

Medieval Hayton

Early Medieval Hayton Anglo-Saxon Hayton

The field name "Scratters", close to the Roman roadside settlement has a name of Anglo-Scandinavian origin, and means something like "Ghost Hill". Is this a folk memory of the former settlement?

During the excavation of the Roman fort in 1975, the remains of an Anglo-Saxon sunken-floored building were found. This contained spindle whorls and sherds of plain and stamped pottery probably dating from the late 5th Century AD. Crop marks revealed similar features c 200m away. It is possible that the settlement received its present name during the Saxon period.

Recent research by Tony Laverack has revealed a possible Anglian inhumation cemetery. In the 2002, MAP Archaeological Consultancy excavated two burials in a flexed position, outside the Roman burial zone. One of these was a youth buried with a knife with an antler handle and two spearheads.

Other finds in the area include costume accessories and 8th-century sceattas (small silver coins) found in or near Hayton, minted in the reigns of the Northumbrian kings Eadbehrt (737-758) and Aelfwald (779-788). A coin of Cnut was also found.

Later Medieval Hayton

Land ownership

Hayton (*Haiton*) is mentioned in the Domesday Book; the entries show that most of the settlement was an outlying dependency of the manor of Pocklington, and had belonged to Tostig, (brother of King Harold) and then to Morcar, Earl of Northumbria, at the time of the Norman Conquest. The remainder had been part of arable lands in Burnby, held jointly by Norman and Asa

Norman and Asa's pre-Conquest estate was given to William de Percy. It may have passed to the families of de Bossall (before 1280) and de Holthorp (in 1343), to Robert Stillyngton, Bishop of Bath and Wells in 1468, and was bought in the sixteenth century by the family of Monckton, whose descendant became Lord Galway in the 18th century. The estate stayed in that family until the mid-1800s and its headquarters was either at Low Trenwick, or in the moated manor house which stood opposite what is now the Plough Inn, on the south side of the A1079. Some of the earthworks of this remain upstanding, the rest are only visible as a crop mark. A geophysical survey was also undertaken here in 1998 revealing clear features, indicating activity here earlier than the moat itself.

Other Medieval features

The characteristic corrugated pattern of medieval ploughing (rig and furrow) covered many of the Roman features which all lay forgotten until the rig and furrow was removed by modern ploughing. During the 1998 season, a headland associated with the present line of the road to Burnby, was found to overlie an earlier phase of ridge and furrow cultivation. The furrows continued from those previously encountered south of Burnby Lane, demonstrating that this phase of cultivation predates the present road line.

In 1999 two further medieval features were identified in excavation. A possible pond was cut the edge of the gravel terrace to the south of the site. Again the wet character of this part of the site hampered excavation. A rectangular pit, cutting the top of the Iron Age ditch contained a number of semi-articulated horse vertebrae and ribs. Although no datable artefacts were retrieved from this feature, the large size of the horse remains suggests a post Roman date.

St Martin's Church

The most obvious standing medieval structure is St Martin's Church. There may have been a chapel at Hayton at the time of Domesday, dependent on the mother church at Pocklington, but a stone-built church on the present site was probably not constructed until the reign of Henry I. Pevsner believed the earliest Norman work dates to well before 1170.

The church contains a corbel table of decorated animal heads and rare late medieval wall painting.

The Manor house

A manor house and adjacent water mill on Hayton Beck, were probably built at the same time as the church, following the granting of Hayton to Nigel d'Aubigny (whose descendants took the surname de Mowbray) some time between 1108 and 1115. Hayton was held by the Mowbrays at least until they became Dukes of Norfolk in the late 14th century. The position of Hayton would have made it an important link between their estates in North Lincolnshire and North Yorkshire. Hayton's position halfway along the King's Highway between York and Beverley, Hull and the Humber crossings provided enough custom to support an inn at least as early as 1453, although nothing more is heard of it until 1752, when it is called the Black Bull.

The earthworks marking the site manor can still be seen in the field behind Manor Farm. The whole complex has been surveyed as part of our project. A charter issued by Richard de Moreville mentions the mill, and also two 'ovenams', or intakes, separate from the two open fields - so even at this early date, land that had been waste was being enclosed and brought under cultivation.

The mill

The mill at Hayton – which operated for nearly 800 years, until the 1930s – is mentioned repeatedly in the documents. Its name is first given as “Dune Milne” in 1315, but this had become “Dove Mylne” by 1556 and “Dow Mill” by 1610; the field now called “Dumbhill Ends” in which our excavation is located, was then known as Dow Mell Ings. Earthworks associated with the mill are still apparent and it was likely that Hayton Beck was diverted and partly canalised to supply the water to power the mill.

The Rudston family and the later history of Hayton

Before about 1166, Hayton was held from the Mowbrays by Richard de Moreville, who was connected to one of the important Anglo-Scottish families. He made several grants of land in Hayton to St. Mary's Abbey in York. At a date between 1166 and 1175 he “sub-let” his land in Hayton to Roger de Rudston, and so appeared the first recorded member of the family that was to dominate Hayton for most of the next 750 years. There is insufficient room to recount their colourful family history here, though Hayton played an important part in the great rebellion against Henry VIII, the Pilgrimage of Grace, as Nicholas Rudston was one of the ringleaders.

King Charles 1 visited Hayton on his way to Hull to demand the surrender of the arsenal, one of the events that sparked the English Civil War. In return for his hospitality (and a large forced loan) he created Walter Rudston a Baronet. There is a tradition in the village that a skirmish took place during the Civil War, victims of which are buried in an unmarked grave in the churchyard. A substantial number of musket ball shaves have been found which may relate to this.

It is likely that the Rudston's manor house (commonly called Rudston Manor, was destroyed during the Commonwealth to be replaced at the Restoration by a fine house in the fashionable Dutch style, depicted in a print dating from 1720 which in turn was demolished around 1810.

The old school, now the Village Hall, which was founded by W.H. Rudston-Read, Lord of the Manor of Hayton, close to where the manor house once stood, is the HQ of our summer excavations, and forms a last link with this ancient family.