

All is Revealed

It was a beautiful afternoon, the sun was shining from the West but shadows had not lengthened and there was still the prospect of a lovely evening. It was low tide on the river and the brown mud stretched as a broad band beside the water. It was spring and in the village the pink and white cherry blossom was decorating the trees and showing Goxhill at its best. Thus it was when Google Earth captured the images for the latest update of its coverage of Goxhill.

We know from all of this that it was probably late April or early May. The Oil Seed Rape was just coming into flower and so the farmers will be able to tell us in which year it was grown in that particular field. Some of us will see other clues, the colour of a new car, new building, or a newly planted lawn or allotment. My own guess is that it was 2008 just one year ago.

Now this offers wonderful opportunities for looking over the fence at our neighbours and the detail that can be seen is quite alarming but there are better things that can be done than looking at Mrs Wot-sit's laundry. Although we see Goxhill more or less as it is at present we can do a little Archaeology and go back a few hundred years. We shall not need a shovel or a trowel nor shall we need the assistance of the famous Time Team just you and I using Google Earth will do some Arial Archaeology

I want you to go to Google Earth and travel to Goxhill and join me on Bridge Hill. Set the Eye Level at about 200 feet and we will begin.

The road over the railway bridge is the highest piece of road surface in the village and we can see

the cut for the line on either side of Ferry Road.

If we travel northwards along the road we can see dark and lighter markings in the grass of the fields on both sides of the road. This is the ridge and furrow of the old Mill field. Before Goxhill was divided up into fields owned by individual farmers there were four big arable fields and each person was allotted one or more strips of land in each field. These strips were ploughed individually with a single furrow plough pulled by oxen and or horses. By ploughing up one side and down the other side of the strip the soil was cast up to the middle where it formed the ridge and between the strips was the furrow.

When the land was enclosed the owners of these fields put them down to grass and used them to keep animals. The ridges and furrows remained in the fields and we can see them today. Those on one side of the road exactly match the ones on the other side. Ferry Road was made at the time of the enclosure and cut right through the ridge and furrow of the old open field.

A little further along in the next field on the village side of the road the end pieces of the ridges or lands are curved. They are called S lands and can be found in many parts of England. This was caused by swinging the team of horses or oxen out of the furrow before turning round the end of the ridge. The furrow and baulk across the ends of the ridges was the headland this was used when there were no roads by all of the people to get to their own strips with their animals and implements and to carry away the harvest.

If we travel further along Ferry

Road past the end of Willow Lane we come to a most interesting field on the right. It is full of bumps and hollows there are some ridges and furrows running at a right angle to those which we saw at first. This is much earlier because we know that this field was already divided into private closes before the enclosure. Fortunately one piece had to be allotted in the enclosure act. This was awarded to Cathleen Trower and the owners of each of the closes adjoining hers are named. The large dark marks are hollows which follow the boundaries of these closes. Cathleen Trower's award was the large square piece next to Meadow Close the piece running alongside Willow Lane belonged to William Keeling. Mr Markham owned the close alongside Ferry Road Mr Burwell had a close in the corner whilst Mr Markham owned the close and homestead in Mill Lane. Cathleen Trower had a narrow access track at the end of William Keeling's close where Meadow Close joins Willow Lane and the name of her close was Green Close.

Ariel archaeology can be found in many places in Goxhill and some of it can be seen on Google Maps. Most of what can be seen requires much more advanced interpretation than I can give. Because the enclosure of the village is so well documented it is possible learn a lot by comparing the written evidence with the pictures on screen. Do have a look and see what you can find.

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