

# **An Archaeological Resource Assessment of Post Medieval Period Lincolnshire (c. 1500-1800)**

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Note: For copyright reasons the figures are currently omitted from the web version of this paper. It is hoped to include them in future versions.

## **Introduction**

The scope of post-medieval archaeological studies is in serious need of reassessment. Standing monuments of all types appear to be relatively well served with many local industrial archaeological and conservation groups undertaking detailed surveys of mills, barns, dovecotes, pumping stations etc. However, when it comes to studying remains below ground there is a remarkable lack of interest shown by archaeologists. Post-medieval features are regarded as encumbrances which have to be removed in order to recover the real archaeology below. Of 163 reports presented to the Lincolnshire SMR in 1997 few mention post-medieval features and deposits except in passing. Even fewer discuss their significance. In many respects the status of post-medieval studies in this county only has reached the point of understanding and appreciation that medieval studies were at in the 1950s. Many of us have serious difficulties in getting to grips with the need for integrating historical data with the excavated evidence. Lincolnshire lacks many of the basic tools such as Victoria County History and RCHM volumes but there are some syntheses available in the History of Lincolnshire series (eg Wright 1982).

In this context what can archaeology offer that cannot be found in documentary sources? More specifically are there certain topics which can be addressed in Lincolnshire better than in other parts of the country? What follows does not pretend to be a comprehensive assessment of the post medieval archaeological resource. It inevitably will reflect personal interests and highlight areas of ignorance.

## **SETTLEMENT**

### **Towns**

Apart from Lincoln and Stamford few of our towns have received a sustained programme of archaeological investigation. Inevitably the late medieval and early post-medieval deposits are subject to the greatest levels of destruction from later development ranging from cellars to wholesale levelling of ground. So even when there is excavation on a site little is gleaned about its post-medieval development.

Lincolnshire was the second largest county in England and Wales until 1974. It had 5 boroughs, one city and 34 market towns but even in 1750 it is estimated that only six towns would have had more than 2,500 inhabitants (Lincoln, Boston, Gainsborough, Stamford, Grantham and Louth). Of these less than a third (15) have been the subject of more than cursory archaeological investigation. Only Boston, Bourne, Gainsborough, Grantham, Holbeach, Horncastle, Sleaford, Spalding, Stamford have received more attention but little has been written about the post-medieval development of these towns.

Neil Wright has brought together information about the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century development of Lincolnshire towns in his book on towns and industry (Wright 1982) but little has been done on the transition from the medieval to the industrial period. An awareness of historical research and those questions which cannot be answered from documentary sources would help to provide a sound basis from which to develop a strategy for future excavation. There is little recorded environmental data for the post-medieval period outside Lincoln. Environmental sampling of post-medieval deposits is rare; perhaps it is thought to be an unnecessary expense especially on multi-period sites.

It is truly scandalous that there has been no sustained programme of investigation at Boston. Here we have a port which, in the medieval period, was of international importance. Although Boston was already in decline by 1500 there are important questions which can be posed. For example what role did Boston play in the decline of Lincoln? Gill Harden's survey of medieval Boston in 1978 highlighted the rate of destruction which was occurring without adequate archaeological record. Her study included reconstruction maps of the town for the medieval period and for 1500 and 1682. The documentary evidence is there to complement the archaeological record. Twenty years on the

archaeology of the town has been poorly served, comprising mainly a series of small scale salvage excavations and watching briefs and there remains no coherent strategy for the town.

Proposals for establishing an extensive urban survey programme within the county are currently being considered by English Heritage which hopefully will start to address some of the problems identified briefly here. At the very least it is hoped that more consistent policies regarding development in all our towns can be put into place in the not too distant future.

### **Rural Settlement**

The overwhelming theme which comes through in any examination of the post-medieval period in Lincolnshire is that of agriculture and its ancillary industries which led to the development of wealth in the towns where industries eventually concentrated (such as brewing, tanneries, and later on engineering). The archaeological excavation of rural sites has been sparse but the RCHM survey of rural settlement in West Lindsey demonstrates the value of non-intrusive archaeological investigation, combined with documentary research; for example the continuing fluctuation of village population from the 13<sup>th</sup> century throughout the medieval and post-medieval periods.

The factors leading to depopulation and shrinkage of settlements were various and included the acquisition of land by monasteries, with the subsequent conversion to pasture for sheep farming through the 13<sup>th</sup> and early 14<sup>th</sup> century, the Black Death, and climatic deterioration in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The later 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries were generally a time of rural population decline with a continuing conversion to pasture. Much of this was carried out by a new generation of great landowning families who grew rich, or richer, on the spoils of former monastic houses. The reduction in population continued throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> century, perhaps following private enclosure of land, coupled with the migration into towns and the fens. After the 17<sup>th</sup> century far fewer villages were completely abandoned although a number were reduced in size or transformed, either as a result of emparking or changes in estate management. Farmsteads became dispersed into the newly enclosed fields. Occasionally we see the creation of new settlements, such as the seaside resorts or New Bolingbroke and Woodhall Spa in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Shrinkage and sometimes subsequent recovery of villages be detected in the settlement morphology. There is, however, a lack of detailed documentation and a real contribution can be made here using other archaeological techniques such as fieldwalking, survey and excavation. The RCHM survey of West Lindsey has also increased awareness of landscape features such as gardens and parkland, often preserving earlier remains such as the DMVs (eg at Hackthorn, Fillingham and Riby). It confirmed the conclusion reached in Northamptonshire that gardens are extremely common but poorly understood and thus in serious danger of being destroyed without recognition (e.g. Harpswell, which was identified in the 1970s but is now ploughed out). The majority of gardens are 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century in date and contain features such as terraces, ponds, canals, moats and prospect mounds.

Outside West Lindsey garden features have been noted but not recorded at Eresby, near Spilsby (Marjoram 1984), at Langtoft Hall Farm. This was the site of a medieval monastic grange which was replaced by a hall in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The surviving farmhouse dates to 1700 and there is also a 19<sup>th</sup> century crewyard but the remains of a 16<sup>th</sup>-early 17<sup>th</sup> century balustraded garden wall survive and earthwork remains of a formal garden belonging to the Hall were surveyed and recorded, partly from air photographs, and excavated prior to development for housing (Field and Clark 1991).

Apart from examining broader themes of fluctuating rural decline and regeneration what are the special characteristics of the Lincolnshire rural economy? These were mostly centred on the fens (wildfowl, oysters, crabs, fishing) and were much affected by the drainage schemes of the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards. Wool, but not cloth, and cattle were also important. What of the small scale rural industries such as brewing, tanning, saddleries and blacksmiths. So far, there is little information about these crafts in the archaeological record.

Developer funded work on rural sites is usually confined to watching briefs on individual house plots within the medieval core of a village. How can we bring together the results from a large number of such sites to identify any trends? Local Development Plans identify areas within villages set aside for development, usually both within the medieval core and on the fringes. It is essential to identify particular research themes applicable to specific villages, so that archaeological interventions can be carried out with clear aims and objectives.

The main threat to the rural landscape, however, is from encroaching arable rather than development. An assessment of the sites recorded by Paul Everson in the early 1980s, carried out in 1988, indicated that more than 10% of the earthworks previously recorded had already been destroyed. Ridge and furrow has been sketch plotted as part of the National Mapping Project undertaken by the RCHM but sources used were mainly air photographs taken after the extensive destruction of pasture which occurred after the Second World War. There is clearly a need for more extensive survey elsewhere in the county, in line with the Royal Commission's work in West Lindsey, to provide a context for the detailed developer funded investigations.

## **TRADE**

Pottery is one of the keys to unravelling the network of trading contacts which, in turn, reflects levels of prosperity in a community. Andrew White's thesis on post-medieval pottery in the East Midlands prepared in the early 1980s, describes groups of pottery from the region, but there is still no pottery type series for the county. Pottery kiln sites recorded at Bourne (a continuation of the medieval products running through to the 17<sup>th</sup> century); Boston and Grimsby (both producing glazed red earthenwares in the 17<sup>th</sup> century); Kirkstead (16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century) and Bolingbroke (16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century). Wasters similar to the Toynton/Bolingbroke materials have been found at Coningsby and may indicate the site of another production centre.

An early 19<sup>th</sup> century porcelain factory was excavated at Brampton, near Torksey in the 1960s by a local amateur archaeologist.

There has been no detailed study of these local production sites and it is often not possible to distinguish between products from different kilns, eg Grimsby and Boston. The very term Toynton/Bolingbroke indicates the problem which specialists have in identifying products from these two important centres which began production in the medieval period.

Large quantities of splashed glazed wares, similar to Toynton wares, but different fabrics are present in pottery assemblages of late 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> centuries from many rural and urban sites. It is assumed that they come from rural production centres, as yet unidentified. For example at Fiskerton 5 miles east of Lincoln and at Bicker (in the fens) has produced wasters of apparent 17<sup>th</sup> century date have been found in forms and worryingly fabrics characteristic of both the Bourne and Toynton traditions.

Pottery from well stratified archaeological deposits (to all intents and purposes this means those from Lincoln and possibly Boston) needs detailed study so that smaller groups of material, such as those from rural excavations and fieldwalking groups can be more accurately dated. The value of this has been amply demonstrated for the medieval period. We should not forget associated material such as clay tobacco pipes which, thanks to the work of Peter Davey and Jenny Mann, have been well studied in the county. Pipe kilns have been excavated at Boston.

Few rural sites in Lincolnshire, of any size, have produced stratified pottery groups of medieval let alone post-medieval date but it is through collections from fieldwalking that the occurrence of Saxon, medieval and post-medieval fabrics can be plotted. This approach has been applied by John Hurst using as a core the fieldwalking collections in the north of the county made by Rex and Eleanor Russell. In his paper, published in 1991, he was able to draw on information from 132 Lincolnshire sites on which continental or regional imports have been found.

Plotting of findspots, both casual and excavation data, will begin to show patterns of distribution in the county of both local and imported products.

Few rural medieval and post-medieval sites have been excavated as a result of the implementation of PPG16, probably because they are more easily identified and therefore generally avoided. However, a large number of fieldwalking projects covering many hectares of land have been carried out, which could potentially provide the raw material to add to the earlier work such as that of the Russells. Unfortunately, the briefs outlining the scope of work on these sites often specifically state that obviously post-medieval material should not be picked up. This is usually because fieldwalking is perceived to be a technique which establishes the presence or absence of a site and the majority of sites being looked for are medieval or earlier. It is assumed that general scatters of later pottery are associated with manuring practices and are not of any immediate relevance.

A recent project at Bunkers Hill, on the outskirts of Lincoln illustrates this well. Despite the known presence of late prehistoric features, the majority of artefacts retrieved from a 17ha site were post-medieval in date with a background scatter of medieval pottery, no doubt an indication of manuring rather than evidence of occupation. It was only when the pottery was identified that an absence of 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century material was noted. This led to the conclusion that perhaps there had been a change in land usage to pasture at that time with a return to arable cultivation in the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Can the distribution of later pottery give us an insight into changes in land use? Are these connected in any way to the enclosure of parishes, private and parliamentary? Lincolnshire is very fortunate in being able to refer to the detailed work that Rex Russell has carried out on the Enclosures in the county with published maps not only of the enclosure landscape parish by parish but also reconstructions of the pre-enclosure landscape. These form a major resource for studying the rural landscape, particularly in the northern half of the county.

Of the 721 parishes in Lincolnshire at the time (reduced to 622 modern parishes), 57% (413) were privately enclosed from the 16th century onwards. There were 301 parliamentary enclosures between 1760 and 1836; 8 predate 1760 giving a total of 309. Nearly 41% took place between 1760 and 1780 and 26% between 1790 and 1810. They are fairly evenly distributed across the county.

Work in Oxfordshire by Maureen Mellor has taken a further step in integrating analysis of pottery groups from fieldwalking with documentary evidence to identify centres of production as well as extent of distribution for pottery types and their relationship to boundaries. There seems to be great potential for applying these methods to post-medieval material.

### **Maritime trade**

The focus of the widespread maritime trade of the Lincolnshire ports in the Middle Ages was the 'staple' port of Boston through which all shipments of wool were supposed to pass en route for Calais. Until the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century Boston exported more wool than any other port in England. Boston attracted many foreign merchants who would also have been a common sight in a number of Lincolnshire havens to the north. Scandinavian, Flemish and Hanseatic vessels traded through Grimsby, Saltfleet, Skegness and Wainfleet. Wool was still being sent from these smaller ports in local vessels to join the one or two large fleets which went from Boston to Calais each year as late as the early 16<sup>th</sup> century. Only Grimsby, in NE Lincolnshire has been the subject of any large scale excavations, so this trade is poorly understood in the archaeological record.

The decline of the coastal trade was due to a combination of factors. The religious houses, which had played such a vital role in the wool trade and also the trade in salt and fish, ceased after the Dissolution. The decline in the trade of salt was also a result of natural changes to the coastline. As the salt marshes grew and the sea retreated many of the creeks were silted up, as evidenced in the several surveys of havens and shipping in Lincolnshire carried out in 1560, 1565 and 1580. Major repairs had been undertaken at Wainfleet to straighten and repair the bends in the haven to no avail. Saltfleet and Wilgrip havens had been silted up since about 1545. Many other havens were now one or 2 miles from the sea the saltmarsh crept outwards. There has been no archaeological investigation of any of these coastal sites, except for small-scale evaluation at Wainfleet all Saints.

The salt trade which had been such an important part of the Lincolnshire economy from at least the Bronze Age finally went in to decline by the 17<sup>th</sup> century with imports from Scotland and from the Bay of Biscay replacing local products. The work of Chris Sturman had provided the documentary evidence for the salt making activities in the Lindsey marsh but what of the archaeological record? Excavation of the distinctive crescent-shaped salt mounds at Wainfleet in the 1980s revealed evidence for 15-16<sup>th</sup> century manufacturing processes (McAvoy 1994). Saltern mounds in the Tetney area south of Grimsby have been plotted from aerial photographs and are assumed to be medieval but they are very different in character being circular in shape. What date or dates are they and do they result from a different process of salt extraction? Mapping of the saltern mounds and sea banks on the ground, from air photographs, and from early cartographic sources has been carried out, but as is the case for all periods, there is physical evidence to illustrate the actual techniques of production.

## **BUILDINGS**

Since 1989 there have only been 23 building survey reports lodged with the SMR. Of these 18 are RCHM building reports, 5 are archaeological building surveys (two of which were on medieval buildings and one a church). Only East Lindsey and the City of Lincoln planning authorities have really addressed the problem of building recording and there are few examples of archaeological conditions being placed on planning consents. Few buildings are surveyed prior to alteration although there are records being made of buildings which are to be demolished.

Lincolnshire is not a county with an abundance of great houses. With a few exceptions, such as the Earls of Ancaster and Yarborough who expanded and consolidated large holdings in the county in the 18<sup>th</sup> century there are few large landowners. However, there were numerous seat of the landed gentry. Work by Terence Leach on country houses and their families examines the buildings from a local historian's point of view. Many, regrettably, have been demolished but there is a good pictorial record of these buildings from sketches and engravings. In rural areas the threats to country houses, farms and associated landscape features such as gardens and parks probably cannot be dealt with entirely through developer led funding.

Estate villages have been studied by architectural and local historians but generally ignored by the archaeologist eg an 18<sup>th</sup> century example of circular gothic style buildings at Anwick (Roberts 1994). There is a similar example at Langton by Spilsby. Later (more conventional) 19<sup>th</sup> century examples of estate architecture can be found in many villages for example at Nocton and Blankney in North Kesteven. Catherine Wilson considered the building programme conducted by Christopher Turnor on his extensive Lincolnshire estates over 40 years from the 1830s onwards (Wilson 1994). She notes that the absence of plans or estate correspondence which means that observation in the field is the only way to discover the extent of his works of improvement to farm complexes and the construction of farmworkers cottages. Her records are mainly confined to photography. 19<sup>th</sup> century farm complexes are historically well-documented but their measured survey is something of a rarity. Elsham Top farmstead, a self-contained 19<sup>th</sup> century unit of farm buildings, farmworkers cottages and smithy with the farmhouse a mile away in Elsham; unusually built in chalk, is an exception (Russell 1991).

In 1977 ten farm complexes were chosen by the Museum of Lincolnshire Life, as representative examples from various geographical locations across the county, for a detailed survey programme. This consisted of recording their layout, function and combining it with documentary background research to provide a social historical context.

Ancillary buildings in these complexes, such as barns, are under considerable threat from demolition or conversion into desirable residences. Few have been surveyed, although the SPAB is active in the county.

Other categories of building ripe for conversion often without record, schools, pubs and banks do not fare so well. An active Lincolnshire Mills group monitors planning applications for demolition and conversion. There is a good photographic archive but few mills contain their internal workings.

### **Mud and stud**

A category of building special to Lincolnshire is the mud and stud cottage. Over 700 have been identified the majority of which are in E. Lindsey. (About 50% have already been demolished). This map may not actually reflect their true distribution because recent work by Rodney Cousins has made it out of date, showing only half the recorded buildings. Also, there is a bias in the past survey of these buildings which concentrated on E. Lindsey. In addition, this part of the county was slower to develop than other areas of the county. eg in S. Holland land values are very high so any building surplus to requirements is demolished fairly quickly. A few examples in the west of the county may not be true mud and stud. Further investigation is required to establish if they are actually related to the mud buildings found in Nottinghamshire.

Detailed surveys of only six examples have been carried out by Mick Clark and Naomi Field (Withern Cottage (Field 1984), Manby, Old Bolingbroke, Wood Enderby, S.Thoresby and N. Somercotes, the last two as part of a planning requirement). A few more have been recorded in less detail (eg Grainthorpe, West Keal, Carrington). Keith Miller has recorded further examples in former S. Humberside .

The few surveyed buildings while being generally similar in layout all contained unique features. How did the style evolve? Are variations in style and construction chronological or geographical or a bit of both?

How does the mud and stud cottage fit into the development of vernacular buildings in the county. Dating evidence is poor but so far examples are thought to be at least late 17<sup>th</sup> century in date and later, based on associated brickwork in firestacks and carpentry techniques used. Documented examples show they were being built as late as 1850 (e.g. at Baumber; Field 1984). A recent recording brief was carried out on a late 17<sup>th</sup> century Grade II\* Listed Building at N. Cotes. It is virtually identical to the layout of the mud and stud buildings but constructed in brick. Presumably there is a distinction in social status. (In recent years there was a stigma attached to living in a mud house and many were clad in brick, partly to upgrade them, but also to disguise their lowly origins.)

### **Churches**

Although there has been a considerable increase in archaeological recording and excavations in and around churches the emphasis has been very much on the medieval fabric of the building.

About 70 churches have been made redundant in the county since 1968, of which a proportion are post-medieval in construction. Tothill, a brick church built in 1778 on the site of a medieval church, was photographically recorded before demolition in the late 1970s. Amber Hill and Chapel Hill, All Saints both Victorian brick churches on new sites have recently been sold for conversion to residences without record. Grimsby (demolished without record). Gainsborough Holy Trinity and Horncastle Holy Trinity have been converted to Arts Centres. These are just a few recent examples.

When it comes to non-conformist chapels the record is no better. Lincolnshire has a strong non-conformist tradition. By the first quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century there were 110 dissenting meeting houses (as against some 700 parish churches). Quakers were concentrated in the north-west of the county, south-west of Lincoln and in the fens. The Baptists were more generally associated with rural communities whilst Presbyterian churches were found in towns.

What are the architectural similarities and variations of these buildings? What of their fittings and internal layout? How do these reflect the different liturgical practices; all aspects of church archaeology regularly applied to the Church of England examples.

CBA work on non conformist chapels. Lincolnshire input?? Many chapels have been sold for conversion to houses without any record of internal fittings, others have been demolished.

Recently the County Council has appointed a planning archaeologist with experience in building recording in order to extend the expertise of their reorganised conservation section. Hopefully advice will be given to Districts and in future more account will be taken of buildings in the application of both PPG15 and 16.

### **BUILDING MATERIALS**

Lincolnshire is a key county in the study of early brickwork, with the Flemish influence, principally through Boston and across the Humber from Hull, resulting in the development of brickmaking in the county from the 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> centuries. Although simple to use in construction it was at first only to be found in the buildings of the rich and powerful the prime example being Tattershall Castle built in 1440 by Ralph Lord Cromwell. Gainsborough Old Hall, 15<sup>th</sup> century timber framed Hall with brick tower 1490s and kitchen of a similar date fall just outside our date range but together with Wainflete School (1484) are indicative examples of the high status which brick still retained at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Torksey Castle (later 16<sup>th</sup> century), and Doddington Hall 1593-1600 were buildings on a grand scale but we also begin to see more modest examples such as Halstead Hall, near Woodhall (c. 1500) and Heronshaw Hall at Old Leake built in 1573, or the Red Hall at Bourne of early 17<sup>th</sup> century date. The brick almshouses on the Peterborough Road at Bourne, have a date stone of 1636. The recording of buildings by Maurice Barley and David Roberts has provided a good background to further survey. Of particular importance in Lincolnshire is the collation of further measured examples of the lower status brick buildings of the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century in the county.

David Neave's study of William Catlyn, an architect builder based in Hull who built houses in the latter part of the 17<sup>th</sup> century considers the Dutch influence on both the materials used as well as

architectural style in his houses which are to be found on both sides of the Humber (Neave 1994). Lincolnshire's connections with the Low Countries are long-lived and the Dutch influence on architecture is evident elsewhere in the county. For example, pantiles with a black glaze were being imported into the county via Hull in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. This trade needs further systematic documenting and recording.

The raw materials which were used to construct these buildings have so far been poorly recorded. In 1993 geophysical survey on the site of a borrow pit for the Spalding bypass identified a brick kiln (Coupland, Field and Tann 1993). Evaluation excavation deliberately avoided the main structure of the kiln but is thought (from associated pottery and the size of the bricks) to have been 17<sup>th</sup> century in date. This site was preserved in situ. A possible 18<sup>th</sup> century coal-fired brick kiln was excavated in the grounds of Algarkirk Hall by the Trust for Lincolnshire Archaeology in 1981. It had eight flues. It is assumed that the bricks were manufactured for building works on the estate. Attempts to identify structures where bricks of the same dimensions had been used were unsuccessful (Healey 1994, 49). This important site is not yet fully published. An 18<sup>th</sup> century brick kiln has been restored at Baumber, near Horncastle, by a local enthusiast and Andrew White recorded material from a brick kiln at West Ashby in the 1970s.

There is nearly as little information about tile production. The Boston tile industry which began in the 14<sup>th</sup> century continued into the post-medieval period. There are references to tile production in Lincoln but there is little physical evidence, apart from the 15<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> century kiln found at St Marks.

Enclosure and Tithe Award maps, together with early Ordnance Survey maps are important sources for locating sites of later brickpits. These were to be found in virtually every parish with accessible clay sources but there is little excavated evidence. Small brickworks continued to make hand-made bricks through most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century but large firms used extrusion and wire-cutting machines from the 1860s onwards. The localised manufacture of brick until the development of industrial scale brickworks in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (especially along the Humber bank) means that the study of brickwork sizes and fabric must be on a very local scale too.

Mick Clark has been collecting information on brick sizes from dated buildings but brick sizes alone cannot yet be used as a reliable dating technique. Andrew White started a reference collection of bricks at the City and County Museum in the 1970s which needs to be reassessed. The City of Lincoln Archaeological Unit has a good reference collection of tile from the Roman, medieval and post-medieval periods which was started by Rick Kemp and his work is being continued by Jenny Mann and Jane Young. This collection has a good type series covering fabric and form of tiles up to the introduction of pantiles in the 17-18<sup>th</sup> centuries. It has a less extensive brick type series. Much needed work on recording brick sizes from buildings of known date to assist in assessing other buildings, paying due regard to texture and fabric as well.

## **SUMMARY**

Current piecemeal recording of sites both in rural and urban contexts is mostly a direct response to threat from development. This does not allow us to take stock and review the general themes of economic development and trade.

The creation of a post medieval pottery and building materials corpus is a top priority. We need to be actively adding to the type series already begun, and ensure long-term curation by people with the necessary expertise.

The proposed extensive urban survey to be funded by English Heritage will make a major contribution to establishing a coherent framework for future urban investigations. Of national importance is the role of Boston and its relationship to Lincoln and the prosperity of the county.

The detailed survey of West Lindsey by the RCHM has shown the potential for rural studies in the remainder of the county. Extensive survey techniques, combined with detailed earthwork survey, fieldwalking and study of the documentary sources is a costly and labour intensive process but is vital in providing a background to our understanding of the more random small-scale developer funded projects. Non-commercial funding is urgently required, before these sites become obliterated by infilling and extension of villages under large housing developments, as well as the ploughing up of our diminishing areas of pasture.

The recent hedgerow legislation provides an important opportunity for archaeologists to investigate the origins of boundaries and creation of new ones, an important element in developing our understanding of the changing landscape in response to agricultural modernisation.

Saltmaking is of special importance in the Lincolnshire economy and deserves further field investigation to complement the existing documentary research.

Standing buildings are an integral part of the archaeological record. Only Lincoln and East Lindsey District Councils are currently placing archaeological conditions on Listed Building Consents. Mud and stud buildings are unique to Lincolnshire but few have been recorded in any detail to date. The recent County Council initiative is to be welcomed and it is hoped that increased awareness of the importance of buildings in the archaeological record will result in more planning conditions applied either through PPG15 or 16.

### **Conclusions**

23 years ago the East Midlands Committee for Field Archaeologists produced a document called *Priorities 1977* with the intention of identifying gaps in our knowledge and themes for future research in the counties of Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire. It was prepared in response to a meeting called in 1976 by the Department of the Environment to discuss regional priorities and problems. Not surprisingly, post-medieval archaeology gets little mention. Raising awareness of the value of post-medieval studies within our own profession is going to be paramount if we are to persuade planners, and others, on whom we rely for our work to take it seriously.

However, there are positive moves afoot which I hope will mean that if we do meet again in 20 years time it will be to modify research priorities already in place rather than treading the same old ground once again.

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