

**Finds on your Doorstep – 6000 years of life in Appleby - finds recorded on the Portable Antiquities Scheme Database (search for [finds.org.uk](http://finds.org.uk)) – by Martin Foreman, Finds Liaison Officer for North Lincolnshire.**

**Prehistory, from the Neolithic to the end of the Iron Age (4000 BC – AD 43) 5 records**

The Ancholme valley was inaccessible from the end of the Ice Age, 12,000 years ago, and the scarcity of finds reflects this. An arrowhead and axe are both prestigiously well-worked and suggest later Neolithic hunters ventured here, but there is no trace of people living nearby for the next two thousand years. Iron Age pottery from west of the marsh gives a first hint of occupation. A coin of the Corieltavi, the local tribe, may suggest a settlement lay on an ancient route running north to the Humber. But a Kentish coin comes from near the steelworks, so even this isolated community enjoyed wider contacts by 100 BC.

A fine polished axe and an arrowhead were lost in the lonely Ancholme marshes. Much later, an Iron Age settlement was connected by tracks running north to the Humber and west over the heath to Dragonby.



**Neolithic stone axe and flint arrowhead**  
NLM-12BEC1

NLM-D4C5C1

**Iron Age pottery and coins from the margin of the marsh**  
NLM-3F63AC

SWYOR-1F0295

SWYOR-5502F3

**The Roman period (AD 43-410) 58 records including 69 objects**

When the Romans paved the road north from Lincoln, it followed the old route along the edge of the Ancholme marshes to the North-West Frontier of their Empire. At first it led to an Army base at Winteringham; the Romans would only cross the Humber in AD 70. The last day of a march to the end of civilisation passed through Appleby in the late afternoon.

Roman finds are found along the line of Ermine Street. But they also point to traffic on a byway leading to the Trent or to Dragonby, a Celtic ironworking centre now perhaps taken under new management.

Hod Hill brooches arrived with the Army, but most other brooch styles were made and used by Britons. The ‘fantail’ on the last brooch below was probably a Corieltavian preference added to various forms of brooch.



**Hod Hill brooch**  
SWYOR-C45D68

**Others are of native Iron Age styles, and all were made in Britain**  
NLM-B301A6

SWYOR-2C2440

SWYOR-C350A8

Roman coins seem strongly linked to the Roman Army. Those found at Appleby are later than the brooches, and include issues of ‘rebel’ Emperors who defied the central Empire from their Western powerbases.



**Coins from AD 81 to 402: nos 3 and 5 are of rulers who defied the central Empire – Carausius and Magnentius. *Paul the Chain* purged the supporters of Magnentius, ending occupation at many sites**  
 SWYOR-B064F2      SWYOR-7DEDE4      SWYOR-E8E314      SWYOR-2CC054      SWYOR-7CE2C2      SWYOR-142F12      SWYOR-B26F86

## **The Early Anglo-Saxon Period (AD 410-700) (34 records)**

Hired muscle was recruited to prop up the late Roman regimes in Britain. Mercenaries were drawn from peoples beyond the Empire: Angles, Saxons and Jutes. But sub-Roman *tyrants* fell out with their hirelings, and power – which grows from the point of the sword – slipped from master to mercenary.

In very few generations, soldiers became settlers. But they flaunted national costume and customs harking back to the fashions and gods of free *Germania*. For the Angles at Appleby, southern Scandinavia had once been home. Their women – or women they had seized with the land – now dressed *a la* Anglo-Saxon mode.

The Angles of Appleby buried their dead. A burial ground lay near *Santon*, perhaps just outside a little ‘town’ by the sandy heath. Here, Brunhildas or Blodwyns were laid to rest in the dress of tribal matrons.



**Brooches from costumed burials at Santon, and a fragment of a similar brooch from Mickleholme**  
 SWYOR-B90401      SWYOR-B8E3A7      SWYOR-B264E8      SWYOR-B27211      SWYOR-B247A8      SWYOR-E9F4D0

Brooches were worn in pairs or sets on the upper body to fasten a woman’s clothing. Pairs of clasps worked like cuff-links to close the sleeves of their gowns. Dress for the grave matched your station in village life.



**Matching pair of brooches**      **Sleeve clasps from long-sleeved ladies’ garments of Anglian style**  
 SWYOR-B296F6      SWYOR-B28415      SWYOR-B2A835      SWYOR-B96361      SWYOR-B9ACA7      SWYOR-B9BB21      SWYOR-B9FD65      SWYOR-BA9313

Men also dressed in the grave according to their place in daily life. The right to bear weapons was the badge of a free man, so a belt to carry kit, a knife, or the weapons themselves, represented this status at the funeral.



**Spearhead and shield boss - as iron objects are found less often, men's graves *seem* rarer**

SWYOR-7A7F63



SWYOR-B22CA7

### **A warning to the curious...**

Most unusually, and because of its historical importance, the Santon Anglo-Saxon cemetery is now protected as a **Scheduled Ancient Monument**. It is an offence to disturb the ground here further without permission. So, if you see anyone digging about there, remember this is a special place. Politely ask them to leave. And tell the Police. It's your history, so please look after it.

### **The Middle and Later Saxon Periods (700-1066) 23 records**

Finds suggest the Anglian settlers had established a viable community. A reinvention of silver coinage helped trade over longer distances as regional kingdoms allied, competed and combined in the making of England. A range of new dress fittings point to a nationwide culture in which local fashions gave way to an 'English look'.

From AD 669, if haltingly, rulers accepted the Roman Catholic style of the Christian religion. They could now draw on the remembered prestige of Rome to support their rule. Churchmen used writing to help build governments which remembered the laws they passed and the deals they had struck.

The first new silver coins were made by North Sea Frisian traders. Kings took up the innovation as it gave them a grip on economic life, and a handy new means to cash in on their power to tax the work of others.

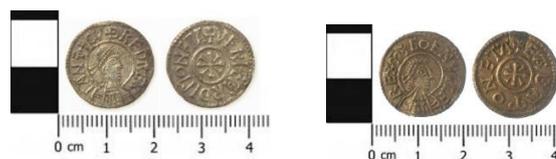


**Frisian silver coins helped kick-start trade**

SWYOR-3A4B52

SWYOR-290A15

NLM-EA1196



**Silver pennies issued by Kings of Kent**

SWYOR-200652

SWYOR-0B56E5

English costume included belts or garters with metal ends to protect and weight them. The pins fixed veils or hair as part of what appear as nun-like costumes worn by women, though made of fine dyed wool and linen.



**Strap ends, early to later forms**

SWYOR-197DD8

SWYOR-7C4718

SWYOR-673F75

SWYOR-BCF5E6

SWYOR-BCE187

SWYOR-6736C5

SWYOR-672BD5

SWYOR-B09717



**Pins for hair or veils, probably earlier to late**

SWYOR-A98A7

Writing might mean a monastery – or just that a lord kept priests to pray for his family and do the books. Vikings liked wealth. But, what was profitable: to pillage the village, or just take it over as a going concern?



**Stylus and decorated fragment**

SWYOR-EA0A26

SWYOR-8EAC71



**Viking decorative mount and buckle**

SWYOR-FEEF24

SWYOR-AC86A7

### What's in a name....?

Low *Santon* sounds like an Anglo-Saxon name, meaning the settlement – *ton* - on the *sandy* heath. Both Anglo-Saxon and Viking finds are found there, but it is an English place-name which survives today.

*Appleby* has the Viking *by* ending: perhaps today's village began as an outlying settlement with an orchard? And a pub serving cider to thirsty travellers?

*Mickleholme* is Viking for *big oak*. However, the only early medieval object reported thereabouts is Early Anglo-Saxon, so that early settlement was perhaps taken over and renamed. Though a pagan Saxon and a pagan Viking might both have respected the same old oak tree, and for very similar religious reasons.

### The Medieval Period (1066-1500) 44 records

Medieval Appleby is represented by finds from its households. Small change was probably accidentally thrown out with rubbish, passing from dustpan to midden to field, and lies around the village, which was where medieval occupation centred. Dress fittings may have been thrown out with soiled clothing, or simply discarded when outmoded.

The landowners of Appleby now included the Chapter of Durham Cathedral. Their village holdings, including the church, were part of a nationwide portfolio of investments. The seal used by a Richard of Appleby to sign a document *c.* 1250 was found in the fields, while the document itself survives at Durham.

Coins make up a record of economic activity. Cut silver pennies – halfpennies and farthings – met the daily or weekly shopping bill. Day-to-day spending peaked in the 1200s, but thereafter the record falls silent.



**Small change from King Richard I to Edward I The last halfpenny is a Scottish coin**

SWYOR-B27A13

SWYOR-956474

SWYOR-88DFE3

SWYOR-8886E5

SWYOR-3DD950

SWYOR-6E9526

SWYOR-D51CF0

SWYOR-F71E84

Two silver-gilt brooches are contemporary with the boom time of the 1200s. Buckles and pendants might bear heraldic emblems. A horse was the preferred means of transport for those who could afford to travel.



### Silver-gilt brooches

SWYOR-857D27 SWYOR-F9EEE2

### Buckle and harness pendants with heraldic motifs

SWYOR-B4EB93 SWYOR-6AAEC5

SWYOR-693B98

### Spur buckle

SWYOR-99D155

Ordinary belt fittings include later types, so we know that life went on even if there was less money about. Spinners' whorls and a thimble show a medieval world of homespun dress-making and make-do-and-mend.



### Buckles and strap ends, dated from early to late

SWYOR-6B3966 NLM-CAA1A7 SWYOR-6B2D08 SWYOR-791ED6 SWYOR-07BA95 SWYOR-54C663 NLM-EBE5D7

### Whorl for spinning and a thimble

SWYOR-6DE545

Ordinary folk knew that papers prove your rights: Richard of Appleby and Alice Daughter of Agnes had seals so they could play the local property market. A locked casket secured deeds and other valuables.



### Richard sealed a deal with the Church – with this seal?

NLM-BE6954

SWYOR-2C3333

### Letter and key from a casket

SWYOR-6345B3

SWYOR-6E73B5