

The Wolds before AD1000

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Archaeological survey in the Lincolnshire Wolds has not been extensive and there has been no comprehensive ground survey of the whole area, such as that carried out by the Fenland Project over the Fens of Cambridgeshire.¹ Nevertheless, there have been a number of limited surveys in the Wolds. The Ordnance Survey collected archaeological information to revise the six inch maps of the county from the late 1920s. The first Ordnance Survey correspondent was C. W. Phillips who was sent to Lincolnshire by O. G. S. Crawford in 1929, initially to check on features that Crawford thought might be long barrows, a theory which Phillips was able to confirm.² Phillips published a summary of Lincolnshire's archaeology in 1933-34, the first modern attempt to summarise the state of archaeological knowledge in the county.³

In the early days Phillips was reliant on a number of local archaeologists. Not only the professional museum curators, such as Harold Dudley at Scunthorpe, but also amateur archaeologists: Harry Preston of Grantham and, notably, Ethel Rudkin who had a wealth of knowledge about the archaeology of the county.⁴ There was one established museum in the Wolds: Louth Museum was founded by the Louth Naturalists', Antiquarian and Literary Society. The Museum holds a small number of local Prehistoric finds, some of which were collected after 1887 by the Louth Antiquarian and Naturalists' Society, an earlier name of the present Society.⁵

Amateur archaeologists have continued to make useful contributions to the archaeological record of the Wolds. In particular, in the Lymn valley Mr G. V. Taylor collected information and carried out several small-scale excavations on land that he and his brother farmed after the Second World War,⁶ and also Mr William Bee who, for several years, up to the present, has been systematically field-walking in the Lymn valley and recording flint scatters. In addition, amateur archaeologists have carried out field-work in specific areas: for example Mr J. Clark and Mrs J. Mostyn Lewis in Claxby and Normanby parishes and Mr D. Everatt in Thoresway parish.

There were two more formal surveys in the 1980s targeted specifically at parts of the Wolds. The first, the Bain Valley Survey carried out by the Trust for Lincolnshire Archaeology, looked at a north to south transect, ten kilometres wide and some forty kilometres long, down the west side of the Wolds. Field-walking was carried out on selected areas within the transect.⁷ The second was a transect survey by the University of Sheffield this time running east to west

¹ David Hall and John Coles, *The Fenland Survey. An Essay in Landscape and Persistence* (1994), Fig.1.

² C. W. Phillips, *My Life in Archaeology* (Gloucester, 1987), pp.16-17.

³ C. W. Phillips, 'The present state of archaeology in Lincolnshire', *Archaeological Journal* 90 (1933), pp.106-49 and 91 (1934), pp.97-187.

⁴ C. W. Phillips, 'Memoirs of Lincolnshire', in *A Prospect of Lincolnshire* edited by Naomi Field and Andrew White (Lincoln, 1984), pp.3-5, esp. p.3.

⁵ Jeffrey May, *Prehistoric Lincolnshire* (Lincoln, 1976), p.214.

⁶ P. Phillips, 'Obituary. G. V. Taylor, 1924-1997', *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology* 32 (1997), p.7.

⁷ P. Chowne, 'The Bain valley survey', in *Looking at the Land. Archaeological Landscapes in Eastern England. Recent work and future directions* edited by M. Parker-Pearson and R. T. Schadla-Hall, Proceedings of a Conference held at Jewry Wall Museum, Leicester 6-7 October 1989, (Leicester, 1994), pp.27-32.

across the northern Wolds and involving a more detailed study of a corridor only some four hundred metres wide. This project included some excavation on long barrow sites and some analysis of aerial photographs across the Wolds.⁸

The aerial photographic work was carried out by Dilwyn Jones and complemented his larger survey of aerial photographic evidence on a broad block of land running east to west across the whole width of Lincolnshire. This survey, in total, covered an area of land five kilometres wide and nearly seventy kilometres long.⁹ It identified soils on the Wolds as the most responsive to the conditions under which cropmarks form. D. Jones found that the Wolds had more than half the archaeological sites in what was only twenty-two per cent of the area surveyed.¹⁰ The wealth of evidence from aerial photography is thus particularly valuable for understanding the archaeology of the Wolds. The extensive recording of cropmark, soilmark and earthwork sites across Lincolnshire from aerial photographs was carried out by the former Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England in the mid 1990s and covered all of the Wolds. Thus comprehensive mapping of cropmark, soilmark and earthwork evidence, from aerial photographs, for archaeology in the Wolds is now available through the National Mapping Programme.¹¹

While the two transect surveys were being undertaken by Sheffield University and the Trust for Lincolnshire Archaeology, a much larger English Heritage project to survey the fenlands of eastern England was underway. This included some work on the northern fen edge in Lincolnshire and a number of parishes whose territory stretched up into the southern Wolds: East Kirkby, Hagnaby, East and West Keal, Toynton All Saints and Toynton St Peter.¹²

More recent survey work in the Wolds was undertaken as part of a Heritage Management Plan for a large estate in the northern part of the Wolds.¹³ Although somewhat limited in extent compared to some of the earlier surveys, field-work found few scatters of Prehistoric flints but did identify a number of earthworks in woodland that are probably surviving Prehistoric linear ditched boundaries some of them with multiple ditches.¹⁴

The Royal Commission also conducted earthwork surveys in West Lindsey recording upstanding remains of former areas of settlement and carrying out documentary research into

⁸ P. Phillips, 'The Lincolnshire Wolds survey', in *Looking at the Land. Archaeological Landscapes in Eastern England. Recent work and future directions* edited by M. Parker-Pearson and R. T. Schadla-Hall, Proceedings of a Conference held at Jewry Wall Museum, Leicester 6-7 October 1989, (Leicester, 1994), pp.32-34. This survey work was published in *Archaeology and Landscape Studies in North Lincolnshire* edited by P. Phillips, part i: Excavations at north Lincolnshire long barrows, part ii: Aerial surface survey on the Lincolnshire Wolds and excavation at Newton Cliffs, north Lincolnshire, British Archaeological Reports, British Series 208 (Oxford, 1989).

⁹ D. Jones, 'Aerial reconnaissance and Prehistoric and Romano-British archaeology in northern Lincolnshire', *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology*, 23 (1988), pp.5-30.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.10-12.

¹¹ A. Kershaw, 'The Lincolnshire National Mapping Project', in *Lincolnshire's Archaeology from the Air* edited by R. H. Bewley, Occasional Papers in Lincolnshire History and Archaeology No.11, (Lincoln, 1998), pp.18-22.

¹² T. Lane, *The Fenland Project Number 8: Lincolnshire Survey the Northern Fen Edge*, East Anglian Archaeology Report No.66 (Sleaford, 1993).

¹³ T. Lane, 'Reconstructing Lincolnshire landscapes', in *Through Wet and Dry. Essays in Honour of David Hall* edited by T. Lane and J. Coles, Lincolnshire Archaeology and Reports Series No.5, WARP Occasional Paper 17, (Heckington, 2002), pp.135-46.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.140.

the villages. This survey covers those Wolds parishes that are in West Lindsey District. Almost all the earthwork remains that were surveyed were medieval and post medieval.¹⁵

The results of all these different surveys and of other specific investigations or discoveries allow an attempt to be made to draw a picture of the development of the landscape of the Lincolnshire Wolds and to show how mankind has affected that picture. The earliest peoples who ranged across the Wolds lived in the Palaeolithic. The Palaeolithic is that large length of time from the earliest evidence of tool-making to the withdrawal of the ice sheets from Europe as the glaciers retreated at the end of the last Ice Age. In Britain this period runs from approximately 525,000 years ago to about 12,000 years ago and there was intermittent occupation of Lincolnshire during the warmer stages of this period. Almost all the evidence for Palaeolithic occupation has been damaged or destroyed by later glaciation during which massive ice sheets scoured the landscape and destroyed or redeposited the archaeological evidence of human activity. Only in the south of England, which escaped the major glaciation of Britain during the Anglian Quaternary stage (OIS-12),¹⁶ are lower Palaeolithic sites found in primary contexts and even then they are extremely rare. The site at Boxgrove in West Sussex is one example.

Lincolnshire is very much on the periphery of Palaeolithic studies. Palaeolithic hand-axes have been found here but are few in number. Nevertheless they do indicate that early humans were active in the area. It is the Lincolnshire Wolds that has the most interesting and important sites for the study of the Palaeolithic in Lincolnshire.

At Welton-le-Wold a gravel quarry revealed hand-axes associated with mammalian remains in gravel buried some thirteen metres beneath glacial till.¹⁷ The finds, made in the 1970s, are not in a primary context but they are in good condition and have not been moved far. The importance of the site lies in its stratigraphy as it is rare for any site to have a clear stratigraphic relationship between hand-axes and dateable layers. The hand-axes must be older than the till that seals the deposit. The upper till layer is Devensian (OIS-2 or 4) and it seems that the glacier that deposited this till moved over the top of the valley without disturbing the earlier gravel layers in the valley. There are other till layers above the gravel, which may be from a glaciation in the Wolstonian age (OIS-6, 8 or 10), although some experts suggest they may be of Anglian age. The very existence of a Wolstonian glaciation in Britain remains a subject of debate amongst geologists.¹⁸ From an archaeological point of view the hand-axes

¹⁵ P. L. Everson, C. C. Taylor and C. J. Dunn, *Change and Continuity, Rural Settlement in North-West Lincolnshire* (1991), p.xvii.

¹⁶ The conventional British Quaternary stages are used here together with the Oxygen Isotope Stages (OIS). Recent analysis of cores taken of marine sediments at the bottom of the deep ocean has allowed a framework of the various cold and warm periods to be constructed. This is done by using the remains of marine micro-organisms in the cores, estimates of the rate of deposition of the sediments, correlations with changes in the earth's magnetic field and radioactive methods of dating. Climatic changes in the temperature of oceans affect the oxygen element in the shells of marine micro-organisms and this can be measured. Thus a series of marine stages can be identified that run through time and provide a framework for the Palaeolithic. These marine stages are referred to as Oxygen Isotope Stages (OIS).

¹⁷ C. Alabaster and A. Straw, 'The Pleistocene context of faunal remains and artefacts discovered at Welton-le-Wold, Lincolnshire', *Proceedings of the Yorkshire Geological Society*, 41 part 1 (1976), pp.75-94; J. J. Wymer and A. Straw, 'Hand-axes from beneath glacial till at Welton-le-Wold, Lincolnshire and the distribution of palaeoliths in Britain', *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society*, 43 (1977), pp.355-60. Till is clay deposited by melting glaciers and ice-sheets, it can be many metres thick.

¹⁸ J. J. Wymer, *The English Rivers Palaeolithic Project Report No.2 1995-1996 The Great Ouse Drainage and The Yorkshire and Lincolnshire Wolds* (Wessex Archaeology, 1996), unpublished report, p.137.

from Welton show that early humans did exploit the Wolds before the last glaciation perhaps in the warm Hoxnian stage (OIS-11).¹⁹

There is a further group of lower Palaeolithic finds from a quarry at Kirmington (NLSMR No.2260).²⁰ These were found beneath Devensian till on a layer of coarse shingle that has been interpreted as a storm beach. The site lies in what was a wide east-west valley which has been filled with sediments but was an inlet of the sea which formed the storm beach where the worked flint has been found.²¹ The site suggests an open beach environment where early humans foraged for food along the shore. The site is most likely to be Hoxnian in date (OIS-11) but again opinion is divided.²²

Further palaeoliths have been found to the west of Welton in the Lymn valley especially in the parish of Tetford which now includes the former parish of Salmonby. These axes are reported as coming from the clay of the valley.²³ The concentration of hand-axes here is intriguing, they are generally in good condition with only limited evidence of rolling, and further work needs to be done to understand their provenance.

There is only limited evidence for upper Palaeolithic activity in the Wolds and it all comes from the Lymn valley. This may be a reflection of the amount of field-work that has taken place here notably by W. Bee. The late upper Palaeolithic knife from Fulletby is one rare piece of evidence of human re-colonisation of the Wolds after the last Ice Age.²⁴ In this late glacial period the environment would have been similar to the tundra landscapes of northern Canada today, with very few trees and the plant life dominated by sedges and mosses. Initial human activity would have been seasonal and perhaps limited to small bands of hunters perhaps pursuing reindeer or horse onto the tundra during the summer. These hunters would have left their families further south.²⁵ As the sub-arctic conditions began to ameliorate, vegetation began to re-establish itself initially with grasses and dwarf shrubs and, later, trees. Seasonal camps would have been established and human use of the resources of the land would have continued all year. The late upper Palaeolithic runs for several thousand years from about 12,000 to 10,000 years ago and merges with the early Mesolithic as the average temperatures rose and Britain passed from a glacial stage to the present post-glacial stage.

The Mesolithic is a time of hunter-gatherers, small groups of people, probably linked by family ties, moving from place to place as the seasons dictated and using the resources available to them to survive. These kinship groups would have had to exploit different types of landscape in

¹⁹ J. J. Wymer, *The Lower Palaeolithic Occupation of Britain* (Salisbury, 1999), pp.179-80.

²⁰ The main record of archaeological sites in the Wolds is the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR). The SMR is a record of the known archaeology held and maintained by Lincolnshire County Council in the Highways and Planning Directorate. The SMR held by Lincolnshire County Council covers that part of Lincolnshire within its administrative area; there are separate SMRs for the unitary authorities of North Lincolnshire and North-East Lincolnshire both of which include parts of the Wolds within their areas. Within the text numbers from the Sites and Monuments Records are given where relevant. LSMR is the Lincolnshire SMR, NLSMR is the North Lincolnshire SMR and NELSMR is the North-East Lincolnshire SMR. SMR numbers as given in the text are the unique reference numbers under which particular sites, monuments or findspots are recorded.

²¹ N. Loughlin and K. R. Miller, *A Survey of Archaeological Sites in Humberside* (Hull, 1979), p.201.

²² J. Wymer, *The English Rivers Palaeolithic Project Report No.2*, p.139.

²³ T. W. Bee, 'Palaeolithic hand-axes from the Lymn valley, Lincolnshire', *Lithics*, 22 (2001), at least one of the hand-axes is reported as eroding from till.

²⁴ William Bee and Janet Owen, 'Upper Palaeolithic knife from Fulletby', *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology*, 28 (1993), p.66.

²⁵ P. C. Buckland, 'North-West Lincolnshire 10,000 years ago', in *A Prospect of Lincolnshire* edited by Naomi Field and Andrew White (Lincoln, 1984), pp.11-17.

order to make use of the different animals, plants and fish that lived in different habitats. Thus evidence for Mesolithic activity is often found in transitional zones where the landscape character is changing; zones where there is a change from higher land to lower land, from wetter to drier or from sandy soils to clayey soils.

Evidence for Mesolithic activity in the Wolds is entirely dependant upon finds of worked flint and other stone. Finds of Mesolithic flints are not common on the Wolds although there are some concentrations of findspots. It should be noted that many of the reports of small scatters of flints that have, in the past, been published in gazetteers such as the *East Midlands Archaeological Bulletin*, or in 'Archaeological notes' published by the local archaeology society since 1952, do not contain a detailed analysis of lithic scatters.²⁶ There may have been Mesolithic flints found but not identified as such, and consequently there may be an under-representation of Mesolithic sites in the records. Nevertheless, the more comprehensive studies of flintwork from surveys in the Wolds have identified a number of Mesolithic sites. Very few of these have been identified as early Mesolithic, that is, from 10,000 to 8,000 years ago, and most comprise only one or two flints. There is a flint (LSMR No.43647) and a possible *tranchet* axe-head (LSMR No.43777) from Salmonby, a further flint from Walesby (LSMR No.51827) and there is a site in Claxby parish at the bottom of the Wold's scarp and interpreted as a possible campsite.²⁷

Later Mesolithic finds are more numerous although still uncommon. There is a noticeable concentration on the coversands to the west where the lighter soils may have had a less dense tree cover and so were preferred by man. It may be that game would have been attracted to natural clearings in this woodland and man may well have deliberately sought to keep these areas clear. It is also possible that they may have created small clearings in order to encourage game animals to browse the grasses in these open areas.

There are two denser groupings of Mesolithic flint scatters: in the Lymn valley around Tetford and on the southern edge of the Wolds overlooking the low lying land to the south. Both these areas have been the subject of intensive field-work and this distribution of Mesolithic flints may reflect the pattern of field-work in the area. Nevertheless, a number of other areas in the Wolds have had varying degrees of field-walking and finds reporting and none have recorded more than the odd flint of Mesolithic date. The Bain Valley Survey identified five sites, all at the head of small valleys near streams that flowed down to the River Bain, but all had very small collections of worked flint.²⁸ The Sheffield University survey along a narrow band across the Wolds found no Mesolithic flints to the east but some sites on the west. This suggests that people were exploiting the western edge of the Wolds, where the lighter sandier soils of the coversands lie, with some occasional sweeps into the Wolds to forage.²⁹ Ethnographic studies of hunter-gatherers living in similar environments to that of Mesolithic Britain suggest that they lived at population densities of between 0.01 and 0.02 people per square kilometre.³⁰ Thus, at any one time, the population of Lincolnshire may have been no more than 70 to 140 people. Foraging areas in the Mesolithic period would have been very extensive and involved exploitation of the landscapes adjacent to the Wolds and beyond. The

²⁶ For example, "Thoresway . . . Worked flints, scrapers arrow-heads etc., were exposed on these four sites during ploughing; . . .", J. B. Whitwell and C. M. Wilson, 'Archaeological notes, 1967', *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology*, 3 (1968), p.19.

²⁷ P. Phillips (ed.), *Archaeology and Landscape Studies in North Lincolnshire*, part ii, p.32.

²⁸ P. Chowne, 'The Bain valley survey', p.29.

²⁹ P. Phillips (ed.), *Archaeology and Landscape Studies in North Lincolnshire*, part ii, pp.33, 37.

³⁰ Steven Mithen, 'Hunter-gatherers of the Mesolithic', in *The Archaeology of Britain* edited by John Hunter and Ian Ralston (1999), pp.35-57, esp. p.55.

Mesolithic land surface of the Lindsey Marsh and of the northern fens has been covered by later silts from marine and riverine floods and the evidence of flint scatters is usually buried too deep for the plough to bring them to the surface. It is not unreasonable to assume that Mesolithic hunter-gatherers would have utilised the coastal habitats of Lincolnshire which would have been rich in food sources. Circuits including visits to the coast and the uplands by Mesolithic communities would provide them with a variety of sites to exploit, perhaps seasonally. Not all these circuits need necessarily have included visits to the coast, some may have headed inland into the Midlands. Although a diet of food from a marine environment is very common in Mesolithic times it was by no means essential to survival. The leg bone of a Mesolithic female found in gravels of the Trent Valley in Nottinghamshire has been analysed and found to contain isotopes that indicate a diet completely lacking in sea food.³¹

From about 4,000BC the later hunter-gatherers began to grow crops and to husband livestock. It is likely that the period of transition was extensive with a hunter-gatherer way of life continuing to survive particularly in peripheral areas where there were abundant food sources and more inhospitable landscapes such as marsh lands. Indeed, the very first farming activity would have initially been hunter-gatherers engaged in small scale farming of crops to supplement their diet and such activity may have continued for many generations. This gradual change from a purely hunter-gatherer lifestyle marks the change from the Mesolithic to the Neolithic in Britain. This is the period which has traditionally been regarded as the time when settled farming began in this country.

The planting of crops requires cleared land and it is during the Neolithic that forest clearance began in earnest in the Wolds. There is evidence from excavations on the Giants' Hills 2 long barrow at Skendleby for clearance of the closed deciduous oak and hazel woodland perhaps as early as 3,500BC.³² There was also evidence for tillage in the pre-barrow soil, leading to the suggestion that the barrow was placed on the edge of land that had been taken into cultivation.³³ The analyses of pollen and mollusc remains from the soil found filling the ditches of long barrows, carried out as part of the University of Sheffield project, indicate that there was a grassland environment in the early Neolithic in the immediate vicinity of the long barrows. There is also pollen evidence for cereal crops perhaps in plots or small fields, while the animal bones that were found suggest that cattle, pig and sheep were raised at least in the later Neolithic.³⁴ Bones of auroch, a species of large, wild cattle, were found at Ash Hill long barrow and Giants' Hills 2 long barrow and it has been suggested that this species may have survived into the middle or later Neolithic.

Evidence for Neolithic activity in the Wolds is dominated by the surviving long barrows that are found across these uplands. The most recent work on these monuments by D. Jones has identified fifty-six sites of long barrows or mortuary enclosures in the Wolds, far more than are found in any other part of Lincolnshire.³⁵ The long barrows show a marked clustering to the east of the Wolds, in the valleys of the Waithe Beck, the Great Eau and also Fordington

³¹ Glyn Davies, *Interim Statement on the Archaeological Works at Staythorpe Power Station, Nottinghamshire*. Specialist report on Human Bone by Andrew Chamberlain; Stable Isotope Analysis of the Human Bone by Michael Richards (ARCUS, 2001), unpublished report, pp.7-8.

³² J. G. Evans and D. D. A. Simpson, 'Giants' Hills 2 long barrow, Skendleby, Lincolnshire', *Archaeologia*, 109 (1991), pp.1-45, esp. pp.7 and 42.

³³ *Ibid.*, p.3.

³⁴ P. Phillips (ed.), *Archaeology and Landscape Studies in North Lincolnshire*, part i, p.181.

³⁵ Dilwyn Jones, 'Long barrows and Neolithic elongated enclosures in Lincolnshire: an analysis of the air photographic evidence', *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society*, 64 (1998), pp.83-114.

Bottoms that flows into the River Steeping to the south.³⁶ It has been suggested that this distribution reflects the areas where early Neolithic people lived, in the valley bottoms to the east and south of the Wolds. There are very few long barrows in the Bain Valley or the valley of the Lymn.

In comparison, Neolithic axe-heads made from flint and from other stone have a much more widespread distribution pattern. These have been taken as evidence for widespread forest clearance in the Neolithic and subsequent settlement.³⁷ These axes do, however, have both a functional and a symbolic importance and more emphasis has recently been placed on the ritual deposition of Neolithic axe-heads.³⁸ The distribution of Neolithic axe-heads does show two distinct clusters on the Wolds: one in and around the parish of Thoresway and the other in the Lymn valley. J. May identifies these two clusters as due, in part, to the selective activities of field-workers and certainly both areas have seen extensive field-work by particular individuals. The Thoresway cluster is the result of finds made or reported by Mr D. Everatt in the 1960s and 1970s; all but one of the Neolithic axe-heads found in Thoresway are credited to Mr Everatt's activity. In the Lymn valley much field-work has been done by Mr G. V. Taylor in the 1950s and 1960s and more recently by Mr W. Bee in the Tetford and Salmonby areas. However, only about half of the finds of Neolithic axe-heads that have been found in, or are reported from, this area are by these two field-workers and reports of finds date back to at least 1934.³⁹ The finds recorded in the LSMR indicate the discovery of axe-heads and parts of axe-heads over more than seventy years by a number of different individuals. Thus, this cluster is not the result of the activity of one or two field-workers. It would require a more systematic survey over adjacent valleys to prove that this concentration of axe-heads is truly unusual in the southern Wolds. Nevertheless, the possibility is intriguing, especially given the lack of evidence for long barrows in the valley. Perhaps the Lymn valley was a prime location for the ritual deposition of axe-heads in contrast to those valleys to the east where long barrows are found.

It is during the Neolithic that people began the practice of building large ritual monuments in the landscape to mark certain places as being significant to them. It may be that this marking of special places continued much earlier traditions of recognising certain places as sacred. Long barrows are the most numerous of these ritual elements of the Neolithic landscape in the Wolds. There is evidence from excavation at the Giants' Hills 2 long barrow at Skendleby of an earlier sepulchral monument that stood on the site before the mound of the barrow was built.⁴⁰ This reuse of special sites continues during the Prehistoric as the local population continued to use the site and led in some cases to the regular redesign and adaptation of monuments through time.

The human remains found in excavated long barrows are usually disarticulated and do not comprise complete skeletons. The bodies of the dead have been defleshed, probably through excarnation, the laying out of bodies in the open until the soft tissues have disappeared. The

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.91 and Fig.4.

³⁷ J. May, *Prehistoric Lincolnshire*, p.53.

³⁸ Richard Bradley, *The Passage of Arms. An Archaeological Analysis of Prehistoric Hoards and Votive Deposits* (Oxford, 1990; second edition 1998), pp.65ff.

³⁹ C. W. Phillips, 'The present state of archaeology in Lincolnshire', (1934), p.179 (Salmonby, five examples).

⁴⁰ J. G. Evans and D. D. A. Simpson, 'Giants' Hills 2 long barrow, Skendleby, Lincolnshire', pp.7-14, the facade and burial area predated the construction of the mound. There was also an enclosure found beneath and predating the mound of Giants' Hills 1, although this enclosure was not necessarily part of an earlier sepulchral monument, C. W. Phillips, 'The excavation of the Giants' Hills long barrow, Skendleby, Lincolnshire', *Archaeologia*, 85 (1936), pp.37-106, esp. p.74.

bones of the dead had a special and continued significance to the communities that used the monuments. Bones are found re-deposited in different locations within long barrows as well as being ritually re-deposited in other places that were also important to the local communities.⁴¹ It is not unreasonable to assume that similar things happened in the Lincolnshire Wolds. The symbolism that Prehistoric people associated with these long barrow monuments is very difficult for the modern mind to understand, but it is thought that these monuments stood for ideas and cultural memories from earlier generations and this symbolism was emphasised by the direct association of the long barrows with the ancestors through the human bones that were deposited in them. They were much more than just graves in a similar way that a church is more than just a tomb.

The relatively large number of long barrow monuments on the Wolds suggests that there were significant ritual landscapes here during the Prehistoric period. In the Lindsey marshlands, to the east of the Wolds, the old land surface is buried beneath later flood deposits and so the absence of long barrows or mortuary enclosures in this area may be because they are buried too deeply to be found. Nevertheless there is a similar absence of such monuments in the clay vale to the west and on the limestone further west. This might suggest that the Wolds themselves were regarded as special and the concentration of long barrows in the Wolds is an indication of the ritual significance of these uplands, or some parts of these uplands, during the earlier Neolithic.

Other ritual monuments of the Neolithic and Bronze Age are found in the Wolds although there are none of the complex, large-scale, ritual monument groups incorporating a number of different monuments (such as henges, cursuses or pit alignments together with barrows) that are found in other parts of the country. Henges are ceremonial sites, circular in plan, and usually defined by a bank and ditch; they are traditionally dated to the late Neolithic. They can be very large and have one or two entrances, sometimes a circular setting of timber posts can form part of the henge; very rarely a henge will include stone circles. In the Wolds there is a henge in the Bain valley in West Ashby with a diameter of some twenty-five metres and a circle of pits outside the ditch which may well have held wooden posts.⁴² This is the largest henge in the Wolds, although there are other similar, but smaller, circular monuments, sometimes referred to as hengiform monuments. These too have a circular or oval form with entrances, but their diameter is much smaller than the larger henge monuments. Several have been tentatively identified in the valleys of the Wolds and perhaps indicate small ceremonial landscapes in use during the Neolithic. There is one at Stainton-le-Vale in the valley of the Waithe Beck (LSMR No.50261), one at Calceby in the valley of the Great Eau (LSMR No.44177) and one in West Ashby in the Bain valley (LSMR No.40816).⁴³ The West Ashby example was excavated in 1977.⁴⁴ Originally thought to be a round barrow the excavations revealed a series of monuments that had been modified by the people reusing the site. The earliest monument was possibly a small henge-like monument that had later been reused as a funerary monument over some considerable time. It is not unusual for sacred sites to be reused in this way for many generations from the Neolithic into the Bronze Age.

⁴¹ Michael Parker Pearson, *Bronze Age Britain* (1993), pp.46-49.

⁴² N. Field, 'West Ashby henge monument', *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology*, 17 (1982), pp.76-77.

⁴³ There is a further monument in Scamblesby, in the valley of a tributary of the river Bain, seen in aerial photographs, that has tentatively been identified as a hengiform monument (LSMR No.43653). It is now considered that this monument is more likely to be the remains of a long barrow, see D. Jones, 'Long barrows and Neolithic elongated enclosures in Lincolnshire', p.109, no.26.

⁴⁴ N. Field, 'A multi-phased barrow and possible henge monument at West Ashby, Lincolnshire', *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society*, 51 (1985), pp.103-36.

The cursus is another type of monument found as part of ceremonial landscapes of the Neolithic in the south of Britain and the Midlands especially. The Lincolnshire Wolds are notable in not having any certain cursus monuments, especially given that they are found in the Yorkshire Wolds to the north on the other side of the Humber.⁴⁵ Cursus monuments are long thin enclosures with two parallel ditches often 100 metres, or more, apart that run across the landscape usually in a fairly straight line for distances of more than 1000 metres. The largest in Dorset runs for some ten kilometres. There are usually entrances on the long sides of the cursus and it is thought that they would have been used for processions. Cursuses are often aligned using astronomical sightings.

D. Jones identified a short cursus-type monument at Thorganby but it is less than a hundred metres long and only nineteen metres wide and does not compare with major cursuses found elsewhere in Britain.⁴⁶ The absence of cursuses in Lincolnshire has been discussed by Jones and he suggests that linear pit-defined monuments may have served a ceremonial purpose similar to that of cursuses. Jones identified two examples of this type of monument on the Wolds at Stenigot in the valley of the Bain and Bag Enderby in the Lymn valley. These monuments are a double alignment of paired pits at regular intervals and widely spaced, the pits may have held timber posts. It is suggested that these monuments acted as a focus for sepulchral-ritual ceremonies.⁴⁷

There is evidence that long barrow sites continued to be used in the later Neolithic although not necessarily for the burial of human bones. At Giants' Hills 2 long barrow the ditches were deliberately refilled and later pottery was found in the ditches. The evidence from the snail remains and the charcoal from the filled in ditches of the barrow show that, even though activity was taking place on the barrow site, the immediate area of the barrow had reverted to dense woodland of yew and ash with some oak and shrub including hazel and blackthorn.⁴⁸

Settlement sites, in other words, evidence of permanent or semi-permanent huts, occupation debris or evidence for fields, from the Neolithic and Bronze Age have always been difficult to find and are rare in Britain as a whole. There are no certain sites in the Lincolnshire Wolds although evidence has been found that points towards the existence of settlement sites even though the sites themselves have not been identified. The field-work of the Fenland survey in the south of the Wolds found a number of flint scatters of this date. A single scatter dated to the early Neolithic was found as well as a number of later flint scatters. Analysis of the pre-late Neolithic finds showed them clustered on the lighter soils and this trend continued into the late Neolithic and early Bronze Age.⁴⁹

During work on a reservoir in Donington-on-Bain there was some tentative evidence for an early field system with small rectangular plots and access trackways. This field system may have been Neolithic as it was overlain by, and hence earlier than, a pair of ditches (one a ring ditch) which were dated to the Beaker period.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ C. Stoertz, *Ancient Landscapes of the Yorkshire Wolds: Aerial Photographic Transcription and Analysis* (Swindon, 1997), pp.25-30.

⁴⁶ D. Jones, 'Long barrows and Neolithic elongated enclosures in Lincolnshire', p.113, no.58.

⁴⁷ D. Jones, *Ibid.*, p.100.

⁴⁸ J. G. Evans and D. D. A. Simpson, 'Giants' Hills 2 long barrow, Skendleby, Lincolnshire', pp.19-20, 25, 31, 43-44.

⁴⁹ T. Lane, *Lincolnshire Survey the Northern Fen Edge*, pp.41 and 43.

⁵⁰ G. Tann, *Stenigot Reservoir to Kenwick Pumping Station, Archaeological Watching Brief and Excavations during Groundworks for a water trunk-main* (Lindsey Archaeological Services, 1997), unpublished report, p.22

Also in the Bain valley the excavations of the West Ashby barrow found early Bronze Age flint work and pottery in the make up of the mound as well as similar flint work during field-walking in the vicinity of the barrow. The conclusion was that the barrow lay close to a settlement.⁵¹

In 1986 a gas pipeline cut through a number of features in Swallow and domestic material was recovered. It has been suggested that the pipeline passed through the remains of a Bronze Age settlement at this point.⁵²

The monuments that would have dominated the Wolds landscape in what has traditionally been called the Bronze Age were the round barrows. These earthwork mounds survived for many centuries after they were built. In 1852 it was still possible to write of ‘a chain of tumuli or barrows stretching from the Humber to the interior of the country, though now somewhat broken in its connection’.⁵³ Although few barrows survive as earthworks today many more are evidenced by cropmarks of ring ditches visible in growing cereal crops photographed from the air. Over 350 barrows and possible barrows are now recorded in the Lincolnshire LSMR in the Wolds.⁵⁴ Although not all of these will be of Bronze Age date, archaeologists have usually given them this general date.

It has been found in other parts of the country that Bronze Age barrows were often placed near to earlier monuments in the landscape such as henges, long barrows or cursuses. Thus early Bronze Age landscapes for the dead were created and these landscapes were often in fairly open grassland. It is possible that, in the later Bronze Age, in parts of the Wolds, barrows were used as markers for dividing up the land, perhaps marking territorial grazing rights for different groups of people, such as family groupings.⁵⁵

There is certainly evidence from the excavations at Giants’ Hills 2 long barrow in Skendleby for further extensive woodland clearance on the Wolds in the Beaker period, at the end of the Neolithic and early in the Bronze Age. In the area of the long barrow this was followed by some cultivation before the area became grassland in the later Bronze Age and into the Iron Age. Soil analysis suggests, however, that not only was the land uncultivated but that the area was not intensively grazed either.⁵⁶

The discovery of how to smelt and work iron did not have a major impact on the cultural and social life of Prehistoric people in the short term. The settlement pattern and economies of the late Bronze Age and early Iron Age are similar. As with other periods, the amount of information on settlement during this period is small. There were certainly people utilising the Lincolnshire Wolds as late Bronze Age tools have been recovered, notably a number of bronze socketed axe-heads. There are, however, not a large number of them and there are no hoards of

⁵¹ N. Field, ‘A multi-phased barrow at West Ashby’, p.111.

⁵² K. Leahy, ‘Finds of Bronze Age loom-weights and pottery from Swallow’, *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology*, 25 (1990), pp.48-49.

⁵³ Harold Dudley, *Early Days in North-West Lincolnshire. A Regional Archaeology* (Scunthorpe, 1949), p.81, quoting *The Eastern Counties Herald*.

⁵⁴ I am grateful to Ellen Cross whose work on round barrows for her undergraduate dissertation included some enhancement of these records in the Lincolnshire SMR. Ellen Cross, ‘Round barrows, archaeology and landscape in East and West Lindsey, Lincolnshire’, unpublished BA dissertation, University of Nottingham (2002).

⁵⁵ Francis Pryor, *Farmers in Prehistoric Britain* (Stroud, 1998), pp.84-85.

⁵⁶ J. G. Evans and D. D. A. Simpson, ‘Giants’ Hills 2 long barrow, Skendleby, Lincolnshire’, pp.31, 44.

bronzes similar to those that have been found in other parts of Lincolnshire.⁵⁷ One explanation might be because bronze hoards are often found in low-lying ground and in rivers. They are ritual deposits in watery places and a number have been found in the rivers and fen edge locations just off the Wolds.⁵⁸

There are a number of cropmarks of enclosures, and groups of enclosures, in the Wolds that have been plotted from aerial photographs and recorded by the National Mapping Programme. Such sites have often been tentatively dated to the later Prehistoric on the basis of their morphology. Several have had late Iron Age and Romano-British artefacts picked up from their immediate vicinity by field-walkers. Although many of these sites were no doubt occupied in the late Iron Age some circumspection is required when assigning them a date. Enclosure ditches visible in aerial photographs at Kirmond-le-Mire were investigated in 1991 and found to date from the late Bronze Age from the pottery found within them. It may well be that some of the sites seen as cropmarks have their origins much earlier than the late Iron Age.⁵⁹

In other parts of Lincolnshire large scale linear boundaries have been identified, but they have rarely been noted in the Wolds. Intriguingly, earthwork survivals of similar such monuments have been found in the north of the Wolds during recent survey work, and some of these might well be of late Prehistoric date. They would have been highly visible in an open landscape but their exact functions are still a matter of some debate.⁶⁰

Hill forts which are found in other parts of the country are few in number in Lincolnshire and those there are, are smaller than the average. There is one in the Wolds on the northern side of the Kirmington gap and known as Yarborough Camp (NLSMR No.743). This site is not certainly Iron Age although finds from its interior of Roman pottery suggest the date of occupation of the site.⁶¹

The large enclosure recorded from aerial photographs in Binbrook at Swinhope Hill may perhaps date to the late Bronze Age to early Iron Age. The style of the enclosure is reminiscent of the smaller single-ditched hill-forts found further south in the country and dated to this period. The cropmarks also reveal small ring ditches within the enclosure which have been interpreted as evidence for round houses.⁶²

The Iron Age in Britain saw a gradual rise in population, reaching a peak in the late Iron Age before the Roman conquest. The density of population rose and, for the first time, relatively large population centres grew up. These probably acted as market centres and are an indication of a change from a subsistence economy to a market economy.

⁵⁷ P. J. Davey, 'Bronze Age metalwork from Lincolnshire', *Archaeologia*, 104 (1973), pp.51-127.

⁵⁸ For a distribution map of Bronze Age metalwork in Lincolnshire see J. May, *Prehistoric Lincolnshire*, p.115, Fig.63.

⁵⁹ N. Field and D. Knight, 'A later Bronze Age site at Kirmond-le-Mire', *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology*, 27 (1992), pp.43-44.

⁶⁰ T. Lane, 'Reconstructing Lincolnshire landscapes', pp.140-41. For a discussion of these boundaries in Lincolnshire see Yvonne Boutwood, 'Prehistoric linear boundaries in Lincolnshire and its fringes', in *Lincolnshire's Archaeology from the Air* edited by R. H. Bewley, Occasional Papers in Lincolnshire History and Archaeology No.11, (Lincoln, 1998), pp.29-46.

⁶¹ N. Loughlin and K. R. Miller, *A Survey of Archaeological Sites in Humberside*, p.195; J. May, *Prehistoric Lincolnshire*, p.143.

⁶² LSMR No.42747; D. Jones, 'Aerial reconnaissance and Prehistoric and Romano-British archaeology in northern Lincolnshire', p.20 and Fig.11.

If it had been possible for an observer to take a general, bird's eye view of the Lincolnshire Wolds a generation or so after the Roman Conquest that observer would probably not have noticed very much difference in the general pattern of the landscape to that of the pre-Roman late Iron Age. There would have been a small fort at Kirmington positioned to cover the northern gap through the Wolds. There would perhaps have been newly metalled Roman roads crossing the Wolds and leading to the coast. The vast majority of the small farmsteads and larger settlements would have looked the same. Most of the archaeological evidence for the start of the Roman period in the Wolds point towards continuity rather than dramatic change.

D. Jones has carried out a study of Romano-British settlement in the Wolds from aerial photographic evidence.⁶³ The small farmsteads appear to be scattered across all parts of the Wolds although they do form a dispersed pattern. This pattern is backed up by finds of Romano-British pottery which are also found widely in the Wolds. Odd finds of quern stones indicate that there was some arable farming with cereal crops being grown for domestic use, at least.

A number of small farmsteads have been recorded on the Wolds, some with elements of curvilinear ditches which indicate an Iron Age origin. Others have rectilinear enclosures and several have had Romano-British pottery found upon them. Excavations at Barnetby-le-Wold have revealed a late Iron Age farmstead that continued to be occupied into the Roman period.⁶⁴ It is interesting that there was no evidence here for any profound change in the settlement as a result of Roman political control being established over this area; traditional circular wooden buildings were still constructed well into the Roman period. There was also very little Roman pottery being used on the site, even as late as the second century, which might indicate that the people continued to manufacture their own pottery in traditional Iron Age styles. It may be that the impact of Roman material culture on rural Iron Age people in the Wolds was very limited for several generations after the Roman invasion. It has been suggested that this community deliberately chose to ignore the Roman artefacts and other symbols of Roman cultural dominance as a protest against the changes that the Romans brought about. It is only in the later second century that major changes in the development of the farmstead took place and small corn-driers constructed. In the mid third century larger, stone corn-driers were built. The corn-driers certainly indicate that arable crops were being grown; there was environmental evidence for wheat on the site. They also show that the community was prepared to invest in stone buildings.

Few other late Iron Age or Romano-British farmsteads have been excavated in the Wolds. At Stenigot Reservoir in Donington-on-Bain part of a farmstead was excavated which demonstrated there was arable cultivation of wheat, barley and oats together with evidence of features used to control stock animals with bones of cattle, pigs, sheep, horse and dog being recovered.⁶⁵

The larger Roman sites are easier to recognise and where they include evidence of mosaics, hypocaust tile (under floor heating), painted plaster-work or domestic stone buildings they have commonly been called 'villas'. These high-status farms are a feature of the later Roman

⁶³ Dilwyn Jones, 'Romano-British settlement on the Lincolnshire Wolds', in *Lincolnshire's Archaeology from the Air* edited by R. H. Bewley, Occasional Papers in Lincolnshire History and Archaeology No.11, (Lincoln, 1998), pp.69-80.

⁶⁴ Mark Allen and Jim Rylett, *Archaeological Excavation Report: Phase 5, The Bridles, Barnetby le Wold, North Lincolnshire*, (Pre-Construct Archaeology, 2002), unpublished report.

⁶⁵ R. J. Armour-Chelu, *Evaluation and Excavation at Stenigot Reservoir, Donington-on-Bain, Lincolnshire* (Lindsey Archaeological Services, 1997), unpublished report.

period and there are several on the Wolds – as at Worlaby (NLSMR No.2331), Kirmond-le-Mire (LSMR No.54193) or Walesby (LSMR No.50571).⁶⁶ D. Jones noted the Lymn valley as an important area of quite dense Roman settlement, the aerial photographic evidence revealing a landscape of small ‘villas’ and associated enclosures.⁶⁷

There are a number of large (up to thirty hectares) settlement sites in Roman Lincolnshire, some of which have been called ‘small towns’. Although these sites can be very extensive, their whole area was not necessarily occupied all at the same time. In the Wolds there are several of these settlements and all would appear to develop from late Iron Age proto-urban sites. None of these sites are known to have had earthwork enclosures. These open, undefended settlements seem to have functioned as economic, political and social centres during the Iron Age and into the Roman period. Sites are known at Kirmington (NLSMR No.2268), Ludford (SMR No.40610), Horncastle (SMR No.42689), Ulceby Cross (SMR No.42028) and Spilsby (SMR No.43217).⁶⁸ There is also a possible site at South Ferriby cliff (NLSMR No.1661). Settlements have also been recorded at Nettleton Top adjacent to Caistor High Street and, from cropmark evidence, at Aswardby in the Lymn valley.⁶⁹ Recent excavation at Nettleton Top, by Durham University with funding from Lincolnshire County Council, has shown that the site has substantive remains of the late Iron Age and early Roman occupation. Earlier finds had indicated the presence of a shrine or temple complex here and similar evidence has been reported from Kirmington.⁷⁰ D. Jones suggests there may be a similar temple enclosure at Aswardby. A religious focus may be a feature of these sites. They are, as yet, incompletely understood and further investigation of these sites is needed.

There are two small later Roman forts in the Wolds at Horncastle and at Caistor. Both had stone walls and date to the late third century or later. The Horncastle walls enclose a rectangular area of two hectares while the Caistor enclosure fortified an area of three and a half hectares. At Horncastle the fortifications were built at the confluence of the rivers Bain and Waring and were outside the area of the earlier late Iron Age and Romano-British settlement that lay to the south. At Caistor the defences follow the lie of the land and, although there is some evidence for Roman settlement at this location, there is very little evidence for any substantial earlier Iron Age occupation here. It seems that these fortifications were part of a defensive system for the east coast of Britain that included the Saxon Shore Forts of the south of England. Horncastle and Caistor, in that case, being local strong points that perhaps acted as bases for units of mobile light troops that could react quickly to any barbarian raiders that threatened the area.⁷¹

There is a traditional picture of the end of Roman rule coming in AD410 and Angles and Saxons then arriving from the continent and taking over large areas of the countryside. The Anglo-Saxons arrive in Lincolnshire within a couple of generations of the end of Roman rule, although

⁶⁶ J. B. Whitwell, *Roman Lincolnshire*, (Lincoln, 1970, revised edition 1992), pp.85-86.

⁶⁷ D. Jones, ‘Romano-British settlement on the Lincolnshire Wolds’, pp.71-76.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.69-70.

⁶⁹ Steven Willis, ‘Nettleton: north-west of Mount Pleasant House’, *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology*, 35 (2000), p.55 (Nettleton); D. Jones, ‘Romano-British settlement on the Lincolnshire Wolds’, p.69 (Aswardby).

⁷⁰ J. May, *Dragonby. Report on Excavations at an Iron Age and Romano-British Settlement in North Lincolnshire*, Oxbow Monograph 61 (Oxford, 1996), p.271 (for Nettleton); K. A. Leahy, ‘Votive models from Kirmington, south Humberside’, *Britannia*, 11 (1980), pp.325-30 (for Kirmington).

⁷¹ Naomi Field and Henry Hurst, ‘Roman Horncastle’, *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology*, 18 (1983), pp.47-88, esp. p.86.

there is some evidence for a limited Germanic presence during the fourth century.⁷² The collapse of the Roman economic system led to changes in the landscape as the larger high-status Roman farms declined and disappeared and once again small farmsteads and minor settlements, somewhat reminiscent of those previously found in the Iron Age, appeared.

It is the burial grounds of the pagan Anglo-Saxons that provide much information on the period from the fifth to the seventh centuries. There are several of the larger cremation cemeteries in the Wolds, most notably at South Elkington near Louth and at Hall Hill in West Keal. Cremation cemeteries are earlier than inhumation cemeteries, there are fewer of them and they can be very large. These are cemeteries with the cremated remains buried in urns and they date to the early part of the Anglo-Saxon period in the fifth and sixth centuries. Two hundred and fifty burials were plotted at South Elkington with only about a quarter of the cemetery excavated and the scatter of pottery from cemetery urns at Hall Hill covered over eight thousand square metres (about two acres). The cemetery at Elsham, excavated in 1975-76 found over 600 urns.⁷³ There is the possibility of a further cremation cemetery near Wold Newton where over twenty urns were discovered during gravel extraction in 1828.⁷⁴

It is suggested that these large cemeteries serviced a wide area with communities bringing their dead some distance to be buried. The rituals associated with the burial of cinerary urns from many different communities would have been important parts of the funerary ceremonials the early Anglo-Saxons carried out. For the settlers who took part in these rites at the cemetery, the ceremonies would have served to emphasise their group identity. Thus, these cemeteries were special places in the landscape for the families that used them and lived around them. It is not surprising to find them in prominent positions.⁷⁵ The Hall Hill cemetery overlooks the northern fens and the Stickney ridge where evidence for early Anglo-Saxon settlement has been found.⁷⁶ The South Elkington cemetery looks out across the Lindsey marshes towards the sea. The site of the Elsham cemetery has a view from the western edge of the Wolds towards and across the valley of the river Ancholme, as well as views across the Wolds to the Lindsey marshland and beyond to the sea. The Wold Newton cemetery is within the Wolds and the suggested locations for this cemetery would seem to have only limited prospects around the valleys of the area. However, the exact location of this cemetery is not known.⁷⁷

Inhumation cemeteries are much more numerous and are, on the whole, smaller than the cremation cemeteries. The cemeteries rarely have more than a hundred graves, and probably served individual settlements or small groups of settlements.⁷⁸ As these cemeteries are also

⁷² For discussions of the fourth century Germanic brooches found in northern Lincolnshire see K. A. Leahy, 'Late Roman and early Germanic metalwork from Lincolnshire', in *A Prospect of Lincolnshire* edited by Naomi Field and Andrew White (Lincoln, 1984), pp.23-32; K. Leahy, 'The Anglo-Saxon settlement of Lindsey', in *Pre-Viking Lindsey* edited by Alan Vince (Lincoln, 1993), pp.29-44, esp. pp.30-33.

⁷³ G. C. Knowles, 'Elsham', *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology*, 11 (1976), p.60; N. Loughlin and K. R. Miller, *A Survey of Archaeological Sites in Humberside*, p.197.

⁷⁴ N. Loughlin and K. R. Miller, *A Survey of Archaeological Sites in Humberside*, p.171.

⁷⁵ Howard Williams, 'Cemeteries as central places - place and identity in migration period eastern England', in *Central Places in the Migration and Merovingian Periods*. Papers from the fifty-second Sachsensymposium, Lund, August 2001, edited by Birgitta Hardh and Lars Larson (Stockholm, 2002), pp.342-62, esp. pp.352-58.

⁷⁶ T. Lane, *Lincolnshire Survey the Northern Fen Edge*, p.58.

⁷⁷ In 1856 a number of cinerary urns were found at South Willingham (LSMR No.40557). It has been claimed that this is the site of an Anglo-Saxon cremation cemetery but it is a doubtful site as no urns survive, the number of urns found is not certain and the site is unlocated.

⁷⁸ For cemeteries see K. Leahy, 'The Anglo-Saxon settlement of Lindsey', in *Pre-Viking Lindsey* edited by Alan Vince (Lincoln, 1993), pp.39-44; K. Leahy, 'The early Saxon context', in G. Drinkall and M. Foreman,

placed on high ground with views of the surrounding area they are sometimes found in a line along the slopes of a ridge of high land. Thus, along the eastern edge of the Wolds lie the cemeteries of Brocklesby (LSMR No.53803), Keelby (LSMR No.53804), Riby (LSMR No.50022), Laceby (NELSMR No.1244) and Welbeck Hill (NELSMR No.1234).⁷⁹

One of the more interesting burials found in the Wolds is that from Asgarby, discovered in 1915. The grave goods indicate it to be the grave of a warrior with a sword, shield and a variety of rich accoutrements. It dates to the seventh century, and the quality of the grave goods have led to suggestions that this may be the grave of one of the aristocrats of the area, perhaps even a prince of the kingdom of Lindsey.⁸⁰ The kingdom of Lindsey covered, more or less, the area north of the river Witham to the Humber estuary and from the sea to the river Trent, consequently including the Lincolnshire Wolds. It seems likely to have been a small independent Anglo-Saxon kingdom for at least part of the sixth and seventh centuries.

When pagan inhumation cemeteries cease to be used, from about the late seventh century, the Anglo-Saxon archaeological evidence is much sparser. Christian burials without grave goods became the norm. Settlement evidence is elusive and it is still not possible to develop a coherent picture of settlement pattern in Lincolnshire although P. Everson has suggested that some multi-focal settlements of a later period may have their origins in earlier Anglo-Saxon times.⁸¹ The Fenland Survey found some pottery scatters in the very south of the Wolds that indicate some settlement in East and West Keal and Toynton St Peter, together with some evidence of continued occupation of Roman sites into the middle Saxon period.⁸²

Excavated settlement sites on the Wolds have found *grubenhäuser*. A *grubenhäus* or sunken-featured building is a building consisting of a pit with a post-hole at each end. The floor of the pit may have formed the floor of the building or it may have had a raised wooden floor. At Riby, sunken-featured buildings were found together with farming compounds for livestock. The evidence from the bones found suggested that the farmers kept mostly cattle together with lesser numbers of sheep. There was also some limited evidence for arable crops and for textile production using wool or flax. Occupation of the site lasted until the mid ninth century.⁸³ At Nettleton Top a further excavated settlement similarly had sunken-featured buildings and evidence for cattle and sheep being reared. Arable crops were also grown, probably mostly barley.⁸⁴

There were certainly a number of high-status centres in the Wolds: Horncastle and Caistor were royal sokes or estates⁸⁵ and there were early monasteries at Partney and possibly Louth.⁸⁶ It is worth noting that two of the three markets in the Wolds recorded in the Domesday Book

The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Castledyke South, Barton-on-Humber, Sheffield Excavation Reports 6 (Sheffield, 1998), pp.8-11.

⁷⁹ K. Leahy, 'The early Saxon context', map Fig.4, p.8.

⁸⁰ A. White, 'Anglo-Saxon finds from three sites in Lincolnshire', *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology*, 23 (1988), pp.87-88.

⁸¹ For a discussion of the limited evidence in Lindsey see Paul Everson, 'Pre-Viking settlement in Lindsey', in *Pre-Viking Lindsey* edited by Alan Vince (Lincoln, 1993), pp.91-100.

⁸² T. Lane, *Lincolnshire Survey the Northern Fen Edge*, pp.58-59.

⁸³ K. Steadman, 'Excavation of a Saxon site at Riby Cross Roads, Lincolnshire', *Archaeological Journal*, 151 (1994), pp.212-306.

⁸⁴ N. Field and K. Leahy, 'Prehistoric and Anglo-Saxon remains at Nettleton Top, Nettleton', *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology*, 28 (1993), pp.9-35.

⁸⁵ Peter Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Lincolnshire* (Lincoln, 1998), p.114.

⁸⁶ David Stocker, 'The early Church in Lincolnshire', in *Pre-Viking Lindsey* edited by Alan Vince (Lincoln, 1993), pp.110-12 (Partney), 114 (Louth).

were at Louth and Partney and these markets were perhaps associated with the monastic centres⁸⁷ and may have had their origins in the middle Anglo-Saxon period. Recent analysis of finds in Lincolnshire has stressed the wealth of Lindsey during the period leading up to the Scandinavian take-over of the area.⁸⁸ A number of sites have been found along the eastern edge of the Wolds, close to Barton Street, where numbers of middle Anglo-Saxon coins and other metalwork have been reported together with some evidence of pottery imported from the continent.⁸⁹ The evidence from these sites suggests that the natural resources of the Wolds were being exploited and commercial links established through these sites with other parts of Britain and with the continent.

Evidence for woodland during the Anglo-Saxon period on the Wolds is somewhat limited. Woodland can regenerate on abandoned land fairly quickly, in about fifty years, but there is no evidence for this in the Wolds. Certainly the Domesday Book records little woodland in the Wolds and, despite the difficulties of using what is essentially an assessment for taxation purposes, it would seem that only sparse woodland areas remained by 1086. Nevertheless, there is some evidence for a royal estate centre at Waltham within a wooded area. This argument is based on the place name 'Waltham', an early settlement name, deriving from 'weald' or 'wald' meaning woodland, high forest land, and '-ham' meaning an estate or administrative centre. Comparison with other Walthams or Wealdhams across the country suggests that the name is associated with royal estates near forest land. The Lincolnshire Waltham was perhaps associated with an estate on the Wolds that was regarded as forest even though it was less wooded than the royal forests found in the south of England.⁹⁰ The place-name Limber found in the Wolds near to Waltham derives from the Old English name for the lime tree.⁹¹ Lime trees are a native species and are indicative of ancient woodland. If this is evidence for woodland in Waltham it is early and middle Anglo-Saxon woodland and is not recorded in the later Anglo-Saxon period.

Scandinavian settlers probably arrived in Lincolnshire from 877 when the great Viking army split up and parts of Mercia were shared out amongst the warriors.⁹² It seems that the large estates were fragmented into smaller holdings, many of which later formed the manors recorded in the Domesday Book. At the same time there was a movement towards more nucleated settlements and the core of many present day villages began at this time. The new landowners needed to emphasise their status and one way they did this was by the founding of churches on their land. By usurping ancient rights, notably the right of burial from the episcopal minsters, these new churches served the lordship of their founder and became the centres of new, small parishes.⁹³

Work on the Anglo-Saxon stone sculpture of Lincolnshire by P. Everson and D. Stocker has recently shed new light on the formation of parishes in Lincolnshire.⁹⁴ Most of the stone

⁸⁷ *The Lincolnshire Domesday and the Lindsey Survey* edited by C. W. Foster and T. Longley, Lincoln Record Society vol.19 (Horncastle, 1924), 7/56, 24/45. The other market was at Bolingbroke, 14/65, and is described as new. P. Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Lincolnshire*, p.174.

⁸⁸ Katharina Ulmschneider, 'Settlement, economy and the "productive" site: middle Anglo-Saxon Lincolnshire AD650-780', *Medieval Archaeology*, 40 (2000), pp.53-79.

⁸⁹ For example, K. Steadman, 'Excavation of a Saxon site at Riby Cross Roads', pp.247-49.

⁹⁰ R. Huggins, 'The significance of the place-name Wealdham', *Medieval Archaeology*, 19 (1975), pp.198-201.

⁹¹ Kenneth Cameron, *The Place-Names of Lincolnshire, part 2, The Wapentake of Yarborough*, English Place-Name Society volume LXIV/LXV, (1991), pp.219-20.

⁹² P. Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Lincolnshire*, p.97.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, pp.154-56.

⁹⁴ P. Everson and D. Stocker, *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture, volume 5: Lincolnshire* (1999).

sculptural pieces found in Lincolnshire are the remains of the monuments of an elite. Some of these monuments stood in the graveyards of minster churches but in many of the churches of Lincolnshire, where stone sculpture has been found, there were only one or two monuments, and it is argued that these are the special high-status monuments of the founder of a new church, and perhaps his family, buried in a newly established graveyard. These new churches are the churches of new parishes. Because it is possible to date the sculpture it can be said that the foundation of these parochial graveyards began in the early to mid tenth century. This then is the earliest evidence for the creation of parishes in Lincolnshire. The particular style of these monuments in Lindsey from about 950 may indicate a connection with the re-establishment of the Bishop's authority after Wessex re-conquered Lindsey in 942. Thus in Lindsey, including the Wolds, the creation of parishes may have occurred widely during the mid to late tenth century as the local magnates founded parochial churches on their land and sought the support of the new Bishop.⁹⁵

The landscape of the Wolds today has been formed by the activities of mankind since the last Ice Age. The inhabitants of the Wolds during each period of pre-history and history have left evidence of their passing. Even today there are landscape elements in the Wolds that were created by the activities of people who lived thousands of years ago. Seeking to understand how and why a landscape has been formed will help us to manage, protect and enjoy that landscape.

⁹⁵ For the detail of this argument see David Stocker and Paul Everson, 'Five towns funerals: decoding diversity in Danelaw stone sculpture', in *Vikings and the Danelaw. Select Papers from the Proceedings of the Thirteenth Viking Congress, Nottingham and York, 21-30 August 1997* edited by James Graham-Campbell, Richard Hall, Judith Jesch and David N. Parsons, (Oxford, 2001), pp.223-43, and also P. Everson and D. Stocker, *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture: Lincolnshire*, pp.76-79.