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**Archaeological Watching Brief Report**

Rectory Farm, Lea Lincolnshire

**Site Code: RFL 96**

**LCNCC: 147.96**

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Rectory Farm, Lea Lincolnshire

Site Code: RFL 96  
LCNCC: 147.96

Prepared for RH & RW Clutton (acting on behalf of A.L.I.H. Farms Ltd.)  
by Simon Johnson of Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln)

October 1996

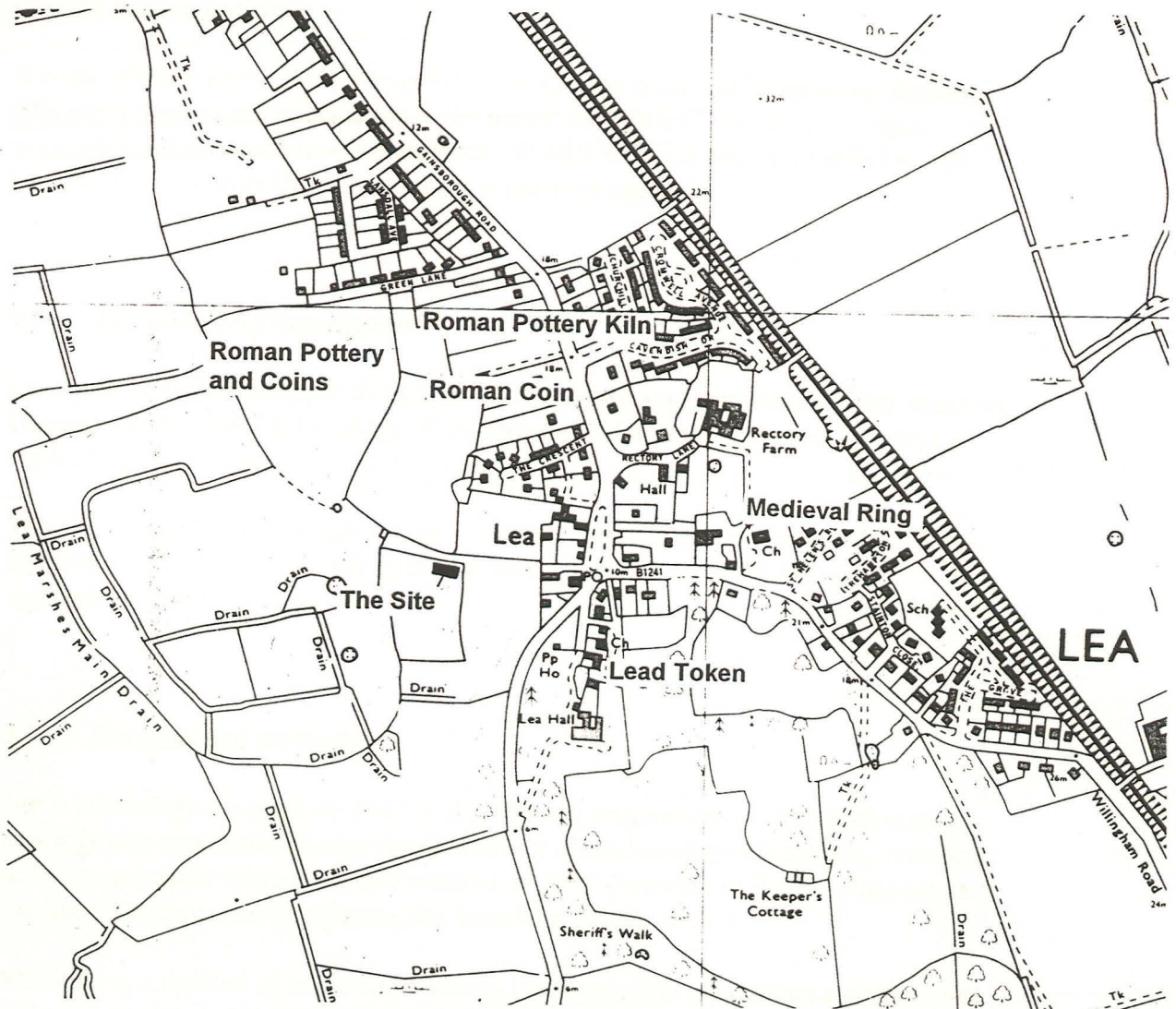
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### Summary

- \* *An archaeological recording brief took place during groundworks for the construction of a new agricultural building at Rectory Farm, Lea, Lincolnshire. (Fig. 1)*
- \* *No significant archaeological deposits or artefacts were exposed or recovered during foundation trenching, and permission was sought via the County Archaeological Officer for an early termination of the brief. The request was approved and the archaeological condition curtailed.*



**Fig. 1: Site Location incorporating principal entries from the County Sites & Monuments Record (1:10,000)**  
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## 1.0 Introduction

Detailed planning approval for a cattle shed at Rectory Farm was granted in January 1996, subject to the undertaking of an archaeological scheme of work. The condition was issued due to the proximity of the development to medieval village remains, as defined by the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England aerial photographic data. As the development site lies within a demonstrably sensitive archaeological landscape, there existed a possibility that archaeological deposits would be disturbed or destroyed as a result of development. An archaeological condition was issued therefore to ensure that any deposits exposed or destroyed as a result of groundworks would be preserved by record and interpreted to standards expected by the County Archaeological Officer (in accordance with guidelines set by the Institute of Field Archaeologists).

A copy of this report will be deposited at the County Sites and Monuments Record, effectively placing the information in the public domain and enhancing the data available for future resource management. Copies will also be forwarded to the Lincolnshire Archives Office and the local planning authority.

## 2.0 Location and description

Lea lies in the administrative district of West Lindsey approximately 2.5 km. south of Gainsborough. The solid geology of the area comprises lower Jurassic lias clays masked by cover sands of more recent origin.

The site lies to the west of the village within the documented extent of the medieval settlement and is centred at national grid reference SK 8263 8664 on land approximately 5m. OD.

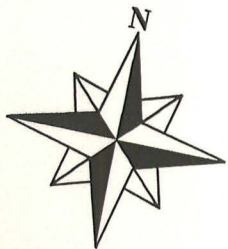
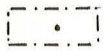
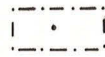
## 3.0 Purpose and methods

*'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 Standard Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs, 1994.)

Monitoring consisted of observation during the excavation of fourteen stanchion pits followed by detailed inspection and section cleaning on the 18th July, 1996. Recording was undertaken using standard watching brief record sheets and proforma context sheets; supplemented with photography and scale drawing.

The watching brief was undertaken by the writer.

Existing Hedge Line



0

5

10 m.

Fig. 2: Site Development Plan showing Stanchion Centres and excavated pits

#### 4.0 Archaeological and Historic Background

The name Lea derives from the Old English *Leah* which translates '(place at) the wood or woodland clearing' (Mills, 1993, 206).

The parish has received relatively little archaeological consideration and consequently the development of the settlement and previous land use is poorly understood; a situation added to by the historic landscape disappearing through its growth as a principal suburb of Gainsborough since 1921 (when the village was comprised a mere thirty-six houses (Lunn 1968, 9).

The area has yielded a significant quantity of flint artefacts; recovered from the wind blown sands.

Archaeologically, Lea is perhaps better known for its Romano-British pottery industry. Excavations conducted in 1983 revealed a well preserved kiln with flue and stoke hole. A quantity of under-fired pottery and clay fire bars were also recovered and further work in 1985 resulted in the recording of a series of associated features including large quantities of tile, mortar and burnt stone indicating a possible building (Field and Palmer-Brown 1991, 40-56). The close proximity of the River Trent to the west of the village would have played a key role in the transportation of the kiln products to a wider market (Whitwell 1992, 59).

Other Romano-British material has been reported including several coins and pottery scatters which seem to suggest the nucleus of roman settlement to have been south of Green Lane. This may, however, reflect disproportionate field research.

Lea is listed in the Domesday survey of 1086 as 'land of Count Allan' (the cousin of William the Conqueror) and was held by Robert Threhampton whose family were lords of the manor until 1324 when the estate was forfeited and passed to William de Aune. The manor, lying in isolation from the village, was returned to the family and in 1330 a licence to crenelate was issued (Everson 1991, 117). In 1597 the estate was bought for William Anderson whose family held it until 1913.

During the Civil War Gainsborough was of strategic importance and a battle fought in 1643 at Lea proved decisive to the parliamentary victory. (Lunn 1968, 8)

#### 5.0 Results

The site was inspected by the writer who monitored the initial clearing of topsoil and subsequent foundation trenching. The foundation cuttings measured 1.0 x 0.5m in plan and were excavated to a depth of 1.2m. Fourteen pits were monitored, but no significant archaeological features, artefacts or ecofacts were exposed. The natural stratigraphy may be summarised as follows:



Context	Category	Description	Interpretation
[100]	Layer	Dark brown fine, well sorted, friable humic silty sand. Depth 20-25 cm.	Topsoil horizon
[101]	Layer	Loose orange-yellow fine well sorted sand depth >90 cm.	Natural blown sand

Following the completion of foundation trenching, it was considered unlikely that archaeological remains would be exposed during the remainder of the development (principally a service trench). On this basis, the County Archaeological Officer was approached, and a request was made for the project brief to be terminated. The request was approved.

## 6.0 Conclusions

The watching brief at Rectory Farm did not identify any significant archaeological deposits. The negative result is not altogether surprising given the moderately low impact foundation design and the development location (on the periphery of the medieval settlement).

## 7.0 Acknowledgements

Sincere thanks are expressed to Mr TMM Raikes of RH & RW Clutton for commissioning PCA (Lincoln) to undertake the brief on behalf of A.L.I.H. (Farms) Ltd. Thanks also to Mr M Bennett and Ms S Grundy of the County SMR for access to the Parish File.

## 8.0 Appendices:

### 8.1 Information derived from the County Sites & Monuments Record

NGR	PRN	Description
SK 8265 8702	51390	Romano-British pottery kiln excavated in 1983.
SK 8256 8697	51380	Roman coin of Constantine found in 1952.
SK 826 869	51379	Romano-British pottery and coins reported in 1964.
SK 8307 8667	51389	St Helen's Church, rebuilt in 1848.
SK 831 867	51385	C15/C16th finger ring of bronze inscribed with the letter 'M'.
SK 82 86	51393	Medieval settlement of Lea.
SK 829 865	51387	Lead token with the initials 'I C' on one face.

SK 830 864

51394

Site of Lea Hall and Gardens.

## 8.2 Site archive

The site archive consists of :

Paper Element:

- x1 General account sheet
- x1 Context record sheets
- x1 Site drawings
- x1 Colour print film

Object Element:

No artefacts were recovered

Primary records are currently with PCA (Lincoln). An ordered archive of both paper and object elements is in preparation and will be deposited with the City and County Museum, Lincoln, within six months.

## 8.4 References

- Field N & Palmer-Brown CPH 1991 'New Evidence for Romano-British Grey Ware Pottery Industry in the Trent Valley'  
*Lincolnshire History and Archaeology* 26
- Lunn GLA 1968 *A Guide to Lea*
- Mills, AD 1993 *English Place-Names* (Oxford)
- Whitwell, JB 1992 *Roman Lincolnshire*