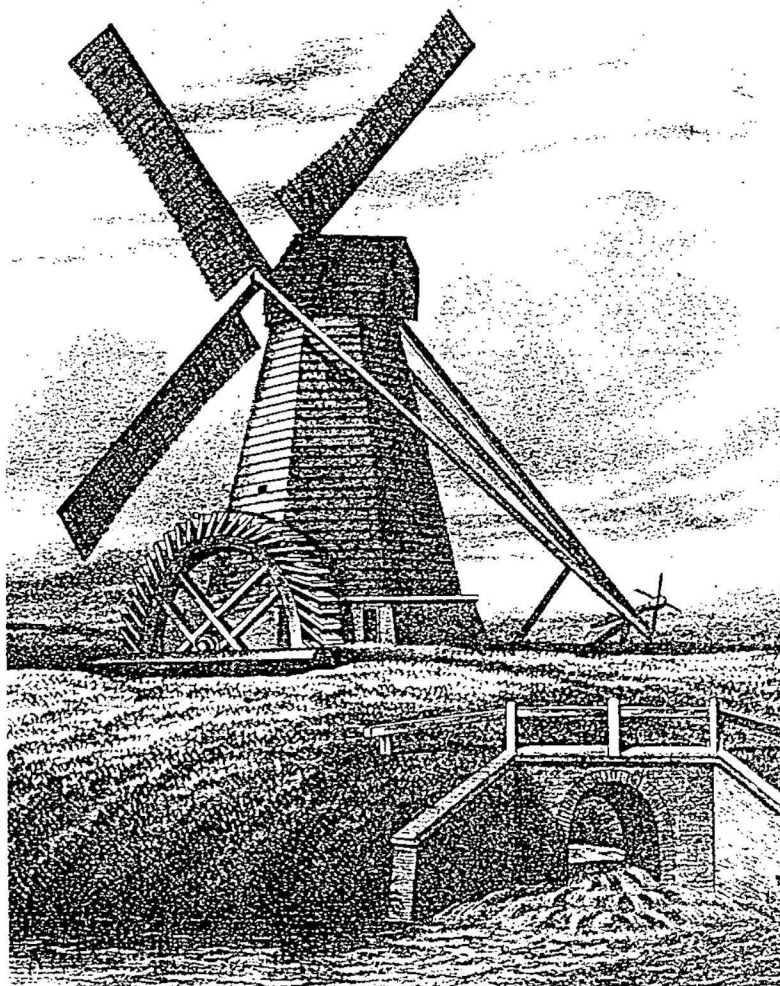


ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

RYCROFT AVENUE, DEEPING ST
JAMES

LINCOLNSHIRE



PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY

Site Code: DJRA94
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JAMES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

FOR

ANGLIAN WATER SERVICES LTD.

BY

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1. SUMMARY

An intermittent archaeological watching brief was maintained during water main replacement in Rycroft Avenue, Deeping St James. A total of eight visits took place during July and August 1994 and on each occasion no important archaeological remains were observed or recorded. All of the observed trench had been excavated through reinforced concrete and, as such, was particularly difficult to deal with in archaeological terms. Nevertheless, beneath the concrete it was evident that very little had been disturbed previously. The underlying strata were made up usually of gravels, heavy clayey peat/blue clay, and fine silty clay in varying thicknesses up to a depth of 1 metre.

2. INTRODUCTION

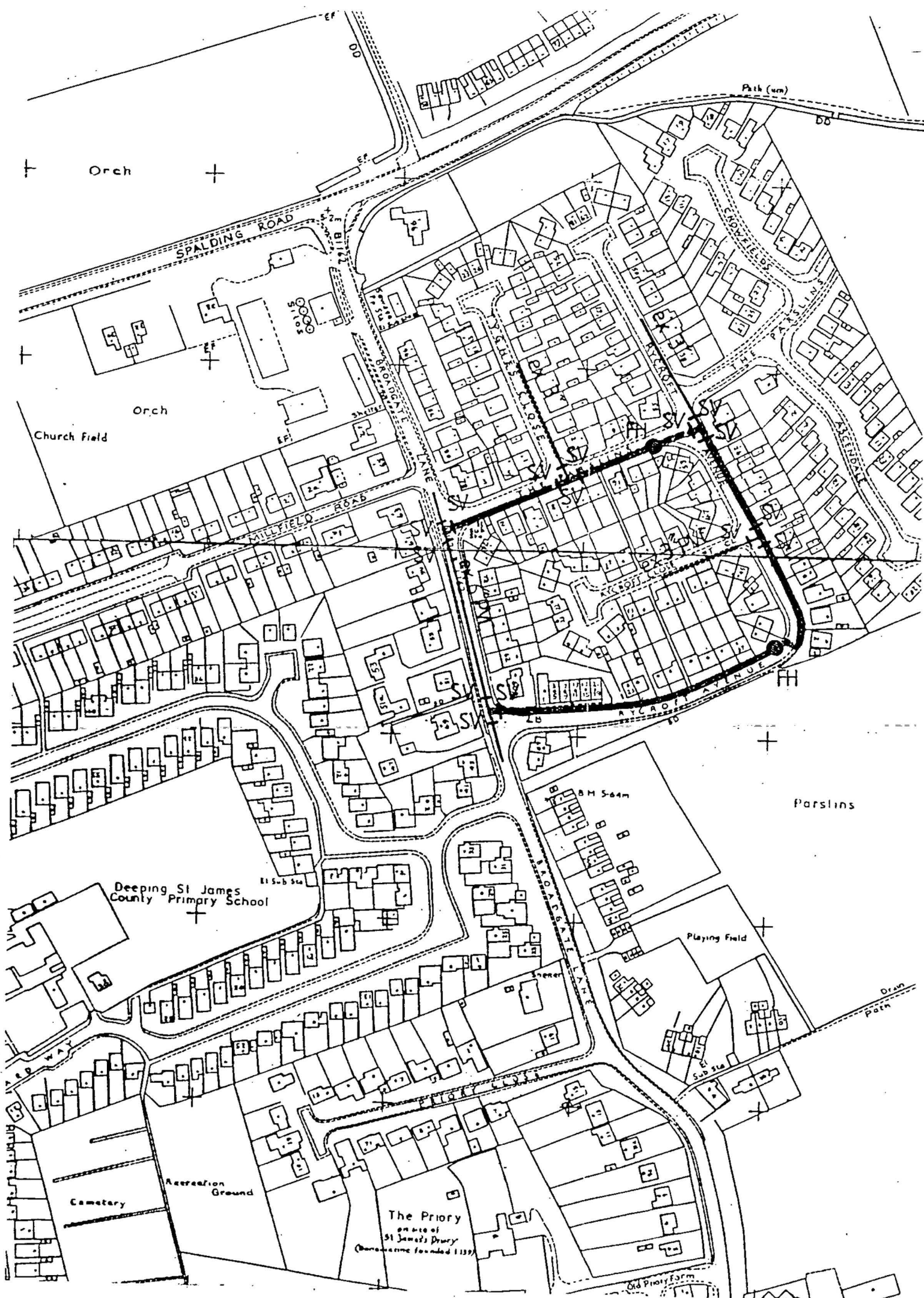
Pre-Construct Archaeology was invited by Anglian Water Services Limited to conduct a watching brief on the new pipeline which was to be installed in Deeping St James. The construction of the water main lasted from about the beginning of July 1994 until its completion on 9 August 1994. However, as Pre-Construct Archaeology was not asked to conduct the watching brief until 28 July 1994, i.e. almost at the end of the work, only eight visits in all were made.

3. LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

(see Anglian Water's Drawing No. DJ.SH.01.01, 12 May 1994)

(Copy overleaf)

Anglian Water's replacement of the water main in Deeping St James was intended to connect the existing main on Broadgate Lane with the one which served the houses on the The Parslins and Rycroft Avenue with the exception of the northern extension to Rycroft Avenue. In this sense, the trench was horseshoe-shaped around the housing estate.



4. REASONS FOR THE WATCHING BRIEF

4.1. The Planning Background

4.1.i. South Kesteven District Council's local plan contains statements relevant to the watching brief for the water main replacement in Deeping St James, Rycroft Avenue (South Kesteven District Local Plan, 1992, 79 & 80).

4.1.ii. There are various Acts and guidelines which are helpful to developers and, in particular, appropriate to Anglian Water's replacement water main in Deeping St James, Rycroft Avenue. Chief among these documents are: *The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1970*; *The National Heritage Act 1983*; *The General Development Order 1988*; and *Planning Policy Guidance Note (PPG 16) on Archaeology and Planning 1990*. The latter, especially, is most useful in its application to the planning background.

5. GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY OF THE IMMEDIATE AREA

(by D. R. Robson)

Deeping St James is at the south-east corner of an extensive tract of Fen Gravel (now named the 1st Terrace Gravels). These deposits are of Devensian age and consist of pebbly sand and gravel containing limestone stones and flints. North of the village the soils have loamy or sandy upper layers over calcareous gravelly sand. The lower-lying soils before drainage were liable to seasonal waterlogging due to fluctuating groundwater.

An extensive area of clayey river alluvium over loamy and sandy Terrace Gravels occurs west, east and south of the village and here clayey Fladbury and clayey over coarse loamy Stixwoud soils occur. Locally, low ridges of loamy soils are present slightly above the alluvial level.

A distinct change occurs to the east at approximately 4 m (12 ft) contour.

This coincides with the presence of grey estuarine deposits which formerly had a peat cover. It is possible that the upstanding peat determined the extent and shape of the river alluvial deposits. The estuarine alluvium of the Borroway Drove Beds (Fen Clay) was deposited after the formation of woody and reed peat (Lower Peat) over the low areas of Terrace Gravels or thin loamy material derived from them (Crowland Beds). This peat probably dates from about 3600 BP. The clayey Barroway Drove Beds have an intricate dendritic pattern of silty creek deposits. When the sea level fell, an upper or Nordelph Peat extended eastwards. The oldest date for this is 3000-2000 BP in Bourne Fen to the north. The Barroway Drove Beds thinned towards the west and in places the Nordelph Peat directly overlies the Lower Peat. Wastage of peat through drainage, cultivation and wind erosion means that deep peat soils of the Adventurers' series are uncommon and confined to low places near the fen margin. The main soils are humose clayey Downholland series and similar but very acid Tydd series, the latter developing through oxidation of sulphides after drainage and containing the straw-coloured mineral jarosite. The creek ridges have calcareous humose silty Chatteris soils.

The later marine Terrington Beds do not appear to have penetrated to the fen margins probably because the upstanding peat formed a barrier at the time. Low-lying washlands bordering the river Welland have clayey over peaty Midelney soils and the youngest alluvium has calcareous clayey over peaty Windrush soils often containing freshwater shells.

6. BACKGROUND

Sites of Known Archaeological Significance.

Deeping St James is one of the complex of once separate settlements in this southern part of Lincolnshire. The place-name element common to all of them, Deeping, means 'deep fen' (Ekwall, 141) and is first recorded in Domesday, 1086/7 AD, as East or West Deeping (Foster & Longley, 128, 173, 174 & 225). The suffix 'St James' is first found in an Episcopal Register for the years 1209-35.

Although the written record for Deeping St James is rather later than would have been expected, the archaeological record begins in the remote past. There are several instances of the finding of neolithic artefacts - arrowheads, scrapers and the like - which lead into the bronze age where a cinerary urn is noted, together with the possibility of an unrelated barrow. Perhaps some of the flint tools and weapons also belong to this period. The Iron Age is represented by a gold coin and probably a dugout boat found in c1830.

Nevertheless, it is the Roman period which has produced the spectacular finds in Deeping St James. A Roman priestly crown, with fragments of other crowns, have been discovered by chance. These are indeed rare objects for Roman Britain and have led to speculation about the proximity of a Roman temple hereabouts. The speculation has been fuelled by other finds perhaps associated with the crowns: 2 coin hoards and other coins, pottery, 2 swords, 2 daggers and an iron frame of a *vexillum*, maybe suggesting a military presence, and so on. Roman buildings are known, too, from the parish, one containing the remains of a corn drying kiln.

In the middle ages a Benedictine priory was built (Pevsner & Harris give a date of 1139 for its foundation - p 247) and a church of more or less the same date. The church, however, has seen many alterations since, the most recent major change being the rebuilding of the tower in 1717. The priory, which was dissolved in 1539, has been subsequently excavated (in 1968 but unpublished) and it was to this priory which the present church owed its genesis for it was originally the priory church. Other finds of a medieval nature from Deeping St James include an ornamental tile louvre, Lyveden pottery and a hoard of Elizabethan silver coins. There was also a substantial tythe barn associated with the parish.

A significant building from the period following the middle ages but now sadly demolished was a post mill which stood adjacent to the area of the proposed water mains re-lay.

In all, Deeping St James gives the impression of having been a place of some importance throughout the past 3 millenia, or maybe more.

7. OBJECTIVES OF THE WATCHING BRIEF

In general terms, all archaeological remains should be seen as finite, and a non-renewable source (PPG 16; see also The Planning Background 4.1. above). Ideally, it is necessary for archaeologists to be able to discuss projects with potential developers before any earthmoving work commences. The policy which Anglian Water Services Limited has adopted with regard to conservation is laudable, and particularly so when much of the work is outside the control of Planning Acts. With this well founded policy it is possible to formulate a practical programme of archaeological investigation before the start of any groundwork.

8. REQUIREMENTS FOR WORK

8.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology, as the chosen archaeological contractors for the work, undertook to comply with the requirements of PPG 16, to observe the standards suggested by the Institute of Field Archaeologists with regard to watching briefs. The work included the examination of the subsoil for archaeological features together with their recording, and the observation of natural deposits, again recording details wherever necessary. Nevertheless, as mentioned in 1 above, time did not always allow for this criterion to be resolved to the ultimate.

8.2 After completion of the fieldwork, Pre-Construct Archaeology arranged with the City and County Museum, Lincoln for the long term storage of all artifacts, and the deposition of the site archive, as well as a copy of the report commissioned by Anglian Water Services Limited.

8.3 The site code used by Pre-Construct Archaeology is DJRA 94 and the Archive Number for reference at the City and County Museum Lincoln is 123.94.

9. RESULTS OF THE WATCHING BRIEF

Nothing of archaeological significance was recovered from the pipe trench.

10. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Pre-Construct Archaeology would like to thank Anglian Water Services Limited for the opportunity to conduct the watching brief and for taking an interest in the work as it progressed, especially the site engineer involved (Mr P. Holdich). Thanks are also due to the staff of the County and City Museum, Lincoln who gave assistance when required. A special tribute should be made to Denis Robson for his account of the soils and geology of the area.

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