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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
OF A WATER PIPELINE
THROUGH BILLINGHAY
LINCOLNSHIRE
(BWC97)**



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ARCHAEOLOGICAL
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SERVICES

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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
OF A WATER PIPELINE
THROUGH BILLINGHAY
LINCOLNSHIRE
(BWC97)**

Work Undertaken For
Anglian Water Services Ltd

February 1998

Report Compiled by
Paul Cope-Faulkner

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1. SUMMARY

A watching brief was undertaken during the laying of a water pipeline through Billingham, Lincolnshire. The watching brief monitored the excavation of the pipeline in two areas of the village.

The pipeline traverses the medieval core of the village which is first referred to in the Domesday Survey of 1086. Place-name evidence suggests the origins of Billingham go back to the Saxon period, when a tribe known as the Billingas or Bilmigas settled the fen-edge of Lincolnshire. Earlier remains are also known and comprise finds of Early Bronze Age date (2400-1800 BC) and a cemetery, a coin and the remains of the Car Dyke dating from the Romano-British period (AD 50-410).

The investigation revealed glacial deposits upon which undated activity had occurred in the form of a gully and a small pit. Fills of recent utility trenches and the modern road comprise the majority of deposits encountered in the investigation. A single find, that of a handmade brick, was made.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background

Between the 28th October and the 23rd December 1997, an archaeological watching brief was undertaken during excavation of trenches for a new water pipeline through Billingham, Lincolnshire (National Grid Reference TF154 550). The archaeological work was commissioned by Anglian Water Services and was carried out by Archaeological Project Services.

An archaeological watching brief is 'defined as a formal programme of observation and

investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological purposes within a specified area, where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed.' (IFA 1994, 1).

2.2 Topography and Geology

Billingham is located 13km northeast of Sleaford and 25km southeast of Lincoln, North Kesteven District, Lincolnshire (Fig. 1).

The pipeline follows the main High Street, with branches along Victoria Street, Church Street and Bridge Street. Of the total length of the pipeline, two areas were subjected to archaeological monitoring. The first along Church Street and the second in an area known as The Whyche (Fig. 2).

Local soils are predominantly of the Beccles 2 Association, typical stagnogley soils (Hodge *et al.* 1984, 119). North, east and west of Billingham the soils are of the Beccles 1 Association and have similar characteristics (*ibid.* 117). Beneath these soils are glaciofluvial deposits and chalky till and lie above a solid geology of Amptill Clays (BGS 1995).

Billingham is situated at the southern end of a ridge of higher ground extending from Martin, through Walcott and finishing at the Billingham Skirth. This ridge of higher ground, caused by the underlying geology, slopes down to the west and east and attains a height of 7m OD, up to 4m higher than the surrounding fens of the River Witham.

2.3 Archaeological Setting

Billingham is situated in an area of known archaeological remains dating from the Early Bronze Age (2400-1800 BC) and later.

Pottery of this period, of a type known as Beaker ware, has been found west of the village centre (NK9.6). Other finds of this period are known from throughout the parish and include bronze swords from Billingham Dales and flints from north of the village.

Romano-British remains are restricted to the finding of a single coin, that of the Emperor Constans (AD 333-50). A Roman cemetery is also believed to lie in the vicinity of the area known as The Whyche as ten skeletons and associated pottery were found while excavating gravel pits (Trollope 1872, 79). The Car Dyke, a Roman watercourse is also located in the vicinity. This once connected the River Witham near Lincoln with the River Nene east of Peterborough and may have had a drainage function (Simmons and Cope-Faulkner 1997). There is some dispute regarding the course of the Car Dyke in Billingham, some have seen the Car Dyke as turning and following the course of the Billingham Skirth, whereas others have suggested it continued in a southeasterly direction.

Billingham is first mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086. Referred to as *Belingei*, the name is derived from the Old English 'island of the *Billingas* (Ekwall 1974, 43). The *Billingas* or *Bilmigas* are thought to be the name of a Saxon tribe, whose presence in the area is preserved in the place-names of Billingham and Horbling. The area in Billingham known as the Whyche is also Saxon in origin and is derived from the Latin *vicus*, meaning dwelling or village (*ibid.* 515).

At the time of the Domesday Survey, Billingham belonged to the Archbishop of York and contained 16 acres of meadow and 3 fisheries (Foster and Longley 1976).

The medieval period (1066-1500 AD) is best

represented by the parish church of St. Michael, dating to the 13th century (Pevsner and Harris 1989, 146). The Billingham Skirth is also medieval, although possibly utilised the course of the Car Dyke, and is known to have existed by 1200 AD (Hallam 1965, 104).

3. AIMS

The requirements of the watching brief were to locate and record archaeological deposits, if present, and to determine their date, function and origin.

4. METHODS

The proposed water mains required the excavation of a pipe trench to a depth of c. 1.1m. Following excavation by machine, the sides were observed and, where safe, the sides cleaned and rendered vertical. The depth and thickness of each deposit was measured from the ground surface. Each deposit or feature revealed within an opened area was allocated a unique reference number (Context number) with an individual written description. Sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10, and their locations drawn on a 1:2500 map of the village. A photographic record was also compiled. Recording of deposits encountered during the watching brief was undertaken according to standard Archaeological Project Services practise.

Records of the deposits and features identified during the watching brief were examined. Phasing was assigned based on the nature of the deposits and recognisable relationships between them. A list of all contexts with interpretations appears as Appendix 2.

5. DESCRIPTION OF THE TRENCH

Following post-excavation analysis, three phases were identified:

- Phase 1 Natural deposits
- Phase 2 Undated activity
- Phase 3 Modern activity

Archaeological contexts are listed below and described. The numbers in brackets are the context numbers assigned in the field.

Phase 1 Natural deposits

Located at the base of Section 1 (Fig. 3), in the Whyche area of Billingham, was a natural deposit of light bluish grey silty clay (004). Further east (Fig. 4, Section 6) the natural changed to orange-brown clayey silt with chalk fragments (028), before altering to reddish brown sand and gravel (014, 015 and 022). These layers are all derived from glaciofluvial action.

Phase 2 Undated activity

Two features were identified in this phase. The first, located in Section 1, was a linear feature (009), possibly a gully that was 0.76m wide and 0.2m deep and contained a single fill of greenish brown fine sand (008).

A second feature was located in Section 6 and comprised a bowl-shaped cut (027), possibly a small pit. This measured 0.37m wide and was 0.32m deep and contained a single fill of dark grey silt with frequent brick and tile fragments (026).

Deposits of blackish brown sandy silt (003) and greyish brown silt (019) represent vestigial traces of a former topsoil, but were only evident in Sections 1 and 5. A single fragment of handmade brick dateable to the 18th or 19th century was retrieved from

context (003) and was the only artefact recovered during the investigation.

Phase 3 Modern activity

Located in Section 1 was a narrow but deep feature (007). Measuring 0.2m wide with a minimum depth of 0.8m it contained a loose fill, with many voids, of reddish brown sandy clay (006) and with a fragment of wood. This feature has been identified as a posthole for a telegraph post, which had recently been removed.

The pipeline trench was observed cutting a previous utilities trench (029) (Fig. 3, Section 2, although more apparent in Fig. 4, Section 4). Measuring 0.7m deep, the trench had been backfilled with dark brown silt (013), and the upper fills were associated with hardcore and rebuilding the road (011 and 012).

Other deposits associated with this phase comprise the make-up, hardcore and tarmac of the present road.

6. DISCUSSION

Natural deposits (Phase 1) indicate an extensive area of glacial deposits and may indicate the presence of a glacial moraine.

Undated activity (Phase 2) consists of a gully and a small pit for which no function can be ascertained. The buried soils represent remnants of an earlier topsoil, and can be dated to before the construction of the roads. These roads first appear on Bryant's *Map of the County of Lincoln*, dating to 1828 and are not present on earlier depictions.

Modern activity (Phase 3) comprises a telegraph posthole, a utilities trench and the modern make-up for the present road.

Only a single artefact was recovered, that of a fragment of handmade brick and dates to the 18th or 19th century.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Archaeological investigations of two areas in Billingham were undertaken because the site fell within the core of the medieval village of Billingham and the presumed site of a Saxon precursor. Furthermore, references suggest the existence of a Roman cemetery in the Whyche area of Billingham.

Deposits encountered included natural layers associated with glacial activity. Two undated features, a gully and a small pit, were the only archaeological deposits encountered in the investigation. No artefactual material was recovered from either feature, although the pit contained brick and tile fragments. A buried soil was also identified which predates the roads that first appear on a map dated to 1828. Recent activity is associated with the utilities and the modern road. These recent deposits are likely to have destroyed any archaeology formerly present.

Apart from a single brick fragment from a buried soil, no finds were recovered during this investigation. No waterlogged deposits are recorded and this would suggest that few environmental indicators (seeds, wood, shells *etc*) would survive other than through charring.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services wish acknowledge the assistance of Yvette Powell and Louise Wilkes of Anglian Water Services Ltd for commissioning the fieldwork and post-excavation analysis. Gary Taylor coordinated the work and Tom Lane edited this report. Kate Orr, the

Heritage Officer for North Kesteven District Council, permitted examination of the relevant parish files maintained by the Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire.

9. PERSONNEL

Project Coordinator: Gary Taylor
Site Supervisors: René Mouraille, Fiona Walker
Finds Processing: Denise Buckley
Illustration: Paul Cope-Faulkner
Post-excavation Analyst: Paul Cope-Faulkner

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11. ABBREVIATIONS

APS Archaeological Project Services.

BGS British Geological Survey

IFA Institute of Field Archaeologists

NK Numbers prefixed with these letters are the reference codes used by the Heritage Officer for North Kesteven District Council

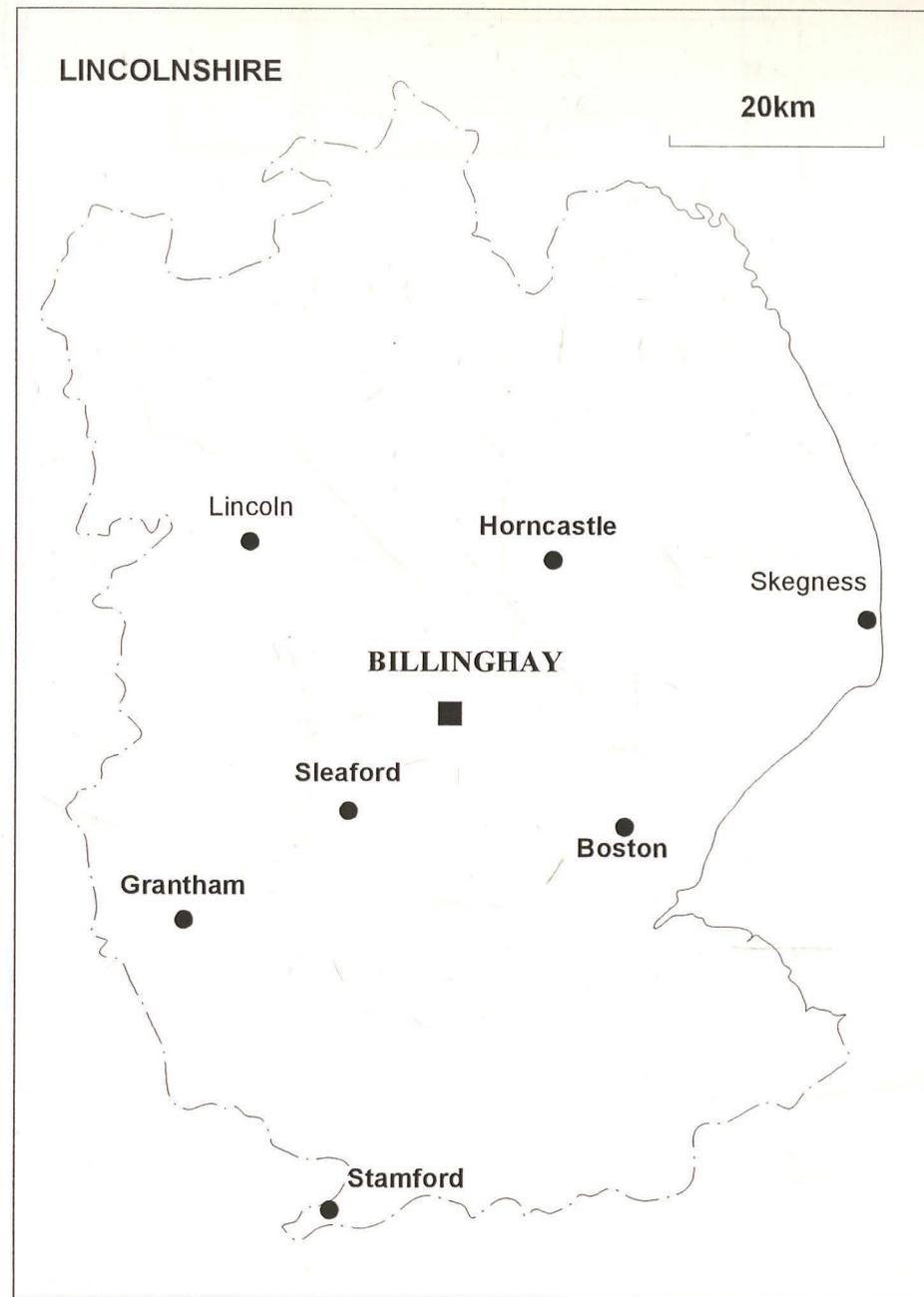
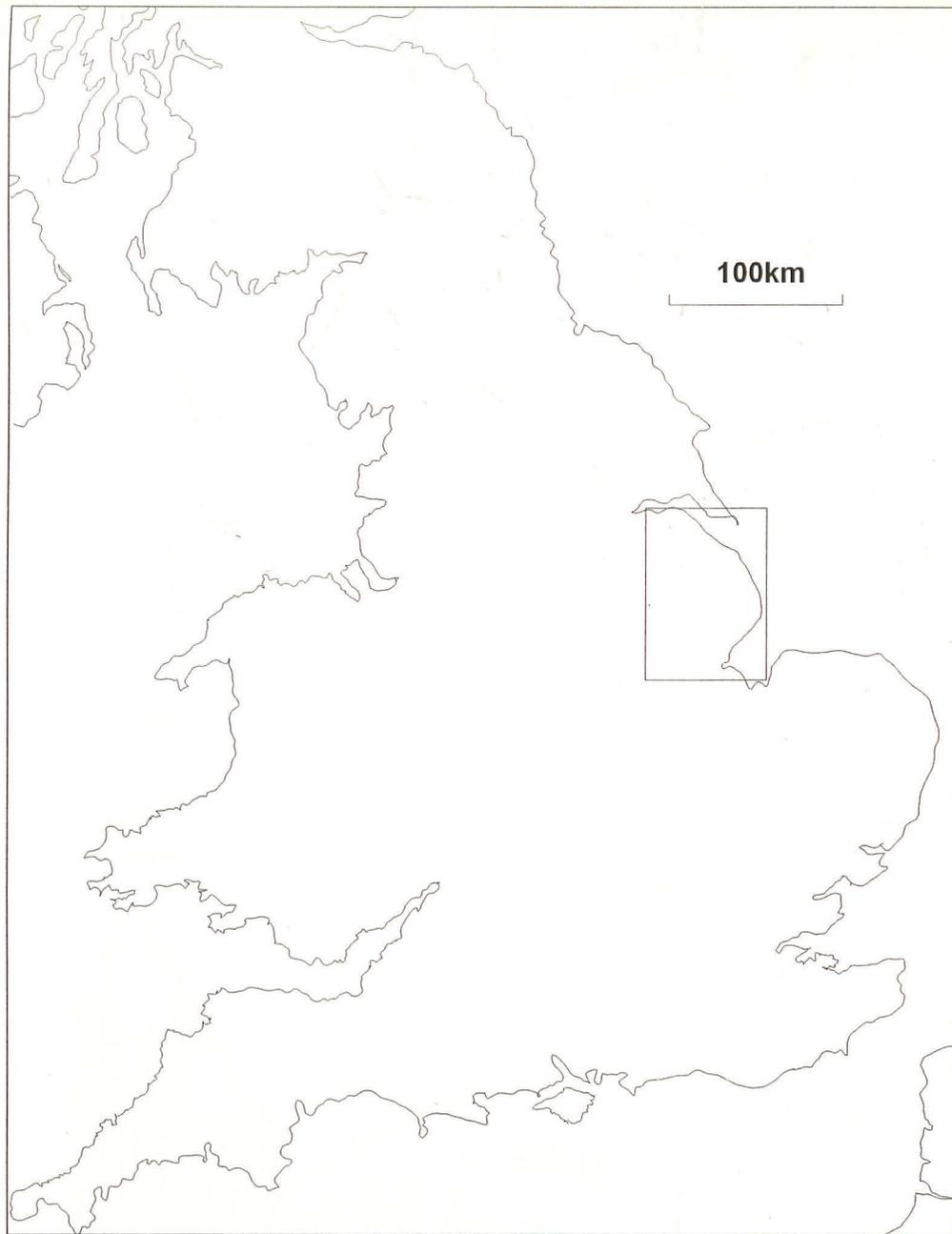


Figure 1 - General Location Plan

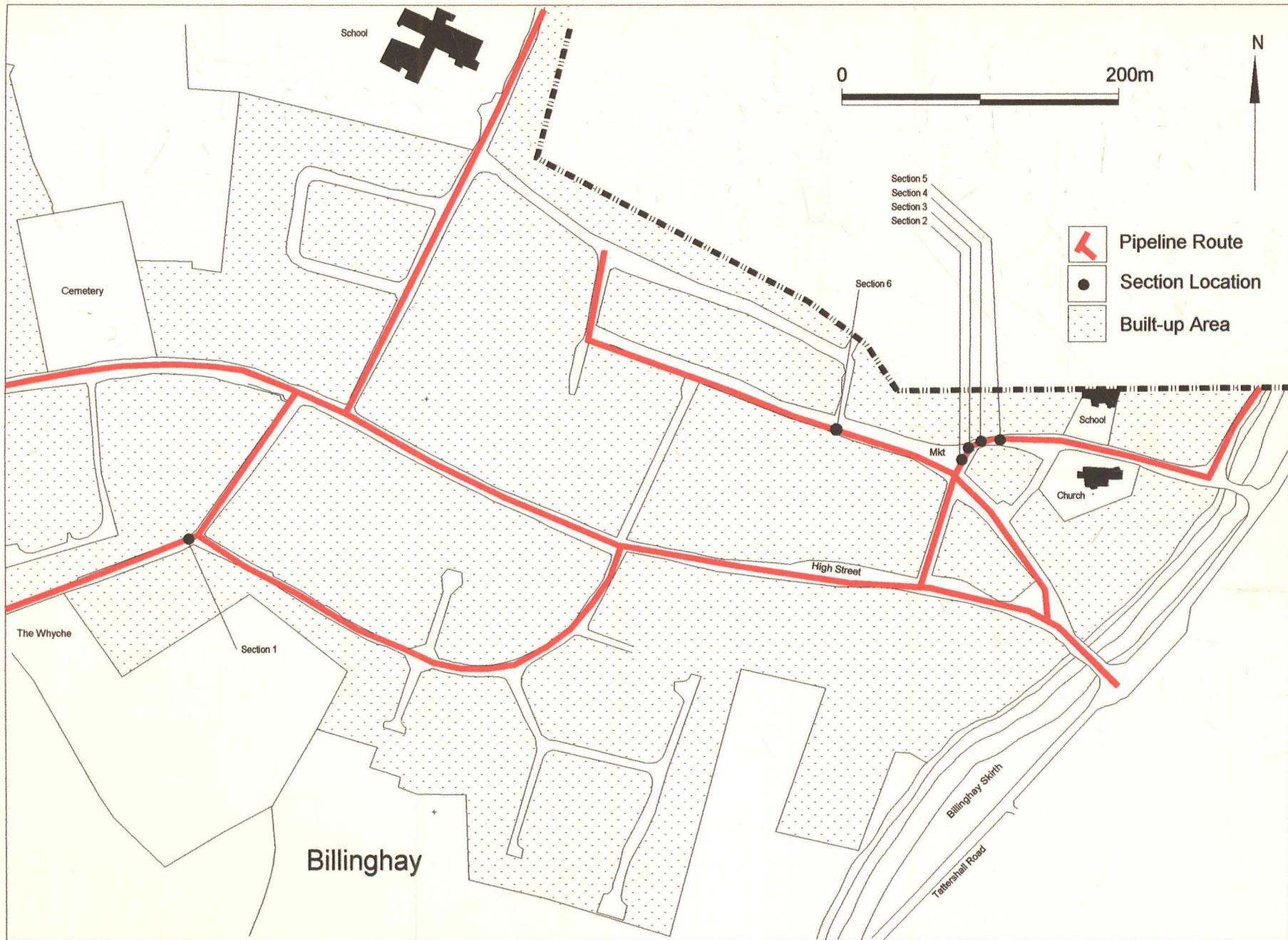
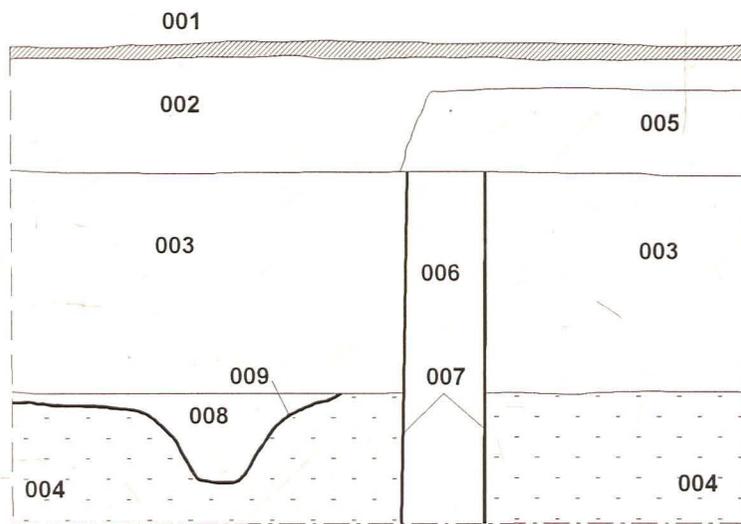
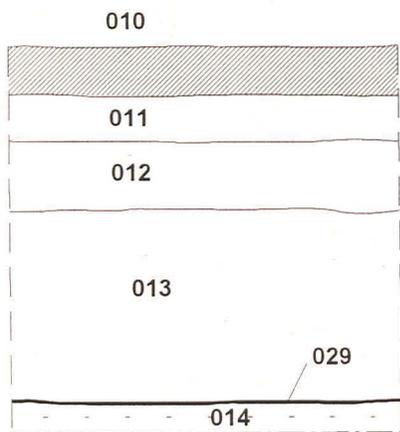


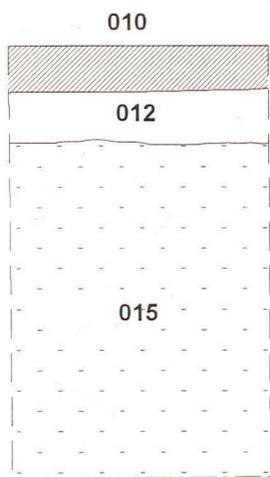
Figure 2 - Site Location plan



Section 1



Section 2



Section 3

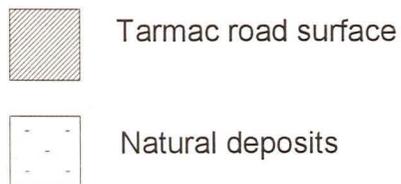
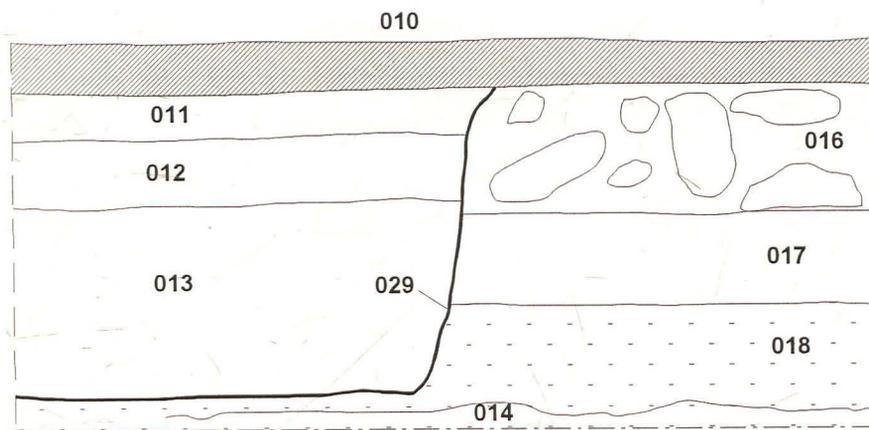
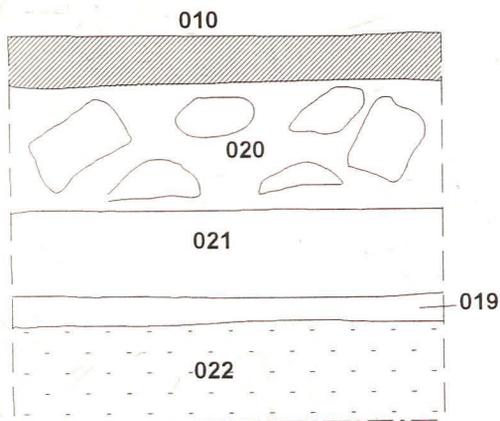


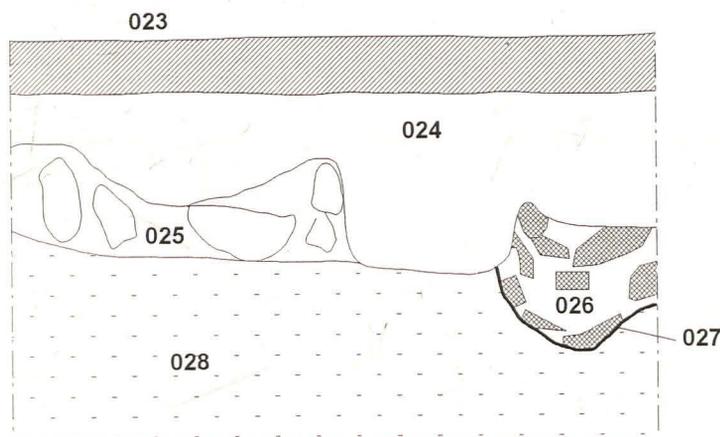
Figure 3 - Sections 1, 2 and 3



Section 4



Section 5



Section 6

-  Tarmac road surface
-  Natural deposits
-  Limestone
-  Brick/tile fragments

Figure 4 - Sections 4, 5 and 6



Plate 1 - General view of the pipeline trench along Church Street



Plate 2 - Section 4, showing the cut for the utilities trench

Appendix 1

CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

No.	Section	Description	Interpretation
001	1	Black Tarmac, 30mm thick	Road surface
002	1	Dark brown sand, stone 0.27m thick	Hardcore for 001
003	1	Blackish brown sandy silt, 0.5m thick	Buried topsoil
004	1	Light blueish grey silty clay	Natural deposit
005	1	Crushed limestone, 0.2m thick.	Same as 002
006	1	Reddish brown sandy clay	Fill of 007
007	1	Cut, 0.2m wide by 0.8m deep	Modern posthole
008	1	Greenish brown fine sand	Fill of 008
009	1	Linear cut, 0.76m wide by 0.2m deep	Gully?
010	2,3,4,5	Black Tarmac, 0.11m thick	Road surface
011	2,4	Light grey limestone fragments, 0.11m thick	Hardcore for 010
012	2,3,4	Light brown gravel, 0.16m thick	Make-up for 010
013	2,4	Dark brown silt, 0.44m thick	Fill of 029
014	2,4	Reddish brown sand, 70mm thick	Natural deposit
015	3	Reddish brown sand and gravel	Natural deposit
016	4	Whitish brown limestone fragments, 0.3m thick	Hardcore for 010
017	4	Reddish brown sandy gravel, 0.21m thick	Make-up for 010
018	4	Reddish brown gravel, 0.2m thick	Possible natural deposit
019	5	Dark greyish brown silt, 80mm thick	Buried topsoil
020	5	Whitish brown limestone fragments, 0.3m thick	Hardcore for 010
021	5	Reddish brown sandy gravel, 0.21m thick	Make-up for 010
022	5	Reddish brown gravel	Natural deposit
023	6	Black tarmac, 0.12m thick	Road surface
024	6	Gravel, 0.42m thick	Hardcore for 010
025	6	Brown silt with limestone fragments, 0.21m thick	Make-up layer
026	6	Mid blackish grey silt	Fill of 027
027	6	Cut, 0.37m wide by 0.32m deep	Small pit?
028	6	Orange brown clayey silt with chalk fragments	Natural deposits
029	4	Cut, 0.7m deep, very disturbed	Service trench

Appendix 2

THE ARCHIVE

The archive consists of:

29	Context records
1	Photographic record sheet
6	Scale drawings
1	Bag of finds
1	Stratigraphic matrix

All primary records and finds are currently kept at:

Archaeological Project Services
The Old School
Cameron Street
Heckington
Sleaford
Lincolnshire
NG34 9RW

The ultimate destination of the project archive is:

Lincolnshire City and County Museum
12 Friars Lane
Lincoln
LN2 1HQ

The archive will be deposited in accordance with the document titled *Conditions for the Acceptance of Project Archives*, produced by the Lincolnshire City and County Museum.

Lincolnshire City and County Council Museum Accession Number: 178.97

Archaeological Project Services Site Code: BWC97

The discussion and comments provided in this report are based on the archaeology revealed during site investigations. Other archaeological finds and features may exist on the development site but away from the areas exposed during the course of this fieldwork. Archaeological Project Services cannot confirm that those areas unexposed are free from archaeology nor that any archaeology present there is of a similar character to that revealed during the current investigation

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Appendix 3

GLOSSARY

Anglo-Saxon	Pertaining to the early part of the Saxon period and dating from approximately AD 450-650.
Boulder Clay	A deposit formed after the retreat of a glacier. Also known as till, this material is generally unsorted and can comprise of rock flour to boulders to rocks of quite substantial size.
Bronze Age	Part of the prehistoric era characterised by the introduction and use of bronze for tools and weapons. In Britain this period dates from approximately 2000-700 BC.
Context	An archaeological context represents a distinct archaeological event or process. For example, the action of digging a pit creates a context (the cut) as does the process of its subsequent backfill (the fill). Each context encountered during an archaeological investigation is allocated a unique number by the archaeologist and a record sheet detailing the description and interpretation of the context (the context sheet) is created and placed in the site archive. Context numbers are identified within the report text by brackets, <i>e.g.</i> (4).
Cut	A cut refers to the physical action of digging a posthole, pit, ditch, foundation trench, <i>etc.</i> Once the fills of these features are removed during an archaeological investigation the original 'cut' is therefore exposed and subsequently recorded.
Fill	Once a feature has been dug it begins to silt up (either slowly or rapidly) or it can be back-filled manually. The soil(s) which become contained by the 'cut' are referred to as its fill(s).
Layer	A layer is a term used to describe an accumulation of soil or other material that is not contained within a cut.
Medieval	The Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1066-1500.
Natural	Undisturbed deposit(s) of soil or rock which have accumulated without the influence of human activity.
Neolithic	The 'New Stone Age' period, part of the prehistoric era, dating from approximately 4000-2000 BC.
Prehistoric	The period of human history prior to the introduction of writing. In Britain the prehistoric period lasts from the first evidence of human occupation about 500,000 BC, until the Roman invasion in the middle of the 1st century AD.
Romano-British	Pertaining to the period dating from AD 43-410 when the Romans occupied Britain.