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LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

**RAF Digby, Ashby De la Launde, Lincs  
New NCO Accommodation  
Archaeological Watching Brief**

NGR: TF 0450 5645 505045

Site Code: RAFD 03

LCNCC Accn No.: 2003.273

356500

**Report**

**for**

**Clark Construction**

**by**

**D. Young**

Conservation  
Services

14 OCT 2003

Highways & Planning  
Directorate

**LAS Report No 684  
August 2003**

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EVENT L14421

SOURCE L19028

NEGATIVE

L19029

RAF Digby, Archaeological Watching Brief

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## The Figures

Fig. 1 Location of RAF Digby, Ashby de la Launde c) based on the 1:50,000 OS map. © Crown copyright, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS Licence No. AL 100002165.

Fig. 2 Area of watching brief. Scale 1:400 reduced from plan prepared by Mott McDonald.

## The Plates

Pl. 1 General view of the site looking north showing the site during piling, at the commencement of the watching brief.

Pl. 2 Excavation of ground beams showing disturbed conditions, view looking north

Pl. 3 Close-up of disturbed ground conditions in groundbeam trench showing mixed soil and limestone rubble.



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**Summary**

*An archaeological watching brief during the machined groundworks identified disturbed ground consistent with use of the site as a stone pit and failed to locate any archaeological features.*

**Introduction**

Lindsey Archaeological Services was commissioned by Clark Construction to conduct an archaeological watching brief in accordance with a brief supplied by the North Kesteven Heritage Officer dated June 6<sup>th</sup> 2002 and the general requirements set out in the *Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook* (Lincolnshire County Council Archaeology Section, 1998)

**Site Location**

RAF Digby is situated c 10km north of Sleaford on the Jurassic limestone and clay in the parish of Ashby De la Launde, on the boundary of Scopwick (Fig. 1). The proposed new NCO accommodation block was built on the site of the former primary school on the corner of Heath Road in the south eastern part of the camp complex (Fig. 2).

**Archaeological background**

The new quarters lie east of the married quarters where evidence for archaeological remains were found in 1993, mainly comprising undated pits and ditches. The Roman road, King Street passes close to the site, and follows the eastern parish boundary of Ashby De La Launde south of the camp. Casual finds of Roman pottery have been made further east and there is a major Roman site to the south. A few worked flints of early Neolithic date were found during the watching brief on the married quarters in 1993 and it was possible that further remains of prehistoric and Roman date could have been revealed during the groundworks phase of construction. It was noted, however, that there was a stone pit on the site which was recorded on a 1789 map of the parish and on later OS maps, which could have already destroyed archaeological remains over part, or all, of the site.

**Aims and Objectives**

The purpose of the watching brief was to record the absence or presence of archaeological deposits disturbed during the groundworks at the above site.

### **Method**

The supervision of groundworks was to be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Project Brief. Archaeological features were to be excavated and drawn when appropriate, depending upon safe access. Finds located in archaeological features were to be identified using a context numbering system for archaeological remains which was in operation. LAS operates a standard context recording system, developed by its staff over the past 20 years based on MOLAS and CAS models. A full photographic record was kept of all stages of groundworks attended.

### **Results**

The new NCO building is c.50m long and 20m wide. The monitoring of the groundworks took place between February 2<sup>nd</sup> and February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2003. Unfortunately work had begun some considerable time beforehand without LAS being notified and the whole of the area was already stripped of topsoil and some subsoil and had been blinded with a considerable thickness of limestone rubble (Pl. 1). This had the effect of completely hiding and potentially destroying any surviving archaeology on the site.

The turf overlay a mixed deposit comprising a red brown soil with patches of limestone brash and areas of larger rubble pieces, consistent with the backfill of the stonepit identified on early maps of the site (Pls 2 and 3). The foundations were piled because of the disturbed nature of the ground. Depths of the foundation pilings were supplied by Clarke Construction and a range of readings to the top of the natural limestone were recorded, ranging from 1.5 m in the south end of the area to 3.5 m towards the east end and 2.4 m towards the northern end. Excavation of the groundbeam trenches confirmed the considerable modern disturbance.

No finds were recovered during the period of the watching brief.

### **Conclusion**

Despite the fact that the watching brief was not carried out in ideal circumstances, it is very unlikely that any archaeology was disturbed or damaged in the construction of the foundations for this building.

### **Content of the Site Archive**

Site correspondence

Site location maps (3)

LAS film no 2003 / 20 / 1-7, 12a-16a, 29a-33a.

Site notes

D. Young,  
August 6<sup>th</sup> 2003



## THE FIGURES



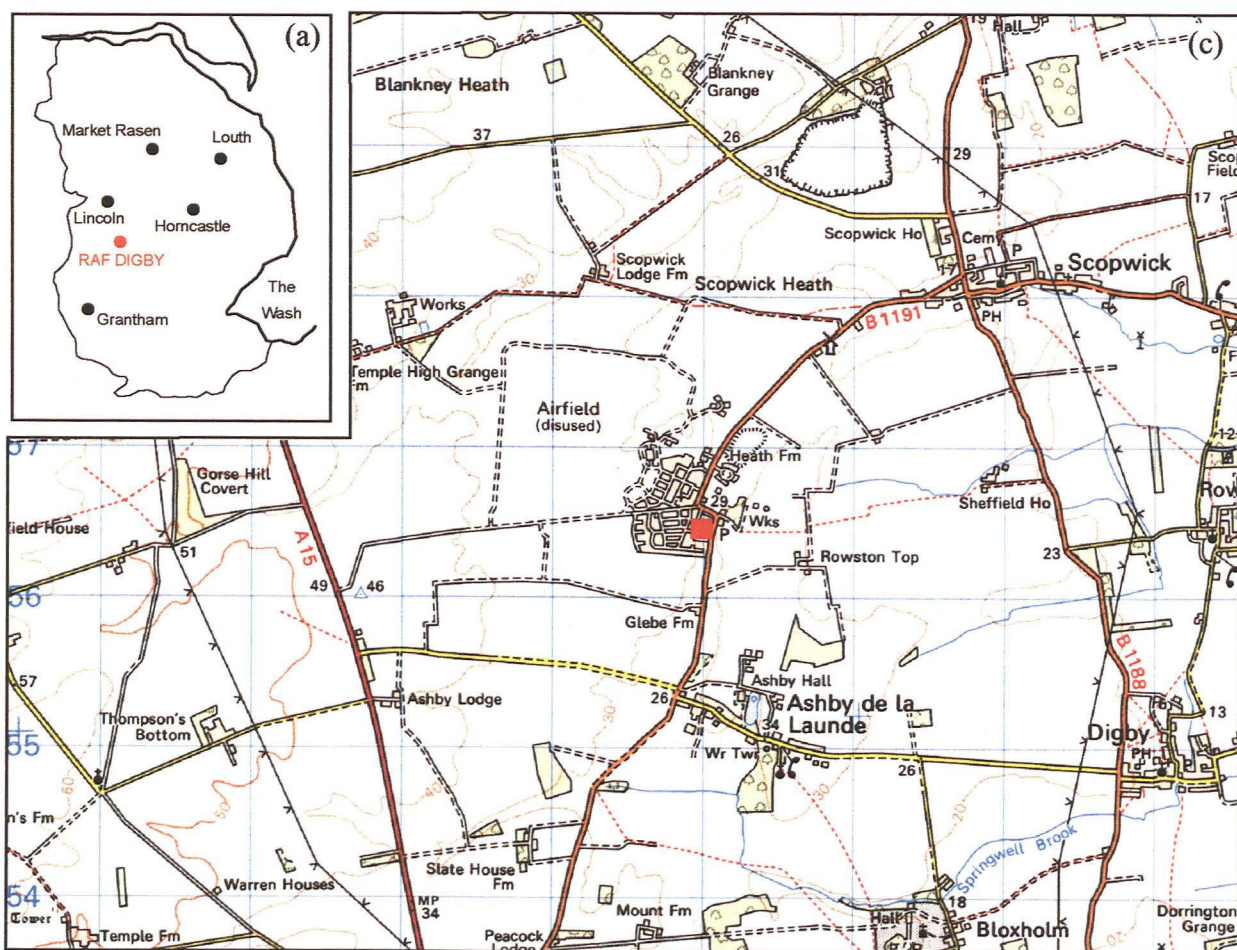
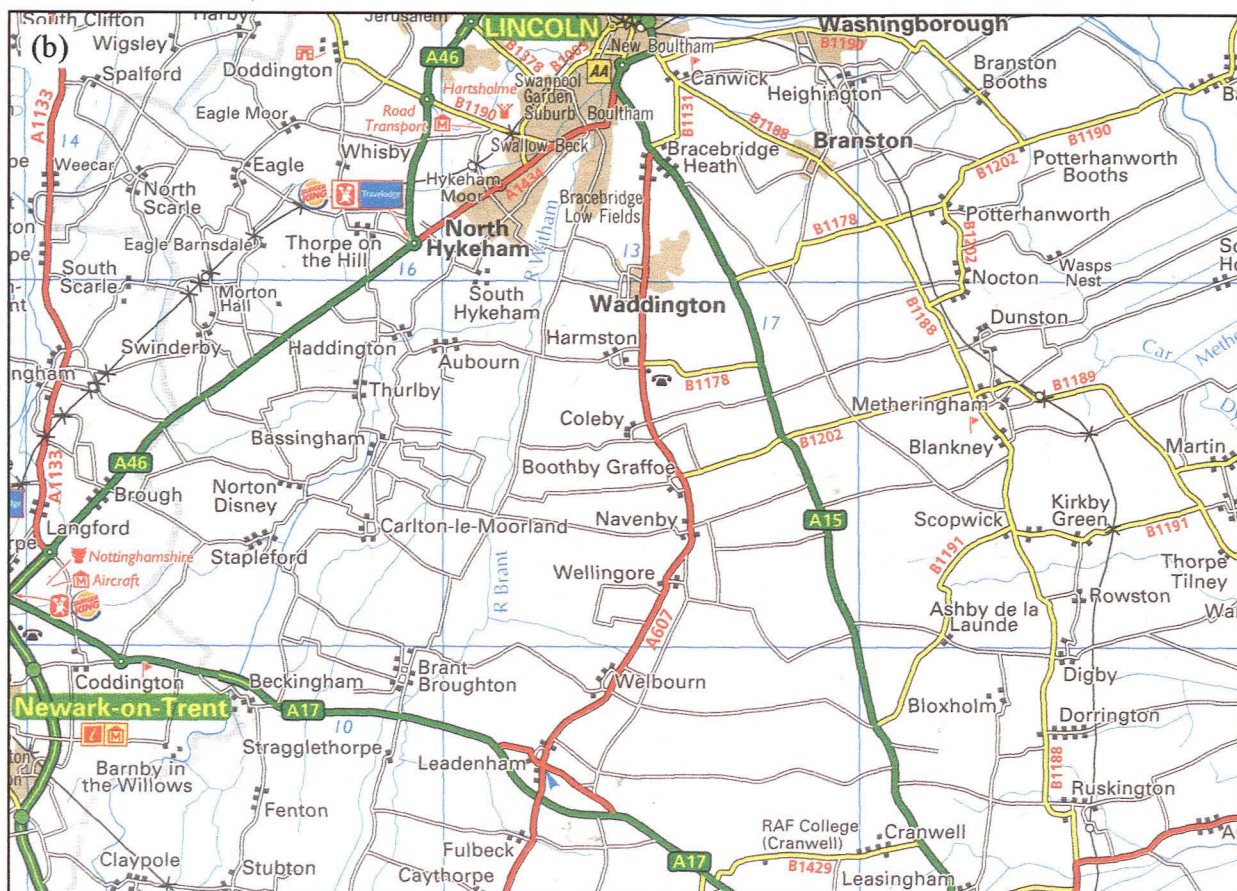


Fig. 1 Location of RAF Digby, Ashby de la Launde (c based on the 1:50,000 Ordnance Survey map. © Crown copyright, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. NAL Licence No. AL 100021059).







## THE PLATES





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Pl. 2 Excavation of ground beams showing disturbed conditions, view looking north.





Pl. 3 Close-up of disturbed ground conditions in ground beam trench showing mixed soil and limestone rubble.