

## Derek Cater – My Background

I have over 30 years' post-graduate experience as an archaeologist working in the UK commercial sector.

I am currently Consultancy and Design Manager for Network Archaeology, a company which specialises in undertaking archaeological investigations on large infrastructure projects across the UK and Europe.

I was Archaeological Advisor to National Grid for over 10 years and helped put more than 15 cross-country gas pipelines in the ground.

For five years, I was a Heritage Lead writing ES chapters and supporting heritage reports for HS2 Phases 2a and 2b.

I am a resident of Harpswell and am speaking as private citizen.

## Harpswell's Historic Landscape

When we think of heritage, we tend to think of grand historic buildings, such as Lincoln Cathedral, impressive archaeological sites, such as Stone Henge or Sutton Hoo, or impressive artefacts, such as Domesday Book. However, our most-immediately available heritage asset is the historic landscape, which tells the story of our rural communities, extending back a millennium or more.

If one stands on the western side of the B1398 Middle Street, south of Hermitage Farm, Harpswell and looks east to Caenby Corner and then West to Upton, one can see the Harpswell/ Glentworth parish boundary running almost ruler-straight, taking in high, limestone plateau land, intermediate land on the scarp slope of the Lincoln Edge, and lower and lowland extending from the foot of the scarp slope west to heavy, and historically damp clays at Upton.

If one drives south along Middle Street, all the way to Lincoln, one can observe a similar arrangement of parishes running at right angles to the A15 Ermine Street Roman Road, taking in the varied resources available across the limestone uplands, the scarp slope of the Lincoln Edge and the heavier clays to the west. The regularity of this arrangement suggests large-scale planning, with parish boundaries deliberately laid out to guarantee the varied resources and capabilities the several topographical zones afford<sup>1</sup>. The dates of the village churches in these parishes and the reused masonry they often contain suggest they were built no later than the about AD900, whereas research across the East Midlands suggests nucleated villages, such as Harpswell and Glentworth, were forming from about 850AD. The parish territories were presumably laid out at the time the villages formed. Which authority existed in the Lincoln region in the 9th or 10<sup>th</sup> century capable of imposing such a regular arrangement of parishes across such a large tract of land is unknown. Nevertheless, the historic landscape shows just such an authority must have existed at that time.

From the Middle-Street vantage point, if one looks diagonally right, one can see the tower of Harpswell Church. One may just about be able to discern that the openings in the tower are transitional in form between Anglo-Saxon and the succeeding Norman style. The change was precipitated by the Norman Conquest of 1066 and Harpswell Church tower was built in the 1080s;

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<sup>1</sup> Morris, R.1989 *Churches in the Landscape*, London, 235-7.

change occurred gradually. There is a group of similarly dated and designed churches in the surrounding landscape, including at Glentworth. Harpswell village had clearly been established by the 1080s.<sup>2</sup>

If one descends into Harpswell village, and visits the church, one will note it is dedicated to St. Chad. Chad was the first bishop of the Mercians, having established a see and cathedral at Lichfield, Staffordshire in the 660s AD. Lincolnshire came under Mercian domination at this time<sup>3</sup>. One might wonder what Chad's evangelists were doing in Harpswell in or around the late 7<sup>th</sup> century. At that point, one might notice the spring that rises in Harpswell's churchyard, note that 'Harpswell' means the spring (where water wells up out of the ground) of the harp player, and speculate whether his evangelists may have been converting a pagan water cult to Christ<sup>4</sup>. A similar spring at Hemswell, the next village and parish to the north of Harpswell, is named Saint Helen's Well. There is a cluster of Saint Helen's well dedications stretching north from Lincolnshire across South, West and North Yorkshire. It is speculated that the early Church converted wells formerly dedicated to the pagan Roman water deity Alauna to Helen(a).<sup>5</sup> This may suggest that Harpswell and some of the other spring-line village sites of West Lindsey may have been occupied or visited for cultic purposes before their villages formed in the 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> century and several centuries before Harpswell's church tower was raised in the 1080s.

From the vantage point beside the B1398 Middle Street or from the churchyard, one can see the lumps and bumps comprising the remains of the medieval village of Harpswell in the pasture field due west of Harpswell church. One can note that Harpswell village and, indeed, all villages at the foot of the scarp slope of the Lincoln Edge are positioned on the spring line, where the permeable limestone meets an underlying, impermeable clay deposit. One may also note that these spring-line villages are linked by a line of roads and footpaths, as at Harpswell, that run at the foot of the scarp slope north from Lincoln to the Humber Estuary and are collectively known as the Low Road.

Harpswell medieval village comprised cottages and farmsteads ranged along both sides of a central road that ran due west from Middle Street to Heapham<sup>6</sup>. It survives as a hollow way in the woodland behind the church, as a faint depression across the pasture field west of Harpswell Church, and as field boundaries, now on the northern side of the road, now on the southern, all the way to Heapham.

Harpswell village withered in the straightened economic conditions ushered in by the Black Death and subsequent bubonic plagues, which ravaged the country from 1348 until the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. The rump of the village was cleared away in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century by the Whichcote family, who built a mansion (Harpswell Hall) in the western part of the pasture field, west of Harpswell Church. After depopulating the village, they laid out a compact landscape park on the site of the village, planted an avenue of trees flanking a carriageway leading from before the church west to the mansion, dammed a minor watercourse to produce a serpentine lake, laid out pleasure grounds and

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<sup>2</sup> Stocker, D, and Everson, P. 2006 *Summoning Saint Michael, Early Romanesque Towers in Lincolnshire*, Oxford, 181-186.

<sup>3</sup> Sawyer, P 1998 *Anglo-Saxon Lincolnshire*, Lincoln.

<sup>4</sup> Mills, A.D. 1991 *A Dictionary of English Place-Names*, 159.

<sup>5</sup> Jones, G. 2007, *Saints in the Landscape*, 115-118.

<sup>6</sup> Everson, P. L., Taylor, C.C. and Dunn, C.J. 1991 *Change and Continuity, Rural Settlement in North-West Lincolnshire*, London, 107-109.

a viewing mound, created a moat (if this was not of medieval origin) and diverted the village road to run around the eastern and southern sides of the park, along the line of the current Church Lane/ Common Lane. All these developments are readily visible in the landscape today.

The medieval open-field agricultural system of Harpswell was enclosed in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, and Harpswell Hall was demolished in the earlier 19<sup>th</sup> century. Hall Farm, Church Farm, Hermitage Farm, Hermitage Low Farm and Billyards Farm were all created at this time, as were their farmsteads and fieldscapes. These farms and their field systems in large measure structure the present-day landscape of Harpswell.

More than a millennium of change is legible in the present-day landscape of Harpswell, as indeed it is, *mutatis mutandis*, across the footprint of the Tillbridge Solar development. The proposed scheme would introduce a large industrial element into this quintessentially rural landscape. This landscape may be able to accommodate small-scale industrial development of this kind; however, the proposed scheme would be dominant within the Harpswell and neighbouring landscape. Alterations to hedgerows comprising the late-18<sup>th</sup>-century fieldscape, designed to screen the solar panels from view, would adversely affect the 18<sup>th</sup>-century landscape's legibility. The proposed mitigation planting along the western side of the B1398 Middle Street would prevent the appreciation of a millennium change from a single, convenient vantage point. Finally, the security fencing that will surround the proposed scheme will constrain movement through the Harpswell landscape and will impoverish one's experience of it's the landscape's historical development. Indeed, the proposed changes would entail that very few, if any, people currently alive would ever again be able to experience the historical development of the Harpswell and wider landscape.