

Fieldwork at Chapel Road, Fillingham.

J. L. Buckberry and D. M. Hadley

The Department of Archaeology and Prehistory, University of Sheffield excavated a small area of a late Anglo-Saxon cemetery, along with a section of an early to middle Anglo-Saxon ditch, and conducted an earthwork survey in Fillingham (SK 859 946) during July and October 2000 (Fig.1). The excavations formed part of an ongoing project to examine Anglo-Saxon and medieval settlement and cemeteries in Lincolnshire.¹ Fillingham is a shrunken medieval village, with visible remnants of medieval settlement and ridge and furrow around the village, particularly at the west end of the village near to the post-medieval lake (Fig.1). The village plan is complex, and it is clear that the form the village had on the earliest available maps was rather different from its medieval predecessor. It is likely that the village was once poly-focal; indeed, according to Domesday Book, Fillingham had seven manors in 1086 (Foster and Longley 1924, pp.94, 119-20, 203), which may have been associated with separate settlement foci (Hadley 2000a, pp.201-02). Although the creation of the lake clearly transformed the appearance of the village, it appears from surviving earthwork evidence (Everson, Taylor and Dunn 1991, p.27) and previous excavation (Field 1983) that the village had undergone a number of alterations in the preceding centuries. The fieldwork was, thus, intended to build on previous work and to investigate the development of the village in the Anglo-Saxon and medieval periods. In particular, we set out to survey the earthwork evidence at the west end of the village and to investigate a previously discovered late Anglo-Saxon cemetery on Chapel Road, in order to ascertain if this was associated with a church and contemporary settlement.

The Anglo-Saxon cemetery in Fillingham

In 1953 a burial was unearthed in the garden of Lakeside Cottage, Chapel Road, Fillingham (Fig. 1).² The upper half of a west-east aligned burial was found on the east side of the garden, with the legs and feet extending under the hedge into the adjoining paddock. The grave was shallow, stone-lined and covered with similar limestone slabs. Mrs Rudkin, a local amateur archaeologist, visited the site on 8 May 1953. Her diary records that skulls and bones had been uncovered previously, when a water main was laid through the garden, indicating that there was once a cemetery in the garden of Lakeside Cottage.³ A representative from Lincoln museum also visited the site, but found no evidence to date the burial with any accuracy, and concluded it could date from any period from Roman to late medieval. The skeleton and its coffin were left in situ.

In 1982 the North Lincolnshire Archaeology Unit were called out to investigate the discovery of a charnel deposit

dug into the limestone bedrock of a property adjoining Lakeside Cottage. Two graves lined and capped with limestone pieces were found just under the topsoil to the south of the charnel. The graves were west-east aligned with the

heads to the west, and were hollowed into the bedrock. The skeletons were supine and extended, with the arms lying across the body. No finds were associated with the skeletons, but prehistoric, early Anglo-Saxon and later medieval pottery were found in the vicinity. The excavator believed the burials were post-Roman and Christian in character, and compared them to examples discovered at Hemswell, Blyborough, Normanby and Hackthorn, all in Lincolnshire (Field 1983). A further area was partially excavated, revealing the outline of further stone-lined graves. Owing to financial constraints, these graves were covered by a tarpaulin and left unexcavated.⁴

Geophysics and excavations undertaken in July 2000

One aim of the fieldwork in Fillingham was to try to find out more about the cemetery in the vicinity of Lakeside Cottage. Prior to excavation two resistivity surveys were carried out in the orchard belonging to Lakeside Cottage and in the adjacent paddock. This was undertaken in an attempt to identify the extent of the cemetery and to determine whether the cemetery was associated with a church. Unfortunately, neither of these surveys revealed any archaeological features (Buckberry 2000a), although a negative geophysical survey does not necessarily indicate a lack of archaeology in the area surveyed, but rather a lack of detectable features. Indeed, human bone and Anglo-Saxon pottery were identified in rabbit holes spread across the paddock suggesting that the cemetery may have been extensive.

In July 2000 four trenches were excavated. Trench 1 measured 8m by 6m, and was located east of and adjacent to the previous excavations in 1982. Trench 2 measured 3m by 2m and was opened to examine an exposed bedrock face. Trenches 3 and 4 both measured 1.5m by 1m, and were located to identify whether burials extended to the north and southwest of Trench 1 (see Fig.2). Towards the end of the excavations, whilst clearing away rubble from around the site, the tarpaulin covering the graves encountered in 1982 was discovered, and beneath this the tops of the stone linings of six graves were clearly visible. This area of the site was excavated over a long weekend the following October.

These excavations revealed that much of Trench 1 and all of Trenches 2 and 3 had been disturbed by a post-medieval quarry. The western and southern edges of the quarry were exposed in Trenches 1 and 2, and were almost vertical. The limited area of the base exposed had a flat bottom. The quarrying was presumably undertaken to obtain the natural bedrock, a crumbly sandstone/mudstone, which would be unsuitable for use as walling material. It is possible that the stone was obtained either to repair roads in the village or in the construction of the dam built to create Fillingham Lake in the late eighteenth century (Davies 2000). The quarry appears to have been backfilled shortly after its excavation, as there was no evidence of any silting at the base of the quarry. The base fill was found directly on top of the bedrock and formed an extensive, thick layer over the quarried area. This fill contained both post-medieval pottery, mostly dating to the late eighteenth century, and medieval pottery dating from the early Anglo-Saxon period

through to the fifteenth century, although the vast majority of the pottery (over 200 sherds) dated to the Anglo-Saxon period (Davies 2000; Young 2000).

In addition, in excess of 1700 fragments of human bone were recovered during the course of the excavation, all from contexts post-dating the quarry. The assemblage was typical of disturbed burials rather than formal charnel deposits, as small bones such as the metatarsals were at least as abundant as larger skeletal elements (especially femurs). Charnel deposits tend to have proportionately fewer small bones, as they are lost when bodies are redeposited. This indicates that the quarry destroyed a large area of the cemetery, but that the recovered bones were left in the vicinity and mixed with the quarry backfill. Given the confused nature of the resistivity survey in the paddock immediately to the north of the excavations, it would appear that the quarry extended for some distance in that direction. This is also indicated by the fragments of human bone found in rabbit holes spread across the paddock.

Six west-east aligned stone-lined graves were excavated in October 2000 (Trench 5) (Fig.3). One of these graves continued under the baulk on the west of the trench and the outlines of other graves were observed continuing to the north, indicating that further graves remain in situ. It is evident, however, that much of the cemetery was destroyed by the post-medieval quarrying activity detected in the first four trenches excavated, and it is unlikely that many more burials remain undisturbed. The excavated graves were in two rows, indicating that the cemetery was planned. They were very shallow at the time of excavation (from 0.19m to 0.35m deep), with the skeletons lying directly on the bedrock. The stone linings protruded above the level of the subsoil, indicating that although the graves may originally have been shallow the ground level had been subsequently lowered. One grave (104) overlay another grave (110), and some disarticulated material was recovered from the grave fills, demonstrating that the cemetery had been in use for some time. Four of the graves (104, 107, 113, 116) had 'pillow stones' supporting the skulls of the skeletons. The presence of these pillow stones indicates that the cemetery is of late Anglo-Saxon date, given that such grave furniture has consistently been assigned to that period (Daniell 1997, p. 160). In this case, such a deduction is supported by the presence of residual early to middle Anglo-Saxon pottery from several grave fills. Samples from three of the skeletons (001, 002, 004) were submitted to obtain radiocarbon dates, to confirm the date of the cemetery (see below).

Analysis of the skeletal remains

The previous excavations in 1953 and 1982 revealed three adult burials. The excavation of Trench 5 revealed six further adult burials. A summary of the age, sex and stature of these six individuals is given in Table 1. While it was not thought implausible that there should have been an Anglo-Saxon cemetery consisting entirely of adults, the charnel from Trenches 1, 2 and 3 was subsequently analysed in order to test this hypothesis. Cemeteries of later Anglo-Saxon date do sometimes display unusual demographic profiles, consisting exclusively of adults, for example, or showing marked sex biases.

This is characteristic of some monastic sites, and appears to indicate cemeteries reserved for the burial of members of the religious community (Hall and Whyman 1996, p. 120). The skeletal assemblage was analysed to determine the minimum number of individuals present, and to determine the age and sex of as many of these individuals as possible.⁵ At least nine adults (two males, three females and four unsexed) and seven sub-adults were present among the skeletal material from Trenches 1, 2 and 3 (see Table 2). Disarticulated bones recovered from the grave fills of Trench 5 represented a further two adults and three sub-adults. However, when disarticulated skeletal elements were compared with those recovered from Trenches 1, 2 and 3 a minimum total of nine adults and eight sub-adults in the disarticulated material were identified. By combining the minimum number of individuals identified from the disarticulated material with the intact skeletons from this and previous excavations, a total of eighteen adults and eight sub-adults have been identified across the site. The age distribution of the skeletal assemblage recovered in the recent excavations is that of a normal population, but with infants under-represented (Fig.4). Many children would have died during childhood, with anything up to 50% dying before five years of age. However, infant bones are particularly fragile and prone to destruction and loss (Buckberry 2000b), and their under-representation in this sample should be expected given the disturbed nature of the site. A total of five males and six females were identified among the adult remains, close to the normal 1:1 sex ratio. The remaining four adults from the disarticulated material could not be sexed.

Interpretation of the cemetery

Summary details of articulated skeletons found in Trench 5

Skeleton	Age	Sex	Stature (m)
1	Mid adult	?male	1.7 ±0.04 (from humerus)
2	Mid to old adult	? female	Could not be estimated
3	Mid adult	Female	1.62 ±0.04 (from femur)
4	Mid adult	Male	1.67 ±0.03 (from femur ± tibia)
5	Young adult	Male	1.64 ±0.03 (from femur + tibia)
6	Mid to old adult	Female	1.56 ±0.04 (from femur + tibia)

The form of the intact burials - in particular the stone linings and pillow stones - and the presence of residual pottery of early to middle Anglo-Saxon date within the grave fills of the burials in Trench 5 suggested that the cemetery was of later Anglo-Saxon date. Radiocarbon dating confirmed that two stone-lined graves (containing skeletons 001 and 004) dated to 900-1020 AD cal and 980-1035 AD cal (1 a range) respectively.⁶ A third radiocarbon date revealed that skeleton 002 was earlier than skeleton 001, with a date of 670-810 AD cal (1a range). This was the only excavated skeleton not placed in a stone-lined grave, which suggests that the stone-lined graves succeeded an earlier phase of burial.⁷ The analysis of the redeposited material revealed the presence of infants and children, and this suggests that the cemetery is unlikely to have been monastic. It is not, of course, impossible that the cemetery could have been a lay cemetery associated with a religious

community, of the type identified elsewhere at Crayke (Yorks) and Monkwearmouth (Tyne and Wear), for example (Adams 1990, pp.39-44; Cramp 1969, pp.31-34). However, in the later Anglo-Saxon period it is unlikely that there was a religious community of any note in Fillingham, and no material culture evidence consistent with such a community has been found in the village. The tenth century was a time when the earlier large religious communities of Lincolnshire were being superseded by local churches, which were in many cases the forerunners of the later medieval parish churches (Hadley 2000a, p.288). It is plausible that the burials at Fillingham were associated with just such a church, although no evidence for its location has been forthcoming. Domesday Book reveals that there was a church in Fillingham in 1086 (Foster and Longley 1924, p. 120), but it is unclear whether this church lies under the medieval church of St Andrew (the earliest fabric of which dates to the twelfth century), was associated with the excavated cemetery or was located elsewhere in the village. It is not impossible that there may once have been a church somewhere in the western part of the village, in addition to the surviving church of St Andrew (Fig.1). Indeed, a number of villages in Lincolnshire have evidence for the presence of two medieval churches (Everson, Taylor and Dunn 1991, p.46). While churches were often enduring institutions, it is not unknown for churches of Anglo-Saxon date to have failed to survive the Middle Ages (Morris 1985, pp.55-57). At Barrow-upon-Humber, for example, excavation has revealed a church of later Anglo-Saxon origin that appears to have gone out of use before the thirteenth century (Boden and Whitwell 1979). Equally it is possible that the cemetery at Fillingham was associated with a predecessor of the present parish church of St Andrew. It is unlikely that there was a continuous area of burial extending from the church to the excavated cemetery, but it could be one of a growing number of known late Anglo-Saxon cemeteries that were not situated around a church (Hadley 2000b, pp.210-12). All of the skeletons in Trench 5 were supine and extended, with arms placed crossed over the stomach. Some variation was observed in the burial rite accorded each individual. Two skeletons had stones placed in their mouths, and, in addition, one skeleton (004) had small flat stones placed over the eyes. These rites have been identified in other cemeteries including St Nicholas Shambles, London, and Raunds, Northamptonshire, and have been dated to the tenth to twelfth centuries (Daniell 1997, p. 165). It is difficult to determine what these stones signified to those who placed them, although Daniell (1997, p. 165) suggests that stones placed in the mouths may have been put there to prevent talking at the Resurrection, or they may have been intended to act as a weight to prevent the person rising up. The reason for the deposition of quartz pebbles in graves, seen at both Kellington (Yorks) and Whithorn (Dumfriesshire), is not known, but may be linked to the condemnation of 'stone-castings' in cemeteries (Daniell 1997, p. 165). It is possible that the stones found in graves at Fillingham were connected to this rite, but that quartz pebbles were either unavailable, or that the white colour was unimportant to the people of Fillingham. Whatever the explanation, the comparative rarity of such burial rites suggests that they belong to a range of localised individual and community beliefs that do not form any consistent pattern in the archaeological record (Hadley 2001, p.97).

Anglo-Saxon and medieval settlement in Fillingham

The fieldwork also sought to reveal something of the changing settlement pattern in Fillingham. Earthwork survey was undertaken in the western part of the village, where the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England had previously indicated the presence of medieval earthworks, but where detailed survey had not previously taken place (Everson, Taylor and Dunn 1991, p.27). The field survey recorded ridge and furrow (the visible remnants of medieval ploughing) and evidence for paddocks or crofts (the block of land attached to a house). This earthwork evidence provides an important indication of the changes to the layout of the west end of the village. The mainly modern houses on Chapel Road may well occupy the positions of medieval houses, to judge from the enclosures visible in the field behind Chapel Road. These enclosures appear to have pertained to earlier houses on the west side of Chapel Road, and the lack of evidence for ridge and furrow within the enclosures points to the enclosures being of medieval date (Fig.1). The post-medieval housing on the western side of Chapel Road does not correspond directly to the enclosures, and it suggests that there was a break in settlement activity in this area of the village between the later medieval settlement and the building of the post-medieval buildings, rather than suggesting that the post-medieval housing was built on existing plots.

It is clear that the creation of the lake in the later eighteenth century had a significant impact on the village of Fillingham. Earthworks visible in the field on the south side of the lake indicate that there had once been settlement in that area. Earthwork evidence on the east side of the hollow-way (former road) to the south-east of the lake may indicate the locations of former crofts, although the earthworks to the west of the hollow-way seem more likely to be related to the quarrying activity that we now know to have taken place in Fillingham in the post-medieval period (see above). It is not certain, however, that the creation of the lake and the related quarrying disturbed existing roads and houses, since they may already have been abandoned. It is, indeed, not unknown for medieval villages to 'shrink' in size or to be partially relocated, and the evidence concerning the enclosures on the western side of Chapel Road suggests a break in occupation. The hollow-way that is terminated by the south side of the lake is mirrored by one on the north side, but it is not clear whether the hollow-way was actively used or was a major route way when the lake was constructed. Ridge and furrow survives on the north side of the lake and this suggests that the medieval settlement did not extend beyond the northern extent of the lake, and, thus, the disruption to settlement, as opposed to agricultural activity, may have been relatively limited. Nonetheless, the landscaping instituted by Sir Cecil Wray in the wake of his building of Fillingham Castle, c. 1760, which sits on the ridge overlooking the village, was criticised by his contemporary, a local landowner Jeremy Whichcot, who took to riding his cart and horses across Sir Cecil's land on an annual basis in an attempt to re-establish the public right of way that Sir Cecil was trying to obliterate, suggesting significant disruption to the village (Hill 1966, p.30). Moreover, a broad band of ridge and furrow at the west end of the village is bisected by the lake, which clearly cut through a former field, as the ridge and furrow on either side of the lake is in direct alignment.

Our excavations of the cemetery site also added unexpectedly to our knowledge of the development of the settlement. The foundations of a post-medieval farm building were excavated in the southern part of Trench 1. Although the eastern side of this building had a cellar and was left unexcavated, under the floor on the western side of the trench the archaeology remained in situ. This consisted of a roughly shallow U-shaped feature partially cut into the bedrock, interpreted as an elongated pit or section of a ditch (Fig.5). It contained thirty-three sherds of mid to late Anglo-Saxon pottery, animal bone, a bone pin and a spindle whorl. This was the only feature in Trench 1, other than the building, that did not contain any human bone, and is likely to represent an area of settlement that was earlier than, or contemporary with, the cemetery. It certainly seems unlikely that the ditch was cut through the cemetery, or we would have expected to find fragments of human bone. The pottery found in the ditch was broadly contemporary with the residual pottery found in the grave-fills of Trench 5. A series of post-holes were cut into the bedrock on either side of the pit or ditch, and further post-holes were detected in Trench 4. In the absence of datable material within the post-holes it was not possible to say whether they were related to the ditch or pit. Whether or not the ditch represents the edge of an Anglo-Saxon settlement is open to debate, and could only be proven with further archaeological investigation in the area. Nonetheless, it may be worth comparing the evidence with that from Holton-le-Clay where later Anglo-Saxon burials were found to have succeeded middle Anglo-Saxon settlement (Sills 1982). It may, indeed, be a feature of many Lincolnshire villages that, while settlement has broadly continued in the same location since at least the middle Anglo-Saxon centuries, nonetheless, there were significant transformations in those settlements during the later Anglo-Saxon and medieval centuries (Everson, Taylor and Dunn 1991, pp.28-33).

The animal bone assemblage from this feature consisted of sheep (48%), cattle (31 %) pig (20%) and horse (1 %). Most of the cattle, sheep and pig were mature when they were killed off, similar to the pattern seen in ninth-century contexts from Flaxengate, Lincoln (O'Connor 1982). The higher percentage of sheep than cattle present at Fillingham is different from that identified at Flaxengate, however, where cattle were the dominant species (O'Connor 1982, p.11). This contrast may reflect the supply of animals to urban centres such as Lincoln by rural settlements like Fillingham, although this suggestion would have to be tested on further faunal assemblages from Fillingham and other rural Anglo-Saxon settlements (Chamberlain 2000).

Discussion

The recent fieldwork in Fillingham has added to our understanding of late Anglo-Saxon mortuary practices and the development of the village. The cemetery at Fillingham is notable because it appears to have been preceded by earlier (middle Anglo-Saxon) settlement. In this respect it is comparable to St Peter's, Holton-le-Clay (Sills 1982) and St Peter's, Barton-upon-Humber (Rodwell and Rodwell 1982), although at Fillingham the cemetery was abandoned during the medieval period, unlike the cemeteries at both Holton-le-Clay and Barton-upon-Humber. The excavation of the cemetery also

revealed something about the changing settlement pattern of Fillingham. Along with the earthwork survey it revealed that although there had been settlement in the western part of the later village from the middle Anglo-Saxon period, this settlement had not been continuous or consistent. There were significant changes in land use during the Anglo-Saxon and medieval centuries.⁸ Many recent studies have made use of post-medieval maps and plans to investigate the origins and development of medieval settlement. While this evidence clearly has much to tell us, it is becoming apparent that we need to use a wider range of evidence. Work by the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England demonstrated that earthwork evidence can often reveal significant medieval transformations in the layout of a settlement. Recent excavations, such as these at Fillingham, have indicated that the origins and development of medieval villages are sometimes much more complex than has hitherto been believed.

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The field chapel is dedicated to Swiss Saint Nicholas von der Flue (1417-1487), known as Brother Klaus. It was commissioned by farmer Hermann -Josef Scheidtweiler and his wife Trudel and largely constructed by them, with the help of friends and craftsmen on one of their fields above the village. Location. The small chapel of concrete was built on the edge of a field in Mechernich on the way Rissdorfer Weg, in a low slope of the Eifel (Naturpark Nordeife) Natural Park, 55 km from Cologne in the west of Germany. Concept. In order to design buildings with a sensuous connection to life, one must t