The Moated Site, Churches, and Hedgerow Survey at Wragby, 1979

Compiled by A. J. White

On 9 June 1979 the Society held a Field Day in Wragby. The project had been suggested by the then Chairman, Arthur Wickstead, as a means of bringing the various interest-groups together with a common purpose, and to demonstrate the functions and abilities of the Society to non-members.

In the event the Field Day was well attended and a number of projects undertaken, with varying degrees of success. It is probable that a number of important aspects of Wragby were missed, and in some respects results were disappointing in that there was insufficient time to carry through some of the ideas, but on the other hand it was a most enjoyable and sociable day and the people of Wragby went out of their way to provide a sort of 'open house' to their strangely miscellaneous and enthusiastic visitors.

Members of the Archaeological Section undertook four projects: a field survey of the earthworks known as the Rout Yard, a measured plan of the ruins of the old church, a comprehensive recording of features and fittings in the 'new' (1839) church, and a species-count along significantly placed hedgerows for relative dating purposes. The results are summarized below; and it should be noted that the information gained in the course of the Field Day required much additional work by the various group-leaders subsequently.

FOOTNOTES
1 Those who took part were K. Wood, F. Booth, J. Pitchbeck, P. Everson, B. Kirkham, W. Stokes, P. Wheatley, L. East, J. East, A. Hill, T. Wragstaffe, A. White, P. Sutherland, N. Field and J. Gordon.
2 A geophysical survey was undertaken under the supervision of Mr K. Wood but was abandoned as the site was unresponsive to this approach.

WRAGBY MOATED SITE

P. Everson

The field surrounding the old church at Wragby was formerly in pasture and full of earthworks—hollow-ways, ditched closes and ponds—characteristic of abandoned medieval settlement, fringed by the undulations of the ridge-and-furrow of old arable lands. The only part that has not now been levelled and ploughed is the moated complex north-west of the old church, where the massiveness of the earthworks and designation as a scheduled ancient monument has so far ensured its survival.

A measured plan of these earthworks was made during the Society's Field Day in 1979. Though not as finely detailed as might be possible in optimum conditions (since the site was covered with a midsummer luxuriance of nettles and the like), the plan shows the basic outlines of a defended major residence that may at one stage of

Fig. 1 Plan and cross sections of the moated site at Wragby, M. Clark.
Fig. 2 Plans of the old church and surviving chancel at Wragby based on information from documents and 19th-century illustrations. M. Clark.
development have been a small castle.

The site is that of one (almost certainly the larger) of the two early medieval manors of Wragby recorded in Domesday Book. In the late eleventh century it had a church and priest, and was centre of a substantial estate lying principally in the surrounding villages. For much of the later medieval period it was held by the de Roos family, but seems certainly to have been out of residential use by the end of the fifteenth century, if not earlier.

WRAGBY CHURCHES

F. N. Field and A. J. White

At some stage in late-medieval or post-medieval times the focus of settlement in Wragby seems to have moved, leaving behind the manorial earthworks and the parish church of All Saints. By 1836 the church was considered to be inconveniently distant and a faculty was obtained for its demolition. Only the chancel was retained as a cemetery chapel and the chancel arch was blocked off with the exception of an access door. The remainder of the church was comprehensively demolished and its site became an extension to the graveyard. All surplus materials were sold off locally to defray costs and only a few items found their way into the new church.

With the prospective demolition of the last remains of the old church (to be realized in 1981), it was felt that a measured plan should be made of the surviving chancel, but enough information was gleaned from documents and illustrations to offer in addition a reasonably complete plan of the whole church, at least in its eighteenth-century form. This is graphically illustrated in the accompanying figure. The earliest parts of the church then surviving were the north aisle and its arcade, in Transitional Norman style. The chancel arch, of Early English type, perhaps opened into a contemporary (thirteenth century) chancel. To the north of the chancel was an aisle which before the Reformation had served as a Lady Chapel. Both chancel

and chancel aisle were removed in 1755 by Edmund Turner. A faculty obtained the following year (1756), sanctioning this work refers to a private north chancel aisle which was used by 'idle people and boys to loiter in' during the time of Divine Service. The old chancel 'being by length of time become very ruinous and decayed and being built of small stones and bad materials could not be repaired. The present brick chancel with limestone dressing dates from 1755, but the sketch by C. Nattes c. 1790 fails to show it as either brick or roofed in lead as the faculty provides for.

Parts of the south wall of the nave may have been original twelfth-century work, but the infill shown in the Nattes view could indicate a lost south arcade and aisle. Most of the windows on the south side were clearly late seventeenth to eighteenth century but the south porch was of brick, in the Tudor tradition which emanated from Tattershall Castle. The west tower was in the Perpendicular style with pinnacles, battlements and a west door.

Dimensions of the old church are given in a glebe terrier of 1822. The churchyard contained half an acre (0.2 ha) and the church was 82 feet (25 m) in length by 29 feet (8.8 m) wide, the chancel being 14 feet (4.3 m) wide, and the west tower was 48 feet (14.7 m) high. In the tower were six bells. Three of these were cast in 1697 by William Noone of Nottingham, while the three other bells, also from the Nottingham Foundry, were brought in the same year from Kirmond le Mire by Edmund Turner.

After the demolition of the church the three bays of Transitional arcading were re-erected 'with questionable taste' in the grounds of Sudbrooke Holme, while other fragments are still to be seen in various gardens in Wragby. Part of a font now serves as a flower tub in a garden opposite the Town Hall. Other items can be seen in the new church, including two stones with cramp-holes and a very weathered moulding in the porch. The six bells were transferred to the tower of the new church and in the ringing chamber can also be seen various carved stones; in the east wall a knight's head and shoulders in camail and
bascinet (mid-late fourteenth century) from a monument, and in the west and south walls two corbels in the form of female and male heads in fifteenth-century head-dress. In the nave stands a splendid Norman pillar-piscina.

The new church was built in yellow brick with limestone details and was consecrated in 1839. The cost was £3,500, and Sir Christopher Turner provided the site as well as much of the money for building. Considerable internal alterations took place in 1897.

Footnotes
4 See Ross, op. cit.
5 L. A. O. F. B. I/164.
6 Ibid.
7 L. A. O. Wragby Terrier Bundle.
8 T. North, The Church Bells of Lincolnshire, 1882, pp. 760-1.
9 J. C. Cox, Little Guide, Lincolnshire, 1916, pp. 344-5. No trace survives of them at Sudbrooke. The two pillars to be seen in the garden of one of the Lodges there are Early English, probably from the pre-1790 Sudbrooke church.

Wragby Hedge Survey

R. H. Healey

The aim of the hedge species count was to test the theory of Dr Max Hooper which suggests a correlation between the age of a hedge and the average number of species growing in a thirty-yard length. The actual equation, where X is the age of the hedge in years and Y is the number of species in the length, is $X = 110Y + 30$. This gives approximately one new species in the length for each hundred years of its existence. This theory has been tested in various parts of the country, but it is important to collect more data from each region in order to establish the factors affecting local counts and ultimately arrive at a more accurate equation for a particular locality. Although some work has been carried out in Lincolnshire there is scope for a great deal more.

Unfortunately Wragby was not the ideal place to initiate a survey of this kind on account of the lack of documentation. As a general rule it is useful to start from a hedge of known date, i.e. from an enclosure award, but as Wragby was evidently a pre-eighteenth century enclosure no records survive.

In a single day the amount of ground which can be covered by a limited number of people is itself limited and the Wragby group therefore tried to get as much variety as possible by visiting three opposite areas of the parish, north, south and east, with differing types of terrain (Fig. 3). The method of recording was kept simple; when a minimum of two people one can pace out the lengths and keep a written record because a yard is better suited to the human stride we did not go metric!—whilst the other person identifies the species. The results are based on hardwoods only, although climbers were also recorded at the time of the survey. Results are shown in the table.

**Conclusion and comments**

It will be seen from the table that in some instances only a few lengths of hedge were available for study. In the last column the figures have been rounded off to the nearest half century. Overall the picture may seem fairly inconclusive, but the fact that the majority lie between the 300-500 year old range would appear to tie in with the pre-eighteenth century enclosure. The parish boundaries, which might have been expected to have the oldest hedges, proved disappointing, although an interesting substantial ditch with remains of a double hedge was noted along the northern boundary at B. The species, not noted here in detail, varied in the different areas. Some woodland species such as dogwood and hazel, were noted in B and D, where there is now no woodland, with oak and small leaved lime appearing in the southern areas, such as V and G, close to surviving remnants of old woodland both in this and

**Wragby Hedge Survey**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Hedge No.</th>
<th>No. of Lengths</th>
<th>Average No. of Species</th>
<th>Apparent Years Old to Nearest Half Century</th>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
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<td>350</td>
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<td>G</td>
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<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>350</td>
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</table>

adjoining parishes. The influence of the proximity of woodland was particularly noticed along the railway line at E, where one might have expected a hedge of only one or two species, but which proved to have an average of over five! This suggests that the counts of both E and V are artificially raised by their situation. More satisfactory was a simple length of N crossed by a North Sea gas pipeline in recent years. This replanted stretch of young hawthorns contained no intruders! It was interesting also to note that beyond N, and just over the parish boundary, there was some gorse still flourishing in the hedge. Gorse was once widespread in Lincolnshire, as is well attested by place-names, up until the time of enclosures, but has now disappeared from many areas completely.

Finally, one useful by-product of the study was that a form was devised to simplify hedge-counting. For the Wragby survey we wrote each new species on card and ticked it off, a rather time-consuming process. The form lists all the usual species encountered, including climbers, with spaces for additional items and comments.