

Nothing is more pleasing, wholesome and engaging than the pursuit of archaeology. Its varieties are infinite. It takes us out to the woods and fields, to the breezy moorland where lie so many puzzling remains of men [*sic*] of old, to early churches and quaint houses. And there is always something new to read about, some document to be deciphered, some fresh problem to be solved. (Addy 1914: 30, my addition in parentheses).

Summary

This PhD thesis is an interpretative study of the rural landscapes and communities of Nottinghamshire and South and West Yorkshire during the Iron Age and Romano-British periods. It challenges dominant narratives of the Iron Age and Romano-British periods by focusing on the regional evidence for inhabitation that remained relatively unknown until the late 1970s. Much of this evidence consists of cropmarks of field systems and enclosures. Whilst aerial photography and developer-funded survey and excavation work have significantly expanded the data available, it has not been interpreted from a social perspective, and these landscapes and their inhabitants are still rarely discussed outside of the region. This thesis argues that the region and its archaeology offer the potential to write very different accounts of people and places in northern England during the study period.

This PhD thus assesses the current known extent of these enclosures and field systems within the region, and suggests reasons for their physical layout and purpose. This thesis is also an explicit attempt to use theories developed in landscape archaeology, social geography, anthropology and critical social theory to write fine-grained histories for the people who once inhabited this region. In addition to the empirical research therefore, theories concerning the nature of everyday life, small-scale communities, field systems and boundaries, agricultural practices and daily routines, human-animal relations, depositional practice and consumption studies will be used to articulate with research at both a local and a wider scale. I will also discuss issues concerning Roman imperialism and 'Romanisation' within the region.

This PhD has developed archaeologies of inhabitation for the study period that treat the region on its own terms, rather than continuing to contrast it in negative terms to the better known Iron Age and Romano-British landscapes and artefact assemblages of southern England. This PhD responds to calls by recent archaeological research agendas for greater emphasis on landscape, settlement and regional studies, and for the development of agrarian sociologies.

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Acknowledgements

Looking back with hindsight (and relief), it is now apparent to me that this doctoral thesis has had a long gestation, and I have been influenced and inspired by many people, none of whom, however, should be held responsible for my final work.

During my undergraduate studies at the Department of Archaeology and Prehistory, Sheffield University, Professor John Collis first interested me in the Iron Age when I worked on his excavations in France in 1988 and 1989 (and subsequent visits). I would not have been able to finish my undergraduate degree without his support. Professor Andrew Fleming stimulated my interest in prehistoric and later field systems during a wet and windy two weeks of surveying on Dartmoor in April 1989.

Following my graduation, Bob Sydes of the South Yorkshire Archaeology Unit (now Heritage Manager for North Yorkshire Council) gave me my first professional employment. His belief that the brickwork field systems had their origins in the Iron Age inspired much of my later work. I would especially like to thank the friends in the South Yorkshire Archaeology Unit who helped me develop my practical expertise and my involvement with the archaeology of the region. They include Tim Allen, Simon Atkinson, Bill Barkle, Mark Brennand, Andrea Burgess, Claire Brown, Clare Coleman, Chris Cumberpatch, Jon Dunkley, Jane Gosling, Stacey Hallett, Kay Harvey, Dom Latham, Colin Merrony, Karen Miller, Graham Robbins and Steve Webster. The closure of the South Yorkshire field unit was lamentable. The Doncaster Archaeology Group, especially George Morris and Albert Cruze (both now sadly deceased) also helped with fieldwork upon which I was engaged.

Other good friends who have influenced my approach to archaeology in general or field systems in particular include Max Adams, Oscar Aldred, Dr Bill Bevan, Dr Joanna Brück, Toby Catchpole, Catherine Cavanagh, Anwen Cooper, Chris Ellis, Dr Chris Fenton-Thomas, Dr Duncan Garrow, Dr Catriona Gibson, Kate Howell, Dr Bob Johnston, Dr Willy Kitchen, Mark Knight, Dr Gavin Lucas, Dr Graham McElearney, Richard O'Neill, Dr Rachel Pope, Jesse Ransley, Roddy Regan, Sara Reilly, Dr Gary Robinson, John Thomas, Reuben Thorpe, Dr Sharon Webb and Nick Wells. I would

especially like to thank Dr Helen Wickstead. Her work on the Bronze Age landscapes of Dartmoor has been a source of continued intellectual stimulation for me, and I have benefited enormously from all of her help, advice and encouragement over the years.

When I returned to Sheffield University in 1996 to do a part-time MA in Landscape Archaeology, Dr Mark Edmonds (now Professor at the University of York) was an inspirational lecturer and became a good friend. I would like to thank him for giving me the chance to change my direction within archaeology, for stretching essay deadlines on occasion, and for showing me the possibility of writing subtle, evocative accounts of past people. Professor John Barrett, Professor Paul Buckland, Colin Merrony and Professor Mike Parker Pearson at Sheffield University also provided me with much useful information. Other postgraduate MA or PhD students at Sheffield during that time have continued to influence my own work. I would especially like to thank Tim Allen, Anwen Cooper, Dr Helen Evans, Dick Dickson, Dr Duncan Garrow, Dr Melanie Giles, Dr Danny Hind, Dr Willy Kitchen, Emily La Trobe Bateman, Dr John Raven, John Roberts, Graham Robbins and Gilly Vose. Those two years were among the happiest and most intellectually stimulating of my life.

I would not have been able to begin this PhD if I had not held a joint post as a Lecturer at the Department of Archaeology and Prehistory, University of Wales, Newport, and as a Project Officer with Wessex Archaeology. I would like to thank Professor Stephen Aldhouse-Green from UWN and Sue Davies and Andrew Lawson of Wessex Archaeology for setting up this post. Professor Miranda Aldhouse-Green and Dr Joshua Pollard were instrumental in the award of a studentship allowing me to spend five months a year working on my PhD research whilst continuing to teach undergraduates. My teaching and postgraduate colleagues at UWN have been the source of much advice and help, especially Dr Eleanor Ghey, Dr Mike Hamilton (thanks for the loan of the computer!), Dr Ray Howell, Anne Leaver, Dr Lesley McFadyen, Dr Angela Morelli, Dr Joshua Pollard and Dr Julia Roberts. Josh and Lesley in particular pointed me to lots of useful literature, and their innovative approaches to archaeology have influenced my own practice. It was a sad time indeed when SCARAB was dismantled and the decision was made to close the Archaeology department at Caerleon, and in particular the subsequent disingenuous, disorganised

and underhand treatment of Archaeology students and staff by senior UWN management was a regrettably low point on which to conclude my teaching there.

Drs Julia Roberts and Rick Peterson let me house sit for them in Cardiff, a lifeline after I had been laid off by UWN. In Sheffield, Rob Watson and Irene de Luis kindly allowed me to use their home as a base for archive and site visits; and when I needed to return to full-time work in the region Kathy Speight very generously put me up for several months and allowed me access to her computer to continue work on this thesis. At the South Yorkshire Archaeology Service Andy Lines, Jim McNeil, Roy Sykes and Dinah Saich provided me with much information, but I would especially like to thank Louisa Matthews for being so helpful and putting up with my extensive photocopying and scanning demands; and granting me access to the draft Magnesian Limestone report. At the West Yorkshire Archaeology Service, Vince Devine (now at Cadw), Andrea Burgess, Jason Dodds, Rebecca Mann and Ian Sanderson were all extremely helpful. Andrea in particular printed out GIS plots, aerial photograph transcriptions and provided me with much valuable information and discussion. At the Nottinghamshire SMR, Virginia Baddeley kindly dealt with my requests.

Others who have been most generous with their time and knowledge are Dave Berg, Vicky Brown, Claire Coulter, Sam Harrison, Dan Lee, Dr Deborah Moretti, Dr Jane Richardson, Ian Roberts, Alistair Webb and Paul Wheelhouse (now at Golders Associates) of Archaeological Services WYAS; and Alison Deegan, who kindly allowed me to use some of her excellent GIS plots produced as part of the Magnesian Limestone Project. I would particularly like to thank my colleagues on the Wattle Syke project, especially Tudur Davies, Sue Moss and Dave Williams, for all of our creative on-site dialogues. Mark Brennand, Fraser Brown and Alan Lupton of Oxford Archaeology North were generous with their time and knowledge, and allowed me access to some of the text and illustrations of the A1 (M) Darrington to Dishforth volume. Daryl Garton and Dr David Knight of the Trent and Peak Archaeological Unit also provided unpublished information, images and informative discussion. Professor Robert Van de Noort graciously provided me with unpublished images from the Sutton Common excavations. Dr Bill Bevan, Alison Deegan, Jen Eccles, Malin Holst, Ruth Leary, Samantha Glasswell and Jane Sumpter of the Bassetlaw Museum

in Retford, and Richard O'Neill and Dr Jim Symonds at ARCUS have all been very forthcoming with information. Gavin Edwards of the Manor House Museum, Ilkley, allowed me to photograph finds from the 1962 and 1919-1922 excavations. Pete Robinson of Doncaster Museum allowed me to photograph finds from Pickburn Leys and the Cadeby hoard, and supplied me with information about unpublished finds in the Doncaster area. Dr Robert Johnston and Colin Merrony at Sheffield University allowed me access to the SLAP collection of Derrick Riley aerial photographs. I would especially like to thank Dr Chris Cumberpatch for much unpublished information and our many conversations about Iron Age and Romano-British pottery and field systems, and also our mutual rants about poor fieldwork practice and the continued inequities of direct developer funding and competitive tendering.

I must also acknowledge the insightful comments and discussion of my draft chapters by Professor Miranda Aldhouse-Green, Dr Melanie Giles and Dr Lesley McFadyen, although sincere apologies to them all for having to wade through my sometimes verbose text. Melanie Giles also steered me towards some interesting additional reading and references, and valiantly acted as my 'external internal' supervisor.

I would particularly like to thank Anne Leaver for her hard work producing maps and doorway orientation diagrams for me, and who along with Gemma Rees gave me much advice with formatting other illustrations. Gemma also helped enormously with the many IT problems that I faced, including dying hard drives, software crashes, irascible printers and incompatible image manipulation programmes, and she stopped me from throwing computers through windows on several occasions! I would not have been able to print out and complete this thesis without her able assistance, and her emotional support. I am extremely lucky to have the continued love and support of Gemma, Kai, Teg and Felix, which has allowed me to stay (relatively) sane. Finally, I would like to thank my mother and father. My mother did not live to see me graduate from Sheffield and subsequently gain my Masters there, and my father died before my PhD studentship was confirmed. I will be forever grateful to them, and I hope that they would have been proud of me. This thesis is dedicated to them.