98/6

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION

Land North of Morton Road, Laughton, Nr Gainsborough, Lincolnshire.

NGR: SK 8455 9753
Planning Ref. 98/P/0039
SITE CODE: MRL98

54274 - Post Med
54275 - Undated
51306 - Med.

EVENT 43342
SOURCES 41895 41601

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Report prepared for Mr A Hancock (Planning Consultant) on behalf of his client
by James Albone
April 1998

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Summary

* *An archaeological field evaluation took place on land north of Morton Road, Laughton, nr Gainsborough, Lincolnshire (Fig. 1).*

* *Four trenches were excavated to establish the archaeological potential of the site, with one of these located to intercept a cropmark which was identified from aerial photographs.*

* *The cropmark features (boundary ditches) were largely devoid of artefacts. However, fragments of iron smithing slag from one of the ditches has been dated to the post-medieval period.*

* *A natural watercourse, representing an earlier course of Laughton Beck, a post-medieval pit, a pond, and two undated ditches were also exposed.*

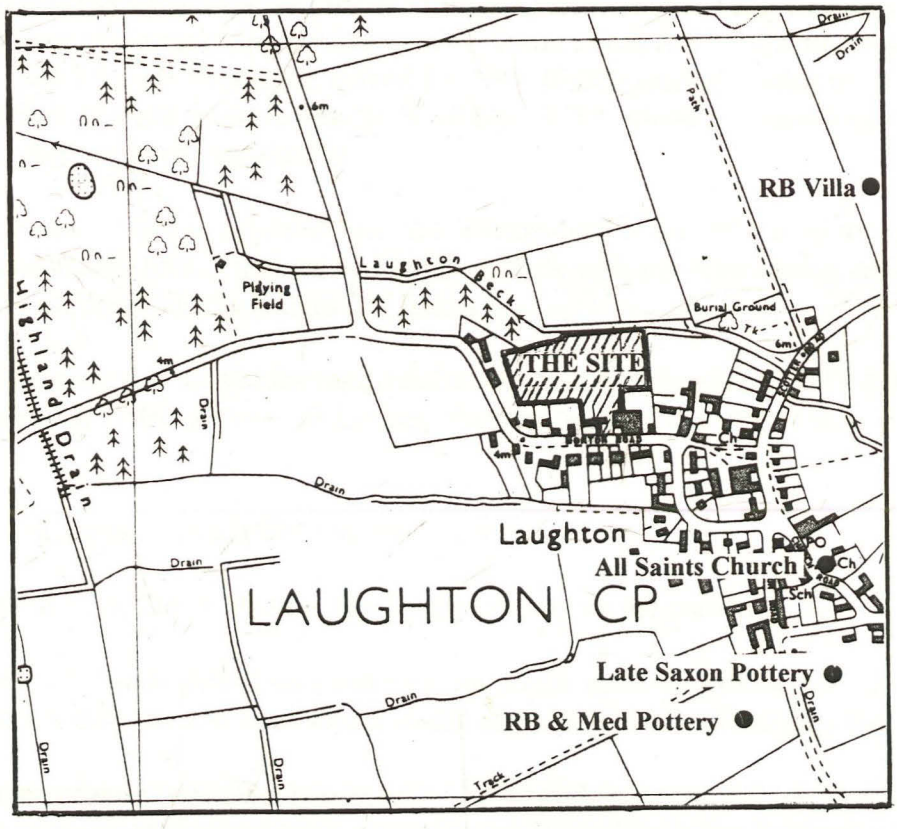


Fig. 1: Site location incorporating principal entries from the County Sites & Monuments Record (1:10,000)
(OS Copyright Licence No: AL 515 21 A0001)

1.0 Introduction

A four-day programme of archaeological trial excavation was carried out on a site north of Morton Road, Laughton, near Gainsborough, Lincolnshire (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr A Hancock (Planning Consultant), acting on behalf of his client.

The results of this report will assist the local planning authority to assess the archaeological significance of the site, the potential impacts which may be imposed by a development, and the requirement or non-requirement for further archaeological intervention in advance of, or during, development.

A copy of this report will be deposited at the County SMR, and a short text will be submitted to the editor of the county journal, *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology*; effectively placing the information in the public domain. Reports will be deposited at the City and County Museum, Lincoln, accompanied with an ordered project archive.

2.0 Location and Description

Laughton is in the administrative district of West Lindsey, and lies approximately 7 km. north-east of Gainsborough, 9 km west of Kirton in Lindsey. The settlement rests over wind blown sands; deposited around 11,000 - 10,000 years BP, after the last glacial period. The site is centred on NGR SK8455 9753, where the mean elevation above sea level is approximately 5 m.

The site covers an area of approximately 2.0 hectares and is currently used for grazing horses. Its northern limit is defined by Laughton Beck with the others being defined by property boundaries (chiefly hedges and fences).

Planning permission is sought for residential development (reference 98/P/0039), and the site is included within the West Lindsey District Council Local Plan (Site Ln2).

3.0 Archaeological and Historic Background

Isolated prehistoric flint tools have been recovered within the parish.

An important Romano-British villa lies c.500 m. to the north-east of the site, and pottery of this date has also been found on the south side of the village (see Fig. 1).

The meaning of the place-name Laughton is Old English in origin and refers to the enclosure or homestead where leeks grew (Ekwall 1989, 28). In the Domesday Survey of 1086 *Lactone* was divided between two owners; Roger of Poitou and Guy of Craon (Morris 1986). Laughton was situated in Corringham wapentake, and its inclusion within the Domesday Book suggests that it originated from at least Late Saxon times.

Aspects of the parish church, dedicated to All Saints, date from the 12th/13th centuries, with Decorated and Perpendicular style work on the tower. It was partially rebuilt in the late nineteenth century (Pevsner, Harris & Antram 1995 , 427-8).

In 1340 Laughton was taxed at the same rate as Gainsborough (Stark 1843, 80). However, this is more an indication that Gainsborough was in fact a smaller settlement than Laughton. The extent of the medieval settlement, which underwent some decline in the late 14th century, can be determined only by studying pottery scatters and similar remains, as no earthworks survive.

Further depopulation consisting of eight farms and six cottages is recorded in 1607, along with the conversion of 300 acres of arable land into pasture by Sir Roger Dallison. The main focus of this seems to have been the east-west axis of the village (Everson 1991), which includes what is now Morton Road. However, Dallison was caught after embezzling £13,000 worth of Crown revenue and his Laughton estate, valued at £1,500 pa., was lost (Holmes 1980, 70).

The parish was enclosed between 1606 and 1668 (Johnson 1962, 141).

4.0 The objectives of archaeological trenching

The County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) contains entries which indicate a potential for the disturbance of significant archaeological remains within the development site. A cropmark showing a possible medieval boundary ditch (RCHME Ref: Li.646.7.1) is recorded on the site.

The Assistant County Archaeologist for Lincolnshire issued a brief requiring that four archaeological trenches should be excavated to determine the nature of the archaeology (its character, date, depth, state of preservation, extent and significance). Only by sampling a percentage of the site could the actual archaeological potential be fully addressed. The overall objective of this phase of work, therefore, was to present the District Planning Authority and the client with a set of data from which reasoned decisions may be taken regarding future management of the archaeological resource.

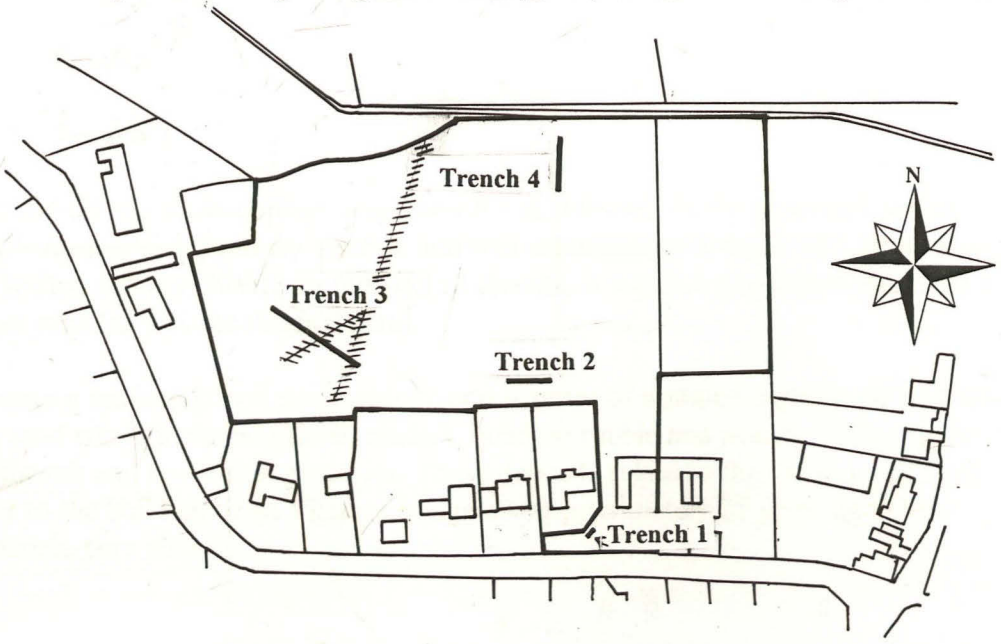


Fig. 2: Site plan showing the location of the trenches (1:2500)

4.1 Methodology

The four trenches (the locations of which can be examined in Fig. 2) were sited as follows;

Trench 1 was located close to Morton Road adjacent to the existing/proposed access to the site. The purpose of this trench was to determine whether or not any medieval structural evidence existed fronting onto Morton Road.

Trench 2 was orientated east to west and situated parallel to the southern boundary of the site.

Trench 3 was orientated south-east to north-west at the west end of the site. The purpose of this trench was to locate and identify the features shown by the cropmarks.

Trench 4 was located close to Laughton Beck on the north side of the site and was orientated north to south.

Recording was undertaken using standard context record sheets (incorporating physical descriptions, interpretations, and stratigraphic relationships). Features were planned and drawn to scale in section, and photographic recording was undertaken (some prints are reproduced in this report). The drawings, and the rest of the paper record, will form the basis for a long-term project archive.

A small quantity of pottery and ironworking slag was recovered during the excavation, and specialist reports on these artefacts are presented in the appendices at the back of this report.

Deposits with a potential for the recovery of environmental remains were not encountered and therefore no sampling took place during the investigation.

The evaluation was supervised by the writer assisted by three experienced field archaeologists (J Snee, I M^{c} Grath and P Lings).

5.0 Results

5.1 Trench 1

This trench was located close to Morton Road, adjacent to the proposed access to the site. It measured 4.30 m. by 1.62 m. and was excavated to a depth of 1.20 m. Due to the limited space available on this part of the site, it was not possible to excavate a larger area (as was the original plan).

Beneath a modern gravel surface/drive was a series of dumped deposits of silty sand and sand which included gravel, cinders, building rubble and pottery dating to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These deposits relate to the infilling of a hollow prior to the building of an adjacent bungalow approximately 25 years ago (Mrs Hancock, pers comm).

All of the underlying stratigraphy appeared to relate to a pond, presumably the hollow referred to above. Two upper fills comprised a layer of yellow-brown sand (103), which sealed a dark orange-brown sand (104); neither of which contained any artefacts. Beneath these deposits was a dark grey-brown sandy silt-clay (105), which was interpreted as further evidence of backfilling as it contained a large number of stones, brick and tile fragments, wood and pottery with a suggested date of the early-mid eighteenth century. A small area of pale yellow sand (106) exposed in the south corner of the trench may have been a natural deposit, but could equally have been an earlier fill of the pond.

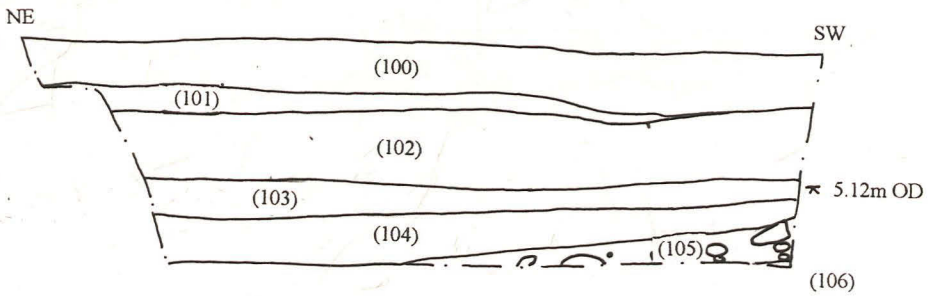


Fig. 3: Section of Trench 1 looking south-east. Scale 1:40.

5.2 Trench 2

This trench was located on the south side of the site, parallel to the boundary. It measured 15.15 m in length by 1.60 m in width and was orientated east to west. Beneath the vegetated sandy loam topsoil and subsoil, a single large pit was exposed, [202].

The pit extended beyond the trench confines but appeared to be sub-rectangular in plan, and measured c.3.5m. by c.4m. This feature contained two fills; a dark grey-brown sandy loam (203) over a light grey-brown sandy loam (204). The upper fill contained a single sherd of pottery dated to the late seventeenth to mid-late eighteenth centuries. Fragments of iron smithing slag were recovered from both of the fills which have been dated to the post-medieval period.

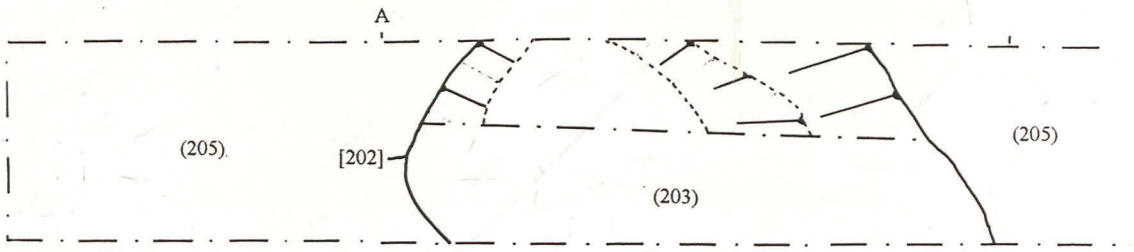
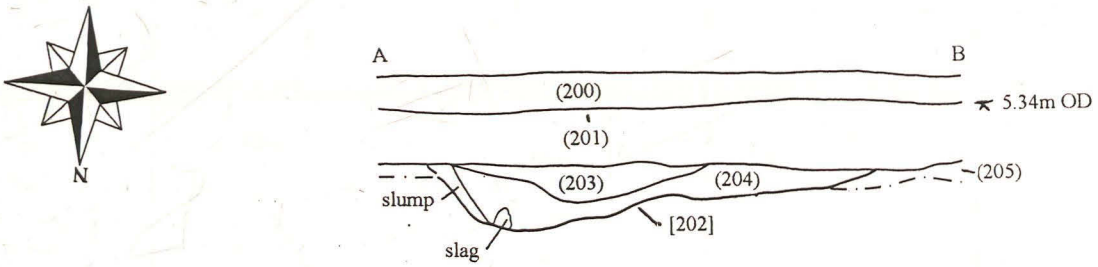


Fig. 4: Plan and section of pit [202]. (1:40)



5.3 Trench 3

This trench was orientated north-west to south-east at the west end of the site - to locate any remains associated with the cropmark features recorded at the County SMR. It measured 35.30 m by 1.50m.

A series of linear features running north to south and east to west were sealed beneath the topsoil and subsoil.

Ditch / Channel [307] was exposed at the south-east end of the trench and was at least 2.10m in width. It was filled with pale orange loamy sand (308), overlying dark grey silty sand (309). A fragment of iron smithing slag of post-medieval date was recovered from the latter. This feature was not fully excavated due to waterlogging.

Ditch / Channel [304] was located towards the south-east end of the trench and measured 2.70m in width. It had a broad shallow profile and contained a grey-brown sandy loam fill (305). This feature corresponds well with one of the cropmark features. It was cut by a small sub-oval pit [302] which contained a dark brown sandy loam and twentieth century pottery and refuse.

?Gully [310] ran along the western edge of (and was cut through) feature [304]. It was filled with brown sandy loam (311) which contained a single sherd of pottery; broadly dated between the mid-late sixteenth to mid-late eighteenth centuries.

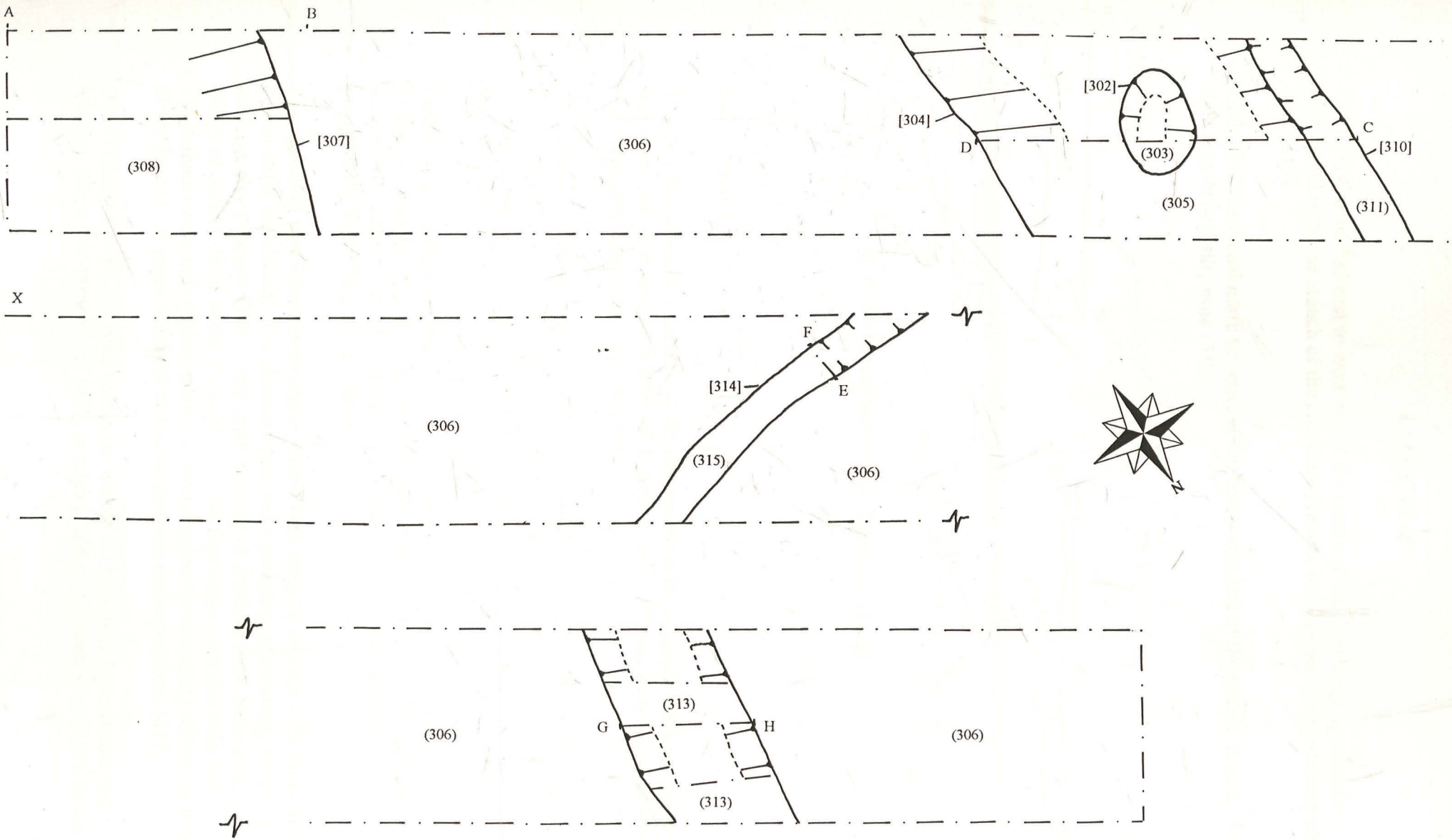


Fig. 5: Plan of Trench 3 (1:40)

Gully [314] extended east to west across the centre of the trench and appeared to correspond with one branch of the cropmark feature. It contained orange-brown silty sand (315).

Gully [312] extended north to south at the north-west end of the trench. It contained light grey-brown silty sand (313).

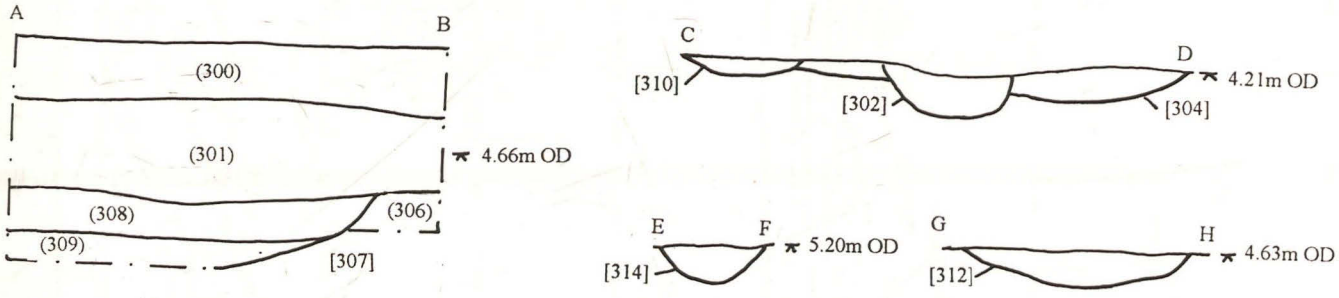


Fig. 6: Section of features in Trench 3 (1:40)

5.4 Trench 4

Trench 4 was orientated north to south; perpendicular to Laughton Beck on the north side of the site. It measured 18.80m. by 1.60m. A series of linear features, all of which were orientated east-west, were exposed.

At the north end of the trench a series of deposits below (or possibly within) the topsoil appeared to represent either levelling of the ground surface or dumped material from the cleaning of Laughton Beck (a distinct raised area can be seen along much of the south side of the beck)

Feature [411] at the south end of the trench had a U-shaped profile, the base of which dipped towards the west. This feature contained a dark grey sand (412) and was cut by the natural channel [408]. It is likely that this feature is a large animal burrow which pre-dates the final filling of the channel.

Channel [408] was 7.26m. wide and at least 0.74m. deep (it was not fully excavated due to water inundation). The channel contained a complex, interleaving, sequence of sand and clay deposits. Only a very small quantity of artefacts were recovered; six sherds of pottery dated to the late twelfth to mid fourteenth centuries from (420). These sherds were only slightly worn and would appear to accurately reflect the date of the deposit. A single fragment of similar date was recovered from (417).

Ditch / Channel [406] extended across the middle of the trench. It contained two principal fills; a mid-brown sand (407) overlying mid-grey/brown sand (415). In the

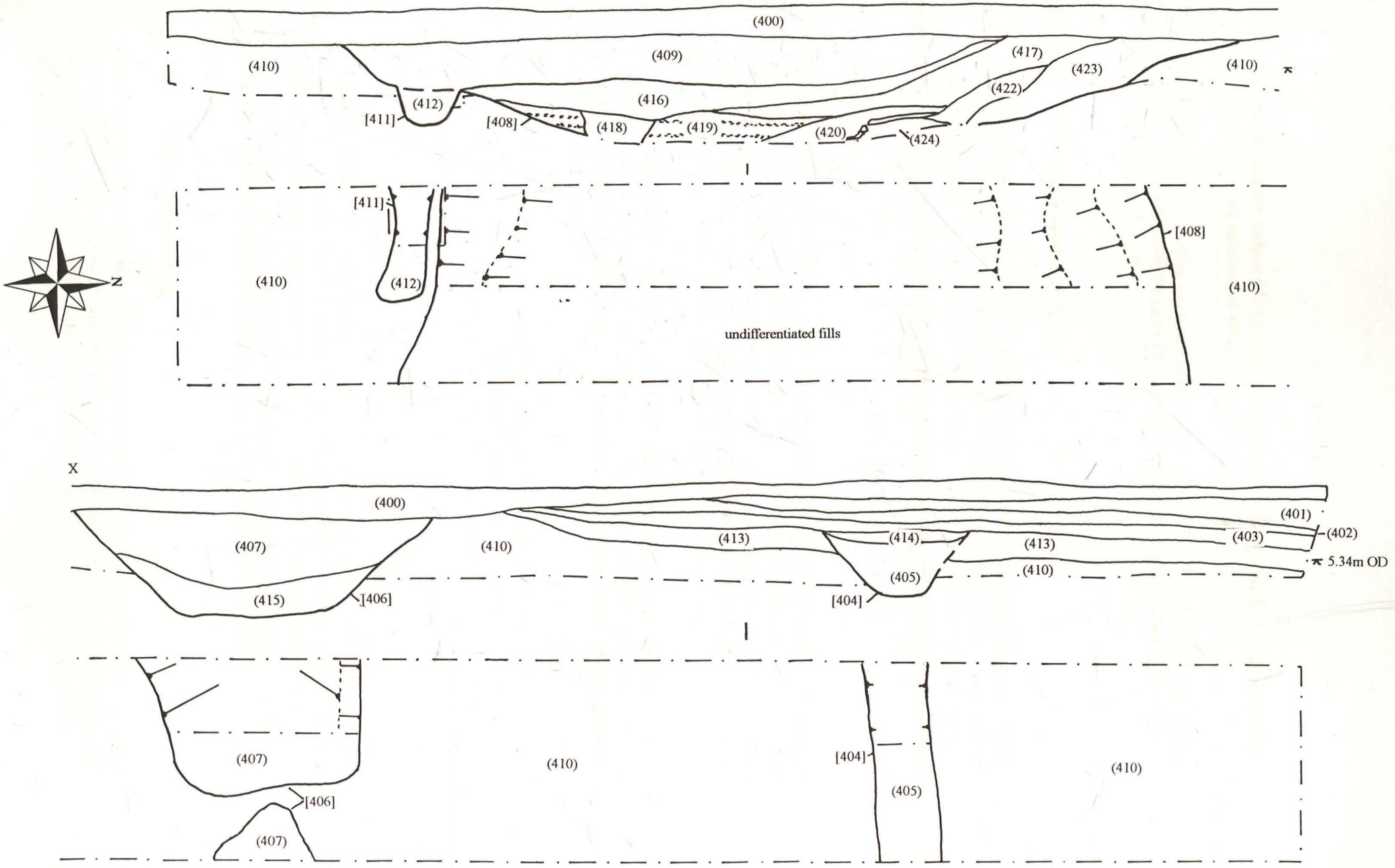


Fig. 7 Plan and section of Trench 4 (1:40)

base of the feature, below (415), was a very thin (c.0.01m.) band of dark grey silty clay. No finds were recovered from either fill.

Ditch / Channel [404] was located close to the north end of the trench. It contained two fills; a light yellow-grey sand (414) over a lighter sand (405). No finds were recovered from either fill.

6.0 Discussion and conclusion

The evaluation was successful in locating the ditches recorded as cropmarks. These features, in Trench 3, produced only a single sherd of pottery and a few fragments of iron smithing slag. These finds have been dated to the post-medieval period; more specifically between the mid-late sixteenth and mid-late eighteenth centuries. The pit in Trench 2 was of a broadly contemporary date, having produced a sherd of pottery dated to the late seventeenth to mid/late eighteenth century, as well as more iron smithing slag.

The identification of a natural stream channel running parallel to Laughton Beck was of no great surprise as the current course of the beck may represent a relatively recent straightening of an earlier meandering channel. The small quantity of medieval pottery recovered from this channel, dated to the late twelfth to mid fourteenth century, would not suggest a large amount of activity on this part of the site at that time.

The two undated ditches in Trench 4 may be contemporary with the ditches and pit in Trenches 2 and 3, but in the absence of any artefacts this cannot be proved. The purpose of these ditches so close to, and between, the medieval and modern courses of Laughton Beck is uncertain.

Trench 1 established that a large amount of modern ground make up has been deposited close to Morton Road; principally, the filling in of a possible pond. Artefacts recovered from the pond fill were of a suggested date of the early-mid eighteenth century.

The results of the evaluation suggest that there has been limited activity on the site between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. The lack of finds from the excavated features suggests that there probably was not any substantial form of settlement during this period on the site itself. The ditches were most probably the boundaries of small fields or paddocks as suggested from the interpretation of the cropmarks. It is concluded, therefore, that the site of proposed development has always (ie at least from the medieval period) been used primarily an area of grazing/farming.

7.0 Acknowledgements

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) express sincere thanks; both to Mr A. Hancock and to his client for this commission. Thanks are expressed also to Mark Bennett and Sarah Grundy (County SMR) and to members of the site team; Phil Lings, Irene McGrath and Jim Snee.

8.0 Appendices:

MRL98 Post-medieval pottery archive and comment

By Jane Young

(105)
BL 1 BOWL RIM; 18/19TH
BL 1 BOWL RIM; 17-19TH; LOCAL?
BL 1 ? BASE; 17-18TH
BL 1 CUP? BASE; 17-18TH
BS 1 HOLLOW BS; L17-M18TH
DATE: PMH7 - PMH8. Early to mid 18th century.

(203)
STMO 1 CUP? RIM
DATE: PMH7 - PMH8. Late 17th to mid/late 18th century.

(311)
STSL HOLLOW BASE; PLAIN
DATE: PMH6 - PMH9. Mid/late 16th to mid/late 18th century.

(100)/(101)/(102)
BS 2 ? BASE; 18TH/19TH
CRMWARE 1 ? BASE
BL 1 BOWL; RIM; 18TH/19TH
STSL 1 HOLLOW COMBED/FEATHER DEC
DATE: PMH9 - EMH. Mid/late 18th to 19th century.

(420)
MISC 3 ? SHELL TEMPER; COMPLETELY LEACHED; PROB 10-12TH
BEVO 3 JUG BS; CU GLZE; ?ID OR HUMB
DATE: MH4 - MH6. Late 12th to mid 14th century.

(417)
MED 1 SCRAP; POSS BEVO/HUM/HUMB; 12TH-14TH

U/S
BL 1 ?; 18TH
HUM 1 JUG; ?ID OR HUMB
LMED 1 ? BS; UNGLZE; ?HUMB

Comment
Most of the material is late post-medieval, 18th or 19th century, though the unstratified sherds show that some 15th-16th century pottery is also present on the site. Pottery from (420), although weathered, is unlikely to be just from field manuring as only two vessels are represented by 6 sherds, and although slightly worn by weathering, they still seem quite fresh. Little material has been recovered from this area so it is difficult to judge how typical this assemblage is. From what is already known of this locality, the medieval period is dominated by Humber-type material coming down the river Trent from Beverly in the 12th-13th centuries, and from the Humber ware sites of Cowick and possibly Holme-upon-Spalding in the 14th-16th centuries. South of Gainsborough, sites have a fair percentage of Nottingham wares in the 13th-14th century deposits.

REPORT ON THE SLAG, CERAMIC TOBACCO PIPE AND BAKED CLAY FROM THE MORTON ROAD, LAUGHTON EVALUATION (MRL98).

Jane Cowgill©
April 1998

A small assemblage of finds was recovered from the four evaluation trenches. The majority of the pottery is post-medieval in date although two features in trench 4 produced sherds dated to the 12th – 14th century.

The Recording Methodology.

A total of 6986g (8 pieces) of slag was submitted for recording with a single clay tobacco pipe stem and 72g (5 pieces) of baked clay. The material was identified by visual examination, sometimes with the aid of a x10 binocular microscope. It was recorded on *pro forma* recording sheets but a database was not created due to the small size of the assemblage.

The Catalogue.

Ctext	Type	No	g	Comments
105	Tap	1	43	Dribble
105	Slag	1	412	HB fragment; totally encrusted with sand and rust
105	Slag	2	219	SSL; totally encrusted with sand and rust
203	HB	1	1269	Small charcoal imprints; some small glassy glazed patches; curved clay wall attached; no tuyere depression; rusty; 2 layers
203	Slag	1	1468	Looks like furnace slag; very dense; rusty; large charcoal imprints
204	HB	1	3473	Looks like furnace slag; very large charcoal imprints (60x40x30mm); mid-grey colour and water abraded; 2x'rod' imprints – longest 120mm; very dense
309	SSL	1	102	Mid-grey colour; matt; 2 large blobs vitrified clay attached; water worn
105	CTP	1	10	Stem fragment
203	Clay	4	52	Lightly baked; iron rich sandy clay; no surfaces – possibly natural
425	Clay	1	20	Lightly baked; iron rich sandy clay; no surfaces – possibly natural

Codes:

HB	Plano-convex hearth bottom
SSL	Smithing-slag lump
CTP	Ceramic tobacco pipe

Discussion.

The slag probably represents the waste products from iron smithing although two pieces are closer in form to those generated by iron smelting using the bloomery process. These pieces are extremely dense and contain the very large charcoal imprints that are characteristic of furnace slags. There is also a single piece of tap slag which is the commonest smelting waste product but can also be generated during smithing. All the slags, however, that form this assemblage are dense, they are also abraded and water worn. The two plano-convex hearth bottoms are exceptionally large, especially the piece from context 204 considering that it is incomplete. Neither have the characteristic depression formed by the blast of air from the tuyere although one has clay attached to the back from the curved hearth wall. The size of the slags and their density suggest that large pieces of metal were being forged and welded at high temperatures, probably a white (snowball) heat. If a steel was being forged with a wrought iron this could also account for the high level of metal loss.

Some of the slag was found associated with late 17th – mid 18th century pottery and there is no reason why the slag is not contemporary. The only surprising aspect is that charcoal was used as the fuel and some of the pieces are very large (see catalogue). (Wood when converted to charcoal shrinks to about one seventh of its original size.) By the 18th century coal would be the expected fuel used by a smith especially when close to good transport route such as the River Trent. Many of the Nottingham coals, however, are not suitable for smithing because of their sulphur content and other sources, such as the Durham coalfields have to be exploited instead. It should have been easy to obtain sulphur free coal all over the country because so many smiths are known to have used it (pers. comm. C Salter) so there must be some other explanation for the use of charcoal in this instance. Charcoal is a very clean fuel to use and if well produced, burns at a high and stable temperature for a long period while generating very little clinker in the hearth. This may reinforce the suggestion made about the slag that large pieces of metal were being worked at high temperatures. The charcoal may have been expensive (particularly such large pieces) which may possibly suggest that a decorative item of metalwork was being made.

The ceramic tobacco pipe stem has a wide central perforation suggesting that it is contemporary with the pottery from the same context. The five pieces of baked clay may represent lightly baked/fired natural and in such a small quantity can add nothing to the understanding of the site.

8.3 Site archive

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

8.4 References (main text)

Ekwall, E.	1989	*The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-names.*
Everson, P.	1991	Laughton. Unpublished archive notes in SMR.
Holmes, C.	1980	*Seventeenth-Century Lincolnshire.*
Johnson, S.A.	1962	Some Aspects of Enclosure and Changing Agricultural Landscapes in Lindsey from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century. *LAASRP Vol. 9 Pt.2 p134-150.*
Morris, J. (gen. ed.)	1986	*'Lincolnshire' Domesday Book.*
Pevsner, N. Harris, J. & Antram, N.	1995	*The Buildings of England: Lincolnshire.*
Stark, A.	1843	*The History and Antiquities of Gainsburgh.* 2nd Ed.

8.5 List of archaeological Contexts

Trench 1

100	Modern make-up layer
101	Modern gravel layer
102	Modern make-up layer
103	Sand layer
104	Post-medieval pond fill deposit
105	Post-medieval pond fill deposit
106	?Natural sand

Trench 2

200	Topsoil
201	Sandy loam subsoil
202	Cut of pit
203	Upper fill of 202
204	Lower fill of 202
205	Natural sand

Trench 3

300	Topsoil
301	Sandy loam subsoil
302	Cut of modern pit
303	Fill of 302
304	Cut of ?ditch / channel
305	Fill of 304
306	Natural sand
307	Cut of ?ditch / channel
308	Upper fill of 307
309	Lower fill of 307
310	Cut of gully
311	Fill of 310
312	Cut of gully
313	Fill of 312
314	Cut of gully
315	Fill of 314

Trench 4

400	Topsoil
401	Dumped silty sand
402	Buried soil
403	Buried soil ?same as 400
404	Cut of ditch / channel
405	Lower fill of 404
406	Cut of ditch / channel
407	Upper fill of 406
408	Natural watercourse
409	Upper fill of 408
410	Natural sand
411	Cut of ?animal burrow
412	Fill of 411
413	Layer of possible natural sand
414	Upper fill of 404
415	Lower fill of 406
416	Sand lens in 408
417	Sand lens in 408
418	Sand fill in 408
419	Sand / sandy clay layers in 408
420	Sand lens in 408
421	Clay lens in 408
422	Sand lens in 408

423	Sand lens in 408
424	Sand lens in 408

P1. General view of site looking S-W (Trenches 2, 3 and 4)

P2. Trench 1, looking S-E

P3. Trench 2, looking E

P4. Trench 3, looking N-W

P5. Trench 4, looking S