

Some of our roads and tracks have very long histories. The intriguingly named Bluestone Heath Road is believed to be an ancient long-distance prehistoric route. There are several theories as to the origin of its name but the most likely derives from the blue flora found along its route. Many Roman roads crossing the Wolds are still in use today, for example Caistor High Street linking Horncastle and Caistor. A major Roman route once connected Lincoln to the salt-making sites along the coast. Many public footpaths and bridleways are old roads and footpaths that linked villages, farms and churches or enabled people to access waterways, woods or houses.

ANCIENT ROUTES

Brick was seldom used in the Wolds during the 16th and 17th centuries, but became more evident as a vernacular building material with the development of local brick pits from the 18th century. Many of the original buildings had predominantly thatched roofs until the 17th century when clay pan tiles first came into use. Other important buildings include the 'mud and stud' cottages within the southern Wolds, watermills and Georgian and Victorian farmsteads and cottages.



A range of building materials were used, but commonly incorporating local stone, which was of variable quality. In the north-west local quarries on the escarpment provided Claxby ironstone and Tealby limestone. The ironstone, with its distinctive rich ochre is obvious in Nettleton, and the paler limestone at Tealby and Walsby. Spilsby sandstone, a form of greensand rarely used elsewhere, is evident in church and other public buildings in the southern Wolds and has a distinctive dark brown/green colour. Chalk was used for a number of churches, farms and cottages.

INTRODUCTION

Walk, drive or ride through the Lincolnshire Wolds and you cannot fail to appreciate the natural beauty of the area. It is also an area rich with heritage dating back many thousands of years. Much history is not obvious on first glance. How many of us have seen strange lumps and bumps or ruins of old buildings in a field and wondered what they are or why they are there. There are new discoveries and new understanding of old discoveries still coming to light, so our knowledge is constantly evolving.

This leaflet is just a taster of some of our heritage to explore in today's landscape of the Lincolnshire Wolds.



The remains of Bolingbroke Castle



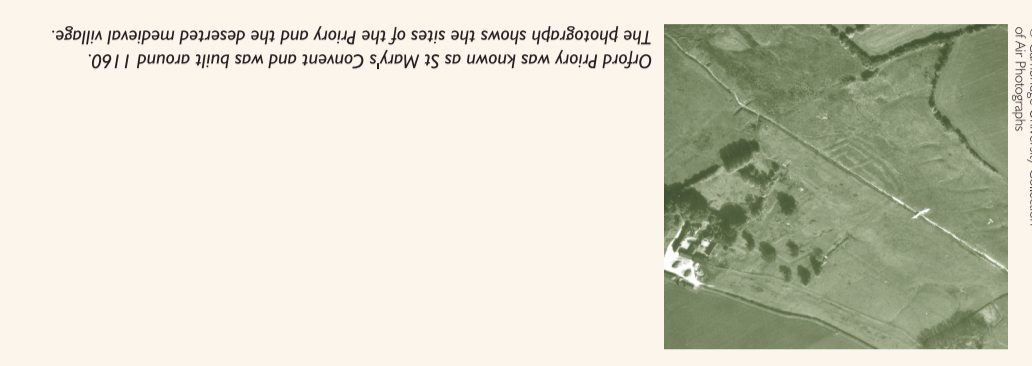
Walesby Church

WHERE TO FIND OUT MORE

- If you wish to find out more your local library and reference library have sections on local history and archaeology. There are also organisations who may be able to answer specific enquiries.
- Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire, The Old School, Cameron St, Heckington, Sleaford NG34 9RW
Tel: 01529 461499 www.lincsheritage.org
 - Lincolnshire Archives, St Rumbold Street, Lincoln LN2 5AB
Tel: 01522 782040 www.lincstothePast.com
 - The Lincolnshire Historic Environment Record, Lincolnshire County Council, Development, Conservation Services, City Hall, Beaumont Fee, Lincoln LN1 1DN
Tel: 01522 782070 www.lincolnshire.gov.uk
 - Archaeologist, North East Lincolnshire Regeneration Partnership, Origin 1, Europarc, Grimsby North East Lincolnshire DN37 9TZ
Tel: 01472 323586 www.nelincs.gov.uk

The Lincolnshire Wolds has a number of attractive farmsteads, country houses, hamlets and villages that all help to shape its character. Historic buildings within the area reflect the varied geology and topography of the landscape and range from architect designed estate buildings to vernacular architecture, inspired by local materials and craftsmen.

BUILT HERITAGE



Monasteries were situated at the edge of the Wolds, for example North Ormsby and Louth Park were both built in the first half of the 12th century. Priories were usually outposts of larger religious houses or monasteries with the aim to look after the interests of the Mother Church and spread



Some of the masonry from Louth Park Abbey was used in the construction of the old Town Hall and re-used yet again in the Priory Hotel (above).

Orford Priory was known as St Mary's Convent and was built around 1160. The photograph shows the sites of the Priory and the deserted medieval village.

THE LINCOLNSHIRE WOLDS

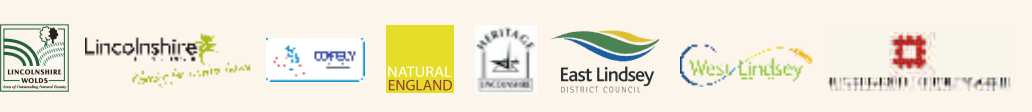
The Lincolnshire Wolds is a nationally important and cherished landscape. Part of it was designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1973. Covering an area of 558 square kilometres or 216 square miles, the AONB contains the highest ground in eastern England between Yorkshire and Kent, rising to over 150m along its western edge. Rolling chalk hills and areas of sandstone and clay underlie this attractive landscape.

The Lincolnshire Wolds has been inhabited since prehistoric times and the appearance of the countryside today has been greatly influenced by past and present agricultural practices.

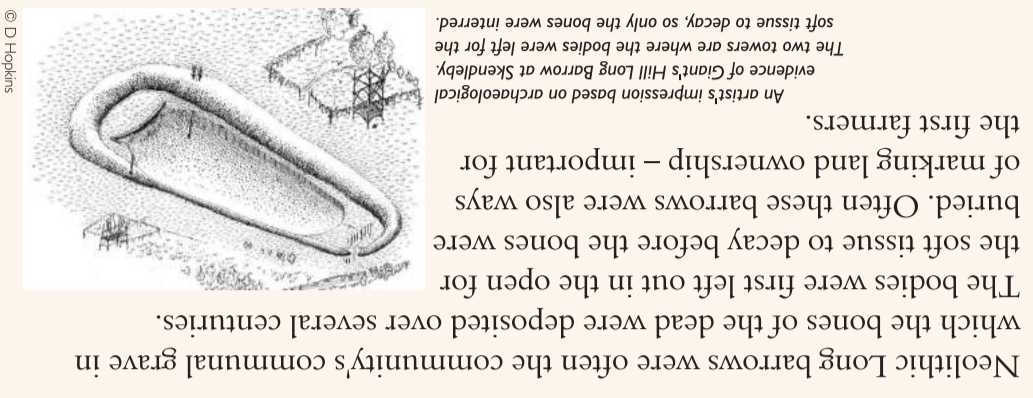
A Countryside Service helps to protect and enhance the landscape through partnership projects with local landowners, farmers, parish councils, businesses and residents of the Wolds.



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Round barrows, the distinctive burial mounds of the Bronze Age around 2000 BC, can still be seen throughout the Wolds. One of the most accessible of these is 'Grims Mound' beside the Viking Way at Grimblethorpe. Bronze Age round barrows were the burial places of important individuals or families and were either interred as a complete body or in a cremation vessel. Grave goods of jewellery, weapons and other possessions were also buried in the barrows.



Neolithic Long barrows were often the community's communal grave in which the bones of the dead were deposited over several centuries. The bodies were first left out in the open for the soft tissue to decay before the bones were buried. Often these barrows were also ways of marking land ownership – important for the first farmers.

TRIAL, RELIGION AND CEREMONY

The Lincolnshire Wolds has been inhabited for thousands of years. Flint hand axes found deep within glacial gravel at Welton le Wold show that early humans were living here over 300,000 years ago. Scatters of stone Walmsgate are good examples. Known as Deadmen's Graves at Claxby and the one beside the A16 at Walmsgate are good examples.

THE OLDEST INHABITANTS OF THE WOLDS

WONDERS of the WOLDS

Heritage of the Lincolnshire Wolds



One of a series of leaflets to help you get to know the Lincolnshire Wolds. Produced by the Lincolnshire Wolds Countryside Service and the Wolds Heritage Working Group



If you would like this leaflet in an alternative format please contact us

Heritage of the Lincolnshire Wolds

SETTLEMENTS AND HOMES

Evidence of prehistoric settlement is rare and usually only visible as crop marks in arable fields or scatters of finds in the ploughed soil. The Romans recognised the farming potential of the Wolds and established major settlements at Horncastle, Caistor and Ulceby as well as a network of smaller settlements and villas.

The rich farmland of the Wolds supported a high population during the first part of the medieval period. Many of these settlements were abandoned in the 14th and 15th centuries. This was due to a complex mix of reasons including a period of declining agricultural production caused by climate change, Black Death, famine and changes in agriculture, especially the rise of the woollen industry that encouraged the development of sheep runs. This has resulted in one of the highest concentrations of Deserted Medieval Villages (DMVs) in the country - with over 100 abandoned settlements in the Wolds. The remains of DMVs are recognisable in fields by their characteristic humps, bumps and hollow ways. East Wykeham, Walmsgate and Biscathorpe are just some of the many DMVs visible today.



Cultivated terrace at Kirmond le Mire

Remnants of ridge and furrow, which is a legacy of medieval ploughing and cultivation terraces often survive nearby. In the medieval open field system, fields were divided up into strips and villagers cultivated one or more of these strips. These strips were then ploughed individually and after many years the soil gradually moved to form the humps and hollows of the ridge and furrow we see today. However, as this method continued into the 19th century in some places, some remaining examples may not be medieval.

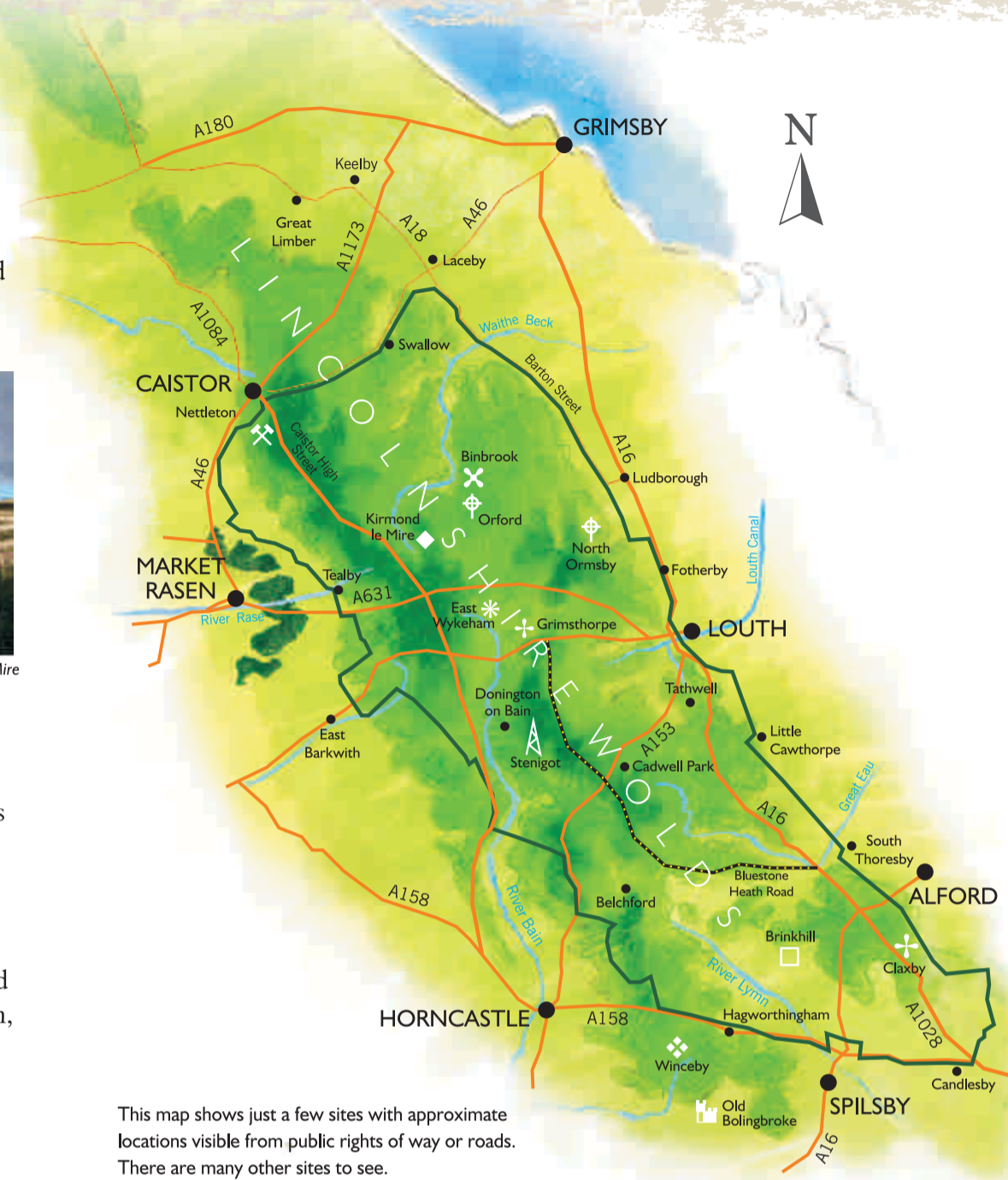
There are several old moats in the Wolds, with Brinkhill actually having three moats. The first moats were dug for defensive reasons around the houses of the important and wealthy. Towards the end of the 13th and into the 14th centuries however it became fashionable to have a moat around your house. Their size and shape varies considerably, as does the purpose for which they were constructed.



Medieval moated site at Brinkhill

INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE

Evidence of industrial heritage can be seen wherever one goes. Almost every parish had a watermill or windmill and a blacksmith's shop. The watermills not only ground corn, some produced paper whilst others were involved in the leather, wool and timber industries. In Louth, whole factories were powered by water, for example the carpet factory. Parts of today's peaceful countryside near Nettleton would have been unrecognisable, being actively mined for ironstone until the 1960s. Transport was important - roads, canals and railways carried materials and goods to and from the Wolds.



This map shows just a few sites with approximate locations visible from public rights of way or roads. There are many other sites to see.

Map Key

Long Barrow - Claxby	Deserted Medieval Village - East Wykeham	Old Bolingbroke Castle
Round Barrow - Grimsthorpe	Cultivated Terrace - Kirmond le Mire	Site of battle - Winceby
Monastery - North Ormsby	Moat - Brinkhill	Binbrook airfield
Orford Priory	Mines - Nettleton	Stenigot mast
Bluestone Heath Road		AONB boundary

MAP © Lincolnshire and South Humberside Tourist Cartography by Lovell Johns Ltd. Oxford 1993

CULTURAL HERITAGE AND FOLKLORE

The Wolds has seen the start of many inquisitive lives, including explorers Captain John Smith, Sir Joseph Banks and Sir John Franklin. Alford, Lord Tennyson - the Poet Laureate - spent his early years in Somersby and Tealby. Aspects of the landscape are featured in many of his works, including 'The Brook' and 'Maude'. Peter de Wint, the 19th century artist, captured many panoramic scenes and the Wolds provided the setting for A.S. Byatt's Booker Prize-winning novel 'Possession'.

Brinkhill gold

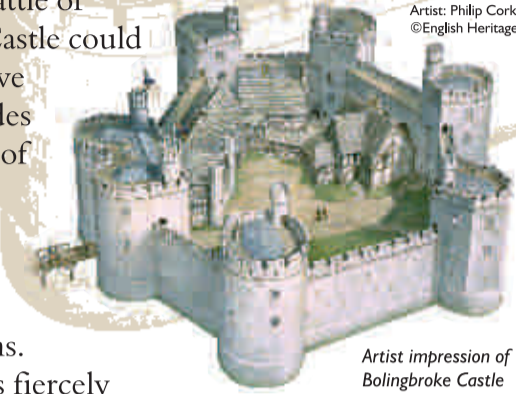
In the early 17th century a bright yellow metallic ore was found in the blue clay deposits. For a period there was a mini 'gold rush' in Brinkhill and the name of one of the village farms records this, Goldfield Farm. Nobody made their fortune - the ore turned out to be veins of Marcasite or Pyrites of Iron better known as 'fools gold'.

Horse play at Brinkhill

During the siege of Bolingbroke Castle, Oliver Cromwell requisitioned horses from Royalists, Mr Maidens a farmer at Brinkhill. The horses were sent to the blacksmith with the instruction that they should be re-shod with overlong nails. This made them lame and so useless to Cromwell. The story never tells of any comeback on the farmer or blacksmith.

CONFLICTS AND MILITARY HERITAGE

There is only one castle in the Wolds; at Old Bolingbroke. It was built in 1230 and all but destroyed after the Battle of Winceby. Interestingly, Bolingbroke Castle could not have been built purely for defensive reasons as it is overlooked on three sides by hills. It was the birthplace in 1367 of the future King Henry IV.



Artist: Philip Corkin © English Heritage

Artist impression of Bolingbroke Castle

During the Civil War (1642-49) the Wolds were never a stronghold of either the Royalists or Parliamentarians. The battle to control Lincolnshire was fiercely contested throughout late 1642 and 1643. For much of this time the King's forces controlled much of the county and sought to prevent the Parliamentarians in Hull and Boston from communicating and from moving troops up and down the county. Irby civil war fort is likely to have been built at about that time, by the King's forces, to keep a watch on the major north-south routes. It is unusual as it has no connection to a civil war battle site, but was an important defence location.



A re-enactment of the Battle of Winceby (based on a photo from Mr D Hitchbourne)

The only battle in the Wolds was Winceby and it lasted less than an hour. At that time Parliamentary forces were holding Bolingbroke Castle under siege. A force of Royalists set forth from Newark to relieve the castle. On 11th October 1643 advanced companies of cavalry and dragoons from both sides met at Winceby. The battle was a decisive victory for Parliament and as the Royalists retreated they were trapped by a gate that would only open towards them; they were killed there. Today the location is locally known by the descriptive name, Slash Hollow.

More recently, the Wolds has been an important area for the military, including RAF Kelstern used in the First World War as a night landing ground. Some bomber and fighter bases of the Second World War remained active during the Cold War. Binbrook airfield still remains in part today, at the village of Brookenby. RAF Stenigot has played a key role in the nation's defence for many years. The first wooden towers were built in 1938 forming part of the Chain Home Radar network, providing an early warning system against enemy aircraft. The mast is now a listed structure.



The four dishes at RAF Stenigot were a well known sight appearing in the early 1960s. They were part of the NATO Ace High communications network. The base remained in military hands until 1992 and the dishes, which still lie on the ground, were taken down in 1997.



The site at Stenigot today

POST MEDIEVAL

