LAND ON THE EDGE

HEADLINE STORIES

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Louth, Lincolnshire

Contents

Acknowledgements

I should like to acknowledge the following debts to the various people and organisations who have enabled this research to be completed. In the first place, thanks are due to Historic England for the funding of this project and to Sarah Grundy and Ian George of Lincolnshire County Council for commissioning this study and managing the wider *Inns on the Edge* project of which this is a part. I likewise owe debts of thanks to a large variety of organisation who have kindly provided materials during the preparation of this work. The underlying mapping of the creek and island systems of the Lincolnshire coastal zone depends ultimately on the Lidar data provided under the Open Government Licence by the Environment Agency, which is © Environment Agency 2021; the resultant mapping consequently contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0, as do the Lidar images included in this work. The other component of many of the maps produced for this work is the OS Six Inch maps from the 1900s, which have been used as a base-layer for transcribing the Lidar data, as discussed in Section 2 of the main report: this has been kindly provided to this project by the National Library of Scotland and its third-party digitizer and is reproduced with their permission. Other sources of information are acknowledged in the captions to the relevant images, but the following have been of particular use: Captain Andrew Armstrong's large-scale *Map of Lincolnshire* of 1779, British Library Maps K.Top.19.19.5 tab.end, which is © The British Library Board and used by their kind permission; Bryant's 1828 *Map of Lincolnshire* and Greenwood's 1830 *Map of Lincolnshire*, which were kindly provided for this project by Daniel Crouch Rare Books; modern mapping of eastern Lincolnshire, made available by OpenStreetMap, which is © OpenStreetMap contributors, under the Open Data Commons Open Database License 1.0 (www.openstreetmap.org/copyright); images of artefacts made available by the Portable Antiquities Scheme, which are provided under CC BY-SA 4.0 and CC BY 2.0 licences; and Google Earth images provided by Google and its partners, which are used and attributed in the image caption as per Google Earth's Terms of Service and attribution guidance (as of 2021 and 2022).

In addition to the above, I also need to express my thanks to Paul Cope-Faulkner of Archaeological Project Services for allowing me to use a processed greyscale plot of a magnetic gradiometer survey undertaken by Archaeological Project Services as fig. 1.4a; to Jacob Field for sharing his transcription of the Lincolnshire coastal zone sections of the Spare Beds and Stabling Survey of 1686 (TNA WO 30/48) with me; to Professor T. Spencer, of the Cambridge University Collection of Aerial Photography, for allowing me to use a historic aerial photograph as fig. 20 of the main report, which is reproduced with permission of the Cambridge University Collection of Aerial Photography © Copyright reserved; to Jan Allen for helping me access the materials produced for the Viking Link and Triton Knoll projects, and to Mark Allen of Allen Archaeology for providing me with copies of their Triton Knoll materials, Candy Hatherley of Headland Archaeology for sending me their Triton Knoll materials, and Ruben Lopez Catalan of Network Archaeology for sharing their Viking Link project data; to Rachael Hall and Rosalind Buck of the National Trust for providing me with the archaeological and geoarchaeological assessment relating to NT Sandilands; to Katherine Selby for providing me with a copy of her and Sally Derrett's report on the Lincolnshire Coast Submerged Landscape; to Ian Simmons for allowing me to see a pre-publication copy of his book *Fen and Sea: The Landscapes of South-East Lincolnshire AD 500–1700* (Oxford, 2022) and for several thought-provoking discussions of the landscape history of the south-eastern portion of the study zone; to Ian Shennan for sharing some of his underlying work preparatory to the palaeogeographic maps he has published of the region with me, which helped considerably; to Helen Fenwick for sending me materials that were proving hard to source; and to Richard Watts of the Lincolnshire HER for answering my many queries and providing the large number of grey literature reports that needed to be consulted for this project. Finally, it ought to noted that photographs and postcards that appear without further attribution in this work are either images taken by the author or scans of early twentieth-century postcards from the author's own collection.

1 Mapping the Marsh: A Lost Landscape of Islands and Creeks

Introduction

The coastline of Lincolnshire has changed dramatically and repeatedly, and one of the key aims of the Land On The Edge project has been to understand this dynamic evolution. The current Lincolnshire coastline of dunes and resort towns is relatively recent in origin, being located on the seaward edge of a flat, wide plain of agricultural land around 5–10km wide that is known as the Outmarsh. This stretches from Humberston, south of Cleethorpes, all the way down to Skegness and Wainfleet and mainly lies around 1.5-2.5m above sea-level, with a similar plain forming the Low Grounds from Wainfleet to Boston. This area was originally all coastal saltmarshes, sandbanks and mudflats, and still lies well below the maximum level of spring tides on the Lincolnshire coast. The process by which this landscape was won back from the sea, and then in part lost to it once more, is an important question. To understand this, we need to know what this landscape looked like before it was dewatered and given over to agriculture and later tourism.

Maps and the hidden landscape

In order to analyse this region, we need detailed maps of it. Modern Ordnance Survey and British Geological Society maps give a general idea of its character. These show that it much of consists of a flat plain of marine alluvium studded by occasional low hillocks that usually reach between 3m and 9m above sea-level at their summits. These hillocks or minor rises would originally have been low, dry islands in a wide coastal zone, but identifying just how many there were of these islands is difficult. Furthermore, current maps give no real indication of what was present in the rest of the coastal zone away from these islands prior to the modern era.

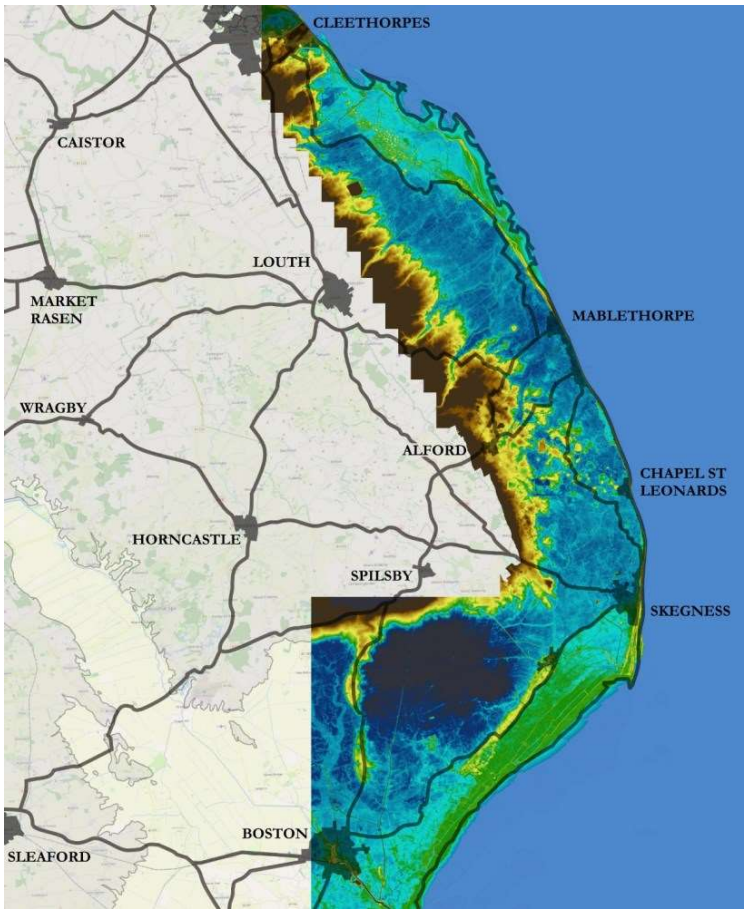


Figure 1.1: Lidar image of the entire study area. Land in blue is all below about 2.5m OD, with land in dark blue being located close to or below sea-level; land in green lies up to about 5m OD, whilst land in yellow and brown is above 5m OD. The grey represents the 3m contour inland of the project area (contains Lidar data © Environment Agency 2021, licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0).

A key tool in aiding our understanding of both these questions is Lidar. Lidar, or airborne laser scanning (ALS), produces detailed and reliable topographic maps that have a high degree of accuracy, allowing us to observe extremely minor variations in the height of the land. Using this tool, we can see that the former islands in the area around Chapel St Leonards are more numerous and extensive than the BGS maps indicate and that they spread further too, down into the Addlethorpe area, with others present near Boston too. Even more importantly, the Lidar also shows that the Lincolnshire coastal zone was once criss-crossed by a dense network of creeks and estuarine rivers, some hundreds of metres wide or more, both in the Wash area and also on the Lincolnshire Marsh from Humberston down to Wainfleet.

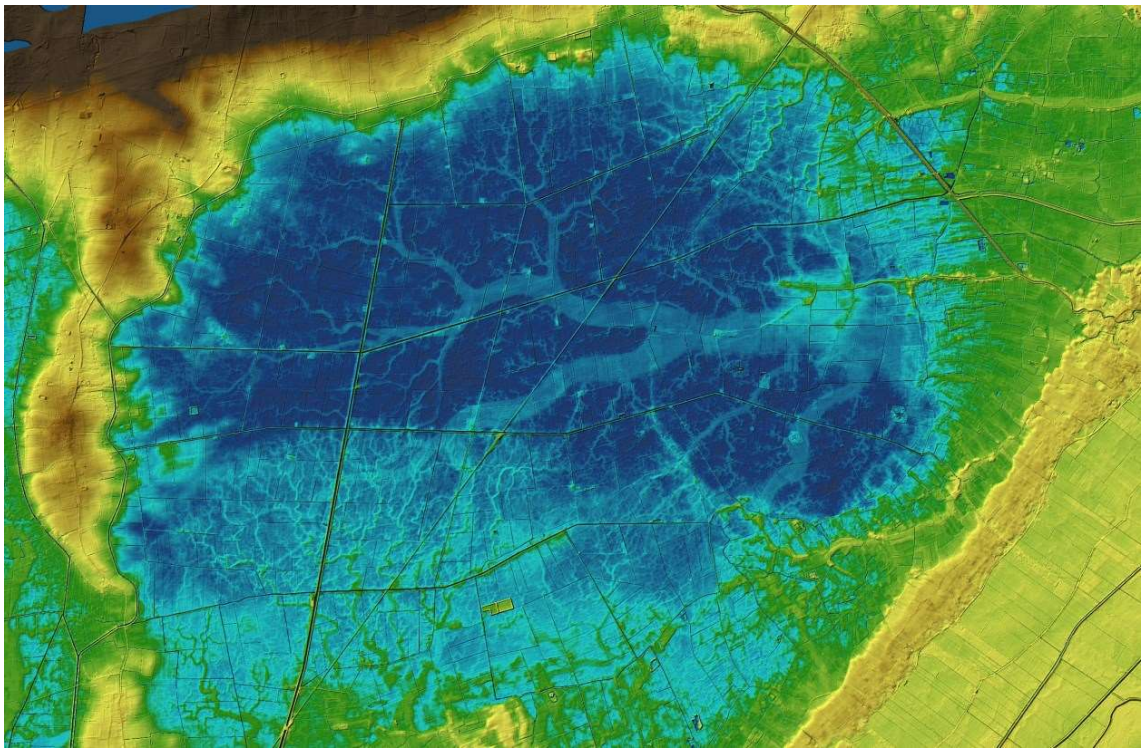


Figure 1.2: A Lidar rendering of an area of the Lincolnshire coastal zone, focussing on the East Fen and Wash coastline and adjusted to show some of the overlapping generations of dendritic roddons here. The large channels in the darker zone are prehistoric marine roddons that were buried under the peats of the East Fen until this was drained and reclaimed (contains Lidar data © Environment Agency 2021, licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0).

Reconstructing the creeks and rivers of the former coastal marshes

The lost creeks and estuarine rivers of the Lincolnshire coast are visible on a normal Lidar plot of this landscape as slight changes in colour indicative of small, but locally significant, variations in height compared to the surrounding former marshes. These variations represent raised 'roddons', that is silt- and sand-filled former channels that now stand higher than the surrounding land—due in part to this suffering from compaction and shrinking under drainage, especially in areas where there was formerly considerable amounts of peat—and down-cut channels. These creeks and rivers weave across the landscape and often have dendritic offshoots. Plotting them can be a complex task, although the pattern can be brought out considerably by altering the colour scale of the Lidar plot so that it only looks at a restricted range of heights. For this project, the Lidar evidence for these watercourses was combined with a complete survey of all the coastal borehole records from Boston through to

Figure 1.3: Aerial photo of the Ashington to Sloothby area depicting a major roddon, 60m or more wide, and its tributaries, with a darker, central 'final channel' clearly visible (Google Earth image from 2021, Google © 2022, Image © 2022 CNES/Airbus).

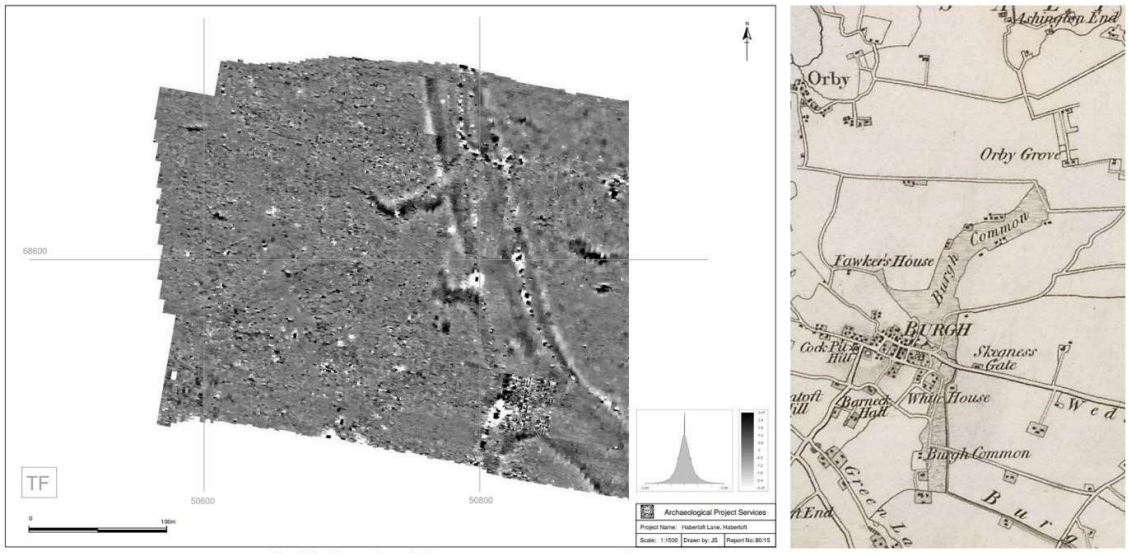


Figure 5 - Area A processed greyscale plot

Figure 1.4: (a) A plot of a magnetic gradiometer survey undertaken by Archaeological Project Services at Orby, which shows the southernmost part of the major roddon seen in fig. 3, helping confirm its scale and reality (Archaeological Project Services). (b) Section from the 1824 OS old series map, showing the extensive Burgh Common/'Common of Scalflete' that preserved the line of an even larger channel into which the Orby roddon drained (Ordnance Survey, 1824/Wikimedia Commons).

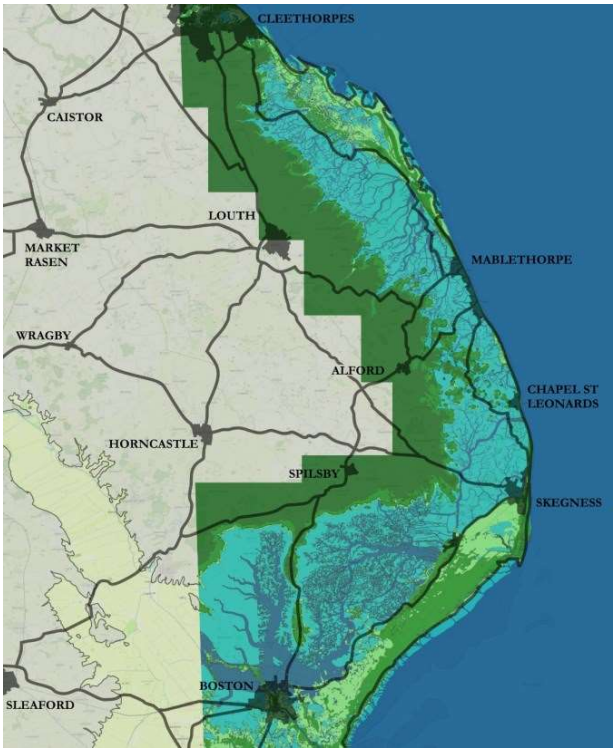


Figure 1.5: Map of the Lincolnshire coastal zone showing the channels identified in this study (Underlying modern mapping for this and Fig. 1.1 is © OpenStreetMap contributors, available under the Open Database Licence)

Grimsby, aerial photography of the whole coastal region, and 19th-century and earlier mapping. The geological material suggests that some of the visible lost creeks and rivers had their origins back in the prehistoric era, perhaps even before the flooding of the Lincolnshire coast around 6000 BC, and were a persistent feature of the landscape here. In contrast, the aerial photography and early mapping can be used to confirm and supplement the channels identified via Lidar. Aerial photographs taken in the right conditions are able to show very small dendritic saltmarsh channels, as well as filling in gaps where modern development obscures the Lidar if they date from before this development. Older maps can likewise help with this, especially in those areas where the lines of creeks are clearly preserved in field and parish boundaries.

Analysing the lost landscapes of the Lincolnshire coastal zone

The maps that have been produced as a result of this work offer a much richer view of Lincolnshire's dynamic coastal zone and enable detailed landscape history questions to be asked. When combined with archaeological and historical data, it becomes clear that whilst much earlier settlement tended to focus on the islands in the marsh, roddons, sand banks and the waste-mounds from the medieval salt-processing industry were also key elements in the landscape just as they were in the southern Lincolnshire Fenland, with settlements being built around and atop. Furthermore, by combining this material together, we can also begin to ask questions

about how the landscape would have looked and evolved in different eras. So, between Boston and Wainfleet we seem to have multiple overlapping generations of creeks, some orientated East–West and others North–South, many of which are thought to be prehistoric in origin, whilst on the Outmarsh there is much less evidence for overlapping systems. Moreover, in some areas, the creek systems seem to have at least partially continued to be active well into the medieval period—in the Skegness area, for example, the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century field boundaries seem to follow the line of these creeks, whilst all along the coastline the mouths of these creeks seem to have formed the prosperous medieval ports and havens of Lincolnshire, like those of Saltfleet, Northcotes, Wainfleet, Wrangle and Wilgrip.

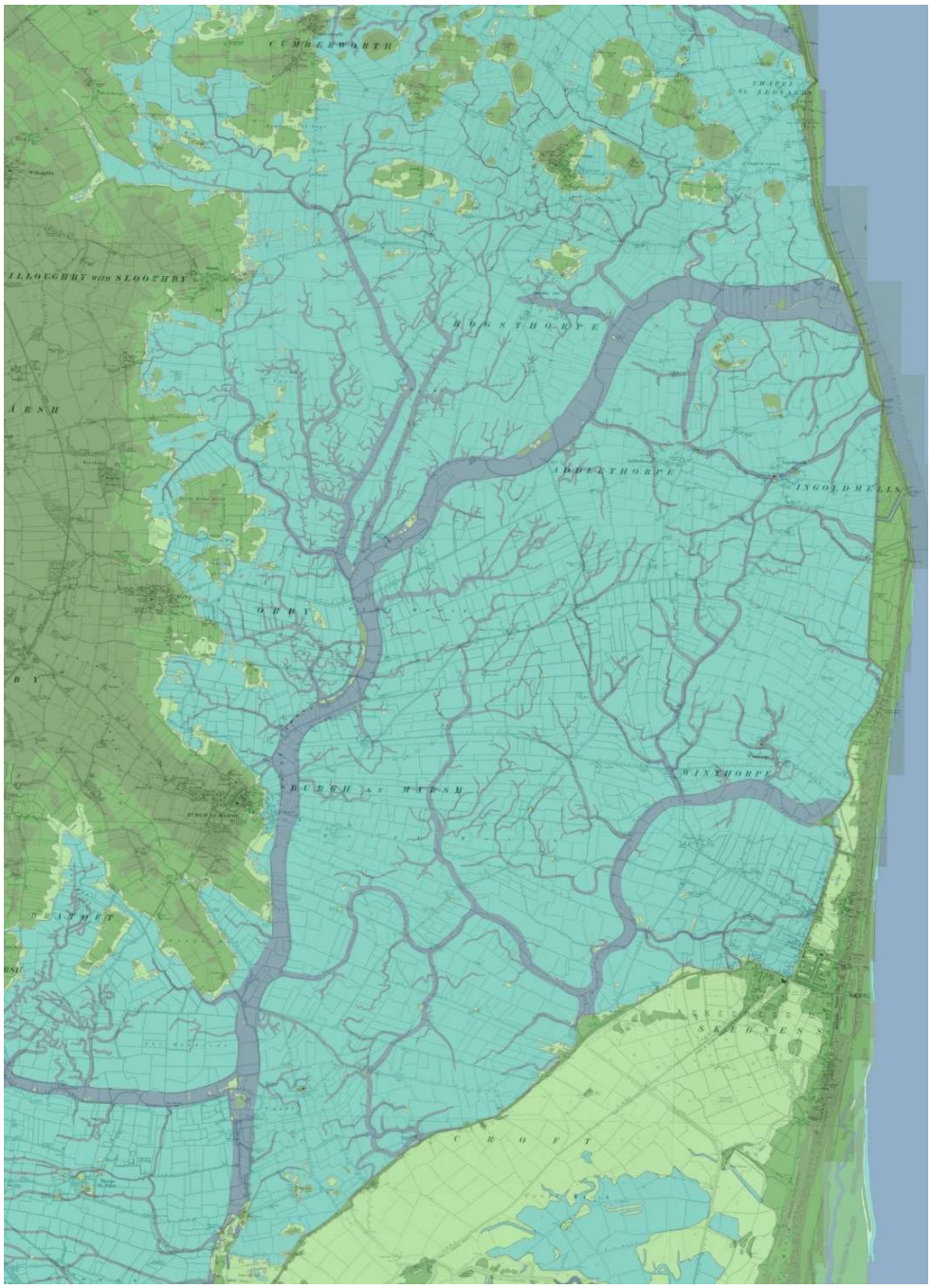


Figure 1.6: Reconstruction of the channel systems in place in the southern Lincolnshire Marsh, based on Lidar data, aerial photographs and other sources, set against a map of the fields in early twentieth century Lincolnshire (National Library of Scotland). Note, creeks and estuarine rivers are shown in dark blue, land below *c.* 2.5m OD in light blue, land between *c.* 2.5m and 3m OD in light green, land from *c.*3m to 5m OD in green, and land over *c.* 5m OD in dark green.

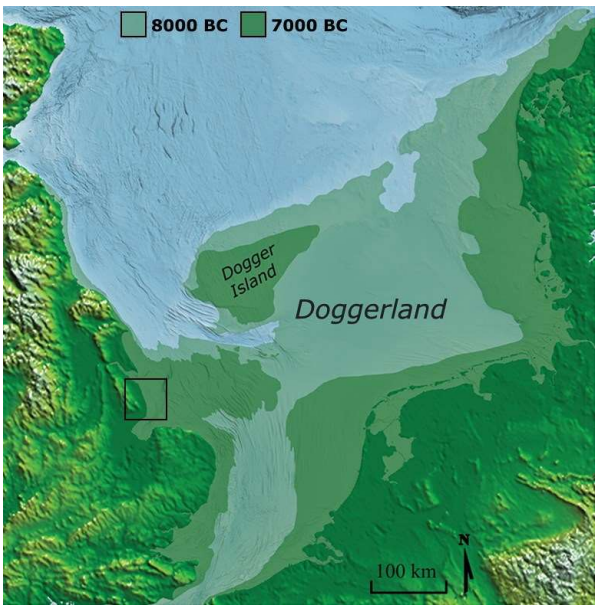
2 Discovering Western Doggerland: The Drowned Landscape and Submerged Forest of the Lincolnshire Coastline

Introduction

The present-day Lincolnshire Outmarsh is a flat landscape of reclaimed marine alluvium broken up by occasional minor 'hills' that seldom rise above 8m OD or so. Many of these 'hills' are natural mounds of clay and gravel deposited at the end of the last Ice Age (*c.* 29,000–14,700 years ago) that protrude through the flat alluvial plain, the last remnants of a rolling, undulating prehistoric landscape here that was flooded by the sea from around 8,000 years ago through to the medieval period. This landscape was laid down by the melting glaciers on top of a flat wave-cut chalk platform that had been created when high sea-levels about 125,000 years ago eroded away the Lincolnshire Wolds. As the glaciers melted, sea-levels rose by over 120m, gradually transforming eastern Lincolnshire from an upland, forest-covered zone sitting above the great lowland plain of Doggerland (now the bottom of the North Sea) into, first, a gradually flooding landscape of shallow valleys and hills, and then a wide, flat landscape of low islands, creeks and coastal marshes that largely lay below the level of the highest tides.

The drowning of Western Doggerland and the emergence of the Lincolnshire coastline

In order to understand the process by which the post-glacial landscape was transformed from one of clay hills and valleys into that of the modern flat alluvial plain, an analysis was undertaken using all accessible



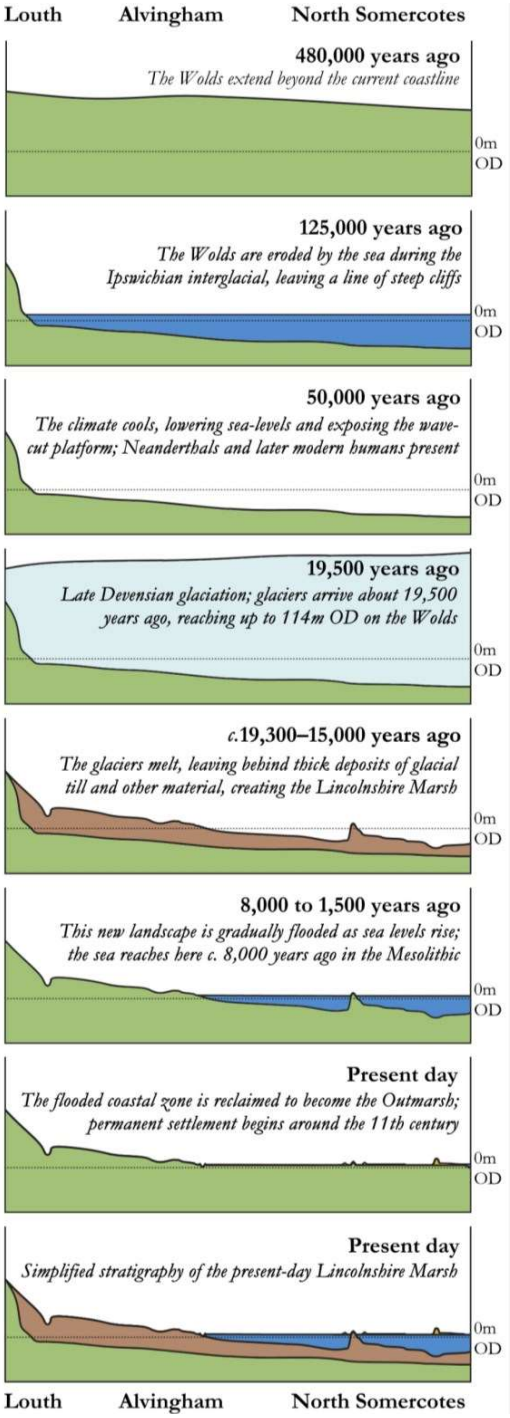


Figure 2.1: The evolution of the Lincolnshire coast during the past half a million years, based on a borehole survey from Louth to North Somercotes (Source: C. R. Green)

Figure 2.2: The start of the flooding of Doggerland (Source: J. Walker et al, 'A great wave: the Storegga tsunami and the end of Doggerland?', *Antiquity* 94 (2020), 1409–25, fig. 2, made available under a CC BY licence).

geological data recorded between Boston and Grimsby, including borehole and auger records, archaeological excavations, 19th-century brick-pit records, and the various previous reconstructions of the underlying landscape that have been attempted. This allowed a model of the prehistoric landscape prior to its flooding to be created and the gradual inundation of the Outmarsh to be mapped in greater detail than has been previously attempted. Some areas are naturally better recorded than others, and so the model has

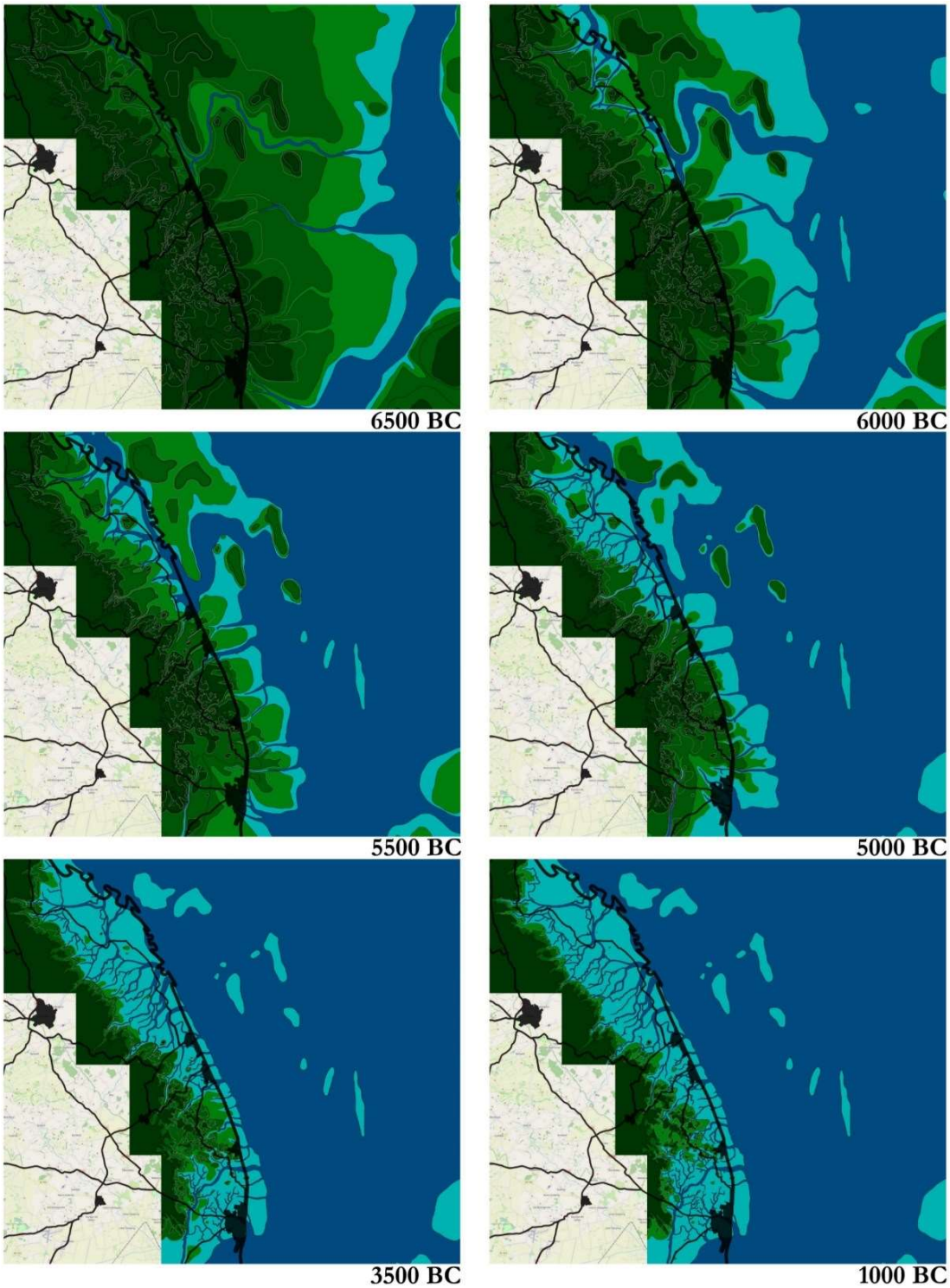


Figure 2.3: The flooding of the Lincolnshire Marsh, with the modern coastline and towns marked: dark blue areas are suggested to be under water most of the time; light blue areas are probably below spring-tide level; light green indicates land around 2.5–5m above sea-level (Underlying modern mapping © OpenStreetMap contributors, available under the Open Database Licence).

greater certainty in those areas, but even allowing for this, it does give us an intriguing idea of how the Lincolnshire coastal zone would have changed over time prior to the flooding reaching its highest level around 1,500 years ago or so. When combined with previous models of how the offshore portions of Doggerland originally looked, we can create palaeogeographic maps of the process, as seen in the images presented here.

Thes maps show how this landscape flooded over time from the start of the Early Mesolithic, around 6500 BC, through to the Late Bronze Age (*c.* 1000 BC). As can be seen, the flooding was initially relatively rapid, but slowed in pace after this. Britain's land-bridge to the Continent via Doggerland was severed sometime around 7000 BC according to recent studies and the coastline moved inexorably westwards after this, with the sea reaching parts of the modern Lincolnshire coastline by around 6500–6000 BC. By the Early Neolithic, much of the modern Outmarsh was flooded almost as far inland as it was in the early medieval period. Furthermore, the hills to the east of the current coast became a string of barrier islands that are believed to have protected the Lincolnshire coast, creating calmer conditions and allowing the wide saltmarshes and sand flats to develop. By about 1000 BC the coastal zone had largely stabilised, although there were periods in which the sea receded slightly, and the easternmost edge of the saltmarshes in 1000 BC is probably located in roughly the same area as it was in the medieval period, prior to its erosion from Mablethorpe down to Skegness after the 13th century, when storms destroyed the barrier islands.

The submerged forests of the Lincolnshire coast

Aside from the glacial islands—like those on which Huttoft and Cumberworth are situated—the most obvious remnants of this drowned landscape of 'Western Doggerland' can been seen along the Lincolnshire coast. Here the waterlogged remnants of the great Mesolithic to Neolithic forests that once covered the hummocky landscape are exposed at low tides or thrown up by the sea after storms.

At sites like Wolla Bank, near the North Sea Observatory at Chapel St Leonards, the lowest tides expose the eroded fragments of the old land surface, with fallen trees, branches and stumps lying in a thin peat that formed over the ancient soil as the rising tides waterlogged the forest. Analysis suggests that the forest at Wolla Bank was a mixed deciduous woodland that transitioned to alder carr and then oak woodland as water levels rose, before the land was finally submerged in the Neolithic period, around 5,200 years ago.

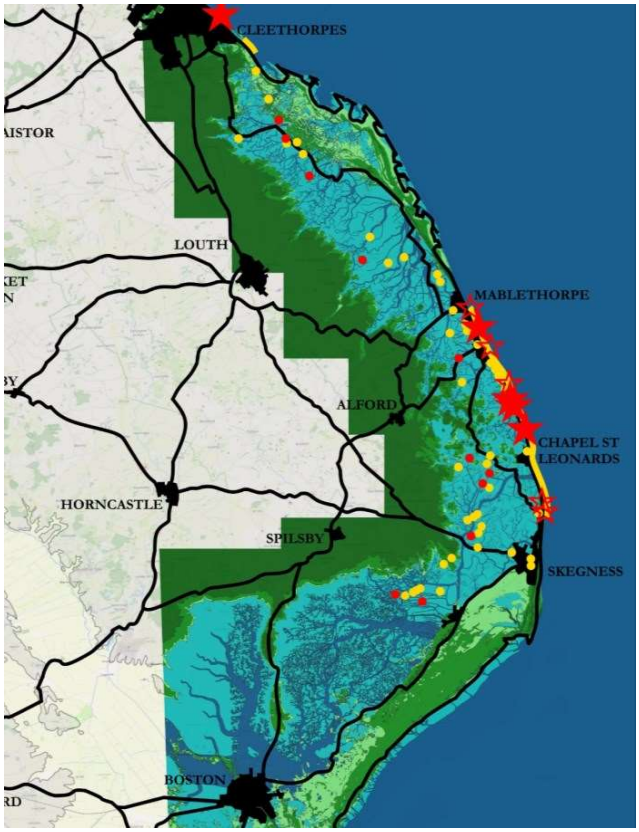


Figure 2.4: Map of the Lincolnshire Outmarsh area, showing where buried forests (red) and peats (yellow) from the initial inundation have been found; stars are recorded coastal exposures of these (open where not currently visible), dots are inland finds, and the yellow line denotes the coast where peat is often found (Modern map © OpenStreetMap contributors, Open Database Licence).

The presence of a submerged forest all along the eastern Lincolnshire coast from Ingoldmells to Mablethorpe, with other exposures found further north at Cleethorpes, has intrigued visitors to this coastline for hundreds of years. One of the earliest accounts of it comes from 1796, when the Portuguese abbot and scientist Joseph Correa de Serra was taken to see the forest at Sutton-on-Sea by Sir Joseph Banks of Revesby. Visible only at the

Figure 2.5: A tree trunk from the Late Neolithic forest exposed on the sea-front at Cleethorpes (C. R. Green).

lowest tides, he records that a 'submarine forest' of birch, fir and oak was preserved atop clay islands that 'extend at least twelve miles in length, and about a mile in breadth, opposite to Sutton shore'. Unfortunately, these easily accessible coastal fragments of the pre-flood landscape of the Lincolnshire coast are increasingly under threat. When first reported, the outcrops were huge. However, by the 1920s, their width had declined to only about 135 metres, and by the 1990s to only 45 metres. Nowadays, only a few small sections of ancient land surface are exposed by the lowest tides—during an exceptionally low tide at Trusthorpe in 2018, only two lone stumps appeared above the sea, a vast change from previously recorded experiences! This can be in part explained by recent beach replenishment works covering up some of the forest deposits and recent increases in mean sea-level, but it is likely that erosion over time also plays a very significant role, particularly as a significant amount of decline was noted prior to the modern beach replenishment works.

Where to visit

Wolla Bank and Anderby Creek—The lowest tides expose the in-situ eroded fragments of the old land surface, with fallen trees, branches and stumps lying in a thin peat that formed over the ancient soil as the rising tides waterlogged the forest. Analysis suggests that the forest here was a mixed deciduous woodland that was finally submerged in the Neolithic period, around 5,000 years ago or so.

Cleethorpes—The remains of a slightly more recent, Late Neolithic forest dated to around 4,500 years ago can be encountered on Cleethorpes beach just the north of the railway station at most normal low tides. There are a variety of large fallen tree trunks along with stumps, roots, and a possible Bronze Age timber trackway. Some of the trees may even have signs of human working, and flint blades and a hafted Bronze Age axe have been found here.

Figure 2.6: The Neolithic submerged forest outcrop at Wolla Bank, Lincolnshire, and a branch embedded in it (C. R. Green).

3 Romans, Saxons and Vikings: The Settlement and Reclamation of the Lincolnshire Coastal Marshes

Introduction

The Lincolnshire coastal zone saw flooding by the sea from around 6000 BC onwards, completely changing the landscape and character of this region. Nevertheless, alongside the floods that created an enduring wide, flat expanse of saltmarshes, islands, creeks and estuarine rivers here, there were also periods of marine regression, when the marshes either dried out in part or were overlain by freshwater peats. These periods occurred at a variety of times and in a range of places, with some lasting longer than others. For example, the vast expanse of the East Fen resulted from one of these periods, with this peat fen then persisting from the Bronze Age right through to its drainage in the nineteenth century. In the main coastal zone, however, these intervals tended to be followed by renewed marine flooding.

Settlement and salt-making in the Romano-British marshes

One of the most notable of these periods came in the Romano-British era, when some of the major roddons of the marshes silted up and areas of the former saltmarshes became dry enough for settlement. So, the channel of former great Witham roddon north of Boston has Romano-British settlement sites and finds scattered all across the top of it, as can be seen in the map to the right. Similarly, at Hogsthorpe, near Chapel St Leonards, there is evidence for Romano-British era settlement and agricultural activity, some directly above late prehistoric salt-making sites, and it is thought that a fortified Roman ferry-port was constructed on the coast at Old Skegness, just offshore of where the end of the pier used to be.

However, this doesn't mean the entire coastal region was dry then, only perhaps slightly higher elements of it; indeed, some of the identified settlement sites are thought to have been associated with continuing salt-production. As such, we should probably think of the Romano-British coastal zone as one that allowed significant settlement activity to take place, but also one that was still in many areas a coastal and marshland environment.

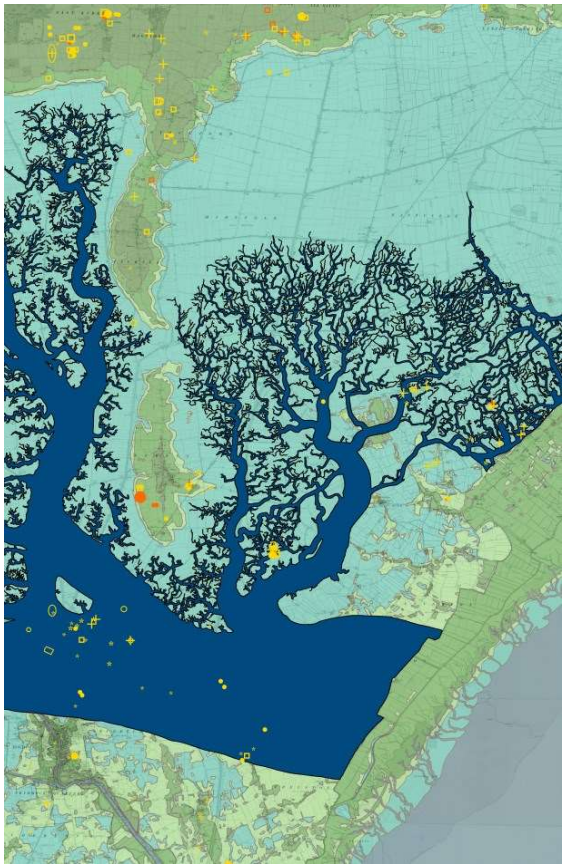


Figure 3.1: The late prehistoric creek systems near Boston, showing the Witham roddon with Romano-British (yellow) finds and sites atop it.

Figure 3.2: An Early Anglo-Saxon pendant, from one of the islands in the coastal marshes (Portable Antiquities Scheme, LIN-7A7C04, CC BY-SA 4.0).

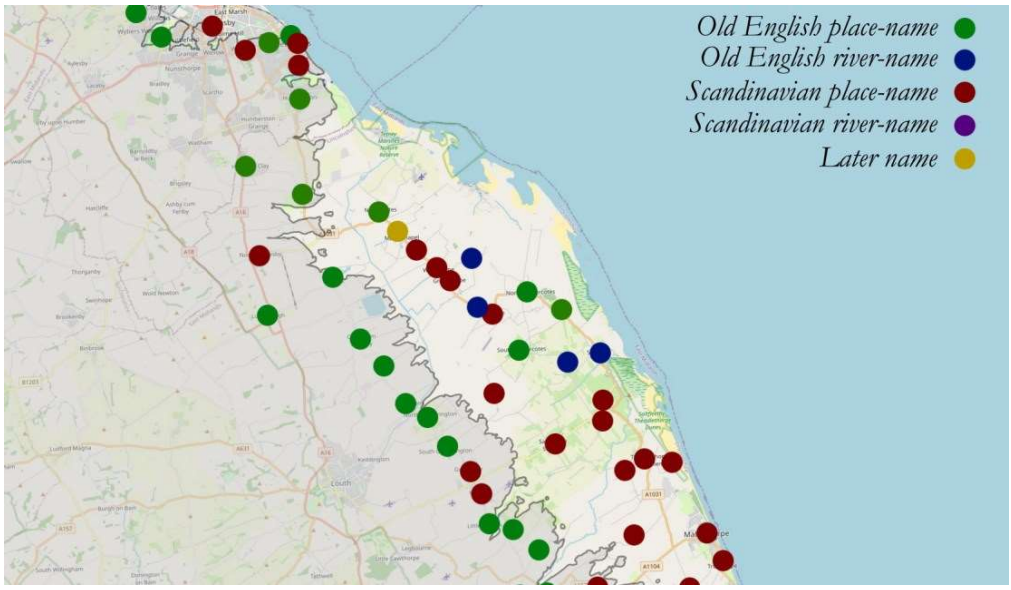


Figure 3.3: Significant place-names in the northern Lincolnshire Marsh categorized by their language and meaning, with the 3m contour inland of the Outmarsh (*i.e.* the edge of the coastal marshes) shown. The only Old English names in the Outmarsh are river-names, names related to boundaries (Mar Haven), and those indicating seasonal salt-making sites (North Cotes and the two Somercotes). Underlying modern mapping © OpenStreetMap contributors, available under the Open Database Licence.

The Late/post-Roman marine transgression and Anglo-Saxon activity in the marshes

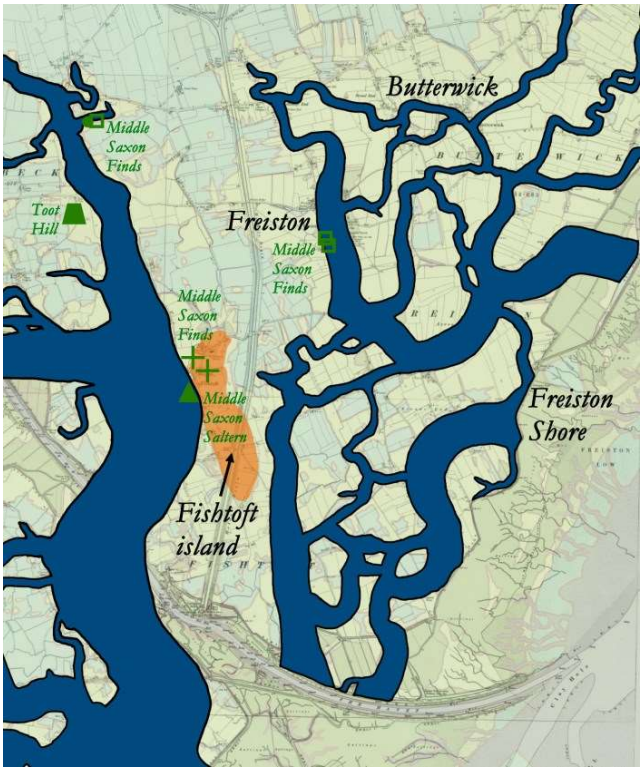


Figure 3.4: Detail of the early medieval Toft Haven area, showing the distribution of Middle Saxon finds and sites in this area (Underlying mapping: OS Six Inch, National Library of Scotland).

At the end of the Romano-British era, the entire coastline saw significant changes once again, with sea-flooding that deposited a metre of more of sediment on top of many Romano-British sites on the Outmarsh. The creek systems visible there on Lidar probably have their origins in this final major marine transgression, although in the Wash region the flooding didn't reach as far inland as the prehistoric floods did. The usage of this renewed coastal wetland landscape in the early medieval period can be hard to trace beyond the creeks and rivers themselves. In particular, the vast majority of Early Anglo-Saxon finds from the project zone come from the islands of higher ground that remained above the floods and the dry Middle Marsh margins, at sites near Chapel Point, Burgh-le-Marsh, Cumberworth, Stain (Withern), and elsewhere. It is highly likely that the extensive saltmarshes of this period were used by these communities, for grazing and salt-making, but the evidence is thin. Slightly more data is available for the Middle Saxon period (7th to 9th centuries AD) from the coastal marshes themselves, however, with finds from the Fishtoft, Saltfleet and Burgh-le-Marsh/Ingoldmells areas, including a possible salt-making site from Fishtoft.

The Lincolnshire coastal marshes in the Viking era and afterwards

The 9th to 12th centuries AD saw notable changes along this coastline. On the one hand, place-names suggest that a number of look-outs and fortifications were constructed overlooking or even on the marshes, which might be associated with Viking-era coastal defence (as is discussed elsewhere). On the other hand, there is good evidence for an increasing amount of activity in the coastal marshes themselves.

That this was indeed a key period in terms of the settlement and reclamation of the marshes is indicated by both the place-name and the documentary sources. In the northern coastal marshes, for example, almost all the villages on the edge of marsh have names of Old English/Anglo-Saxon origins, whilst many on the Outmarsh surface itself have names with Scandinavian roots, suggesting permanent settlement in and after this era but perhaps not before (fig. 3.3). Indeed, those settlement-names on this part of the Outmarsh that have Old English roots are either landscape terms (usually river-names) or seem to indicate seasonal salt-making settlements, as in the case of Somercotes ('summer salt-makers' cottages'). Documentary sources generally support the idea of permanent settlement in the Outmarsh being primarily a 9th/10th century and after phenomenon. Certainly, by the time of Domesday Book in the late 11th century it is clear that some of the modern villages—such as Grainthorpe—were already well-established, although others like Marshchapel and the new town of Wainfleet seem to date from after this.

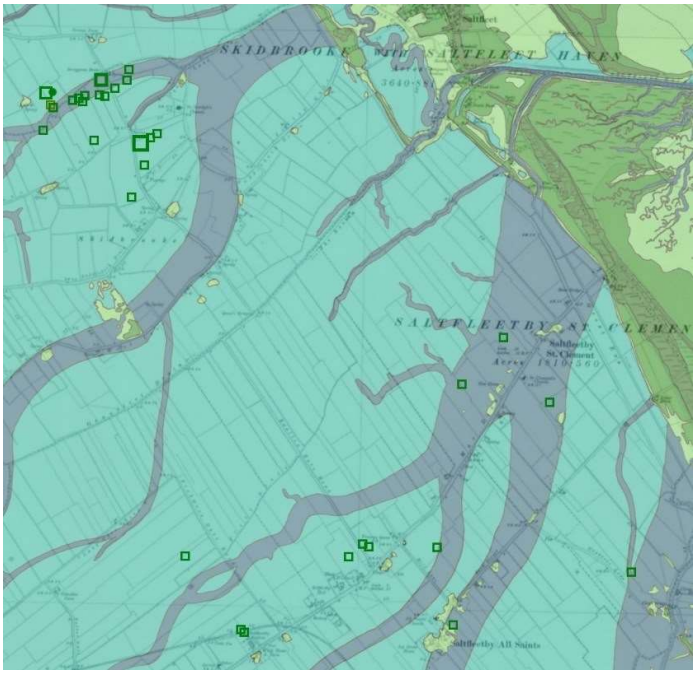


Figure 3.5: Map of the Skidbrooke to Theddlethorpe area showing pre-1100 finds (Underlying mapping: OS Six Inch, National Library of Scotland).

Figure 3.6: An arguably 11th-century lead spindle whorl with runes referring to Odin and Heimdall, found in Saltfleetby St Peter parish (Portable Antiquities Scheme LIN-D92A22, CC BY-SA 4.0).

Archaeological finds offer additional confirmation of this picture, with the Late Saxon (or Anglo-Scandinavian) era being better represented by finds on the surface of the coastal marshes than earlier periods are. Many of these finds are believed to relate to salt-making activity, as in the Wrangle area and in Marshchapel parish, whilst others look to be evidence for the establishment of permanent settlements, including finds of sculptural material indicative of pre-Norman churches, as at Conisholme. In some cases, waste-mounds from salterns appear to have offered the slightly higher, drier ground needed for building settlements and churches, although settlements are also found beside or on top of roddons, as at Skidbrooke and Saltfleetby, or on the slightly higher ground offered by former coastlines and sand bodies.

Related to the evidence for permanent settlement beginning in earnest in this era are the existence of large numbers of sea-banks, especially

in the north and the south of the study zone. These indicate a progressive and sometimes complex process of sea-defence and desalinisation from the Late Saxon era through to the medieval period and beyond, allowing settlement and agriculture on the Outmarsh. Unfortunately, many former banks in the central area from Skegness–Chapel Point and Sandilands–Theddlethorpe have been lost to coastal erosion. However, a substantial section of sinuous sea-bank still exists on the east coast between Sandilands and Chapel Point, which is thought likely to be medieval in date. In contrast, the 'Roman Bank' in Skegness is believed to be a 16th-century edifice constructed after the loss of Old Skegness and its haven banks to the sea, and to the south of Skegness there is an extensive area of post-medieval sea-banks. These banks enclosed an ever-larger area of former marsh in Skegness, Croft and Wainfleet, reclaiming an exceptional amount of land from the sea, a process that also occurred in the north around Tetney to North Somercotes.

Figure 3.7: Map showing the likely stages of reclamations seawards of Croft Bank from the later 16th century onwards, set against the Lidar data & showing the ancient saltmarsh creeks (Underlying mapping: OS 1:25,000 1945–71 [1948, 1949], National Library of Scotland, CC BY 4.0).

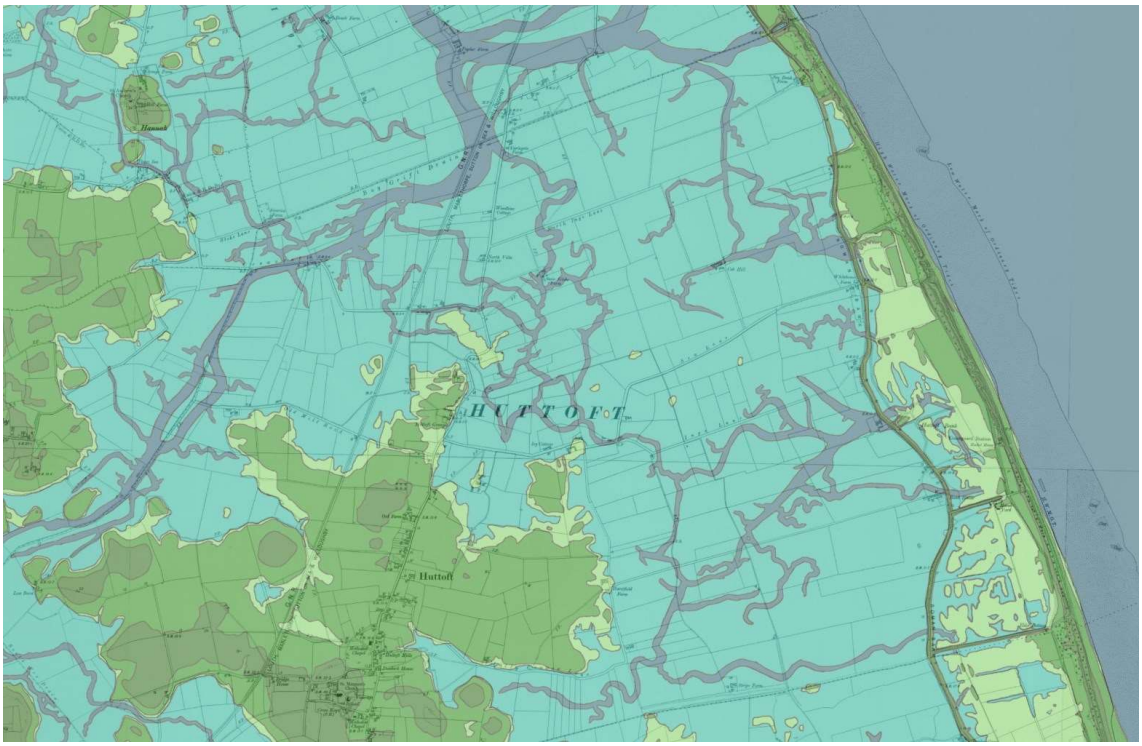


Figure 3.8: The area around Huttoft on the east coast, showing former channels and a section of probable medieval sea-bank, known locally as 'Roman Bank': this is the sinuous raised land to on the east near to the sea. Note, land below *c.* 2.5m OD is in light blue and land above this in shades of green (Underlying mapping: OS Six Inch, National Library of Scotland).

4 Salt and Creeks in the Lincolnshire Coastal Zone: Making a Living in the Marsh

Introduction

The exceptionally rich and dynamic coastal landscape of Lincolnshire, with its wide saltmarshes, winding marine creeks, and long shorelines, constituted a valuable resource for the people who lived beside and within it. One major benefit was its potential for large-scale salt-making, an industry that produced an essential ingredients of life and one that was both widely used and relatively hard to source in the medieval period and before.

The earliest salt-making on the Lincolnshire coastline

Although we have evidence for salt production on the east coast of England from the Neolithic period onwards, the earliest evidence currently known from the Lincolnshire coastal zone belongs the Late Bronze Age, with salt-making sites from this period known at Stickford and Tetney. More common are certain or possible Iron Age to Romano-British saltern sites, which are scattered all along the region from Tetney to Old Leake, with particular concentrations in the Wrangle area and the southern Outmarsh. These sites are known primarily from chance finds, excavations and field-walking, as whilst they don't leave an obvious trace in the Lidar evidence, they do have an artefact signature, including shallow containers in which the brine was heated and a range of pedestals or 'handbricks' (which bear fingermarks and occasionally fingerprints) and other securing devices for these, all of which are collectively known as 'briquetage'. In consequence, the concentrations of finds probably reflect areas with exceptional levels of fieldwork, by Betty Kirkham and the Fenland Survey amongst others. This supposition is confirmed by recent finds of these items in areas where they were previously unknown, such as in the vicinity of Sandilands, during large-scale excavations taking place there. Quite how late this type of salt-making continued is difficult to say, but some probably Middle Saxon briquetage is known from the Fishtoft area, and the 'old way' of making salt seems to have also been used at a 10th- to 12th-century saltern discovered at Marshchapel.

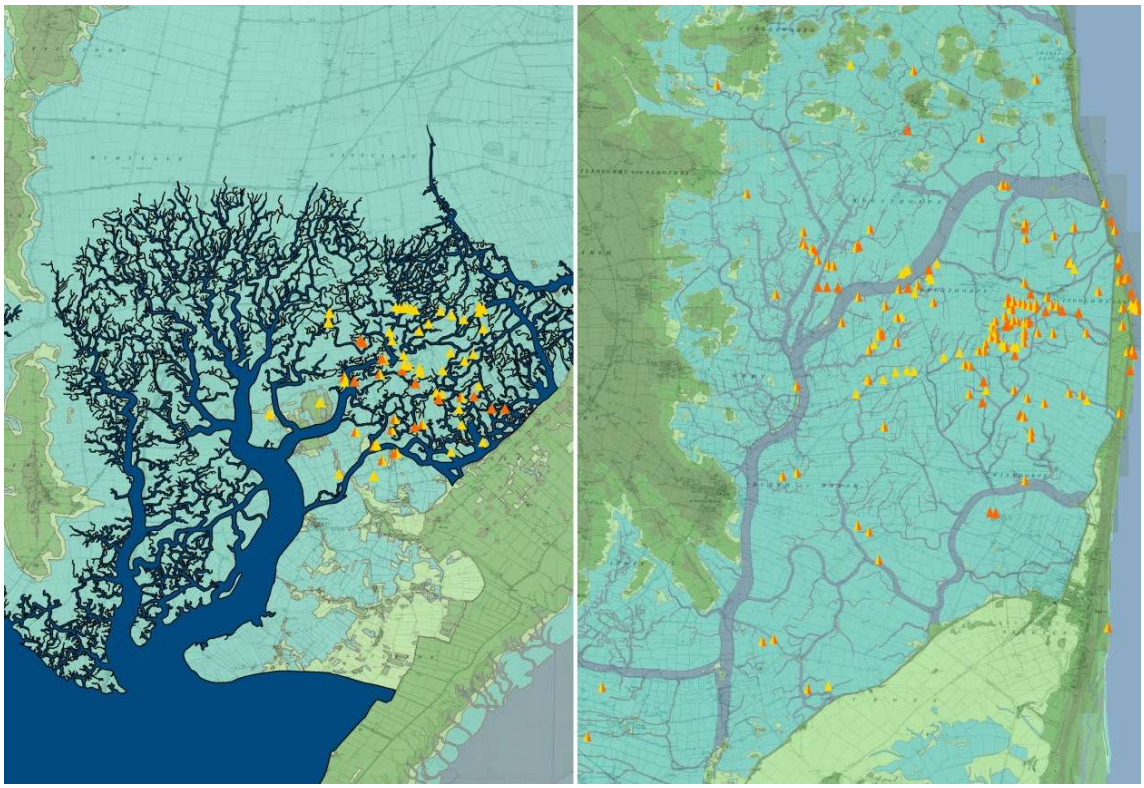


Figure 4.1: Two maps showing the distribution of Iron Age (orange)/Romano-British (yellow) salt-making sites in the Wrangle area (left) and the Ingoldmells–Addlethorpe area (right), along with a plot of the channel features identified in these areas.

Figure 4.2: A salt evaporation pan and a 'handbrick' pedestal with a thumb impression, both of which were found at Ingoldmells (Sources: C. R. Green; M. Laing, 'Who made the white gold? Exploring the demographics of Iron Age salt production in England through fingerprint analysis', *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* 88 (2022), 79–96, doi:10.1017/ppr.2022.11, fig. 8, CC BY 4.0).

The 'new way' of making salt: the medieval saltern mounds of the Lincolnshire coast

Whilst salt-making sites of the above type do not leave an identifiable mark on the modern landscape that can be easily read from Lidar, the saltern mounds of waste silt and sand that were produced by the medieval to early modern sand-washing salt industry most definitely do. Waste mounds of this industry, which only came to an end in the 17th century, often reach up to 5m OD or more in height and can cover considerable areas, especially in the most intensively worked parts of the coastline where the mounds merge together to form an odd, hilly landscape to the seaward of old coastlines and medieval sea-banks. The presence of large areas of such mounds along the Lincolnshire coastline has long been known, and the Lidar evidence allows this industry to be mapped in considerable detail.

Perhaps the best-known block of these sites lies in the northern Outmarsh, from Tetney to North Somercotes, where around 23 million cubic metres of waste silt have been calculated to have been mounded up all along the coastal zone from probably the Late Saxon period onwards to form an area approximately 7km long and up to 2km wide. The Lidar evidence for these mounds matches up exceptionally well with Haiwarde's 1595 mapping of the mounds of the salt industry in Marshchapel parish, and shows nicely how the oldest, westernmost mounds in the group (up to 4.5km inland from the current coastline) have merged together, whilst the most recent mounds—still in use in 1595—to the east still stand apart as separate 'islands'. Of particular interest here are the fact that the Lidar evidence allows not only lines of mounds

Figure 4.3: The raised platform of a saltern mound at Eau Bank End, North Somercotes, which rises to around 5m OD at its highest (C. R. Green)

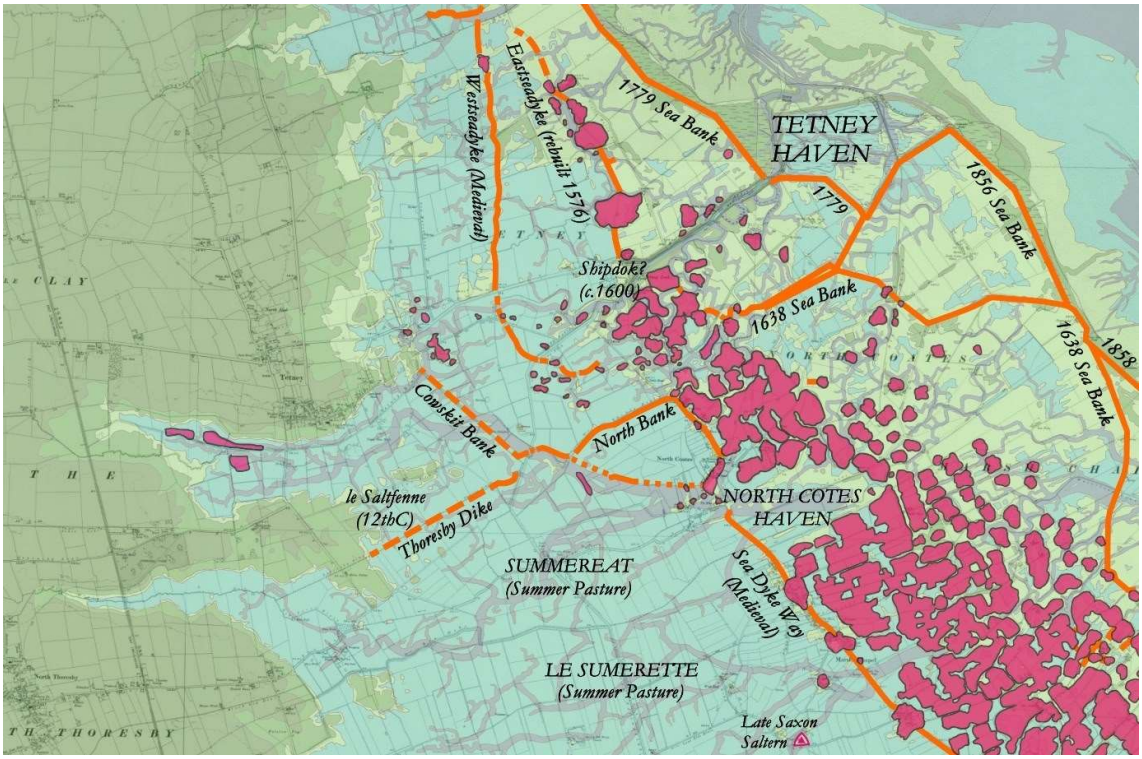


Figure 4.4: Map of the area from Tetney to Marshchapel, showing the location of the Late Saxon saltern at Marshchapel, along with all the medieval saltern mounds identifiable in this area (marked in pink) and the certain and possible sea-banks (orange).

parallel to coast to be recognized within the westernmost, merged mounds, but also 'gaps' in the distribution of these mounds to be identified. Indeed, these gaps are clearly visible and appear to be related to major creeks and havens of the early medieval–high medieval period. This suggests that they remained active marine channels when at least the first generation or so of medieval salterns were in use, and that the block of saltern mounds was built up initially around these creeks, only cutting off their landward ends from the sea at some point later in the medieval period.

The other major block of saltern mounds rising up to 5–7 m OD lies in the south of the *Land On The Edge* study area, between Wainfleet and the former Wrangle/Old Leake haven-mouth, now the parish boundary between these villages. This block is around 12km long, and it has recently been suggested that it contains over 90 million cubic metres of waste silt. As in the north, the inner edge of this block of mounds—known locally as the Tofts—is located up to 5km inland of the present-day coastline, due to post-medieval reclamations of the saltmarshes that lay beyond them. Finds of Late Saxon material from around the mounds suggest that the innermost, earliest line of these may well have their origins in this era, whilst the most seaward mounds probably represent the 17th-century end of this industry. Of interest when considering this block is both the lack of clear gaps for marine channels, as are found amongst the northern mounds, and the fact that in the area of Wainfleet the mounds look very much like they consciously fill the line of several former major creeks. Moreover, it is worth noting that the mid-12th-century 'New Town' of Wainfleet, one of Lincolnshire's major medieval coastal ports, is built atop the higher ground created by these saltern mounds, indicating that the industry was already well-advanced there by the time that this settlement was founded.

In addition to these great, coherent blocks of saltern mounds, other non-geological rises in the landscape are visible in the Lidar of the flat coastal, alluvial plain, many of which are likely to represent other, more local and less extensive, areas of salt-making activity. In the south at Wrangle and Old Leake, these show a strong correlation with the identifiable former creeks of the Wrangle and Leake Havens, being located on their edges or filling them, and a similar correlation is visible elsewhere in the study zone too. So, for example, rises that have been identified as probable saltern mounds are found along the edge of the great

channel that once wended its way across the Outmarsh between Burgh-le-Marsh and Addlethorpe/Ingoldmells, up to 6km or more inland from the current coast and associated in some cases with medieval pottery and finds. Likewise, there are small groups of identifiable saltern mounds linked with the medieval ports of Saltfleethaven and Mar Haven, with the structure of Saltfleethaven's late medieval to early modern harbour being partly made from them. Furthermore, Arthur Owen's suggestion that a number of churches in the Outmarsh were built on saltern mounds seems to be supported by the Lidar evidence.

Of especial interest may be those small groups of probable saltern mounds found inland of the two great blocks of mounds. At Friskney and Wainfleet, for instance, there are probable saltern mounds inland of the Tofts—in both places, they fill or abut what look to be former marine creeks inland of the western edge of the Tofts, presumably the upper reaches of the original Friskney and Wainfleet Havens prior to these being largely cut off from the sea by the Tofts, with a few outlying mounds also being found at the village of Wainfleet St Mary. Similarly, in the Tetney area, Lidar, archaeological work, geological surveys and aerial photographs show a scattering of relatively small salt-making sites up to 4km or so inland of the inner edge of the main saltern block, some even being found in the valley to the west of Tetney village. Although these could well be seen as earlier salterns than those in the main block, it is worth noting that other Lidar and landscape evidence, including multiple sea-banks and local field-names like *le Saltfenne* (recorded in the 12th century), suggest that this part of the Outmarsh may well have remained under marine influence into the medieval era.

Conclusion

All told, a historical landscape reconstruction using Lidar and archaeological material allows the identification of large numbers of salt-making sites all across the low-lying coastal plain from Boston to Grimsby. This industry began in the prehistoric era but appears to have reached its height in the medieval period, when tens of millions of cubic metres of waste silt were deposited in large areas along the then-coastline in both northern and southern Lincolnshire, creating raised, hilly platforms that helped defend this coastline and which will undoubtedly influence any future flooding of this exceptionally low-lying landscape due to rising sea-levels.

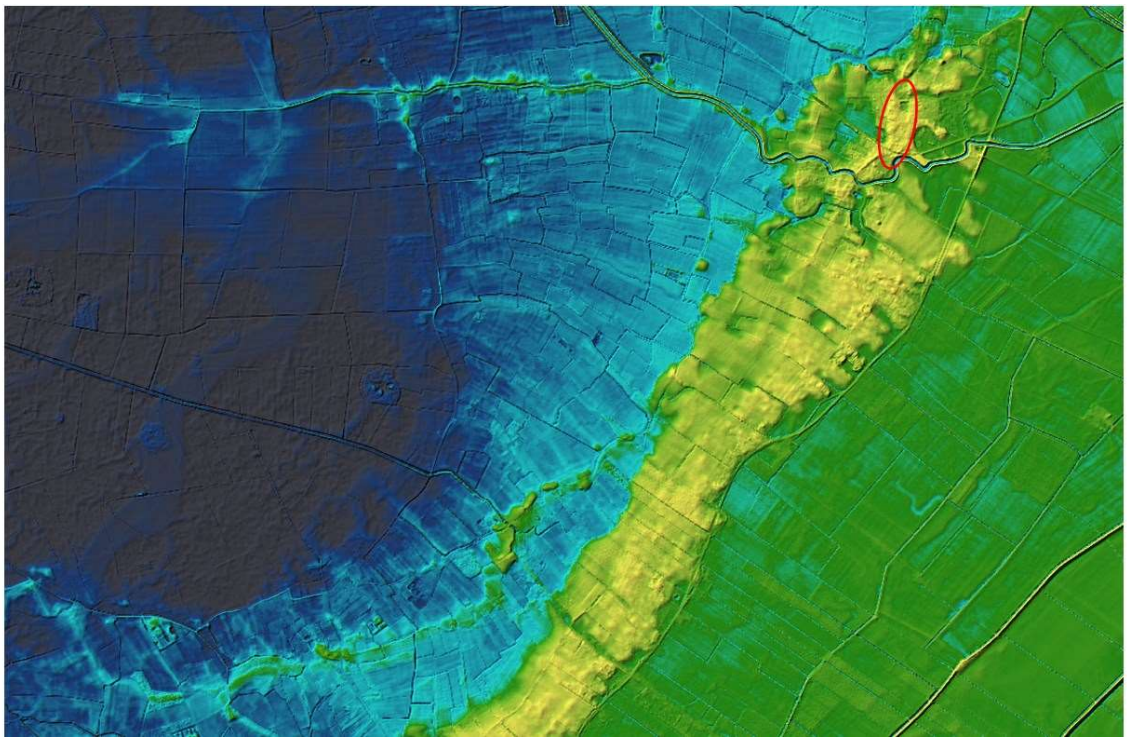


Figure 4.5: Lidar image of the medieval saltern mounds of the Tofts, primarily shown in yellow; the green land to the east of the Tofts are post-medieval reclaimed saltmarshes. The medieval 'New Town' and port of Wainfleet atop the saltern mounds is indicated by a red outline (Lidar data © Environment Agency 2021, Open Government Licence v3.0)

5 The Medieval Ports and Havens of the Lincolnshire Coastline

Introduction

The early coastal landscape of Lincolnshire was characterized by wide marshes, winding creeks (some hundreds of metres wide), large areas of sand, dunes and flats, and occasional islands of dry land. This dynamic coastal zone saw considerable and increasing economic and settlement activity from the 9th century AD onwards, and by the medieval period there was a significant network of ports and havens all up the coast from Boston to Grimsby.

Figure 5.1: The North Sea and the east coast of England on al-Idrīsī's mid-twelfth-century Arabic map, from a mid-thirteenth- to early fourteenth-century copy. Note, north is at the bottom and south at the top; the river running across the centre of the image is the Witham with Boston on the left and Lincoln on the right, whilst Grimsby is shown on the coast to the north of the river (Source: Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Manuscrits, Arabe 2221, f. 338v–339r; PD).

Boston

The most famous of Lincolnshire's seaports, Boston was probably founded in or around the 11th century on a raised early medieval channel deposit, or 'roddon', of the River Witham. By the 12th century it was clearly of sufficient importance that it came to the attention of the great Muslim scholar al-Idrīsī, working in Sicily in around 1154. Indeed, Boston has been described as a 'medieval boom town'. With its ability to cater for larger ships, good links with Germany and Scandinavia, and the growth of the wool trade, Boston found itself in a very favourable position. By the 13th century, it was the most important port in England for the shipment of wool, England's premier export, and in the 14th century around 3% of its population were born outside England, although in subsequent centuries its importance fluctuated and declined.

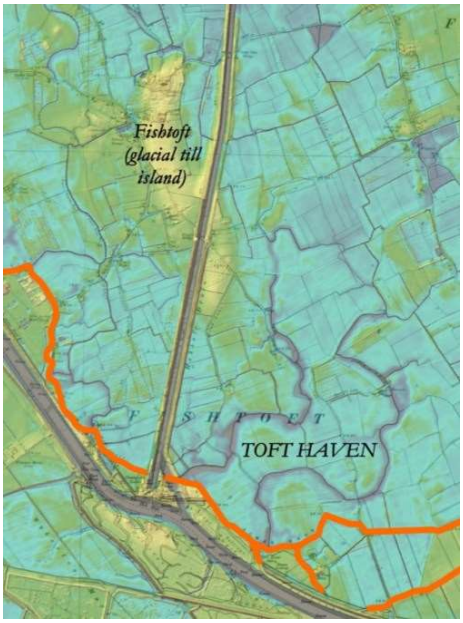


Figure 5.2: Lidar image of Toft Haven, adjusted to show the latest, down-cut channels and Fishtoft glacial till island, which has evidence of Middle Saxon activity; the major banks in this area are also marked in orange (Underlying map source: OS Six Inch 1906, National Library of Scotland).

Toft, Leake, Wrangle and Friskney Havens

Toft, Leake, Wrangle and Friskney formed a line up the coast from Boston to Wainfleet. Toft was a 'creek of considerable magnitude' running from Fishtoft down to around Hob-hole Sluice, and it is claimed that boats could still sail up to near the church as late as *c.* 1700; certainly, in

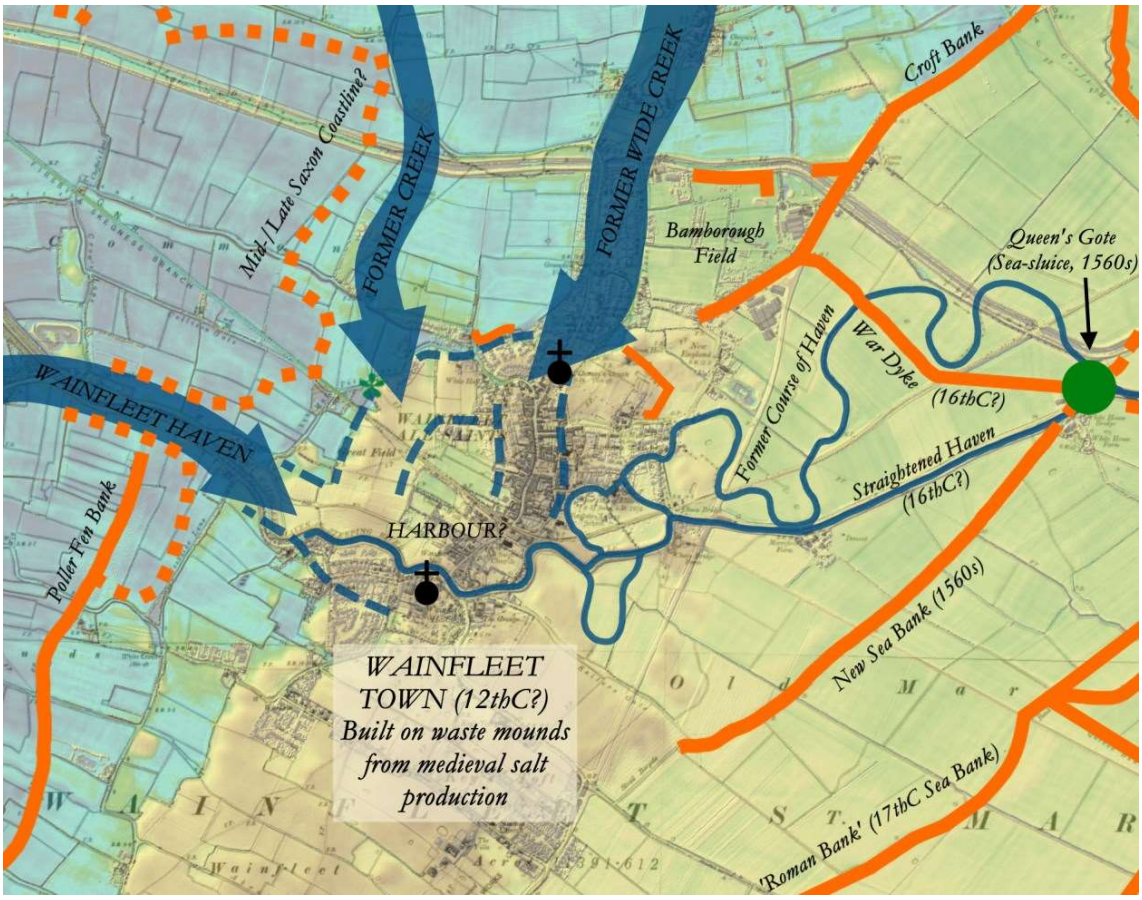


Figure 5.3: Lidar image of the Wainfleet area annotated with the major features, including banks in orange (Underlying mapping: OS Six Inch, National Library of Scotland; Lidar data in this and figs 5.2 and 5.5 © Environment Agency 2021, Open Government Licence v3.0).

the 16th century ships from Fishtoft were involved in the wool trade and the creek was under official watch for pirates. Leake and Wrangle havens were more important and may have shared a common mouth, with vessels from the latter involved in transporting large amounts of Lincolnshire salt to the herring-fair at Yarmouth in the 14th century and the Wool Fleet in 1471, whilst there was apparently a lighthouse well inland of the current coastline at Leake in the Early Modern era. Friskney, in contrast, is mostly undocumented and may have largely ceased to function in the Late Saxon/Anglo-Scandinavian era.

Wainfleet

Located on a significant tidal inlet, the medieval town was built in the 12th century on higher ground created by the waste mounds of the medieval salt industry. Like Boston, it was extremely prosperous and ranked amongst the most important towns of Lincolnshire in the 14th century, exporting both salt and wool. Its prosperity declined significantly after this, however, and by 1560 it was described as a 'poor beggarly town' with no merchants, the haven suffering from silting and increasingly shifting away from the town.

Skegness

Although now a significant coastal town, Skegness in the mid-18th century was little more than a few buildings and a church. However, it had not always been like this. In the 16th century, it was claimed that there had been 'a great haven town' here that was destroyed by the sea earlier in the 1500s. In general, this is a credible tale. Official records refer both to a medieval harbour here and the town being destroyed, and Skegness was explicitly described as 'a good port' in a set of 12th-century sailing directions (in contrast to many of the others on the Lincolnshire coast). Indeed, in the 14th century Skegness was one of the main home ports of Lincolnshire's fishermen, while in the 15th century it imported wood and other goods from Scandinavia for the building of Tattershall Castle.

Ingoldmells and Schalflet

The port of Schalflet ('shallow estuary') is placed north of Skegness in a set of 12th-century sailing directions. Medieval references associate this name with Burgh Common and an area within 'Orby meadows'—given that Burgh Common lay on the line of a massive, 300m-wide medieval creek that once flowed from there to the coast via Orby marsh, reaching the sea between Ingoldmells and Chapel St Leonards, the sea-end of this creek (lined by medieval sea banks) must be a very plausible candidate for the port of Schalflet. This inlet had probably partially silted up by the end of the medieval period, as some of its mouth was reclaimed as arable land then, but it was still probably open to some degree. It may also have been the pirate-infested creek known as 'Ingoldmells Haven', or 'Thieves' Creek', in the later 16th century.

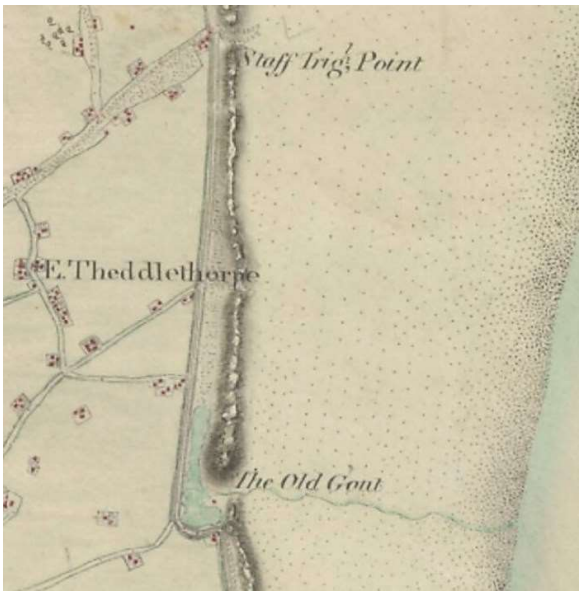


Figure 5.4: The Old Gout, as it appeared on the 1819 OS draft map of Theddlethorpe, showing The Old Gout filled with water (Source: British Library, Maps OSD 284/Wikimedia Commons).

Wilgrip (Theddlethorpe)

Established by the 12th century at the latest, Wilgrip Haven's location has been variously given as 'The Old Gout'/haven between Theddlethorpe and Mablethorpe (Crook Bank car park) or the outfall of Woldgrift Drain between Mablethorpe and Trusthorpe, the latter primarily due to the name. Of the two, the former is significantly more plausible, not least because The Old Gout seems to be related to the mouth of a large, early medieval estuarine river visible on Lidar that flowed from Alford to Theddlethorpe and reached the sea just to its north, with this river appearing, significantly, to have been diverted at some point into the present Woldgrift Drain. The last mentions of Wilgrip as an actual port/creek date from the 16th century; subsequently, the minor haven here was known as Theddlethorpe Haven in the 18th century and was the location for the local lifeboat and smugglers in the 19th century.

Saltfleethaven

Saltfleethaven was the most important port on the coast between Wainfleet and Grimsby and is mentioned repeatedly in medieval documents, starting with Domesday Book in the 11th century. The current haven, constructed in the 19th century, doesn't reflect the larger medieval harbour that once existed here and which can still be seen on Lidar, located at the conjunction of several large estuarine rivers and creek systems. The origins of Saltfleet lie in the Anglo-Saxon era and there is a notable concentration of early medieval archaeological finds near here. Trade from Saltfleet in the medieval period included grain,

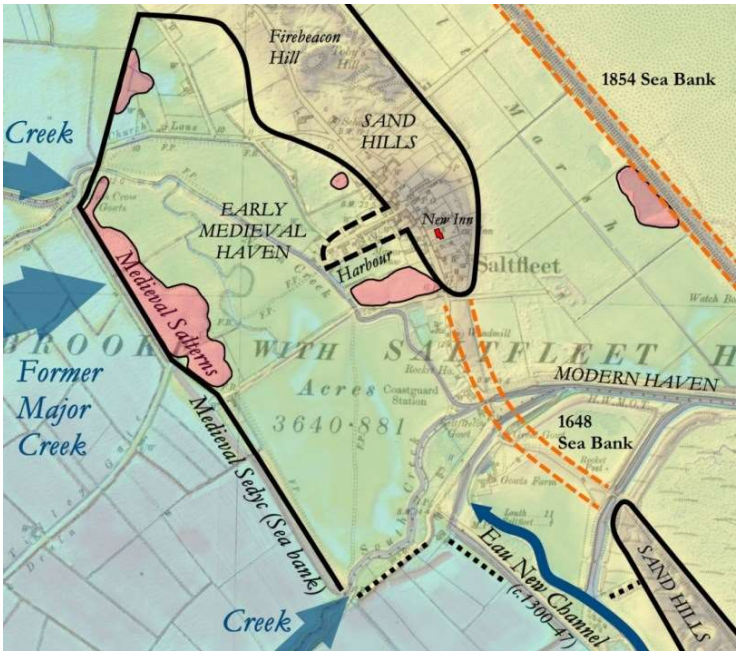


Figure 5.5: The original extent of Saltfleet Haven. Note, the original haven was cut off from the sea in the 17th century by the long sea-bank upon which the windmill currently stands (Underlying mapping: OS Six Inch, National Library of Scotland).

fish and wool; as at Wainfleet, however, the clogging of the harbour with silt was a perennial problem that ultimately caused the haven to decline significantly and move away from the settlement.

Mar (Somercotes), Swine (Grainthorpe) and Northcotes havens

Several havens and ports are mentioned between Saltfleet and Humberston, of which these three were the most significant, the first two being mentioned in Domesday Book. Mar Haven fell out of use in the 13th century; it lay on the boundary between Skidbrooke and Somercotes, and traces of it can still be seen on Lidar. Swine Haven was probably located just seaward of the northern part of Grainthorpe village, but was pushed further away over time by a combination of silting, salt-mounds and reclamations—Grainthorpe Haven at the coast is the latest version of it, dug in the 19th century. Northcotes Haven was the wide channel of an estuarine river running to the south and east of the village of North Coates and, like Swine, it gradually moved further east over time. Although often said to have been in notable decline since the 13th century, there were significant numbers of ships here in the 14th century and the Northcotes creek was under official watch for pirates in the late 16th century.

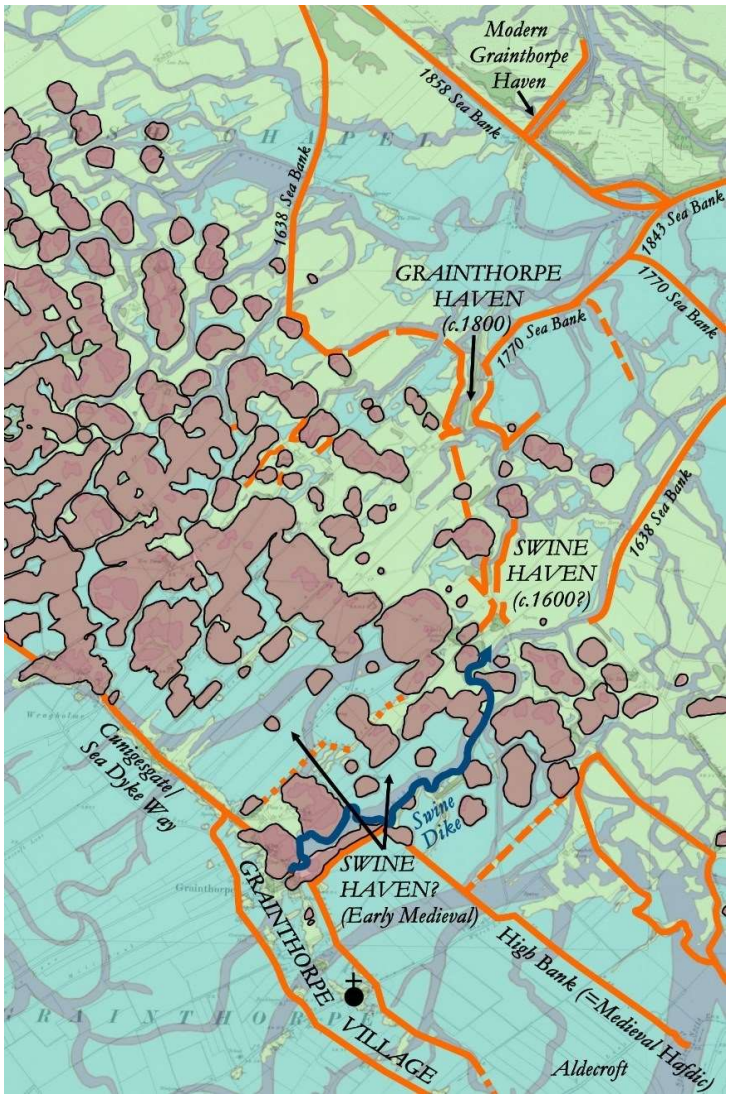


Figure 5.6: The area around Grainthorpe, showing banks (orange), saltern mounds (pink), and the development of Swine Haven from the early medieval period (Underlying mapping: OS Six Inch, National Library of Scotland).

Grimsby

Grimsby was a major port town and medieval borough, established beside a marine creek in the saltmarshes by the River Humber. Unlike Boston and the other ports, it was at least partly rooted on a firm glacial clay promontory projecting into the marshes, rather than solely atop marine sediments or saltern mounds. In terms of origins, these are traditionally ascribed to the Viking era, although there are indications that there was some sort of significant earlier activity in the local area, including a probably pre-Viking coastal lookout hill and fort just to the west at Toote Hill, Little Coates. As to its medieval trading, Grimsby never rivalled Boston, which was a port of national importance; nonetheless, it did have local and even regional significance, including Scandinavian connections, and it is 1 of only 3 coastal ports north of the Thames mapped by the great Islamic scholar al-Idrīsī in *c.* 1154. Like other Lincolnshire ports, Grimsby saw significant decline from the later medieval period, which continued until the silting up of its harbour was finally solved in the 19th century.

6 The Lost Islands of the Lincolnshire Marsh and Coast

Introduction

The Lincolnshire coast, as it exists today, is only a few centuries old. Once there was a wide expanse of coastal marshes here, stretching up to a mile seaward of the present beaches and to up to 10km inland of them. Human activity in this wetland landscape was often drawn to any slight rise in the landscape. Some of these rises were natural islands formed at the end of the last Ice Age; marine flooding from around 6000 BC gradually drowned the gently rolling land here, leaving only the tops of the small hills protruding as islands. Others were sandbanks, dunes, former river channels or coastlines, where natural processes built up a slight rise compared to the surrounding marsh. And yet others were created, usually accidentally, by human activity, especially salt-making.

The offshore barrier islands

Perhaps the most important islands of the Lincolnshire coast were a band of offshore islands that protected the coast from erosion and allowed the wide saltmarshes and creek systems to develop. Formed from the slightly higher ground that once lay to the east and north of the modern Lincolnshire and Norfolk coastlines, they were originally part of a glacial moraine left by the retreating ice-sheets on what was then the land surface. These islands extended south-eastwards from Spurn Point and are believed to have shielded the Lincolnshire seaboard from the full ferocity of the storms and tides of the North Sea, creating a sheltered tidal lagoon between themselves and the main coastline. This protection appears to have finally failed during the 1200s, when the offshore islands were destroyed by storms and floods. The debris that resulted from their destruction is usually thought to have been cast up along the foreshore of the Lincolnshire Outmarsh as broad 'storm beaches' and sand dunes, as at North Somercotes.

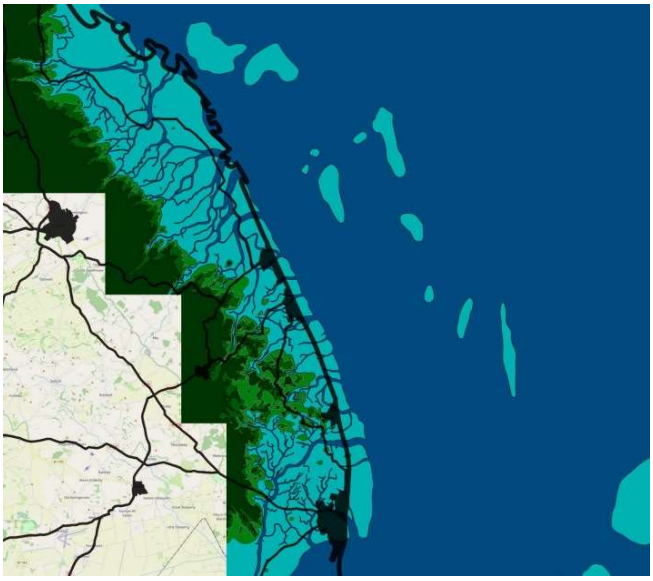


Figure 6.1: The Lincolnshire coastline in the late prehistoric period, showing the persistent offshore barrier islands set against the modern coastline (Underlying modern mapping © OpenStreetMap contributors, available under the Open Database Licence).

The clay islands of the medieval marsh

As the Lincolnshire Marsh flooded, the low hills became islands surrounded by saltmarshes, and these offered some of the most important sites for settlement along the coast. One of these coastal zone 'islands' was Stain Hill near Mablethorpe, which rises from the surrounding marine alluvium to reach a maximum height of 9m above sea-level. Significant quantities of Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon finds from this island, along with aerial photographs, suggest that there was some sort of significant settlement or estate centre located on this elevated point. Subsequently, it became the site for medieval village and a chapel, with a moated manor house at its foot, although the village, church and manor have now largely disappeared.

To the east of Alford there is another, much larger island-group, now occupied by the villages of Thurlby, Mumby, Anderby, Huttoft and Cumberworth. There is good evidence for Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon-era activity here, not only from the names Huttoft and Cumberworth (which are Old English in origin), but also from metal-detected finds and archaeological excavations. Chance finds from Cumberworth parish include part of a Late Roman crossbow brooch, potentially indicative of the presence of the Late Roman military in the very late 4th/early 5th centuries AD, a Late Roman clipped silver siliqua

Figure 6.2: The former islands are visible as slight rises in the flat Outmarsh, as seen here at Hannah, Old English *hana* + *ēg*, 'the island where cocks are found/bred' or 'Hana's island' (C. R. Green)

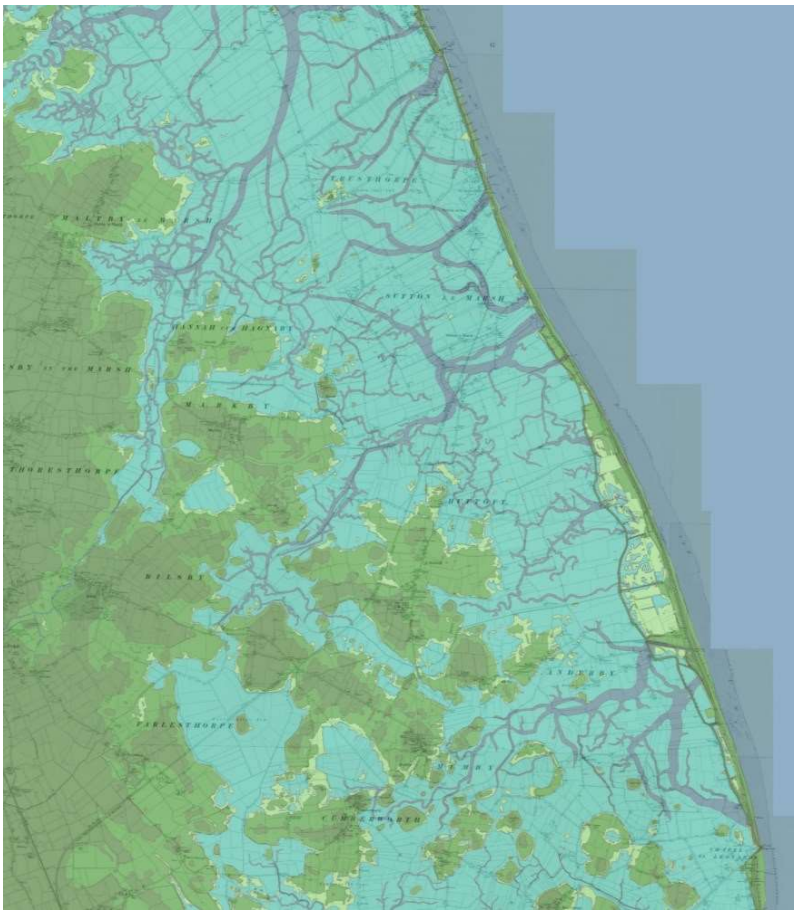


Figure 6.3: Reconstruction of the channel systems and islands in place in the central Lincolnshire Marsh around Sandilands/Huttoft Bank, based on Lidar data, aerial photographs and other sources.

of Arcadius, struck at Milan in 395–402, and an Anglo-Saxon silver coin of *c.* 680–710. At the same time, excavations at St Helen's Church in the village of Cumberworth itself have seen the recovery of 26 burials from an Anglo-Saxon cemetery that was in turn overlain by a timber church, this last being probably demolished by the end of the tenth century. Finally, to the south-east of this island group were a scattering of smaller dry islands in the coastal marshes heading out towards the open sea, including one now occupied by the villages of Helsey and Hogsthorpe. Again, these seem to have seen activity in the Anglo-Saxon period, with finds of metalwork and even high-status gold pieces, although some of the place-names suggest more limited activity, such as Helsey, 'the

island where there is a shed for drying fish.' Further south, there are small glacial islands at Croft, near Wainfleet, and Fishtoft, where there is evidence for pre-Viking salt-making.

Islands of sand on the Lincolnshire coast

Some islands on the Lincolnshire coastline had much less solid footings. Perhaps the most famous, or infamous, of these is the medieval pirate island of Ravenserodd, which witnesses describe being thrown up by the waves in the first half of the 13th century somewhere offshore of Grimsby, perhaps in the vicinity of Spurn Point. Initially used for drying nets, the sand island had become the site of a market and a fair by 1251, and by 1290 the town and port of Ravenserodd had begun to seriously threaten the trade of nearby Grimsby, with contemporary Grimsby folk declaring it a pirate island at the mouth of Humber, preying on passing shipping. Indeed, the demise of this town during the following century was widely attributed to its evil character—as one chronicler put it, 'by its wicked works and piracies, it provoked the wrath of God against itself beyond measure' and was consequently swallowed by the sea. Over 200 buildings and properties had been lost by the mid-1340s, and by 1362 the once-prosperous town was 'destroyed to its foundations' and lay derelict, with its exact former location nowadays being uncertain.

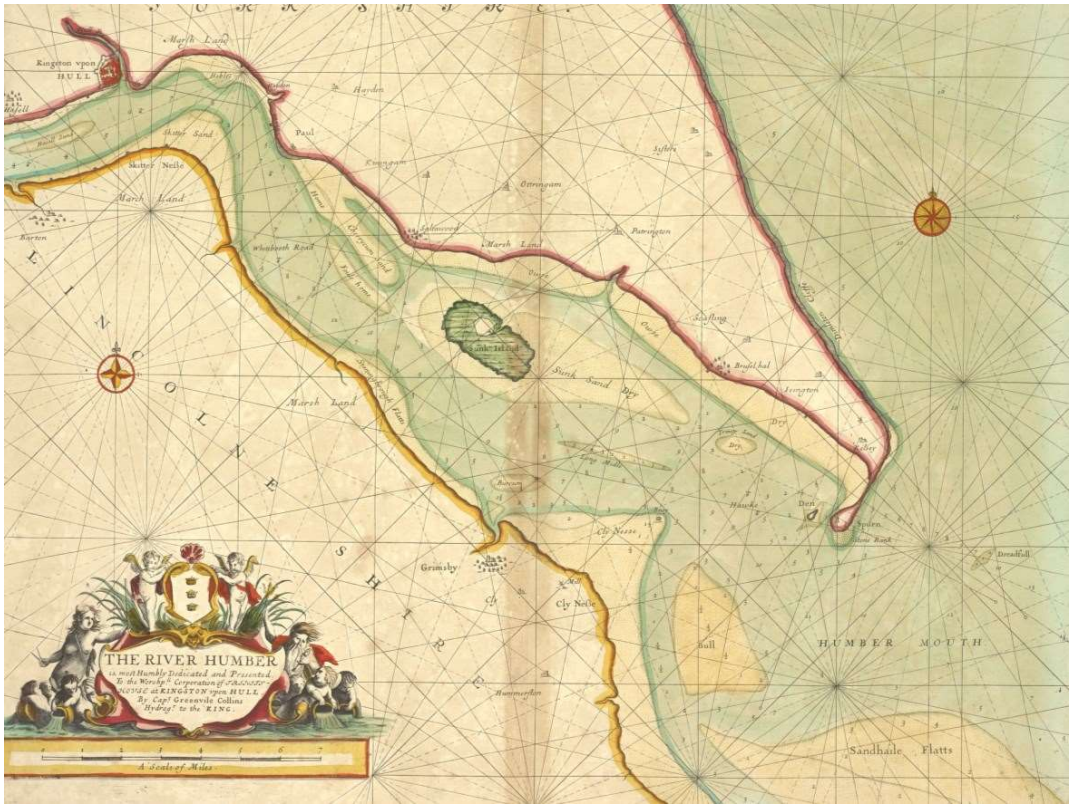


Figure 6.4: A 1702–1707 edition of Captain Greenvile Collin's chart of the River Humber, showing the islands of sand here, including Sunk Island of the coast of Holderness at the point where it was still an island in the process of reclamation, Burcom at the entrance to Grimsby Haven, and Bull Sand in the mouth of the Humber (Source: New York Public Library Map Div. 02-295, Public Domain).

Other sand 'islands' along the Lincolnshire coast include North Somercotes, which largely lies atop an ancient sand-body first formed during the initial prehistoric flooding of the land here and which was then supplemented by storm beaches after the destruction of the offshore barrier islands. 'Old Skegness', an ancient haven town lying just offshore from the current Skegness and which was destroyed by the sea in the 1500s, was probably built on such a sand body too. Needless to say, most of these 'islands' were, like Raveserodd, very much at the whim of the tides. Burcom, for example, now exists as a sand bank below low-tide level close to the south shore of the Humber near Grimsby; however, it has an old name, OE **burg-cyme* or **burg-cuma*, meaning either 'arrival at the town' or 'arriver at the town', and on some 19th- and early 20th-century maps and charts it seems to be shown as a dry sand—one that remained above the sea at

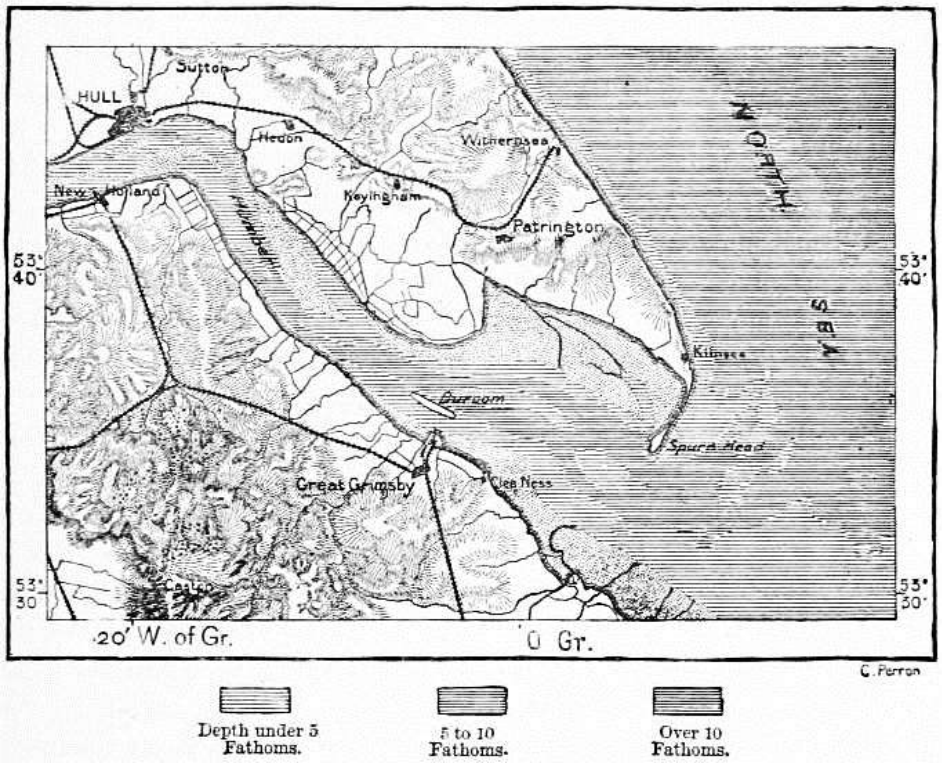


Figure 6.5: Map of the Humber in Élisée Reclus's *Universal Geography IV: The British Isles* (London, 1876), p. 235. This shows Burcom as an island in the Humber to the north of Grimsby and Sunk Island attached to the north bank (Internet Archive, Public Domain).

high tide—or even an island, suggesting that its character may well have fluctuated over the centuries. Similarly, 'The Bull' or Bull Sand, next to Humberston, is shown as an island in 1541 and a 'dry sand' in 1595, but had ceased to be so by the 17th century; it is currently the site of Bull Sand Fort, a 4-storey steel and concrete fortification originally armed with four 6-inch guns and built 1915–1919.

Islands of salt

The final category of lost Lincolnshire coastal islands are the 'saltern mounds', large piles of waste silt and sand produced by the medieval salt-making industry. These mounds, some standing 6m above sea-level, initially acted as dry islands in the coastal marshes, and as each generation of mounds were reclaimed they became part of an undulating landscape on the landward edge of the coastal zone. The wide ridge of the Tofts, running south-west from Wainfleet, has its origins in such mounds. Likewise, the landscape around Tetney, Marshchapel and Grainthorpe is largely constructed from these islands: the industry here was still in operation in 1595, when William Haiwarde's drew a detailed map of Fulstow and Marshchapel, and only ceased operation in the early 17th century.

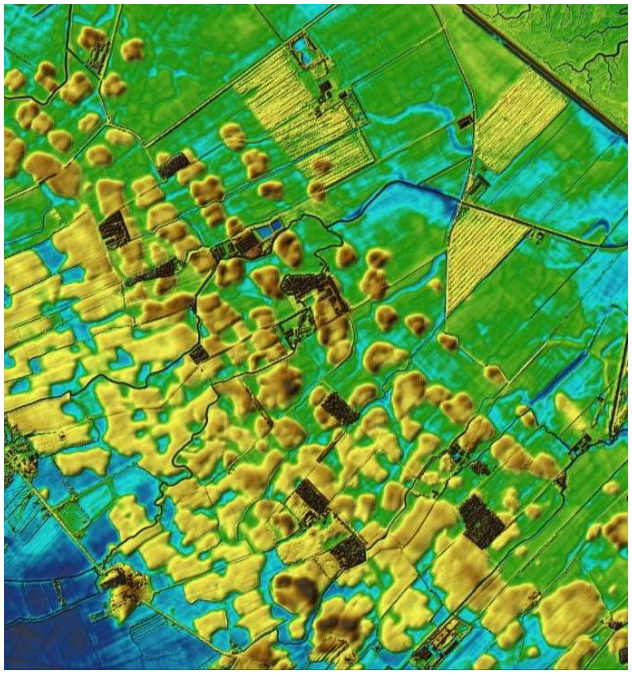


Figure 6.6: A Lidar image of the saltern mounds in the Marshchapel area (© Environment Agency 2021, Open Government Licence v3.0).

7 The Drowned Towns and Villages of the Lincolnshire Coastline

Introduction

Up until the 13th century, the coast of Lincolnshire was protected by a series of offshore coastal barrier islands that were once low hills on the plain of Doggerland until the latter flooded 9,000 years ago to become the North Sea. These islands created a sheltered tidal lagoon between themselves and the main coastline, but this protection appears to have failed during the 1200s, as the offshore islands were finally destroyed by a series of storms and floods in that century. With the foreshore no longer protected, the sea began to make significant inroads into the land here, reclaiming a mile or more from the coast between Mablethorpe and Skegness by the end of the sixteenth century and destroying a number of low-lying coastal settlements in the process.

Mablethorpe St Peter

The storm surges of 1286 and 1288 are often considered to be the events that finally overwhelmed the offshore barrier islands, and they seem to have caused significant damage to the Lincolnshire coast too, particularly in the neighbouring medieval parishes of Mablethorpe St Peter (now lost) and Mablethorpe St Mary. The church of Mablethorpe St Peter lay offshore north-east from the modern main Mablethorpe pullover, and both the *Louth Park Abbey Chronicle* and the *Hagnaby Abbey Chronicle* both relate that the church of Mablethorpe St Peter was 'rent asunder by the waves of the sea' and 'entirely destroyed' in storms during these years. The Hagnaby chronicle goes on to relate that 'many men, uncounted sheep, and an unknown number of cattle perished' in February 1288 and that 'the sea did very great damage in Mablethorpe' in August of the same year.

Despite its obviously vulnerable coastal position, the rebuilding of Mablethorpe St Peter's church appears to have been begun a short time after these floods and on the same site, with money from the local tithes and offerings assigned to this from May 1290. Whether the church of Mablethorpe St Mary was also damaged in these floods is unrecorded, although it may be significant that it too was being rebuilt in the early 1300s; in this case, however, the rebuilding took place well inland, on a new site where the church currently stands. This was clearly the more sensible course, as the flooding continued at intervals until the late 1530s, when the church of St Peter, its village and the greater part of its parish were 'overflown with water in the sea' and never recovered, with further floods continuing into the 17th century. As late as the 1870s, the church ruins could still be seen from the dune-top and finds from Mablethorpe St Peter occasionally turn up on the beach here.

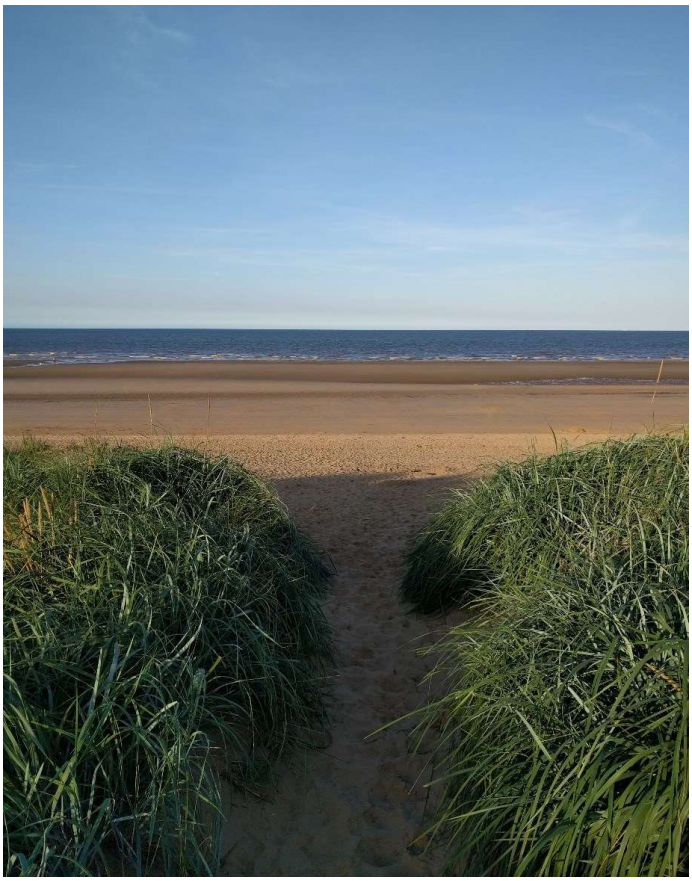


Figure 7.1: The view over Mablethorpe beach to the north of the pullover; the settlement and church of Mablethorpe St Peter is said to lay offshore in this area, with part of the church ruins apparently still able to be seen north-east of the main Mablethorpe pullover as late as the 1870s (C. R. Green)

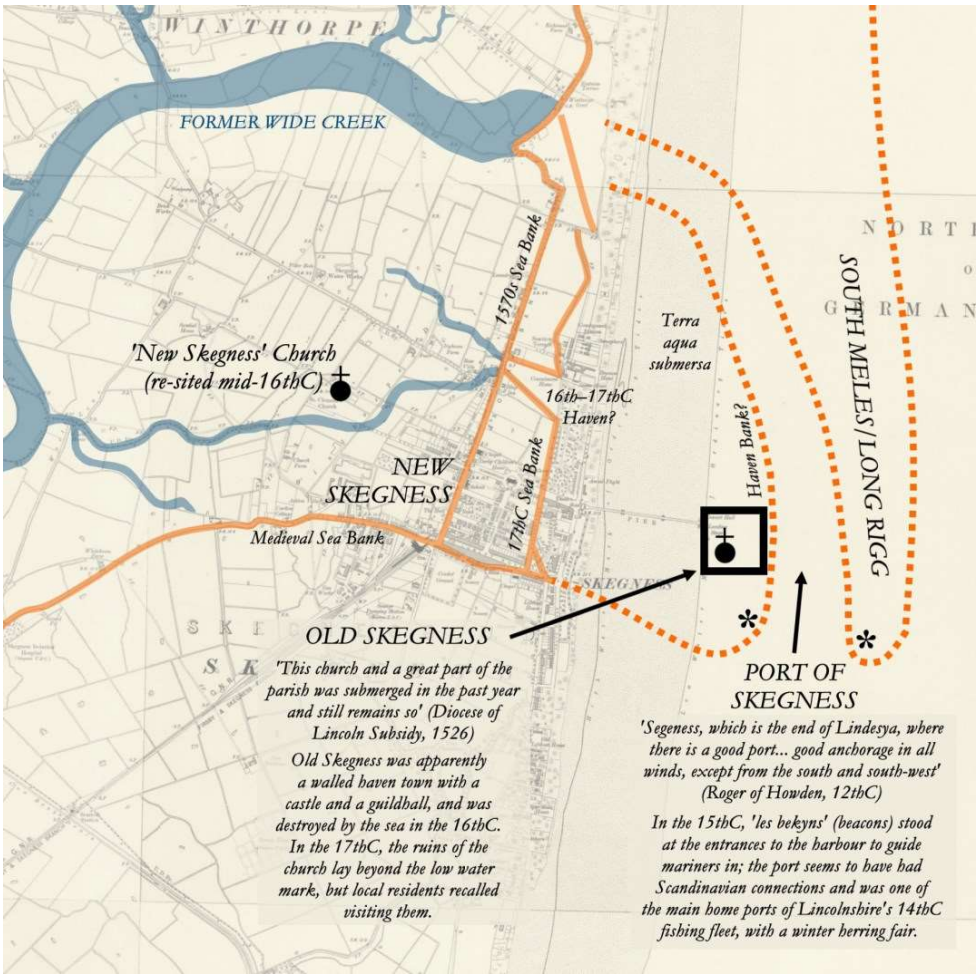


Figure 7.2: A suggested reconstruction of the coastline prior to the loss of Old Skegness in the early 16th century, along with the known sea-banks still surviving. The 17th-century Green Bank interestingly outlines a probable new later 16th- and 17th -century haven and also seems to suggest, via a gap in it, that the Winthorpe creek was still active when it was built. The 'Haven Bank' is mentioned in the 16th century, whilst the medieval sea-banks to the south of Skegness seem to survive as Croft Bank/the High Street (Map source: OS Six Inch, National Library of Scotland).

Old Skegness

A similar calamity befell 'old Skegness' in the early 16th century. Probably originally a Roman defended ferry port of some significance, the medieval port of Skegness was located on a creek at the western entrance to the Wash, where it was sheltered by a 'ness' or promontory of dunes and beaches running south from the Ingoldmells shore. In 1500 Skegness was said to be 'in very great danger of the sea', and in or about 1526 the town was finally taken by the sea, a contemporary ecclesiastical subsidy recording that the 'church and a great part of the parish was submerged'. By 1540, the town seems to have been entirely swallowed up by the waves, although 'manifest tokens of old buildings' including the church were said to be visible at low tide into the 17th century, located around half a mile or so out to sea. A new settlement and church at Skegness was subsequently constructed further inland, but this was considered 'a poor new thing' and 'New Skegness' remained little more than a hamlet until the 19th century.

Sutton on Sea

Skegness and Mablethorpe St Peter were not alone in this destruction. Not only were two hamlets within Skegness parish, called East and West Meales, also taken by the sea in the early 16th century, but Sutton-in-the-Marsh (modern Sutton on Sea) clearly suffered a parallel fate. Its church is recorded in 1398–1409 as

Figure 7.3: A 15th-century painting of a sea-flood in Holland, showing the breaking of the sea-bank—much of Holland was flooded, with the Dordrecht region seeing 23 villages submerged and 2,000 people dead (Source: Rijksmuseum Amsterdam SK-A-3147-B, Public Domain)

having been 'since destroyed by the sea', and the replacement church seems to have been itself eaten by the sea in the mid-16th century, along with 'some houses inhabited, and very much of the best grounds in our said town'. The third church was constructed inland and formed the core of the present-day Sutton on Sea, although the sea continued to attack the coast here and cause significant floods, and the church fell into such ruin that it again needed rebuilding!

Chapel St Leonards

Similar accounts of a lost church and settlement survive from Trusthorpe, between Mablethorpe and Sutton, but perhaps the most dramatic account of a Lincolnshire coastal village being destroyed by the sea comes from the former Mumby Chapel, modern Chapel St Leonards. In 1570, the worst storm of the 16th century appears to have almost completely levelled the settlement here, as Holinshed related in his contemporary *Chronicles*, saying that 'the whole town was lost, except three houses… Likewise, the church was wholly overthrown except the steeple... Master Pelham lost eleven hundred sheep at Mumby Chapel'. He also recounts that the tide was so high that a ship was driven upon the top of a house in the village; the sailors, thinking it a rock, leapt onto it for safety and only survived by clinging to its roof. Whilst up there, they succeeded in rescuing the mistress of the house, who had apparently been 'lying in childbed', although her husband and child drowned.

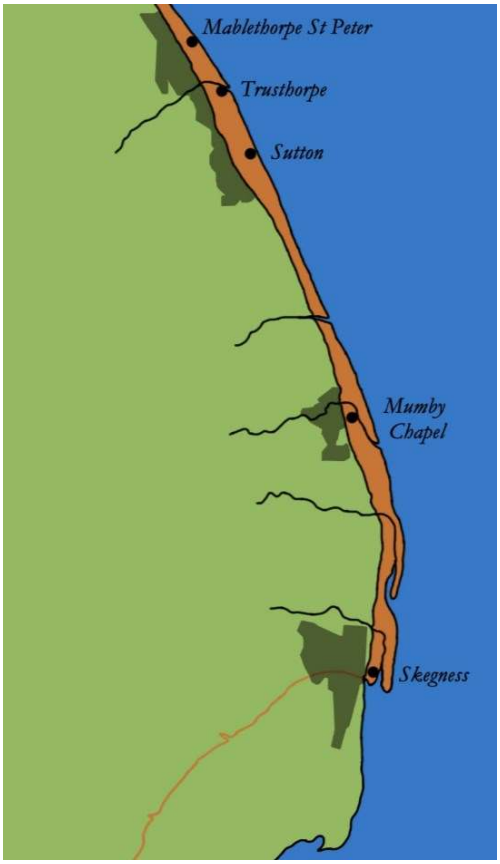


Figure 7.4: One possible reconstruction of the drowned coastline and settlements of Lincolnshire. Robinson's suggested late medieval to 16th-century coastline is in orange and set against the modern coastline (green).

Later flooding and erosion

Although the most dramatic losses seem to have been over by the end of the 16th century, flooding and erosion continued along the coast from Mablethorpe to Skegness. In 1645, for example, the inhabitants of

Mablethorpe, Withern, Strubby and Maltby were all exempted from a tax for coastal defence owing to 'their great loss lately sustained by the inundation of the sea', whilst in 1730 the sea bank south of Skegness was said to have been broken by the sea and the rabbits of the warren there were washed away. Similarly, the sea overflowed the Ingoldmells Bank for over a mile in 1735 and made a large breach in the defences at Sutton in 1777. In the later 18th century, it was said that 8 acres of land had recently been consumed at Sutton, whilst a flood mark on Winthorpe church tower bearing the date 1837 is located nearly 3m above the ground, despite the fact that the church itself stands about 3m above sea-level. Elsewhere, there were issues too. At Cleethorpes, De la Pryme in 1697 observed the sea washing away the cliffs, with huge pieces 'undermined and brought down every great tide as bigg as whole churches together'. He also reported the local tradition that the villagers had lost 'several miles of land' to the sea.

Figure 7.5: Before and After Kingsway was built at Cleethorpes, showing the low cliff being eroded towards the houses here.

Such continued flooding had clear landscape impacts even into the modern era. The original Ingoldmells Point seems to have been eroded away since the early 19th century and the name transferred to the outfall 200m further north than the original, whilst the old Scabbed Lamb at Ingoldmells, a noted smuggling inn at Jackson's Corner, was lost to the sea as late as the 1860s! Likewise, at Cleethorpes, the erosion there was only halted in the late 19th century through the erection of the sea-wall and promenade, and this had to be extended southwards to form the Kingsway in the early 20th century, when further erosion saw the road running along the top of the cliff disappearing in cliff falls and the houses on the front under severe threat.


Figure 7.6: A visualisation of people taking refuge on a roof to escape the sea, based ultimately on Holinshed's description of the flooding of Mumby Chapel (Chapel St Leonards) in 1570 (Source: Louis K. Harlow, in Jean Ingelow, *High Tide on the Lincolnshire Coast* (Boston, 1892), Library of Congress, Public Domain).

8 Towns and Trade on the Lincolnshire Coast

Introduction

The story of towns and trade along the Lincolnshire coast is one of vastly varying fortunes. Probably the oldest town along the coast was 'Old Skegness', which is often thought to have its origins as a walled Roman 'small town'/ferry port, although it was only a relatively minor centre in the medieval period—albeit one possessing a castle, a guildhall and a harbour—and was utterly destroyed by the sea in the 16th century. Other towns have their origins in the medieval period, saw dramatic rises in their fortunes before declining and then, in some cases, rising anew. Yet others are new creations of the 19th and 20th centuries, growing up around the old bathing inns of the Georgian coast, and a final few have lived only in the minds of their designers.

The earliest towns and trading centres of the Lincolnshire coast

There was probably a second Roman 'small town' on the Roman-era coastline at Burgh-le-Marsh, where a large number of Roman coins and other items have been found, whilst imported Samian ware pottery from Gaul is found at several sites in the Roman saltmarshes. For example, the finds from Saltfleetby St Peter indicate that a high-status site with continental contacts was located by the side of a creek there. In the Anglo-Saxon era, there seem to have been a number of high-status settlements on islands in or on the edge of the saltmarshes, the most notable of which is the 7th- to 9th-century monastic trading-centre at Little Carlton. This has seen significant finds of imported coinage and pottery from the continent, as well as the discovery of a small wharf running out from the pre-Viking shoreline.

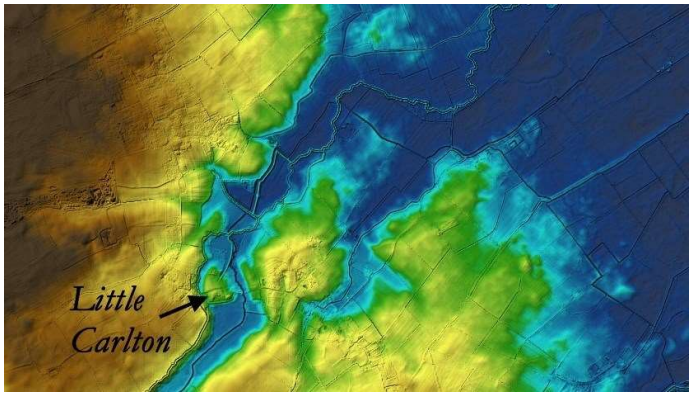


Figure 8.1: Lidar map of the 'island'-like situation of the Middle Saxon site at Little Carlton, which sat right at the edge of the coastal zone and had a small wharf (© Environment Agency 2021, Open Government Licence v3.0).

At the start of the medieval period, the two premier towns and trading centres on the Lincolnshire coast were Grimsby and Boston. Both had become important enough to attract the attention of the great Muslim scholar al-Idrīsī when he wrote about and mapped England in about 1154, being two of the only three coastal towns he deemed worthy of note

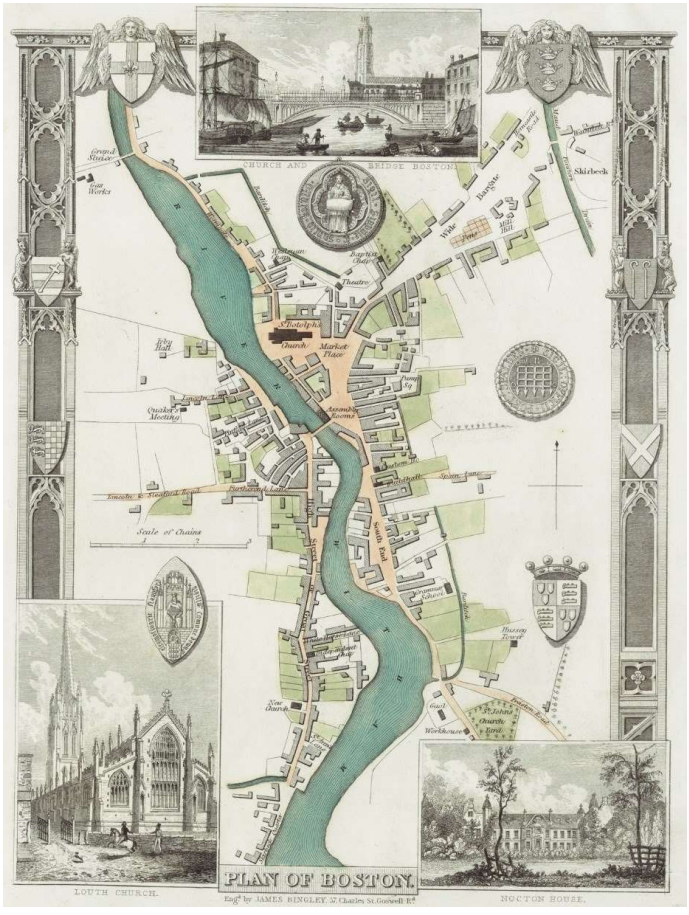


Figure 8.2: 'Plan of Boston, England' in the 1830s, Thomas Moule, 1837, slightly cropped (Source: The Norman B. Leventhal Map & Education Center at the Boston Public Library; licensed for reuse under a Attribution 2.0 Generic CC BY 2.0 licence via Flickr).

north of the Thames. Indeed, in about 1200 Boston was second only to London in the scale of its overseas trade, and may even have exceeded it, whilst its population of around 5,500 people made it the tenth largest urban centre in 14th-century England. Boston's trading activity was largely based around the wool trade, for which it was England's most important port, exporting wool from as far west as Cheshire and Flintshire. English wool was famed not only in Europe for its quality, but also as far afield as Syria and Iran in the 13th and 14th centuries. Boston consequently attracted significant numbers of migrants from an early date. German and Flemish merchants involved in the wool trade were present here, as were Hanseatic merchants from Baltic ports. Indeed, around 3% of its medieval population was born outside of England and in the 15th century Boston inhabitants included people born in the Netherlands, France, Scotland, Germany and Norway, some of whom are believed to have run inns in the town.

Figure 8.3: An early twentieth-century postcard of Grimsby Docks, showing the dock tower of 1852 (Source: Newberry Library Postcards Collection, Internet Archive, Licence-free).

Grimsby was a significantly less important port and town than Boston, and while it too had some strong overseas trading connections—with Scandinavia in particular—that are recorded from the 11th century onwards, they were on nothing like the scale that Boston's were. It was, however, a more significant town than the two medium-sized ports of the Lincolnshire coast, Wainfleet and Saltfleethaven. All of these towns saw considerable activity through to the 14th century, but subsequently entered a period of decline, with silting of the harbours being a major issue for all four. For Wainfleet, the decline was considerable, and by 1560, it was described as a 'poor beggarly town' with no merchants, and its later haven lies well away from the town, whilst at Saltfleet silting, new sea banks, and attempts to straighten the haven saw it reduce in size and move away from the town. Grimsby similarly saw a marked decline, such that in the late 18th century more fish was being landed at inland Louth, via its canal, than there was at Grimsby. This reduced status was only combatted by attempts to restore the harbour from the start of the 19th century, culminating in the construction of new docks in the mid-19th century and a renewed importance for the town that saw it become one of the fastest-growing towns in the country. Boston also saw a major collapse in its trade towards the end of the medieval period. This led to contraction in the town, although from the 18th century there was a degree of recovery, especially after the construction of the Grand Sluice in 1764–6 (which allowed larger ships to enter the river), the straightening of the river to the Wash, and the construction of the docks in 1884.

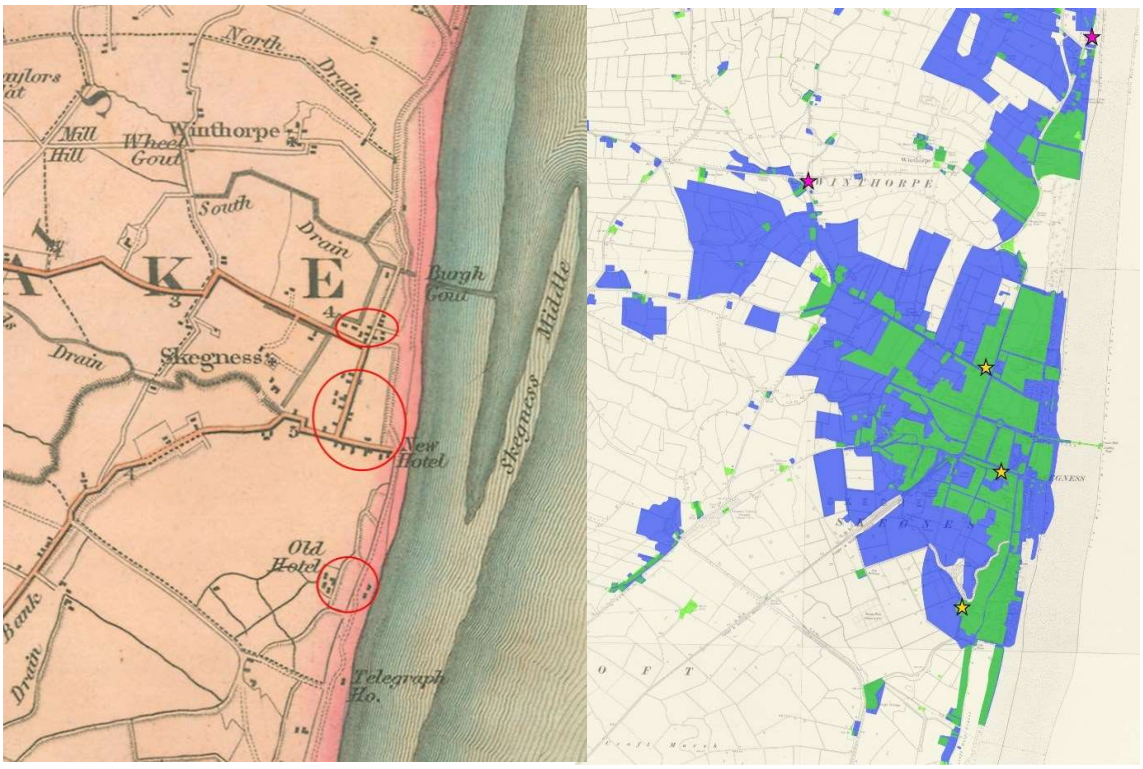


Figure 8.4: Two maps of the growth of Skegness—(a) Extract from Greenwood's *Map of Lincolnshire* (1830), showing the 3 areas of settlement in Skegness by that time, one dominated by the Vine Hotel (or Skegness/Old Hotel) in the south, one around the New Hotel (Hildred's) on the old sea-bank, and one around the sixteenth- to eighteenth-century haven and its associated Ship Inn in the north (Source: Daniel Crouch Rare Books). (b) Skegness in the 1950s (green) and the 2020s (blue, including caravan parks), with the three pre-19th-century inns marked with yellow stars (Underlying map: OS Six Inch, National Library of Scotland.

Bathing inns, railways and new towns

If Boston and Grimsby found new life during the 18th and 19th centuries, they were not alone. This period also saw the seeds of a number of new coastal towns planted along the coast. The origin of Skegness, Cleethorpes and Mablethorpe/Sutton-on-Sea all can be found in the later 18th century, when they became home to fashionable Georgian sea-bathing inns and hotels. The initial inns were established at places that were little more than hamlets previously, but the early to mid-19th century saw them acting as the core around which new resorts grew. At Cleethorpes, for example, the Dolphin Inn/Cleethorpes Hotel was joined by only 2 or 3 lodging-houses in 1803 in providing services for those wealthy visitors wishing to stay there, but by the middle of the century there were two further bathing inns and 106 lodging-houses, with 1,300 visitors at a time in the 1850s. Likewise, Skegness was a very small hamlet before about 1770, its original town and harbour having been lost over two centuries earlier, but it saw notable growth in the late 18th and especially the 19th centuries after the founding of two bathing hotels (the Vine and Hildred's). Mablethorpe followed a similar pattern, with a fashionable bathing inn (the Book in Hand) forming a core around which a small resort grew by the mid-19th century, with over 120 visitors resident in July 1855 and 4,000 'pleasure-seekers' descending on the place in a single day in August 1871.

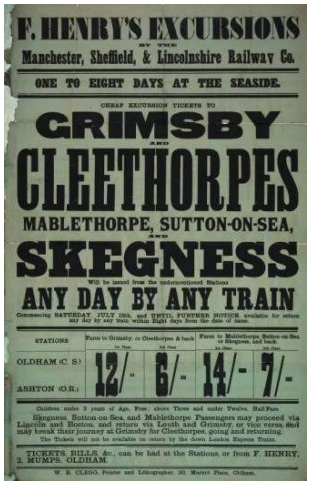

F. HENRY'S EXCURSIONS
Manchester, Sheffield, & Lincolnshire Railway Co.
ONE TO EIGHT DAYS AT THE SEASIDE.
GRIMSBY AND CLEETHORPES
MABLETHORPE, SUTTON-ON-SEA, AND SKEGNESS
ANY DAY BY ANY TRAIN
OLDHAM (C. S.) 12/- 6/- 14/- 7/-
ASHTON (O.R.)
TICKETS, BILLS, &c., can be had at the Stations, or from F. HENRY, 2, MUMPS, OLDHAM.

Figure 8.5: Advert for excursions to the Lincolnshire resorts of Cleethorpes, Mablethorpe and Skegness, 1880s (Source: Science Museum Group Collection © The Board of Trustees of the Science Museum, released under a CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 licence).

These three places were not the only sites in Lincolnshire where such bathing inns were established. A major factor that allowed Skegness, Mablethorpe/Sutton and Cleethorpes to develop beyond small resorts and into true towns was the connection of these places to the railway networks

of the 19th century, although this was arguably in turn influenced by the proven and continuing popularity of those places with bathers and tourists compared to other bathing sites. Cleethorpes got its branch line first in 1863, and 30,000 people subsequently arrived by train on 3 August that year, along with another 10,000 who arrived via the roads; by the end of the 19th century, it was home to nearly 40,000 people. Skegness gained its railway in 1873, and on the August bank holiday of that year 10,000 trippers arrived in the town. The increased popularity of Skegness due to the railway led to the creation of a new planned town and 'health resort' here from the late 1870s, with wide roads and pavements, although the northern part of the plan was never followed through. Mablethorpe was last to benefit, gaining a railway in 1877. Whilst it too saw a significant surge in development, notably between the station and the beach, it grew significantly more slowly than the other 2 'new towns' and was never as popular. Although it gained urban status in the 1890s and was locally significant, it still had less than 1,000 permanent inhabitants by 1901, and only merged with Trusthorpe and Sutton in 1925.

Towns that never came to pass

In addition to the 'new towns' that did get built, there were also plans for coastal towns that never came to fruition. One of the earliest of these was focused on Sutton-on-Sea, where a proposal to build a large, 10-acre fish dock got so far as obtaining an Act of Parliament to allow its construction. Even more transformative would have been Harry Teggin's scheme for the construction of a massive 'Great Wash City' of 750,000 people to the south of Skegness from 1966. This would have been built partly on the marshes and partly in the Wash itself, providing a huge new deep-water port, vast new areas of reclaimed lands, and enormous fresh-water reservoirs, at the cost of the entire Wash coastal zone from Skegness to Hunstanton and beyond in Norfolk. Perhaps more plausible were the plans for a new 'garden city' on the coast to be built at Huttoft—now the National Trust Sandilands site—and named Woldsea, which sought financing in 1911. With large pleasure gardens, a cricket ground, a golf course, Mock Tudor houses and hotels, and magnificent sands, it was intended as a gentile, quiet resort for the upper and 'better middle' classes, a Woodhall Spa-by-the-sea, but it eventually failed, perhaps because it was launched so close to the start of World War One. The former golf course and Grange and Links hotel at Sandilands were amongst the only tangible remains of the scheme, and both have recently been lost, leaving as the only remnant the name of an isolated farmstead in Huttoft parish, Wold Sea Farm.

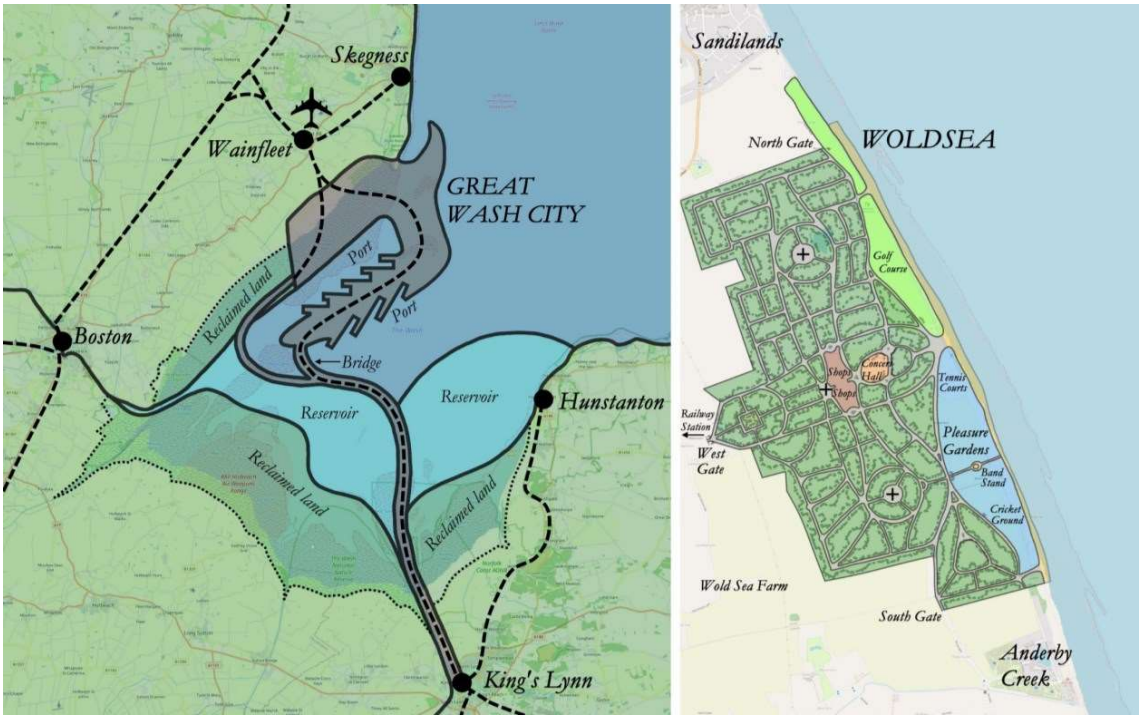


Figure 8.6: (a) Harry Teggin's vision of a 'Great Wash City' to be built in the Wash; (b) Woldsea, as envisaged in its prospectus (Underlying modern mapping © OpenStreetMap contributors, available under the Open Database Licence).

9 Wrecks and Wreckers on the Lincolnshire Coast

Introduction

Despite its lack of high cliffs and sharp rocks, the Lincolnshire coast has long had a reputation as a danger to shipping. In the 19th century it was said that this coastline was 'perhaps the most dangerous in the kingdom', due to the paucity of good harbours and its treacherous shoals of shifting sands, and there are dramatic tales of wrecks on the Lincolnshire coast, like the ship at Chapel St Leonards that was wrecked upon the roof of a house during the major storm in 1570. Indeed, a single storm in 1833 left more than 30 ships sunk or beached on the Lincolnshire shoreline, whilst one in 1823 saw nearly 60 ships sunk or stranded, and the skeletons of half-buried wooden ships wrecked here can still be seen on the coast at low tides and after storms.

Figure 9.1: Shipwreck at Sutton on Sea, located around 50 metres offshore; an edited version of an image by Richard Hoare available on Geograph (© Copyright Richard Hoare and licensed for reuse under a CC BY-SA 2.0 licence).

Wrecks, wreckers and the 'right of wreck' on the Lincolnshire coast

Although no medieval shipwreck remains are currently known from the beaches of Lincolnshire, documentary sources make it clear that such wrecks did frequently occur and that the question of who profited from the finding of them was a contested topic. Strictly speaking, the 'right of wreck' belonged to either the king or the local lord, to whom wrecks must be reported, and the wreckage could furthermore only be kept by them if no living thing survived the loss of the ship and no owner claimed the goods; however, local mariners and other coastal inhabitants often had other ideas on both these points! For example, in 1353 a ship named *La Marie* bound for Berwick on Tweed was driven ashore in a storm at the medieval port of Saltfleethaven and broke up, scattering itself and its cargo of victuals and merchandise on the shore, all of which 'some evildoers carried away'. A royal commission was set up to retrieve the cargo and the wreckage for the merchants who owned it, although it seems not to have met with much success, these having been apparently widely appropriated and sold on—indeed, the merchants ended up appealing to the king for his personal intervention in this case when the commission failed! Local documents similarly tell of many medieval wrecks along the coast and the 'wreckers' or 'beach harvesters' who found them. In December 1436, the Ingoldmells Court Rolls recorded as 'wreck of the sea' seven casks of beer (one of which was found empty in Skegness church!), one cask of black soap, and multiple boards of fir and

wainscotts that were in the custody of several inhabitants of Ingoldmells and Skegness. Similarly, in 1302 William Lawys had a cow seized as punishment 'for wreck of the sea carried away' without reporting, and in 1569 4 men—including one gentleman—were ordered to appear with the 'certain iron war engine [gun]… weighing six stone of iron' that they had recovered from the beach.

Considerable local interest in the items thrown up by the rage of the sea continued well into the modern era. In 1826, a government note described the inhabitants of the Saltfleet region as 'Christian savages on their sand-hills', who, when they see a vessel driven onto the beach, 'clap their hands and shout excitedly, "Thank God a wreck!"' Similar sentiments issued from the judicial bench. In April 1852, John Dobson was given 18 months hard labour for 'stealing… from a stranded ship' at Saltfleet, and the Chairman of the Bench at Louth accompanied his sentencing with 'forcible observations upon the disgraceful reputation the Lincolnshire wreckers were obtaining for their inhumanity' by their preying on the 'unfortunate mariners so often wrecked upon the dangerous coast of East Lincolnshire'. This increasingly negative portrayal of 'Lincolnshire wreckers'—perhaps more accurately described in most cases as 'beach-combers' or 'beach harvesters'—reflected a tightening of governmental control and the loss of customary wreck rights for both lords and inhabitants in this era, and is comparable to the contemporary moral panics over 'wrecking' in Cornwall and elsewhere. Despite this, however, the idea that items thrown up by the sea were there for the taking continued to be securely embedded in the maritime communities of Lincolnshire, as can be seen from the records of North Somercotes parish school, whose log-books make frequent comment on the absences from school caused by wrecks. On 13 February 1871, for example, it was recorded that several boys were absent 'being occupied on the sea shore gathering coal, corn, etc. from wrecked vessels'. Likewise, on 19 October 1869, it was said to be 'Very stormy. 9 or 10 ships came ashore and many of the sailors drowned. Very few children in school', and on 6 December 1882 only 48 of 175 attended school after a ship sank with the loss of all hands and the shore was 'strewn with bags and wreckage'.

Saving lives on the Lincolnshire coast

Despite the 19th-century claims of the 'inhumanity' of Lincolnshire coastal communities, the same maritime communities also fulfilled a key humanitarian role—wrecking, lifesaving, and rendering aid to those who

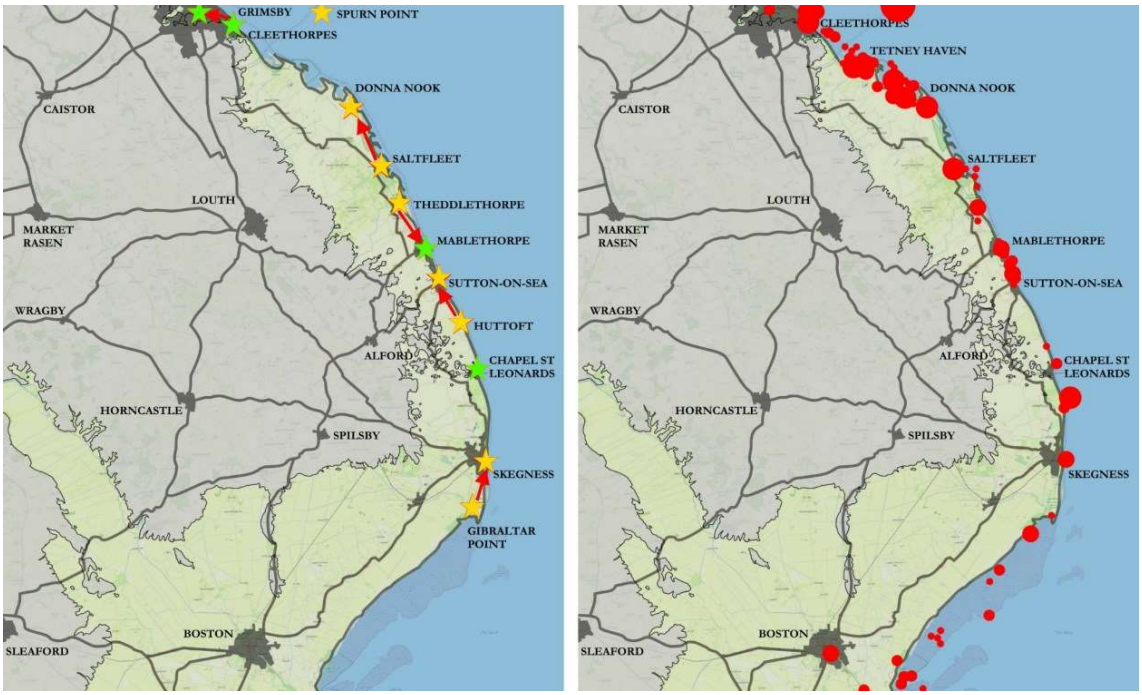


Figure 9.2: (a) The location of lifeboat stations of the first (yellow) and second (green) halves of the nineteenth century, showing the relocation of some of these; (b) Shipwreck remains and records from the Lincolnshire coast on the CITiZAN database (Underlying modern mapping © OpenStreetMap contributors, available under the Open Database Licence)

LIFE-BOAT SERVICE ON THE LINCOLNSHIRE COAST: THROWING THE HAND ROCKET.

Figure 9.3: Life-boat service on the Lincolnshire coast from *The London Illustrated News*, vol. 77, issue 2162, 6 November 1880, supplement, featuring the Skegness lifeboat, the second *Herbert Ingram* (Source: Internet Archive)

Figure 9.4: The first launch of the Mablethorpe lifeboat *John Rowson Lingard* in 1905, viewed by crowds on the beach, from an early 20th-century postcard.

had escaped the waters were not mutually exclusive activities for these communities. At first, such aid was naturally done provided on an *ad hoc* basis, but over time it became increasingly regularized, with rescue boats organized by local volunteers stationed along the coast, like that at Theddlethorpe which was purchased by subscription in the 1790s and saved 22 vessels in just three years. This was all put on a formal footing in the 1820s with the foundation of the National Institution for the Preservation of Life from

Shipwreck (later the RNLI) and the Lincolnshire Coast Shipwreck Association (founded 1827). Subsequently, a number of lifeboat stations were founded and maintained for various periods from Gibraltar Point to Grimsby, with the boats being staffed by volunteer local mariners who showed often incredible heroism. The community investment in this activity can be seen in the North Somercotes school logs record, which show not only significant pupil absences for wrecking, but also for the launch of the new lifeboat at Donna Nook and for lifeboat rocket practice. It ought also to be remembered that members of the coastal community who did not serve on the lifeboats also continued to take part in lifesaving too. In 1833, for instance, the Donna Nook lifeboat crew tried and failed to launch the lifeboat to save a ship named the *Hermione*, but kept getting blown back, so a local farmer Richard Hoodless mounted his horse and swam it into the wild seas, succeeding in saving four of the eight-man crew by this method before the vessel was wrecked.

Figure 9.5: Skegness seafront in the early 20th century from a postcard of that era, showing 'the ship Eliza' in the background, a schooner towed to Skegness beach for breaking up in 1882 that was purchased and used by Joe Wingate as a museum on the beach.

The afterlife of vessels on the beach

The vessels that ended up on the Lincolnshire coast had a variety of fates. Some still lie there today, exposed by the shifting sands and tides and recorded by groups such as CITiZAN, with notable concentrations around Cleethorpes and Sutton-on-Sea. Others were taken by the local community and their lords, as described above, or alternatively claimed by their owners, who often in the modern era arranged for the breaking up of the ship and the sale of its constituent elements by local agents at auction. For example, in 1865 there was a sale of four hundred lots of 'ship wood, saved from the *Perseverance*, of London' at the Ship Inn, Saltfleet, including 16,000 feet of oak and fir planking, 300 oak posts, and one ton of 'iron bolts and spikes'. Likewise, in 1883 the 'ship wood' from the vessel *Fourth of November* was being sold by auction on land next to the Sea View Hotel, Skegness. Some vessels, however, were deliberately beached on the coast. In the Mablethorpe area in particular, ship-breaking businesses are known to have operated on the beaches, and many houses and properties in the coastal area are said to have had beams, gateposts or fences constructed from reclaimed ship-wood. A few of the vessels escaped this fate, however. The *Eliza*, for example, was bought at Kings Lynn in 1882 and towed to Skegness for breaking up on the beach. It was, however, bought by one Joe Wingate. He kept the ship whole on the beach and turned it into a museum, exhibiting marine curiosities including a 70ft whale skeleton—a role it played until 1911, when it was toppled by a gale, after which it was finally broken up and sold for £16.

10 Pirates and Smugglers on the Lincolnshire Coast

Introduction

Given its lengthy and lightly populated coastline prior to 19th century, characterized by wide marshes and creeks, it is perhaps no surprise that the Lincolnshire seashore has plentiful evidence for both piracy and smuggling, with the inhabitants of the coast being variously the victims of the former or the instigators of both.

Lookouts and fortresses: protecting the Lincolnshire coast in the Viking age

hat the Viking threat to the east coast of England was, at first, piratical is clear; as Alcuin of York put it in 797 AD, 'a pagan people is becoming accustomed to laying waste our shores with piratical robbery', and there are good indications that the Lincolnshire coastal landscape was fortified in response. In particular, a number of names involving Old English *tōt* ('lookout place') are found all along the coast and overlooking it, along with names involving OE *burh* ('fortress') in the same area, all of which may well reflect an Anglo-Saxon/early Viking-era defensive system designed to protect the coast. The most dramatic of these sites was arguably Toote Hill ('lookout-hill') near Grimsby, which was quarried away in the 19th and early 20th centuries. This once stood between 50 and 100ft high and had an early earthwork fortress just to its west, both defensive sites being located on a low clay promontory that projected out into the coastal marshes.

Figure 10.1: A depiction of Viking raiders on the way to attack the town of Guérande, France, in *c.* AD 919, from a manuscript of *c.* 1100 (Source: Bibliothèque nationale de France. Département des Manuscrits. NAL 1390, f. 7r, Public Domain).

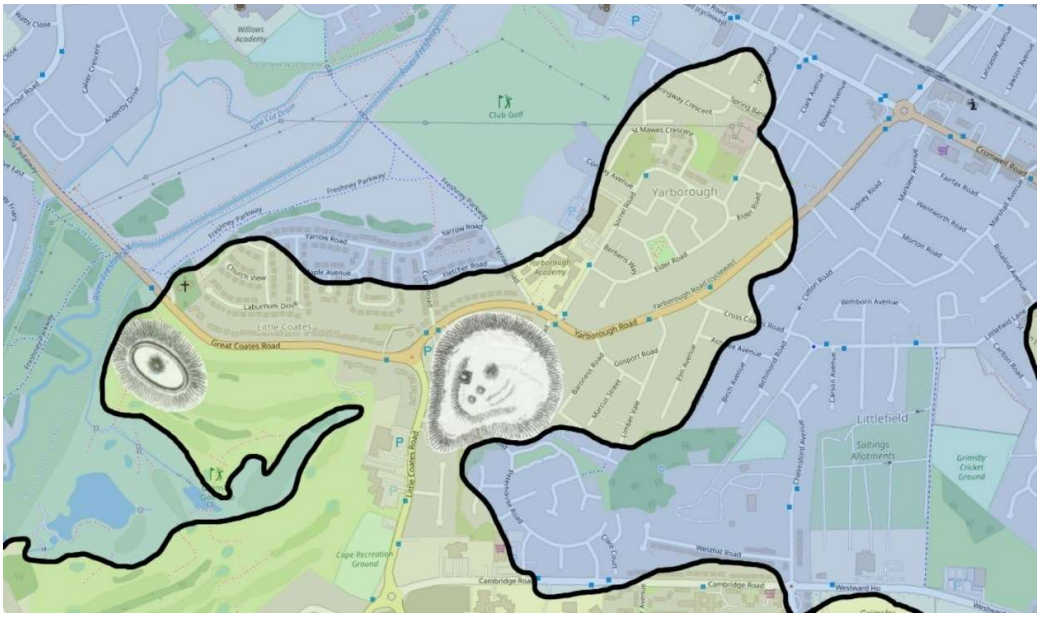


Figure 10.2: A map of the area around Toote Hill, Little Coates, Grimsby, showing the location of Toote Hill (right) and Cun Hu Hill (left) prior to modern quarrying and landscaping, based on the Rev. W. Smith's etching of these features in Oliver's *Monumental Antiquities of Great Grimsby* (Hull, 1825). Dry land above 5m OD is in green and low-lying land is in blue (Mapping © OpenStreetMap contributors, available under the Open Database Licence).

Medieval piracy and the 'pirate island' of Ravenserodd

As written documentation increased into the medieval era, the people of the Lincolnshire coast can be definitely said to have 'sinned as often as they were sinned against' when it came to piracy. In 1387, for example, three Grimsby men boarded a vessel from Wilgrip (a now-lost port near Theddlethorpe) at Skegness and made off with its contents at night, whilst John Selby of Grimsby complained in 1365 that Walter Skott, also of Grimsby, attacked his vessel with arrows at Saltfleethaven! In both cases, the authorities could do little, it seems, and such piracy would appear to have been an accepted part of maritime life, although punishments were sometimes metered out, as in 1228 when the William de Briggeho of Grimsby was hanged at York for piracy. Not all incidents involved local people, however—in 1321, pirates from Denmark attacked the London merchant ship *La Margarete* off the coast at Saltfleetby, causing £200 of losses (around £150,000 today), whilst in the following year three mariners from the medieval port of Skegness made off with a ship from Estland (medieval Estonia) lying at anchor there!

Perhaps the most interesting example of piracy on the medieval Lincolnshire coast comes in the form of its very own 'pirate island' located just off the coast from Grimsby, in the Humber mouth. The sand-island of Ravenserodd seems to have been created by the 'casting up of the sea' in the 1230s and rapidly evolved from being merely a place to dry nets to being a fully-functioning town with a charter and market. By the 1290s, it had begun to seriously threaten the trade of Grimsby. The men of the latter accused those living at Ravenserodd of piracy and using 'fear and force' to compel ships to dock there, rather than the Lincolnshire borough, with the result that parts of Grimsby were becoming deserted! Fortunately for Grimsby, the tide quite literally began to turn in the mid-14th century, with the 'pirate island' seeing first erosion and flooding and then complete destruction between the 1330s and the early 1360s. Contemporary chroniclers suggested that Ravenserodd, 'by wrong-doing on the sea [and] by its wicked works and piracies', had 'provoked the wrath of God against itself beyond measure', and certainly no more was heard of it after 1362!

Pirates of the Elizabethan age and after

One of the more notable Lincolnshire pirates of the 16th century was William Johnson of Boston, who, in his 'ship all black' that was 'furnished with a quantity of munitions of war', was accused in the 1560s of repeatedly waylaying and stealing from Flemish merchant and fishing boats, in at least one case killing their

Figure 10.3: Hull in the first half of the seventeenth century; the pirates from Lincolnshire hanged here in 1579 were probably executed in the same place as a Hull man convicted of murder and robbery on the high seas in 1593—he was hanged 'by the south blockhouse within Humber bankes', just inland of what is now The Deep (Source: British Library/University of Toronto, Wenceslaus Hollar Digital Collection, Public Domain).

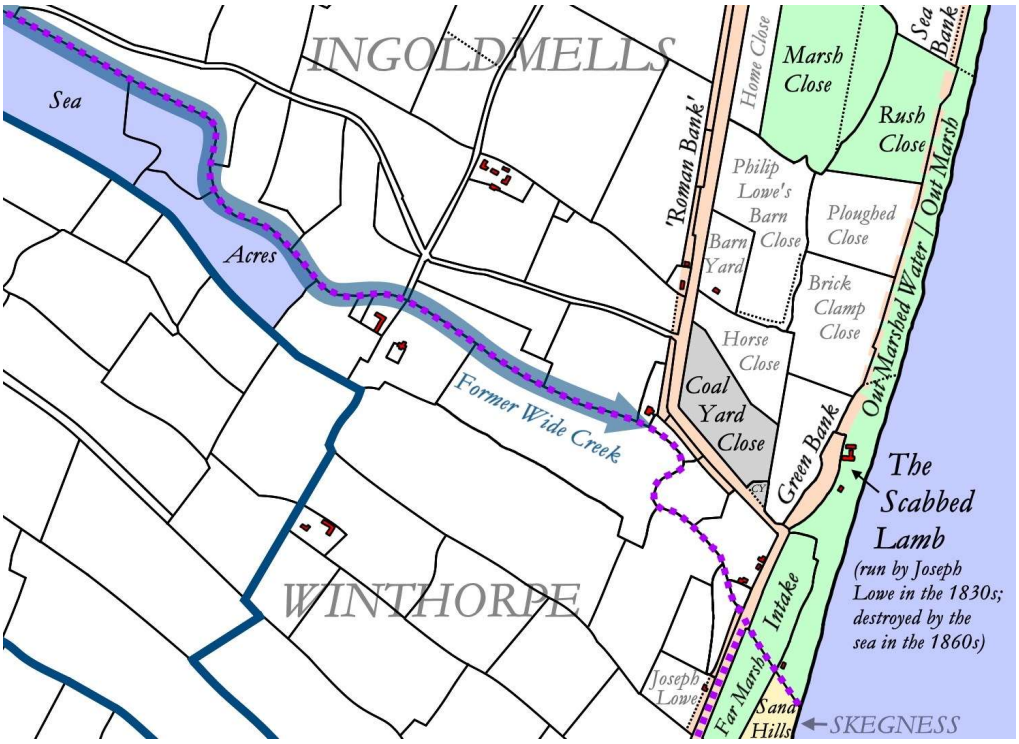


Figure 10.4: The probable location of The Scabbed Lamb at Jackson's Corner, a notorious smuggling inn—the map here is based on the 1840s Tithe Maps of Ingoldmells, Winthorpe and Skegness.

captain. Johnson and his men reportedly committed their crimes 'masked, and so disguised as they should not be known', before taking the spoils back to Boston to be sold. Needless to say, Boston was not alone in having a piracy problem in the Tudor era. Multiple cases were reported in the 1570s of people either receiving goods from pirates or of supplying them in the area from Boston to Grimsby. The government took steps to deal with this issue in the reign of Elizabeth I, and deputies instructed to prevent both piracy and smuggling were stationed at each creek and port, although this wasn't wholly successful—in some cases they seem to have actually worked with the pirates, either releasing them from custody (as Richard Holmes did at Grimsby) or themselves supplying them (as Thomas Stone did from Wainfleet). Ingoldmells Haven was apparently particularly notorious as a haunt of pirates, being said to be 'otherwise called Thieves' Creek' (a name that was also suggestively applied to a creek at Wainfleet in this era), and in consequence an armed expedition was sent against the Ingoldmells pirates from Hull in the summer of 1577. This succeeded in capturing a pirate vessel named the *Elizabeth* along with its captain Launcelot Grenewell and 16 others, as well as a gentleman from Ingoldmells and two yeomen from Grimsby, who were charged with receiving the stolen goods and supplying the pirates. Ten men were subsequently hanged at Hull as a result of all this.

In the post-medieval era, the remote creeks and minor havens of the Lincolnshire coast seem to have been in notable decline, with many silting up and being lost, and this decline appears to have greatly assisted official efforts against local piracy. Indeed, concern around piracy in the 17th century seems primarily to have been aimed at the threat from foreign ships, whose attacks kept Lincolnshire ships in port and disrupted trade. In July 1672, for example, during the Third Anglo–Dutch War, Colonel John Butler wrote that the Lincolnshire coast was 'now so infested with small privateers that our merchants dare not send a vessel to sea', and described how two ships delivering coals near Wainfleet and Ingoldmells were taken by one of these. The local mariners had clearly not forgotten how to handle themselves, however, as a dozen or so local men joined up with the seamen who had escaped the Dutch to give chase and they succeeded in driving the privateer away, recapturing the two ships, and ensuring that that the *Happy Entrance*—a Boston wine-ship that the privateer had been waiting for—successfully avoided falling into Dutch hands. A similar situation occurred at Grainthorpe, where a coal ship forced to shore by Dutch privateers was protected from plundering by the local inhabitants, who gathered on the beach and drove off the landing party!

The smugglers of the Lincolnshire coast

If piracy seems to have been in notable decline, aside from in times of warfare, the same cannot be said for its close relation, smuggling, which was at its peak during the 18th and 19th centuries. There is some evidence that, as the obscure creeks and inlets along the coast disappeared or came under official watch, smugglers who had previously operated all down the coast shifted their attention to the larger ports like Boston, where their activity could be more easily concealed. However, this is not to say that it ceased away from these sites. Smugglers along the bulk of the coast often put out from the beaches and remaining creeks in small boats and met larger smuggling ships out at sea, whilst inns along the coast, often located close to the dunes or minor creeks, seem to have been key focal points in this era for smuggling operations. For example, Joseph Lowe, keeper of the Scabbed Lamb Inn on the coast at the Skegness–Ingoldmells boundary, was fined £1000 (£90,000 today) in 1834 for smuggling, his inn—like Ravenserodd, perhaps—being subsequently eaten by the sea later in that century. Similarly, when alterations were made at The Vine at Skegness in 1902, a skeleton wearing buttons bearing the Royal insignia was discovered; the man's identity is uncertain, but it is possible that he was a customs riding officer that disappeared in the earlier 19th century and who met an unfortunate end having attempted to apprehend his quarry at Skegness!

Other key smuggling sites along the coast included Oliver's Gap, Theddlethorpe, and the sandhills at Mablethorpe, where a sand excavation undertaken by children close to the promenade at the beginning of the 20th century uncovered a smuggled hogshead of tobacco that had been buried but never returned for. The Book in Hand, Mablethorpe, and Crook Bank, Theddlethorpe, are two further places with links to Lincolnshire's smuggling past. It was here that John and George Bell attempted to get two officers in the preventative service drunk in 1838 so that they could unload their smuggled goods just up the coast at Theddlethorpe. One officer, John Gallagher, only pretended to drink, however, and then followed George Bell back to the former Theddlethorpe Haven ('The Old Gout'), where he found 30 men unloading smuggled tobacco, spirits, cigars and eau de cologne! The encounter ended with the officer drawing his cutlass and pistols and engaging the smugglers, who fled, leaving their goods behind.

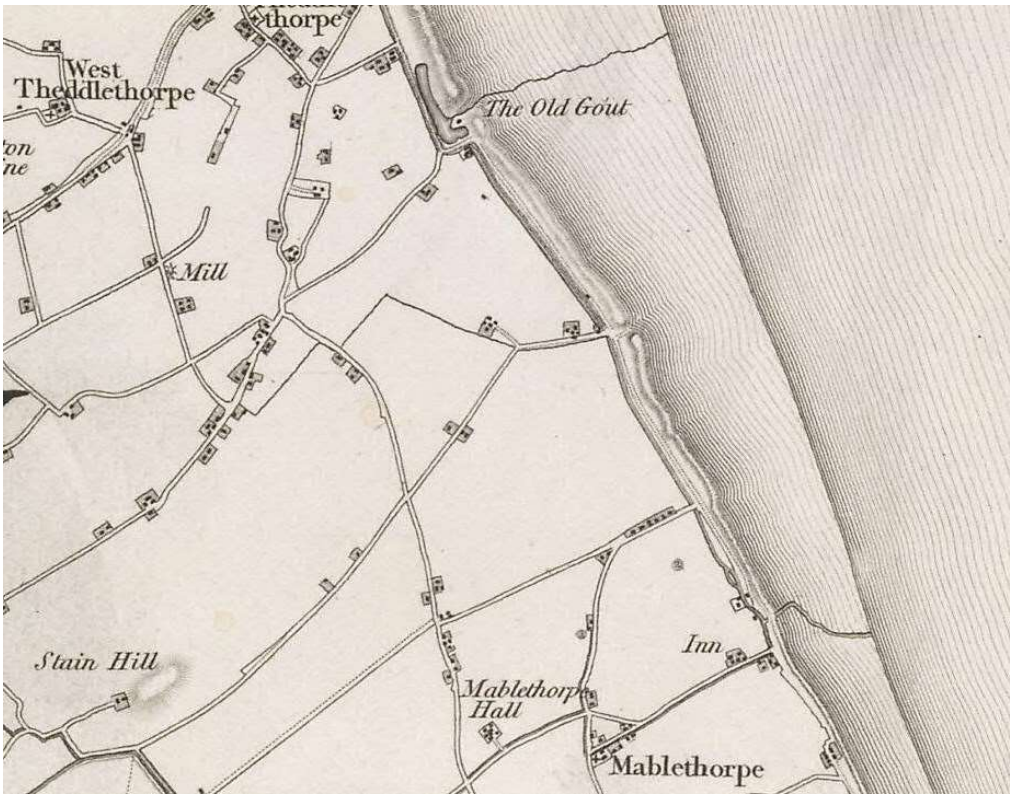


Figure 10.5: The '*Inn*' marked at Mablethorpe is the Book in Hand; the house where the smugglers were found was located in the former haven at '*The Old Gout*', seen here on the 1824 OS map when it was still filled with water (Source: Ordnance Survey, 1824/Wikimedia Commons).

11 Fortress Lincolnshire? Landscapes of Defence and Warning on the Lincolnshire Coast

Introduction

The coastline between Grimsby and Boston is nowadays around 60 miles (100km) long and was even longer in the Late Roman to early medieval period, when it was studded by wide tidal inlets and tempting estuarine rivers—as such, it is hardly surprising that this landscape has traces of multiple efforts over the centuries to protect it from external enemies.

Roman defences

Although the two surviving Roman walled forts of eastern Lincolnshire at Caistor and Horncastle lie well inland from the coast, there are good reasons to think that the town of 'Old Skegness'—swallowed by the tide in the 1500s and probably located out to sea from Skegness pier—may well have been a third Late Roman walled site. This town would probably have acted as both a terminus for a ferry across the Wash from Norfolk and as a northern extension of the Saxon Shore Fort system, designed to protect the hinterland of the Roman provincial capital at Lincoln. Likewise, it is noteworthy that Roman finds from the Skegness area include both a Late Roman prick spur and a gold coin, both find-types being considered indicative of the presence of the Late Roman army. Whether there were more defended sites northwards along the coast is uncertain, but cases have been made for Late Roman earthwork forts at Yarburgh, near Louth, and Cun Hu Hill, near Grimsby.

Anglo-Saxon and Viking defence

Place-names located down the coastline of Lindsey may reflect the presence of Anglo-Saxon/Viking-era defensive systems here, designed to protect the coast from the sea-raiders and invaders. The names of interest here primarily involve Old English *tōt*, 'lookout place', and are found all along the pre-Viking coast and overlooking it, as are several names involving OE *burh*, 'fortress'. The clearest example is Toote Hill, or the 'lookout-hill', Little Coates, near Grimsby. Quarried away in the 19th and early 20th centuries, this once stood 50–100ft high with a trench encompassing its summit and was located on a low clay promontory jutting out into the coastal marshes. There was also a **tōtærnhyll*, 'look-out house hill', at Cleethorpes, presumably located atop the high cliff here—the only cliffs on the Lincolnshire coast. Other 'Toot' names are found in the area of Tetney, Boston, East Keal, Tattershall and perhaps Gunby/Bratoft, while the parish-names Tothill and Toynton may well both contain Old English *tōt*. It is interesting to note that the 'look-out' place-names are very much coastal, whereas the 'fortress' names are less so and show in many cases a close link with Anglo-Saxon road system.

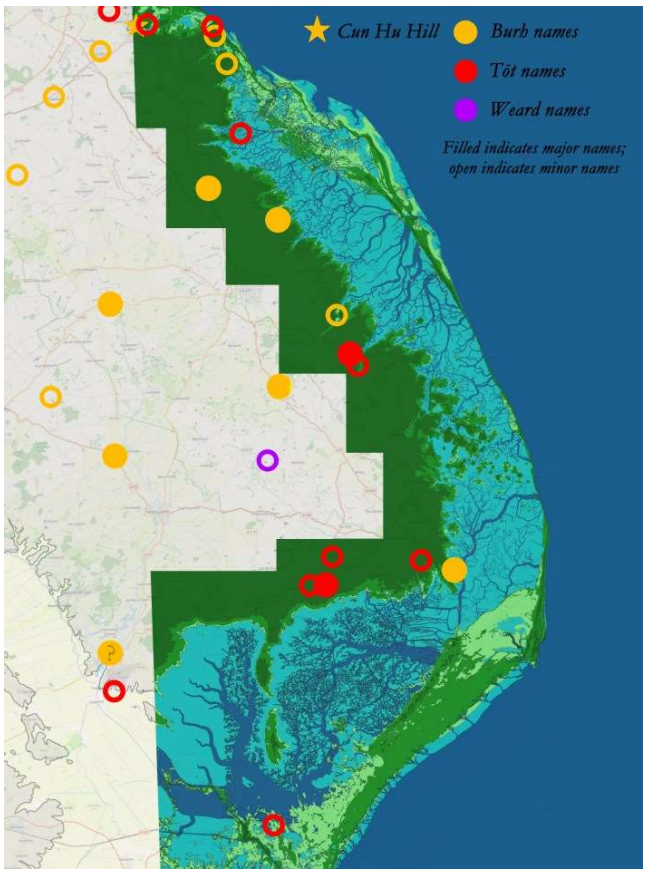


Figure 11.1: The distribution of Old English *tōt* (red) and *burh* (yellow) names in Lincolnshire; note that the *tōt* names have a clearly coastal distribution, which is of considerable interest, whilst *burh* ('fortification') names are found both at the coast and inland. (Underlying modern mapping © OpenStreetMap contributors, available under the Open Database Licence).

Figure 11.2: The destruction of Toote Hill, Little Coates. A photograph taken in 1903, showing the hill in the process of being quarried away (Source: Walter Johnson, *Byways in British Archaeology* (Cambridge, 1912), Internet Archive).

Castles and beacons in the medieval and post-medieval periods

There are several medieval castles located either in or on the edge of the coastal zone. Castle Carlton, Toot Hill (in Tothill), Castle Hill (Welton le Marsh), and King's Hill (Wrangle) all seem to be Norman earthwork castles, the first two having been recently re-dated to the late 11th century. Whilst it has been suggested that they are unlikely to have been intended for coastal defence and instead reflect elite display, it is worth noting that a reconsideration of the sites suggests that they all probably had good views of the coastline, and the name of Toot Hill suggests a defensive function at some point here. In addition to these, there may have been a castle at the drowned haven town of Skegness, based on medieval and 16th-century references to one, and both of the major ports of Grimsby and Boston seem to have been equipped with earthen defences during the medieval period—Boston is, in fact, called a fort, rather than a town, by one mid-12th-century Arabic geographer who seems to have had good knowledge of the Lincolnshire coast!

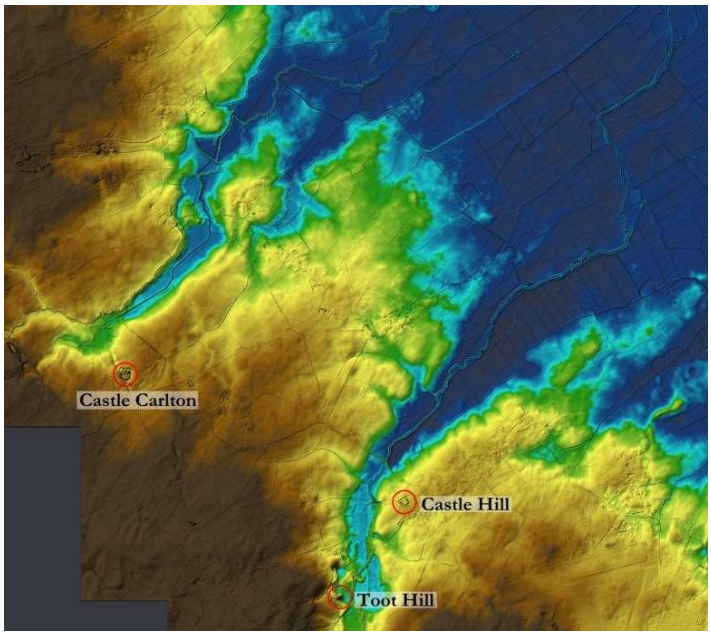


Figure 11.3: Lidar image of the area around Castle Carlton, Toot Hill and Castle Hill, Withern (a possible 12th-century earthwork), adjusted to show the remains of these sites and the low-lying areas of the Outmarsh (© Environment Agency 2021, Open Government Licence v3.0).

Such fortifications, whether meant primarily for defence from coastal raids or even just having the potential for this as one of several

functions, were probably supplemented by a network of coastal warning beacons, just as the Anglo-Saxon forts were by 'Toot Hills'. Various local place-names, some dating back to at least the 14th century, involve the word 'beacon' or 'firebeacon', and these—like the *tōt* names—have a decidedly coastal distribution that spreads up onto the Wolds, presumably to enable communication with inland forces. In addition, there are also more uncertain earthworks and possible fortifications dotted along the coast that may have seen use in this era, including the medieval moated precursor of Mablethorpe Hall, which was given a licence to erect fortifications and stone walls due to its position 'on the sea coast' in 1459.

By the Napoleonic War, in the early 19th century, the main coastal defence was once again a system of beacons, updated to involve signals and flags, and supplemented by inland military forces (Volunteer Corps) who could react to these. Furthermore, plans were made to evacuate the citizenry of Grimsby, for example, in carts if the enemy landed, destroying what infrastructure they could behind them. In 1803, when the beacon system was tested for intervisibility, guns were fired from the Signal Stations at Cleethorpes cliff and Saltfleet harbour, with first flags raised and then, after nightfall, the beacons lit, and an analysis suggests that claims that a beacon at Seacroft, Skegness, could communicate with Lincoln via only the single intermediary beacon on the Wolds at Nab Hill, Fulletby, are probably correct. The issue with this system was, of course, the potential for false alarms from fires set accidentally or otherwise, and in April 1804 those doing so deliberately were warned that they would be prosecuted 'with the utmost rigour of the law', as the false alarms and consequent call-outs for the Volunteers Corps were causing 'much inconvenience'!

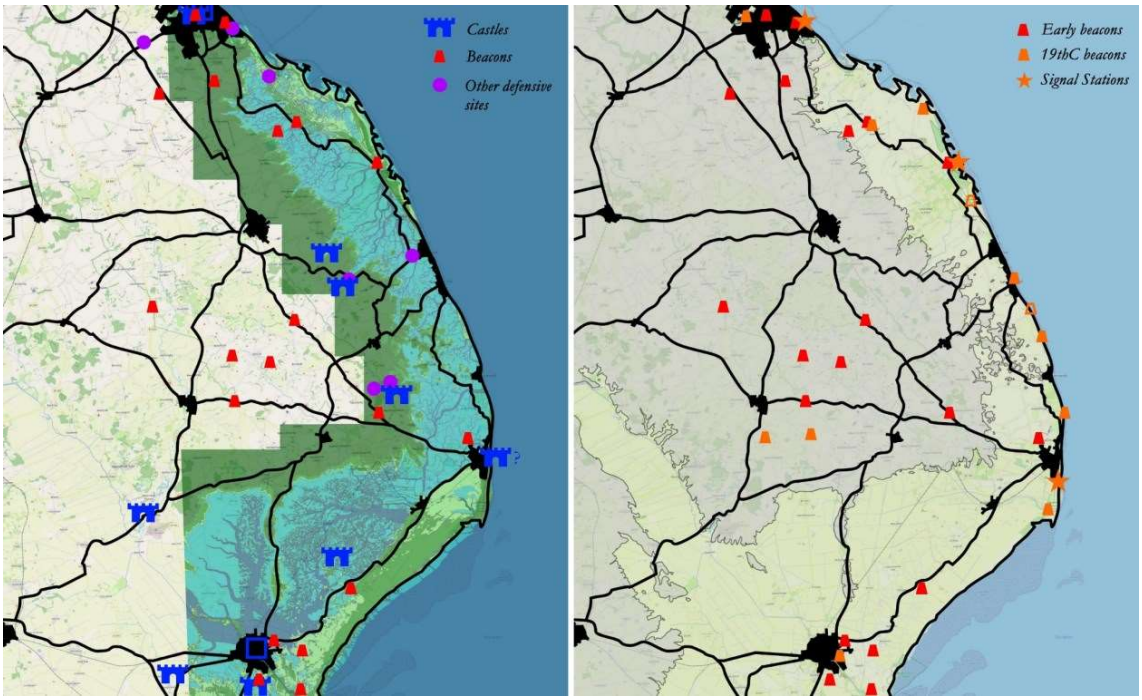


Figure 11.4: (a) Distribution map of castles and other possible medieval defensive sites along the Lincolnshire coastline, along with potential early beacon sites. (b) Distribution map of recorded Napoleonic-era beacons, signals and signal stations (open symbols indicate possible signal sites), along with the earlier beacon sites; note, some of the early beacon sites and 'Toot hills' seem to have been reused as part of the Napoleonic and later system, and others probably were too. (Modern mapping © OpenStreetMap contributors, available under the Open Database Licence)

The First and Second World Wars

The most notable upgrades to the coastal defences date from the First and especially the Second World Wars. The former saw the foundation of the two great Humber Mouth forts, Haile Sand Fort and Bull Sand Fort, in 1915, although they were completed too late to be much use in that conflict, as well as a partial system of coastal concrete pillboxes, with the surviving remnants of these concentrated mainly around Saltfleet to Donna Nook. In addition, several air bases were established, the most notable and long-lived of which was at RAF North Coates, and cavalry and cyclist units were deployed along the coast, at Skegness,

Burgh-le-Marsh, Sutton-on-Sea, Chapel St Leonards and Grimsby. An Army base was also established at Humberston Fitties, with the huts they put up there forming the basis of the chalet camp that has flourished there since 1919.

The changes wrought by the Second World War were far more extensive, with a 'Coastal Crust' of anti-invasion devices, including pillboxes, gun emplacements, mines and anti-tank cubes, found all along the seaboard from Grimsby to Boston. Key coastal artillery batteries were established at Grimsby Docks, Theddlethorpe (Crook Bank), Mablethorpe, Ingoldmells (Jacksons Corner), Gibraltar Point and Freiston Shore, and mobile train-mounted artillery was also provided. Although most airbases were inland of the Lincolnshire coastal marshes, there were two in the Outmarsh at North Coates and nearby Donna Nook, and there were a significant number of radar stations established along the coast too, whilst the farmland of the Outmarsh was criss-crossed by anti-aircraft trenches. Although much of this infrastructure and defence architecture has been removed or decommissioned in the post-war era, involving significant effort in terms of the Coastal Crust by the County Council after 1945, large elements continue to persist along the northern Lincolnshire coast and can still be seen on beach visits today, as can the Humber forts.

Figure 11.5: The two great Humber Mouth forts, Bull Sand Fort (left) and Haile Sand Fort (right), with Spurn Point in the background; begun in 1915, they were completed too late to be of much use in the First World War but were used in World War Two (C. R. Green).

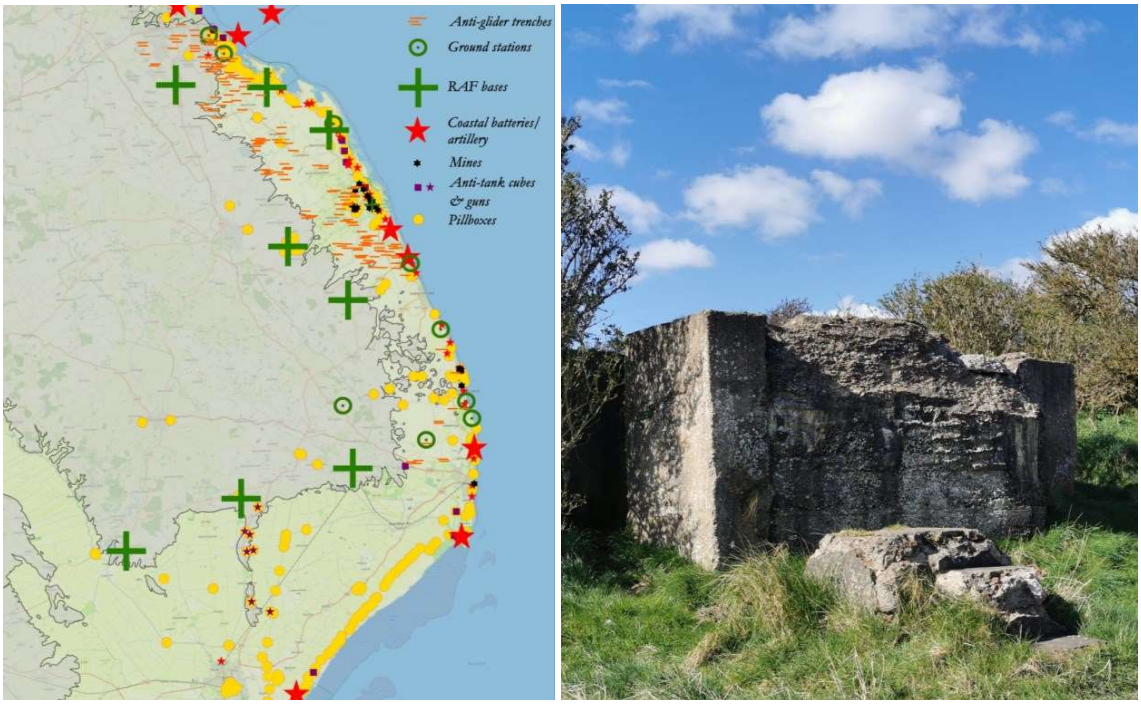


Figure 11.6: (a) The distribution of elements of the Second World War 'coastal crust' along the Lincolnshire coastal zone, showing the 3m contour inland of the Outmarsh/Low Grounds (Underlying modern mapping © OpenStreetMap contributors, available under the Open Database Licence). (b) A First Word War pillbox at Sea Lane, Saltfleet, probably built in 1917; at the outbreak of the Second World War, the pillbox was reoccupied and integrated into the new anti-invasion defence (C. R. Green).

12 Inns on the Edge and the Landscape of the Lincolnshire Coast

Introduction

The inns and alehouses of the Lincolnshire coastline are of considerable interest from a landscape history perspective. Some of them, especially the more ancient, seem to reflect the landscape of creeks and ports that existed here before the 17th century, whilst others actually played an important and decisive role in shaping the subsequent resort landscape of the coastal strip that still exists today.

Reflecting the landscape: ports and the earliest 'Inns on the Edge'

Inns and other drinking establishments are first recorded in the Lincolnshire coastal zone during the medieval period. In Boston, for example, several people had surnames like Taverner and Typeler in the taxation returns of 1327, 1332 and 1340. These names likely indicate their occupations as tavern-owners and ale-sellers/tapsters, as surnames were not yet fully hereditary. The records of foreign residents in late medieval England also show brewers from Holland living in Boston in the 1430s–50s, including one named Nicholas Johnson and another named Peter Taillour. In Grimsby, meanwhile, there is the documented case of Robert de Eynesham, a burgess and tavern-keeper of Grimsby, who escaped from prison in the late 14th century and so found his way into the medieval records. Of course, it is not surprising that taverns and tavern-keepers existed in the major medieval ports of Lincolnshire. Boston was very wealthy in this period—it was the main port for the shipping of wool, England's most important export, and its overseas trade was second only to London, where the evils of the port's taverns were being complained of as early as the 12th century! Some of the oldest recorded inns in Boston included the Red Lion Tavern in Bargate, first mentioned in 1515, and the Crown in the Market-place (1516). Other inn-names from 16th century Boston include the Ram, the Bell, the White Hart, the Saracen's Head, the White Horse, the Rose, and the Sword (all mentioned in 1564). Whether these inns were in existence prior to the 16th century is, of course, uncertain, but it seems very likely that at least some, if not the majority, of them were.

The smaller Lincolnshire ports likely had their own inns and ale-house in the later Middle Ages and Early Modern era too. The best evidence for this comes from the medieval court rolls of Ingoldmells Manor, which covered the southern Lincolnshire Marsh and Old Skegness, a former 'great haven town' and 'a good port'. These court rolls mention many brewers/brewsters and tipplers—ale-sellers/alehouse-keepers, who sold ale but did not brew it—who had broken the 'assize of beer/ale', a set of rules about the quality, prices and measures to be used. For example, in April 1313, there were two tipplers and twenty-one brewsters in court, whilst in May 1346, there were eleven tipplers and sixteen people who had 'brewed and sold beer contrary to the assize'. Sometimes we know where these ale-sellers lived within the manor, such as Robert May of Skegness, who was in court with three

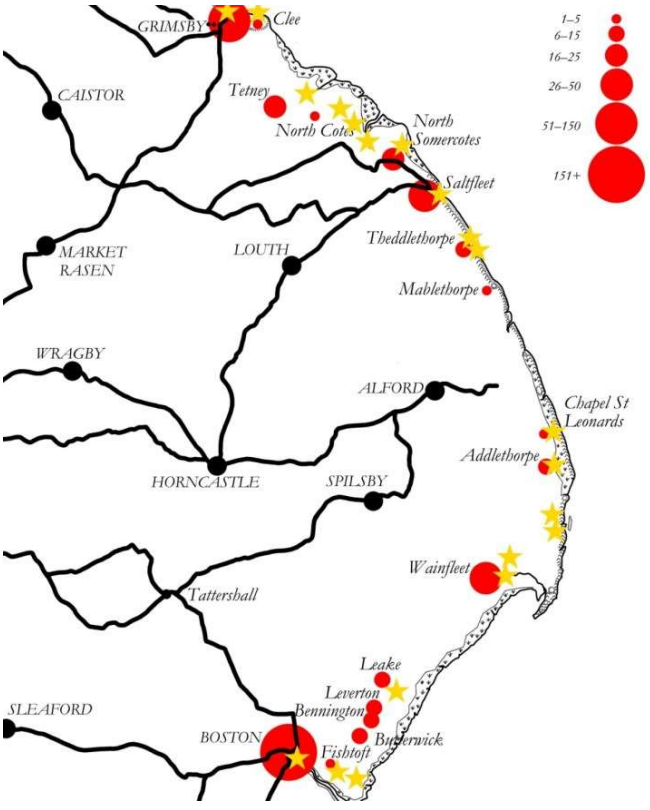


Figure 12.1: The distribution of inns and alehouses along the Lincolnshire coast in 1686, based on the proxy measure of spare beds and stabling places (red), mapped against the recorded 16th- to 17th-century ports and havens. The background map shows both roads recorded on maps of the 17th to mid-18th centuries and the 18th-century coastline.

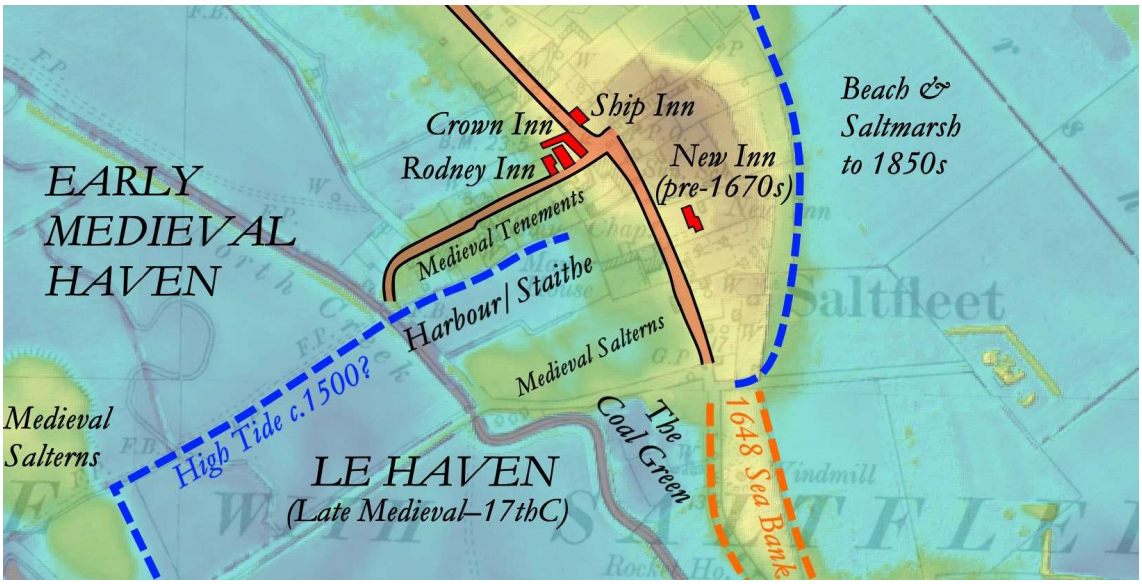


Figure 12.2: Detail of Saltfleet Haven, showing the probable area of the documented late medieval to early modern harbour and staithe (landing-stage or wharf) and the position of the inns recorded by 1792 in relation to this, along with Lidar information regarding land elevation. 'The Coal Green', which lay to the south of the harbour, may indicate the area where colliers once beached to unload their cargoes prior to the mid-17th century. Contains Lidar data © Environment Agency 2021, Open Government Licence v3.0, and OS Six Inch mapping, courtesy of the National Library of Scotland.

others for 'tippling of beer' in April 1343, or Robert Ffoular Jnr and four others, who were presented to the court by Skegness for brewing and selling bear contrary to the assize in October 1374. It is also interesting that some of these ale-sellers, such as John son of Alan and two others in October 1345, were in trouble 'because they had no signs for selling beer', which suggests that this was expected, as it was also for the wife of Robert Herryson in July 1419, who was brought up for being unwilling to 'expose the sign called Alestake'.

The ports and havens of the Lincolnshire coastline were in a state of serious decline by the 17th century. However, the Spare Beds and Stabling Survey of 1686, which gives information about the number of these available in inns and alehouses across England and Wales, reveals a continuing strong correlation between the locations of inns and the medieval/post-medieval ports of the coastal zone. Mapping these shows that the four largest concentrations of inns and alehouses along the Lincolnshire coastal zone are located in just those four places—Boston, Grimsby, Saltfleet and Wainfleet—where the most important late medieval and early post-medieval ports and havens were situated, whilst no significant inns/alehouses are recorded from the area of Skegness, which is expected given the loss of the port to the sea here in the 16th century. Moreover, the smaller concentrations of spare beds and stabling places also match up well with the known minor 16th- to 17th-century ports and havens of the coastline. So, there are inns at North Somercotes, Theddlethorpe, Old Leake and Fishtoft among other places, all of which had active creeks and havens nearby, but none at Huttoft, Anderby or Sutton, for example, which did not. In other words, the evidence of the Spare Beds and Stabling Survey of 1686 strongly suggests that the distribution of the more important inns and alehouses along the 17th-century Lincolnshire coastal zone closely reflected the locations of the recorded ports and havens of this region (which in turn had an intimate connection to the former great creeks of the medieval and earlier coastal marshes).

Creating the landscape: bathing inns and the origins of the resort coastline

Whilst the earliest 'Inns on the Edge' seem to have ultimately reflected the landscapes that had existed all along this coastline from the medieval period through to the 17th century, some of those that came afterwards appear to have played a central role in creating a wholly new landscape in this region. The key inns here are the Georgian bathing inns of the 18th and earlier 19th centuries, which were established at Skirbeck, Boston Scalp/Fishtoft, Freiston, Skegness, Ingoldmells, Sutton, Mablethorpe, Saltfleet and

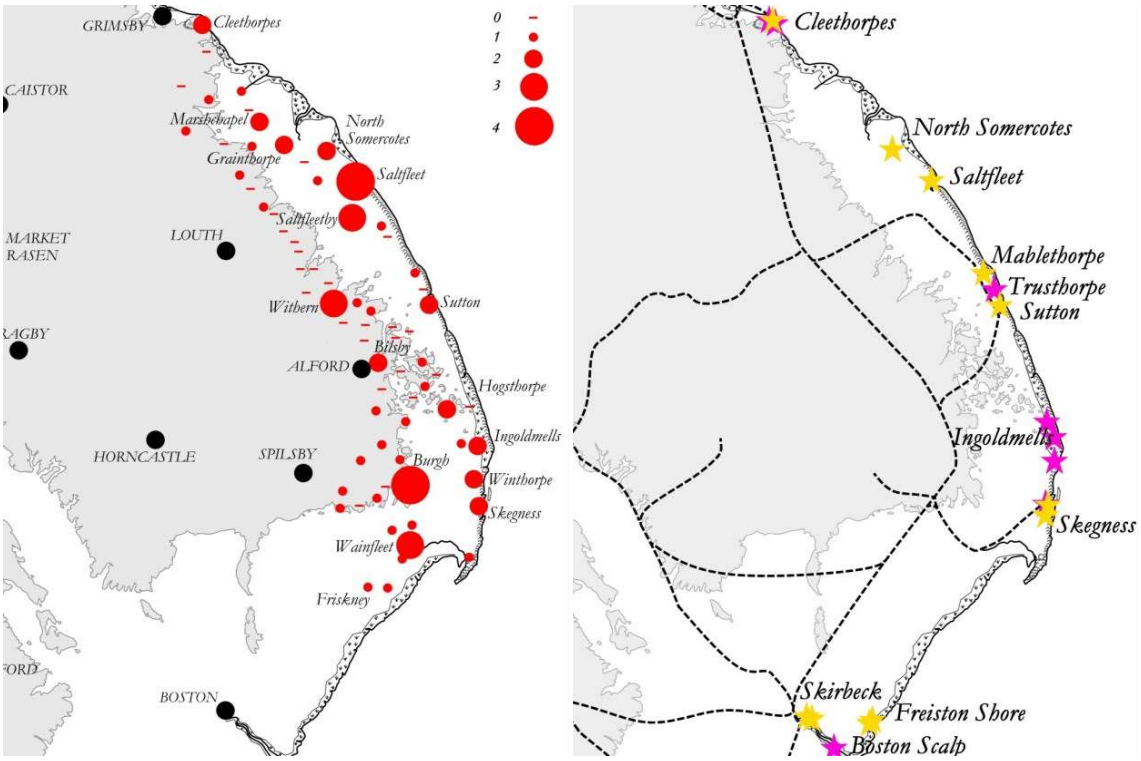


Figure 12.3: (a) The distribution of coastal inns licensed in the Lindsey Quarter Sessions alehouse recognizances of the 1790s; the map shows the number recorded from each parish and settlement in the area from Cleethorpes to Friskney, including those licensed in settlements on the edge of the Middle Marsh. (b) The 18th- and early 19th-century bathing inns and places along the coastline of Lincolnshire and the 19th-century railway network; yellow stars indicate sites recorded pre-1800, pink pre-1850.

Cleethorpes. These establishments were often well-appointed inns, designed to cater for the wealthier, genteel elements of society who wished to partake of the new fashion of sea-bathing. For example, Cleethorpes, where the Dolphin Inn/Cleethorpes Hotel was founded around 1760, was declared in 1805 to be 'the resort of much genteel company, it being universally allowed to be the most eligible and agreeable bathing place on the Lincolnshire coast'. Similarly, Skegness—where the Vine was established in about 1772 and the 'New Hotel'/Hildred's by 1792—was declared in 1779 to be 'a Place very much resorted to by Ladies and Gentlemen for Sea Bathing, where there is a safe and convenient Shore'.

Bathing inns seem to have formed the seeds from which a wholly new urban and resort landscape grew up along the coastal strip of Lincolnshire. Where previously, there were only thinly dispersed settlements or hamlets, by the mid-19th century small resorts had started to emerge. At Cleethorpes, there was only really the hamlet of Oole, with a single bathing inn—The Dolphin—and two or three lodging houses, at the start of the 19th century, but by the 1850s two further bathing inns and 106 lodging houses had been established here and the resort was catering for over a thousand visitors at a time. At Mablethorpe, there was very little by the sea where the town centre is now in the early 19th century other than The Book in Hand inn, which was established by 1792 and known at first as the Mablethorpe Hotel or Sign of the Castle. However, by the middle of the century a small resort had likewise grown up around this inn, with several new inns and beerhouses established at Mablethorpe by the late 1860s. In July 1855, the place was said to be 'full of visitors to overflowing', and several thousand visitors arrived on a single day in 1871. Turning to Skegness, there seems to have been little more than a small hamlet here with a scattering of surrounding settlements prior to the establishment of two eighteenth-century bathing inns in the parish, the original town having been washed away in the 16th century. Although it was still referred to as a 'retired watering place' and 'free from bustle' in 1866, Skegness was by then already developing into a significant resort—in 1861, 3,000 attended the races here, and in 1859 more than a hundred children from one of the Burgh schools apparently 'had a glorious day at the sea-side, spent in cricketing, donkey-riding and other appetite-getting fun'.

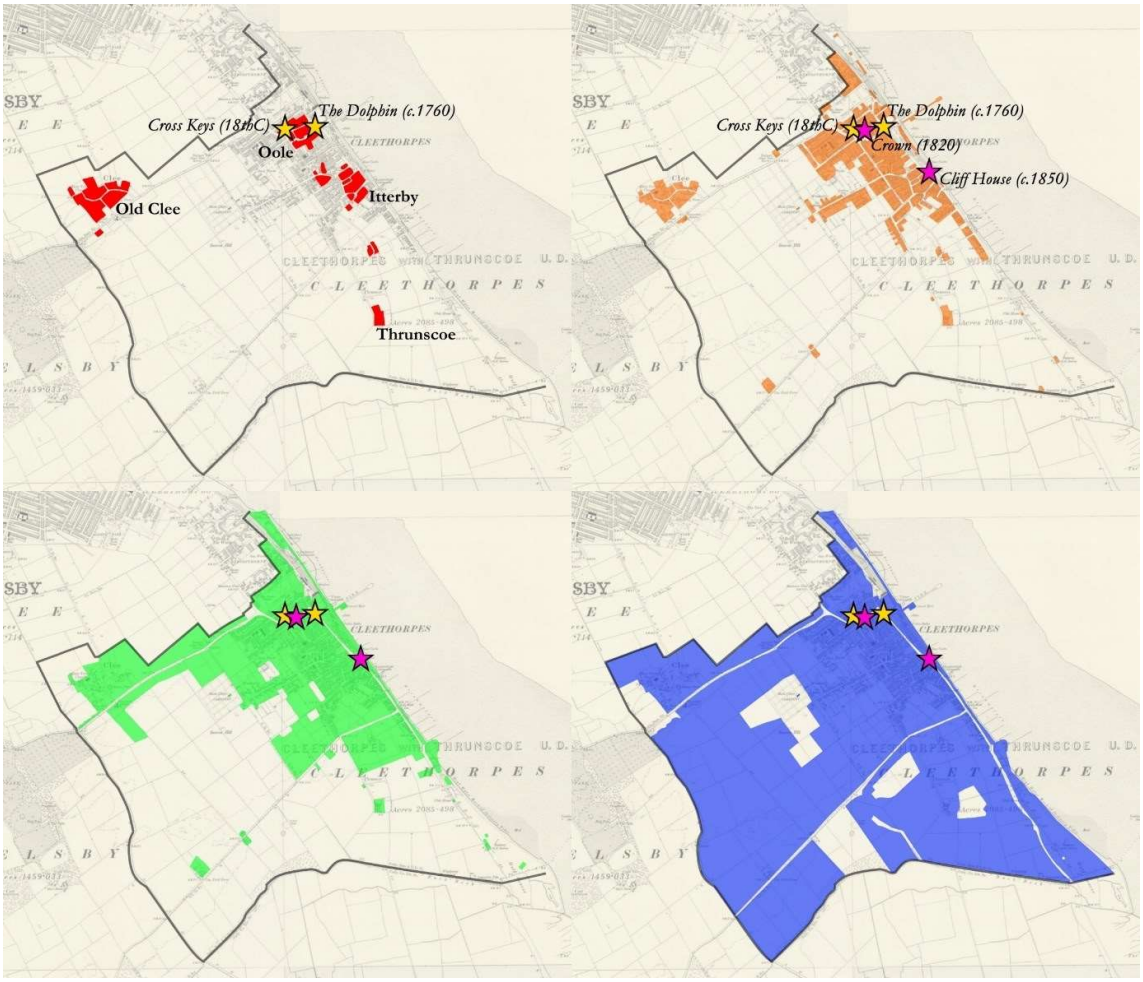


Figure 12.5: The built landscape of Cleethorpes parish—(a) The four hamlets in the early 19th century, along with the two 18th-century inns; (b) the growth of Cleethorpes to *c.* 1900, with pubs and bathing inns founded up to *c.* 1850; (c) Cleethorpes in the 1950s; (d) Cleethorpes in the 2020s (Base map: OS Six Inch 1909, National Library of Scotland).

Not every Georgian bathing inn led to the development of a small resort—inns offering river-bathing failed to find a lasting audience, whilst the bathing inns at Freiston Shore (the Coach & Horses/Plummers and the Marine) and Saltfleet (the New Inn) fell out of favour at least in part because of saltmarsh growth and the construction of sea-banks that created a barrier between them and the waters. Those that ultimately grew to be towns also had the advantage of being connected to the railway network—Saltfleet and Freiston both missed out on this, and suffered as a result, whilst Cleethorpes got its railway in 1863, Skegness in 1873, and Mablethorpe in 1877. However, whilst undoubtedly significant, not least in inspiring local landowners and others to invest in these new towns, it is worth noting that the connection to the railway network was itself influenced by the proven and continuing popularity of Cleethorpes, Mablethorpe and Skegness with bathers and tourists prior to the railways arriving. Given that this mid-19th-century popularity seems to have ultimately had its roots in the establishment of the bathing inns here, there would thus seem to be a credible argument for seeing these 'new inns' as having had a crucial role in the creation of the modern Lincolnshire coastal landscape that continues to predominate into the 21st century.

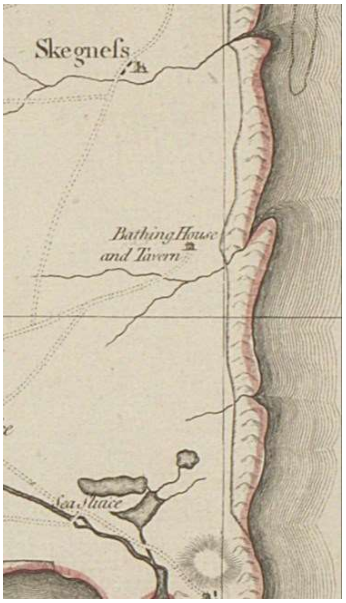


Figure 12.4: Skegness in 1779 (Source: © The British Library Board, British Library Maps K.Top.19.19.5 tab.end).