a plough team, and so cannot be ridge and furrow from ploughing, even though this is visible on air photographs to the south.

The stream channel is deep, but alluvium along the stream edge shows that flooding has occurred. The banks and ditches may have served solely to reduce the spread of flood water and drain it back into the stream, but it seems likely that they may have had a more complicated role, keeping the land under floodwater as meadowland.

Acknowledgements

LAS are grateful to Anglian Water Services Ltd and Anglian Water Technology Group (especially Richard Kent and Peter Cashman) for their co-operation throughout the project. Similar cooperation was received from their contractors Amec (Paul Gibbs, site agent), and the trenching contractors Lincolnshire Land Drainage Ltd. Further help was forthcoming from Jim Bonnor (Senior Built Environment Officer, Lincolnshire County Council).

Mark Williams prepared the illustrations, and Jane Frost collated and produced the report.

Geoff Tann Lindsey Archaeological Services 7th June 2002

References

Field, N. and Williams, M. 2002 Osgodby-cum-Kirkby S101A Sewerage Scheme, Lincs.: Earthwork Survey and Evaluation Trenches. LAS Report No. 572, February 2002.

Everson, P.L., Taylor, C.C. and Dunn, C.J. 1991 Change and Continuity: Rural Settlement in North-West Lincolnshire.

Archive Summary

Correspondence Anglian Water Services Ltd plans Annotated copies of Anglian Water Services Ltd plans Photographs: LAS film no. 02/19/8a-13a, 19a, 20a (including those used in this report). Archaeological find: pottery sherd Specialist's report: Post-Roman pottery

Appendix 1

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Pottery Archive OSK02

Jane Young Lindsey Archaeological Services

context	cname	full name	form type	sherds	weight	part	description	date
23	BL	Black-glazed wares	cup	1	12	BS	possible local fabric	mid to late 17th

23 May 2002

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Fig. 1 Location of Osgodby (C based on the 1989 Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 Landranger map, Sheet 112. © Crown copyright, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS Licence No. AL 10002165).







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- PI.2 Soil from the pipe trench was redeposited a short distance away from its source; the dark sand fill of the former ditch 9 between Fields 3 and 4 appears across the adjacent earthwork bank (looking east).





- Pl. 3 Stone boulder 11, seen (centre foreground) beside twentieth century bridge across the stream (looking north).
- PI. 4 Course of the pipe trench in Field 4, cutting across artificial drainage channel (centre, beside old fence), and possible backfilled natural stream meander 12 (foreground). The evaluation trenches are visible to the right of the pipe trench (looking east).





Pl. 5 The pipe trench course, Field 5 (looking east).

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