

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 afford¹. 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 10th 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;

¹ 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.²

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 time³. One might wonder what Chad's evangelists were doing in Harpswell in or around the late 7th 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 Christ⁴. 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).⁵ 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 9th or 10th 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 Heapham⁶. 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 17th century. The rump of the village was cleared away in the early 17th 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

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

³ Sawyer, P 1998 *Anglo-Saxon Lincolnshire*, Lincoln.

⁴ Mills, A.D. 1991 *A Dictionary of English Place-Names*, 159.

⁵ Jones, G. 2007, *Saints in the Landscape*, 115-118.

⁶ 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 18th century, and Harpswell Hall was demolished in the earlier 19th 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-18th-century fieldscape, designed to screen the solar panels from view, would adversely affect the 18th-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.

Information for Planning Inspectors re: Tillbridge Solar – impact on landscape

In 2018, members of the Harpswell and Hemswell Neighbourhood Planning Team commissioned Darren Carroll of Carroll Planning and Design to undertake a Character Assessment of both villages at part of their overall their Neighbourhood Plan, so that the ‘special qualities’ that give an area its sense of place and unique identity could be recorded.

Although Tillbridge Solar has referred to this document, they have been highly selective in their choice of information. I would ask that the planners actually read this document, not just selected excerpts, so that they can gain a full understanding of the landscape, and the need to protect important views, not just from the cliff edge but also the views towards the cliff edge and across the landscape. (Page 9 – Hemswell and Harpswell Character Assessment).

In their planning documents, Tillbridge Solar propose to ‘screen’ the worst impacts of their scheme. However, what this means is that they will effectively block these views for the lifetime of the scheme, severely comprising the visual amenity of the area.

Specifically, views from the A631 and from Common Lane (on the Heapham and Harpswell border (from Harpswell Wood) where one can see the contrasting character of the flat, open landscape of the Till Vale and the rising, wooded nature of the Cliff. This would be blocked should the solar scheme proceed. Yet these views are one of the defining characteristics of Harpswell Village and its surrounding landscape. (Photographs 10, 12 and 19, in the Hemswell and Harpswell Character Assessment document).

Travelling along Common Lane, between Heapham and Harpswell, the open views across the landscape are extensive. (Photos A, B, C, D) The hedge-lines are discontinuous, not solid, which is a characteristic of the landscape. Filling in hedgerows (part of the planning proposal) again removes characteristics of the area and will create a ‘tunnel’ effect when travelling along Common Lane, and to a certain extent along the A631.

In respect of St Chad’s Church (Grade 1 listed), the Scheduled Ancient Monument (the field opposite the Church containing the remains of the early medieval settlement at Harpswell, the site of Harpswell Hall and the medieval Moat), and also from the village, the scheme will still be visible.

- View from the village (Photo E)
- View from the raised bank where St. Chad’s Church sits (Photo F)
- The proposed site for batteries and other installations behind the behind Kealey’s barn will impact on the views south of the site of the Harpswell Hall (Photos G, H, and I) and Moat (Photos J and K). The solar scheme will also be seen from the Moat bank (Photo L). These sites are within the Scheduled Monument.
- Views from Common Lane out of the village (Photos M, N and O)
- View from Middle Street between Glentworth and Harpswell. The proposed ‘screening’ will effectively block this view. (Photo P)

The proposed solar scheme will adversely affect the character of the landscape and remove characteristic features of the landscape, completely changing a person’s appreciation and experience of the open landscape of the Till Vale. It is acknowledged that the two Solar schemes already given approval will be visible in the distant landscape from the Cliff. Should the Planning Inspectorate approve the Tillbridge Solar scheme, the culminative effect of these schemes and change to the landscape and its appreciation cannot be underestimated.

Johanna Gray

Resident of Harpswell and Harpswell representative on the Harpswell and Hemswell Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

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Photo A – View from Common Lane towards scarp slope/Glentworth (just past Harpswell Wood)



Photo B: View from Common Lane towards scarp slope/Glentworth (on approach to Hermitage Low Farm)



Photo C: View from Common Lane towards cliff edge and Hemswell

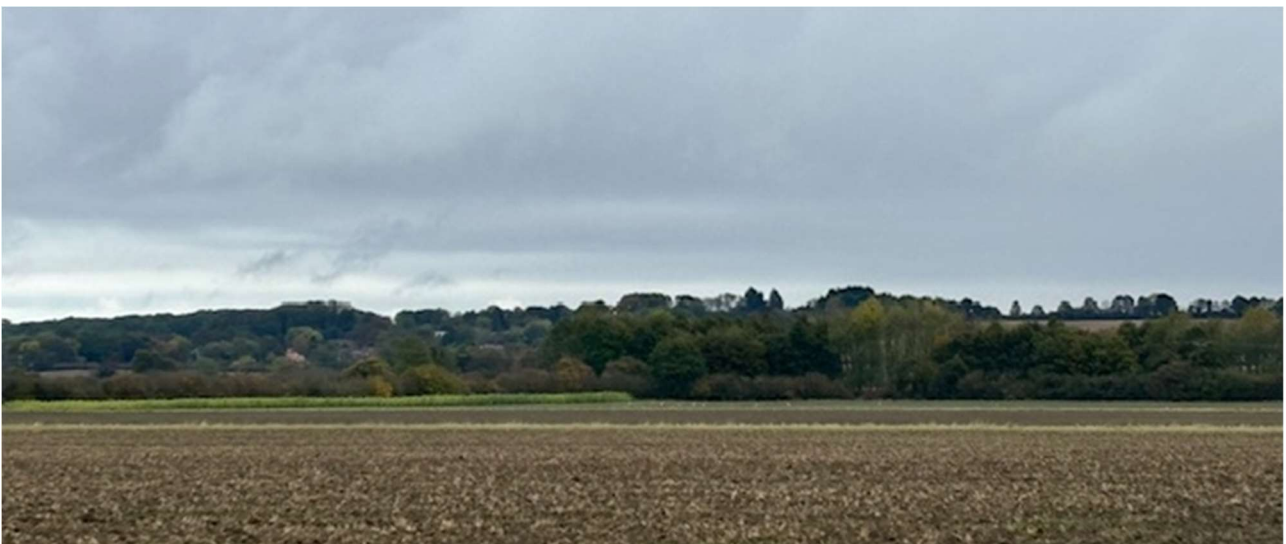


Photo D: From Common Lane towards cliff edge / Hemswell



Photo E: View from Harpswell Village. The Solar scheme will be visible.



Photo F: Photo from the bank outside St. Chads. The scheme will be visible.



Photo G: View from Old Hall looking South-West. The scheme will be visible.



Photo H: Close up of same view (but still within scheduled site)



Photo I: View south-east of the Scheduled site, where the planned installations at the back of barn will be very visible.



Photo J: View from the Moat looking south-west, where the scheme will be visible.



Photo K: View south-east of the Moat, where the planned installations behind the barn will be visible.



Photo L: View from the outer bank of the Moat, where the solar scheme will be visible.



Photo M: View from Common Lane, looking south-west.



Photo N: View from Common Lane, looking south.



Photo O: View from Common Lane, looking south.



Photo P: View from Middle Street looking over the landscape between Glentworth and Harpswell. The proposed 'screening' by Tillbridge Solar will block this view.

