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# LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

FRANCIS HOUSE SILVER BIRCH PARK GREAT NORTHERN TERRACE LINCOLN LN5 8LG

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## **Old Bolingbroke Electricity Rebuild:**

### **Archaeological Monitoring of New Transmission Pole Holes near Southfield Farm, Mavis Enderby**

**NGR: 3584 6600**

**SMR 43158**

Site Code: **MES 95**

LCNCC Museum Accn. No. **202.95**

Planning Application No. **S/018/1061/95**

Report prepared for East Midlands Electricity

**February 1996**

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# **Mavis Enderby/Old Bolingbroke Electricity Rebuild: Archaeological Monitoring of New Transmission Pole Holes near Southfield Farm**

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## **Summary**

*A possible archaeological site identified from air photographs was confirmed to be of Romano-British date after monitoring of holes machine-augered for new electricity transmission poles. A scatter of pottery, mostly greywares, was seen on the field surface and one hole may have disturbed an archaeological feature such as a ditch or pit; no information could be obtained from the hole sides. A small number of prehistoric flint artefacts were also recovered from the field near to the pole holes.*

## **Introduction**

The Old Bolingbroke Rebuild project represented part of an extensive programme of renewal and re-alignment of overhead electricity transmission lines, conducted in 1995 by East Midlands Electricity. A replacement network of timber poles and 11kv cables was established before existing poles were decommissioned and removed. During the consultation stage of the project Lincolnshire County Council's Assistant Archaeology Officer, providing planning/curatorial advice for East Lindsey District Council, noted that holes for new poles in one short section of the scheme at Mavis Enderby lay within an area of a possible cropmark site known from air photographs and thought to represent a Romano-British habitation site (Figs. 1-3).

Lindsey Archaeological Services was commissioned by East Midlands Electricity in December 1995 to conduct an archaeological watching brief during augering of the four holes specified. Fieldwork took place on 6th December 1995 during light snowfalls which settled towards the end of the work. Most of the land was arable with a newly sprouting crop; a large proportion of the ground surface was visible.

## **Archaeological Background**

A cropmark complex in the fields between Southfield Farm, Mavis Enderby and Highfield Farm, Old Bolingbroke was photographed from the air by Chris Cox in 1986 and has recently been plotted by the RCHME Lincolnshire Mapping Project (Pl. 1; Fig. 3). From the shape of the visible features (ditched trackways and rectangular small fields) the site had been thought to be a Romano-British rural settlement site but no finds had been recorded from the site.

Iron Age and Romano-British pottery has been reported from Mavis Enderby village since 1932; Black-burnished and coarse wares were found in the churchyard and also during road widening about 150m to the south.

Few other finds from the immediate vicinity have been reported, apart from a poorly provenanced Neolithic greenstone axe found about 1869. Flint arrowheads and scrapers are recorded from Old Bolingbroke parish, about 1km NW of Highfield Farm.

### **The Watching Brief** (Fig. 2)

#### **Pole 1**

This pole location was on a ridge beside a farm track and a muck heap (Pls. 2 and 3). The subsoil was dark red-brown sandy loam which overlay a thick green sand deposit containing pieces of orange sandstone. No archaeological remains were found during the augering of the hole.

#### **Pole 2**

The second monitored hole lay to the SW of 1, at the base of a pronounced NW-SE depression thought to be of natural origin (Pl. 4). The sequence of deposits visible in the spoil was:

topsoil

orange sandy loam

grey clay (from about 1m below the ground surface to the hole base at 2.1m deep) (Pls. 5 and 6).

The grey clay was interpreted as a formerly waterlogged deposit of glacial or post glacial date. No archaeological remains were found at this pole location.

#### **Pole 3** (Pls. 7 and 8)

During the augering of this hole, 9 Romano-British pottery sherds were disturbed including one unabraded larger sherd (Appendix 1). The sequence of deposits here was:

topsoil with some ironstone lumps

dry yellow-brown sand (apparently the source of the unabraded Romano-British sherd)

bright orange sand near hole base

The ironstone pieces on the field surface were irregular and not dressed but may have come from a demolished structure. The stratified pot sherd indicated that this hole had either cut through a buried archaeological feature or that the ground level had become raised since the Romano-British period.

#### **Pole 4** (Pl. 9)

No archaeological remains were found at this pole location, the last to be monitored and the most easterly of the group .

The sequence of deposits within the hole was:

topsoil

orange sandy clay

grey-green clay

orange sand and gravel  
green sand

5 18 Roman and 2 later sherds were recovered from the field surface to the west and north of Pole 1. Although one sherd could not be dated, the other was from a local kiln, with a date range of early 13th - mid-15th century. A flint core (probably Late Mesolithic) and 4 worked flint flakes of a later date were also found (Appendix 2).

6 One sherd of a Toynton-Bolingbroke bowl (late 15th - 17th century) was collected from the field surface near 4; it was noted that the concentration of Roman pottery present to the west had thinned or ceased by this point. A struck flint flake was also found.

7 13 Roman sherds, 2 medieval and 2 post-medieval Toynton/Bolingbroke sherds were collected from the field surface between Poles 1 and 3. Two struck flint flakes were recovered.

### **Conclusion**

The watching brief found evidence of human activity on this land from the Late Mesolithic period. Prehistoric activity appears to have been restricted to flint tool manufacture, presumably casually when replacement artefacts were needed. The raw material may have been collected from the land surface; it does not seem to have been imported from outside the area.

The Romano-British pottery confirmed the interpretation of the air photographs that a settlement site of that date is located in the vicinity of Pole 3. It is likely that features survive beneath the ploughsoil (as shown on the photograph) and are associated with dateable material including pottery. Structural remains may still be present, as indicated by the sandstone pieces on the field surface. There may even be vestigial physical traces of archaeological features such as ditches and banks showing as low ridges on the field surface at ground level (Pls. 10, 11 and 12).

Very few medieval and early post-medieval sherds were found, reflecting the location at the edge of Mavis Enderby parish. The sherds showed traces of glaze under microscopic examination but were not closely dated. There is unlikely to have been any medieval settlement in this field.

The new transmission poles probably caused very limited damage to the archaeological remains; by monitoring the excavation of the holes it was possible to assess the level of that damage and, more positively, to recover evidence about this previously uninvestigated archaeological site. This information may be useful when considering the future management of the site.

### **Acknowledgements**

LAS was grateful for the interest and co-operation received from East Midlands Electricity, particularly from Peter Gregory (Project Manager, Networks) and the site team of Lawrence, Sam and John.

Help was received from Ian George (Assistant Archaeological Officer), Mark Bennet and Sarah Grundy (Sites and Monuments Record) at the Lincolnshire County Council Archaeology Section. A copy of the sketch plot of the cropmarks was provided by Helen Winton (RCHM(E) Lincolnshire Mapping Project) and LAS is grateful for permission from the RCHM(E) to reproduce the sketch plot.

The flints were examined by Ian Brooks (Engineering Archaeological Services Ltd.), the Romano-British pottery by Barbara Davies and the later pottery by Jane Young (City of Lincoln Archaeology Unit). The finds were processed by Jane Frost and Mick McDaid. The report was produced by Jane Frost.

Geoff Tann  
Lindsey Archaeological Services  
13th February 1996

### **Archive Summary**

Archaeological finds:

Flints

Roman pottery

Medieval pottery

Specialists' reports

Annotated 1:2500 EME plan

Field record sheets

## Appendix 1: Romano-British and Medieval Pottery

### Romano-British pottery

B J Davies

Fri Jan 19 17:27:27 GMT 1996

Archive

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3,GREY,-,-,-,-,BSS ABR,-,4,-
3,GREY,JB,-,-,-,-,BASE,-,1,-
3,GREY,JB,-,-,-,-,BS NECK ABR,-,1,-
3,GREY,JL,-,-,-,-,BS LARGE FRESHISH,-,1,-
3,GREY,BWM,-,-,-,-,BS NECK SANDW,-,1,-
3,SHEL,B,-,-,-,-,BS GROOVES AND CORDONS TOWARDS BASE,-,1,-
3,ZZZ,-,-,-,-,MOST SHS ABRATED,-,-,-
3,ZDATE,-,-,-,-,3?,-,-,-
7,GREY,-,-,-,-,BSS ABR,-,6,-
7,GREY,-,-,-,-,BASAL BS GRITTY ABR,-,1,-
7,GREY,BWM,-,-,-,-,RIM PITTED,-,1,-
7,SHEL,-,-,-,-,BSS SCRAPS,-,2,-
7,CASH,BFL,-,-,-,-,RIM,-,1,-
7,GREY,BWM,-,-,-,-,RIM-SHLDR,-,1,-
7,GREY,BWM,-,-,-,-,RIM FRAG ABR,-,1,-
7,ZZZ,-,-,-,-,SOME RIM SHS MOST ABR,-,-,-
7,ZDATE,-,-,-,-,3+/POSTRO,-,-,-
5,GREY,-,-,-,-,BSS SOME ABR,-,14,-
5,GREY,J?,-,-,-,-,BASE STRING,-,1,-
5,GREY,B?,BIAP,-,-,-,BS LGE,-,1,-
5,GREY,JB,-,-,-,-,BS SHLDR,-,1,-
5,SHEL,CP,-,-,-,-,RIM FRAG,-,1,-
5,ZZZ,-,-,-,-,MOST SHS ABR,-,-,-
5,ZDATE,-,-,-,-,3+/POSTRO,-,-,-
```

### Notes

The site produced 40 Roman shs from three contexts (3,5 &7), two of which also produced post-Roman pottery (5 & 7). Most of the Roman sherds are abraded and there are few diagnostic rims. Those that are present can only be broadly dated to the 3rd century or later (see below - Date Range). Almost all the Roman pottery consists of grey wares, mainly wide mouthed bowls. A few sherds of shell-tempered ware are present, consisting of a probable bowl and a cooking pot. There is also a flanged bowl in a coarse tempered ware containing calcite.

### Date Range

cxt	shs	date
3	9	3?
5	18	3+/POSTRO
7	13	3+/POSTRO



### **Post-Roman pottery**

(identified by Jane Young, City of Lincoln Archaeology Unit)

#### **Context**

- 5      1 undiagnostic sherd; very abraded  
        1 sherd locally produced jug; early 13th century - mid-15th century
  
- 6      1 sherd Toynton/Bolingbroke type bowl; late 15th - 17th century
  
- 7      2 undiagnostic sherds; very abraded  
        2 sherds Toynton/Bolingbroke type ware; late 15th - 17th century

## **Appendix 2: Flint Artefacts from Mavis Enderby**

A total of eight flints were recovered from this project. The flakes were separated into three main groupings. Primary flakes with a completely corticated dorsal surface, secondary flakes with partially corticated dorsal surface and tertiary flake with an uncorticated dorsal surface. The classification of the cores followed Clark *et al* (1960), the description of the tools follows that of Inizan *et al* (1992) and the flint colours are defined by the Geological Society of America's Rock -Color Chart (Goddard *et al* 1948).

Lincolnshire is a flint rich area with a range of potential sources which could have been exploited in the past (Brooks 1989, 55-59). The chalk of the Lincolnshire Wolds contains considerable flint resources in the form of both tabular and nodular bands (Wood and Smith 1978). These are generally of poor quality, being opaque, grey and faulted. There are, however, a series of derived flint deposits in the form of tills, gravels and beach deposits. The flint in these is often of a superior quality and is the preferred source of flint for much of the flint assemblages in Lincolnshire.

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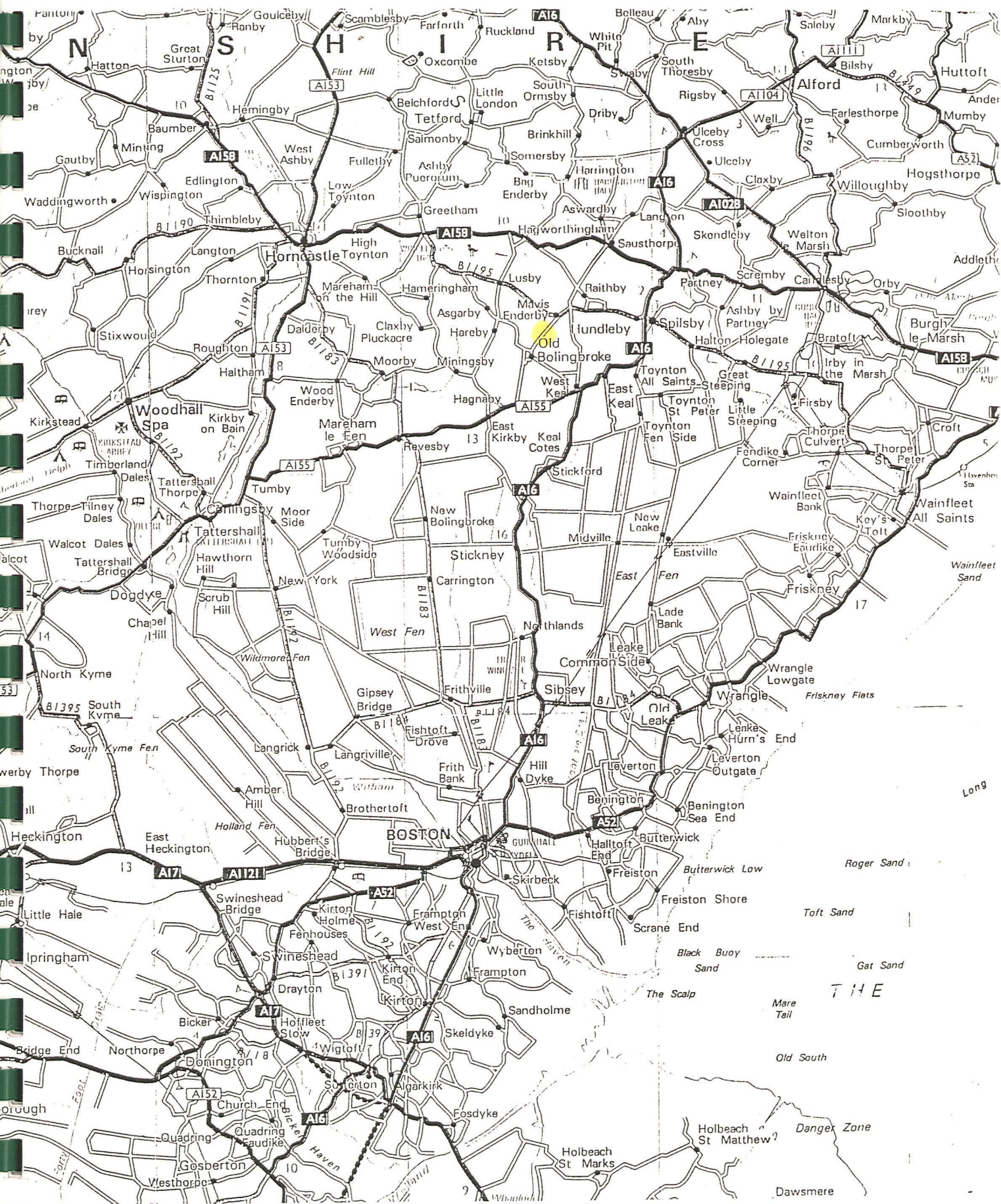


Fig. 1 Location of Mavis Enderby

⊗ existing pole position

● 1 - 4 position of monitored pole holes

● 5 - 7 finds scatters

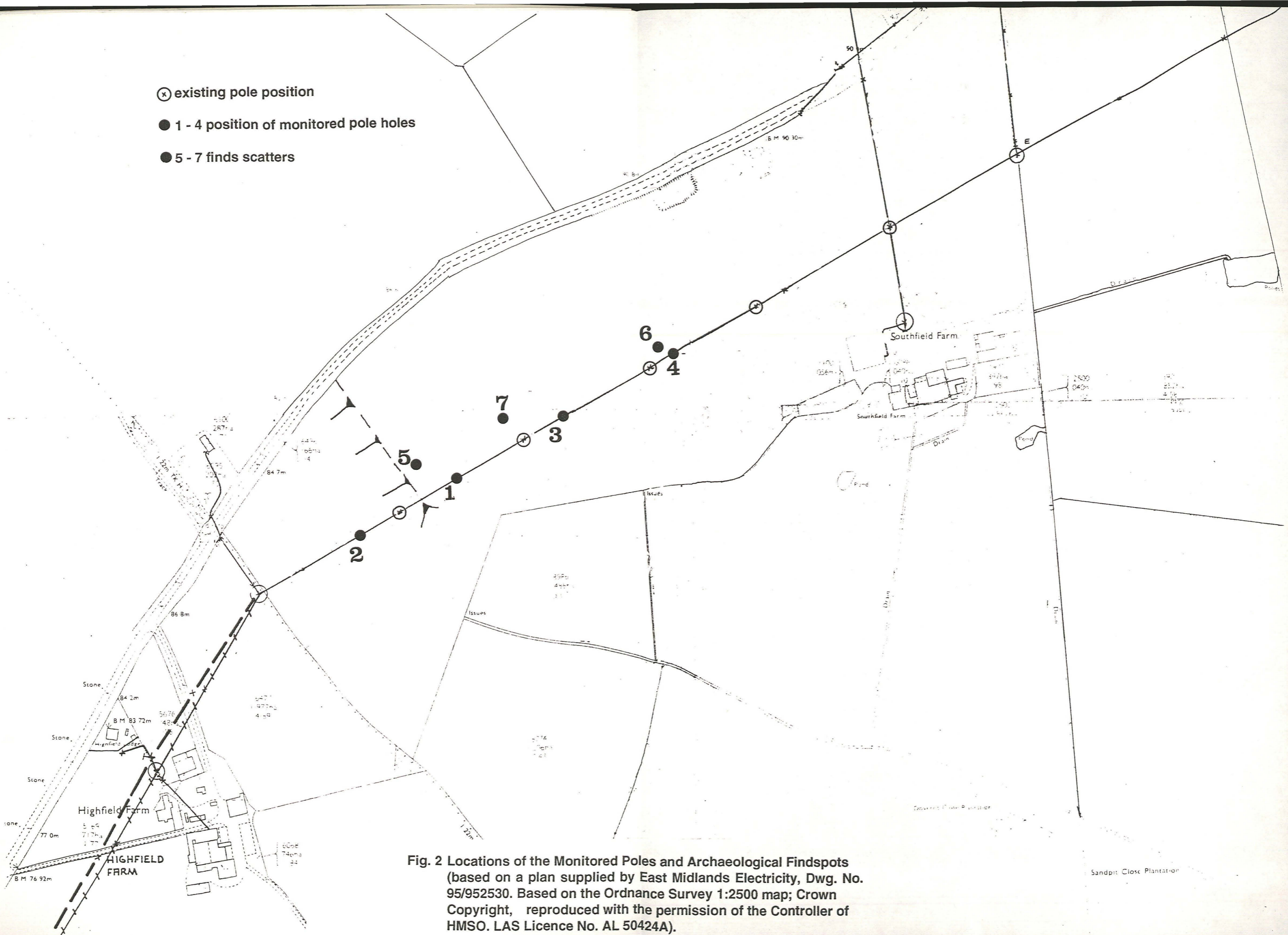
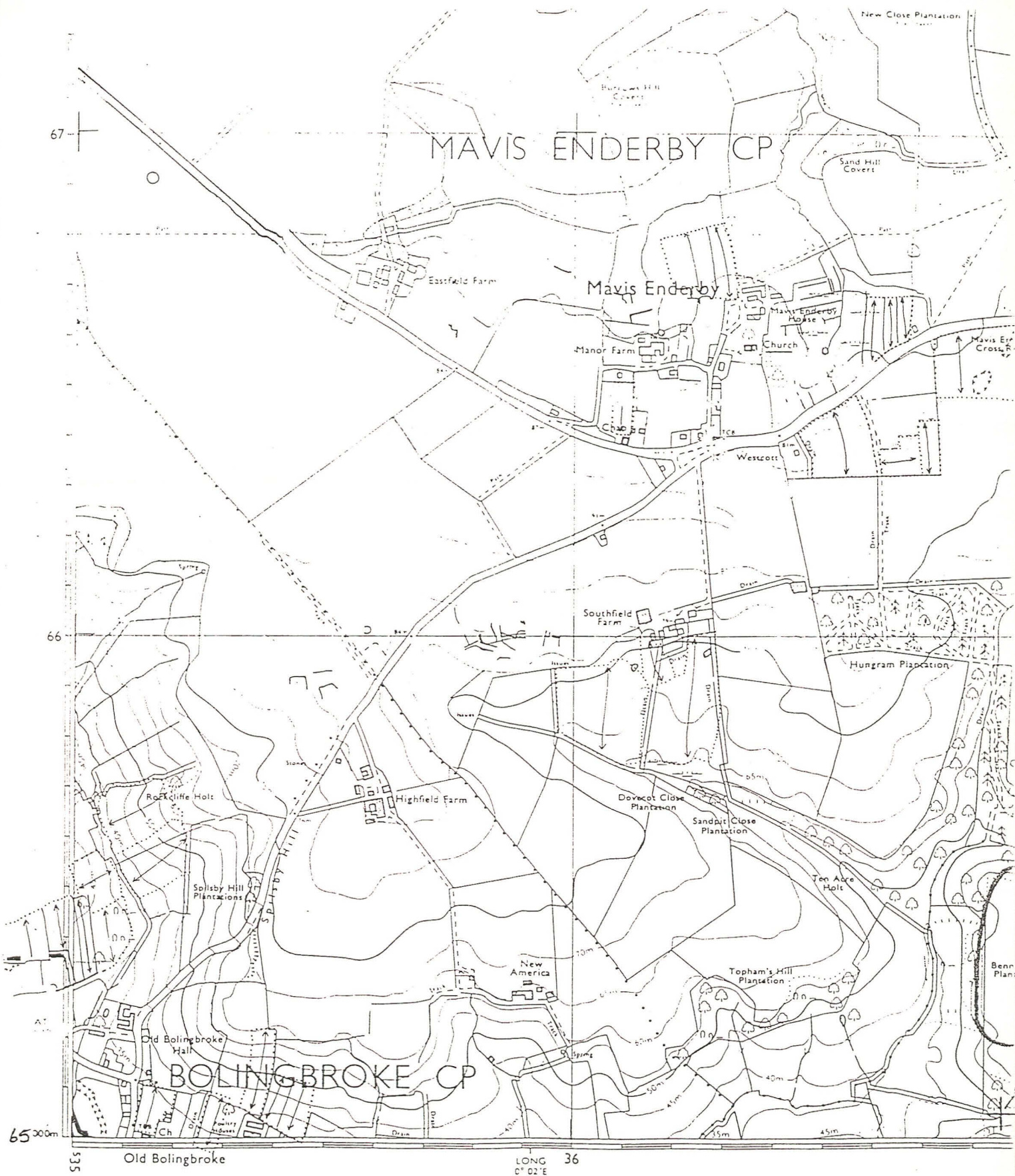


Fig. 2 Locations of the Monitored Poles and Archaeological Findspots (based on a plan supplied by East Midlands Electricity, Dwg. No. 95/952530. Based on the Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map; Crown Copyright, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS Licence No. AL 50424A).



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Pl. 1 Cropmarks of archaeological features to the west of Southfield Farm, Mavis Enderby. The existing transmission lines cross the centre of the photograph; The approximate locations of the new poles are marked. (Photograph CDC SF 3213/3 [26.7.86]; Copyright reserved).



Pl. 2 Location of Pole 1 (looking SE)

Pl. 3 Pole 1 (beside JCB) looking NE up slope from site of Pole 2







PI. 4 Pole 2 was sited in the base of the west-east depression between the existing poles (looking NE from Pole 1)

PI. 5 Subsoil disturbed during augering for Pole 2





PI. 6 Grey clay beneath the sandy subsoil at Pole 2

PI. 7 No archaeological features could be seen in the smeared sides of the augered hole at Pole 3





PI. 8 Location of Pole 3 (looking NE)

PI. 9 Dark brown topsoil and subsoil at Pole 4





PI. 10 Panoramic view of the field surface near Pole 3 (looking west;  
Highfield Farm on left edge)

Pl. 11 Panoramic view, looking south; Pole 1 is beside the track, Pole 3 on the left. A slight ridge can be seen in front of the poles.





Pl. 12 Undulations in the fields to the SE (looking south from Pole 1)