

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

Prehistory: Neolithic to Iron Age 4000BC- AD 43 (41 records)

Prehistoric finds appear zoned, with both Neolithic and Bronze Age objects whose quality or exotic nature may have conferred status on their owners found to the east. Some were perhaps placed in sites overlooking the Ancholme Valley or other marshy areas. As Ermine Street follows the marsh edge, it may perpetuate an older route. More workaday flint tools were found to the west of Winterton, in fields approaching the Lincoln Edge, suggesting contemporary occupation of the higher land. Iron Age finds suggest continued occupation of this land between rivers, with a coin from the South of Britain the most unusual discovery.

Finely worked Neolithic objects occur to the east; and ordinary flint working debris and tools to the west. Both groups may be dated to the mid-to-late- Neolithic, when flint objects might furnish notable graves.



Bronze Age tools and flint-working waste appear around Winterton itself. This may suggest settlement was sited on higher drier land between the Ancholme valley to the east and the Lincoln Edge to the west.



The poor condition of Middle Bronze Age (1800-1100 BC) spearheads belies the possible significance of their find-spots, with two overlooking a dip south of Winterringham, and two from just west of Ermine Street. In these situations, the objects appear to have been placed close to encroaching wetland margins.



Iron Age finds suggest a focus suggested by Bronze Age metal tools remained active. Late Iron Age Coins from south of the village include gold and silver issues of the Corieltavi. There was also a coin of the Atrebat, a Home Counties tribe led by Verica, a Roman client, which presumably arrived via the Humber.

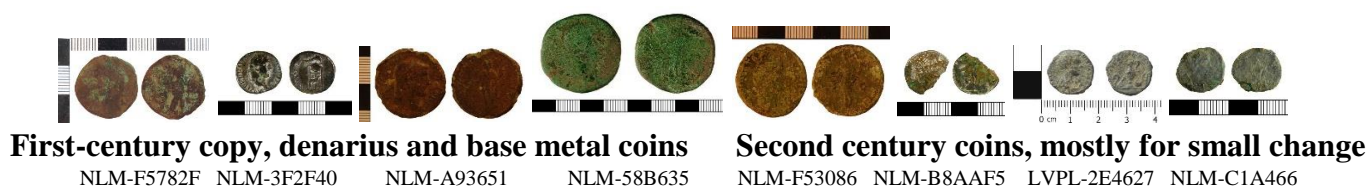


The Roman period (AD 43-410) (126 records)

Roman finds from Winterton might originate from continuing occupation of pre-existing settlements, or from the sites of new villas overlooking the Winterton Beck, and at Roxby. The Winterton villa has seen formal excavation, revealing 4th-century mosaics which highlight its importance in the late Roman period. Roxby's villa had a pottery industry.

The Winterton mosaics rehearsed themes which appear to have been close to the hearts of a local elite, and which also appear in the mosaics of Horkstow, on the opposite side of the Ancholme Valley. Under a later Roman system of delegated local government, these may have been twinned power-centres.

Early Roman coins include types in common use at the Winterringham Army camp, and more of small values or base metal than of good silver. These may have circulated among Romanised or collaborative Britons.



Brooches include a mixed range of types, including forms favoured by the Corieltauvi – the bow and fantail and 'East Midlands enamelled'. The first from Ermine Street(*) is early, but the rest probably 2nd-century.



Brooches were found near burials at Simonswood, which probably lay outside contemporary settlement; Roman custom required graves be dug away from areas used by the living. Brooches found here were near-complete: one is Corieltauvian, one silvered, and one gilt; the surface finish reflecting military taste or rank.



Roman lifestyle accessories from the west perhaps originated from the villa site. An enamelled bowl may be a souvenir; while Samian tableware, amphora, furniture fittings and board games suggest living in comfort. Roman potsherds from the Roxby kilns were also recorded at the south-west corner of Winterton village.



The Roman period (AD 43-410) (continued)

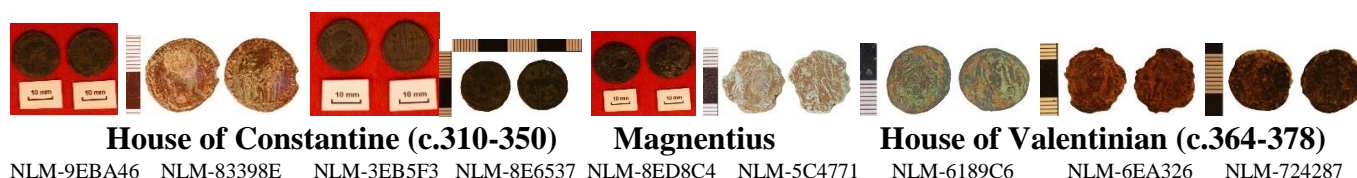
The Late Roman period saw indications of status at the Winterton villa with new mosaics laid. A high-status burial in a stone coffin was discovered alongside Top Street, and is best associated with its later occupation. As a burial ground, this may have continued to the end of the Roman period and beyond.

Late Roman coins appear in modest quantities. Those of the mid-3rd century include more Central Empire issues than of the separatist Gallic Empire. The House of Constantine, also represented by a hoard of 330-341 from the latest phase of the villa's bath house, appears, as do coins of the House of Valentinian.

Radiate coins may suggest busy times under the Central Empire, but less activity during separatist rule.



Coins from fields and excavations suggest villa life flourished up to the mid-4th century, though a Roman presence continued thereafter. A coin of Magnentius was lost in the 350s, before his *Damnatio* as a rebel.



Roman beads from the south-west corner of Winterton may come from furnished Late Roman burials which accompanied a stone-coffin burial on Top Street. Recent fieldwork has revealed burials near Simonswood.



The Early Anglo-Saxon period (410-700) 6 records

Anglo-Saxons were recruited as mercenaries to defend regimes based on places like Winterton's villa. Objects from Top Street and the south-west corner of Winterton may show where their graves have been ploughed out: brooches and a bead suggest costumed burials of women observing Anglian custom. Roman graves lay nearby, though these were at least a century earlier, so old burial grounds may have been re-visited. An Anglian potsherd from Simonswood may hint at renewed re-use of that cemetery too, implying that whoever now used Winterton's Roman cemeteries knew where they lay, and what they were for, and chose to do so.

Anglo-Saxon grave goods have been reported from near where a Roman coffin was found. Others are ill-located, not having been recognised at the time of discovery, and may come from elsewhere in Winterton.

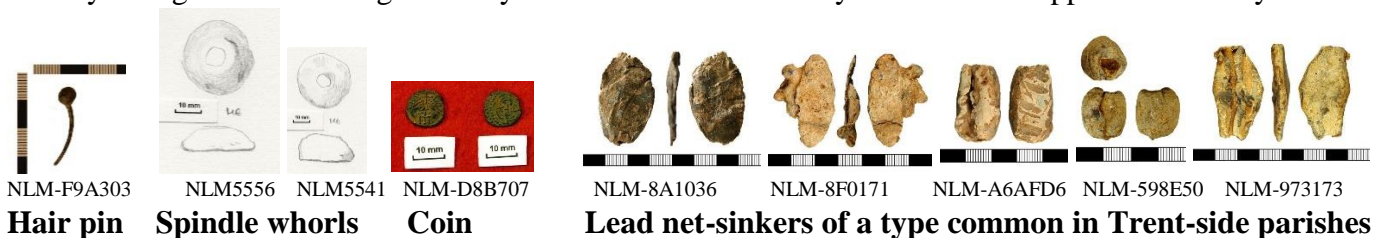


The Middle Saxon and Viking periods (AD 700-1066) 26 records

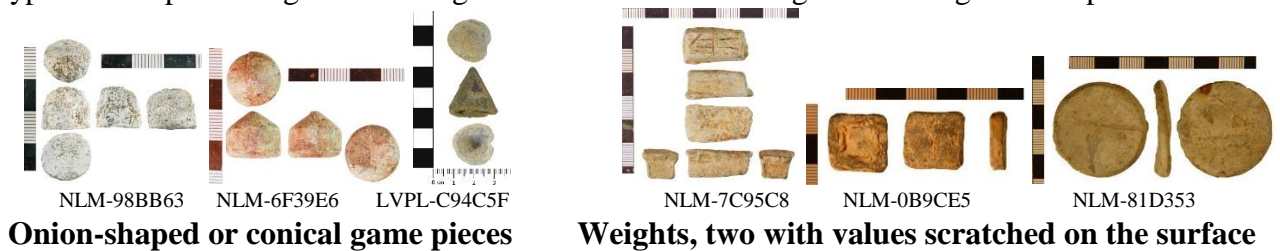
Middle Saxon (700-850) finds confirm English occupation was established by that time. Net-sinkers and spindle whorls may point to functions ancillary to some nearby centre: perhaps Flixborough or West Halton. Winterton's fishermen used techniques popular along the lower Trent valley.

A Viking presence may be marked by game pieces and weights. The former may point to a lord with leisure to play; the latter were necessary for his economic participation in a world where bullion transactions had replaced the use of coins. Conversion to Christianity produced an Anglo-Scandinavian culture where Catholic faith sat side by side with northern pagan heritage.

A hairpin and whorls show the presence and domestic work of women, while a coin indicates economic activity. Weights from fishing nets may hint at a service economy dedicated to support of a nearby centre.



Board games were played by both Saxon and Dane, but the forms of these pieces most closely resemble Viking types. Some plain weights of Viking date bear surface markings confirming their suspected values.



Pyramidal Norse bells are a form used for both farm animals and on horse-gear, as is also represented by decorated stirrups. Whorls fitted a thicker Viking spindle, while brooches match types known from London as well as locally. Their designs sometimes paraded the Christian affiliation of enthusiastic Viking converts.



What's in a name?

Winterton was named for an Anglo-Saxon named Winta, meaning *Winta's town*. This was perhaps the same person as is commemorated at neighbouring Winteringham, which means *the town of the people of Winta*. Together, they may imply a narrow estate bounded by the Humber to the north, the Ancholme Valley to the East, and the Lincoln Edge to the west. The place-name survived the Viking settlement, so, though divided, its name, and presumably people who recognised and used it, survived.

The Medieval period (1066-1500) 117 records

Medieval finds are distributed as if originating from Winterton, with only a single object reported from the further (eastern) side of Ermine Street. Coins suggest Winterton's medieval heyday to have been in the 13th and 14th centuries, and that they were mostly used in small transactions. Other finds conform to this trend; of these, nearly half are related to dress. Costly household equipment such as metal cauldrons was rare, and weighing equipment for shop or kitchen absent.

Other objects include horse-gear and pilgrim souvenirs, including examples from Walsingham and Ketsby, which may point to holidays or to other traffic along Ermine Street.

Medieval coins demonstrate an early abundance of small cut pennies used in day-to-day transactions. Later round halfpennies and farthings suggest similar activity up to 1400, but coins of higher values do not appear.



Medieval coins from Henry II to Richard II, with smaller denominations predominating throughout

NLM-DCF21B NLM-B3C72B NLM-E5C342 NLM-394952 NLM-1E53C6 NLM-5849E0 NLM-9B4A31 DENO-918963 NLM-1EA2CA

Simple cast buckle frames are the most common. Buckles from Winterton span the 13th to 16th centuries.



Medieval one-piece buckle frames which might be locally made were the most common types

NLM-5C3D97 NLM-39EC86 NLM-CCB813 LM-70D539 NLM-70C72A NLM-70BC6C NLM-1EBD27 NLM-B6DD78 NLM-A1E634

Other strap fittings are mostly of later medieval date, with an apparent preference for simple rounded forms.



Mounts for belts or straps

NLM-C80095 NLM-844031 NLM-7CA0A4 NLM-6E8B66 NLM5539

Strap loops

NLM5538

Strap end

NLM-A2D562

Metal vessels were rare, and of these, one had been mended. Padlocks and keys show concern with security while thimbles suggest sewing or mending at home. These finds suggest only a modest level of prosperity.



Vessel fragments, the last mended

NLM-EF0817 NLM-D579F8 NLM-02BD74

Padlocks

NLM-70E3C5 NLM-DA7237

Keys for chests

NLM-9AF3B4 NLM5546

Thimbles

NLM-CA77DB NLM-2DBB64

Horse pendants include heraldic and religious motifs. Pilgrim badges suggest travel to Ketsby, Lincolnshire; and to Walsingham and Bromholm in Norfolk: all were journeys begun from Winterton along Ermine Street.



The Post-Medieval period (1500-1700) 89 records

Post-Medieval coins may suggest economic recovery under the Tudors, silver coins appearing at Winterton for the first time in over a century. Objects were recorded from all around the town, with those east of Ermine Street indicating occupation along Holme Lane began in the early 17th century. Finds dated up to 1700 cluster around Winterton itself, with few beyond the Lincoln Edge.

Dress accessories remain prominent. Animal bells hint at conversion of arable to pasture, and lead whorls to a new cottage industry. Whether they were related remains uncertain, as the same broad dating is suggested for both categories of object.

Tudor and Stuart coins from Winterton included halfgroats or larger denominations. They mark the end of a period - from 1400 to 1520 - which produced no silver coins, at least among finds reported from the parish.



Silver coins of monarchs from Henry VIII to Charles I (1509-1649), most are of multiple values

Mounts with prongs were probably attached to leather, or to leather and textile sword-hangers. Buttons appear amongst smaller dress fasteners, most being small and plain: these may have been lost from clothing.



A limited range of buckles appears. Dress hooks, and cheaper cast one-piece versions, are more common finds. Composite versions appear in contemporary pictures, but the purpose of the simpler forms is unclear.



Animal bells may indicate that parts of Winterton had been converted from arable to pasture. Though lead whorls are ascribed to the same broad date-range as the bells, they may have been too heavy to spin a yarn. They may have been used to spin thick fibres for a coarse woollen fabric, or for plying cord to make rope.



NLM-8CEC21



NLM-28D9A6



NLM-65B476



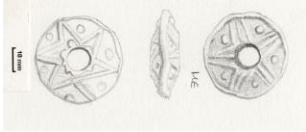
NLM-EE9715



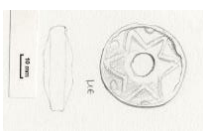
NLM-DCE8BD

Fragments of spherical bells, with a single complete example

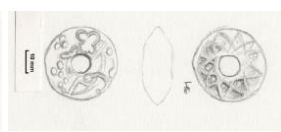
Open bell fragments



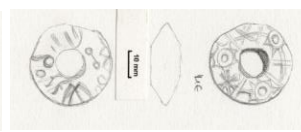
NLM5533



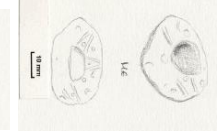
NLM5534



NLM5535



NLM5536



NLM5542

Lead spindle whorls with line and pellet decoration; the last was perhaps a homemade copy