

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

LONDON ROAD, GRANTHAM,  
LINCOLNSHIRE



PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY (Lincoln)

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NEGATIVE

LONDON ROAD, GRANTHAM  
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT  
FOR  
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## 1.0 ABSTRACT

An archaeological watching brief took place during water mains replacement near the junctions of London Road and Bridge End Road, Grantham. Regrettably, part of the area marked for observation and recording was not monitored, though it is understood that trench depths in this area were minimised due to the density of live services present.

No important archaeological remains were observed or recorded during the watching brief.

## 2.0 INTRODUCTION

Anglian Water Services Ltd invited Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) to undertake a programme of observation and recording during water mains replacement on London Road and Bridge End Road, Grantham (Fig. 2). Archaeological services were requested following advice received from the County Archaeological Officer that important remains and artefacts had been recorded within areas affected by small sections of a more extensive pipeline route. Anglian Water Services Ltd agreed therefore to finance a low-level watching brief so that any archaeological deposits disturbed during trenching could be recorded, interpreted, integrated within the Sites and Monuments Record and eventually published in the local county journal.

## 3.0 LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

Grantham lies in south Lincolnshire, approximately 14km south-west of Sleaford, 32km south of Lincoln. The area monitored during the present watching brief lay on the south side of the town; four small trenches on London Road/North Parade (Fig. 2).

The town is built over oolitic limestone and upper lias clay, sited close to the Lincoln Edge at heights varying between 60 and 100m above modern sea level. The River Witham runs through the east side of the settlement and the Grantham Canal runs westwards from Earlsfield.

## 4.0 PURPOSE OF THE WATCHING BRIEF

"An archaeological watching brief is defined as a programme of observation and investigation conducted during the destruction of archaeological deposits, resulting in the preparation of a report and ordered archive" (Institute of Field Archaeologists draft on Standard guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs, 1993).

The County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) contains information which suggests that important archaeological remains lie in the vicinity of parts of the route chosen for the new water main.



Fig. 2 Location of the four mills inspected during the catching brief

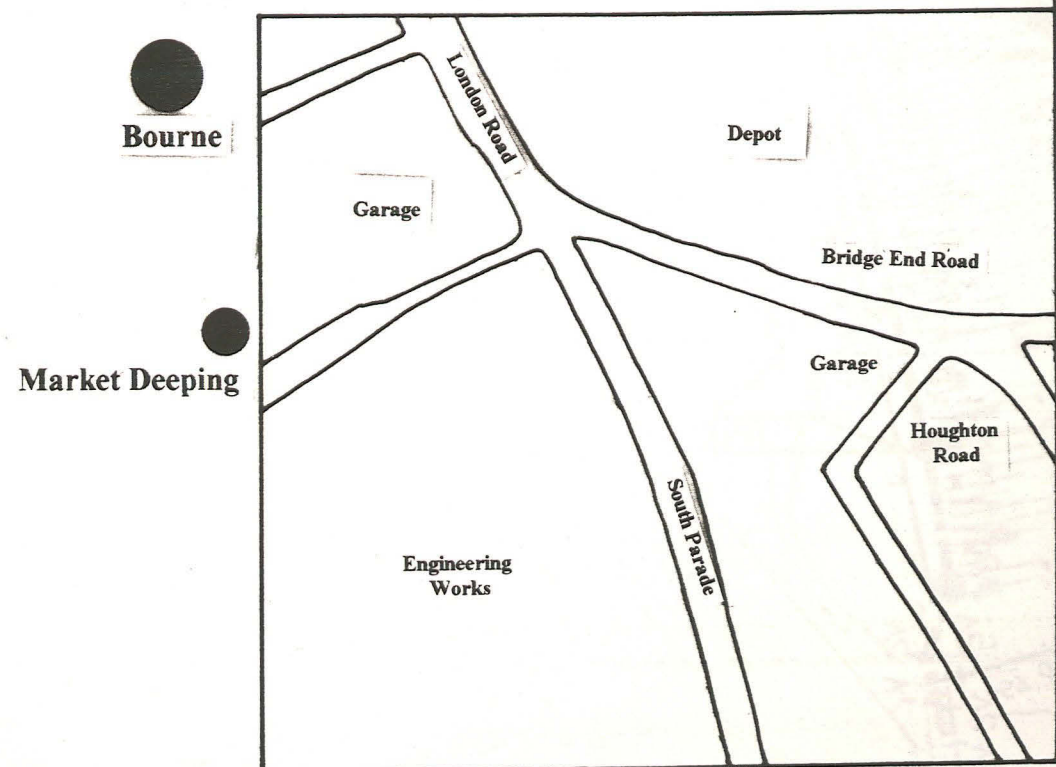
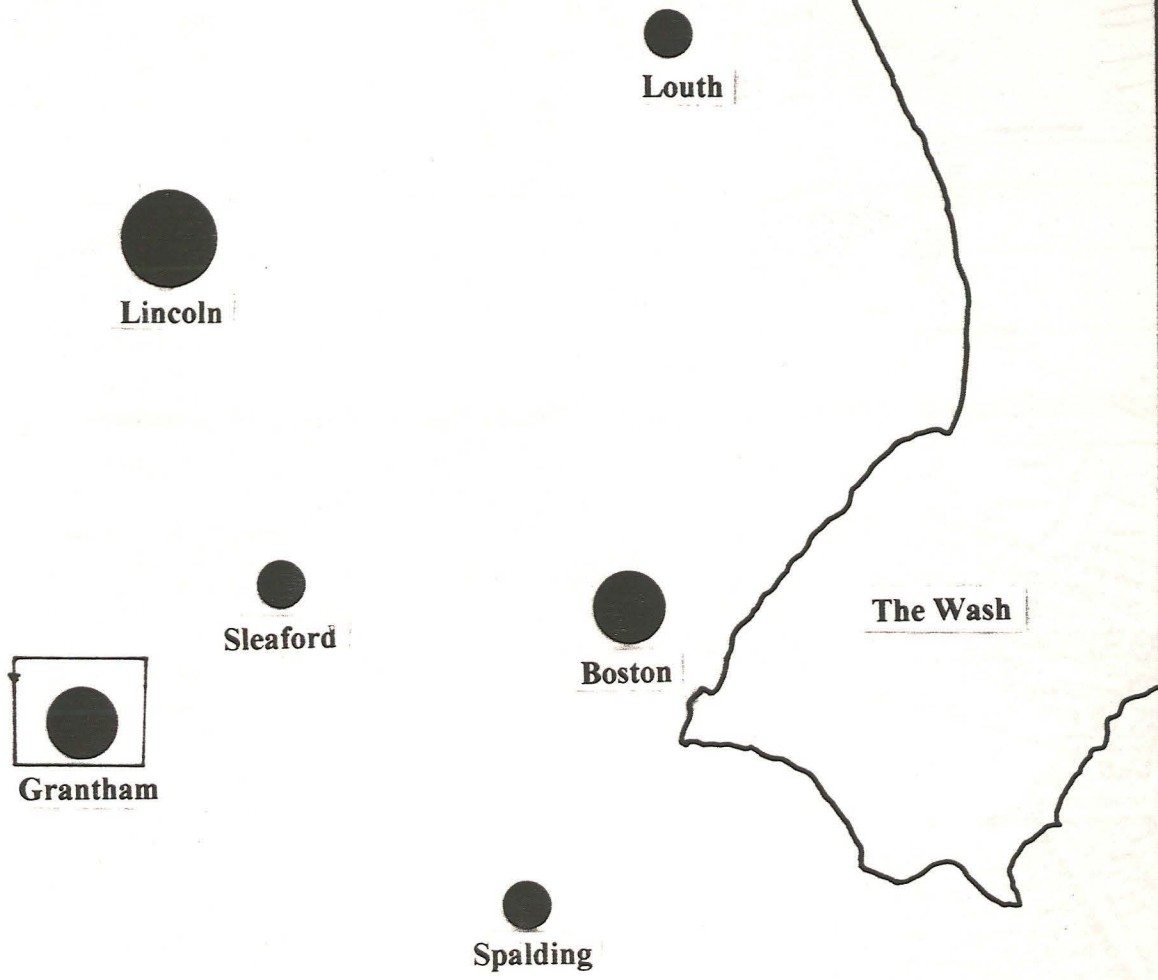
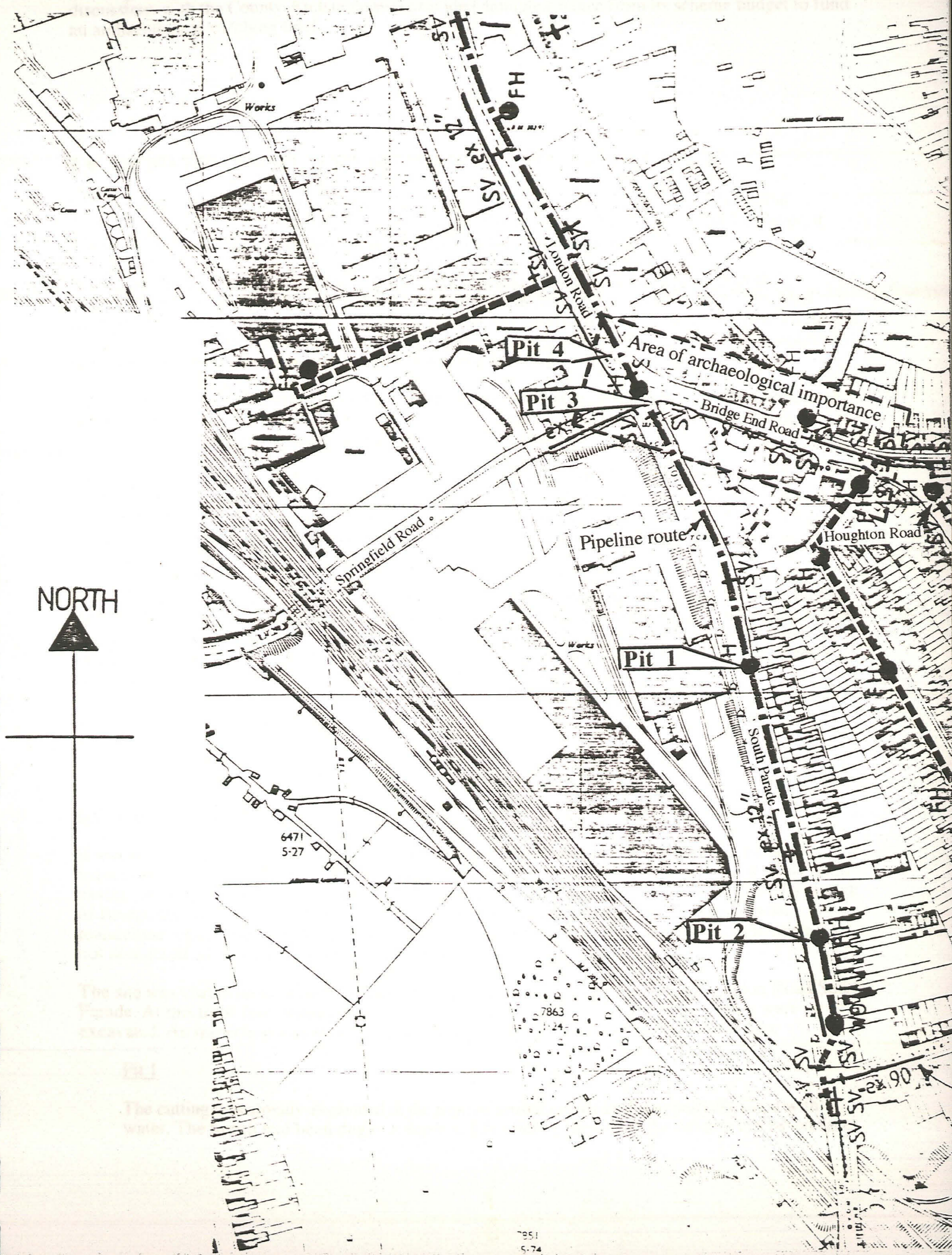


Fig. 1: Site Location Map



Fig. 2 Location of the four pits inspected during the watching brief





In recognising the importance of buried resources, Anglian Water Services Ltd. (following discussions with the County Archaeologist) provided suitable finance from its scheme budget to fund an archaeological watching brief.

## 5.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The unsuspecting traveller to Grantham would be forgiven for thinking it largely of Georgian foundation as so many of its fine buildings were built in the C18th (Mee 1970, 148). However, it possessed manorial status in 1086 and a castle during the Norman period.

The earliest finds from the area date to the Mesolithic period (Middle Stone Age, c. 8000BC - 4000BC) and are found widely distributed in the Grantham/Ancaster area (May 1976, 36). Also dating within the prehistoric era are groups of Beaker and Bronze Age (c. 2500BC - 800BC) remains; usually burial chambers. Beaker sites are often associated with sand and/or gravel deposits and their occurrence around Grantham on limestone is unusual (*ibid*, 68).

There are important middle/late Iron Age (c. 500BC - AD43) sites closeby also, the most famous of these being Honington Camp; thought by some to be a small hillfort akin to monuments more common in other regions (a claim not substantiated by excavation).

The north-south Roman road, Ermine Street, passes the east side of Grantham through Cold Harbour. A major Roman site, apparently too large to be a homestead or villa, has been identified as a result of surface collection at Foston, north-west of Grantham (Whitwell 1992, 76). Villa sites are known in the parishes of Great Ponton, Gunby-and-Stainby, Newton-and-Haceby, Denton and Stoke Rochford.

As noted above, at the time of the Domesday Survey (1086), Grantham was a Royal manor, though, prior to the Norman Conquest, there existed a settlement of some size. Human remains dating within the Anglo-Saxon period have been recovered from around the development area (at the junction of Bridge End Road and Houghton Road) though little is known regarding the wider context of these remains.

## 6.0 METHODS AND RESULTS

It was agreed with Anglian Water Services Ltd. that an intermittent watching brief would be maintained during trenching operations in the area of Houghton Road and Bridge End Road (Fig. 2) as this was where Saxon burials had been previously recorded, as well as Roman finds on the stretch of Bridge End Road, west of Houghton Road to the junction of London Road. Contact was maintained with Anglian Water Services Ltd., though the Bridge End Road section of the route was not monitored when a message to inspect was, regrettably, not received.

The site was visited on only one occasion; during trenching and thrust-boring on London Road/South Parade. At this time, four rectangular pits, each measuring approximately 2.0m x 1.0m, were excavated. An inspection was made of each of these cuttings and may be summarised thus:

### Pit 1

The cutting was already excavated at the time of arrival on site and was partially filled with water. The trench had been dug to a depth c. 1.5m below the top of the modern tarmac surface,



the lower c. 50cm of which was submerged.

The east section face was cleaned and photographed. it comprised c. 50cm of modern tarmac and make-up, overlying more than 80cm of light brown silty sand containing a moderately frequent density of small limestones. No cultural deposits were seen in any of the trench sides.

#### Pit 2

A second cutting lay approximately 150m south of Pit 1 on South Parade. It was of a similar depth and was also partially filled with water. Approximately 50cm of modern tarmac/make-up overlay a composite of natural-looking bands of yellow silty soil and natural limestone; possibly redeposited. There was water at a depth 1.0m beneath the modern ground surface.

#### Pit 3

This trench was excavated approximately 150m north of Pit 1, at the junctions of South Parade/London Road, Springfield Road and Bridge End Road. Only c. 35cm of road/make-up deposits overlay compact limestone rubble (c. 80%) mixed with yellow/brown silty soil which appeared to be redeposited - possibly as part of the road construction. No archaeological features were exposed and water lay at a depth 1.0m beneath the modern ground surface (in Pits 1, 2 and 3, the water had been introduced during thrust-boring and pipe-laying).

#### Pit 4

The last cutting to be examined was sited approximately 35m north of Pit 3; on London Road.

Approximately 35cm of modern tarmac/make-up overlay c. 55cm of laminated limestone brash/yellow sandy silt, which appeared, superficially, to be a natural formation. However, beneath these deposits (beyond the base of the trench) was at least 30cm of compact (iron-panned) light brown sandy silt which contained a scatter of charcoal flecks; clearly a deposit of cultural origin.

The contractors allowed suitable time for detailed cleaning of the west section face and the excavation of the lower (archaeological) deposit. Despite a detailed search, no finds were recovered from the trench and a relative date for the deposition was not established.

## 7.0 CONCLUSIONS

Results of this archaeological watching brief will not greatly enhance the County Sites and Monuments Record, though it has been established that cultural deposits may lie deeply-buried beneath modern road deposits in the London Road/Bridge End Road area.

It is with great regret that the section of Bridge End Road, between Springfield Road and Houghton Road, was not monitored. When the site inspection was made on Sunday, March 12th, 1995, information was provided by the on-site contractors that this section of Bridge End Road had already been excavated and the new water pipe inserted. Subsequently, the project engineer was consulted and explained that he had made attempts to inform Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) of the development in advance (though this message did not, for whatever reason, get through). He also explained that trenching on Bridge End Road was undertaken to minimal depths due to the frequency of live services in that area.



## 8.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Sincere thanks are expressed to Anglian Water Services Ltd for inviting Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) to undertake the above works.

## 9.0 REFERENCES

May J, 1976 *Prehistoric Lincolnshire*

Mee A, 1970 *The Kings England: Lincolnshire*



## Appendix 1

## Information contained within the County Sites &amp; Monuments Record

Grid Ref.	SMR Ref.	Description
SK91893488	30516	Anglo-saxon Cemetery at Spittlegate: cremations and inhumations present. Sited on the east side of the Malt houses in the fork in the Great Northern Road to Donnington and Boston. Finds included urns, spearheads, knives and square headed brooches.
SK920349	30515	Romano-british material from an excavation by Mr. I White.
SK92203490	30588	Spittlegate Mill, Cold Harbour Lane; post-mediaeval.
SK920349	30531	93 Bridge End Road: Late Neolithic / Early Bronze Age Flints, including 20 struck flakes, 8 blades and 2 thumb-nail scrapers.
SK924347	30512	Mesolithic Flints from the banks of the River Witham.
SK924347	30513	Romano-british Grey Ware from the banks of the River Witham
?	30517	Bronze Age pottery: 2 cinerary urns and 1 small pot, 4.75" high, similar to a food vessel. Found when building N <sup>o</sup> 33 shop of Mr Hornsby's works near Paper Mill Lane.





(a)



(b)



(c)

## Appendix 2 Colour photographs

(a) Pit 1, looking west

(b) Pit 2, looking north-east

(c) Pit 4, looking south-west from above