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. 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 Domestacy 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 (Eversion, 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). 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. 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 soil 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 Hernswell, 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.

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 2000b), 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 5m 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 south-west 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 in 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 sitting 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 channel deposits, as small bones such as the metatarsals were at least as abundant as larger skeletal elements (especially femurs). Charnel
Fig. 1. Site location showing the results of the fieldwork survey.
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 careful excavation
from Trenches 1, 2 and 3 was subsequently analysed in order to
test this hypothesis. Cemeteries of later Anglo-Saxon date do
typically contain unusual demographic profiles, consisting
exclusively of adults, for example, or showing marked sex
bias. 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. 3
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
skull 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

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 σ range)
respectively. 4 A third radiocarbon date revealed that skeleton
002 was earlier than skeleton 001, with a date of 670-810 AD
cal (1 σ 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. 5 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

<table>
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<th>Skeleton</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Stature (m)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>001</td>
<td>Mid adult</td>
<td>? male</td>
<td>1.7 ±0.04 (from humerus)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>002</td>
<td>Mid to old adult</td>
<td>? female</td>
<td>Could not be estimated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>003</td>
<td>Mid adult</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1.62 ±0.04 (from femur)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>004</td>
<td>Mid adult</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1.67 ±0.03 (from femur + tibia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>005</td>
<td>Young adult</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1.64 ±0.03 (from femur + tibia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>006</td>
<td>Mid to old adult</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1.56 ±0.04 (from femur + tibia)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Summary details of articulated skeletons found in Trench 5
Fig. 2. Trench plan.
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 acrossed over the stomach. Some variation was observed in the burial rites accorded each individual. Two skeletons had stones placed in their mouths, and, in addition,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Category</th>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Number of Individuals</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infant</td>
<td>Birth to 11 months</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Child</td>
<td>1 to 6 years</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older Child</td>
<td>7 to 12 years</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescent</td>
<td>13 to 17 years</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Adult</td>
<td>18 to 25 years</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prime Adult</td>
<td>26 to 45 years</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prime to Old Adult</td>
<td>26 years or older</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Adult</td>
<td>46 years or older</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unaged Adult</td>
<td>18 years or older</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Minimum Number of Individuals and age distributions in disarticulated material from trenches 1, 2 and 3.
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 main modern houses on Chapel Road may well occupy the positions of medieval houses, and thus the disruption to settlement, as opposed to agricultural activity, may have been relatively limited. Nonetheless, the landscape 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 Whitchcot, 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. 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 those at Fillingham, have indicated that the origins and development of medieval villages are sometimes much more complex than has hitherto been believed.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank William Rose for permission to excavate at Fillingham, and Andrew Carter and Mr and Mrs Rush of Lakeside Cottage for permission to undertake survey work. The residents of Fillingham also offered much support and goodwill during our work in the village. We would like to thank Colin Merrony, Naomi Field and Mark Bennett for their advice on the project. We are grateful to the British Academy and the Natural Environment Research Council for funding post-excavation work, to Jane Young for her analysis of the pottery, and Alex Norman and Jo Mincher for drawing the illustrations. Finally, we would like to thank the team of excavators, especially those who braved the appalling weather in October: Penny Bickle, Pete Cleghorn, Tim Gass, Bob Hamilton, Caroline Hamilton, Andy Hammond, Jen Hiller, Steve Lycett, Christiane Meckespecker, and Faye Simpson.

Notes

1. This project is co-ordinated by Dr Dawn Hadley and Dr Andrew Chamberlain and is known as the Ingham Project. Thus far fieldwork has been conducted in Ingham (Hadley 2000c), Belton (Chamberlain, Hadley and Williams 1999), Melton Ross (Chamberlain and Rogers, forthcoming), and Whitton (Hadley, forthcoming). For published accounts see Hadley 2001, pp.37-39. We are grateful to Andrew Chamberlain and Glyn Davies for permission to reproduce their contributions to the Fillingham interim report, and for their discussions of the site with us.

2. Lincolnshire SMR, no.51110.

3. Lincolnshire Archives, Accession number 89/13.


5. Age at death and sex were estimated using standard osteological methods (Bukxstra and Uberlaker 1994).

6. Uncalibrated dates: SK 001 1071A30BP (0A-10812); SK 004 1018A35BP (0A-10811); SK 002 1270A55BP (0A-10838). Dates were calibrated using Oxcal (v3.5) and the 'INTCAL98' calibration curve.

7. Unfortunately, post-medieval disturbance of these two burials meant that the stratigraphic relationship between them was not certain. Thus, it was unclear whether the grave containing skeleton 001 had cut or disturbed the burial containing skeleton 002, or whether it had simply overlain it.

8. This has also been identified, through fieldwork, at neighbouring Ingham where an area of later Anglo-Saxon settlement appears to have been incorporated into the medieval field system, but was subsequently occupied by later medieval settlement (Hadley 2000c).

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