ANGLO-SAXON NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Evidence

There are currently some 103 records in the Nottinghamshire SMR which refer to the Anglo-Saxon period from 410 to 1066. In addition there are some 400 place-names, mostly recorded in Domesday Book and mostly applied to historic villages or farms, and two useful Anglo-Saxon charters.

This poverty of archaeological remains means that this is truly a Dark Age for Nottinghamshire. Despite the bringing in of historical sources and place-names, which must be given equal weight as evidence, the County remains a stage which is illuminated only by pinpricks of light and sounds only with rumblings from the wings. Consequently, any overview is dependent upon looking more widely and across the whole of the period to erect models which make rational use of our limited data.

Given this situation, the research issues are many, and all embracing. Not surprisingly, the over-arching one remains the explanation of how the landscape of the Roman period, well populated, with extensive woodland clearance, dispersed settlement patterns, became that of Domesday Book, 600 years later, with nucleated settlement, "open field" structures, low population and much woodland north of the Trent, dense population, much arable and little woodland in Trent Valley and southwards.

Within this are issues such as
- **Where are the British?**
- **Where are the settlements ?**
- **Nucleation of settlement**
- **The development of Churches and Parishes**
- **The development of Towns**

We can say a surprising amount about these issues, or if that is too bold a statement for some, speculate to develop ideas and models for research in to them. This is what I intend to do now by looking at principally at the 5th Century, Settlement, Religion and Territories.

5TH C. - ROMANO-BRITISH/ANGLO-SAXON TRANSITION

Although there are early brooches from Brough [1], and some pottery from cemeteries such as Millgate [2] may date to the later 5th C, the parallels and date ranges for the material culture in cemeteries suggest that most distinctively A/S settlement belonged to the 6th C.

If we look at the distribution of Early Saxon material culture, cemeteries and early placenames we see that it is focussed on the Trent Valley and South Notts,. A/S cemeteries, early placenames (ham, inga-ham), a few grubenhauser, some finds indicate that early A/S immigration did not extend much beyond this area - which suggests that north of Trent was not attractive

The sparsity of evidence, together with this distribution, suggests that this settlement was not by a mass movement nor by penetration up the Trent and its tributaries, (although this may lie behind the ingaham placenames in the Trent Valley in north-east Notts and adjacent north-west Lincs). Rather it suggests piecemeal movement from the south and south east, into South Notts and the Trent Valley

In this area, we can see the possible survival of territorial and estate structures, and some distributional association between A/S material and Roman settlement. The high population, extensive arable and lack of woodland in 1086 suggests that the Trent Valley and South Notts did not suffer as much depopulation as other areas in 5th C, and retained its economic vitality. It appears that it had an existing economy and social structures which were attractive to A/S takeover.

By contrast, Nottinghamshire north and west of the Trent Valley and its hinterland exhibits an absence of Early Saxon settlement,and a distribution of Scandinavian placenames which suggests space for "colonisation". In 1086 it had a low population with extensive woodland and heath. Palaeoenvironmental and other evidence demonstrates the growth of peat in Idle Valley from the 4th century [3]. Together, this evidence suggests population decline and retraction from more marginal areas in at least 5th century. The growth of heath and woodland, combined with population decline, may suggest also a shift to animal husbandry and more pastoral farming regimes and socio-economic structures

All this implies that during the 5th C and into the 6th century, Notts was populated by British communites with a sub-Romano-British culture. In the absence of coinage and mass-produced pottery, and the disappearance of towns and villas and with no distinctive British material, it is very dificult to identify both the sites and character of this culture.

However, several things point to its existence across the whole of Nottinghamshire and to its longevity of influence - the association of A/S cemeteries/burials and material culture with Roman towns and villas, -.the possible British character of the Cotgrave cemetery indicated by the sparseness of distinctive Saxon burials and their association with one only of the 2 types of burial rite, - partible inheritance in north Notts in Middle Ages, - the probable continuation in to late Saxon period of some villa estates or town territories as royal or aristocratic estates, - and the longevity of association of specifice sites with power (churches on villa sites, the 7th Century baptism of the men of Lindsey at Tiowulfingacastir, which is associated with the Roman town of Segelocum at Littleborough, and where there is also a pre-Conquest church).

SETTLEMENT

Although cemeteries bear witness to Early Anglo-Saxon settlement, only about a dozen settlements can be identified. Even fewer Middle Saxon settlements have been recognised. Only at Southwell [4], Nottingham [5], and Girton (dated 650-815) [6] have substantial structural features been excavated.

Early and Middle Saxon material is strikingly absent from field walking in Sherwood Sandstones and areas in the Trent Valley such as around South Muskham. Field walking in a transect of claylands west and north of South Muskham also failed to pick up Saxon pottery/material [7]. Site inspections and watching briefs in villages have produced little which can be certainly attributed to the Saxon period.

Placenames make a restricted contribution, although.the significance and chronology of these remains an area of debate. Certain topographical names, (*feld, ei, leah*) and certain habitative names (*inga-ham, ingas*) are indicative of the presence of Saxons, their communities and social influence. Most of these however, are territorial in character and say little about the nature of the settlements.

The cemeteries and this limited settlement evidence indicates that the landscape was not significantly transformed in the Early and Middle Saxon periods. The settlement appears to conform with the distribution which can be suggested as having evolved in the 5th C.. There is no evidence that prehistoric fortifications (the few which may be confidently assigned to that period) were reoccupied in the 5th Century or later Rather, it appears that settlement was mainly dispersed across more or less re-organised Roman landscapes (more, north of the Trent - less, in the Trent Valley and southwards). If Girton were to be typical, then settlements may have been small and well integrated with older ones in a pattern which was based on a population which was much reduced from that of the 4th Century.

By the later 8th and 9th centuries however, when *tun* elements in place-names begin to be common, and personal names also appear as elements, some settlements may be growing or becoming focal points in nascent nucleation under the pressures of the developing concepts and demands of lordship, tenurial obligations and taxation which are evident in the later Saxon period. The appearance of placenames in burgh and worth may suggest the appearance of defended, presumably higher status, settlements, which could conform with enclosure and defensive ditches at Nottingham

In the Late Saxon period there is again little archaeological evidence. Late Saxon buildings, property boundaries and other features come from the burghs of Nottingham and Newark. Only occasionally, do late Saxon/Saxo-Norman ceramics, such as Torksey and Stamford wares, appear in from field-walking or from villages. Typically, site inspections and watching briefs in villages, intended particularly to seek evidence of early settlement, have revealed nothing certain of this date. An exception to this, however is Top Lane, Laxton [8], where 1 sherd of 8th/9th Century Northern Maxey B pottery and 9 sherds of Saxo-Norman pottery came from beneath a mediaeval house plot. This suggests that the sites may be there to be found, but that we do not understand how to find them.

Late Saxon settlement studies in Nottinghamshire then, are dependent upon place-names and general models of development. Nottinghamshire is rich in Scandinavian type place-names and these appear to reveal three points. Firstly, there is no real pattern or concentration of Scandinavian place-names which might suggest settlement by Danish army members which was focused on the stronghold of Nottingham. Secondly, many of the place-names with *bi* suffixes and in *thorpe* suggest occupation

of areas marginal to existing settlements. Thirdly many of the place-names which are made up of a personal name and *tun* have Scandinavian personal names, the so-called Grimston hybrids, and they are common in the Trent Valley.

This evidence indicates that Scandinavian incomers fitted in with and around existing settlements but, while they may have extended the range and density of settlement, they did not change the fundamental pattern of a less well populated zone north and west of the Trent and a more densely populated Trent Valley and south Nottinghamshire. Certainly, Scandinavian settlement will have contributed to the increasing numbers of the population, both in new settlements and existing ones.

The only evidence for the date of the nucleation of settlement in Nottinghamshire comes from the Middle Saxon settlement at Girton. This, despite the presence of Saxo-Norman pottery on the surface, does not seem to have been occupied in the Late Saxon period. It may be presumed perhaps, that its occupants had moved to the modern village several hundred yards away on the other side of a stream.

Nevertheless, nucleation of settlement in the Late Saxon period, by the growth of existing farmsteads and/or by the re-location of farms and families to central places, provides the most reasonable explanation for the transformation of our model of the Early and Middle Saxon landscape into that which we may deduce from Domesday Book

It has been claimed that Scandinavian political control and settlement caused, began, or contributed to the break-up of multiple estates and the development of nucleated settlement [9]. This may be doubted, as this phenomenon is visble in areas outside the Danelaw, and is a characteristic of Late Saxon socio-economic development in central and eastern England. As with population growth, this is best seen perhaps, as a trend which had already begun by the end of the 8th century. The Scandinavian contribution may have been perhaps, to give some acceleration to the process, but more importantly to give a distinctive cast to the descriptive terms used for, and to some extent the character of, the tenurial structures and relationships which were evolving more generally.

Equally there is no evidence for the planning of Late Saxon villages. Rather, the indications provided by plan form analysis and documented village histories suggest that regulated plan-forms developed mainly in the 12th or 13th centuries, although this does not rule out a late 11th century context for some.

As an expression of the socio-economic change of this period, nucleation has also come to be associated with the development of open field systems. That the two are intimately involved one with another in a cycle of cause and effect is undoubted. Open fields appear to be one characteristic of this time.

The Southwell Charter, describing the bounds of an estate given to the Archbishop of York in 956, mentions what seem to be open field features, such as headlands [10]. At the end of the period, the presence of adjacent open-fields is the most obvious explanation of the Domesday Book description, in virgates, of the widths of woodland in Hockerton and Kelham [11]. Moreover, the vocabulary of open-field terms is heavily

Scandinavian, suggesting that their development belongs to a period when language had become modified.

Of course, this does necessarily mean that these fields had the same form, or even organisation, as can be seen in the Middle Ages

One undoubted new feature though, was Newark. Although an old settlement, this was transformed into a new burgh and became a major feature of the Late Saxon landscape of south east Nottinghamshire. If not from its inception, it had become a comital holding by the mid 11th century, with a church which was the focus of what was effectively a new parochia. However, the extent of the settlement is still uncertain and it is not clear whether or not the circuit of mediaeval wall represents the Late Saxon defended area.

RELIGION

Anglo-Saxon settlement in Nottinghamshire is visible in the 5th and 6th centuries largely because of their burial practices, which were "pagan" and involved (usually) the deposition of grave-goods. Amongst our 11 certain cemeteries, 4 single burials, and half-dozen or more locations where finds are suggestive of burials, both cremation and inhumation cemeteries are repesented.

The cremation cemeteries are Millgate (Newark), Kingston on Soar [12], Netherfield [13], and Starnhill (Bingham) [14], while the inhumation cemeteries are Willoughby on the Wolds [15], Cotgrave [16], the Fosse Way in Cotgrave [17]. Holme Pierrepoint [18] appears to have been a mixed rite cemetery, as may have been Sutton Bonington [19]. An apparently large inhumation cemetery reported from Collingham [20] may belong to this period, but seemingly lacked grave-goods.

Other cremation cemeteries or individual cremation burials may be represented by some finds of decorated A/S pottery, particularly at Littleborough [21]. Single inhamation burials come from Parsons Hill (Bingham) [22], Aslockton [23], and Winthorpe Road (Newark) [24]. The first two were males accompanied by weapons, while the latter, which has been recently reported, was of a high status female accompanied by grave goods, including a bucket, and buried within a large ovoid enclosure. The nearest Nottinghamshire parallel to this is a cremation burial excavated in the late 18th century at Oxton [25], some 10 km north of the Trent. This involved another high status female, accompanied by a bucket, deposited beneath a mound.

Cremation is usually thought of as the earlier A/S burial rite, which became superceded by inhumation. While some of the pottery from the Millgate (Newark), and Kingston on Soar cremation cemeteries could have a 5th century date, the chronological distinction between the material from the different Nottinghamshire cemeteries is insufficient to support arguments about changes in burial practice. In any case, since most cemeteries appear to belong more to the 6th rather than the 5th

century, with the commonality of material culture coming from them suggests a high degree of contemporaniy, it appears more likely that the choice between cremation and inhumation was decided on ethnic or communal grounds.

Amongst the cemeteries, Cotgrave is particularly notable. Only one burial was accompanied by weapons, a spear and a shield. Originally this was beneath a mound. Two other burial mounds lay adjoining this first, and all three appear to have been a focus for other burials. Otherwise, there were two principal types of grave; graves which were wide and often shorter than the body length, in which the legs of the body were flexed, and graves which were narrow and often longer than the body length, in which the bodies were extended and either coffined or tightly shrouded. Other than the single male with weapons, all other males were either unaccompanied by grave-goods or by only a knife. Some thirteen female burials only had grave-goods. With one exception, the extended burials of either sex had no grave goods. Generally, extended burials appear to be later than flexed ones.

The absence of weaponry at, and general poverty of, Cotgrave stands in dramatic contrast to all the other excavated inhumation cemeteries except Collingham, if this is indeed Saxon. The presence of two types of grave, with Anglo-Saxon material being found in one of these types, may argue for two different groups of people or, given the stratigraphical relationship between some graves of different type, for changes in burial practice. In any event the community represented by this cemetery appears to be very different from those of other cemeteries.

The absence of Middle Saxon burials is usually attributed to the conversion to Christianity of the Middle Angles under Peada in 653. However, the disappearance of pagan burials may not be as simple as this. It should not be forgotten that despite the Pauline mission and conversions of the early 7th Century and Peada's state conversion thirty years later, the state religion of late Roman Britain was Christianity, that sub-Roman commitment to Christianity amongst social leaders, if in the form of the Pelagian heresy, is documented, and that Celtic Christians were well established in the north of England, including Northumbria in the ?6/7th Century.

There is every reason therefore to believe that a significant proportion of the native British population will have adhered to some form of Christian practice, including burial rites, derived from Romano-British culture. This may be one explanation of the burial practices and material poverty of the 6th Century cemetery at Cotgrave.

If this were the case and if the post-Roman British culture was as formative in Early and Middle Saxon culture as other indicators may suggest, it is possible, if not likely, that it was these traditions of late-Roman burial practice which came to dominate, irrespective of the Peadan conversion. Peada's edict may have affected the practices of an upper, aristocratic class with pagan Germanic traditions more than those of the rest of the population.

No Middle Saxon church or monastic sites are known with certainty from Nottinghamshire. However, the association of these with royal centres or estates may provide some clues for future research. Mansfield, Dunham, Southwell and Orston

may be particular targets for this, along with Edwinstowe because of its claimed association with Edwin and the battle of Heathfield.

Placename evidence suggests Misterton as a possible early monastic site, in a location which would parallel the fen-edge monastic sites of Lincolnshire. However, the name could mean no more than the farm or settlement belonging to a monastery.

Other early church sites are indicated by a number of sources. Excavations on the church site at Flawford have revealed a long sequence of structures, the earliest of which has been claimed by the excavator as dating to the 9th century [26]. This church was on the site of a Roman villa, which opens the possibility, likelihood even, that other churches on villa sites, such as Stanford on Soar [27], & Southwell [28], may have equally early foundations.

Two other early churches may be identified. The first is Kirkby in Ashfield. The placename has a bi suffix which is taken by some philologists to be a primary Danish name form. This placename then, probably belongs to the late 9th or early 10th century, and is surely more likely to reflect the existing presence of a church at that time than a subsequent foundation.

The second is the church of East Stoke. Here, there is the evidence is that Syerston, Elston Coddington, and Newark Castle belonged in the parish of East Stoke in the Middle Ages. Further the land enclosed by the Old Trent Dyke on the Island in front of Newark was also part of East Stoke parish, although it was physically separated by the parishes of Thorpe and Farndon. Evidently then, East Stoke once had a parochia which extended over a wide area eastwards beyond Newark. This parochia was disrupted by the foundation of a new superior status church, a comital "minster", at Newark in the late 10th or 11th century and the transfer to it of, or foundation by it, of churches in many neighbouring communities.

The later chapelries and detached portion of parish were the residue of East Stoke's former parochia. Logically therefore, this parochia predates the foundation of Newark's new church. Given its extent and the lack of documented dispute at the time or later, it is unlikely that the earlier parochia of East Stoke was itself recent creation. More likely is that it was old, and perhaps already decaying, before the new foundation at Newark. Given the proximity of East Stoke to the Roman town of Ad Pontem and the A/S cemetery outside it, it is tempting to speculate upon an origin in an adminstrative territory belonging to Ad Pontem.

Our lack of knowledge about early churches and church organisation in Nottinghamshire has been attributed to the invasions and settlement of the pagan Danes in the later 9th century. These it is claimed, destroyed and swept away the existing organisation and buildings of the Church, which was then refounded by King Edwy in 954-7 when he included Nottinghamshire in the Archdiocese of York, for political reasons, and gave the multiple estate at Southwell to that Archbishop. Received doctrine then says that all the County's parish churches are later than and linked in one way or another to the "mother-church" which the Archbishop of York founded at Southwell. Although the presence of a Viking sword from Farndon church [29] and and a "Viking" burial from Nottingham [30] may well represent pagan settlers and

burial practices, there are real reasons to doubt this interpretation, which is long overdue for re-evaluation.

There are 85 churches recorded in Domesday Book in 1086 and others may be included as extant by this date on the basis of their architectural detail and fabric, or the presence of decorated cross shafts, sculpture and fragments of stonework. The majority of these can be categorised as "estate" churches, created out by individual landholders at their centres and also serving individual townships or parishes. Under the interpretation above, these will have been licenced by Southwell Minster and were subdivisions of its parochia.

However, from Domesday Book and later sources it is possible to identify a number of "superior" churches, and to identify or reconstruct some dozen of parochia associated with some of these. The status of the churches is likely to have been variable, as were the extents of their parochia, and at the point of identification may have been in variety of states of growth or decay.

There is a high degree of association between these "superior" churches or parochia and the multiple estates of the king and nobility identifiable from Domesday Book. Given that the origins of some, perhaps many, Late Saxon multiple estates lay in Roman or Early Saxon territorial organisation, and that the survival of these estates in 1086 is a measure of the conservatism and resourcing of the king and upper aristocracy, it follows that some of these churches and parochia, here is no reason why a number of theses could not be of great antiquity and, as in the cases of Kirkby and East Stoke, pre-date the Danish settlement.

Thus, we can see a range of church sites and parochia in Late Saxon Nottinghamshire. Some were new, like Newark and perhaps Worksop, originating in recent royal gifts or franchises to nobles. Others were very old, like East Stoke, and probably Orston, or Southwell itself - for why else did King Edwy choose that particular estate to give to the Archbishop of York ? This evident depth of chronology amongst these parochia alone undermines the notion that, in destroying the administrative and political diocesean structures, the Danes swept the entire church on the ground away. It renders almost superfluous the more important evidence that the Scandinavian settlers rapidly conformed and took up Christianity, and that it was in 1171 that Pope Alexander the Third created the link between Southwell Minster and the whole clergy and laity of Nottinghamshire.

Parochia however, were rapidly becoming outmoded. The new estate churches were subtractions from them and as many parochia were eroded so the pastoral concern of their churches became more local, and many became themselves the equivalent of estate churches, serving little more than a particular parish. Some parochia survived however, fossilised as later parishes. The result is that Nottinghamshire is characterised by having both a large number of single township parishes, as is the norm further south, and a number of multiple township parishes, as is the norm further north. Yet again, the County appears as a bridge between northern and southern England.

Examination of estate churches reveals a particularly interesting facet of 10th and 11th century social organisation. Since ownership of a church was a qualifying criterion in the status of thegn, each church was presumably founded by a particular estate owner. Many townships however, had more than one land-holder, more than one manor. This did not result in the erection of more than one church in a township as might be expected. Indeed, when the later records of the advowsons of churches in multiple manor townships or parishes are examined it is usually to find all the lords of the manors involved and taking turns to present the priests.

In the example of the church of Ratcliffe on Soar, which was founded by Saewin, its Domesday Book tenant, we can see another dimension to this. The dedication of this church in the 1070s, by Wulfstan, Bishop of Worcester , is described in a near contemporary hagiography in which it is described as no more than Saewin's church at Ratcliffe [31]. Yet from later sources the churches of the neighbouring communities of Thrumpton and Kingston on Soar are described as chapels of Ratcliffe. Tenurially, neither Saewin nor his heirs as lords of the manor in Ratcliffe had any part in these communities, nor did their lords of the manor have any involvement in Ratcliffe. Yet Ratcliffe was their "mother" church.

Apart from the caution the Ratcliffe situation gives in respect of the use of later sources in interpreting parochia, these observations show that the social and legal organisation and arrangements of both lords and their tenants, in townships functioned on a different level to that which might be expected from a simplistic view of land-holding and tenurial obligations. The co-operative approach to farming and community, which permited individuals to meet their particular needs and obligations, and which is the essence of nucleated village and open field structures, was reflected at the seigneurial level of spritual provision and surety.

TERRITORIES

In the Early and Middle Saxon periods the strategic position of Nottinghamshire as the border country between northern and southern England, between highland and lowland zones, is well illustrated.

In the 6th Century Nottinghamshire was border country and one of the battle grounds between Northumbria and other kingdoms, particularly Mercia. A battle on the Idle and another on the Trent are recorded in 616 and 679 respectively. Most famous though is the battle of Heathfield in 633, in which Penda of Mercia defeated and killed Edwin of Northumbria, which took place either on Hatfield Chase, just over the northern boundary of the County, or near Cuckney between Mansfield and Worksop on the western side of Nottinghamshire, where there are also Hatfield placenames.

In these events can be seen the military imperative which conditioned developments in Late Saxon and Mediaeval Nottinghamshire, namely that incursions from the north usually come through the Rossington Gap, a narrow corridor of raised ground, on gravels, through the marshes of the Don, Torne and Idle, part of the Humberhead Marshes. If incursions are not met here or close to here, the next best opportunity is on the Trent, or before it is reached. The Trent is the last strategic line, once this is

crossed by invaders from the north, there are numerous routes by which they can proceed southwards or break-out across country.

Little can be said about 5th century political territories. The relationships of A/S cemeteries and finds, and of some Late Saxon multiple estates and parochia, to Roman towns and settlement hint that Roman local government continued to be influential for some time. However, the same evidence can also support the anticipation that these were dissolved by the creation of alternative, perhaps more local and not necessarily long lived, power structures.

However, We have already seen that Nottinghamshire embraced two different countries, one in the Trent Valley and south Nottinghamshire that looked to, and belonged with, a cultural and economic context extending south and east from the county boundary, and another north and west of the Trent Valley which was poorer, less well settled and perhaps different in socirty and economy.

By the 6th century, we can dimly see this division as political units and even put names to them. The Trent Valley and south Nottinghamshire fell within one or more grouping of the Middle Angles. This interpretation fits with the distribution of A/S cemeteries and the Anglian character of their grave-goods. Much of North Nottinghamshire belonged to a grouping which we might call the *Bernet-seatte*, inhabitants of burnt land, a description which survived transmuted, as the 11th century name of the wapentake which covered covered north Nottinghamshire, *Bernesedelaue*, or in other words Bassetlaw.

This territory was probably substantially British, on the basis of the North Nottinghamshire tradition of partible inheritance, the occurence of a few place-names of British origin, and the poverty of Anglo-Saxon material. It probably extended from a royal centre at Mansfield, in the south west, to the Trent on the east and north east, on the basis of the 11th Century link between Mansfield and the the Soke of Oswaldbeck. In the 11th century also there was a link between Mansfield and Edwinstowe, a place-name which may be originate with King Edwin, both of which lie at no great distance from the alternative site of the battle of Heathfield [32]. We may even know of one of the central points on the boundary of the *Bernet-seatte*, from the place-names of West and East Markham, which incorporate the word *maerc*, or boundary.

It may be significant that West and East Markham lie on the boundary between two of the divisions of 11th century Bassetlaw, Hatfield (note the name !) on the west, and South Clay on the east. This may suggest further territorial division, which could make sense of the landscape implied in the name Bernet-seatte. Here the question must be one of what lies behind the description "burnt land". If the Hatfield division of Bassetlaw was the core of the territory of the Bernet-seatte, then it will have covered the Sherwood Sandstones, an area of wood and and perhaps more substantially heath. Summer parching of vegetation on the "droughty" sandstones, or the seasonal burning of scrub, gorse and ferns, to maintain pastures, could give a context to "burnt land".

The possible significance, and antiquity, of the divisions of Bassetlaw begs the question of other territorial units. It may be then, that in Oswaldbeck and the South Clay we may be looking at a westward extension of the kingdom of Lindsey. This would fit with the strategic significance of Tillbridge Lane, the Roman road from Lincoln to Doncaster, and the later distinctiveness in customs of inheritance and land tenure of Oswaldbeck. It would also explain Edwin of Northumbria's choice of the Trent, at *Tiowulfingacaester* , for the baptism of the people of Lindsey by Paulinus in 627 A.D.

Circular though the argument may be, Stenton's identification of *Tiowulfingacaester* with Littleborough, the Roman town of *Segelocum* , still appears to be preferable. The choice of site, and the presence of Edwin, declares this event as a political statement designed to demonstrate Edwin's overlordship not just of Lindsey on the Lincolnshire bank of the Trent, but also of the north Nottinghamshire bank. The extent of the later Soke of Oswaldbeck, in the north east corner of the County against the west bank of the Trent, and the link between Misson and Kirton in Lindsey attested in Domesday Book may suggest at least Oswaldbeck as a minimum area for a westward extension of Lindsey into Nottinghamshire. However, this suggestion would require a special pleading to explain the 11th century link between Mansfield and Oswaldbeck.

In all events, whether or not the *Bernet-seatte* covered the whole of North Nottinghamshire, or whether they occupied the west, while Lindsey controlled the east, overlordship of these strategically positioned lands was important to the kings of Northumbria and Mercia in their struggles for supremacy.

The Battle of Heathfield effectively secured Mercian suzerainty over Nottinghamshire and Lindsey. However the contest between Northumbria and Mercia was not finally settled until after the battle of Trent in 679 when a lasting peace was brokered by Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury. This seems the most likely occasion for the establishment of the boundary between the two kingdoms, on a line described in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle's poem on the reconquest of Mercia by King Edmund in 942. In the process, this peace also established the most northerly boundary of what was to become the County of Nottinghamshire.

This boundary, which survived until local government reorganisation in 1974, was clearly designed to even the strategic control of the Rossington Gap, by bringing a tongue of Northumbria down to Bawtry while flanking this on the west by including Martin and part of Bawtry Forest into Mercia and the later Nottinghamshire. By this disposition of territory, neither Mercia nor Northumbria controlled the corridor between north and south, each being flanked by territory held by the other.

Little can be said about other or smaller territorial divisions. If the larger A/S cemeteries served more than individual communites then these may indicate central places or the boundaries of territories according to the interpretation placed upon their siting.

The isolated high status burials of the 6th or 7th centuries, already described, may relate to particular local Middle Anglian territories. Both the high status females from Newark and Oxton are both in locations which could be interpreted as relating to

borders or boundaries between groups of people. The repetition of rough coincidence between the royal multiple estates, church parochia, wapentakes and large sokes observable or deducable from Domesday Book and other later sources, and Roman towns and villas provides fuel for speculation or interpretation, depending upon ones beliefs on causality or co-incidence in historical process. If links between these can be accepted then the picture becomes one of a variety of territorial units of different functions, origins and development. All of these however share one characteristic; whatever their relationship to land tenure and settlement, they are administrative. Despite expectation, and the occasional indications, that prehistoric or Roman land divisions survive to become the estate, township and parish boundaries visible in the Late Saxon and Mediaeval periods, the evidence is as yet too thin to support a general model of local tenurial or community boundary survival in Nottinghamshire

The most significant effect of the Danish seizure, and English reconqest, of eastern Mercia on territory and administration was the creation of the County of Nottinghamshire. The are several dates at which this could have been instituted, 918 when Edward first re-conquered the area, taking Nottingham, 942 when Edmund re-took northern Mercia from the Vikings of York, or 954 when Edwy re-established English control on the death of Eric Blood-Axe.   Whichever is thought more likely, the County must surely have been shired by 956 when Southwell was granted to the Archbishop of York and became the site of his principal church in the Nottinghamshire.

As has already been mentioned, this gift is most probably to be associated with the inclusion of Nottinghamshire in the Archdiocese of York as an underpinning of the re-establishment of the Church in the north. This linkage may well suggest 954 as the more likely date for the creation of Nottinghamshire. It seems reasonable to assume that shiring and re-establishment of the Church were part of the same political and administrative act, for it was precisely the area within the County boundaries of Nottinghamshire that were included in the northern Archdiocese; Derbyshire and Lincolnshire remained with Canterbury.

The security of the re-conquered northern Danelaw remained a concern until after the reign of William I. The semi-independent and unstable status of Yorkshire and the rest of Northumbria and the Scandinavian interests of 10th and 11th Nottinghamshire now added a new vulnerability to the county's natural strategic importance. In this situation, not only did the land route through the Rossington Gap need to secured, but also the water-way of the Trent, which had provided passage for the invading Danes and was to do so again for others.

The establishment in, or re-establishment as it had clearly been important already in the 9th century, of Nottingham as the military and administrative focus for the County secured one strategic junction between land routes and river crossing. The creation of a new burgh at Newark secured the other. Again, it is possible to suggest at number of dates for this, which range from 918 through to after 954. The best clue at present is a coin of King Edwy which is claimed to have a mint mark representing Newark. Edwy died in 957. As with the shiring of Nottinghamshire, it may be that the reign of this king is most likely time for the founding of Newark. However, the important point about Newark is that its site controls the Trent and not just the specific crossing

there but the other crossings in its vicinity, particularly at that at Holme and, if it still existed, the 9th century bridge at Cromwell (which until recently was thought to be Roman) [33].

Another Late Saxon territorial administrative structure was that of the wapentakes. The use of this Scandinavian term places their definition in the late 9th or 10th century. However, their analogy to hundreds in other counties and the shadowdy existance of several smaller units, "short" hundreds, in Domesday Book, suggests links with the Tribal Hideage of the 7th century. As we have already seen in the case of Bassetlaw, wapentakes and short hundreds then, are probably a re-affirmation of much older administrative units which may themselves have had origins in 5th or 6th century groupings or power structures.

At the local level, nucleation of settlement was a beginning for the process of defining township and parish boundaries. Many of these were probably established much earlier, particularly in the more densely settled arable areas of the Trent Valley, but in communities neighbouring woodland and "waste" intercommoning was common and it was not until well into the Middle Ages that boundaries through these zones became necessary

Economy.

In the 5th century, the bulk of the population lay in the Trent Valley and southwards. Once the major phase of immigration into the County ended, in the 6th or 7th century, increase in this population appears to have been slight, dependent upon a low percentage level of natural reproduction. By the 9th century however, this may have been increasing. With Scandinavian immigration and settlement and increases in reproduction, this increase became exponential from the 10th century. Nevertheless, the pattern of settlement, and economic activity therefore, remained unchanged.

5th century material culture appears to have been largely non distinctive and was perhaps extensively aceramic. 6th century cemeteries speak of pottery making and metal working. Much of this may be presumed to have been local and community based, but consistency in style is notable. Close identification between great square-headed brooches from Holme Pierrepoint and Willoughby on the Wolds has been claimed to be the result of use of the same mould in casting, which may indicate itinerant smiths, trade or exchange between communities or marriage.

It appears that Early and Middle Saxon material culture can be considered as a continuum, developing without significant additions to the repetoire. This may be illustrated by the settlement at Girton, which has characteristic building types and material culture but without the scientific date for the clay floored building would have been assigned to the early 6th C on the basis of a fingernail sized scrap of decorated metalwork. Middle Saxon pottery, then, was presumably produced on the same basis as Early Saxon decorated and plain vessels.

By the later 10th and 11th centuries however, there are indications of pottery being produced in particular centres and traded over some distance, with distinctive wares and kilns uncovered at Nottingham and Newark. Roman roads and rivers presumably

provided the backbone of the communication system, although the bridge at Cromwell, which exhibits considerable engineering skill, does not seem to relate to any known road.

The retraction of settlement and creation of wood and heathland in the late 4th and 5th centuries predicates a diminuation in arable and a rise in animal husbandry. Food offerings from the 6th century cemeteries demonstrate the keeping of sheep amd pigs. Horse burials indicate that these were prestige animals and possibly not numerous. Cattle seem to be only sparsely represented. However, cattle and sheep appear in place-names, which may reflect a royal economy based on animal herds which were housed in these particular places. Place-names with *wic* elements indicate dairy farms. By the Late Saxon period substantial numbers of cattle must have kept, if only to provide the large numbers of oxen implied by the numbers of ploughs recorded in Domesday Book. Place- names in the Trent Valley and low level land such as Cotham, Bulcote, or Lamcote and similar names such as Somercotes on the higher ground beyond the County boundary to the west, suggest the likelihood of transhumance.

Grain impressions in Early Saxon pottery demonstrate the cultivation of barley, wheat, oats, and flax. A few place-names appear to refer to arable crops. Barton indicates barley, Wheatley and Whatton indicates wheat. Again, these names may have origins in the particular services or renders provided by communities in royal support structures. Farms or communities populated by the kings' bondmen, gave rise to the four Carlton place-names.

Natural resources, available in the woods and wastes will have also figured highly in the local economy. Use of timber and wood products are evident from the Cromwell bridge, the wicker-work of fish weirs and traps in the Trent [34], and the references to underwood, coppice woodland, in Domesday Book. Place-names refering to grassland, as in Beeston, demonstate pastures. Meadow, a particular resource and management regime, is recorded predominantly in the Trent Valley and south Nottinghamshire in 1086.

Summary

Overall, we can suggest a 5th Century culture consisting of a variety of types of site, with a variety of belief systems and social structures, with a material culture which is largely non distinctive and perhaps extensively aceramic. This operated within a legacy of fragmentary heritage of Roman centres of power and influence which, although largely reduced to tradition, were the origins of and gave legitimacy to local power structures and authority at a variety of levels from landownership and tenurial arrangements to kingship.

This invisible society was transmuted by A/S immigration and seizure of power and cultural influence in the 6th century. The initial limitation of immigration to the Trent Valley and South Notts may account for the persistence of partible inheritance in North Nottinghamshire into the Middle Ages. The low level of immigration (not much more than 1000 individuals over 100/150 years), suggests that middle Saxon,

English, society, was the product of integration between 2nd and 3rd generation A/S immigrants and the indigenous British population. This integration and the acquisition of existing power structures probably accounts for the survival of some multiple estate into the 11th Century, and a British cultural resonance in Later Saxon social and economic structures (such as bondmen and soke-men, and estates or communities performing particular functions for overlords/kings indicated by placenames (e.g. Oxton, Calverton, Lambley, Bulcote, or Wheatley).

In the Saxon period we see again, in its most graphic form, the distinction between the area north of the Trent, seemingly impoverished and more sparsely settled, with extensive woods and heath, and the Trent Valley and South Nottinghamshire, more densely settled, economically stronger, looking to and part of a region to the south and east of the County. Again, in the evidence for Saxon settlement and territories, and in the strategic concepts which appear to lie behind political events, there is the impression of two different countries, two different economies, perhaps different societies. And we can now put names to these two countries, with the South belonging in Middle Anglia and the north belonging to either the territory of a group known in the 5th or 6th century as the *Bernet-seatte*, or being divided between these and a westward extension of the Kingdom of Lindsey.

As a result of the Danish invasions and annexation of the Danelaw :

- Nottinghamshire developed a Anglo-Scandinavian society, in which people of Scandinavian origins were substantially represented in the aristocracy and language was heavily scandinavianised.
- New placenames appear, some possibly for new settlement.
- Population was addtionally increased by immigration
- Nottingham became a fortified centre for administration and military control
- Newark was founded as a burgh, a fortified centre, with eventually a new minster church.

Nottinghamshire was created.

Finally, the period is marked also by the transformation of a dispersed pattern of settlement, and whatever arrangements for land ownership and management are to be associated with this, into one of nucleated villages and open fields. This involved the increasing centralisation in one place of function. Church, hall, lords farm, tenants and their farms, crafts, all of which in the Early and Middle Saxon periods could be in different places, were being brought together in villages. Although by no means complete and not in its final mediaeval form by 1066, this process and the rising population resulted in a Trent Valley and South Nottinghamshire landscape of highly populated villages, with lands for very acre could be accounted for in Domesday Book

This then is the framework for future research in Anglo-Saxon Nottinghamshire.

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