
**PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORDING OF HULKS ALONG THE
WITHAM FORESHORE,
BOSTON,
LINCOLNSHIRE
(BOHA 13)**

**Work Undertaken For
Interserve Construction Limited**

March 2014

Report Compiled by
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TF 32849 43463 – TF 32900 43604
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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
PROJECT
SERVICES**



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1. SUMMARY

A programme of photographic recording was undertaken prior to and during the removal of a number of hulks along the Witham foreshore in Boston, Lincolnshire. This was carried out in advance of new flood defence works between Pulvertoft Lane and St Ann's Wharf on the west bank of the river.

Nine hulks were recorded and the results were integrated with previous research undertaken on the vessels.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Planning Background

Archaeological Project Services was commissioned by Interserve Construction Limited to undertake a programme of photographic recording of hulks prior to their removal in advance of new flood defence works along the Witham foreshore at Boston, Lincolnshire. The photographic survey was carried out between the 9th September and 10th October 2013.

2.2 Topography and Geology

Boston is located 45km southeast of Lincoln and 7km from the northwest coast of The Wash, Lincolnshire (Fig. 1).

The area of foreshore subject to this report lies 700m south of the town centre between St Ann's Wharf (National Grid Reference TF 32849 43463) and Pulvertoft Lane (National Grid Reference TF 32900 43604), on the west bank of the River Witham (Fig. 2).

2.3 Historical Setting

Boston was the major port of Lincolnshire during much of the medieval period, though suffered decline in the 14th century. The decline was such that international trade through the port became almost non-existent, although there was a coastal trade with London and Newcastle. However, Daniel Defoe commented that in 1724, the town has '*good merchants, and has a good share of foreign trade, as well as Lynn*' although by 1751 the Haven was silted up and large boats were unable to reach the town (Cope-Faulkner 2010, 15). This situation perhaps remained unchanged until the construction of the Grand Sluice enabled the waterway to be cleared. During the Napoleonic wars, Boston reached a position as the 24th most important port in the country (*ibid.*).

The construction of the dock in 1884 with accompanying fish markets, ice houses and warehouses saw a re-emergence of the port. Boston's fishing fleet continued to use the wharves right into the centre of the town.

The existing river wall and the sediments built up against them are likely to date to the mid 20th century. This implies that the hulks are of the same or a later date.

Aerial photographs held by Heritage Lincolnshire were briefly examined to ascertain a tighter date range for the deposition of the hulks. The most informative photograph is undated, but visible landmarks would suggest a date range between 1964 and 1972. The foreshore is exposed and is well lit and a number of vessels are visible. However, none of the vessels corresponds to the hulks recorded, although it is possible that some were buried at this point in time.



Aerial view of between 1964 and 1972 showing the length of examined foreshore. North to top (HTL Code 55 041)

Dating from 1977, a vertical photograph of the town (CUCAP RC8-CC 242) shows a number of hulks and operational vessels located within the study area. However, only vessels 3, 6 and 12 concord with the position of the recorded hulks.

3. AIMS

The aim of the work will be to provide a photographic record of a number of specified hulks prior to and during their removal.

The objectives were to provide a photographic and written record of the hulks to be removed, with location plans, description of removal and a summary of their history/historic context.

4. METHODS

Digital photographs were taken of the hulks to be recorded. These were carried out prior to and during their removal. However, some vessels were so structurally unsound that upon lifting they immediately disintegrated. Positions of all hulks were plotted on to a basemap.



5. RESULTS

The following section provides a record of each individual hulk recorded prior and during their removal. The individual hulk numbers and written records are based on previous surveys (Doughty 2009; ICL 2013; Nayling 2011).



PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORDING OF HULKS ALONG THE WITHAM FORESHORE, BOSTON

Vessel No.	2	National Reference	Grid	TF 38849 43463
Type	Lifeboat	Condition	Silted, slight erosion	
Orientation	NE-SW	Visible dimensions	11.4m long by 3m wide	
Hull Construction		Material	Steel over wood	
		Vessel 2, view towards bow		
		Aft view		
		Vessel 2 being removed. The fragile nature of the wooden hull is evident.		
Additional notes	Steel plates affixed to wooden hull. Central hatch to engine space. Decking intact. Perhaps originated as a lifeboat and converted to small fishing vessel or tender			



PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORDING OF HULKS ALONG THE WITHAM FORESHORE, BOSTON

Vessel No.	3	National Grid Reference	TF 32863 43477
Type	MFV?	Condition	Sunken, silted
Orientation	SW-NE	Visible dimensions	15m long by 5m wide
Hull Construction	Carvel	Material	Wood
		<p>Bow view showing two hatches and largely intact decking</p>	
		<p>Aft view with damaged deck and rounded stern</p>	
Additional notes	Possible motor fishing vessel (MFV) adapted from a small launch. Central recess for cabin and perhaps engine.		

PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORDING OF HULKS ALONG THE WITHAM FORESHORE, BOSTON

Vessel No.	4	National Grid Reference	TF 32888 43506
Type	Unknown	Condition	Sunken, silted
Orientation	SW-NE	Visible dimensions	8m long by 4m wide
Hull Construction	Clinker	Material	Wood
		<p>Visible elements of the central part of the hulk</p>	
		<p>Surviving stern section</p>	
Additional notes	Transom stern		



PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORDING OF HULKS ALONG THE WITHAM FORESHORE, BOSTON

Vessel No.	6	National Grid Reference	TF 32901 43539
Type	Lifeboat	Condition	Sunken, silted
Orientation	E-W	Visible dimensions	3m long by 1m wide
Hull Construction	Clinker	Material	Wood
			
			
Additional notes	Transom stern		


PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORDING OF HULKS ALONG THE WITHAM FORESHORE, BOSTON


Vessel No.	8	National Grid Reference	TF 32908 43558
Type	Lifeboat	Condition	Good
Orientation	S - N	Visible dimensions	4m long by 2m wide
Hull Construction	Clinker	Material	Wood
		View showing the port side of vessel 8	
		Vessel 8 being lifted	
		View showing the largely intact nature of the vessel and name-plate	
Additional notes	'Great Auk' Well preserved lifeboat		


PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORDING OF HULKS ALONG THE WITHAM FORESHORE, BOSTON

Vessel No.	9	National Grid Reference	TF 32910 43571
Type	Launch	Condition	Sunken, silted
Orientation	S- N	Visible dimensions	7m long by 3m wide
Hull Construction	Clinker	Material	Wood
		View showing port side	
		Vessel 9 during lifting. Decayed wood showing as black staining.	
Additional notes	Fragile nature of the vessel was revealed during lifting. Subsequently little more information could be added		

PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORDING OF HULKS ALONG THE WITHAM FORESHORE, BOSTON

Vessel No.	10	National Grid Reference	TF 329083 43584
Type	Small launch	Condition	Sunken, silted
Orientation	NW-SE	Visible dimensions	6m long by 3m wide
Hull Construction	Clinker	Material	Wood
		View showing the starboard side of the vessel	
Additional notes		Possibly overlies a second clinker built boat, although this may be a section of hull from aft which has moved beneath the collapsed fore hull elements	

Vessel No.	11	National Grid Reference	TF 32863 43477
Type	Launch	Condition	Sunken, silted
Orientation	SW-NE	Visible dimensions	8m long by 4m wide
Hull Construction	Clinker	Material	Wood
		View of starboard side of vessel	
Additional notes		Double diagonal planked vessel, probably associated with the Royal Navy/lifeboat service (Doughty 2009, 6). Converted to a fishing vessel. Transom stern with interior wooden engine mounting.	

Vessel No.	12	National Grid Reference	TF 32900 43604
Type	MFV	Condition	Sunken, silted
Orientation	S - N	Visible dimensions	8.5m long by 3m wide
Hull Construction	Clinker	Material	Wood
		View of port side of vessel	
Additional notes		Doughty (2009, 6) records that this vessel is of a similar type to Royal Navy vessels that have been converted for fishing. The hull was coated in cement to prolong its life, though no traces of this are now apparent.	

6. CONCLUSION

A photographic record was made of a series of hulks along the Witham foreshore in Boston, Lincolnshire, prior to their removal.

Research undertaken as part of this work has indicated that the vessels were not deposited until the latter part of the 20th century, although a few deeply buried hulks may have been deposited previously. The hulks themselves were not dated but many appear to be former lifeboats that were adapted for use in the coastal fishing industry.

7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Mr Darryl Allen and Mr Sam Slater of Interserve Construction Limited for commissioning the fieldwork and post-excavation analysis. The work was coordinated by Gary Taylor who edited this report along with Tom Lane. Elizabeth Bates kindly allowed access to the parish files and library maintained by Heritage Lincolnshire.

8. PERSONNEL

Project Coordinator: Gary Taylor
 Site Supervisors: Chris Moulis, Neil Parker, Mark Peachey, Dale Trimble
 Photographic reproduction: Sue Unsworth
 Archiving: Sarah Pritchard
 Illustration: Paul Cope-Faulkner
 Post-excavation analysis: Paul Cope-Faulkner

9. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Cope-Faulkner, P, 2010 *Boston Town. Historic Environment Baseline Study*

Doughty, D, 2009 *The Haven Wrecks*

ICL, 2013 *The Haven Wrecks Report*, unpublished report

Nayling, N, 2011 *Boston Haven Tidal Barrier: Assessment of Cultural Heritage Impacts. Foreshore Inspection Report*, unpublished UWLAS report

10. ABBREVIATIONS

APS Archaeological Project Services

ICL Interserve Construction Limited

MFV Motorised Fishing Vessel

UWLAS University of Wales Lampeter Archaeological Services

11. ARCHIVE

The archive consists of:

8	Photographic record sheets
6	Daily record sheets

All primary records 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:

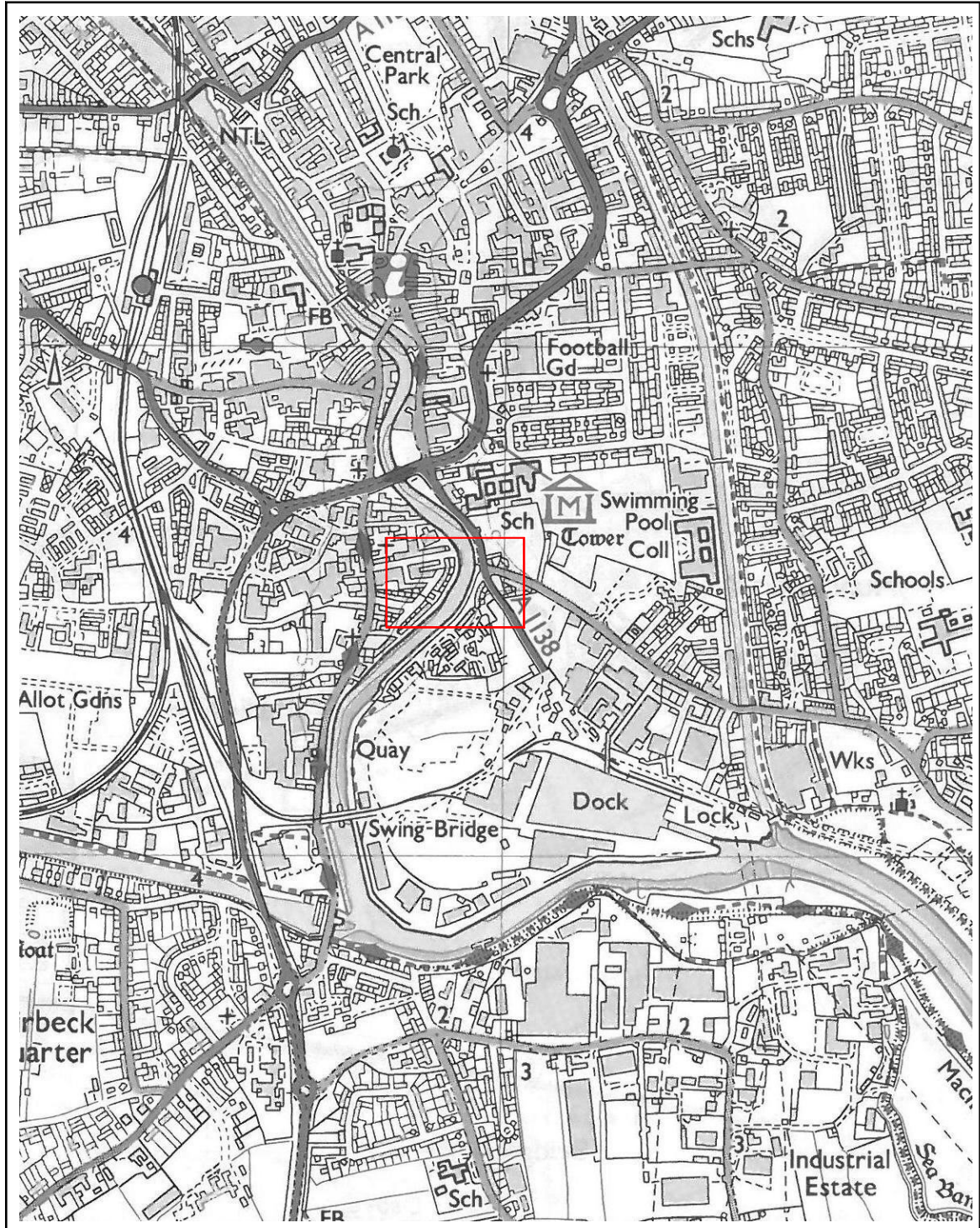
The Collection
Art and Archaeology in Lincolnshire
Danes Terrace
Lincoln
LN2 1LP

Accession Number: LCNCC: 2013.153

Archaeological Project Services Site Code: BOHA 13



Figure 1 - General location plan



TF

33

0 300m

Area detailed in Figure 3

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Figure 2 - Site location plan



Figure 3 - Plan showing the location of recorded hulks