



ON THE BANKS OF THE HUMBER
ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND PALAEOENVIRONMENTAL
INVESTIGATIONS AT GOXHILL, NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE, AND
PAULL, EAST YORKSHIRE, 2016-2020

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Front cover: *Excavated Iron Age roundhouses in the main construction area at Goxhill; a Norse bell from the Soff Lane diversion, Goxhill*
Rear Cover: *East Halton Beck, view looking towards Immingham, on the Lincolnshire side of the Humber Estuary (cc-by-sa/2.0 - © Simon Tomson - geograph.org.uk/p/7146873); remains of a Romano-British roundhouse in the main construction area at Goxhill; excavating medieval features on the Soff Lane diversion at Goxhill*

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Abbreviations

| | |
|-----------|---|
| AGI | Above Ground Installation |
| ALGAO | Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers |
| AMS | Accelerator mass spectrometry |
| BSTFA | N,O-bis(trimethylsilyl)trifluoroacetamide |
| CifA | Chartered Institute for Archaeologists |
| CLAU | City of Lincoln Archaeological Unit |
| DCM | Dichloromethane |
| dGPS | Differential Global Positioning System |
| EMHERF | East Midlands Historic Environment Research Framework |
| ER | External residues |
| FAME | Fatty acid methyl ester |
| GC | Gas chromatograph |
| GC-C-IRMS | Gas chromatography combustion isotope ratio mass spectrometry |
| GC-MS | Gas chromatography-mass spectrometry |
| GIS | Geographical Information System |
| HdV | Hugo de Vries laboratory |
| HER | Historic Environment Record |
| HPLC | High-performance liquid chromatography |
| HPTJV | Humber Pipeline Tunnel Joint Venture |
| ICP-MS | Inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometry |
| LCFAs | Long-chain fatty acids |
| LiDAR | Light Detection and Ranging |
| LOI | Loss on ignition |
| LOIS | Land-Ocean Interaction Study |
| MFTs | Microfacies types |
| MYA | Million years ago |
| NG | National Grid |
| NISP | Number of identified specimens |
| NIST | National Institute of Standards and Technology |
| NLHES | North Lincolnshire Council's Historic Environment Service |
| NPP | Non-pollen palynomorphs |
| OA | Oxford Archaeology |
| OD | Ordnance Datum |
| OIL | Oblique incident light |
| OS | Ordnance Survey |
| PPL | Plane polarised light |
| RE | Rim equivalents |
| RPAZ | Regional pollen assemblage zones |
| SMT | Soil microfabric types |
| SUERC | Scottish Universities Environmental Research Centre |
| TLE | Total lipid extract |
| TLP | Total land pollen |
| TMCS | Trimethylchlorosilane |
| TNF | Total number of fragments |
| WSI | Written scheme of investigation |
| WYAS | West Yorkshire Archaeology Service |
| XPL | Crossed polarised light |

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Summary

Between 2016 and 2020, several archaeological and palaeoenvironmental investigations were undertaken across two areas of landscape on the northern and southern sides of the Humber Estuary, respectively at Paull (NGR TA 1749 2629), East Yorkshire, and Goxhill, North Lincolnshire (NGR TA 1006 2184). The stimulus for these investigations was the replacement of the Number 9 Feeder Gas Transmission Pipeline, which was constructed by National Grid and the Humber Pipeline Tunnel Joint Venture to reinforce their National Transmission System.

The earliest evidence recovered by the project relates to the Mesolithic and earlier Neolithic landscapes that existed in the estuary, comprising palaeoenvironmental and geoarchaeological data obtained through borehole coring at both Goxhill and Paull. This allowed for both the terrestrial environment and changes in sea level to be discerned across the earlier and middle phases of the Holocene, which formed a dynamic period when mainland Britain was in the process of separating from Continental Europe, as rising sea levels gradually submerged the former land bridge joining these two landmasses.

All of the archaeological evidence was confined to Goxhill, on the southern side of the estuary. Detailed analysis indicates that this area was visited, probably by peripatetic groups, during the Bronze Age, with the first evidence for more permanent settlement dating to the Early Iron Age. During this period, it seems that an area to the south-east of Goxhill village was managed and divided, perhaps to facilitate and regulate the movement of livestock around the landscape.

Good evidence was also obtained for later Iron Age settlement, within an excavated area to the north-east of Goxhill village. This initially comprised an unenclosed roundhouse settlement established in the latter centuries of the first millennium cal BC, adjacent to a tidal creek. It was followed by a second phase of Iron Age activity, which again related to an unenclosed roundhouse settlement in the same area, occupied into the terminal stages of the Iron Age, just prior to the Roman conquest, with livestock farming seemingly forming the main economic pursuit. Settlement in this area continued following the Roman conquest, as evidence of a third open settlement, containing roundhouses, was recorded, dating to the mid-/late first century AD. Settlement, however, appears to have expanded during this period and was also characterised by a series of sub-rectangular structures that may have functioned as hayricks. These remains, together with the palaeoenvironmental evidence, seem to suggest that pastoralism continued to represent an important economic concern, though in tandem with arable farming. Two subsequent phases of Roman settlement were also evident in this same area. The first, established in the early second century, was characterised by a series of circular and conjoined enclosures, some containing roundhouses, with the economy again based on mixed farming. During the later Roman period, in the late second/early third century, the settlement was then transformed, with a series of rectilinear enclosures being created across a large swathe of the landscape, emanating out from a settlement core. This settlement was engaged in mixed farming, though perhaps with a greater range of crops and livestock being exploited than previously. It also appears to have been more 'Romanised' in character, containing rectilinear timber buildings and receiving some imported Roman goods. Moreover, salt working also formed an element of the settlement's economy, which was perhaps undertaken at Goxhill for the first time in the later Roman period.

Very limited evidence for post-Roman activity was recovered (in the form of three unstratified sherds of fifth- to seventh-century pottery), though good evidence for later medieval activity was present in an area, south-east of Goxhill village, excavated prior to the construction of a road diversion. The evidence indicates three phases of medieval activity, dating between the tenth and mid-fourteenth centuries. It seems to relate to an area of medieval enclosure running south from Church Side, a road running out from the south-eastern side of the modern village, and was perhaps also associated with domestic dwellings originally situated on the street frontage. The evidence included trackways, enclosure boundaries, small structures, and rubbish pits, which may relate to a period when the medieval settlement had reached its maximum extent, prior to contraction in the mid-fourteenth century, possibly as a result of climate change or the ravages of the Black Death.

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Figure 1: The location of the pipeline and the sites of the Above Ground Installations at Goxhill and Paull