

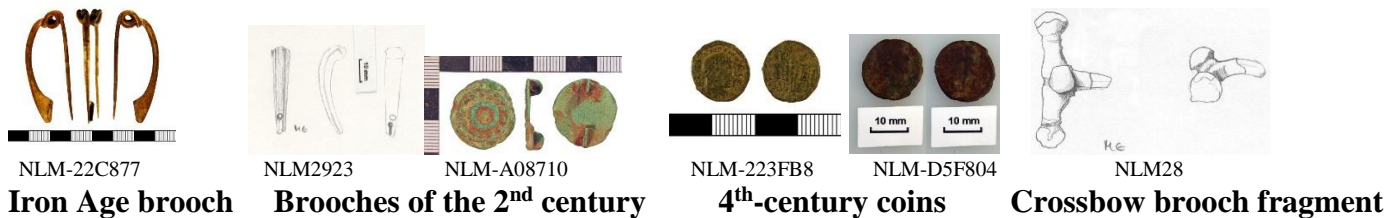
**Finds on your Doorstep – 2,100 years of life in Elsham - finds recorded on the Portable Antiquities Scheme Database (search for [finds.org.uk](http://finds.org.uk)) – by Martin Foreman, Finds Liaison Officer for North Lincolnshire**

**The Late Iron Age and Roman periods (100 BC – AD 410) 16 records**

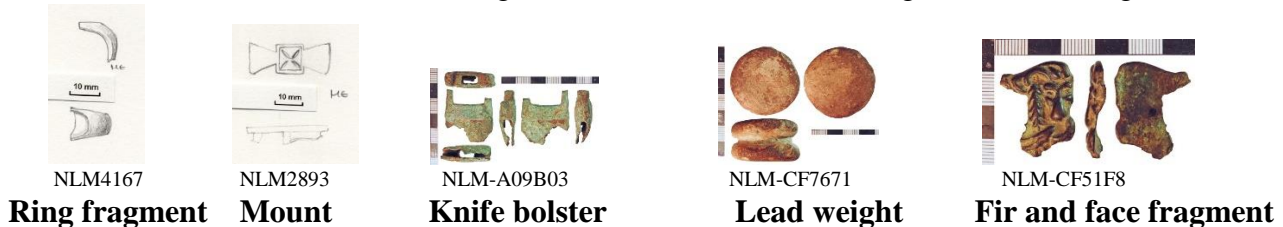
A Late Iron Age brooch from Elsham was considered too good to be true when recorded, because of its remarkable condition. An early (and unillustrated) record of another brooch from the same broad location may, however, confirm a site of contemporary activity.

A few Roman finds are scattered west of Elsham village, with some dateable to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. Coins of the Houses of Constantine and Valentinian point to later Roman occupation. These are accompanied by a crossbow brooch fragment, a type worn as part of late Roman military uniform. This might hint at a context for subsequent Anglo-Saxon activity.

Brooches and coins sketch occupation dated from the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD to the 4<sup>th</sup>. The later coins and a crossbow brooch may together hint at a military or official presence at Elsham in late Roman times.



Other finds point to unlocated occupation from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. A ‘yo-yo’ weight resembles those of cotton reel forms from other Roman sites, though whether it was used as a weight or tied at the groove is unknown.

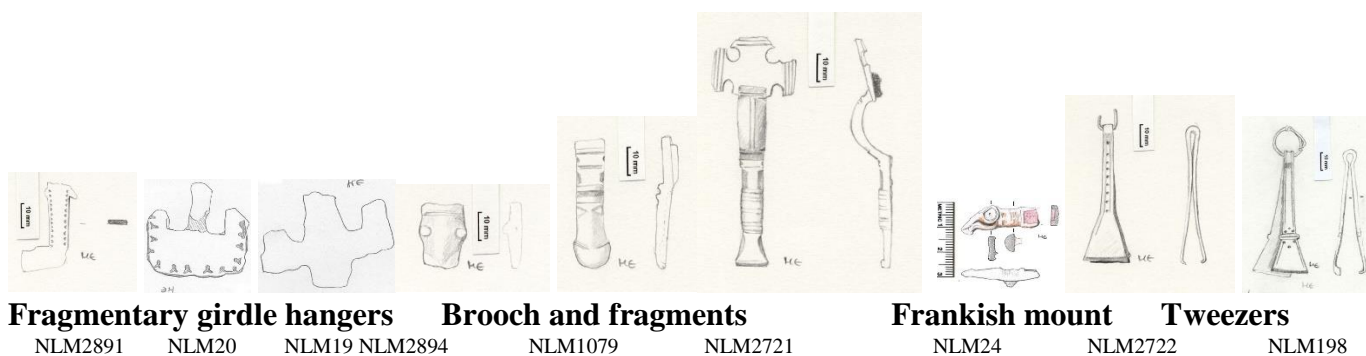


**The Early Medieval period (410-1066) 39 records**

Elsham is the site of one of the major Anglo-Saxon cremation cemeteries of Lindsey. These were distributed so as to suggest organisation under late or sub-Roman authorities based in Lincoln, and perhaps marked mercenary garrisons. Sketchy records suggest the discovery of contemporary objects north of the village – at some remove from the excavated cemetery site.

This activity may have related to the course of Middlegate Lane. Finds, particularly pins, point to a later Christian English occupation, and its Viking and Anglo-Scandinavian successors. A comparable Viking pin-type is associated in East Yorkshire with settlement of members of their Great Army in the 870s.

Girdle hanger and brooch fragments may mark disturbed graves of women buried in Anglian costume according to a Germanic rite. Tweezers might accompany contemporary male burials, or may be later.

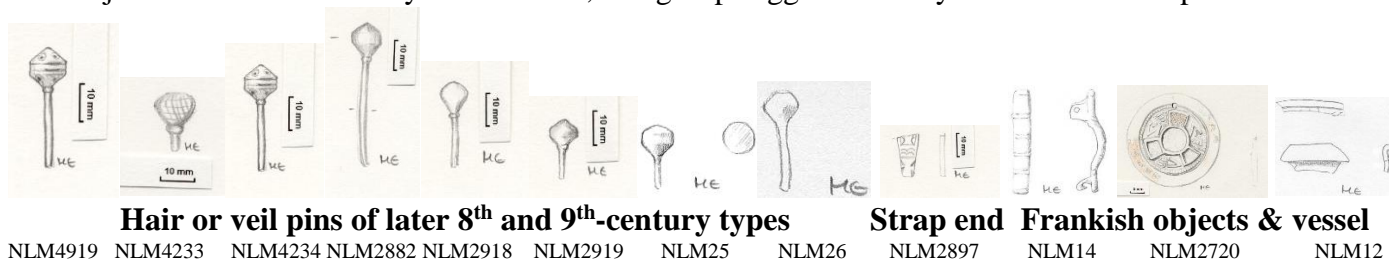


### **The Early Medieval period (410-1066) continued**

The Middle Saxon period saw Conversion engender a Christian English culture shared by rival kingdoms. An oddly slanted assemblage from this period includes many pins from womens' coiffure, a single strap end fragment, and objects of Frankish affinity or origin. This Continental connection was also observed among earlier Anglo-Saxon finds.

Some late Saxon objects were used by Vikings, but strap ends suited to sword belts are of Scandinavian Borre style. Pins of racket-headed form are a type developed among Viking settlers from the Great Army. In turn, Conversion of Vikings promoted an Anglo-Scandinavian society where Christianity met a northern heritage.

Pins and a strap end of late 8<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup>-century styles form an unbalanced Middle Saxon assemblage, along with objects of Frankish affinity. As it stands, this group suggests activity in which women predominated.



**Hair or veil pins of later 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>-century types**

**Strap end Frankish objects & vessel**

Tags may be Saxon or Viking. A form of hair or veil pin associated with Viking settlers in East Yorkshire appears alongside Borre style strap ends from broad belts, with whorls suggesting work with cord or textile.



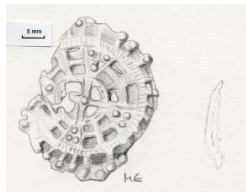
**Hooked tags**

**Viking pin**

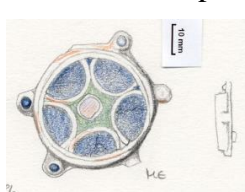
**Strap end fragments**

**Lead spindle whorls**

Anglo-Scandinavian culture set elements of Viking styles alongside the Anglo-Saxon. Though Elsham was in the Danelaw, two out of the three brooches ascribed to this period are of English styles rather than Viking.



**Viking Borre-style brooch from York**  
NLM395



**Saxon enamelled brooch**  
NLM398



**A cheaper lead brooch**  
NLM396

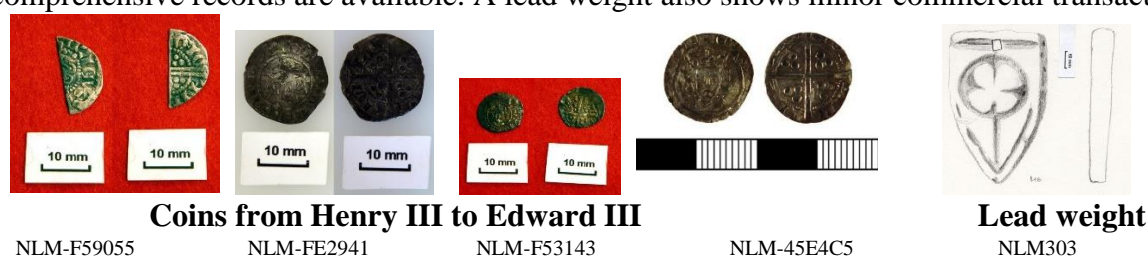
### What's in a name?

*Elsham* is thought to mean *the settlement of Elli*, a personal name, and appears as *Eleham* in Domesday Book. The place-name *Ella* is also common in East Yorkshire, where it is often associated with elder trees. It may there refer to estates held by an Anglo-Saxon king named *Aelle* or *Ella*.

## The Medieval period (1066-1500): 60 records

Medieval objects are recorded as coming from north-west of the village of Elsham, and are presumed to have been spread along with domestic rubbish used to manure fields. A very few coins come from the 13<sup>th</sup> – century heyday of economic life, along with a weight for small transactions in bulky goods. Seal matrices made to enable peasants to engage in transactions, probably concerning land, may be contemporary. The most numerous objects are buckles or other strap fittings, and most of these appear to be of later medieval date. Pilgrim badge fragments may relate to traffic on Middlegate Lane, perhaps to Walsingham.

Coins provide a skeletal record of economic activity which broadly conforms with that observed where more recent and comprehensive records are available. A lead weight also shows minor commercial transactions.



**Coins from Henry III to Edward III**

NLM-F59055

NLM-FE2941

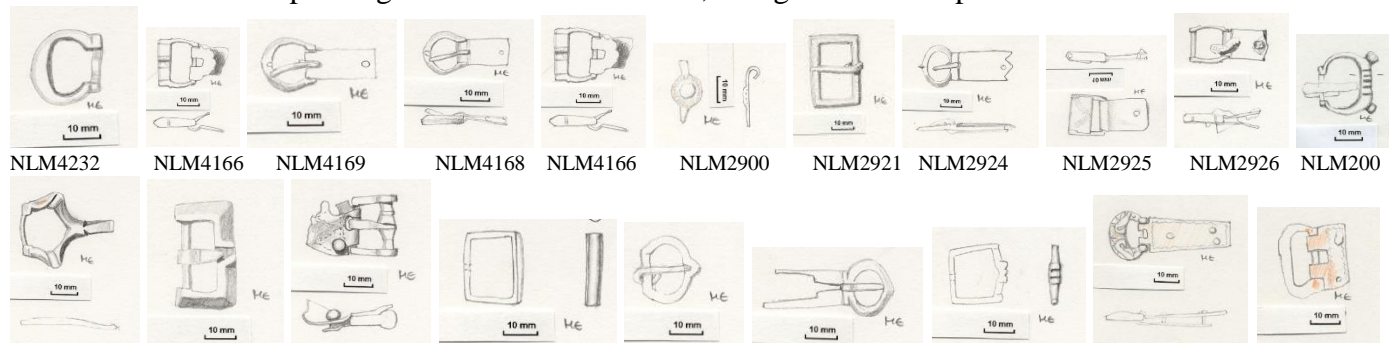
NLM-F53143

NLM-45E4C5

**Lead weight**

NLM303

Most buckles and strap fittings are dated to after 1300, though a later composite construction is uncommon.



**Buckles and strap loops: frames were usually one-piece castings and of single looped forms**

NLM2883

NLM2884

NLM2886

NLM2888

NLM2889

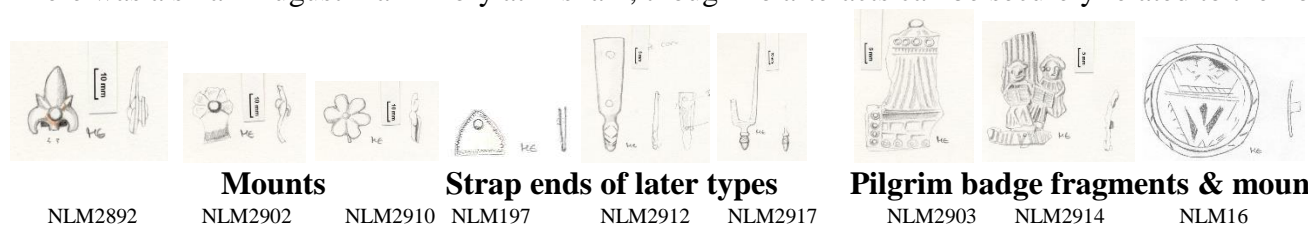
NLM2890

NLM2887

NLM2724

NLM2725

Mounts and strap ends include mainly later medieval types, as with the buckles. Pilgrim badges may relate to Marian devotion, and a mount bears a crowned VV, which is also a motif associated with Walsingham. There was a small Augustinian Priory at Elsham, though no artefacts can be securely related to the house.



**Mounts**

**Strap ends of later types**

**Pilgrim badge fragments & mount**

NLM2892

NLM2902

NLM2910

NLM197

NLM2912

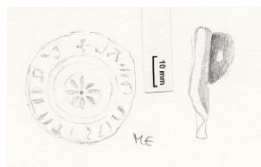
NLM2917

NLM2903

NLM2914

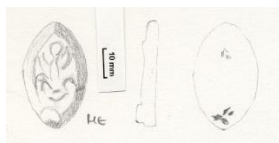
NLM16

Seal matrices prepared to enable commoners to participate in business. Only the first was completed: the others are a lead blank awaiting inscription, and one with only crude scratches where this should appear.



**Personal seal matrix, a blank and a crudely marked version**

NLM2726



NLM2915



NLM2916