

**SCHOLARLY AND PUBLIC HISTORIES: A CASE STUDY OF  
LINCOLNSHIRE, AGRICULTURE, AND MUSEUMS.**

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## Abstract

This thesis is an exploration of the complex relationship between academic, popular and museum histories. A central theme to the research is that nostalgia currently keeps these categories of history quite separate from one another, as academic historians are critical of the use of nostalgia in presenting the past, whereas popular histories are often steeped in nostalgia, as are historical narratives presented in museums. I argue that nostalgia and nostalgic sources should not be viewed as problematic by historians, but embraced simply as another type of historical source. Popular histories, rich in nostalgia, and often reliant on memories should also be considered more favourably by academics as they serve to engage people with historical narratives as both contributors and consumers. The inclusion of nostalgic sources, such as memoirs and oral histories, in historical narratives can also result in the production of new or relative histories, which enrich the historical past presented to us, and open up fresh debates on well covered topics. Nor is nostalgia problematic in museums as it helps visitors relate to, and understand, the stories presented to them. Nostalgia can also motivate people to donate objects to museums, and therefore to have an active role in how the past is represented within museums. Once again this serves to produce a more complex narrative for the visitor that can broaden our understanding of the past.

These ideas are presented through two case studies of agricultural change in Lincolnshire between 1850 and 1980, and a case study of museums in the county. The historical narratives were produced using a range of primary and secondary sources, including oral histories and memoirs. The inclusion of non-

traditional sources aided in the production of new accounts of changes in the labour patterns of women and children, and of increased mechanisation during the period. Both chapters reposition agricultural modernity in history, demonstrating that the shift from traditional to modern practices did not occur immediately after World War Two, but over a period of 30 years from the 1930s to the 1960s.

The museological case study explores how the past is represented in museums and the factors that shape this. Museums in Lincolnshire were surveyed, and professionals working in them were interviewed, to ascertain how they present historical narratives around agricultural changes, and how nostalgia relates to this. It was found that nostalgia had very little impact on how the past was presented in the museums, but the processes of donation and collection, the lack of specialist knowledge in the sector, and external political factors had a significant impact on the presentation of the past in these institutions.

The thesis argues that those involved with academic, popular, and museum histories should work collaboratively to explore ways of incorporating nostalgic sources into historical narratives to develop new interpretations of the past. They should also work in partnership to move away from the traditional museological 'nostalgia debate' to resolve the issues that currently affect how the past is presented in museums.

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I would also like to thank Catherine Wilson OBE who first introduced me to Lincolnshire's agricultural history; her passion for, and knowledge of the subject has inspired me throughout the course of my research. I am also grateful to Ruth Walker from whom I learnt a tremendous amount in a short period of time whilst working at Church Farm Museum.

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## Introduction

This thesis is about the relationship between academic, popular, and museum histories, and the role that nostalgia plays in keeping these categories separate; I argue that these categories of history need to come together, and nostalgia should not be seen as a barrier to that process.

The term nostalgia has strong negative connotations associated with it, which have prevailed until relatively recently. The word is 'pseudo-greek, or nostalgically greek',<sup>1</sup> derived from 'nostos, to return home, and algia, painful condition',<sup>2</sup> and was coined by the Swiss Physician Johannes Hofer in 1688 in relation to 'extreme homesickness', or melancholia, witnessed in mercenary soldiers at the time.<sup>3</sup> The word nostalgia, then, was originally medical rather than philosophical, literary, or political.<sup>4</sup> In fact, nostalgia was considered a psychiatric disorder that whilst curable,<sup>5</sup> could be debilitating or even fatal from the seventeenth century until the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>6</sup>

Whilst its original meaning and context changed during the mid-twentieth century it became to be recognised as a sentimental 'yearning for the past'<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Boym, S., "Nostalgia and its Discontents", *The Hedgehog Review*, Summer 2007, pp 7 – 18, p 7.

<sup>2</sup> Davis, F., *Yearning for Yesterday* (New York: Free Press, 1979), p 1. Pickering, M. and Keightley, E., "The Modalities of Nostalgia", *Current Sociology*, Vol 54, No 6, November 2006, pp 919 – 949. Boym, S., "Nostalgia and its Discontents", *The Hedgehog Review*, Summer 2007, pp 7 – 18.

<sup>3</sup> Davis, F., *Yearning for Yesterday* (New York: Free Press, 1979).

<sup>4</sup> Boym, S., "Nostalgia and its Discontents", *The Hedgehog Review*, Summer 2007, pp 7 – 18.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Irenebatcho, K., "Personal Nostalgia, World View, Memory, and Emotionality", *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, Vol 87, pp 411 – 432.

<sup>7</sup> Pascal, V.J., Spratt, D.E. and Muehling, D.E., "The Influence of evoked nostalgia on Consumers' Responses to Advertising; An Exploratory Study", *Journal of Current Issues and*

(rather than for a place)<sup>8</sup> not just on a personal level,<sup>9</sup> but also a societal one,<sup>10</sup> particularly in relation to consumerism.<sup>11</sup> It also remained to be understood negatively as the antithesis to progress a 'backward looking stance' of sorts,<sup>12</sup> as 'reactionary, sentimental, or melancholic', and 'a response to the experience of loss endemic in modernity and late modernity'.<sup>13</sup> The notion of nostalgia being a yearning for the past either by individuals or groups developed further during the twentieth century as it came to be understood as the desire for an idealised, or mythical, version of a period in time or historical event, at the expense of the present, which has only intensified as social and cultural change have accelerated.<sup>14</sup>

By the late twentieth century nostalgia had become synonymous with the so called 'heritage debate' as it was used as 'a critical tool to interrogate the articulation of the past in the present, and in particular, to investigate sentimentality inflected mediated representations of the past'.<sup>15</sup> During the 1980s and early 1990s Chase and Lowenthal both argued extensively that nostalgia should be regarded negatively by historians because of its role in

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*Research in Advertising*, Vol 24, No 1, Spring, 2002, pp 39 – 47, p 39. Davis, F., *Yearning for Yesterday* (New York: Free Press, 1979). Pickering, M. and Keightley, E., "The Modalities of Nostalgia", *Current Sociology*, Vol 54, No 6, November 2006, pp 919 – 949, p 919.

<sup>8</sup> Boym, S., "Nostalgia and its Discontents", *The Hedgehog Review*, Summer 2007, pp 7 – 18. Pickering, M. and Keightley, E., "The Modalities of Nostalgia", *Current Sociology*, Vol 54, No 6, November 2006, pp 919 – 949.

<sup>9</sup> Spalding, J., *The Poetic Museum: Reviving Historic Collections* (London: Prestel, 2002).

<sup>10</sup> Davis, F., *Yearning for Yesterday* (New York: Free Press, 1979).

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. Pascal, V.J., Sprott, D.E. and Muehling, D.E., "The Influence of evoked nostalgia on Consumers' Responses to Advertising; An Exploratory Study", *Journal of Current Issues and Research in Advertising*, Vol 24, No 1, Spring, 2002, pp 39 – 47, p 39. Baer, A., "Consuming History and Memory Through Mass Media Products", *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, Vol 4, 2001, pp 491 – 501.

<sup>12</sup> Pickering, M. and Keightley, E., "The Modalities of Nostalgia", *Current Sociology*, Vol 54, No 6, November 2006, pp 919 – 949, p 920.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Pickering, M. and Keightley, E., "The Modalities of Nostalgia", *Current Sociology*, Vol 54, No 6, November 2006, pp 919 – 949, p 922. Brisbane, M. and Wood, J., *A Future for our Past: An Introduction to Heritage Studies* (Swindon: English Heritage, 1996).

creating an imagined, or mythical, bygone age that did not reflect the unpleasant realities of life in the past.<sup>16</sup> At the same time their contemporary Hewison critiqued the heritage industry, arguing that in terms of public history the past was presented in nostalgic packages which only served to trivialise and sanitise it.<sup>17</sup> Whilst these arguments were largely accepted they were also challenged; in *Theatres of Memory: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture* Samuel stated that nostalgia was treated by the critics of heritage in the 1980s and 1990s as ‘a contemporary equivalent of what Marxists used to call ‘false consciousness’ and existentialists ‘bad faith’’,<sup>18</sup> suggesting that this critical tool was used to emphasise aspects of nostalgia perceived to be negative by academics such as Hewison, Lowenthal, and Chase and Shaw.<sup>19</sup> This focus on the negative also suggests a lack of appreciation for the development of a multifaceted understanding of nostalgia and in the ‘complex set of processes involved in publicly representing, consuming and understanding the past’.<sup>20</sup> Nor did these critiques recognise the power of nostalgia to democratise the past, and enrich our understanding of it, as lauded by Samuel and championed by

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<sup>16</sup> Chase, M., “Nostalgia”, Conference Papers, *History Workshop*, 20, p 26. Lowenthal, D., *The Past is a Foreign Country*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985). Chase, M. and Shaw, C., “The Dimensions of Nostalgia”, *The Imagined Past: History and Nostalgia*, Chase, M. and Shaw, C. (eds) (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989), pp 1 – 18. Lowenthal, D., “Nostalgia Tells it Like it Wasn’t”, *The Imagined Past: History and Nostalgia*, Chase, M. and Shaw, C. (eds) (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989), pp 18 – 33.

<sup>17</sup> Hewison, R., *The Heritage Industry: Britain in a Climate of Decline* (London: Methuen, 1987).

<sup>18</sup> Samuel, R., *Theatres of Memory: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture*, Volume 1 (London: Verso Books, 1996), p 17.

<sup>19</sup> Chase, M., “Nostalgia”, Conference Papers, *History Workshop*, 20, p 26. Lowenthal, D., *The Past is a Foreign Country*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985). Chase, M. and Shaw, C., “The Dimensions of Nostalgia”, *The Imagined Past: History and Nostalgia*, Chase, M. and Shaw, C. (eds) (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989), pp 1 – 18. Lowenthal, D., “Nostalgia Tells it Like it Wasn’t”, *The Imagined Past: History and Nostalgia*, Chase, M. and Shaw, C. (eds) (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989), pp 18 – 33. Hewison, R., *The Heritage Industry: Britain in a Climate of Decline* (London: Methuen, 1987).

<sup>20</sup> Pickering, M. and Keightley, E., “The Modalities of Nostalgia”, *Current Sociology*, Vol 54, No 6, November 2006, pp 919 – 949, p 927 - 928.

oral history projects, social history museums, and local history groups.<sup>21</sup> It is argued in this work that nostalgia is a far more complex process than suggested by earlier critiques, and that whilst it has led people to believe that the shift from traditional to modern agriculture took place in 1945, it has also offered a way to refute this claim. Nostalgia is therefore not necessarily problematic in relation to the representation of the past, as often assumed.

Whilst it is acknowledged that Chase, Lowenthal, and Hewison's debates were pertinent in the 1980s and the early 1990s this work seeks to reassess these arguments for the twenty first century. It seeks to re-examine the problem in light of more twenty first century interpretations of nostalgia, which have led to more complex and less negative explanations by historians and sociologists. Much like historians such as Samuel,<sup>22</sup> sociologists Pickering and Keightley have explored the way in which nostalgia has become strongly associated with individual and collective social and cultural memory, and its functions as 'a way of attempting to explain how memories are generated, altered, shared and legitimated with particular sociocultural environments'.<sup>23</sup> In 2007 'writer, theorist, and media artist'<sup>24</sup> Boym described nostalgia as 'an historical emotion',<sup>25</sup> suggesting further evolution in the understanding of the term. Nostalgia is understood in this thesis to represent an emotion, or cognitive process, that

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<sup>21</sup> Samuel, R., *Theatres of Memory: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture*, Volume 1 (London: Verso Books, 1996).

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Pickering, M. and Keightley, E., "The Modalities of Nostalgia", *Current Sociology*, Vol 54, No 6, November 2006, pp 919 – 949, p 922. Boym, S., "Nostalgia and its Discontents", *The Hedgehog Review*, Summer 2007, pp 7 – 18.

<sup>24</sup> Boym, S., *About Svetlana Boym*, online. Available from: <http://www.svetlanaboym.com/about.htm>. [Accessed 28th May 2013].

<sup>25</sup> Boym, S., "Nostalgia and its Discontents", *The Hedgehog Review*, Summer 2007, pp 7 – 18, p 8.

people engage in to make sense of the world in which they live;<sup>26</sup> the 'past (however defined) provides a perspective on the present, a means to understand and make sense of it'.<sup>27</sup> In relation to museums and heritage it is understood as the way in which visitors create or build a connection with the historical narratives presented to them through objects and interpretation.<sup>28</sup>

This thesis argues that nostalgia is not as problematic in history and museology today because it has become a vehicle for engagement with the past for a large proportion of the population of Britain. Nostalgia has, in fact, led to people from a diverse range of backgrounds to become both major contributors to, and consumers of, history. The positive impact of nostalgia as motivation for engaging with narrative and public histories is that these new contributors have been able to offer diverse perspectives on the past through collection methods such as oral history,<sup>29</sup> which is often criticised for its nostalgic leanings; and the desire to consume a nostalgic past in a museum context has ensured the continuation of historical narratives that might otherwise be lost. Therefore, historians and museum professionals now need to move away from debates surrounding the pitfalls of nostalgia in academic and public history to concentrate on other factors that influence the representation of the past today. It is now time for historians to consider the argument for using non-traditional approaches to historical research and to acknowledge the limitations of traditional sources. It is also time for museologists to examine the impact of the

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<sup>26</sup> Pickering, M. and Keightley, E., "The Modalities of Nostalgia", *Current Sociology*, Vol 54, No 6, November 2006, pp 919 – 949.

<sup>27</sup> Brisbane, M. and Wood, J., *A Future for our Past: An Introduction to Heritage Studies* (Swindon: English Heritage, 1996), p 5.

<sup>28</sup> Pickering, M. and Keightley, E., "The Modalities of Nostalgia", *Current Sociology*, Vol 54, No 6, November 2006, pp 919 – 949.

<sup>29</sup> Riley, M. and Harvey, D., "Oral Histories, Farm Practice and Uncovering Meaning in the Countryside", *Social and Cultural Geography*, Vol 8, No 3, 2007, pp 391 - 415.

subjective nature of museum donation and collection, the specialist knowledge gap, and the external political influences on the representation of the past in museums.

Perhaps most importantly I call for collaboration between academic historians, museum professionals, and the general public to address these debates in order to better represent the past in both narrative and physical form. I believe that this approach will solve some of the common questions that all the groups are trying to answer around the representation of the past. There is no reason for collaborative work to fail as both history (in particular social history) and museology are academic areas described by Saunders as 'natural bedfellows',<sup>30</sup> and there is a need to 'break down the barriers between professionals, academics and the public'<sup>31</sup> if the past is to be better represented in both the historical and museological contexts. The general public are crucial in this collaboration as they are not only the largest group of consumers of the past in all its forms, but also the most prolific of contemporary museum donors.<sup>32</sup>

Agricultural history in Lincolnshire is used as a case study of nostalgia influencing the representation of the past in both narrative and public histories. Lincolnshire is an excellent exemplar of this issue as there is a large body of popular material drawn from non-traditional historical sources in the form of

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<sup>30</sup> Saunders, N., "Reach Out and Cuddle Up to Another Discipline", *Times Higher Education*, 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2004.

<sup>31</sup> The Historical Association, *Providing Public History: Challenges and Opportunities*, 12<sup>th</sup> July 2011, online. Available from: [http://www.history.org.uk/resources/public\\_news\\_1201.html](http://www.history.org.uk/resources/public_news_1201.html). [Accessed 4<sup>th</sup> August 2011].

<sup>32</sup> Pitt Rivers Museum, *Where do Objects in the Pitt Rivers Come From?*, online. Available from: <http://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/acquisition.html>. [Accessed 13<sup>th</sup> January 2013]. This can also be inferred by the huge number of museums offering donation guidelines to the general public via their websites.

nostalgic memoirs and oral histories, which tell the story of agriculture during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in the county.<sup>33</sup> These historical narratives, predominantly produced by local, and often amateur, historians that relate to Lincolnshire's agricultural and rural past are microhistories; that is, the intensive study of ordinary people and their everyday lives. They also have a tendency to be what Brewer would term 'refuge history'; their spatial focus is on one place, and they highlight particularities in minute detail.<sup>34</sup> In 2005, two comprehensive studies of Lincolnshire villages were produced in this vein. Vose's study of Nettleham, *Nettleham Yesteryears*,<sup>35</sup> examines past village occupants and the history of particular buildings in the village through historical narrative and photographic evidence. Bray's volume on Pinchbeck, *Remembrance of Times Past*,<sup>36</sup> combines oral history, personal recollections, historical documents, and photographs to produce an authoritative piece of work on the village's history.

Despite their limited geographical scope these volumes offer rich historical narratives. They offer an informal approach to history, combining folklore, legend, literature, oral histories, and local stories often related to national events. However, unlike academic 'prospect' works, these 'refuge' pieces do not offer the opportunity to examine patterns on a regional scale when looked at

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<sup>33</sup> Recent examples of these types of texts published in the last ten years include, Brighton, H., *Changing Fields* (Spalding: Self-Published, 2003). Brighton, H., *The Lost Farmyard* (Spalding: Self-Published, 2006). Stennet, A., *Memories of Lincolnshire Farming* (Berkshire: Countryside Books, 2009), Stennet, A., *Images of Lincolnshire Farming* (Berkshire: Countryside Books, 2009). Woodhead, L. and Hall, L., *A Lincolnshire Lad Looks Back, Nocton Estate – The Home of Smiths Crisps* (Driffeld: Japonica Press, 2003). Woodhead, L., *A Lincolnshire Lad's Scrap Book – More Tales from Nocton* (Driffeld: Japonica Press, 2008).

<sup>34</sup> Brewer, J., "Microhistories and the History of Everyday Life", *Cultural and Social History*, Vol 7, No 1, March 2010, pp 87 – 109.

<sup>35</sup> Vose, P.M., *Nettleham Yesteryears* (Lincoln: Epleeko Ltd, 2005).

<sup>36</sup> Bray, T. *Pinchbeck, Remembrance of Times Past* (Spalding: Self-Published, Date Unknown).

individually, nor do they provide context for further detailed study.<sup>37</sup> They are, by-in-large nostalgic in nature, and might be considered as having aided in the perpetuation of the mythical post 1945 uniform adoption of modern agricultural practices. However, it should be recognised that this largely nostalgic material has an inherent historical value.

In contrast to this local approach Lincolnshire's agricultural history has been subject to academic examination on a county-wide, or prospect, basis. For example Beastall, Brown, and Thirsk have all produced social and economic history volumes of an academic nature examining the county's agricultural history which take into account differences and similarities between various parts of the county.<sup>38</sup> But, these works do not extend to the time period examined in this thesis. Nor do these texts particularly reflect the specific, localised detail of Lincolnshire's past, but present broad arguments with localised examples to exemplify their points; they are 'prospect history' written from a distance in a formal style to explore abstract and national historical themes.<sup>39</sup>

The journal *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology* has provided a peer reviewed, academic forum for both 'prospect' and 'refuge' historical articles since 1968. Whilst leading scholars such as Perkins, Haresign, Thirsk, Rawding and Short have all contributed articles examining Lincolnshire's agricultural

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<sup>37</sup> Brewer, J., "Microhistories and the History of Everyday Life", *Cultural and Social History*, Vol 7, No 1, March 2010, pp 87 – 109.

<sup>38</sup> Beastall, T.W., *Agricultural Revolution in Lincolnshire* (Lincoln: The History of Lincolnshire Committee for SHLA, 1978). Brown, J., *Farming in Lincolnshire 1850 – 1945 (Studies in the History of Lincolnshire)* (Lincoln: History of Lincolnshire Committee, 2005). Thirsk, J., *English Peasant Farming: The Agrarian History of Lincolnshire from Tudor to Recent Times* (London: Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1957).

<sup>39</sup> Brewer, J., "Microhistories and the History of Everyday Life", *Cultural and Social History*, Vol 7, No 1, March 2010, pp 87 – 109.



practices, these are small in number and focussed on activities during the time period outside of the parameters of this research. In all, only thirteen articles examining agricultural practice were published in the journal between 1968 and 2011. These articles predominantly examine the period between the sixteenth and nineteenth century, with little attention paid to the twentieth century.<sup>40</sup> In addition to this lack of articles, the *Agricultural History Review*, the journal of the British Agricultural History Society, has only published six 'prospect' or 'refuge' articles examining agricultural practice explicitly identifying Lincolnshire as the focus of study in titles or abstracts in its sixty-year history. Once again, these articles predominantly examine the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>41</sup>

This clearly establishes that there is a distinct divide between the way that academic historians and local historians have approached this historical topic and demonstrated a need for the re-evaluation of the county's agricultural history that draws together both types of histories. During the course of the re-evaluation of these existing sources it became clear that rather than there being a definitive turning point in history in 1945 marked by the discarding of traditional farming practices and the adoption of modern ones (for definitions of traditional and modern practices see pp 14 – 15). There was a far more complex transition from the prior to the modern culture. Whilst examples of pioneering Wolds' farmers who utilised the earliest combine harvesters in the 1930s were identified, there were Fen farmers who clung onto real horse power well into the 1960s, and in rare cases the 1970s, raising questions around a lack of uniformity in the adoption of modern practices and the resistance to

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<sup>40</sup> Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology, *SLHA Journal: Lincolnshire History and Archaeology*, online. Available from: <http://www.slha.org.uk/> [Accessed 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2011].

<sup>41</sup> British Agricultural History Society, *Agricultural History Review*, online. Available from: <http://www.bahs.org.uk/AGHRvolumes.html>. [Accessed 27<sup>th</sup> January 2013].

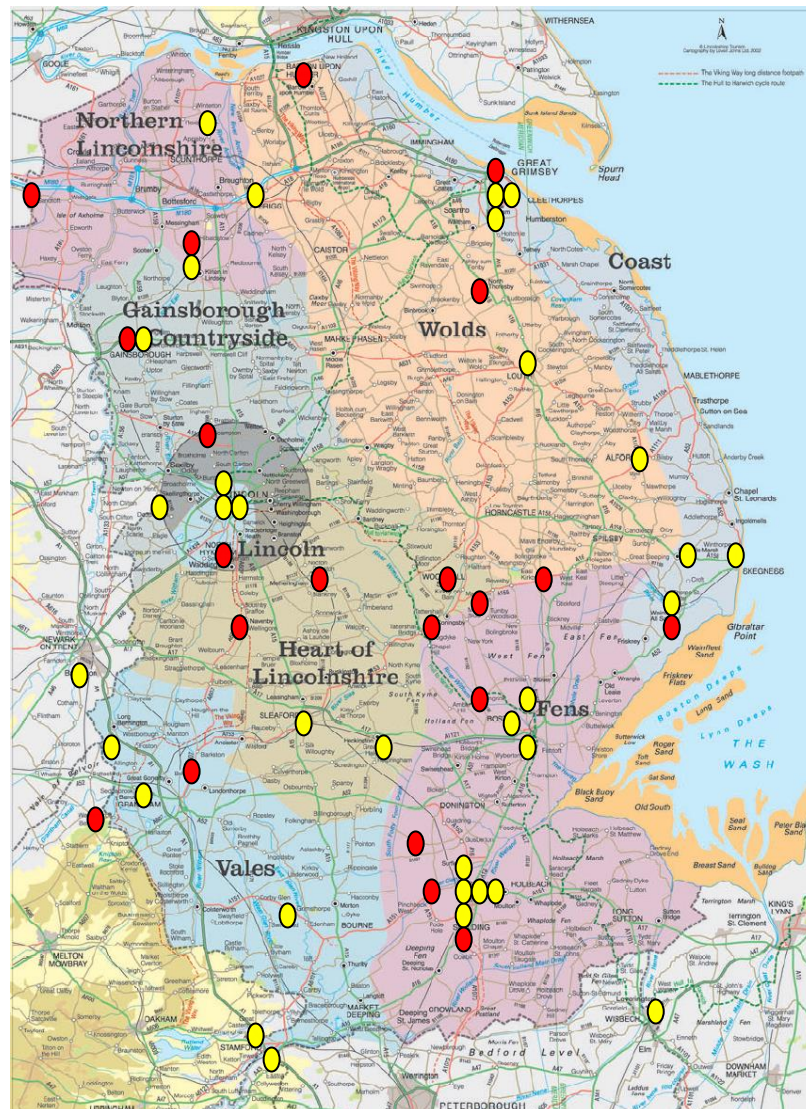
change. This was further substantiated by the undertaking of primary research in the form of the collection of oral histories across the county.

History is very much in the public domain and consumed at a huge rate by the general public.<sup>42</sup> Lincolnshire made an excellent case study for the museological aspect of the research as it is a county rich in heritage and has numerous museums and heritage sites.<sup>43</sup> In all, 32 sites with collections and themes appropriate to this research were identified and targeted. These are identified by the yellow markers on fig 1 (p 11); however these do not represent the full range of sites in Lincolnshire, which were not considered appropriate for this research as they have no connection to agricultural history. These sites are identified by the red markers on fig 1 (p 11).

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<sup>42</sup> See chapter 5.

<sup>43</sup> See chapter 5.

Fig 1. Map showing surveyed and non-surveyed museums in Lincolnshire<sup>44</sup>

Key: ● sites surveyed ● other sites

<sup>44</sup> Visit Lincolnshire, *Lincolnshire Map*, online. Available from: <http://mediafiles.thedms.co.uk/Publication/LM-Lincs/cms/pdf/Areas%20of%20Lincolnshire%20Map.pdf>. [Accessed 13<sup>th</sup> January 2013]. Please note that Wisbech and Newark museums were included in the survey because they have collections policies that identify the county of Lincolnshire as within their collections boundaries. Data based on sites open at the time of the survey. This list is not exhaustive, but representative. Visit Lincolnshire, *Holidays in Lincolnshire, Things to Do*, online. Available from: <http://www.visitlincolnshire.com/>. [Accessed 13<sup>th</sup> January 2013]. Google Maps, *Museums in Lincolnshire*, online. Available from: <https://maps.google.co.uk/maps?hl=en&safe=active&q=map+showing+lincoln&ie=UTF-8&hq=&hnear=0x48780ccb711104fb:0x36603dcfe8c7ddc7,Lincoln&gl=uk&ei=VcjyUKiBIFHD0AXcjIDADA&ved=0CDIQ8gEwAA>. [Accessed 13<sup>th</sup> January 2013].

The case study was also useful in establishing whether or not the past could be represented differently if academic and public historians work together. Most national or university museums have serious research agendas and expect staff to be engaged in research projects related to the collections they hold, for example the British Museum is currently engaged in around 80 projects worldwide<sup>45</sup> aimed at better understanding archaeological objects or sites linked to the Museum, and the University of Reading's Museum of English Rural Life launched a £95,000 Heritage Lottery Fund project in 2009 to 'acquire material that builds, decade by decade, a picture of the countryside in the twentieth century'<sup>46</sup> in a bid to develop new ways of collecting recent or contemporary material. However, this academic approach is not the 'norm' in the museum sector, which is currently focused on developing museum management rather than specialist knowledge, as demonstrated by the number of museum management qualifications available today.<sup>47</sup> It is undeniable that in the past museums were not necessarily managed effectively, leading to a range of problems across the sector from poorly documented collections to ineffective use of resources, but in developing this area of the sector it could be argued that there has been a loss of specialist knowledge, which has left museums vulnerable to the subjective nature of donation and collection and external political influences; both of which have impacted on the representation of the

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<sup>45</sup> The British Museum, *Research Projects*, online. Available from: [http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/research\\_projects.aspx](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/research_projects.aspx). [Accessed 20<sup>th</sup> July 2009].

<sup>46</sup> Brigden, R., "Collecting 20<sup>th</sup> Century Rural Culture: A New Project at the Museum of English Rural Life", *Rural History Today*, Issue 17, July 2009, p 2.

<sup>47</sup> A search of museum courses available in Britain in September 2012 using a postgraduate degrees search engine revealed that there are currently 32 universities in the UK offering 83 museum studies and museology degree courses. Postgraduate Search, *Postgraduate Museum Studies and Museology Degree Courses*, online. Available from: <http://www.postgraduatesearch.com/postgraduate/museum-studies-and-museology/uk/study/postgraduate-browse.htm#ixzz27IfSJH9b>. [Accessed 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2012].

past. None of the museums that took part in the research had strong links with academic historians and were therefore suitable to explore the need for collaborative practice.

The thesis' hypothesis is that whilst nostalgic historical and museological myths regarding the emergence of modern agricultural practices exist, they are not as problematic as historians and museologists might assume. This is because nostalgia can be considered as a motivational factor in people engaging with the past as contributors and consumers, and as therefore having a positive effect on the representation of the past. For historians the limitations of the representation of the past through the rejection of non – traditional, and nostalgic sources, has a far greater impact on how the past is represented in narrative form because it restricts the retelling of the past to particular views, for example as the 'history from above' approach might.<sup>48</sup> Museologists are presented with far greater challenges than that of the impact of nostalgia on the representation of the past; the subjective nature of donation and collection, a focus on professional skills at the expense of subject knowledge, and external political agendas.

In order to either test this hypothesis several questions had to be posed and addressed through both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The first of these questions is explored in chapter 2 of the thesis, and asks 'what is the traditional national and regional historical view on when industrialised and modern agriculture emerges in Lincolnshire?' The question seeks to challenge the accepted view that Lincolnshire emerged from World War Two as a county

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<sup>48</sup> Loughborough University, *Historiography from Below*, online. Available from: <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/media/www/lboroacuk/content/phir/downloads/Historiography%20from%20Below.pdf>. [Accessed 13<sup>th</sup> January 2013].

with widely adopted modern, industrialised, farming practices.<sup>49</sup> The reasons for the emergence and acceptance of the idea that 1945 was a clear turning point from the prior to the modern in several historical narratives is explored and whilst it is undeniable that ‘the history of modern agriculture begins after the Second World War’<sup>50</sup> the over use of 1945 as an exact date for the emergence of change is challenged. The possibility of there being an explicit link between this assertion and the types of sources that historians have typically used is also questioned through a review of existing literature that does not draw out regional particularities in changes in agricultural practice.

The second key question that follows directly from the first is ‘at what point in the twentieth century did modern industrialised agriculture emerge in Lincolnshire?’ In order to answer this question the key features of traditional and modern, industrialised, farming practices were identified. A broad range of features of traditional and modern farming were initially identified including biological and chemical practices, the adoption and application of machinery, patterns in arable crops and animal husbandry, and the quantity and utilisation of labourers. However, to be able to ascertain when modern practices were adopted widely in Lincolnshire certain practices that exemplified this change clearly had to be selected as indicators of continuity and change. After extensive research the indicators of this shift from the traditional to the modern identified were: changes in the patterns of female and child labour patterns and

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<sup>49</sup> This view tends to be presented in broad treatises that aim to summarise the character and aims of post war farming for non – specialist audiences. For example: University of Reading, *Agriculture in Post War Britain*, online. Available from: <http://www.ecifm.rdg.ac.uk/postwarag.htm>. [Accessed 21<sup>st</sup> September 2012]. It is also present in those volumes dealing with changes from a political and economic historical perspective, such as: Holderness, B.A. *British Agriculture since 1945* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985).

<sup>50</sup> Food Security, *Modern Agriculture and Food Security*, online. Available from: <http://www.foodsecurity.ac.uk/issue/history.html>. [Accessed 21<sup>st</sup> September 2012].

the innovation and application of more complexly mechanised equipment on farms in the county.

The abstract concept of continuity and change also had to be considered in order to present a coherent argument as agricultural practice has constantly evolved over the last 6,500 years.<sup>51</sup> The notion of 6,500 years of agricultural evolution interspersed with periods of revolution during the Neolithic, eighteenth century, and the mid-twentieth century had to be adopted, along with an understanding that during periods of evolution change did occur but not at the rate and extent that it did during the periods of revolution. To challenge the acceptance of uniform change across the county commonalities and particularities in the changes in female and child labour patterns and the innovation and application of more complexly mechanised equipment on farms had to be drawn out through the examination of a range of existing traditional and non-traditional secondary and primary sources and the collection of a new body of oral testimonies. A reassessment of Lincolnshire's agricultural history was therefore carried out, which produced a new historical narrative, demonstrating that there was not dramatic and widely spread change in agricultural practice in Lincolnshire until the 1960s. The use of oral testimonies from people who had experienced the shift from traditional to modern practices demonstrated how a non-traditional, and nostalgic source, can contribute positively to the historical narrative.<sup>52</sup> In this case oral history helped draw out a

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<sup>51</sup> UK Agriculture, *UK Countryside History – 4,000 BC*, online. Available from: [http://www.ukagriculture.com/countryside/countryside\\_history\\_4000bc.cfm](http://www.ukagriculture.com/countryside/countryside_history_4000bc.cfm). [Accessed 15<sup>th</sup> July 2009].

<sup>52</sup> Riley, M. and Harvey, D., "Oral Histories, Farm Practice and Uncovering Meaning in the Countryside", *Social and Cultural Geography*, Vol 8, No 3, 2007, pp 391 - 415.

complex picture of change that took place over a longer period of time than previously assumed.

With the conclusion of the historical narrative the next research question; 'how are the changes in practice that demonstrate this shift represented in the county's museums?' was posed and addressed. The historical narratives appearing in museums relating to this period in time were scrutinised initially by an investigative survey to collect quantitative data for analysis. The survey sought to ascertain whether or not there was a direct correlation between the histories presented in the public sphere and the traditional written narratives that presented the idea of change occurring across the county uniformly in 1945 or with the alternative oral historical narrative developed in chapters 3 and 4 of the thesis. The results of this survey demonstrated that whilst there were clear correlations in terms of the general themes identified in the new narrative, there was generally an agreement with accepted idea that modern, industrialised, agriculture appeared directly after World War Two and there were no real divergences from this narrative that presented a more complex story. Context for this aspect of the research was provided through secondary research exploring the development of antiquarian, social history, and folk life museums. Whilst this research is not included in the final thesis, it proved invaluable in understanding how museums represent the past and what historical and cultural factors influence this representation. It was also considered why these types of museums had come to present a partial, mythical, and consumable past steeped in nostalgia to their visitors. The mythical past is considered alongside representation in the final thesis, as this has the greatest relevance to this research.



Qualitative interviews with museum managers were undertaken to establish why the correlation between the traditional historical and the public narrative existed and why this particular aspect of the past was represented in the way it was in the county's museums in 2008. This provided detail about other significant challenges that the managers had to deal with in trying to represent Lincolnshire's agricultural history. It became apparent that participants in the research did not consider nostalgia as a problem; in fact it was a tool by which they could draw visitors to their sites, particularly for events. However, the nature of donation and collection, gaps in subject knowledge, and external political factors, appeared to be more relevant to their everyday work. A reassessment of the significance of the nostalgia in museums followed alongside an evaluation of the impact of current issues around donation and collection, subject knowledge and professional skills, and political agendas. This reassessment has led to the assertion that actually nostalgia is not as 'dangerous'<sup>53</sup> as Chase once proclaimed it to be, or remains to be the central cause of what Lowenthal and Hewison viewed as a mythological and unrepresentative past presented to in the public sphere, because it is not the most influential factor impacting on the representation of the past today.<sup>54</sup> There are issues with the donation and collection of objects that have a far greater impact on the representation of the past in museums today. The logistical problems caused by the desperate giving and collecting of objects in order to preserve what Ewart Evans termed as a prior culture that was on the verge of

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<sup>53</sup> Chase, M., "Nostalgia", Conference Papers, *History Workshop*, 20, p 26.

<sup>54</sup> Lowenthal, D., *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge:Cambridge University Press, 1985).  
Lowenthal, D., "Nostalgia Tells it Like it Wasn't", *The Imagined Past: History and Nostalgia*, Chase, M. and Shaw, C. (eds), (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989), pp 18 – 33.  
Hewison, R., *The Heritage Industry: Britain in a Climate of Decline* (London: Methuen, 1987).

disappearance are still being dealt with 40 years later,<sup>55</sup> leaving museum professionals unable to accept and store large or fragile objects. A lack of detailed knowledge about agricultural history in Lincolnshire has left gaps and duplications in collections. This has resulted in a lack of exploration of donation and collection as a creative, narrative building, process. This selectivity and subjectivity combined with other external forces such as survival in the material record, the desirability of objects, and public demand mean that the past can never be 'truly' reproduced in the museum environment. The past can only be represented and interpreted, and the narrative that is presented is based on objects that people have donated to the museum because they have ascribed meaning and importance to them. Subjectivity is also created by the selection of particular objects by professionals from donors and collections to represent the aspects of history they deem are important.<sup>56</sup> This is not necessarily problematic in itself, but there is a need to understand this process if we are to understand how museums represent the past; an aspect of museology that is currently under explored.

This research has revealed that impact of political agendas from the 1990s onwards on the representation of the past in museums has been far more extensive than that of nostalgia. Blair's New Labour ideals of inclusion led to museum professionals and academics focussing on audience development rather than on the quality of the representation of the past through collections and interpretation. Therefore, the body of academic work and knowledge relating to engaging a wide range of people with the past has been explored

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<sup>55</sup> Ewart Evans, G., *Where Beards Wag All: The Relevance of Oral Tradition* (London: Faber, 1970).

<sup>56</sup> See chapter 5.

extensively, particularly by the Leicester School of Museum Studies.<sup>57</sup> I believe that the academic and professional debates about audiences as visitors are exhausted at this point in time, and do not include them in my discussions.

However, the museum audience as a contributor, and indeed author of the past is explored in the discussions around the use of oral history as a research approach, and the discourse around why people donate objects to museums.

The call for academics, museum professionals, and the general public to work in partnership derives from the final research question that asks ‘if nostalgia is not really the problem whilst donation and collection, and external political influences are, then how do we resolve them?’ Museums, universities, and community groups in Lincolnshire do not currently appear to be working together on collaborative projects to address the negative impact of the issues identified in this research. In fact, in January 2013 only one collaborative project could be identified: National Trust Libraries: Pilot Project at Belton. The project; a collaboration between the National Trust and the University of Cambridge’s Centre for Material Text, is examining the Italian books held in Belton’s library. The collections are being analysed and two discursive workshops will be held for curators and academics in 2013. In order to communicate with the general public an exhibition will be hosted at Belton, which will explore the relationship between the ‘book and place’.<sup>58</sup> It should be noted that whilst this project is furthering the understanding of the representation of the past through

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<sup>57</sup> Examples of important publications are: Research Centre for Museums and Galleries, *Museums and Social Inclusion: The GLLAM Report* (Leicester: Research Centre for Museums and Galleries, 2000). Sandell, R., “Museums as Agents of Social Inclusion”, *Museum Management and Curatorship*, Vol 17, No 4, 1998, pp 401 – 418. Hooper-Greenhill, E., *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture* (London: Routledge, 2000).

<sup>58</sup> University of Cambridge, Centre for Material Texts, *Projects*, online. Available from: [http://www.english.cam.ac.uk/cmt/?page\\_id=14](http://www.english.cam.ac.uk/cmt/?page_id=14). [Accessed 13<sup>th</sup> January 2013].

collections, the public are not contributing to the narrative created here, but are able to consume the results of the project through the exhibition. However, just to the south of Lincolnshire in Cambridgeshire, archaeology students at University Centre Peterborough are currently working with their tutors and representatives from the city's arts, heritage, and sports trust (Vivacity) to develop an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund Young Roots programme to run their own experimental archaeology project. The students have expressed an interest in involving the community in their project throughout, in addition to working with academics and museum professionals. The project will involve the detailed recording of, and subsequent destruction of two replica roundhouses that have stood at Flag Fen since the mid 1990s. These roundhouses will be replaced with new versions, built using 'traditional' techniques, new interpretation will be created to support the new display, and the students will lead a range of life-long learning activities throughout the project. The students intend to help create a sense of ownership for those members of the public that take part in the project; generated from the fact that they have helped to recreate the past. They feel that this might also create a new narrative or site biography for Flag Fen driven by participants. They wish to use the opportunity to increase their employability, and create a research opportunity for academics at the university who are interested not only in the building techniques, but the site formation processes associated with the creation, maintenance, and degradation of the roundhouses (something that was not measured during the lifespan of the current roundhouses).<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Information gathered from University Centre Peterborough Archaeology Team Meeting, December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

The theoretical framework of the thesis is firmly rooted in the relatively recent arguments presented by cultural and social historians to amalgamate their approaches to creating historical narratives. It is particularly influenced by Fass's call for academics to 'engage the issues of culture...with tools and perspectives drawn from social history',<sup>60</sup> and Mandler's acceptance of a need for a dialogue between social and cultural historians around the question of utilising approaches from both sub-disciplines to move historical debates around society and culture forward.<sup>61</sup> This research embraces the concept of looking at a cultural process (agricultural practice), using both social and cultural history approaches in a bid to present a new historical narrative that is arguably more representative of the experience of groups or individuals in the past.<sup>62</sup> Some elements of the theoretical framework within which the thesis sits are clearly in the field of social history. For example in this case the use of oral history to make the historical narrative more inclusive of women and children, who are often under represented in traditional narratives. However, other aspects of the framework fall under the auspices of cultural history, such as the inclusion of memoirs, art, and cultural artefacts, and indeed the study of museums as repositories of history. Other theoretical frameworks have also been drawn on; particularly museological and archaeological ideas around being able to represent and interpret the past through a fragmented collection of

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<sup>60</sup> Fass, P., "Cultural and Social History: Some Reflections on a Continuing Dialogue", *Journal of Social History*, Special Issue, Vol 37, No 1, Autumn 2003, pp 39 - 46.

<sup>61</sup> Mandler, P., "The Problem with Cultural History", *Cultural and Social History*, Vol 1, 2004, pp 94 - 117. The Social History Society, *Social and Cultural History*, online. Available from: <http://www.socialhistory.org.uk/Journal.php> [Accessed 11<sup>th</sup> November 2011].

<sup>62</sup> Mandler, P., "The Problem with Cultural History", *Cultural and Social History*, Vol 1, 2004, pp 94 - 117.

objects that have survived in the material record.<sup>63</sup> Sociological theories were drawn on in the development and execution of the surveys and interviews in a bid to ensure that a rigorous approach to documenting the past and the present was taken.

The approach taken in this research project has allowed the contribution of new academic material to the historic record relating to Lincolnshire's recent agricultural history through a re-examination of secondary sources and the collection of new primary sources. These sources have been drawn together to present a new historical narrative on the shift from traditional to modern agricultural practice in Lincolnshire. The approach has allowed the placement of this shift at a later time than previously presented. This is important because it challenges the common belief that Britain emerged from World War Two as engaging in modern agricultural practices in order to secure the nation's food supply. It demonstrates a complexity in the shift from traditional to modern practices that has not been presented before as historians have generally attempted to deal with the country as a whole to show trends in agricultural progress.<sup>64</sup> I have also examined how agricultural history is represented in historical narratives within the museum context, comparing the historical narratives presented in two very different spheres. This has allowed me to question the idea that nostalgia causes a serious distortion to both written and material historical records. My findings have led me to assert that nostalgia is not the most negative force in presenting a partial, mythical, or palatable past,

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<sup>63</sup> Walsh, K., *The Representation of the Past: Museums and Heritage in the Post – Modern World* (Routledge: London, 1992). Orton, C., *Sampling in Archaeology (Cambridge Manuals in Archaeology)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

<sup>64</sup> Holderness, B.A., *British Agriculture since 1945* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985).

but the real issues lie in an over reliance on traditional historical sources, the subjective nature of donation and collection of material remains, the current levels of subject knowledge held by professionals in the sector, and external political influences on museums. My thesis, then, moves the nostalgia debate forward and contributes new understanding to how the representation of the past can be made richer and more complex through interdisciplinarity. I have also suggested a potential solution to the problems highlighted in my thesis, that of collaborative working. It is anticipated that this call for action will promote discussions between academics, museum professionals, and the public about the future of both written and physical representations of the past and how they might be developed to encompass different relative histories that present new perspectives on the past. This is not yet a discussion that these groups are fully engaging with in Britain, and has the potential to refocus debates around the representation of the past and to change academic and museum practice.

There is the potential for museum professionals to provide academic historians with a new understanding of the application of non-traditional and cultural history material to historic research and for academics to provide museum professionals with an in depth understanding of the issues that affect museum practice in contemporary society. There is also the potential for members of the public with specialist knowledge or skills to contribute to the discourse. This collaboration in turn could lead to more rounded and complex representations of the past in historical narratives and museum collections and interpretation.

The thesis questions the legitimacy of the nostalgia debate in 21<sup>st</sup> Century British academic and public history. It argues that nostalgia has helped to engage people with the past, allowing them to add their individual perspective

and stories to the written historical record, which can only serve to further our understanding of the past. It has also ensured that people have engaged with museums by donating objects to collections, visiting exhibitions and events, and volunteering. Therefore, I assert that the real area for debate between historians and museum professionals is no longer on the perceived dangers of nostalgia in relation to how the past is retold, but on the limitations of traditional approaches to historical research, the nature of museum donation and collection, the knowledge gap in the sector, and the external political influences on museums.



## Introduction

This chapter of the thesis will begin with an examination of the popular orthodoxy on changes in agricultural practice between 1850 and 1980, demonstrating that conventional approaches to agricultural history have resulted in an over-simplified, and indeed mythical, version of the past being presented in established historical narratives. It will argue that the utilisation of oral history as a methodology to capture the historical narrative through the recalling of individual experience can contribute new information to the historical record and further shape our understanding of the past. Whilst the challenges of using memory as a primary source are recognised, the claim that it is an unreliable, nostalgic, source that should be avoided by historians is refuted. In examining the rural the thesis has found it useful to bring together the social and cultural, thus following the calls of Fass and Mandler to make cultural history more social and social history more cultural, to avoid the pitfalls of a too structural or too unique picture of the past.<sup>65</sup> The chapter also justifies the selection of the case studies used to exemplify these arguments by outlining the features of agricultural practices that serve as indicators of continuity and change, and the selection of Lincolnshire as the area of study. Chapters 3 and 4 then re-frame the rise of agricultural modernity in Lincolnshire through the

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<sup>65</sup> Fass, P., "Cultural and Social History: Some Reflections on a Continuing Dialogue", *Journal of Social History*, Special Issue, Vol 37, No 1, Autumn 2003, pp 39 - 46. Mandler, P., "The Problem with Cultural History", *Cultural and Social History*, Vol 1, 2004, pp 94 - 117.

examination of female and child labour patterns and increased mechanisation utilising traditional and non-traditional historical sources.<sup>66</sup>

### **The orthodox popular view on modern agriculture**

The orthodox historical view on industrialised and modern agriculture emerging in Britain directly after World War Two is more complex than one might expect. In non-specialist information produced for the general public, and school children in particular, it is clear that ‘the history of modern agriculture begins after the Second World War’<sup>67</sup> and that modernisation, in terms of mechanisation and production levels, was facilitated by government intervention.<sup>68</sup> However, in academic work there is a range of acceptance of this stance from Gill’s assertion that the post-war years ‘confirmed the arrival of the age of industrial agriculture’,<sup>69</sup> to what Brassley refers to as implied ‘discontinuity at the beginning or end of’<sup>70</sup> World War Two.<sup>71</sup> Whilst it is tempting

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<sup>66</sup> As called for by Woods, A., “Rethinking the History of Modern Agriculture: British Pig Production, C1910-65”, *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol 23, No 2, 2012, pp 165 - 191.

<sup>67</sup> Food Security, *Modern Agriculture and Food Security*, online. Available from: <http://www.foodsecurity.ac.uk/issue/history.html>. [Accessed 21<sup>st</sup> September 2012].

<sup>68</sup> Note these sources were selected to exemplify the point that general histories, particularly those aimed at supporting formal education for children, present this view. BBC, *Learning Zone Broadband Class Clips, Clip 7426*, online. Available from:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/learningzone/clips/changes-in-british-farming-the-post-war-years/7426.html>. [Accessed 21<sup>st</sup> September 2012]. Farming and Countryside Education, *Discovering Farming in Britain*, online. Available from: <http://www.face-online.org.uk/discovering/fact-sheets-discovering>. [Accessed 21<sup>st</sup> September 2012].

<sup>69</sup> Gill, E., “New Thoughts on the Failure of the Organic Food and Farming Movement in Postwar Britain”, *Paper, Annual Conference of the British Economic History Society*, 2009<sup>4</sup>  
Brassley, P., “Output and Technical Change in Twentieth-Century British Agriculture”, *Agricultural History Review*, Vol 48, No 1, 2000, pp 60 - 84, p 60.

<sup>4</sup> Brassley, P., “Output and Technical Change in Twentieth-Century British Agriculture”, *Agricultural History Review*, Vol 48, No 1, 2000, pp 60 - 84, p 60.

<sup>71</sup> Brassley comments on the time frame within which authors have placed their study. He cites, Whetham, E.H., *The Agrarian History of England and Wales, VIII, 1914 – 1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), Perren, R., *Agriculture in Depression, 1879 – 1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), and Brown, J. *Agriculture in England: A Survey of Farming, 1870-1947* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1987). I would also add Holderness, B.A., *British Agriculture since 1945* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1987), Brown, J., *Farm Machinery, 1750-1945* (London: BT Batsford Ltd, 1990), and in the

to argue that Gill's stance is simply inaccurate; I accept Brassley's argument that whilst there appears to be over-simplification of the birth of modern agriculture it would be problematic to label a generation of academics as 'fundamentally wrong',<sup>72</sup> and I also agree with Woods' 2012 call for 'a more historically situated understanding of agricultural modernity'.<sup>73</sup> This thesis, then, will attempt to present a more complex picture of the emergence of modern agriculture in Lincolnshire during the twentieth century that allows for a historical repositioning of changes in agricultural practice.

The over-simplification that Brassley wrote about can be explained by two major contributing factors; the approaches traditionally used by historians to examine agricultural history coupled with a rejection of nostalgic sources in many cases, and the acceptance of the assumptions that modern practice did not exist before World War Two and that government intervention directly after World War Two resulted in the wide scale adoption of modern practices. In the case of Lincolnshire these factors have combined to produce narrow historical narratives that have perpetuated the myth that modern highly industrialised agriculture emerged in Lincolnshire directly and uniformly after World War Two.

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Lincolnshire context Brown J., *Farming in Lincolnshire 1850-1945 (Studies in the History of Lincolnshire)* (Lincoln: Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology, 2005).

<sup>72</sup> Brassley, P., "Output and Technical Change in Twentieth-Century British Agriculture", *Agricultural History Review*, Vol 48, No 1, pp 60 - 84, p 61.

<sup>73</sup> Woods, A., "Rethinking the History of Modern Agriculture: British Pig Production, C1910-65", *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol 23, No 2, 2012, pp 165 - 191, p 165.

## Orthodox approaches to agricultural history

The first contributing factors to an over-simplified and mythical view of the transition from traditional to modern agricultural practice might be explained by the traditional historical approach taken by agricultural historians. Many twentieth century and contemporary agricultural historians were, or are, primarily economic historians. For example Holderness, 'whose research into capital accumulation in British Agriculture during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries made an important contribution to... agrarian history'.<sup>74</sup> However, many of those who are still active have readjusted their position to include social history.

Thirsk, for example, is described by the Institute for Historical Research as 'a major influence on the development of agrarian history... She is recognised as being one of the leading economic and social historians of the 20th century',<sup>75</sup> and Hoyle is described by Reading University as 'one of the leading economic and social historians of early modern England'.<sup>76</sup>

The development of economic history predates that of social history, having emerged in the 1880s.<sup>77</sup> As its title suggests economic history traditionally asked economic questions of the past; examining production, supply and

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<sup>74</sup> Unknown, "Jim Holderness Expert on the Economic History of British Agriculture from the Pre-Industrial Era", *Unknown Source*, Date Unknown. Taken from a newspaper obituary found in a second hand copy of Holderness, B.A., *British Agriculture since 1945* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), included by independent Amazon Seller. I have attempted to identify the source of the obituary, but have not been successful in doing so.

<sup>75</sup> Institute of Historical Research, *Making History, Thirsk, Joan*, online. Available from: [http://www.history.ac.uk/makinghistory/historians/thirsk\\_joan.html](http://www.history.ac.uk/makinghistory/historians/thirsk_joan.html). [Accessed 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2012].

<sup>76</sup> University of Reading, *Staff Profile: Professor Richard Hoyle*, online. Available from <http://www.reading.ac.uk/history/about/staff/r-w-hoyle.aspx>. [Accessed 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2012].

<sup>77</sup> Harte, N., *The Economic History Society 1926 – 2001*, online. Available from: <http://www.history.ac.uk/makinghistory/resources/articles/EHS.html>. [Accessed 24<sup>th</sup> October 2012].

demand, income and wealth distribution, land use, and labour patterns. It is therefore primarily concerned with quantitative data and the testing of models.<sup>78</sup> Economic historians have traditionally focussed on agricultural output to explain change rather than the experiences of those working within the sector, although the effects on humankind were considered.<sup>79</sup> As with other disciplines academic debates around the nature of economic history were prevalent in the 1960s, with a group Scheiber termed 'new economic historians' calling for the application of detailed statistical data by historians in their research and the use of contemporary economic theory to the challenges of interpreting the historical record.<sup>80</sup> Barker argued that this shift in methodology removed the existing social element of economic history,<sup>81</sup> which may have contributed to the repositioning of economic history in recent years to align the sub discipline with social history (as demonstrated in the biographical details of the academics on p 28). For example, the Economic History Society clearly states in its aims that it exists to promote both the study of economic and social history, and to facilitate a closer working relationship between economic and social historians. In addition to this many universities now study economic and social history

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<sup>78</sup> Adelman, P., "What is Economic History?", *History Today*, Vol 35, No 2, 1985.

Williamson, H. F., "What is Economic History: Comment", *Journal of Economic History*, Vol 4, Supplement: The Tasks of Economic History, Dec, 1944, pp 25 – 28, p 25.

<sup>79</sup> Adelman, P., "What is Economic History?", *History Today*, Vol 35, No 2, 1985.

<sup>80</sup> Scheiber, H. N., "On the New Economic History – and its Limitations. A Review Essay", *Agricultural History*, Vol 41, No 4, 1967, pp 383 – 396. It should be noted that this was not an academic development specific to economic history, but part of a much wider movement. Social; Historians made similar assertions in relation to their approach to historical data and Processual, or the New Archaeologists, also called for a scientific and data - laden approach to archaeology at the same time.

<sup>81</sup> Adelman, P., "What is Economic History?", *History Today*, Vol 35, No 2, 1985.

together, allowing the exploration of societal organisation and economic activities in the past.<sup>82</sup>

The limitation of the economic history approach to modern agricultural history has been the general examination of recurrent and economic themes that focus on trends, government control, production levels, guaranteed prices, and stability.<sup>83</sup> This approach has provided us with ‘portrayals of a unidirectional, post-Second World War shift from traditional small-scale mixed farming to large, specialised, intensive systems’.<sup>84</sup> Gill’s comments in the introduction of her 2009 paper *New Thoughts on the Failure of the Organic Food and Farming Movement in Postwar Britain* exemplify this issue as she focuses on the impact of government intervention in the form of the 1947 Agriculture Act, and subsequent financial incentives, input and output, and rising levels of productivity.<sup>85</sup> This historical narrative has generally been accepted and prompted work that has further confirmed rather than challenged it, thus perpetuating the historical myth rather than unlocking alternative, or relative, versions of the past, and adding to academic debate. And whilst historians have

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<sup>82</sup> Economic History Society, *About the Economic History Society*, online. Available from: <http://www.ehs.org.uk/about.asp>. [Accessed 24<sup>th</sup> October 2012] Glasgow University, *Economic and Social History*, online. Available from: <http://www.gla.ac.uk/undergraduate/degrees/economicsocialhistory/>. [Accessed 24<sup>th</sup> October 2012]. University of Cambridge, *Economic and Social History at Cambridge*, online. <http://www.econsoc.hist.cam.ac.uk/>. [Accessed 24<sup>th</sup> October 2012]. Durham University, *MA in Social and Economic History*, online. Available from: [http://www.dur.ac.uk/history/postgraduate/ma\\_degrees/researchmethods/](http://www.dur.ac.uk/history/postgraduate/ma_degrees/researchmethods/) [Accessed 24<sup>th</sup> October 2012]. Birmingham University, *BA Economic and Social History*, online. Available from: <http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/courses/undergraduate/history/economic-social-history.aspx>. [Accessed 24<sup>th</sup> October 2012]. University of Manchester, *Economic and Social History MA*, online. Available from: <http://www.manchester.ac.uk/postgraduate/taughtdegrees/courses/atoz/course/?code=01144>. [Accessed 24<sup>th</sup> October 2012].

<sup>83</sup> Parliament, *Modern Farming*, online. Available from: <http://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/towncountry/landscape/overview/modernfarming/>. [Accessed 21<sup>st</sup> September 2012].

<sup>84</sup> Woods, A., “Rethinking the History of Modern Agriculture: British Pig Production, C1910-65”, *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol 23, No 2, 2012, pp 165 - 191, p 165.

<sup>85</sup> Gill, E., “New Thoughts on the Failure of the Organic Food and Farming Movement in Postwar Britain”, *Paper, Annual Conference of the British Economic History Society*, 2009.

considered the impact of continuity and change of agricultural practices on society, they have not sought to tell the stories of individuals who have lived through this change, which may be attributed to their dependence on traditional sources such as agricultural returns and National Farm Survey results.<sup>86</sup> This is why the socio-cultural history approach is so important to agrarian history; it allows for the exploration of broader themes, utilising different sets of sources, and is much more interested in the human experience than economic history, albeit with its social history links.

### **New approaches to history**

It was identified during the course of this research that one possible solution to the limitations of the traditional approach to agricultural history could be a socio-cultural history approach. In the early 2000s historians such as Fass (who calls herself a social and cultural historian)<sup>87</sup> and Mandler (a cultural historian) had entered a period of critical reflection regarding their historical sub-disciplines and had started to consider how social and cultural history might develop in the future.<sup>88</sup> In 2003 Fass considered how rigorous social history research techniques might be applied to cultural history questions giving this type of research more tangible results, and in turn broadening the focus of social history to include examination of the human experience as cultural history had

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<sup>86</sup> For a range of sources of this type available to historians see The National Archives, *Agricultural Statistics for England and Wales*, online. Available from: <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/records/research-guides/agricultural-statistics.htm#31528>. [Accessed 14<sup>th</sup> January 2013].

<sup>87</sup> Fass, P., "Cultural and Social History: Some Reflections on a Continuing Dialogue", *Journal of Social History*, Special Issue, Vol 37, No 1, Autumn 2003, pp 39 - 46.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid. Mandler, P., "The Problem with Cultural History", *Cultural and Social History*, Vol 1, 2004, pp 94 - 117.

sought to do since the 1970s.<sup>89</sup> In 2004 Mandler produced a fundamentally important article, “The Problem with Cultural History”, in the first edition of the Social History Society’s journal *Cultural and Social History*. The article and the publication of the journal marked a watershed for both cultural and social history. The creation of the journal had signalled professional recognition of the need for a dialogue between social and cultural historians. It also indicated an acceptance by academics that utilising approaches from both sub-disciplines could move historical debates around society and culture forward.<sup>90</sup> Mandler’s core message was that academic disciplines must be critically analysed and reviewed in order to move forward, and that interdisciplinary study can lead to historical interpretations that are broader and more representative of the experience of groups or individuals in the past.<sup>91</sup> He called for discipline in cultural history research methodologies, claiming that post-modernist approaches had ‘begun to plague the practice of cultural history’.<sup>92</sup> And whilst he did not call for cultural historians to adopt social history research methods as Fass had done, he suggested that social science type methodologies could be applied to cultural history;<sup>93</sup> social historians, of course, already used these methodologies extensively, for example in using interviews to collect oral testimonies. The writing of this thesis has, therefore, been influenced by Fass’s concept of applying social history research methodologies to examine what

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<sup>89</sup> Fass, P., “Cultural and Social History: Some Reflections on a Continuing Dialogue”, *Journal of Social History*, Special Issue, Vol 37, No 1, Autumn 2003, pp 39 - 46.

<sup>90</sup> The Social History Society, *Social and Cultural History*, online. Available from: <http://www.socialhistory.org.uk/Journal.php>. [Accessed 11<sup>th</sup> November 2011].

<sup>91</sup> Mandler, P., “The Problem with Cultural History”, *Cultural and Social History*, Vol 1, 2004, pp 94 -117.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid. Crone, R. and Gange, D., “Introduction”, *New Perspectives in British Cultural History*, Crone, R., Gange, D., and Jones, K., (eds) (Newcastle, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), pp 1 – 7, p 3.

<sup>93</sup> Mandler, P., “The Problem with Cultural History”, *Cultural and Social History*, Vol 1, 2004, pp 94 -117.



might be termed a cultural activity and Mandler's call for a more structured and interdisciplinary approach to producing narratives on cultural history.<sup>94</sup>

As with all historical writing, I am concerned with facts, as it is indisputable that, to quote Carr, 'the historian must not get these things wrong'.<sup>95</sup> However, this study is not concerned with the historical 'truth', so often sought and presented in nineteenth and early twentieth century narratives,<sup>96</sup> that in postmodernist terms 'could not only never be known, but was indeed itself merely an article of faith'.<sup>97</sup> Instead, it follows Lowenthal's principle that 'the actual past is beyond retrieval',<sup>98</sup> and Southgate's suggestion that there is the potential for the production of relative histories. Nor do I claim to produce a complete history, as all history is retold in narratives which are, to varying extent, only partial in nature.<sup>99</sup> In line with Fass and Mandler's calls for changes in historical research practices I have sought to draw out unique experiences, interpretations, and world views of individuals in their own words to explore historical change. Their assertions have been substantiated through extensive cross referencing with other primary source material, such as documentary sources, and agricultural statistics.

The social and cultural history approaches used, allowed for the investigation of, and engagement with, a range of primary and secondary sources that might

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<sup>94</sup> Fass, P., "Cultural and Social History: Some Reflections on a Continuing Dialogue", *Journal of Social History*, Special Issue, Vol 37, No 1, Autumn 2003, pp 39 - 46. Mandler, P., "The Problem with Cultural History", *Cultural and Social History*, Vol 1, 2004, pp 94 - 117.

<sup>95</sup> Carr, E.H., *What is History?* (London: Penguin, 1961), p 10. Tosh, J. and Lang, S., *The Pursuit of History* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2006).

<sup>96</sup> Fulbrook, M., *Historical Theory* (London: Routledge, 2002).

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.* p 3.

<sup>98</sup> Lowenthal, D., *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p 106. Southgate, B., *History: What and Why? Ancient, Modern, and Postmodern Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 1996).

<sup>99</sup> Fulbrook, M., *Historical Theory* (London: Routledge, 2002).

not be brought together in traditional histories, but are often used in local, and amateur, histories. For example, country writing or memoirs criticised by Howkins as ‘often pass[ing] for social history’<sup>100</sup> have been used. Howkins’ criticism is directed at the fact that these writings do not necessarily apply the scientific approaches adopted by social historians<sup>101</sup> and that they rely significantly on personal memory as their primary source without drawing on secondary sources to support or counter the ideas presented in them. But, they can be found alongside academic treatises on the rural in bookshops and local studies collections in libraries and archives. They can be considered in the same way as works of literature by cultural historians; as another form of source material. This historical approach also facilitated the use of oral history as the main research methodology, which is explored at length later in this chapter. Both social and cultural historians use oral history to capture the past from new perspectives, for example in June 2010 Forgacs and Gundle published their study ‘Oral History of Cultural Consumption in Italy, 1936-1954’, which used oral history to study mass culture in Italy during the mid-twentieth century.<sup>102</sup> The acceptance and application of these sources to doctoral projects is important as it reflects the developments in history as a discipline over the last forty years towards a history that recognises the limitation of a reliance on documents, and a history that is not elitist, but utilises ‘the views of ordinary people and their experience of social change’.<sup>103</sup> I accept that there are two distinct, and

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<sup>100</sup> Howkins, A., “Social History and Agricultural History”, *Agricultural History Review*, Vol 40, No 2, 1992, pp 156 – 159, p 161.

<sup>101</sup> Fass, P., “Cultural and Social History: Some Reflections on a Continuing Dialogue”, *Journal of Social History*, Special Issue, Vol 37, No 1, Autumn 2003, pp 39 - 46.

<sup>102</sup> Economic and Social Data Service, *Oral History of Cultural Consumption in Italy, 1936-1954*, online. Available from: <http://www.esds.ac.uk/findingData/snDescription.asp?sn=6479>. [Accessed 31<sup>st</sup> December 2011].

<sup>103</sup> Burke, P., “Overture. The New History, its Past and Future”, *New Perspectives in Historical Writing*, 2nd edition, Burke, P. (ed) (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001), pp 1 – 24, p 4.

diametrically opposed, types of history in existence (non-academic and academic) and that the divide between them widened during the twentieth century as academic historians sought to become more rigorous and objective in their presentation of the past.<sup>104</sup> But perhaps it is now an appropriate time for the academic and popular to be considered together to further historians' understanding of the past rather than the continuation of debates around the right type of source to use and the avoidance of sources that might allow nostalgia to influence historical writing.<sup>105</sup> I have drawn directly on this new approach, utilising both the scientific elements of social history data collection and the more creative aspects of cultural history to produce new insights into Lincolnshire's recent agricultural past.

### **Oral history**

My primary data collection method was oral history, which proved to be invaluable in drawing out the complexities of changes in agricultural practice alongside their impact on people's lives. Academic discourse on oral history rose to prominence alongside the surge in the popularity of social history in the 1970s. Academics such as Okihiru have argued that it should be treated as a subject rather than a methodology, although in this particular context, whilst this is not contested, it serves as a method of primary data collection.<sup>106</sup> It is clear from academic debate that there is a clear rationale for the interest in and use

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<sup>104</sup> Lemann, N., "History Solo: Non-Academic Historians", *The American Historical Review*, Vol 100, No 3, June 1995, pp 788 - 798. Southgate, B., *History: What and Why? Ancient, Modern, and Postmodern Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 1996).

<sup>105</sup> Lemann, N., "History Solo: Non-Academic Historians", *The American Historical Review*, Vol 100, No 3, June 1995, pp 788 - 798.

<sup>106</sup> Smith, G., *Historical Insights: Focus on Research: Oral History* (Coventry: History at the HEA in conjunction with the Institute of Historical Research, 2010). Okihiru, G., "Oral History and the Writing of Ethnic History: A Reconnaissance into Method and Theory", *Oral History Review*, Vol 9, 1981, pp 27 - 46.

of oral history by social historians in the last part of the twentieth century, particularly in the British context.<sup>107</sup> Oral history allowed social historians to push the boundaries of research by employing a 'new' research method that reflected the ambitious and revolutionary nature of the discipline; a method that fulfilled the socialist ideologies of the proponents of social history such as Samuel.<sup>108</sup> It allowed the pursuit of the 'history from below' agenda. Oral history was a mechanism by which historians could reconstruct the history of ordinary people whose experiences and activities were often scantily recorded in, or left out of, historical documents.<sup>109</sup> History from below aimed for more inclusive and democratic research that not only utilised ordinary people as a historical source, but actively involved them in the historical process and engaged them with history; oral history proved to be an excellent tool for achieving this aim, as research could be carried out not just by academics but by a range of people including school children, members of community groups, and museum staff.<sup>110</sup> The development of non-academic projects led to those engaging in oral history questioning the purpose of collecting history in this way, and ultimately led to the decision that its use was about empowering people to take ownership of the past and to stake a claim for shared ownership of it. In essence history now had

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<sup>107</sup> Berkeley University. *Oral History*, 2009, online. Available from: <http://socrates.berkeley.edu/~kihlstrm/oralhistory.htm> [Accessed 9<sup>th</sup> August 2011].

<sup>108</sup> Zeldin, T., "Social History and Total History", *Journal of Social History*, Vol 10, No 2, 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Issue, Winter 1976, pp 237 - 246. Raphael Samuel History Centre, *Homepage*, online. Available from: <http://www.rafael-samuel.org.uk/> [Accessed 31<sup>st</sup> December 2011].

<sup>109</sup> Summerfield, P., "Culture and Composure: Creating Narratives of the Gendered Self in Oral History Interviews", *Cultural and Social History*, Vol 1, 2004, pp 65 - 93. George Mason University, *Making Sense of Oral History: How do Historians Use it?*, online. Available from: <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/oral/how.html>. [Accessed 9<sup>th</sup> August 2011].

<sup>110</sup> Thompson, P., *Voice of the Past: Oral History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988). Wilson, A., "A Critical Portrait of Social History", *Rethinking Social History: English Society 1570 – 1920 and its Interpretation*, Wilson, A. (ed) (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), pp 9 -58.

a social role.<sup>111</sup> As social historians strove to create ‘total histories’; histories that aimed to represent the whole of society and everyday activities,<sup>112</sup> groups previously excluded from historical narratives, such as women, ethnic minorities, religious minorities, and disabled people, were now included in their studies.<sup>113</sup>

Over the last forty years this application of oral history has grown tremendously, for example the East Midlands Oral History Archive website lists 79 community oral history projects from across the U.K., which focus on topics as diverse as the women who worked for Rowntree’s in York to the development and history of the gay, lesbian, and bisexual community in Birmingham, and to how people in Cambridge feel about Kettle’s Yard Art Gallery.<sup>114</sup>

Empowerment and engagement is not necessarily an intended outcome of academic projects, although there may be a desire to engage the general public with the findings of the project and empowerment may be a by-product of this engagement.<sup>115</sup> For example, it is unlikely that many participants who contributed to this research will want to read this thesis. Therefore, in order to engage a broader audience, including participants, chapter two of the thesis was partially used as the basis for a chapter in a 2011 Society for Lincolnshire’s History and Archaeology publication: *Growing Better: Lincolnshire and the*

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<sup>111</sup> Smith, G., *The Making of Oral History: Sections 1 – 2*, online. Available from: [http://www.history.ac.uk/makinghistory/resources/articles/oral\\_history.html](http://www.history.ac.uk/makinghistory/resources/articles/oral_history.html). [Accessed 31<sup>st</sup> December 2011]. Thompson, P., *Voice of the Past: Oral History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978).

<sup>112</sup> Wilson, A., “A Critical Portrait of Social History”, *Rethinking Social History: English Society 1570 – 1920 and its Interpretation*, Wilson, A. (ed) (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), pp. 9 - 58.

<sup>113</sup> The Social History Society. *A Message from Penny Summerfield*, online. Available from: <http://www.socialhistory.org.uk/> [Accessed 9<sup>th</sup> August 2011].

<sup>114</sup> East Midlands Oral History Archive, *UK Oral History*, online. Available from: <http://www.le.ac.uk/emoha/emoha/arounduk.html>. [Accessed 31<sup>st</sup> December 2011].

<sup>115</sup> See chapter 1.

*Potato*. This work examined the experiences of female, child, and Irish labour in Lincolnshire between 1850 and 1950 and utilised oral testimonies collected for this research alongside other primary and secondary sources.<sup>116</sup> Empowerment and engagement through this exercise might be measured in different ways. For example, all participants whose memories were used in the chapter were sent a copy of the chapter for approval before publication, and many replied to express their happiness at being included. Unfortunately some participants had died since their interview, but their relatives responded in writing to express their support for the publication and their joy at their relative being included. Of the twenty or so letters sent, no one asked for their memories to be removed from the chapter.<sup>117</sup> One participant, who is also a local historian, also attended the event and purchased a copy of the publication. This supports Frisch's argument that oral history has

the capacity to redefine and redistribute intellectual authority, so that this might be shared more broadly in historical research and communication rather than continuing to serve as an instrument of power and hierarchy.<sup>118</sup>

This capacity for empowerment and engagement is represented in the sheer rise in histories examining specific topics under new themes previously under-explored by academic historians, such as women's history, labour history, and history from below, and the fact that ordinary people continue to contribute to

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<sup>116</sup> Hunt, A., "Tatey Picking Time", *Growing Better: Lincolnshire and the Potato*, Squires, S. and Wilson, C., (eds) (Lincoln: Society for Lincolnshire's History and Archaeology, 2011), pp 37 - 50.

<sup>117</sup> Information sourced from several letters; as these are very personal in nature I have not quoted directly or identified the respondents.

<sup>118</sup> Frisch, M., *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), p xx.

these projects.<sup>119</sup> These histories continue to offer new perspectives on topics well covered by historians in the history from above tradition, and rely on people feeling empowered to participate. For example Bardill's 2006 thesis *The 1984/85 miners' strike: its impact on and legacy for the Nottinghamshire miners and their families* utilised oral testimonies from those people who took part in the strikes or whose family members participated in them to offer a new perspective on a well-documented historical event. Whilst this subject had been tackled extensively in terms of politics, class and gender,<sup>120</sup> there was a gap in knowledge and understanding in relation to its impact on the family that was addressed by Bardill, something that could not have been done without the use of oral histories and people feeling empowered to contribute.<sup>121</sup> This thesis aims to do the same in relation to Lincolnshire in order to contribute to the understanding of the county's agricultural and rural history, hence the selection of oral history as a research tool.

To ensure that the oral histories collected for this thesis contributed new information to the historical record and constituted a fresh social history-led discourse on Lincolnshire, previous oral history projects that recorded agricultural practice in the county had to be investigated to ascertain what work had already been done, the comprehensiveness of this work, the area of study covered, and how accessible it was. This aspect of the doctoral fieldwork was undertaken during the summer of 2005. A useful starting point proved to be the

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<sup>119</sup> Burke, P., "Overture. The New History, its Past and Future", *New Perspectives in Historical Writing*, 2nd edition, Burke, P. (ed) (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001), pp 1 – 24.

<sup>120</sup> For example, Franks, B., "British Anarchisms and the Miners' Strike", *Capital & Class*, Vol 29, No 3, Autumn 2005, pp 227 - 254. Strangleman, T. et al., "Heritage Work: Re-Representing the Work Ethic in the Coalfields", *Sociological Research Online*, Vol 4, No 3, 1999, online. Available from: <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/4/3/strangleman.html>. [Accessed 31<sup>st</sup> December 2011].

<sup>121</sup> Bardill, L., *The 1984/85 miners' strike: its impact on and legacy for the Nottinghamshire miners and their families*, PhD Thesis (University of Lincoln, 2006), unpublished.

survey of oral history collections held in the county begun by The Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology in 2004. This survey was started because it was 'of concern that this potentially interesting and important material is currently unavailable to all but the most determined enquirer'.<sup>122</sup> This task has proved onerous for the society and was still ongoing in 2011.<sup>123</sup> But its results, although incomplete, proved to be a useful starting point primarily for collections held by Lincolnshire County Council.

Museums, libraries and archives highlighted in the society's audit were contacted and appropriate interviews listened to, and where possible summaries or transcripts were taken for scrutiny. Work has been done across the county by Lincolnshire County Council's Heritage Services, but in a piecemeal fashion with varying degrees of success. The only projects specifically aimed at recording twentieth century agriculture had been undertaken by Church Farm Museum, Skegness. Staff had engaged in a series of small scale projects, including a project looking at harvest memories in the 1980s, a project examining rural trades, a project about; living in and around Skegness, and finally a project to start a community archive in 2003. The final project was begun by Ruth Walker and myself with £5,000 funding from the East Midlands Museums, Libraries and Archives Council. However, on a visit to survey the collections in 2005 it was apparent that the museum work was discontinued after we had left the museum. There were a few transcriptions among the collected records, and most material was on tape or minidisk. Staff at Stamford Museum had also undertaken some work relating to industries in

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<sup>122</sup> Wilson, C., *Lincolnshire Sound Recordings – a Summary* (unpublished survey, 2006).

<sup>123</sup> Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology, *Past and Present*, No 85, Autumn, 2011.



the town driven by agriculture: this was easily available and transcribed. There were several items relating to agriculture held at the Museum of Lincolnshire Life that available to listen to, although there appeared to be issues identifying ownership of the material due to a lack of associated paperwork and there were no transcriptions.

Lincolnshire Library Service held around 40 recordings in Lincoln, Boston, Grantham and Louth libraries. However most of these recordings did not have transcripts and summaries in 2008, and nor were they in an easily accessible format for listening to.<sup>124</sup>

The Lincolnshire Sound Archive, managed by Chris Frear (formerly Butterfield), was also approached. This database was available online at <http://www.onevoice.co.uk/england> in 2005, but by 2009 could not be located using search engines and the direct URL address, and remains inaccessible in 2013.<sup>125</sup> This archive has recordings primarily from the north of the county, including an interesting collection on life in the Lincolnshire Wolds recorded in the 1960s and 1970s, and had some transcriptions available on the website in 2008. It should be noted that this is a private collection once held in the county, but now held in Scotland.

Between 1985 and 1986, the Workers Education Association ran a Lincolnshire Women's Research Group in Boston, Lincolnshire. Women engaged in several activities which included the recording and archiving of women's life in rural Lincolnshire. This archive is held by the Women's Library in London and was

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<sup>124</sup> Wilson, C., *Lincolnshire Sound Recordings – a Summary* (unpublished survey, 2006).

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

made accessible to the public since 2007, although it may currently be temporarily inaccessible as the library is being transferred from London Metropolitan University to the London School of Economics.<sup>126</sup> It comprises life history material collected by researchers in the group, and drafts for a proposed book on Lincolnshire women's history.<sup>127</sup>

The British Library holds the Millennium Memory Bank Project Archives, which include several interviews focusing on agriculture from across Lincolnshire. Comprehensive interview summaries are available online (although transcriptions can't be accessed), and recordings can be listened to at the British Library.<sup>128</sup>

There are also several collections relating to folk songs and dialect that feature Lincolnshire recordings. For example, the British Library holds recordings of Lincolnshire folk songs, the University of Sheffield National Centre for English Cultural Tradition and Language holds some Lincolnshire recordings, as does the University of Nottingham, and the University of Leeds Survey Of English Dialect has Lincolnshire examples.<sup>129</sup>

There are also media collections that hold films whose subject is agriculture and rural life in Lincolnshire. The Media Archive for Central England, now housed at the University of Lincoln, has around 17 films relating to agriculture and rural life in Lincolnshire. The collection comprises several news reports by ATV from the

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<sup>126</sup> London School of Economics, *The Women's Library @ LSE*, online. Available from: <http://www2.lse.ac.uk/library/newsandinformation/womenslibraryatLSE/home.aspx>. [Accessed 21<sup>st</sup> January 2013].

<sup>127</sup> 8LWR Catalogue of Records of Lincolnshire Women's Research Group (1930s – 1980s), held in the Women's Library, London.

<sup>128</sup> British Library, *Archival Sound Recordings: Millennium Memory Bank*, online. Available from: <http://sounds.bl.uk/TextPage.aspx?page=backgroundMillenium-memory-bank>. [Accessed 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2009].

<sup>129</sup> Wilson, C., *Lincolnshire Sound Recordings – A Summary* (unpublished survey, 2006).

1980s examining issues such as the potato crops of Lincolnshire, a series of films made in 1985 looking at rural community life and the lives of people working on Lincolnshire farms (including one film focusing on women), and a home movie made on a farm in Brattleby in the 1950s.<sup>130</sup> The Lincolnshire Film Archive has an extensive collection of films made across the county from the 1930s onwards, covering topics from wheat growing and pea vining to films showing many activities on one farm, and domestic activities such as the killing of pigs. Some of these films are silent, but some do have an accompanying commentary.<sup>131</sup>

Issues with the nature of these collections were identified, which perhaps reflect why the Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology's volunteers have struggled to produce a comprehensive database of oral history collection in the county. In 2008 it was clear that collections were small and held in several locations across the county, there was no uniform level of access to collections, few recordings were adequately catalogued, summarised or transcribed, storage was often inappropriate, and collections did not appear to be used by those holding them. There is, of course, the issue that at least two important collections are held outside the county, making access challenging. It was also obvious in 2008 that museum staff had engaged in a range of projects that had not been used effectively, if at all, in the presentation of the past to the public.

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<sup>130</sup> Media Archive for Central England, *Search Results 'Farming in Lincolnshire'*, online. Available from:

<http://www.macearchive.org/Results.html?County=Lincolnshire&Keywords=farming>. [Accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2012].

<sup>131</sup> Lincolnshire Film Archive, *Search Results 'Farming in Lincolnshire'*, online. Available from: <http://search.freefind.com/find.html?pageid=r&id=87011126&query=farming+&ics=1&fr=15>. [Accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2012].

Most importantly however, what became clear from this investigation was that no one had previously attempted specifically to record memories relating to agriculture in Lincolnshire in a systematic way. Projects did exist, but they were piecemeal and broad in focus. There is, therefore, no pre-existing archive that holds the information required for this research. This is highly significant, as it means that this research contributes important new information to subject knowledge through the creation of a new archive focussing on agricultural change.

Oral history was selected as a method of primary data collection for this project because of its relationship with social history, and precedents set by other social history research, such as George Ewart Evans' work in the 1950s and 1960s and Stephen Caunce's work in the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>132</sup> One of the aspects of both Ewart Evans and Caunce's work that shaped this research was the utilisation of oral history to capture the human experience in relation to agricultural change. Stearns argued that the construction of the human experience is a key attribute in social history,<sup>133</sup> and as this piece of work is concerned with creating a new narrative of change from different perspectives, personal experiences had to constitute a significant part of the research.

It has been argued that oral history has been used as a method for capturing and disseminating histories throughout human history, with bold statements

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<sup>132</sup> Works used in this research were Ewart Evans, G., *Where Beards Wag All: The Relevance of Oral Tradition* (London: Faber, 1970), Ewart Evans, G., *Ask the Fellows Who Cut the Hay* (London: Faber and Faber, 1975), and Ewart Evans, G., *The Crooked Scythe: An Anthology of Oral History* (London: Faber and Faber, 1994). Caunce, S., *Amongst Farm Horses: The Houselads of East Yorkshire* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1991). Caunce, S., *Oral History and the Local Historian: Approaches to Local History* (London: Longman, 1994), and Caunce, S., "Mechanisation and Society in English Agriculture: The Experience of the North East, 1850-1914", *Rural History*, Vol 17, No 1, 2006.

<sup>133</sup> Stearns, P. N., "Social History Present and Future" *Journal of Social History*, Special Issue, Vol 37, No 1, Autumn 2003.

such as 'it predates history',<sup>134</sup> and is 'the first kind of history'<sup>135</sup> made by its proponents. However, it should be remembered that a long tradition of use does not necessarily make the methodology effective, nor the results valid or reliable. A concern that has resulted in the slow acceptance of oral history as a valuable and accurate source by the modern historian. Grele's experience of publishing in the 1970s sums up how new this methodology is in relation to the discipline of history. He wrote:

At the time we published the first edition in 1975 it was frankly experimental and tentative. There had been little theoretical or methodological debate over the use of and nature of oral history.<sup>136</sup>

In 1990 Samuel and Thompson articulated why this methodology might not be embraced by historians:

Historians deal, by preference, with 'hard' realities - family, work and home; politics and government; church and chapel. We cleave to precise localities, dateable periods, delimitable fields of study. Our chronologies are marked in numbered years rather than the succession of generations or lost golden ages.<sup>137</sup>

They also make the point that history need not be precise in terms of chronology or geography; a difficult concept for historians of Carr's generation who sought to be scientific and objective. However, this is in line with the concept of the creation of relative histories, and the creation of new historical

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<sup>134</sup> Starr, L., "Oral History", *Oral History: An Interdisciplinary Anthology*, Baum, W. and Dunaway D. (eds) (Lanham: Altamira Press, 1996), p 40.

<sup>135</sup> Thompson, P., *Voice of the Past: Oral History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p 22.

<sup>136</sup> Grele, R.J., *Envelopes of Sound: The Art of Oral History* (London: Praeger, 1991), p xvii.

<sup>137</sup> Samuel, R., and Thompson, P., *The Myths We Live By* (London: Routledge, 1990), p 1.

narratives reflecting different view points, which is one of the key objectives of the thesis.

One needs to consider where these ‘hard realities’ come from: a range of sources. It seems strange that historical documents by definition can include the ephemeral ‘such as letters, diaries, and working notes made by participants in significant events’,<sup>138</sup> but oral history can be rejected as a legitimate source, when documents have just as many biases and hidden agendas as oral history, because – like oral history – they are produced by people. In fact, it has been argued by Hoffman that ‘oral history is simply one among several primary resources. It is no worse than written documents’,<sup>139</sup> and by Counce that it is ‘a source on which to build history as an alternative and complement to the documents on which historians normally rely’.<sup>140</sup> This thesis agrees that oral history is no less reliable than written documents, and concurs with Counce that it should complement usual sources used rather than replace them, providing a relative picture of the past rather than a completely alternate one. As Counce states in his latest article in relation to rural England ‘the century after 1850 is too often portrayed, especially outside academic circles, simply as a period of decline’,<sup>141</sup> suggesting the need for continued investigations in to the period to produce new narratives, which can only be achieved if a variety of sources, including oral history, are drawn upon.

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<sup>138</sup> Counce, S., *Oral History and the Local Historian: Approaches to Local History* (London: Longman, 1994), p 16.

<sup>139</sup> Hoffman, A., “Reliability and Validity in Oral History”, *Oral History: An Interdisciplinary Anthology*, Baum, W., and Dunaway, D., (eds) (Lanham: Altamira Press, 1996), p 92.

<sup>140</sup> Counce, S., *Oral History and the Local Historian: Approaches to Local History* (London: Longman, 1994), p 7.

<sup>141</sup> Counce, S.A., “The Hiring Fairs of Northern England, 1890–1930: A Regional Analysis of Commercial and Social Networking in Agriculture”, *Past and Present*, Vol 217, No 1, November 2012, pp 213 - 246.

This research project has employed oral history to challenge historians' judgements and assumptions in a bid to produce a new interpretation of Lincolnshire's history,<sup>142</sup> and therefore findings were also cross-referenced with a range of other sources to allow evaluation and testing of the information collected.<sup>143</sup> Forty interviews were carried out with 57 participants aged between 28 and 100 across the county (see appendix 1 list of participants). There is no written guide to how many interviews need to be carried out to create a reliable information base, but the 40 conducted for this project created a large body of information that featured patterns in themes and views, particularities of 'local' areas, and information that corroborated accounts. However, perhaps even more importantly than capturing information that could be considered historically sound; the interviews captured a range of personal experiences from different periods in time from a range of people across the county.

Dealing with memory is one of the biggest challenges when working with oral history, as Perks summarised when he wrote:

People forget things; their memories play tricks by 'telescoping' events together or changing their order. They will occasionally subconsciously

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<sup>142</sup> Thompson, P., *Voice of the Past: Oral History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988). Hoffman, A., "Reliability and Validity in Oral History", *Oral History: An Interdisciplinary Anthology*, Baum, W., and Dunaway, D., (eds) (Lanham: Altamira Press, 1996), p 92. Perks, R., *Talking about the Past* (London: The Historical Association, 1992).

<sup>143</sup> Hoffman, A., "Reliability and Validity in Oral History", *Oral History: An Interdisciplinary Anthology*, Baum, W., and Dunaway, D., (eds) (Lanham: Altamira Press, 1996), pp 87–93, and Moss, W., "Oral History; An Appreciation" *Ibid.* pp 107–120.

repress painful memories or artificially highlight their own role in a particular event.<sup>144</sup>

People may also 'lie sometimes, forget a little, exaggerate, become confused, get things wrong'<sup>145</sup> when they are interviewed; this is simply human nature.

Samuel wrote that 'in collecting life stories, you have to try to distinguish what is imagination and what is observation',<sup>146</sup> perhaps hinting that extracting historical fact,<sup>147</sup> while allowing for a personal viewpoint, is the skill of the interviewer.

Studs Terkel provided a more pragmatic approach, which informed the present research. When researching the Great Depression, he said of people, oral history and memory:

In their rememberings are their truths. The precise fact or the precise date is of small consequence. This is not a lawyer's brief nor an annotated sociological treatise. It is simply an attempt to get the story of the holocaust known as The Great Depression from an improvised battalion of survivors.<sup>148</sup>

Terkel's attitude may differ from that of other critics, as he was approaching his research from a journalistic point of view. If the issue of memory is considered carefully and interviews are cross-referenced as previously mentioned, then the reliability of oral history can be managed effectively by the historian.

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<sup>144</sup> Perks, R., *Talking about the Past* (London: The Historical Association, 1992), p 7.

<sup>145</sup> Passerini, L., "Women's Personal Narratives: Myths, Experiences and Emotions", *Interpreting Women's Lives: Feminist Theory and Personal Narratives*, Personal Narrative Group (ed) (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), p 197.

<sup>146</sup> Samuel, R., and Thompson, P., *The Myths We Live By* (London: Routledge, 1990), p 42.

<sup>147</sup> There is much debate on the nature of historical fact: See Tosh, J. and Lang, S., *The Pursuit of History* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2006).

<sup>148</sup> Terkel, S., *Hard Times: An Oral History of the Great Depression* (New York: The New Press, 1970), p 3.



Oral history is a methodology which draws on human experience, memory, and emotion to offer new perspectives on the past. Therefore, while it can offer the historian a richer, new, or relative, version of the past, it is also open to manipulation and abuse by the recorder. The risk of manipulation and abuse was reduced in this study by adopting a professional approach that included subscribing to appropriate ethical principles and following best practice guidelines related to the collection and use of oral testimonies. One of the most important considerations was to ensure that all interviews conducted were valid from a legal and ethical perspective. For example, it 'is unethical, and in many cases illegal, to use interviews without the informed consent of the interviewee, in which the nature of the use or uses is clear and explicit'.<sup>149</sup> For this reason, appropriate consent forms were developed and used in the present research. As well as gaining consent from the contributor, the interviewer must deal with copyright. When an interview is conducted and recorded, it results in two separate copyrights: the spoken words and the recording itself. This leads to dual ownership, in the first case the person who has spoken the words, and in the second the individual or organisation/employer that has made the recording. The Oral History Society advises that the copyright of the transcript belongs to the person who spoke the words. They also advise that those conducting interviews should 'ask their interviewees to assign copyright to them by completing and signing a clearance form'.<sup>150</sup> This was also done, and copyright release was included in the consent form. There are also confidentiality, libel, data protection and freedom of information issues to be considered when

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<sup>149</sup> Ward, A., *Is your Oral History Legal and Ethical?* online. Available from: <http://www.ohs.org.uk/ethics/>. [Accessed 14<sup>th</sup> January 2013].

<sup>150</sup> The Oral History Society, *Homepage*, online. Available from: <http://www.ohs.org.uk> [Accessed 29<sup>th</sup> March 2010].

undertaking an oral history project. To avoid causing distress to contributors and possible legal action, the consent forms should be very clear about what and how information will be used, and of course all information should be stored securely. All information should be kept in accordance with the Data Protection and Freedom of Information Act.<sup>151</sup> Again, details of how material would be used were included in the consent form and reiterated verbally to participants before they signed the form (see appendix 2 copyright and consent form template).

Like most formal organisations, the Oral History Society has a set of ethical guidelines, as

The Society believes that, while oral history work must comply with the law, legal requirements alone do not provide an adequate framework for good practice. No UK law was designed specifically to regulate oral history, in fact no law even mentions it.<sup>152</sup>

These guidelines are available online and clearly set out the responsibilities of interviewers and their employers or sponsoring institutions towards those they engage with and for the care of the material created through the process. Using this set of guidelines, a specific set was developed and followed for this project. The University of Lincoln also has a clear set of ethical guidelines for researchers working with human subjects, and students must go through an

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

administrative process in order to receive permission to carry out their work.

This process was undertaken and permission for the work granted.<sup>153</sup>

Background research on changes in agricultural practice in twentieth century Lincolnshire was then carried out in preparation for conducting interviews, to ensure that 'the life of the interviewee [was] reconstructed within a broader social context'<sup>154</sup> and that I was prepared to undertake the fieldwork. This also ensured that there was a set of topics for discussion<sup>155</sup> (see appendix 3 interview themes) rather than a list of prescribed questions, which it was felt, would direct the interviewee too much, not allowing participants to bring out what they felt was important within the area examined, and not giving them control of the interview. Interviews therefore were carried out in the style that Ewart Evans preferred: 'to approach his informants with few questions, and to let them talk'.<sup>156</sup> However, guidance was provided throughout the interview to ensure that information required for the research was captured.

Only if the risks of abuse and misuse are minimised through the application of good practice (they can never be eradicated fully) can the uniqueness of the source be celebrated as contributing to historical knowledge. The present thesis was influenced heavily by the work of George Ewart Evans in mid-twentieth century Suffolk, and his words remind current academics of the importance of capturing opinion based on experience:

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<sup>153</sup> Records held in Faculty Office at University of Lincoln.

<sup>154</sup> Berger Gluck, S., "What's so Special about Women? Women's Oral History", *Women's Oral History*, Armitage, S.H., Hart, P., Weathermoon K., (eds) (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), pp 27 – 42, p 6.

<sup>155</sup> Raleigh Yow, V., *Recording Oral History: A Practical Guide for Social Scientists* (London, Sage Publications, 1994).

<sup>156</sup> Social History Curators Group, *Group for Regional Studies in Museums Newsletter*, Issue 1 December 1975, online. Available from: [http://www.shcg.org.uk/scripts/resources\\_journal.asp](http://www.shcg.org.uk/scripts/resources_journal.asp) [Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> April 2010].

This oral testimony of the smaller farmer and the farm worker is valuable not only for the facts they can supply to help in constructing a full account of the period but also what they think of the facts.<sup>157</sup>

Again, the idea of capturing opinion and feeling, which is less about historical fact and more about understanding the ways in which change was experienced and understood, is central to this thesis. However, it might be argued that Ewart Evans was motivated not only to record the small farmer and the labourer to find out their views of the past, but to produce a labour history influenced by the political views he formed early in his adult life (he was from a Welsh working class background and became a member of the Communist Party in the 1930s).<sup>158</sup> This aim may have resulted in an over emphasis in Ewart Evans' work on agricultural change affecting working class people, and an assumption that it did not impact wealthier farmers and landowners.

The approach of Ewart Evans stands in direct opposition to some current practitioners. For example, in a profile piece in the *Museums Journal* in April 2008, oral historian Rebecca Roseff was asked: 'what is the secret of good oral history?'<sup>159</sup> Her reply was as follows:

It's a very efficient way of gathering information. Some interviewers set out to obtain an emotional response; that's a very modern thing. I'm more interested in how people worked, rather than how they felt about it.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Ewart Evans, G., *Where Beards Wag All: The Relevance of Oral Tradition* (London: Faber, 1970), p 92.

<sup>158</sup> Evans, M., "Land of My Father", *The Guardian*, 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2002.

<sup>159</sup> Author Unknown, "Profile: Rebecca Roseff, Oral Historian", *Museums Journal*, issue unknown, 2008, p 58.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*

It is extremely hard to concur with any level of this statement. In terms of time and effort, oral history is not an efficient way of gathering information, as it requires significant investment to capture relevant information. However, the information that is captured is often so illuminating that the effort is justified. Roseff's neglect of the feeling that flows throughout oral testimonies also discards one of the most important elements of selecting it as a methodology, and indeed might raise the question of why she practises it at all. Testimonies captured and used throughout this work intentionally reflect not only historical fact, but also the emotion and personal perspective of interviewees linked to it. To use just one example, when Mrs J. was interviewed about her experiences of working on the land, she said:

He said umm I don't want you to work on the land, and I thought well that's rich – I knew I'd have to. So when we came, I mean I...I always did work on the land.<sup>161</sup>

What is lost in the written version of this quote is her intonation, which provides the listener with a glimpse of her feelings on the matter; the acceptance of her situation in adult life based on her childhood experience. Arguably, this is what makes the testimony interesting and special; not only can we use the account to support the discourse on women's labour, but comment can be made on how individual women actually felt about working on the land.

This brings us to one of the main issues in working with oral history: it cannot appear in its original (spoken) format in most work, and has to be translated into the written word. Transcription is a hugely important part of the process, as it

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<sup>161</sup> Mrs J. OH.Southholland.003.

allows greater accessibility of the material collected, but it takes great skill and sensitivity to render a clear and accurate representation of the interview.

Summarising or transcription should always take place and be done clearly, as 'testimony can be collected without making arrangements or keeping records, but the results will be of little use to anyone, even you, if the only documentation is in your head'.<sup>162</sup> There are several aspects that must be considered, the first being the representation of the dialect or language spoken during the interview. Gentleman wrote of Ewart Evans' skills in this area:

He also transcribed the tapes with skill and sensitivity, particularly in the difficult matter of orthography and spelling of a Suffolk usage or accent, he was able accurately to transcribe old usages like bo' or bor (boy), yeh or yeah (yes) without the transcription looking patronising or folksy.<sup>163</sup>

As this is an academic piece of work, offering the general public limited access to the research material, the decision was made to summarise interviews and then transcribe parts relevant to the thesis for inclusion in the study. This does not preclude full transcriptions being made in the future, as it is planned that the archive will be deposited in the University of Lincoln Library once the thesis has undergone assessment. In the short transcriptions used I have tried to address the various accents in the way that Ewart Evans did, by transcribing the words as spoken by the participant and not changing the grammar of their speech. For example, two common colloquial phrases in the south and east of the county that are not grammatically correct (as represented by South Holland, Boston

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<sup>162</sup> Caunce, S., *Oral History and the Local Historian: Approaches to Local History* (London: Longman, 1994), p 125.

<sup>163</sup> Gentleman, D., "Introduction", *The Crooked Scythe: An Anthology of Oral History*, Ewart Evans, G., (London: Faber, 1994), p xix.

Borough, and East Lindsey) but were not corrected are 'we was' and 'I were'. I have also tried to capture speech patterns by including pauses, stutters, and repetitions. Whilst this is not entirely successful on paper, it does ensure that the transcription is as closely represents the spoken word, but perhaps the only way to truly appreciate the accent of the individual is to listen to the recordings.

Another argument for the application of oral history to this research was to capture very specific histories, to draw out the uniqueness of Lincolnshire as a county comprising geographically disparate sub-regions. The great French historian Jules Michelet, Professor of the *École Normale Supérieure*, the Sorbonne and College de France, used oral history as a historical source when writing about the French Revolution during the nineteenth century. He described at some length what he considered this source to be:

When I say oral tradition, I mean national tradition, which remained generally scattered in the mouths of the people, which everybody said and repeated. Peasants, townsfolk, old men, women, even children; which you hear if you enter of an evening into a village tavern; which you may gather if, finding on the road a passer by at rest, you begin to converse with him about the rain, the season, then the high price of victuals, then the times of the Emperor, then the times of the revolution.<sup>164</sup>

However, his rationale is not unassailable, as it is debatable whether a methodology that seeks out an individual and captures their unique perspective

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<sup>164</sup> Cit. in Thompson, P., *Voice of the Past: Oral History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p 22.

on events can in fact capture a national tradition. What it does do is provide historians with an individual's 'reminiscences, accounts, and interpretations of events from the recent past which are of historical significance'.<sup>165</sup> However, if oral history allows the capturing of the social memory of people who identify themselves as belonging to a group because of past experience, such a group could be as large as a nation.<sup>166</sup>

Tonkin highlights the importance of the voice of the individual in history by quoting Robert Louis Stevenson: 'The past is myself, my own history, the seed of my present thoughts, the mould of my present disposition'.<sup>167</sup> This means that everyone has an historical awareness that has, as Tosh wrote, shaped self and group identity and an 'interpretation of the events and experiences which have formed over time'.<sup>168</sup> If Tonkin and Tosh are right, it could therefore be argued that the individual's contribution through oral history is essential to providing a fuller picture of the past.

This thesis is concerned with the presentation of a past that transcends the barriers of the English class system. Howarth and Counce both confirm the importance of oral history in telling the story of the ordinary person, in order to supplement recorded history that often 'represents the interests, aspirations, bias, opinions and cultural values of the educated classes or the State'.<sup>169</sup> They remind us that frequently 'ordinary people still appear only in fleeting glimpses

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<sup>165</sup> Hoffman, A., "Reliability and Validity in Oral History" in *Oral History: An Interdisciplinary Anthology*, Baum, W., and Dunaway, D., (eds) (Lanham: Altamira Press, 1996), p 88.

<sup>166</sup> Tosh, J. and Lang, S., *The Pursuit of History* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2006).

<sup>167</sup> Tonkin, E., *Narrating our Pasts: The Social Construction of Oral History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p 1.

<sup>168</sup> Tosh, J. and Lang, S., *The Pursuit of History* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2006), p

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<sup>169</sup> Howarth, K., *Oral History* (Sutton: Phoenix Mill, 1999), p 6.



in records compiled by others for their own reasons'.<sup>170</sup> It can be argued that by including ordinary people, in this case agricultural labourers and women, in the representation of the past, a more balanced history, or history from a different perspective can be presented. History in effect becomes more democratic. Thompson highlighted this important point when he wrote that 'oral history has radical implications for the social message of history as a whole'.<sup>171</sup> In terms of Lincolnshire there has been interest in the labouring class, but there is little information regarding the role of women on the farm. Starr also made this point when he wrote about how oral history often captures life stories that would otherwise be lost to the historian,<sup>172</sup> and Caunce provided context for the contribution of the ordinary person when he said that they can give 'detailed knowledge to the study of wider themes'.<sup>173</sup> Yow also supported this view when she wrote that oral history captures 'daily life at home and at work – the very stuff that rarely gets into any kind of public record'.<sup>174</sup> This research has tried to reflect all these important elements: history not already recorded, specific knowledge and experience of changes in agricultural practices, and the everyday or social history of rural Lincolnshire. However, the information gathered for this thesis is set against a background of other secondary and primary sources in line with good historical research practice as discussed earlier in the chapter.

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<sup>170</sup> Caunce, S., *Oral History and the Local Historian: Approaches to Local History* (London: Longman, 1994), p 13.

<sup>171</sup> Thompson, P., *Voice of the Past: Oral History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p 6.

<sup>172</sup> Starr, L., "Oral History", *Oral History: An Interdisciplinary Anthology*, Baum, W., and Dunaway, D., (eds) (Lanham: Altamira Press, 1996), pp 3 – 26, p 40.

<sup>173</sup> Caunce, S., *Oral History and the Local Historian: Approaches to Local History* (London: Longman, 1994), p 8.

<sup>174</sup> Raleigh Yow, V., *Recording Oral History: A Practical Guide for Social Scientists* (London: Sage Publications, 1994), p 13.

If representing ordinary people in history is important, then representing minority and excluded groups, such as Black Asian Minority Ethnic communities and people with disabilities, is essential in order to provide a relative and more balanced view of the past. These groups are key members of society, yet their contributions are often left out of traditional histories, or presented from the point of view of people outside of their groups who have made assumptions about their experiences. This issue has been addressed at the Victoria and Albert Museum in relation to an eighteenth century portrait of Francis Williams, 'the first recorded black writer in the British Empire'.<sup>175</sup> Visitors are helped to interpret the portrait by an audio recording of the poet and writer Benjamin Zephaniah discussing his interpretation of what he sees in the painting.<sup>176</sup> One of the excluded groups in relation to agricultural practice that this research sought to represent to a greater extent through the collection of oral histories was women. It would be wrong to suggest that all aspects of the history of women's roles as producers are under-represented in the historical record, for the role of the Women's Land Army during World War Two is a subject well covered by local, social and oral histories.<sup>177</sup> (This is highlighted in the sheer number of volumes available on this topic at the online booksellers Amazon: on 10 May 2010, 467 titles exploring the Women's Land Army were available for purchase).<sup>178</sup> However, it should be noted that many of these volumes may fall under the auspices of what historians might consider non-academic nostalgic

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<sup>175</sup> Victoria and Albert Museum, *Francis Williams – Portrait of an Early Black Writer*, online. Available from: <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/f/francis-williams-a-portrait-of-an-early-black-writer/>. [Accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2012].

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

<sup>177</sup> Short, B., Watkins, C. and Martin, J., "The Front Line of Freedom': State-led agricultural Revolution in Britain, 1939 - 45", *The Frontline of Freedom: British Farming in the Second World War*, Short, B., Watkins, C. and Martin, J. (eds) (Exeter: British Agricultural History Society, 2007), pp 1 - 15.

<sup>178</sup> Amazon, *Search Results 'Women's Land Army'*, online. Available from: <http://www.amazon.co.uk>. [Accessed 10<sup>th</sup> May 2010].

writings, perhaps confirmed by Clarke's assertion that in academic circles this has been 'a neglected aspect of the history of British farming'.<sup>179</sup>

There are, however, other aspects of the work undertaken by English women during the twentieth century that remain largely untold. This under-representation is perhaps due to the androcentric nature of a number of constituents that form this particular area of research.

Firstly, the public face of agriculture is traditionally dominated by men. For example, the term 'farmer' immediately conjures up a male image, something Neath highlighted in the American context when she wrote:

The term that designates one who works on the land, refers only to an adult man, even though women and children worked on the family farms and were also 'farmers'.<sup>180</sup>

Jellison wrote of women undertaking their work 'under a patriarchal system in which their labour largely belonged to their husbands and fathers',<sup>181</sup> again suggesting that men were the more dominant force in America. The same could be said of England, where women also laboured on the family farm to support their husbands.

It can be argued that because of this male domination, the telling of women's history within the agricultural context has been affected greatly by what men,

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<sup>179</sup> Clarke, G., "The Women's Land Army and its Recruits 1938 – 50", *The Frontline of Freedom: British Farming in the Second World War*, Short, B., Watkins, C. and Martin, J. (eds) (Exeter: British Agricultural History Society, 2007), pp 101 – 116, p 101.

<sup>180</sup> Neath, M., *Preserving the Family Farm: Women, Community, and the foundation of Agribusiness in the Midwest 1900 – 1940* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), p 1.

<sup>181</sup> Jellison, K., *Entitled to Power: Farm women and Technology 1913 – 1963* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), p xx.

particularly the elite, class as acceptable work for a woman. For example, historically in England the dairy maid is the acceptable face of a female producer; her very title ("maid") suggests that she is young and virtuous, something that is reiterated visually throughout history. By contrast, the field woman who works in a gang is not seen as virtuous, she is often written about as a wretched, morally dubious woman – and the use of the term ‘woman’ hints at someone who is sexually active. Howkins illustrates this notion when he says of the nineteenth century British woman:

The very difference in the name is significant – the dairymaid and the fieldwoman, the one with its stress on innocence and the rural idyll, the other with its connotations of experience and harshness.<sup>182</sup>

It would appear that a woman working within a feminine or domestic setting, such as the dairy, out of public view was acceptable, whereas a woman engaging publically in physical, and perhaps masculine, activities was not. This thesis will demonstrate that this attitude towards women still prevailed well into the twentieth century, and is particularly reflected in the thoughts of wealthier farmers with a high social standing in relation to their wives’ duties and responsibilities.

In the past, this male domination and concept of acceptability has led to the presentation of a distorted version of agricultural history being presented. The present thesis will challenge this history in line with academics such as Sangster, who has pushed forward the use of oral history in the feminist

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<sup>182</sup>Howkins, A., “The English Farm Labourer in the Nineteenth Century: Farm Family and Community”, *The English Rural Community: Image and Analysis*, Short, B., (ed) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp 85 – 104, p 101. Reay, B., *Rural England: Labouring Lives in the Nineteenth Century* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

tradition to ensure that ‘the often neglected lives of women’<sup>183</sup> are documented, and Berger Gluck, who sees the use of oral history as a form of empowerment for women:

Refusing to be rendered historically voiceless any longer, women are creating a new history – using our own voices and experiences. We are challenging the traditional concepts of history, of what is ‘historically important’, and we are affirming that our everyday lives are history.<sup>184</sup>

Whilst this piece of research agrees with Berger Gluck’s view, it does not necessarily agree with the claim that women are actively coming forward because they want their histories and stories to be heard, rather than being sought out by academics wishing to broaden the historical record. Throughout the research for this thesis, women had to be actively sought out and persuaded to take part in the project to ensure a gender split reflective of Britain’s society today (50/50).<sup>185</sup>

Seeking out participants in general was not a completely scientific process, but was developed in line with sociological method of ‘snowballing’ and by seeking out participants through the local press across Lincolnshire and letters to people suggested by existing contacts (see appendix 4 letter to prospective interviewees). There are inherent challenges in trying to be scientific in approach to collecting interviews; for example, when researching the

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<sup>183</sup> Sangster, J., “Telling our Stories: Feminist Debates and the Use of Oral History” *Women’s History Review*, Vol 3, No 1, 1994, p 5.

<sup>184</sup> Berger Gluck, S., “What’s so Special About Women?”, *Women’s Oral History*, Armitage, S.H., Hart, P., Weathermoon K., (eds) (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), pp 27 – 42, p 3.

<sup>185</sup> Office National Statistics, *Annual Mid-Year Population Estimates, 2010*, online. Available from: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/taxonomy/index.html?nscl=Population+Estimates+by+Age+and+Sex> . [Accessed 12<sup>th</sup> June 2012]

Edwardians, Paul Thompson ensured that his profile of participants matched the social make-up of Edwardian society,<sup>186</sup> but because he was researching the Edwardian period in the 1970s his group was not diverse in age range, thus limiting the range of experience that could be explored. When undertaking a project researching women in farming, Thomas included a profile that she felt matched American society in general, but was perhaps not really representative of women in farming, in a bid to make her project a scientific endeavour:

I was panicked about not having social science authenticity, so I made sure I had at least two Native Americans, two Chicanas, seventeen black women, and women from every class.<sup>187</sup>

It is highly likely that this approach (the deliberate inclusion of minorities) might result in the suggestion that these groups of women were more involved in farming than they actually were. The two techniques used in this project are not without criticism. Snowball sampling is a method by which the researcher is put into contact with participants through other interviewees, and is often utilised by sociologists to access 'hidden populations' such as drug addicts or gay men.<sup>188</sup> Whilst the sample sought for this project did not necessarily belong to a hidden population, it was easier to gain the trust of people if a friend or acquaintance had introduced them. The issue with developing a sample in this manner is that people tend to socialise or work with people of a similar class, beliefs and

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<sup>186</sup> Thompson, P., *The Edwardians: The Remaking of British Society* (London: Routledge, 1975).

<sup>187</sup> Thomas, S., "Digging Beneath the Surface: Oral History Techniques", *Women's Oral History*, Armitage, S.H., Hart, P., Weathermoon, K. (eds) (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), pp 51 – 60, p 51.

<sup>188</sup> Van Meter, K., "Methodological and Design Issues: Techniques for Assessing the Representatives of Snowball Samples", *The Collection and Interpretation of Data from Hidden Populations* (Rockville: US Department of Health and Human Services, 1998).

values, resulting in similar interview results. This is why the local press was also used, as this produced a more random sample, as advocated by Thompson.<sup>189</sup> However, a major issue in using this technique was that those who actively came forward had been involved with other projects as well, such as Stennett's recent research into agricultural change in the twentieth century.<sup>190</sup> In some instances this has led to the duplication of information, and the same group of people contributing to both projects. However, Terkel's comments about oral history not being a sociological exercise were kept in mind as the project developed and the social science methodologies utilised by Thompson were not attempted.

A key methodological consideration in relation to oral history was how it should be presented within the thesis. As discussed earlier in the chapter, conventions in the transcription of interviews are covered at length in contemporary practical guides to oral history, such as Mackay's *Curating Oral Histories*,<sup>191</sup> and were addressed at length by early practitioners such as Ewart Evans. However, conventions for the presentation of oral history in written documents have been extremely hard to pinpoint. It would appear from a discussion with fellow practitioners at the East Midlands Oral History Archive Annual Oral History Day in 2010 that there are in fact no agreed principles, and the ways in which testimonies are presented are varied.<sup>192</sup> It has proved impossible to find any consensus on the presentation of language, colloquialisms, pauses, stutters,

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<sup>189</sup> Social History Curators Group, *Group for Regional Studies in Museums Newsletter*, online, Issue 1, December 1975, online. Available from:

[http://www.shcg.org.uk/scripts/resources\\_journal.asp](http://www.shcg.org.uk/scripts/resources_journal.asp) [Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> April 2010].

<sup>190</sup> Stennett, A., *Memories of Lincolnshire Farming* (Newbury: Countryside Books, 2009).

<sup>191</sup> Mackay, N., *Curating Oral Histories* (Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press Ltd, 2007).

<sup>192</sup> Discussion at East Midlands Oral History Archive Annual Oral History Day, Southwell Workhouse, 7 June 2010.

noises and laughter in academic work. However, if Ewart Evans' approach is held up as a key influence and this work seeks to offer a richer history than presented by other authors, to represent the uniqueness of Lincolnshire and the individual within the historical context, it seems natural to produce transcriptions directly from the interview with pauses, grammatical errors, and laughter left in. This makes the quotes harder to read initially, but provides an insight into the personalities and personal perspectives of the contributors. The reader will find oral histories used throughout chapters 3 and 4 alongside newspaper accounts, articles, and texts (of both a prospect and refuge nature), offering a new and more complex presentation of the emergence of modern agriculture in Lincolnshire. This not only contributes new material to the historical body of work, but also context for the argument that the debates around the dangers of nostalgia are now outdated and that a critical reinvestigation of traditional research methods is needed.

### **Continuity and change**

Chapters 3 and 4 of the thesis are primarily concerned with continuity and change in relation to agricultural practice. They do not examine events over a short period of time, but look at change over a longer term, and are interested in the points at which modern agriculture emerged in Lincolnshire and when breaks in continuity of practice occurred in the county.<sup>193</sup> In essence this part of the thesis is attempting to do what the Historical Thinking Project says is one of keys to examining continuity and change; by challenging the accepted view on the shift from traditional to modern agricultural practices it is 'looking for change

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<sup>193</sup> Burke, P. "Introduction: Concepts of Continuity and Change in History", (*The New Cambridge Modern History Companion Volume*), Burke, P. (ed) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979) pp unknown.



where common sense suggests that there has been none and looking for continuities where we assumed that there was change'.<sup>194</sup> This approach to challenging preconceptions is essential if the thesis is to contribute a new body of historical knowledge to the existing one. Burke criticised historians for accepting continuity with no explanation and focusing on change as being dramatic and revolutionary, and Cannadine has challenged historians for over emphasising either continuity or change during the periods they examined.<sup>195</sup> This thesis tries to take a more balanced view of continuity and change in the agricultural context of Lincolnshire; the research does not seek to place importance on either condition, but instead focuses on resituating changes in agricultural practices, and agricultural modernity, in the historical record.

In 1979 Burke described historical continuity as either representing no change or a particular type of change that had taken place that was even in its pace and course.<sup>196</sup> I reject the idea that continuity is representative of a static society, and agree with Preston in her assertion that 'all societies are involved in a process of social change'.<sup>197</sup> Socio-cultural practices constantly change, it is just the extent and rate of change which differs, and thus the impact on everyday life and society in general. Agricultural practice is no different from any other social or cultural activity and it is accepted that a pattern of evolution

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<sup>194</sup> The Historical Thinking Project, *Continuity and Change*, online. Available from: <http://historicalthinking.ca/concept/continuity-and-change>. [Accessed 1<sup>st</sup> November 2012].

<sup>195</sup> Burke, P. "Introduction: Concepts of Continuity and Change in History", (*The New Cambridge Modern History Companion Volume*), Burke, P. (ed) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979) pp unknown. Cannadine, D., *Perspectives: One Hundred Years of History in Britain*, online. Available from: [http://www.history.ac.uk/makinghistory/resources/articles/making\\_history.html#f37](http://www.history.ac.uk/makinghistory/resources/articles/making_history.html#f37). [Accessed 1<sup>st</sup> November 2012].

<sup>196</sup> Burke, P. "Introduction: Concepts of Continuity and Change in History", (*The New Cambridge Modern History Companion Volume*), Burke, P. (ed) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979) pp unknown.

<sup>197</sup> Preston, C. *Social Continuity and Change, and Social Theory*, online. Available from: [http://scansw.com.au/sc\\_pages/sc\\_core/sc\\_preston.html](http://scansw.com.au/sc_pages/sc_core/sc_preston.html). [Accessed 1<sup>st</sup> November 2012].

interspersed with periods of revolution during the Neolithic, eighteenth century, mid-twentieth century exists.<sup>198</sup> Although it should be noted that whilst these ‘revolutions’ are periods of rapid and dramatic change, they still represent non-uniform change over periods of time, with each revolution taking place in a shorter time frame than the one before it.

Chapters 3 and 4 clearly demonstrate that changes in agricultural practice did take place during the period of relative continuity (c.1850 – 1930), but the impact of these changes in methods agricultural production were so limited that it continued to be traditional rather than modern in its character, and there was little impact on those people working in agriculture.<sup>199</sup>

When George Ewart Evans was researching and writing in the 1960s and 1970s, he recognised that contemporary changes in agricultural practice had affected the way people lived their lives within rural communities to such an extent that he talked about a ‘prior culture’<sup>200</sup> within rural England that was kept alive in the memories of those who had experienced it. The concept of a ‘prior culture’ forms the rationale for the inclusion of the present chapter examining the period 1850 – 1980, which spans both the ‘prior’ and the modern. Ewart Evans said of his term:

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<sup>198</sup> Bradwood, R.J., “The Agricultural Revolution”, *Farmers and Civilisation: Old World Archaeology*, Lamberg – Karlovsky, C.C., (ed) (New York: W.H. Freeman and Company, 1979), pp 22 - 24. Weisdorf, J.L., “From Foraging to Farming: Explaining the Neolithic Revolution”, *Journal of Economic Surveys*, Vol 19, No 4, September 2005, pp 561 – 586. Overton, M., *Agricultural Revolution in England: The Transformation of the Agrarian Economy 1500 – 1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). Overton, M., “Re-establishing the English Agricultural Revolution”, *Agricultural History Review*, Vol 44, No 1, 1996, pp 1 – 20. UK Agriculture, *UK Countryside History – 4,000 BC*, online. Available from: [http://www.ukagriculture.com/countryside/countryside\\_history\\_4000bc.cfm](http://www.ukagriculture.com/countryside/countryside_history_4000bc.cfm). [Accessed 15<sup>th</sup> July 2009]. Gill, E., “New Thoughts on the Failure of the Organic Food and Farming Movement in Postwar Britain”, *Paper, Annual Conference of the British Economic History Society*,  
<sup>199</sup> Ewart Evans, G., *Where Beards Wag All: The Relevance of Oral Tradition* (London: Faber and Faber, 1970), p 17.

I call it prior culture because – in spite of its being primitive in many of its forms – to characterise it as primitive culture would be to make a doubtful value judgement and to suggest that in all its aspects it had little worth preserving.<sup>201</sup>

This statement not only emphasises the historical value of understanding this earlier period, but the language used, such as ‘primitive’, may be interpreted as being consciously used to imply that agricultural practice had remained relatively constant and unchanged for a lengthy historical period preceding the mid to late twentieth century. The term ‘relatively’ is crucial within this context, as this chapter will demonstrate that whilst there is change in agricultural practice between the 1850s and the 1950s, its impact is minimal compared to the many subsequent changes that took place in agriculture between the 1950s and 1980s. This is much in line with Caunce, who argued in 1991 that ‘rural societies are often seen as static but they do evolve, sometimes at a rapid rate’,<sup>202</sup> and there is comparability between this study and Woods’ work on the emergence of modern pig farming as there is some evidence of some changes representing modernity before World War Two, such as combine harvesters being utilised near Lincoln in the 1930s.<sup>203</sup>

This research not only reaffirms Ewart Evans’ recognition of change during the 1960s and 1970s, but provides a new spatial context for this argument. The parallels drawn between Lincolnshire and Ewart Evans’s Suffolk suggest that the continuities and changes in practice may be a wider geographical

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<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

<sup>202</sup> Caunce, S., *Amongst Farm Horses: The Houselads of East Yorkshire* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1991), p 3.

<sup>203</sup> Woods, A., “Rethinking the History of Modern Agriculture: British Pig Production, C1910-65”, *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol 23, No 2, 2012, pp 165 – 191. See Chapter 4.

phenomenon than previously assumed, and suggest scope for further work in challenging the preconception of Britain emerging from World War Two as a 'modern' country.<sup>204</sup>

In his article "Concepts of Continuity and Change in History" Burke provided three models of socio-cultural change. The first is that of a pattern of fluctuation of change around a fixed point in time, the second a gradual rise and decline in trends, and the third an abrupt change that is a turning point in history, that represents a clear discontinuity in socio-cultural trends.<sup>205</sup> The changes described in chapters 3 and 4 contain features that are representative of each of these models. For example, the wide-scale adoption of tractors fluctuates around fixed points in time; World War One and Two. The replacement of the horse by the tractor is represented by a trend of decline and replacement over several decades, but there is a distinct turning point when real horse power is no longer viable and modernity in the guise of tractors must be adopted by farmers to ensure survival.<sup>206</sup>

The research undertaken for this thesis revealed the following indicators for continuity of traditional agricultural practice in Lincolnshire:<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>204</sup> Brassley, P., "Output and Technical Change in Twentieth Century British Agriculture", *Agricultural History Review*, Vol 48, No. 1, 2000, pp 60 - 84, for challenges to the perception that there are two distinct periods of agricultural history in the twentieth century intersected by World War Two.

<sup>205</sup> Burke, P., "Introduction: Concepts of Continuity and Change in History", (*The New Cambridge Modern History Companion Volume*), Burke, P. (ed) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979) pp unknown.

<sup>206</sup> See chapter 4.

<sup>207</sup> Note that no - one indicator is deemed more significant than another. These are not listed in any particular order.

- i) Large agricultural estates owned by the gentry with tenant farmers in upland areas and small holdings owned by individuals in the lowland areas of the county.<sup>208</sup>
- ii) Field patterns characterised by Parliamentary Enclosure in upland areas, drainage and Parliamentary Enclosure in fenland areas, and sparse remnants of medieval strip farming in the Isle of Axholme.<sup>209</sup>
- iii) The application of real horse power or steam to power machinery which still required significant numbers of labourers to perform tasks.<sup>210</sup>
- iv) A large labour force featuring a significant number of women and children working in gangs and as individual labourers, carrying out

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<sup>208</sup> Brown, J., *Farming in Lincolnshire 1850 – 1950 (Studies in the History of Lincolnshire)* (Lincoln: History of Lincolnshire Committee, 2005). Newby, H., *Green and Pleasant Land? Social Change in Rural England* (Hounslow: Wildwood House, 1979). Offer, A., "Farm Tenure and Land Values in England, c. 1750 – 1950", *The Economic History Review*, Vol 40, No 1, February 1991, pp. 1 – 20.

Reay, B., *Rural Englands: Labouring Lives in the Nineteenth Century* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004). Holderness, B.A., "Aspects of Inter – Regional Land Use and Agriculture in Lincolnshire 1600 – 1850", *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology*, Vol 9, 1974, pp 35 – 42. Rawding, C., *The Lincolnshire Wolds in the Nineteenth Century, (Studies in the History of Lincolnshire)*, (Lincoln: History of Lincolnshire Committee, 2001). Perkins, J.A., "Tenure, Tenant Right, and Agricultural Progress in Lindsey, 1780 – 1850", *The Agricultural History Review*, Vol 23, No 1, 1975. Thirsk, J. *English Peasant Farming: The Agrarian History of Lincolnshire from Tudor to Recent Times* (London: Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1957), pp 1 - 22. Haresign, S.R., "Small Farms and Allotments as a Cure for Rural Depopulation on the Lincolnshire Fenland 1870 – 1914" *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology*, Vol 18, 1983, pp 27 – 36. Olney, R.J., (ed) *Labouring Life on the Lincolnshire Wolds: A Study of Binbrook in the Mid Nineteenth Century, (Occasional Papers in Lincolnshire History and Archaeology)*, (Lincoln: Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology, 1975).

<sup>209</sup> Lord, J., MacIntosh, A., and Partington, A., *The Historic Character of the County of Lincolnshire: The Historic Landscape Character Zones, English Heritage Project No. 4661*, Lincolnshire County Council, September 2011, online. Available from: <http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/residents/environment-and-planning/conservation/archaeology/lincolnshire-historic-landscape-characterisation-project?tab=downloads>. [Accessed 25<sup>th</sup> November 2011].

<sup>210</sup> Harwood Long, W., "The Development of Mechanisation in English Farming", *Agricultural History Review*, Vol 11, No 1, 1963, pp 15 – 26. Dewey, P., *Iron Harvests of the Field: The Making of Farm Machinery in Britain since 1800* (Lancaster: Carnegie Publishing Ltd, 2008). Counce, S.A., "Mechanisation and Society in English Agriculture: The Experience of the North East, 1850 – 1914", *Rural History*, Vol 17, No 1, 2006, p. 34. Ó Gradá, C., "British Agriculture, 1860-1914", *The Economic History of Britain Since 1700: Vol. 2 1860-1939*, Floud, R., and McCloskey, D., (eds) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp 152 – 172. Brighton, H., *The Lost Farmyard* (Spalding: Self-Published, 2006). Brown, J., *Farming in Lincolnshire 1850-1950 (Studies in the History of Lincolnshire)* (Lincoln: History of Lincolnshire Committee, 2005). Mingay, G. E., *A Social History of the English Countryside* (Routledge: London, 1990).

hand work throughout the lifecycle of the crop (planting, weeding and singling, and harvesting).

v) A tradition of mixed farming across the county.<sup>211</sup>

Preston argued that agriculture itself can be used as an indicator of change and that the move from traditional modes of production to technologically advanced modes of production is an indicator of modernity.<sup>212</sup> The background research conducted for this thesis revealed that agricultural modernity in the context of Lincolnshire can be defined by a range of features that became apparent throughout the twentieth century. These changes did not all occur at the same time, and it might be unwise to suggest that one of these indicators equals a switch to modernity. Their staggered introduction (both temporally and spatially), perhaps then reflects the complexity of the transition from the prior to modern culture.<sup>213</sup>

i) The purchase, amalgamation, and ownership of land by large private companies (1960s onwards).<sup>214</sup>

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<sup>211</sup> Brown, J., *Farming in Lincolnshire 1850 – 1950 (Studies in the History of Lincolnshire)* (Lincoln: History of Lincolnshire Committee, 2005). Perren, R., *Agriculture in Depression 1870 – 1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). Olney, R.J. (ed) *Labouring Life on the Lincolnshire Wolds: A Study of Binbrook in the Mid Nineteenth Century*, (*Occasional Papers in Lincolnshire history and Archaeology*), (Lincoln: Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology, 1975), Holderness, B.A., "Agriculture", *Twentieth Century Lincolnshire*, Mills, D. (ed) (Lincoln: SLHA, 1989), pp 37 - 70. Ilbery, B., *Agricultural Change in Great Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992). Howkins, A., *The Death of Rural England: A Social History of the Countryside Since 1900* (London: Routledge, 2003). Thirsk, J. *Alternative Agriculture: A History from the Black Death to the Present Day* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

<sup>212</sup> Preston, C., *Social Continuity and Change, and Social Theory*, online. Available from: [http://scansw.com.au/sc\\_pages/sc\\_core/sc\\_preston.html](http://scansw.com.au/sc_pages/sc_core/sc_preston.html). [Accessed 1<sup>st</sup> November 2012].

<sup>213</sup> Note that no - one indicator is deemed more significant than another. These are not listed in any particular order.

<sup>214</sup> Steel, D. A., *A Lincolnshire Village: The Parish of Corby Glen in its Historical Context*, (London: Longman, 1979). Holderness, B.A., "Agriculture", *Twentieth Century Lincolnshire*, Mills, D. (ed) (Lincoln: SLHA, 1989), pp 39 – 70. Velcourt, *Velcourt History*, online. Available at: <http://www.velcourt.co.uk/company/history>. [Accessed 23rd August 2011]. Munton, R. J. C., "Financial Institutions: Their Ownership of Agricultural Land in Great Britain", *Area*, Vol 9, No 1, 1977, pp 29-37. Munton, R.J.C., "Rural Land Ownership in the United Kingdom: Changing

- ii) The amalgamation of fields and the loss of field boundaries, such as traditional hedgerows, to allow for the accommodation of modern agricultural machinery (1970s onwards).<sup>215</sup>
- iii) The adoption and application of large, labour saving, machinery powered either directly or indirectly by the internal combustion engine (1930s in some cases, but in significant numbers from 1960s).<sup>216</sup>
- iv) A significantly reduced labour force, including a significant reduction of the number of children in the workforce, and the loss of women from traditional labouring roles such as handwork (1960s and 1970s).<sup>217</sup>

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Patterns and Future Possibilities”, *Land Use Policy*, Volume 26, Supplement 1, December 2009, pp 54 – 61.

<sup>215</sup> Lord, J., MacIntosh, A., and Partington, A., *The Historic Character of the County of Lincolnshire: The Historic Landscape Character Zones, English Heritage Project No. 4661*, Lincolnshire County Council, September 2011, online. Available from: <http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/residents/environment-and-planning/conservation/archaeology/lincolnshire-historic-landscape-characterisation-project?tab=downloads>. [Accessed 25<sup>th</sup> November 2011].

<sup>216</sup> Dewey, P., *Iron Harvests of the Field: The Making of Farm Machinery in Britain since 1800* (Lancaster: Carnegie Publishing Ltd, 2008). Davies, D., "The Mechanisation of Lincolnshire Farms" *Agriculture: The Journal of the Ministry of Agriculture*, Special Lincolnshire Number, Vol 50, No 4, July 1947, pp 37 - 70. Brown, J., *Farming in Lincolnshire 1850-1950 (Studies in the History of Lincolnshire)* (Lincoln: History of Lincolnshire Committee, 2005). Dewey, P.E., *British Agriculture in the First World War* (London: Routledge, 1989). Lincolnshire Federations of Women's Institutes, *Lincolnshire Within Living Memory* (Newbury, Countryside Books, 1995). Wells, G.B. and Mann A., "Farming in Kesteven and Lindsey", *Agriculture The Journal of the Ministry of Agriculture*, Special Lincolnshire Number, Vol 54, No 4, July 1947, pp 153 –158.

<sup>217</sup> Brown, J., *Farming in Lincolnshire 1850-1950 (Studies in the History of Lincolnshire)* (Lincoln: History of Lincolnshire Committee, 2005). Harwood Long, W., "The Development of Mechanisation in English Farming", *Agricultural History Review*, Vol 11, No 1, 1963, pp 15 – 26. Thirsk, J. *English Peasant Farming: The Agrarian History of Lincolnshire from Tudor to Recent Times* (London: Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1957). Olney, R.J. (ed) *Labouring Life on the Lincolnshire Wolds: A Study of Binbrook in the Mid Nineteenth Century, (Occasional Papers in Lincolnshire History and Archaeology)*, (Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology, 1975). Royal Commission into the Employment of Children, Young People and Women in Agriculture, 1867.

Reay, B., *Microhistories, Demography, Society and Culture in Rural England 1800 – 1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). Howkins, A., *Reshaping Rural England: A Social History 1850 – 1925* (London: Routledge, 1991). Lincolnshire Federation of Women's Institutes, *Lincolnshire Within Living Memory* (Newbury: Countryside Books, 1995). Verdon, N. "Agricultural Labour and the Contested Nature of Women's Work in Interwar England and Wales" *The Historical Journal*, Vol 52, No 1, March 2009, pp 109 - 130. Wallace, J.C., "Farming in the Holland Division of Lincolnshire", *Agriculture The Journal of the Ministry of Agriculture*, Special Lincolnshire Number, Vol 54, No 4, July 1947, pp 158 – 165. Clarke, G., "The Women's Land Army and its Recruits 1938 – 50", *The Frontline of Freedom: British Farming in the Second World War*, Short, B., Watkins, C. and Martin, J. (eds) (Exeter: British Agricultural History Society, 2007), pp 101 - 116.

- v) Advanced chemical and biological practices applied to increase the durability, resistance, and yield of a crop (1950s onwards).<sup>218</sup>
- vi) The rise of farming monoculture and specialisation, which was driven by government intervention and consumer demands (1970s onwards).<sup>219</sup>

Through the examination of a range of existing traditional and non-traditional secondary and primary sources and the collection of a new body of oral testimonies, it was decided that the labour patterns of women and children and the adoption of highly mechanised equipment exemplified the complexity of the shift from traditional practice to modernity. A reassessment of Lincolnshire's agricultural history was therefore carried out, which produced a new historical narrative, demonstrating that there was not dramatic and widely spread change in agricultural practice in Lincolnshire until the 1960s. It also highlights that nostalgia can be useful in encouraging people to contribute to history, that this contribution allows different perspectives on the past to be added to the historical narrative.

Chapters 3 and 4 of the thesis, then, seek to reframe changes in agricultural practice and to demonstrate that the shift from traditional to modern farming peaked during the mid to late twentieth century, set against the comparatively

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<sup>218</sup> Perren, R., *Agriculture in Depression 1870 – 1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). Brown, J. *Farming in Lincolnshire 1850 – 1950 (Studies in the History of Lincolnshire)* (Lincoln: History of Lincolnshire Committee, 2005). University of Reading, *Post War Agriculture*, online. Available from: <http://www.ecifm.rdg.ac.uk/postwarag.htm>. [Accessed 20<sup>th</sup> August 2011]. Brassley, P., "Output and Technical Change in Twentieth Century British Agriculture", *Agricultural History Review*, Vol 48, No 1, 2000, pp 60 – 84.

<sup>219</sup> Wallace, J.C., "Farming in the Holland Division of Lincolnshire", *Agriculture The Journal of the Ministry of Agriculture*, Special Lincolnshire Number, Vol 54, No 4, July 1947, pp 158 – 165. Mr L. OH.Westlindsey.001, described this very well in the following quote 'When we took the farm over every bit of the farm was grassland. The only bits of arable on one farm there was a two acre piece of arable and on the other farm a four acre piece of arable. Everything else was grass. Well, we ploughed about 150 acres of the grassland up, kept 50 acres for hay to sell and gradually bought livestock', which relates to 1965.



static 100 years preceding it. Chapters 3 and 4 of the thesis cover the period 1850 – 1980. They first examine those preceding 100 years of relative continuity (1850 – 1950) and then the 30 years the study is primarily concerned with (1950 – 1980), focusing on two key areas of agricultural practice: labour (that of women and children), and mechanisation, during the period.

In terms of secondary sources these are themes that have been explored in depth by academics, and are accepted as important historical themes for agricultural historians in demonstrating continuity and change in agricultural practice during the period under examination. However, academics tend to focus on a particular theme in isolation, and themes are rarely studied alongside one another. This is exemplified in the case of some of the key academics referred to in this section. For example there is Verdon, who specialises in researching the role of women in agriculture during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and Dewey whose extensive catalogue focuses on increasing mechanisation through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>220</sup> These scholars do not necessarily explore these themes alongside one another in their work, ensuring that this aspect of the thesis contributes a new dynamic to ongoing discussions on agricultural practice.

The themes selected allow academic debates surrounding changes in agricultural practice in Lincolnshire to be revisited as they have been examined

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<sup>220</sup> Verdon, N., "The Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture: A Reassessment of Agricultural Gangs in Nineteenth Century Norfolk", *Agricultural History Review*, Vol 49, No 1, 2001, pp 41 - 55. Verdon, N. "Agricultural Labour and the Contested Nature of Women's Work in Interwar England and Wales", *The Historical Journal*, Vol 52, No 1, March 2009, pp 109 – 130. Dewey, P., *Iron Harvests of the Field: The Making of Farm Machinery in Britain since 1800* (Lancaster: Carnegie Publishing Ltd, 2008). Dewey, P.E., *British Agriculture in the First World War* (London: Routledge, 1989).

in a new way; in conjunction with one another, and from the perspective of the people who experienced those changes first-hand.

### **Agriculture in Lincolnshire: context**

Lincolnshire was selected for study because the area within the geographical boundary of the modern county is diverse in terms of geology, landscape character, and agricultural practice. This diversity within a defined geographical area allowed for both historical local particularities and regional similarities to be identified and examined in order to produce a complex case study of agricultural change in the twentieth century. In addition, no satisfactory attempt to examine this topic within this specific spatial and temporal setting has been undertaken by historians so far.

Lincolnshire is one of England's largest modern counties, with clearly defined geological areas that differ greatly from one another (See fig 2, p 76) and that impact significantly on the types of human activity that place within them.<sup>221</sup> The differing underlying geologies and overlying soil types in Lincolnshire lend themselves to particular types of agricultural production that characterise particular areas of the county; for example, the Fens and Isle of Axholme are composed of nutrient-rich clays, peat and silts that are suitable for vegetable production, whereas the chalky upland areas of the Wolds are more suited to animal husbandry, and the clay uplands between Sleaford and Lincoln to arable

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<sup>221</sup> Bennett, S. and Bennett, N., "Introduction", *An Historical Atlas of Lincolnshire*, Bennett, S. and Bennett, N., (eds) (Hull: The University of Hull Press, 1993), p ix.

crop production.<sup>222</sup> Distinct agricultural practices in these geological regions have produced different labour patterns and the utilisation of technology particular to each area, which are drawn out in Chapters 3 and 4.

In September 2011, English Heritage and Lincolnshire County Council published their Landscape Characterisation report on Lincolnshire.<sup>223</sup> Whilst the historic landscape zones identified by this piece of research reflect the underlying geology, further complexity identified through land use and key landscape features is revealed, demonstrating just how diverse Lincolnshire is. The report examines ten historic landscape zones which all have distinct, more localised areas of character within them. Fig 3 (p 76) taken from the report shows the historic landscape zones identified by the archaeologists that completed the survey. When compared to fig 2 (p 76),<sup>224</sup> it is clear that the underlying geology directly influences surface land use, which determines local agricultural practice, which in turn impacts on associated cultural activities (as established in this thesis).<sup>225</sup>

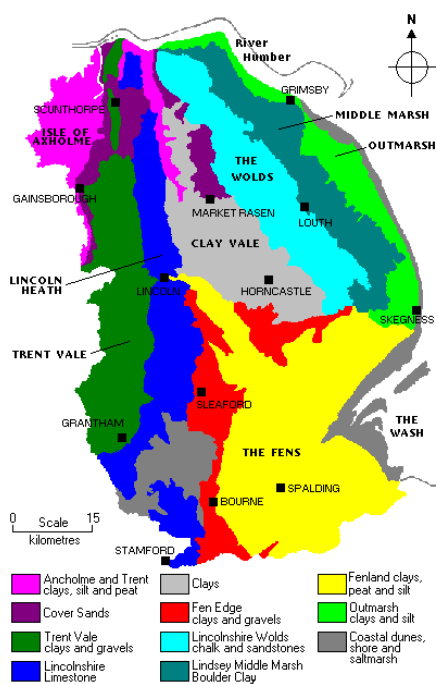
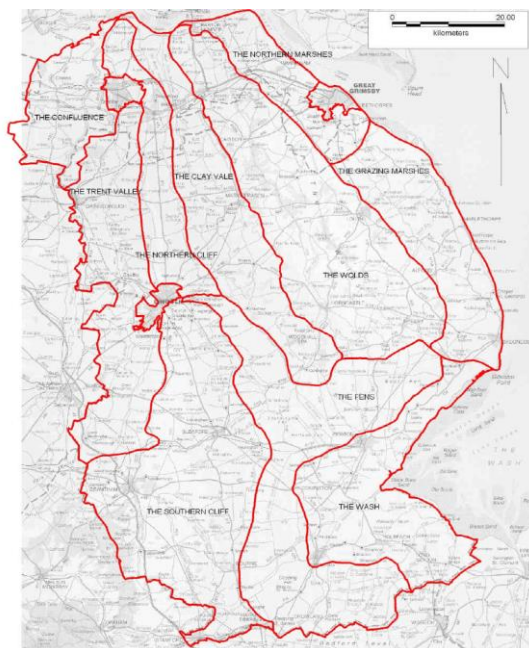
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<sup>222</sup> Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, *Geology and Natural Areas*, 2010, online. Available from: <http://www.lincstrust.org.uk/reserves/nr/geology.php>. [Accessed 1 June 2010]. Lord, J., MacIntosh, A., and Partington, A., *The Historic Character of the County of Lincolnshire: The Historic Landscape Character Zones*, English Heritage Project No. 4661, Lincolnshire County Council September 2011, online. Available from: <http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/residents/environment-and-planning/conservation/archaeology/lincolnshire-historic-landscape-characterisation-project?tab=downloads>. [Accessed 25 November 2011].

<sup>223</sup> This Historic Landscape Characterisation study and subsequent report is part of the National Historic Landscape Characterisation programme led by English Heritage. For further information about the programme see: <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/research/landscapes-and-areas/characterisation/historic-landscape-character/>. [Accessed 30<sup>th</sup> July 2012].

<sup>224</sup> Note that the two maps are to different scales which were not provided in the sources.

<sup>225</sup> See chapters 3 and 4.

Fig 2. Map showing geology of Lincolnshire<sup>226</sup>Fig 3. Map of Lincolnshire's historic landscape zones.<sup>227</sup>

The report also provides a written list of the zones shown in figure 3 (p 76), along with smaller, distinct, character areas within them. This further exemplifies the complex character structure of Lincolnshire, which can be used as an indicator to argue that the county cannot be considered simply as a single entity where rural people engage in one type of agricultural practice. For example, it is clear from the report that there is an upland and lowland divide in practice, with areas such as the Wolds subject to typical upland practices such as sheep grazing on pasture land, whereas lowland areas of clay are predominantly utilised for arable farming, and the nutrient-rich lowland fen areas are used to produce vegetables. However, this report also demonstrates that changes in

<sup>226</sup> Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, *Geology and Natural Areas*, 2010, online. Available from: <http://www.lincstrust.org.uk/reserves/nr/geology.php>. [Accessed 1<sup>st</sup> June 2010]

<sup>227</sup> Lord, J., MacIntosh, A., and Partington, A., *The Historic Character of the County of Lincolnshire: The Historic Landscape Character Zones*, English Heritage Project No. 4661, Lincolnshire County Council September 2011, online. Available from: <http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/residents/environment-and-planning/conservation/archaeology/lincolnshire-historic-landscape-characterisation-project?tab=downloads>. [Accessed 25<sup>th</sup> November 2011].

agricultural practice at particular points in history have impacted widely on Lincolnshire's landscape in a regional fashion, with several commonalities across the county. For example, most areas discussed in the report still show evidence of medieval strip farming, piecemeal and parliamentary enclosure, isolated farmsteads built away from settlements as a result of enclosure, the amalgamation of fields and the loss of field boundaries to accommodate modern agricultural machinery, and the loss of traditional farm buildings and their replacement with large modern structures.<sup>228</sup>

The idea that Lincolnshire cannot be presented as a homogenous area of land is also justified through the examination of existing academic work on the county. In Bennett and Bennett's 1993 work *An Historical Atlas of Lincolnshire*, regional patterns and local particularities are exemplified by examining a range of human activities in the Lincolnshire landscape from the prehistoric era to the twentieth century. This survey demonstrates, albeit in a piecemeal fashion, the variety of human interaction with the landscape and the experience this created over thousands of years, and suggests the potential for a detailed and specific study of one aspect of this activity during a relatively short time period.<sup>229</sup>

Whilst it is accepted that there are similarities in the patterns seen in agricultural practice within the modern county boundary, it is clear that there is significant diversity within this area, making it suitable for a focussed study that examines regional commonality and divergence against national patterns of change. The following chapters will reflect this rich diversity in their accounts of changes in

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<sup>228</sup> Ibid.

<sup>229</sup> Bennett, S. and Bennett, N. "Introduction", *An Historical Atlas of Lincolnshire*, Bennett, S. and Bennett, N., (eds) (Hull: The University of Hull Press, 1993), p ix.

female and child labour patterns and increased mechanisation. The oral testimonies used in these chapters aid in demonstrating that whilst national patterns of change are reflected in the changes that occur in Lincolnshire they do not occur uniformly.

### Changes in female and child labour patterns

This is the first of two case studies, which demonstrate that the shift from traditional to modern agricultural practices did not take place in Lincolnshire at one point in time across the county; and certainly did not occur in 1945 at the end of World War Two. The chapter charts the experiences of labouring women and children, as either gang labourers, paid agricultural labourers, or unpaid labourers, between 1850 and 1980, using secondary and primary sources to present a complex picture of continuity and change in the county. It is clear from this case study that both women and children were an integral, albeit steadily declining,<sup>230</sup> part of the paid agricultural labour force up until the 1970s, at which point the need for casual labour had declined significantly reducing the need for female labourers to extremely low levels, and changes in education legislation and highly developed mechanised agricultural implements finally prohibited children from being part of the official agricultural workforce. It was not until the 1980s that women returned to the land as gang workers in any numbers, and children appear to be removed from the land in all contexts. Women and children worked closely together, whether in gangs, as day labourers, or on the family farm. As gang labourers they were subjected to harsh working conditions performing some of the worst agricultural tasks, and moral outrage at their position in life, apart from at extraordinary times of great stress; during the two World Wars. As day labourers and unpaid family labour both women and children constituted what might be termed a hidden and unofficial workforce, engaging in typical labouring and more specialised and

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<sup>230</sup> Kirby, P., *Child Labour in Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003).

less physically challenging tasks such as poultry keeping that were essential to the survival of the farm. In fact it is clear from the evidence collected that the tasks they completed were rarely considered work, in 1881 the working category farmer's wife or daughter was removed from the census, and was not reintroduced until 1911.<sup>231</sup> The attitudes captured in the oral histories collected for this research reflected the view that women and children did not 'work', from several farmers who claimed at the beginning of interviews that their wives had never worked, but later described the labour contribution they had made to the family farm to the farmer that claimed his daughter did not work on the farm in the 1970s and 80s because she only raised livestock and helped with fieldwork.<sup>232</sup>

Although there has been significant academic interest in the employment of women and children as agricultural labourers in the period after 1750, knowledge about the position of these two groups is, in the words of Verdon, 'far from complete'.<sup>233</sup> This fact, combined with gaps in the study of Lincolnshire's agricultural history, makes the topic worthy of investigation and likely to contribute new knowledge to academia. It was also one of the most frequently discussed topics during the collection of primary research material. From the mid nineteenth century until the mid twentieth century the labourer was crucial to the running of the farm, although the need for workers slowly decreased throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as 'the progress of

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<sup>231</sup> Howkins A., *The Death of Rural England: A Social History of the Countryside since 1900* (London: Routledge, 2003).

<sup>232</sup> Mr C. OH.Eastlindsey.001

<sup>233</sup> Verdon, N., "The Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture: A Reassessment of Agricultural Gangs in Nineteenth Century Norfolk", *Agricultural History Review*, Vol 49, No 1, 2001, pp 41 – 55, p 41.



machinery helped farmers to dispense with the need for extra hands'.<sup>234</sup> It is often assumed that this agricultural workforce consisted 'almost exclusively of male adults',<sup>235</sup> as Samuel claims. However, my research agrees with Reay's assertion that it 'would be very misleading to convey the impression that rural work was limited to males',<sup>236</sup> as during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries women and children were an important and major part of the labour force, often undertaking the hardest types of agricultural labour. Despite their centrality to agricultural production, they remain, by and large, a hidden or forgotten work force, and it is for this reason that the myth of male dominance in agriculture is perpetuated.<sup>237</sup>

This chapter will examine the experiences of female and child gang workers and individual labourers from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The section that examines gang labour argues that whilst women and children were an integral part of the gang workforce they were largely invisible because of the moral outrage such work provoked, except during the extraordinary times of war when their contribution to agriculture was far more public and necessity outweighed moral concerns. The section that examines individual labourers argues that women and children were seasonal labourers for their families, and that not only was their work unofficial because they did not get paid, but it was not actually considered work by the farming community. Once again this means that the contributions of women and children to the agricultural economy are often omitted from traditional historical sources and have to be carefully drawn

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<sup>234</sup> Samuel, R., "Village Labour", *Essays in Social History*, Vol. 2, Thane, P. and Sutcliffe, A. (eds) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp 79 – 97, p 93.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.

<sup>236</sup> Reay, B., *Rural England: Labouring Lives in the Nineteenth Century* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 49.

<sup>237</sup> See chapter 2.

out in oral history interviews because these contributions were, and are, not considered as proper work. In both cases it is difficult to ascertain the levels of child labour used, but it is possible to argue that there is a decline in the child workforce, mainly due to the constant updating of Education Acts from the late nineteenth century onwards. Women and children appear to be largely removed from the agricultural workforce by the 1970s, but this is impossible to prove inconclusively because of the gaps in the historical record and people's attitudes to what constitutes work.

### **Gang labour**

One of the ways in which large numbers of women and children were employed to work on the land in Lincolnshire during the nineteenth century was as part of the gang system. There were two types of gang: the public gang managed by a gangmaster who was hired by the farmer, and the private gang hired directly by the farmer and supervised by one of his workers.<sup>238</sup> Both types of gang existed in Lincolnshire, and there is evidence in the 1867 Royal Commission into the Employment of Children, Young People and Women provided by Mr James Harrison, a labourer from Caistor, and Reverend Henry Hall of Louth that both types of gangs were considered to be as morally reprehensive as one another.<sup>239</sup> Perhaps the only major difference between the two types of gang was that legislation introduced in the nineteenth century only applied to the

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<sup>238</sup> Unknown, "The Agricultural Gang System", *The Lincolnshire Chronicle*, Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> April 1867, p. 6. Olney, R.J., (ed) *Labouring Life on the Lincolnshire Wolds: A Study of Binbrook in the Mid Nineteenth Century*, Occasional Papers in Lincolnshire History and Archaeology (Lincoln: Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology, 1975).

<sup>239</sup> Royal Commission into the Employment of Children, Young People and Women in Agriculture, 1867.

public gangs, which led to many public gangs being turned in to private ones, something that was achieved quickly in Lincolnshire.<sup>240</sup>

Thirsk wrote that during this period it was common to have 'gangs of thirty or forty women and children, collected together by a gangmaster and hired by him to the farmer at a daily rate'.<sup>241</sup> However, a contemporary account in *The Lincolnshire Chronicle*, which drew on the 1867 Report of the Children's Employment Commission, suggests that Thirsk overestimated the size of the gangs as it records the average size of them as being twenty people comprising the gang master, women, and children between the age of six and thirteen.<sup>242</sup>

Both secondary and primary sources do however agree that gangs were not employed consistently across the country, and in the main were found working on the arable farms in 'the six counties of Lincolnshire, Huntingdonshire, Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Suffolk and Nottinghamshire'.<sup>243</sup> The predominance of gangs in the Eastern counties might be attributed to the nature of agricultural activity in these particular counties following the enclosure of the land and removal of small holders. Large-scale, traditional, cereal and vegetable farming required significant amounts of labour periodically during the growing season for

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<sup>240</sup> Conford, P. and Burchardt, J., *The Return of the Gangmaster*, History and Policy Papers, online. Available from: <http://www.historyandpolicy.org/papers/policy-paper-125.html>. [Accessed 24<sup>th</sup> November 2012].

<sup>241</sup> Thirsk, J., *English Peasant Farming: The Agrarian History of Lincolnshire from Tudor to Recent Times* (London: Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1957), p 217.

<sup>242</sup> Unknown, "The Agricultural Gang System", *The Lincolnshire Chronicle*, Saturday 13th April 1867, p. 6.

<sup>243</sup> Morgan, D.H., "The Place of Harvesters in Nineteenth Century", *Village Life and Labour*, Samuel, R. (ed) (London: Routledge, 1975), pp 27 – 69, p 81. *Reports of Special Assistant Poor Law Commissioners on the Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture*, 1843. Author Unknown, The Agricultural Gang System, *The Lincolnshire Chronicle*, 13th April 1867, p 6. *Agricultural Women and Children – Resolution*, HC, Deb 02 April 1867, Vol 186, cc1004-25. Patrick, J., "Agricultural Gangs", *History Today*, Vol 36, No 3, 1986. Thomis, M.I. and Grimmett, J., *Women in Protest 1800 – 1850* (Guildford: Billing and Sons, 1982). Verdon, N., *Rural Women Workers in Nineteenth Century England: Gender, Work, and Wages* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2002).

relatively short periods of time to carry out specific tasks. For example large amounts of labour were required during the cereal crop harvests, and to single, weed, and harvest root crops.

It might also be explained as a reaction to global competition and economic depression.<sup>244</sup> The employment of gangs was beneficial to farmers in two ways; firstly, they only had to pay for labour when required and did not have to retain workers. Secondly, it saved the expense and inconvenience of housing workers.<sup>245</sup> But the employment of women and children within gangs was particularly appealing as they received lower rates of pay than men, and were therefore cheaper to employ.<sup>246</sup> In effect the employment of gang labour was a result of 'capitalist agriculture',<sup>247</sup> which could not function without the seasonal input of women and children.<sup>248</sup>

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<sup>244</sup> Strauss, K., *Challenging Hegemonic Deregulation? The UK Gangmaster Licensing Authority as a Model for the Regulation of Casual Work*, online. Available from <http://www.geog.ox.ac.uk/research/transformations/wpapers/wpg09-18.pdf>. [Accessed 4<sup>th</sup> November 2012]. Patrick, J., "Agricultural Gangs", *History Today*, Vol 36, No 3, 1986. Cope-Faulkner, P., Healey, H., and Lane, T., *Wide Horizons, A History of South Holland's Landscape and People* (Sleaford: Heritage Lincolnshire, 2010).

<sup>245</sup> Patrick, J., "Agricultural Gangs", *History Today*, Vol 36, No 3, 1986. Strauss, K., *Challenging Hegemonic Deregulation? The UK Gangmaster Licensing Authority as a Model for the Regulation of Casual Work*, online. Available from <http://www.geog.ox.ac.uk/research/transformations/wpapers/wpg09-18.pdf>. [Accessed 4<sup>th</sup> November 2012]. Conford, P. and Burchardt, J., *The Return of the Gangmaster*, *History and Policy Papers*, online. Available from: <http://www.historyandpolicy.org/papers/policy-paper-125.html>. [Accessed 24<sup>th</sup> November 2012].

<sup>246</sup> Thirsk, J., *English Peasant Farming: The Agrarian History of Lincolnshire from Tudor to Recent Times* (London: Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1957).

<sup>247</sup> Strauss, K., *Challenging Hegemonic Deregulation? The UK Gangmaster Licensing Authority as a Model for the Regulation of Casual Work*, online. Available from <http://www.geog.ox.ac.uk/research/transformations/wpapers/wpg09-18.pdf>. [Accessed 4<sup>th</sup> November 2012].

<sup>248</sup> Verdon, N., *Rural Women Workers in Nineteenth Century England: Gender, Work, and Wages*, (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2002). Howkins, A., "Peasants Servants and Labourers: The Marginal Workforce in British Agriculture, C1870 – 1914", *Agricultural History Review*, Vol 92, No 1, pp 42 – 62.

Gang labour existed from the beginning of the nineteenth century,<sup>249</sup> but the introduction of the New Poor Law in 1834 was pivotal in the increase of the employment of women and children in agriculture as they had to contribute to the household income to avoid the consequences of poverty.<sup>250</sup> Dr Kay's evidence put before the Lord's Committee on the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1837- 8 provides an insight into the effect of this law on the levels of both female and child labour, with Kay illustrating the increase in employment of these groups after its introduction.<sup>251</sup> This need had a direct impact on the levels of gang labour, and by the 1850s it was a prevalent system of employment dominated by female and child workers, who undertook the most unpleasant types of agricultural labour. In the fenlands of the county they worked as day labourers, employed on the 'roughest, if not the heaviest, classes of work'.<sup>252</sup> They were employed throughout most months of the year, sorting potatoes, picking stones and couch grass colloquially known as 'twitch', manure spreading, harvesting, haymaking, weeding and singling turnips.<sup>253</sup>

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<sup>249</sup> Strauss, K., *Challenging Hegemonic Deregulation? The UK Gangmaster Licensing Authority as a Model for the Regulation of Casual Work*, online. Available from <http://www.geog.ox.ac.uk/research/transformations/wpapers/wpg09-18.pdf>. [Accessed 4<sup>th</sup> November 2012].

<sup>250</sup> Verdon, N., "The Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture: A Reassessment of Agricultural Gangs in Nineteenth Century Norfolk", *Agricultural History Review*, Vol 49, No 1, 2001, pp 41 – 55. Orwin, C.S. and Whetham, E.H., *History of British Agriculture 1846-1914* (London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1964). Patrick, J., "Agricultural Gangs", *History Today*, Vol 36, No 3, 1986. Verdon, N., "Children Working in Agriculture in Britain", *The World of Child Labor: An Historical and Regional Survey*, Hindman, H.D. (ed) (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2009), pp 558 – 562. Cope-Faulkner, P., Healey, H., and Lane, T., *Wide Horizons, A History of South Holland's Landscape and People* (Sleaford: Heritage Lincolnshire, 2010).

<sup>251</sup> Orwin, C.S. and Whetham, E.H., *History of British Agriculture 1846-1914* (London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1964), p 72. The Royal Commission into the Employment of Children, Young People and Women in Agriculture, 1867 recorded that in Lincolnshire during the 1860s children's labour often kept labouring families out of poverty.

<sup>252</sup> Samuel, R., "Village Labour", *Essays in Social History*, Vol. 2, Thane, P. and Sutcliffe, A. (eds) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp 79 – 97, p 86.

<sup>253</sup> Morgan, D.H., "The Place of Harvesters in Nineteenth Century", *Village Life and Labour*, Samuel, R. (ed) (London: Routledge, 1975), pp 27 – 69. Thirsk, J., *English Peasant Farming: The Agrarian History of Lincolnshire from Tudor to Recent Times* (London: Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1957). Conford, P. and Burchardt, J., *The Return of the Gangmaster*, History and

Essentially, children were working outside, year-round, and in all weather conditions.<sup>254</sup> Like children, women could work year-round as 'human weed-killers, "charlocking" or picking twitch and thistles',<sup>255</sup> but they were particularly in demand during the various harvests.<sup>256</sup>

Gang workers' welfare has always been and remains a contentious issue, and this system of work was seen as exploitative in the mid to late nineteenth century. And there were, indeed, unscrupulous gangmasters that did take advantage of those working for them by accepting contracts for low prices and then underpaying their workers.<sup>257</sup> Concern was raised about the 'evils' that affected young children labouring in gangs that included working in mixed sex groups (which was morally corruptive), working long days, being outside in inclement weather, undertaking hard pieces of labour, not being provided with basic sanitary facilities, and of course the neglect of their education.

Contemporary evidence also suggests concerns for the morality of female gang workers, although they appear to have been considered as already corrupted, and as 'rude, rough, and lawless'.<sup>258</sup> Those in employment in the gangs were described as those having 'forfeited their chance of better employment, or

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Policy Papers, online. Available from: <http://www.historyandpolicy.org/papers/policy-paper-125.html>. [Accessed 24<sup>th</sup> November 2012].

<sup>254</sup> Horn, P., *The Changing Countryside in Victorian and Edwardian England and Wales* (London: The Athelone Press, 1984).

<sup>255</sup> Ibid.

<sup>256</sup> Samuel, R., "Village Labour", *Essays in Social History*, Vol. 2, Thane, P. and Sutcliffe, A. (eds) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp 79 – 97.

<sup>257</sup> Verdon, N., "Children Working in Agriculture in Britain", *The World of Child Labor: An Historical and Regional Survey*, Hindman, H.D. (ed) (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2009), pp 558 – 562. Patrick, J., "Agricultural Gangs", *History Today*, Vol 36, No 3, 1986. Strauss, K., *Challenging Hegemonic Deregulation? The UK Gangmaster Licensing Authority as a Model for the Regulation of Casual Work*, online. Available from <http://www.geog.ox.ac.uk/research/transformations/wpapers/wpg09-18.pdf>. [Accessed 4<sup>th</sup> November 2012]. Conford, P. and Burchardt, J., *The Return of the Gangmaster*, History and Policy Papers, online. Available from: <http://www.historyandpolicy.org/papers/policy-paper-125.html>. [Accessed 24<sup>th</sup> November 2012].

<sup>258</sup> Patrick, J., "Agricultural Gangs", *History Today*, Vol 36, No 3, 1986.

whose habits are irregular and coarse'.<sup>259</sup> Testimonies collected for the 1867 Royal Commission on the Employment of Children, Young Persons and Women in Agriculture describe women working on the Wolds as 'so careless' and possessing 'great immorality'.<sup>260</sup> Despite evidence of abuses and the moral concern of the middle-class, it should perhaps be considered that this work may have been 'preferable to the alternatives available at particular times'<sup>261</sup> to those engaged in gang labour, or that these groups of people had limited choices of paid employment.<sup>262</sup> It is perhaps because of the attitudes towards women and children engaged in this type of work that they remained largely hidden. For example whilst there was concern in parliament, images of gang workers were rare, unlike those of the ubiquitous dairymaid, suggesting that people did not want to acknowledge this aspect of agricultural work.

In 1867 the Government passed the Agricultural Gangs Act which made great leaps forward in protecting the interests of child gang workers and in fact started to phase out the use of children as gang workers. The legislation

prohibited the employment of children under eight years of age,  
regulated the distances which children were allowed to walk to work,

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<sup>259</sup> Unknown, "The Agricultural Gang System", *The Lincolnshire Chronicle*, 13th April 1867, p 6.

<sup>260</sup> Royal Commission into the Employment of Children, Young Persons and Women in Agriculture, 1867.

<sup>261</sup> Strauss, K., *Challenging Hegemonic Deregulation? The UK Gangmaster Licensing Authority as a Model for the Regulation of Casual Work*, online. Available from <http://www.geog.ox.ac.uk/research/transformations/wpapers/wpg09-18.pdf>. [Accessed 4<sup>th</sup> November 2012].

<sup>262</sup> Pollard, D., "The Gangmaster System in the UK: The Perspective of a Trade Unionist", *Ethical Sourcing in the Global Food System*, Barrientos, S., and Dolan, C. (eds) (USA: Earthscan, 2006), pp 115 - 128.

ordered the gang masters to be licensed, and prohibited women from working in the same gangs as men.<sup>263</sup>

This act also demonstrates that it actually remained legally acceptable, although morally objectionable, for children and women to work within this system, as in the definitions of the act an agricultural gang was listed as, 'a body of children (under 13), young persons (between the ages of 13 and 18), or women under the control of a gangmaster'.<sup>264</sup> However, children were protected to a greater extent than women, as legislation focussed on protecting them rather than adult women. The Agricultural Children Act of 1873 was an attempt to protect children in the same way that the earlier Factory Acts had done, and it altered the involvement of children within the gang system as it made it illegal to employ a child under the age of ten for agricultural labour. However, the Bill readings highlight that whilst gang labour was considered to be inappropriate for children, agriculture labour in general was considered acceptable for them. On 19 February 1873, Mr Clare-Read MP commented:

But in regard to agriculture, we say that employment in farming operations being essentially healthy we do not suggest that the Factory Acts should be so applied for the purpose of restricting the employment of children in field work... The only instance in which we think that

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<sup>263</sup> Thirsk, J. *English Peasant Farming: The Agrarian History of Lincolnshire from Tudor to Recent Times* (London: Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1957), p 218.

<sup>264</sup> National Archives. *Agricultural Gangs Act 1867*. From *The Harmsworth Encyclopaedia c. 1910*, online. Available from: [http://yourarchives.nationalarchives.gov.uk/index.php?title=Agricultural\\_Gangs\\_Act\\_1867](http://yourarchives.nationalarchives.gov.uk/index.php?title=Agricultural_Gangs_Act_1867). [Accessed 11<sup>th</sup> April 2010].



agricultural children may be exposed to hardships is that of their being employed in what are termed agricultural gangs<sup>265</sup>

Although women were also considered to be exposed to these hardships, which impacted on their character and morality from the nineteenth century middle-class perspective, they were not protected in the same way as children and continued to be an important, albeit invisible, part of the rural workforce in to the twentieth century. However, there were two occasions in the twentieth century when it was more acceptable for women to comprise a visible land-based workforce; World War One and Two. Whilst these occurrences heralded new opportunities for women, the important question lies in the extent of change in people's attitudes to women as agricultural labourers during the period. This is an important question to ask of these two periods, as the historical narrative on women during World War One and Two has been covered almost to the point of exhaustion and few new perspectives have been offered by historians in recent years. On the surface it would appear that these two short periods are ones of great change, but in actuality they are not. Women always worked on the land as labourers, but disapproval led to them being a workforce that was almost invisible. It might be argued that during the two wars they simply became more acceptable and thus visible because of an overt need for their labour, and the publicness of their roles in the war effort, rather than because of a real change in attitude. For example, government propaganda posters from both periods portray happy, youthful and feminine women working in agriculture,<sup>266</sup> suggesting the will for public acceptance. This is not far removed from the

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<sup>265</sup> *County Franchise*. – Resolution.

<sup>266</sup> Clarke. G., "The Women's Land Army and its Recruits 1938 – 50", *The Frontline of Freedom: British Farming in the Second World War*, Short, B., Watkins, C. and Martin, J. (eds) (Exeter: British Agricultural History Society, 2007), pp 101 - 116.

image of the acceptable face of agriculture, the dairymaid, although contradictorily these women would in the main be working as field women.<sup>267</sup>

World War One heralded a period of significant pressure on British farming, with the German submarine campaign against British shipping and supply lines making home food production imperative.<sup>268</sup> The British Government's decision to conscript men working in agriculture during the early part of the war and their initial lack of concern about the possibility that war could 'disturb the existing agricultural regimes'<sup>269</sup> exacerbated the situation.<sup>270</sup> The need for increased home production combined food rationing not being introduced until 1917,<sup>271</sup> and a lack of labour meant that women were called from all walks of life to support their country. A total of 300,000 women labourers came from villages across the country and 16,000 from the Women's Land Army, who are described as being incredibly efficient due to the 'careful selection of recruits, and supported by free transport, uniform and footwear, with a minimum wage set above the rate for village women'.<sup>272</sup> Women were offered the opportunity of working in a range of roles on farms which included dairying, carting,

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<sup>267</sup> Howkins, A., "The English Farm Labourer in the Nineteenth Century: Farm Family and Community", *The English Rural Community: Image and Analysis*, Short, B. (ed) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp 85 – 104. Reay, B., *Rural Englands: Labouring Lives in the Nineteenth Century* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p 55.

<sup>268</sup> White, B., "Feeding the War Effort: Agricultural Experiences in First World War Devon, 1914 – 1917", *Agricultural History Review*, Vol 58, No 1, 2010. Mingay, G. E., *A Social History of the English Countryside* (London: Routledge, 1990). Dewey, P.E., *British Agriculture in the First World War* (London: Routledge, 1989). Howkins A., *The Death of Rural England: A Social History of the Countryside since 1900* (London: Routledge, 2003).

<sup>269</sup> Thirsk, J., *Alternative Agriculture: A History. From the Black Death to the Present Day* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 150. Dewey, P.E., *British Agriculture in the First World War* (London: Routledge, 1989).

<sup>270</sup> Mingay, G. E., *A Social History of the English Countryside* (London: Routledge, 1990). Perren, R., *Agriculture in Depression 1870 – 1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

<sup>271</sup> Dewey, P.E., *Farm Labour in Wartime: The Relationship Between Agricultural Labour Supply and Food Production in Great Britain During 1914-1918, with International Comparisons*, PhD Thesis (University of Reading 1978), unpublished. Dewey, P.E., "Food Production and Policy in the United Kingdom, 1914–1918", *The Alexander Prize Essay, Transactions of the Royal Historical Society (Fifth Series)*, Volume 30, December 1980, pp 71 - 89.

<sup>272</sup> Mingay, G. E., *A Social History of the English Countryside* (London: Routledge, 1990), p 200.

shepherding, keeping poultry, ploughing, haymaking, animal husbandry, field work, and harvesting.<sup>273</sup> However, despite the lure of a decent wage many women still left the countryside to work in the cities and urban areas, as 'urban areas provided higher wages than agriculture',<sup>274</sup> and the type of jobs there were considered more socially acceptable than labouring on the land.

In 1916 the County War Agricultural Committees were ordered by central government to register women who were willing to work on the land and put them in contact with farmers needing labour.<sup>275</sup> By 1917 newspaper reports stated that the Women's Land Army was ready to recruit women between the age of seventeen and fifty in time for that year's harvest. The offer made to women was quite attractive, with the promise of a free uniform, a maximum of four weeks' training, travel expenses, and wages 'at the current rate of the district of 18s a week (whatever is higher)'.<sup>276</sup> The government also specifically targeted middle-class women, offering them the opportunity to take part in horticultural, dairying and poultry-keeping activities, along with the opportunity of studying agriculture at universities.<sup>277</sup>

However, after World War One women of all classes were expected to resume their pre-war lives, in particular those who had joined the world of work as dilutees rather than substitutes, to allow men to fill their pre-war roles.<sup>278</sup> It is

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<sup>273</sup> Author unknown, New Land Army, *Western Gazette*, 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1917, p 8.

<sup>274</sup> Howkins, A. *The Death of Rural England: A Social History of the Countryside since 1900* (London: Routledge, 2003), p 30.

<sup>275</sup> Brown, J., *Farming in Lincolnshire 1850 – 1945 (Studies in the History of Lincolnshire)* (Lincoln: History of Lincolnshire Committee, 2005).

<sup>276</sup> Author Unknown, New Land Army, *Western Gazette*, 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1917, p 8

<sup>277</sup> Howkins, A., *The Death of Rural England: A Social History of the Countryside since 1900* (London: Routledge, 2003), p 31.

<sup>278</sup> Dilutees were defined as unskilled workers that replaced conscripted men during World War One; they were different from substitutes who were skilled in the job which they covered. Hampshire Records Service, *The First World War*, online. Available from:

well documented that upon returning from the war men very quickly replaced female workers, not just in their traditional roles but in previously feminine endeavours such as laundry work which suited ex-servicemen injured or disabled during combat.<sup>279</sup> In addition to this retrograde step in equality, 'public applause for their 'marvellous work' died away',<sup>280</sup> and public memory of their contribution to the war effort faded.

In 1939 at the outbreak of World War Two half the population of Britain was female, and women from all walks of life were once again called upon to work on the land as young men were called upon to serve their country on the battlefield. Most of the women who came to participate in agriculture belonged to the Women's Land Army, 'one of the most conspicuous and memorable aspects of the food production campaign'.<sup>281</sup> It was recognised that this war was not a distant battle being fought solely by a professional army, but one which required the efforts of every member of society, particularly in relation to food production, with Winston Churchill saying in 1940:

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<http://www.hants.gov.uk/rh/archives/ww1.pdf>. [Accessed 24<sup>th</sup> March 2012]. Also see Thom, D. *Nice Girls and Rude Girls: Women Workers in World War One* (London: Tauris, 2000).

<sup>279</sup> The National Archives, *Women and the First World War*, online. Available from: [http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/firstworldwar/document\\_packs/women.htm](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/firstworldwar/document_packs/women.htm). [Accessed 24<sup>th</sup> March 2012]. Braybon, G. *Women Workers in the First World War* (Kent: Croom Helm Ltd, 1981).

<sup>280</sup> *Ibid.* p 11.

<sup>281</sup> Clarke, G., "The Women's Land Army and its Recruits 1938 – 50", *The Frontline of Freedom: British Farming in the Second World War*, Short, B., Watkins, C. and Martin, J. (eds) (Exeter: British Agricultural History Society, 2007), pp 101 – 116, p 101.

This is a war of unknown warriors...the whole of the warring nations are engaged, not only soldiers, but the entire population; men, women and children.<sup>282</sup>

However, despite this contemporary understanding of their importance and the extensive coverage of the subject of the Women's Land Army in various oral, social and local histories,<sup>283</sup> the organisation is still often referred to as the 'Forgotten Army', perhaps reflecting a general disapproval of women working on the land.<sup>284</sup> Contemporary sources support the idea of a sense of disapproval, with Brew stating that the activities of the Women's Land Army were, at first,

limited by the generally accepted theory that the employment of women on the land must be confined to working the dairy and cowsheds, care of poultry, occasional help in the harvest field and the lighter forms of horticulture.<sup>285</sup>

Clarke argued in 2007 that the history of the organisation has been overlooked by academics.<sup>286</sup> There are further issues that affect the examination of the organisation's contribution to agriculture: it was subject to government propaganda campaigns during World War Two and its representation in post-war popular culture has helped propel it to mythical status, thus distorting the

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<sup>282</sup> Mace, R. "Invisible History: Personal Experiences of the Second World War in Britain, How and Why They Should be Used and What do They Contribute to Official Histories of the Conflict", *History Today*, Vol 32, No 12, December 1982, p 30.

<sup>283</sup> Author unknown, "The Women's Land Army", *Rural History Today*, Issue 16, January 2009, p 1.

<sup>285</sup> Brew, B.G., "The Women's Land Army", *Agriculture: The Journal of the Ministry of Agriculture*, Vol 50, No 6, September 1943, pp 275 – 278, p 275.

<sup>286</sup> Clarke, G., "The Women's Land Army and its Recruits 1938 – 50", *The Frontline of Freedom: British Farming in the Second World War*, Short, B., Watkins, C. and Martin, J. (eds) (Exeter: British Agricultural History Society, 2007), pp 101 – 116.

retelling of women's situations and experiences.<sup>287</sup> What is often not portrayed is that women were undertaking hard physical labour which included unpleasant tasks such as rat-catching and manure-spreading. These tasks were recorded as being carried out by the Women's Land Army in *Agriculture: The Journal of the Ministry of Agriculture 1943* which stated that 'hedging and ditching, loading and carting, dung spreading, ploughing with horses and looking after sheep now falls to the Land Army'.<sup>288</sup> Mrs G. undertook a range of hard and unpleasant tasks during her service in Lincolnshire. At Ingoldsby Grange she had to pick early potatoes:

When we got to the farm we were potato picking and it was early potatoes, and it was a back breaking job for people that had not, sort of, been bent double like that before.<sup>289</sup>

Whilst working at Donington one of her first jobs was to spread fertiliser on the land:

Well erm one of my first jobs on the land was erm setting guano, do you call it that? For potatoes. Erm my husband's father then had two labourers working for him, one quite old chappie and this Henry who wasn't quite so old. And I loaded the erm trailer with him. I went down,

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<sup>287</sup> Short, B., Watkins, C. and Martin, J., "The Front Line of Freedom': State-led Agricultural Revolution in Britain, 1939 - 45.", *The Frontline of Freedom: British Farming in the Second World War*, Short, B., Watkins, C. and Martin, J. (eds) (Exeter: British Agricultural History Society, 2007), pp. 1 - 15.

<sup>288</sup> Brew, B.G., "The Women's Land Army", *Agriculture: The Journal of the Ministry of Agriculture*, Vol 50, No 6, September 1943, pp 275 – 278, p 276.

<sup>289</sup> Mrs G. OH.Southholland.008.

we were spreading guano on the land, you know, leading the horses and, you know, things like that.<sup>290</sup>

Women also worked extremely long hours for lower wages than their male counterparts. In 1939 only two counties in England had fixed weekly wage rates for women working in agriculture, so the agreement of a minimum weekly wage for the Women's Land Army at 28s and then 45s was regarded as positive by the government.<sup>291</sup> However, it would appear that in some cases in Lincolnshire, women undertook extra work in the free time left after their 48 hour winter and 50 hour summer working week to earn additional money,<sup>292</sup> suggesting that the wages were not necessarily adequate. Miss P. remembered women working casually for her father on his smallholding at Wigtoft Bank in the south of the county:

During the war we had a lot of help. We didn't actually have Land Girls as such. They came in to erm to top the onions and do things like that voluntarily, you know, sort of after the normal working hours...If they wanted to earn a bit of extra money, you see, they would come and ask for little jobs like that.<sup>293</sup>

The acceptance of farmers of their new labour source is not well recorded, although in 1943 Brew commented in an article in *Agriculture: The Journal of the Ministry of Agriculture* that following its formation

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<sup>290</sup> Mrs G. OH.Southholland.008.

<sup>291</sup> Brew, B.G., "The Women's Land Army", *Agriculture: The Journal of the Ministry of Agriculture*, Vol 50, No 6, September 1943, pp 275 – 278.

<sup>292</sup> Ibid.

<sup>293</sup> Miss P. OH.Southholland.007.

Far from there being a rush for their services, the first volunteers found few offers of employment, and many of the most eager were forced to take up other occupations.<sup>294</sup>

This suggests that farmers were not calling on this organised labour force as had been expected. The Women's Land Army workers were greeted with a range of emotions from reservation to hostility by British farmers,<sup>295</sup> In Lincolnshire reactions to the women appear to have been mixed, with some farmers accepting the women and others being exasperated by their lack of skills and training. Two interviewees from Holland Fen near Boston, Mr S.B. and Mr J.B., simply commented that the women who worked for Dennis's Farm on the Fen were 'bloody good weren't they!'<sup>296</sup>

Traditionally it has been argued by historians that the end of World War Two heralded a new age of equality for women, but research from the 1980s onwards has suggested that 'the wartime changes in the status of women for the main part proved to be transitory',<sup>297</sup> indicating that unless they stayed in the Land Army until it disbanded in 1950 women went back to their previous occupations and it once again became frowned upon for women to work on the land. In the case of Land Army Women in Lincolnshire, oral histories collected suggest that some returned to their previous occupations, with Mr B. summarising that

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<sup>294</sup> Brew, B.G., "The Women's Land Army", *Agriculture: The Journal of the Ministry of Agriculture*, Vol 50, No 6, September 1943, pp 275 – 278, p 275.

<sup>295</sup> Brown, J., *Agriculture in England: A Survey of Farming, 1870 – 1947* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987).

<sup>296</sup> Mr S.B. and Mr J.B. OH.Bostonborough.003.

<sup>297</sup> Smith, H.L., "The Womanpower Problem in Britain during the Second World War", *The Historical Journal*, Vol 27, No 4, December 1984, pp 925 – 945, p 925.



Of course Land Army girls went back to the jobs, typists or whatever they did in the cities didn't they? Some of them stayed behind and married farmers, and workers.<sup>298</sup>

One of the 'girls' who stayed behind and married a farmer was Mrs G. and several other interviewees recounted this occurring in different parts of the county.<sup>299</sup>

Children were also publically utilised as group labour during World War Two. Large numbers of well-organised groups of school children were brought into key agricultural operations, especially at harvest times. In 1943, over 1000 farm camps were set up across the country for school children and adult volunteers that combined a country holiday with farm work in a bid to 'attract 150 – 200,000 adult workers and in excess of 300,000 children'<sup>300</sup> needed to bring the various harvests during wartime. Moore-Colyer also wrote that in 1944, school children in 'Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire and Lincolnshire were granted extra leave...to assist with potato picking'.<sup>301</sup> Contemporary evidence suggests that it was considered acceptable for children to work in this way, for example in 2010 the *Boston Standard* History and Nostalgia pages featured a snippet from the news of 25<sup>th</sup> April 1942 when it was reported that

Holland County Council's education committee met to discuss child labour on the farms, and Coun E.E. Welby-Everard said that due to the

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<sup>298</sup> Mr B. OH.Northkesteven.004.

<sup>299</sup> Represented in interviews: Miss P. OH.Southholland.007, Mr and Mrs G. OH.Southholland.008, Mr S.B. and Mr J. B. OH.Bostonborough.003, Mr H. OH.Southkesteven.001, and Mr S. OH.Northeastlincs.001.

<sup>300</sup> Moore-Colyer, R.J., "Kids in the Corn: School Harvest Camps and Farm Labour Supply in England, 1940 – 1950", *Agricultural History Review*, Vol 52, No 2, 1988, pp 183 – 205, p 186.

<sup>301</sup> *Ibid.* p 187.

‘extreme acuteness of labour shortage on the land’ it would not be a ‘wholly bad thing’ for 12 to 14-year-olds to work harder and longer.<sup>302</sup>

This was of course war-time and therefore the comments may have been driven by the special requirements of these extraordinary times. These comments don’t appear to fit with the middle-class concerns of the effect of gang labour raised in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but they may also be indicative of the attitudes to, and expectations of, individualised child labour in south Lincolnshire in the early to mid-twentieth century.

There is a distinct lack of secondary evidence regarding women and children working in gangs in the twentieth century apart from during World Wars One and Two, which reflects Conford and Burchart’s assertion that a study of *The Landworker* revealed that gangmasters almost disappeared from British agriculture ‘for several decades during the twentieth century’,<sup>303</sup> Although Strauss stated in 2012 that

there is evidence that gang labour persisted until the First World War, it declined significantly in the early twentieth century as farmers once again sought more permanent labour relationships.<sup>304</sup>

Strauss and Conford and Burchart all attribute the post-1945 decline in gang labour to economic security and government intervention, such as the

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<sup>302</sup> Boston Standard, *History and Nostalgia Pages*. Available from: <http://www.bostonstandard.co.uk/custompages/CustomPage.aspx?PageID=66995#> [Accessed 18<sup>th</sup> February 2010]. Note these pages are only available online.

<sup>303</sup> Conford, P. and Burchardt, J., *The Return of the Gangmaster*, History and Policy Papers, online. Available from: <http://www.historyandpolicy.org/papers/policy-paper-125.html>. [Accessed 24<sup>th</sup> November 2012].

<sup>304</sup> Strauss, K., “Unfree Again: Social Reproduction, Flexible Labour Markets and the Resurgence of Gang Labour in the UK”, *Antipode*, Vol 45, No 1, January 2013, pp 180 - 197.

guarantee of minimum wages introduced in the Agricultural Wages Act 1948.<sup>305</sup> Holderness commented broadly on the continued use of gang labour after World War Two, stating that ‘until many of the processes were mechanised, some planting and many harvesting tasks involved the extensive casualisation of labour’,<sup>306</sup> which was usually female. There is specific evidence, however, that gangs operated in Kent, hop-picking until the 1960s (which was very seasonal work),<sup>307</sup> and in Cambridgeshire undertaking handwork during the 1940s and 1950s.<sup>308</sup> Lincolnshire was no different to these other counties that traditionally relied on gang labour; and primary evidence from this research provides an indication of this. Mrs H. went to Spalding High School in the 1940s and recalled working as part of a gang during her summer holidays, she didn’t use the term gang explicitly, but her answer was in relation to a question on group labour provided by school children.

We used to have our holidays erm split. We didn’t have the six weeks at once in the August, we had a fortnight or three weeks in October to help the farmers to get the harvest in, and we weren’t working for our own parents. Then we’d help other farmers and as you were teenagers they used to give you two to a row. One picked one side and one picked the

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<sup>305</sup> Strauss, K., *Challenging Hegemonic Deregulation? The UK Gangmaster Licensing Authority as a Model for the Regulation of Casual Work*, online. Available from <http://www.geog.ox.ac.uk/research/transformations/wpapers/wpg09-18.pdf>. [Accessed 4<sup>th</sup> November 2012]. Conford, P. and Burchardt, J., *The Return of the Gangmaster*, History and Policy Papers, online. Available from: <http://www.historyandpolicy.org/papers/policy-paper-125.html>. [Accessed 24<sup>th</sup> November 2012].

<sup>306</sup> Holderness, B.A., *British Agriculture since 1945* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), p 133.

<sup>307</sup> Conford, P. And Burchardt, J., *The Return of the Gangmaster*, History and Policy Papers, online. Available from: <http://www.historyandpolicy.org/papers/policy-paper-125.html>. [Accessed 24<sup>th</sup> November 2012]. Bowlby, C., *Gangmasters are back with a Vengeance*, online. Available from: <http://www.historyextra.com/feature/gangmasters-are-back-vengeance>. [Accessed 24<sup>th</sup> November 2012].

<sup>308</sup> Lincolnshire Film Archive, *Farming in Father’s Day*, online. Available from: [http://www.lincsfilm.co.uk/videos/news\\_old3.html](http://www.lincsfilm.co.uk/videos/news_old3.html). [Accessed 24<sup>th</sup> November 2012].

other, and you had these big wicker baskets and they used to take 'em and empty 'em, you know, in the horse and cart.<sup>309</sup>

Whilst nearly 70 miles away a few years later, Mr S. engaged in pea and potato picking between 1952 and 1955, from the age of 13, in the northeast of the county. He worked in gangs of school children and in gangs proper:

I've done pea picking...in my summer holidays. In my time at Caistor Grammar school they allowed those people who wanted to, to get in a lorry and do potato picking for a couple of weeks. Instead of doing your lessons you had the choice. This was the 1950s and they would lorry us out for Caistor Market Place to a farm at North Kelsey and we would do potato picking. In the summer months I would do a lot of pea picking.<sup>310</sup>

Although the interviewees did not recall why they had been asked to work to collect in the harvests it is highly likely that both of these experiences relating to the school gangs were linked to the continued use of child agricultural labour post-World War Two. The continued use of child gang labour was in line with policy on the extension of the use of the Women's Land Army and Prisoners of War until food security was restored in the late 1940s and early 1950s. There was also a shortage in agricultural labourers that occurred during the late 1940s and into the 1950s due to the low birth rate that preceded the baby boom, and the raising of the school aging leave to 14 or 15 in 1947, that meant that organised gangs of school children were still required.<sup>311</sup>

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<sup>309</sup> Mrs H. OH.Southolland.005.

<sup>310</sup> Mr S. OH.Northeastlincs.001.

<sup>311</sup> Rahikainen, M., *Centuries of Child Labour: European Experiences from the 17<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).

In 1960 the licensing of gangmasters, established for almost a century, was abolished by the Local Government Act. There were so few gangmasters in operation that they were no longer viewed by central government as a problem.<sup>312</sup> At the same time schooling entered a new era and enjoyed what Rahikainen describes as an ‘ultimate victory’,<sup>313</sup> as children had to stay in compulsory education for much longer than they had been required to do so previously, making it impossible for gangmasters to recruit them to work outside of the school holiday periods.<sup>314</sup> However, economic instability, Britain’s entry into the EEC, and government policy during the 1970s provided the context for re-emergence of the gangmaster (or employment agency as they became known from the 1970s onwards)<sup>315</sup> in the highly capitalist 1980s.<sup>316</sup> Strauss defined this movement as a ‘second wave of gangmaster activity’,<sup>317</sup> enabled by the Conservative’s programme of deregulation and subsequent re-regulation of the labour market from the late 1970s onwards.<sup>318</sup> The impact of the economic instability was that consumers spent less on food than they had done

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<sup>312</sup> Conford, P. And Burchardt, J., *The Return of the Gangmaster*, History and Policy Papers, online. Available from: <http://www.historyandpolicy.org/papers/policy-paper-125.html>. [Accessed 24<sup>th</sup> November 2012]. Bowlby, C., *Gangmasters are back with a Vengeance*, online. Available from: <http://www.historyextra.com/feature/gangmasters-are-back-vengeance>. [Accessed 24<sup>th</sup> November 2012].

<sup>313</sup> Rahikainen, M., *Centuries of Child Labour: European Experiences from the 17<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), p unknown.

<sup>314</sup> Patrick, J., “Agricultural Gangs”, *History Today*, Vol 36, No 3, 1986.

<sup>315</sup> Wilkinson, M., *Forced Labour in the UK and the Gangmasters Licensing Authority*, (Hull: Contemporary Slavery Research Centre, 2010). Scott, S., *Temporary Migrant Workers and the UK’s Flexible Labour Market: Shifting Policy Narratives and Regulatory Rebalancing*, online. Available from: [http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0018/9126/Scott.pdf](http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0018/9126/Scott.pdf). [Accessed 25<sup>th</sup> November 2012].

<sup>316</sup> Strauss, K., *Challenging Hegemonic Deregulation? The UK Gangmaster Licensing Authority as a Model for the Regulation of Casual Work*, online. Available from: <http://www.geog.ox.ac.uk/research/transformations/wpapers/wpg09-18.pdf>. [Accessed 4<sup>th</sup> November 2012]. Conford, P. And Burchardt, J., *The Return of the Gangmaster*, History and Policy Papers, online. Available from: <http://www.historyandpolicy.org/papers/policy-paper-125.html>. [Accessed 24<sup>th</sup> November 2012]. Rahikainen, M., *Centuries of Child Labour: European Experiences from the 17<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).

<sup>317</sup> Strauss, K., “Unfree Again: Social Reproduction, Flexible Labour Markets and the Resurgence of Gang Labour in the UK”, *Antipode*, Vol 45, No 1, January 2013, pp 180 – 197.

<sup>318</sup> Ibid.

previously, which of course weakened the agricultural economy, and caused farmers to re-evaluate their expenditure.<sup>319</sup> Once again casual gang labour would become a favourable option, and whilst these gangs no longer employed children because of changes in the law, they did employ women once again. The return of gang masters and labours was particularly apparent in Scotland, where soft fruit harvests required large amounts of labour for a short period once a year, and in the Fenland areas of Lincolnshire on the fields where 'brassicas, bulbs, and potatoes' were grown.<sup>320</sup> Whilst these Lincolnshire root crops no longer required singling or weeding, brassicas harvests still required some level of hand work, the flower crops were still picked by hand, and whilst potatoes were harvested mechanically, sorting by hand took place on the machine.

### **Individual labourers**

Women and children also worked as individuals as part of the seasonal rural labour force during the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth century, either for employers or their families. Throughout the period under examination (1850 – 1980) female and child outdoor labourers constituted a hidden workforce. In the mid nineteenth century they were often expected to work alongside their husbands and fathers who were employed by farmer with the expectation that the whole family would undertake work.<sup>321</sup> In Lincolnshire 'boys

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<sup>319</sup> Brass, T., "Medieval Working Practices? British Agriculture and the Return of the Gangmaster", *Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol 31, Issue 2, 2004, pp 313 – 340.

<sup>320</sup> Conford, P. And Burchardt, J., *The Return of the Gangmaster*, History and Policy Papers, online. Available from: <http://www.historyandpolicy.org/papers/policy-paper-125.html>. [Accessed 24<sup>th</sup> November 2012].

<sup>321</sup> Burnette, J., "The Wages and Employment of Female Day-Labourers in English Agriculture, 1740-1850", *The Economic History Review*, New Series, Vol 57, No 4, November 2004, pp 664-690.

as young as eight years old [were employed] in bird scaring, tenting (looking after cows, sheep, pigs or horses), weeding, picking twitch or stones, bean-dropping, singling turnips';<sup>322</sup> they were undertaking the same unpleasant tasks as their gang counterparts. One witness who spoke to the Commission on Children's Employment in 1862 recalled how he would use child labour on the Fens:

In clearing a field of twitch, I should first plough it up, then drag it, then harrow and roll it, then fork it with men....then I should drag it over again and then have girls and boys pick it over.<sup>323</sup>

Throughout the period examined the female workforce was dominant in certain areas of the county, such as the potato-growing uplands and the bulb-growing lowlands. In 1919 County Investigators recorded that in Lincolnshire 'year-round women's work was...considerable in "normal times"<sup>324</sup>, with the majority of this work 'being concentrated in the bulb industry around Spalding and in the cultivation of potatoes in the Holland Division.'<sup>325</sup> Census County Reports from 1921 also provide an insight into the levels of female labour in Lincolnshire at the time: Holland in Lincolnshire came fifth of 20 counties in a ranking according to the percentage of female to male agricultural labourers. For every eight men employed in agriculture there were 14 women, and whilst gang labour producing potatoes will have contributed considerably to this, bulbs also

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<sup>322</sup> Reay, B., *Rural England: Labouring Lives in the Nineteenth Century* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p 67.

<sup>323</sup> Orwin, C.S. and Whetham, E.H., *History of British Agriculture 1846 – 1914* (London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1964), p 115.

<sup>324</sup> Verdon, N., "Agricultural Labour and the Contested Nature of Women's Work in Interwar England and Wales", *The Historical Journal*, Vol 52, No 1, March 2009, pp 109 – 130, p 118.

<sup>325</sup> Ibid. Wallace, J.C., "Farming in the Holland Division of Lincolnshire" *Agriculture: The Journal of the Ministry of Agriculture*, Special Lincolnshire Number, Vol 54, No 4, July 1947, pp 158 – 165, p 163.

accounted for this large percentage of female workers. In 1931 there were 11 women labouring for every four men in Holland County, remaining dominant, but reflecting declining levels of labour due to technological innovation.<sup>326</sup> There was also a stronger presence generally at times of stress, for example in 1918 'one of the main sources of relief labour [in rural areas] proved to be the women folk of the locality'.<sup>327</sup>

It can be argued that children of labouring families on nineteenth century and twentieth century farms, or those from families with smallholdings or farms, exemplify the notion of an unofficial and unpaid workforce, with Brown stating that 'employment was not really the term to use of family labour for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, for wages rarely entered into the equation'.<sup>328</sup> In fact in 1851 a third of all farmers in Britain did not employ any labour at all, and the census of that year contained references to these people labouring on the farm themselves with the help of their children.<sup>329</sup> However, the requirement to work on the family farm during the period 1850 – 1980 was not universal; one interviewee, Mr G., recalled that in the 1930s on his parents' smallholding in South Lincolnshire

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<sup>326</sup> Verdon, N., "Agricultural Labour and the Contested Nature of Women's Work in Interwar England and Wales", *The Historical Journal*, Vol 52, No 1, March 2009, pp 109 – 130.

<sup>327</sup> Brown, J., *Agriculture in England: A Survey of Farming, 1870 – 1947* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), p 65.

<sup>328</sup> Brown, J., *Farming in Lincolnshire 1850 – 1945 (Studies in the History of Lincolnshire)* (Lincoln: History of Lincolnshire Committee, 2005), p 42. Allen, Robert C., "Agriculture during the industrial revolution, 1700–1850", *The Cambridge Economic History of Modern Britain, Vol 1, Industrialisation, 1700–1860*, Floud, R. and Johnson, P. (eds) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp 96 – 116.

<sup>329</sup> Kirby, P., *Child Labour in Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003).



We weren't included in helping in the farm. My parents didn't want us to be farm labourers. As such and erm consequently when I left school I went into an accountant's office.<sup>330</sup>

Nor were the children of farmers forced in to working on the farm, with Mr S. recalling that he and his sister did not work for their father very often during the late 1950s and into the 1960s because he expected them to work for free, but chose to work for another farmer who would pay them for their efforts.<sup>331</sup> Mrs H. also recalled that during the 1930s and 1940s she would not only work on her family's small holding near Spalding, but would work for other farmers cleaning bulbs.<sup>332</sup> Mr F. and Mr W. both recalled that they only helped during their school holidays,<sup>333</sup> with Mr W. unable to help because he was sent to boarding school in Norfolk between the ages of 11 and 17.<sup>334</sup>

These children were, however, expected to carry out a variety of tasks, from caring for younger siblings and collecting firewood to gleaning in the fields with their mothers.<sup>335</sup> It was 'in the arable eastern counties'<sup>336</sup> where this type of child labour was most prevalent. This group's efforts constituted largely unseen labour, although their contributions were essential to the running of the farm.

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<sup>330</sup> Mr G. OH.Southholland.008.

<sup>331</sup> Mr S. OH.Northkesteven.001.

<sup>332</sup> Mrs H. OH.Southholland.005.

<sup>333</sup> Mr F. OH.Eastlindsey.008 and Mr W. OH.Eastlindsey.004.

<sup>334</sup> Mr W. OH.Eastlindsey.004.

<sup>335</sup> Reay, B., *Microhistories, Demography, Society and Culture in Rural England 1800 – 1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

<sup>336</sup> Horn, P., *The Changing Countryside in Victorian and Edwardian England and Wales* (London: The Athelone Press, 1984), p 14.

Women also contributed to the survival of the family farm by providing free labour to their husbands.<sup>337</sup>

Late nineteenth century and early twentieth century schooling was affected by the rural practice of taking children out of the class room to use them as individual labourers and 'even when children did go to school, their attendance was spasmodic. Boys would be taken from the classroom to earn money, girls to do domestic chores'.<sup>338</sup> There were also differences in the attitudes towards boys and girls gaining an education. For example, 'one marsh farmer sent his sons to school but refused to let his daughters go, since they only needed to milk, sew, cook and bear children'.<sup>339</sup> It is estimated that during the 1860s, little more than half the children in the country were receiving an education, which prompted the Acts referred to earlier, including the Agricultural Children Act. However, this act still allowed country children between the ages of eight and ten to work during the harvest, and after the age of ten they were allowed to be released further for farm work provided they attended school for a particular number of days a year. The testimonies collected regarding children's schooling in Lincolnshire by the Royal Commission into The Employment of Children, Young People and Women in Agriculture, 1867, suggests that landowners and farmers were concerned about the government raising the age of compulsory education to nine years old as it would 'be the ruin of all our best labourers'.<sup>340</sup>

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<sup>337</sup> Crowley, T., "Rural Laborers", *The Encyclopaedia of the Victorian Era*, Pendergast, T., and Pendergast, S. (eds) Adams, J.E., (ed – in – chief), (Danbury: Grolier Academic Press, 2004).

<sup>338</sup> Reay, B., *Microhistories, Demography, Society and Culture in Rural England 1800 – 1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p 230.

<sup>339</sup> Obelkevich, J., *Religion and Rural Society South Lindsey 1825 – 1875* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), p 53.

<sup>340</sup> Royal Commission into the Employment of Children, Young People and Women in Agriculture, 1867.

There was a series of five Education Acts in the latter part of the nineteenth century that Verdon describes as more successful than other Acts in reducing child labour. The first was in 1870 followed by Acts in 1876, 1880, 1891, and 1893. Despite Verdon's claim there is evidence to suggest that in Lincolnshire the earlier Acts did little to improve levels of attendance at school. In 1877, the Lincolnshire Chronicle printed the Schools Inspector's annual report on the state of the schools in Lincolnshire. Mr M.J. Barrington complained that whilst children from the agricultural districts of the county tended to attend regularly in winter and early spring, during the summer 'the fields claim their presence, and the schools are half-emptied'.<sup>341</sup> Evidence from schools' log books, available due to history projects, confirms the inspector's findings. Pickworth with Walcot School, near Folkingham in South Kesteven, opened in 1878, and early log books record absenteeism of children due to gleaning.<sup>342</sup> Bourne Abbey School opened in Bourne, South Kesteven, in July 1877, and recorded absenteeism from early on in its existence. In October 1879 a dip in attendance was recorded because girls were gleaning, and in 1885 the headmistress commented on the irregular attendance of some girls who were helping with the potato harvest.<sup>343</sup> At Burgh Le Marsh, on the marshlands of Lindsey, the vicar recorded not only the local, but also the regional, consensus regarding the lack of availability of children to attend schools,<sup>344</sup> and on the Wolds at Caistor the local Church of England school log book records that in 1867 attendance was as low as 4

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<sup>341</sup> Author Unknown, Education in the County, *The Lincolnshire Chronicle*, 18<sup>th</sup> October 1878, p 6.

<sup>342</sup> Pickworth Village, *Pickworth with Walcot School*, online. Available from: [http://www.pickworthvillage.co.uk/local\\_history\\_pages/pickworth\\_school.html](http://www.pickworthvillage.co.uk/local_history_pages/pickworth_school.html). [Accessed 15th January 2013].

<sup>343</sup> Bourne Abbey Church of England Academy, *1877*, online. Available from: <http://www.bourneabbey.lincs.sch.uk/page/?title=1877&pid=55>. [Accessed 15<sup>th</sup> January 2013].

<sup>344</sup> Royal Commission into the Employment of Children, Young People and Women in Agriculture, 1867.

pupils as all the others were gleaning after harvest or potato picking.<sup>345</sup> In January 1869 the log book records the return of several children to school that had been in agricultural work since the beginning of the previous summer.<sup>346</sup>

By the end of the nineteenth century the school leaving age was eleven, and the Acts appear to have had a positive impact on lessening the numbers of children working in agriculture at the start of the twentieth century as 'legislative change had effectively pushed up the age of the typical agricultural worker'.<sup>347</sup> Whilst child labour in agricultural gangs declined at the turn of the twentieth century because of this change, child labour did not disappear in the years leading up to World War One. It was simply more prevalent on family-run farms, which is problematic for the historian as this went largely unrecorded, except in school log books (for example Bourne Abbey Schools' log books record issues with girls missing half – days at schools during the early 1900s because they were taking food out to the labourers in the hayfields),<sup>348</sup> because it was unpaid and therefore 'not subject to government inquiry'.<sup>349</sup>

During and after World War One labour shortages meant that children were called in significant numbers to assist in agricultural work.<sup>350</sup> During World War One, children were released from school to help in the fields, and in 1917 H.A.L.

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<sup>345</sup> Arnold, R., *The Farthest Promised Land – English Villager, New Zealand Immigrants of the 1870s* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1981).

<sup>346</sup> Ibid.

<sup>347</sup> Verdon, N., "Children Working in Agriculture in Britain", *The World of Child Labor: An Historical and Regional Survey*, Hindman, H.D. (ed) (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2009), pp 558 – 562, p 561.

<sup>348</sup> Bourne Abbey Church of England Academy, 1900, online. Available from: <http://www.bourneabbey.lincs.sch.uk/page/?title=1900&pid=56>. [Accessed 15<sup>th</sup> January 2013].

<sup>349</sup> Verdon, N., "Children Working in Agriculture in Britain", *The World of Child Labor: An Historical and Regional Survey*, Hindman, H.D. (ed) (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2009), pp 558 – 562, p 561.

<sup>350</sup> Rahikainen, M., *Centuries of Child Labour: European Experiences from the 17<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).

Fisher claimed that 600,000 children had been released early from education during the first three years of the war, many of whom had gone into agricultural work.<sup>351</sup> This release was not necessary willing on the part of the schools, but education committees were put under pressure by farmers to provide them with labour, and boys as young as ten and eleven were able to leave school to undertake agricultural work.<sup>352</sup> Once again Bourne Abbey School's log books record an instance in November 1918 where the school is recorded as reopening after a closure of four weeks to allow children to go potato picking.<sup>353</sup> However, schools could support farmers by arranging the school breaks around times, such as harvest, that required higher levels of farming. Brown confirms this in relation to Lindsey in Lincolnshire, where the school holidays were reorganised to coincide with the 'haytime and the potato harvest'.<sup>354</sup>

Two men, Mr A.B. and Mr H.B., born in 1909 and 1907 respectively and interviewed in 2007, recounted similar experiences to that of Mr Moore. They both lived in South Lincolnshire around Donington and Gosberton after World War One. When asked about work in the early twentieth century, Mr A.B. said:

As soon as you could walk you did work. No doubt about that. Half of us didn't go to school...Quite a bit to do, especially in the tatey picking time. Mothers kept them at home to earn a bob or two. The inspector was

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<sup>351</sup> Howkins, A. *Reshaping Rural England: A Social History 1850 – 1925* (London: Routledge, 1991).

<sup>352</sup> Rahikainen, M., *Centuries of Child Labour: European Experiences from the 17<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).

<sup>353</sup> Bourne Abbey Church of England Academy, 1900, online. Available from: <http://www.bourneabbey.lincs.sch.uk/page/?title=1900&pid=56>. [Accessed 15<sup>th</sup> January 2013].

<sup>354</sup> Brown, J. *Farming in Lincolnshire 1850 – 1945 (Studies in the History of Lincolnshire)* (Lincoln: History of Lincolnshire Committee, 2005) p 191.

looking round for them. Caused quite a bit of concern. Some got runned out with a brush (laughs). It was quite good.<sup>355</sup>

There is further evidence to suggest that this was a broader experience in Lincolnshire, with Moore writing:

When we all moved to Lincolnshire just before the First World War my school career was over. I should have gone to a Lincolnshire school, but I didn't, and nobody bothered about it, and I started work.<sup>356</sup>

It would appear that school boards later combated this continuing problem by planning the school year around the various harvests. Oral testimonies collected in a 1995 project contained reference to this practice. One participant from Stixwold stated that 'school holidays varied according to the farming year',<sup>357</sup> whilst one from near Coningsby recalled that 'potato setting coincided with Easter holidays',<sup>358</sup> which was corroborated by someone from nearby Kirton Holme who had the same experience.<sup>359</sup>

Mr H.B. added to the discussion of children at work during the early twentieth century, explaining that he left school at thirteen, c.1920, to start work. He went on to say: 'Some left school when they were twelve...after the First World War there were no labourers left...There was always a job'.<sup>360</sup> This sentiment was echoed by Mrs H., who was born in 1914 and spent her early years in East

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<sup>355</sup> Mr A.B. OH.Southholland.010.

<sup>356</sup> Moore, F. and Hynam, J. *The Horses Knew the Way, Memories of a Lincolnshire Life* (London: Alan Sutton, 1991), p 29.

<sup>357</sup> Lincolnshire Federation of Women's Institutes, *Lincolnshire Within Living Memory* (Newbury: Countryside Books, 1995), p 114.

<sup>358</sup> Ibid. p 137.

<sup>359</sup> Ibid.

<sup>360</sup> Mr H.B. OH.Southholland.010.

Firsby, nine miles from Lincoln. She recalled her brother leaving home at twelve to work on an uncle's farm:

...And I remember one of my brothers. He left home at twelve to work, go work on a farm because there was a shortage of labour because of the war.<sup>361</sup>

Although the school leaving age was gradually raised during the period being examined, several participants on the oral history interviews started work when they might still be considered children. Whilst it would be easy to consider these young people as an innocent, exploited workforce, they could also be defiant if they did not agree with working practices they were subjected to. For instance, Mrs H. left school at the age of 15 to work on the land in 1933, and recalled that in her first job

We used to set potatoes, set them out of boxes. One each end, and erm, the boss we worked for he insisted we walk backwards...But we used to turn round when he'd gone by.<sup>362</sup>

Mr D. started work for Dring's in Holland Fen in 1946 at the age of 15:

When I first were there I was down riddling tates at the grave. You see that was my first job. I went in September time.<sup>363</sup>

Nor was there legislation to allow children shorter working hours or to limit the hours within which they worked: for example, 'in 1949 a young lad of fourteen

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<sup>361</sup> Mrs H. OH.Westlindsey.006.

<sup>362</sup> Mrs H. OH.Eastlindsey.005.

<sup>363</sup> Mr D. OH.Bostonborough.004.

regularly had to be up in the morning before 5.30am to help with milking on the farm at Stickney'.<sup>364</sup> This generation was surveyed in 1972 by the National Economic Development Office for the "Agricultural Manpower in England & Wales Survey", which identified that despite a gradual rise in the school leaving age from the early twentieth century onwards only ten percent of farmers in England and Wales claimed to have experienced a secondary education and did not hold paper qualifications in any regard.<sup>365</sup> Whilst, in the years following World War Two almost all children attended school, and child labour became what Rahikainen terms a 'marginal phenomenon'<sup>366</sup> it was associated directly with family farms, and this may be what the survey captured.

During the lean post-World War Two years, children on family farms were expected to help with a variety of jobs, particularly those that required more labour; it was obviously more cost-effective to use free family labour than pay agricultural labourers, and in areas like the south of the county, where crops that demanded more labour to manage such as potatoes were grown, this was particularly common. Mrs J., whose father had a smallholding at Sutton Bridge, remembered:

I was one of a large brood so we had to help. Even before we left school we had to help on the land...The worst job I remember was cross harrow picking...The potatoes would be ploughed out by a horse and plough but as always some would be coming over...We had to go afterwards when

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<sup>364</sup> Lincolnshire Federation of Women's Institutes, *Lincolnshire Within Living Memory* (Newbury: Countryside Books, 1995), p 137.

<sup>365</sup> Holderness, B.A., *British Agriculture since 1945* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985).

<sup>366</sup> Rahikainen, M., *Centuries of Child Labour: European Experiences from the 17<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), p unknown.



it was supposedly cleared and my father would take the harrows one way and we would have to go with a basket and pick these stray one up. It was a soul destroying job.<sup>367</sup>

Even children in families of larger landowners would help during this period. Mr W. recalled his experiences of helping on one of his father's farms at Thorpe Latimer in the 1950s:

I remember working the horses, especially when we had potato picking. I was only an old boy, but it was my job to lead the horses from the pickers to the graves.<sup>368</sup>

This project recorded numerous examples of children still working on family farms from the beginning of the twentieth century to the 1960s all across Lincolnshire, reflecting Kirby's assertion that 'family farm labour remained buoyant through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries'.<sup>369</sup> Despite the hard work, interviewees remembered their contributions to the family farm fondly, and did not consider the work to be an imposition or necessarily unpleasant, and often commented on wanting to help their families.<sup>370</sup> This was particularly apparent in male interviewees who had gone on to take up the running of the family farm. It would appear that work did not interfere so much with school in the case of those supporting their families during the twentieth century, and that due to technological advancements the work was not so physically demanding.

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<sup>367</sup> Mrs J. OH.Southholland.003. In Crowley, T., "Rural Laborers", *The Encyclopaedia of the Victorian Era*, Pendergast, T., and Pendergast, S. (eds) Adams, J.E., (ed – in – chief), (Danbury: Grolier Academic Press, 2004) Crowley states that large farming families were common because the parents needed a large labour force that they did not have to pay.

<sup>368</sup> Mr W. OH.Southholland.009.

<sup>369</sup> Kirby, P., *Child Labour in Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), p 57.

<sup>370</sup> Mr and Mrs. A. OH.Southholland.006, Mr W. Shouthholland.009, and Mr B. OH.Southholland.001.

This frequency of labour reflects Holderness's assertion that in 1965 90% of relatives working on a family's farm had no work contract and were technically unpaid.<sup>371</sup> Women whose families rented or owned smallholdings and farms would engage in a range of entrepreneurial activities central to the survival of the farm, such as fruit production, vegetable growing, poultry keeping, egg production, and dairying.<sup>372</sup> These activities appear to be part of a gendered division on the farm, and interviewees often did not recognise them as labouring tasks, and openness about women engaging in them would suggest that they were acceptable activities for women. Poultry-raising, egg-collecting and dairying were carried out across Lincolnshire in order to provide a secondary income that was often used by women to pay for housekeeping or even labourers' wages;<sup>373</sup> Mrs J. recalled her father being particularly mean and asking her mother to prove what she had spent her small housekeeping allowance on,<sup>374</sup> and a participant in another project recalled that 'my dad never gave my mother any money, farmers' wives kept hens to cover their housekeeping'.<sup>375</sup> There is a body of evidence to suggest that it was common for children in Lincolnshire to help with these traditionally feminine farm activities. There were a range of tasks that children could undertake from an early age, which reflect the continued adherence to mixed farming in the county.<sup>376</sup> In Yarburgh to the north of Louth

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<sup>371</sup> Holderness, B.A., *British Agriculture since 1945* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985).

<sup>372</sup> Crowley, T., "Rural Laborers", *The Encyclopaedia of the Victorian Era*, Pendergast, T., and Pendergast, S. (eds) Adams, J.E., (ed – in – chief), (Danbury: Grolier Academic Press, 2004).

<sup>373</sup> Based on a comment from Local Historian Brenda Webster at the Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology Annual Conference, April 2009.

<sup>374</sup> Mrs J. OH.Southolland.003.

<sup>375</sup> Lincolnshire Federation of Women's Institutes, *Lincolnshire Within Living Memory* (Newbury: Countryside Books, 1995), p 142.

<sup>376</sup> See chapter 2.

Seasonal tasks included fruit and berry picking; brambling; taking tea to the harvest field; and early morning mushroom gathering. Before Christmas there was poultry to be killed, dressed and drawn.<sup>377</sup>

Evidence collected during this project and others suggests that the experience of children helping their mothers with looking after chickens and egg collecting during the post-war period was a common one, perhaps because it was a safer engagement than helping in the fields. Other participants recalled breaking mangolds for horses, driving tractors, steering potato pickers and packing flowers during the summer to help their families right up until the 1960s. Mr A. recalled his first memories of working as a seven year old in 1961:

...Carting Mangolds for the horse. Erm my Auntie and one of the chaps on the farm loaded them on the trailer and I was driving the Crawler and I think I'd be about seven...And I just sat on it. It had a hand clutch and I had to keep putting it up between the heaps.<sup>378</sup>

It would appear that up until the point farms adopted the use of large and complex pieces of machinery it was still considered safe, and necessary, for children to work on the land. One of the interviews that was conducted as part of the oral history research was with three generations of one family near Coningsby. The father recounted how he had worked for his father as a young boy, but that his daughters had not worked on the farm as children. His daughter interjected, recalling that she had raised calves and helped with harvests, but her father was adamant that this did not count as work, as by the

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<sup>377</sup> Lincolnshire Federation of Women's Institutes, *Lincolnshire Within Living Memory* (Newbury: Countryside Books, 1995), p 102.

<sup>378</sup> Mr A. OH.Southholland.006.

1970s and 80s it was too dangerous for his children to work on the land due to the new high levels of mechanisation and equipment used.<sup>379</sup> However, his comments were probably not really about mechanisation, but because he didn't consider the tasks his daughter carried out as work. These accounts reflect the levels of family labour utilised on Lincolnshire farms during the 1960s and 1970s, which Holderness places at approximately half of all agricultural labour.<sup>380</sup>

A survey of rural Women's Institutes in Lincolnshire carried out in 1978 by academics at Bishop Grosseteste College commented that in East Lindsey 'it seems fair to say that the trend to combine a job with housework has not 'caught on' yet and that most women do not go out to work'.<sup>381</sup> At a first glance this survey result suggests that women in this area of Lincolnshire were not generally part of the workforce at this time which may relate to their withdrawal from the workforce post-World War Two. However, the oral history research carried out for this thesis suggests that in certain areas women still formed a key component of the agricultural workforce, and this comment might be more representative of the fact that women's work was hidden or unofficial. For example the ladies in the families interviewed in Holland Fen clearly recalled women working on the potato harvests between the 1950s and 1970s; referring to their own generation and that of their mothers as being the primary workforce.<sup>382</sup> What becomes particularly clear from the present research is that

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<sup>379</sup> Mr C, Snr., Mr C, Jnr, and Mrs C., OH.Eastlindsey.001.

<sup>380</sup> Holderness, B.A., *British Agriculture since 1945* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985).

<sup>381</sup> Bishop Grosseteste College, Centre for Rural Social Studies, *A Survey of Women's Institutes* (Lincoln: Bishop Grosseteste College, 1978).

<sup>382</sup> Mr S.B. and Mr J.B. OH.Bostonborough.003, Mr B. and Mrs B. OH.Bostonborough.004, and Mr D. and Mrs D. OH.Bostonborough.005.

as less labour was required the numbers of women working on the land dwindled, but that women retained particular, or traditional, jobs on the farm. For example, when mechanical potato harvesters were introduced in the 1970s women were employed to work on them sorting potatoes from stones and clods of soil picked up by the harvester.<sup>383</sup> What is apparent is that women's work was hidden and unofficial; it was simply not considered work by people in farming circles. Whilst there may have been fewer women on the land during the 1960s and 1970s in areas like South Holland, those that remained in agriculture continued to be invisible, whilst at the same time women came to be a major visible constitute of the horticultural industry, working for companies like Moermon's growing plants for supermarkets,<sup>384</sup> or working in processing industries like the women who went to work at Lockwoods' Factory in Long Sutton.<sup>385</sup>

## **Conclusion**

It is clear from the secondary and primary evidence that women and children working in either gangs or as individual labourers were integral to agricultural production in Lincolnshire, but were by and large an invisible workforce. As gang workers women were morally reprehensible and children were at risk of moral corruption, and were ignored by the general public because whilst there was significant distaste for them engaging in gang labour, it was necessary to for the buoyancy of agricultural economy. It was only during the extraordinary times of war during the twentieth century that gangs, or groups, of workers became visible. It would be naive to assume that this meant attitudes towards

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<sup>383</sup> Mr B. and Mrs B. OH.BostonBorough.004 and Mr D. and Mrs D. OH.BostonBorough.005.

<sup>384</sup> Personal Communication Mrs K Hunt, 20<sup>th</sup> December 2012.

<sup>385</sup> Mrs J. OH.Southholland.003.

agricultural gangs of women and children and agricultural labour had changed, and is more representative of the necessity of their contribution to feeding the nation.

Individual, especially family, labourers were also hidden, not because their work was unpalatable to the middle-class, but because their labour was not generally recognised as work. Women and children were expected to work on family farms, but as they were rarely paid they became an unofficial workforce, and the tasks they undertook were not considered agricultural work. These workers are even more hidden from history as their roles are not recorded in traditional historical sources, and attitudes towards their responsibilities means that it is difficult to uncover their stories, even with techniques like oral history interviews.

Despite these challenges if the historical account provided in this chapter is considered against the indicators for traditional practice and modernity it is possible to conclude that modern agricultural practice is represented in the historical narrative produced here by the significant reduction of the female labour force from traditional agricultural tasks, and the removal of children from the agricultural labour force. In terms of gang labour this shift appears to take place in the 1960s and 1970s, but it is not sudden or dramatic as there is a general trend of decline in gang labour from 1850 to the 1960s (aided by successive Education Acts), with peaks during the extraordinary conditions of World War One and World War Two. There is not continuity in Lincolnshire, as the areas of the county with the labour intensive potato crops, retain traditional practices for the longest period until increased mechanisation in the 1970s. In terms of individual labourers the historical evidence suggests that there is a

similar step-change in the 1970s, but it is clear that the tasks undertaken by women and children for their families were, and still are, not considered 'real work' by the farming community. Whilst not within the remit of this research, this does leave the potential for the further exploration of women and children as labourers on family farms from the 1970s to the present day.

### Changes in mechanisation

This chapter will examine the development in, and application of, agricultural machinery between 1850 and 1980 to ascertain the extent to which, and when modernisation occurred in the county. The chapter is designed to reflect and acknowledge that the term mechanisation encompasses a range of innovations from horse and steam power to that of the internal combustion engine and the implements and machines they powered; from cake breakers to chaff cutters, to ploughs and harrows to reapers, and binders and threshing drums.<sup>386</sup> It examines what Gale Johnson calls 'the mechanical revolution',<sup>387</sup> particularly focusing on the widespread introduction of steam in the 1850s, of the motor tractor power during the two world wars and its impact on real horse power,<sup>388</sup> the introduction of reapers and binders in the 1850s and combine harvesters from the 1930s onwards and their impact on labour required at harvest time, and the development of machinery associated with root crops (sugar beet and potatoes in particular) and its impact on hand work.

This chapter argues that whilst there was constant innovation and adoption of new technologies between 1850 and 1950, the impact on the people who chose to remain in agriculture and the bearing on their working lives was negligible, due to the large amount of hand work that was still required on farms. Whilst

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<sup>386</sup> Advertisement for Grassam's Implement Depot, Crescent, Spalding, *Stamford Mercury*, 11<sup>th</sup> September 1863.

<sup>387</sup> Gale Johnson, D., "Population, Food and Knowledge", *American Economic Review*, Vol 90, No 1, March 2000, p 6.

<sup>388</sup> Throughout this work, the term tractor refers to motor tractors rather than traction engines which were also often referred to simply as tractors. Cf. Dewey, P., *Iron Harvests of the Field: The Making of Farm Machinery in Britain since 1800* (Lancaster: Carnegie Publishing Ltd, 2008).



Harwood Long argued that in terms of mechanisation in England's 'progress was comparatively insignificant until 1939',<sup>389</sup> this chapter will argue that in Lincolnshire significant progress was not made until after 1950. It also reflects Binswanger's assertion that 'during the twentieth century and especially since World War II, the speed with which farmers adopt new machines has quickened'.<sup>390</sup> It also attempts to reflect Martin's assertion that the modernisation of farming was diverse and complex, not only across Britain, but within the county of Lincolnshire.<sup>391</sup> It seeks to resituate the transition from traditional farming practices to modern ones in terms of mechanisation, reflecting Martin's argument that modernisation is reflected in terms of the development and application of the combine harvester in the upland areas of the county from the 1930s onwards. More generally it echoes research by Woods and Martin which has argued that modernisation in farming can be seen in the 1930s rather than directly after World War Two.<sup>392</sup> However, it does present a compelling argument for other areas such as the cessation of real horse power not taking place until the 1960s in the lowland areas of the county.

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<sup>389</sup> Harwood Long, W., "The Development of Mechanisation in English Farming", *The Agricultural History Review*, Vol 11, No 1, 1963, pp 15 – 26, p 25.

<sup>390</sup> Binswanger, H., "Agricultural Mechanization: A Comparative Historical Perspective", *The World Bank Research Observer*, Vol 1, No 1, January 1986, pp 27 – 56, p 48.

<sup>391</sup> Martin, J., *The Development of Modern Agriculture: British Farming Since 1931* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000).

<sup>392</sup> Ibid. Woods, A., "Rethinking the History of Modern Agriculture: British Pig Production, C1910-65", *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol 23, No 2, 2012, pp 165 – 191. Martin, J., "The Commercialisation of British Turkey Production", *Rural History-Economy, Society, Culture*, Vol 20, No 2, 2009, pp. 209-228.

## The relationship between mechanisation and reductions in the labour force

The relationship between mechanisation and the reduction of the agricultural labour force is complex and multi-faceted. This relationship changed over time and it is agreed that ‘the pattern and speed of mechanization is heavily influenced by relative scarcities of capital and labor’.<sup>393</sup> It is well documented that, rather than labourers being forced off the land because of technological innovation in the 1850s, the introduction of mechanised farming was in fact spurred on in response to a deficiency in labour caused by the migration of people from the countryside to the towns,<sup>394</sup> in reaction to what is recognised as ‘the process of “modern economic” growth’.<sup>395</sup> For example, Holderness suggested that ‘it was the shortage of farm labour that precipitated mechanisation’,<sup>396</sup> and Dewey argued that if the censuses from 1851 and 1871 are examined there is a clear reduction in the number of labourers (908,678 to 764,574) and farm servants (189,116 to 134,157) in England and Wales, which led to farmers investing in ‘improved implements and machinery in an effort to make up for the loss of their labourers’.<sup>397</sup> Ó Gradá also commented on broad

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<sup>393</sup> Ibid.

<sup>394</sup> Dewey, P., *Iron Harvests of the Field: The Making of Farm Machinery in Britain since 1800* (Lancaster: Carnegie Publishing Ltd, 2008).

<sup>395</sup> Van Zanden, J.L., “The First Green Revolution: The Growth of Production and Productivity in European Agriculture, 1870-1914”, *The Economic History Review*, New Series, Vol 44, No 2, May 1991, pp 215 – 239, p 215. Binswanger, H., “Agricultural Mechanization: A Comparative Historical Perspective”, *The World Bank Research Observer*, Vol 1, No 1, January 1986, pp 27 – 56. Ó Gradá, C., “British Agriculture, 1860-1914”, *The Economic History of Britain Since 1700: Vol 2 1860-1939*, Floud, R. and McCloskey, D. (eds) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp 153 - 172.

<sup>396</sup> Holderness, B.A., “Agriculture”, *Twentieth Century Lincolnshire*, Mills, D. (ed) (Lincoln: SLHA, 1989), pp 37-70, p 49. Van Zanden, J.L., “The First Green Revolution: The Growth of Production and Productivity in European Agriculture, 1870-1914”, *The Economic History Review*, New Series, Vol 44, No 2, May 1991, pp 215 – 239.

<sup>397</sup> Dewey, P., *Iron Harvests of the Field: The Making of Farm Machinery in Britain since 1800* (Lancaster: Carnegie Publishing Ltd, 2008). Ó Gradá, C., “British Agriculture, 1860-1914”, *The*

trends in the reduction of people living on farms and farm labourers between 1860 and 1914, stating that 'Britain's farm population dropped by about a quarter, and the number of labourers by a third' during the period.<sup>398</sup> And Brown has acknowledged the continued reduction in the labour force in Lincolnshire throughout the nineteenth century as being a driving force in farmers investing in 'barn machinery, threshing machines, steam engines, and harvesting implements'.<sup>399</sup> As late as 1947, Davies claimed that within Lincolnshire 'the planting and harvesting of potatoes with reduced labour forces has naturally led to a call for machines to undertake these jobs'.<sup>400</sup>

However, it should not be ignored that throughout the period under examination labour was the most expensive aspect of operating a farm, and that some farmers also adopted machinery in a bid to cut their labour bills.<sup>401</sup> In fact, Van Zanden is clear in his assertion that in the 1870s 'threshing machines...were mainly used by large farmers to save wage labour'.<sup>402</sup> And Ó Gradá's examination of the diffusion of the mechanical reaper between the 1850s and 1870s reminds us that there was little sentimentality in farming by concluding that reapers were adopted slowly in Britain not because of a paternalistic duty felt by farmers towards their workers who would be usurped by the new

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*Economic History of Britain Since 1700: Vol 2 1860-1939*, Floud, R. and McCloskey, D. (eds) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp 153-172.

<sup>398</sup> Ibid.

<sup>399</sup> Brown, J., *Farming in Lincolnshire 1850-1950 (Studies in the History of Lincolnshire)* (Lincoln: History of Lincolnshire Committee, 2005), p 105. Harwood Long, W., "The Development of Mechanisation in English Farming", *The Agricultural History Review*, Vol 11, No 1, 1963, pp 15 – 26.

<sup>400</sup> Davies, D., "The Mechanisation of Lincolnshire Farms", *Agriculture: The Journal of the Ministry of Agriculture*, Special Lincolnshire Number, Vol 50, No 4, July 1947, pp 37 - 70.

<sup>401</sup> Brown, J., *Farming in Lincolnshire 1850-1950 (Studies in the History of Lincolnshire)* (Lincoln: History of Lincolnshire Committee, 2005).

<sup>402</sup> Van Zanden, J.L., "The First Green Revolution: The Growth of Production and Productivity in European Agriculture, 1870-1914", *The Economic History Review*, New Series, Vol 44, No 2, May 1991, pp 215 – 239, p 233.

technology, but due to the cost of this new machinery set against the average small sizes of farms and the irregularity in aspects of crop production that required labour input.<sup>403</sup> There was also the fact that labour levels required were still significant due to the tasks that the machines could not complete, and the impact of the adoption of this new machinery on the majority of the workforce was therefore limited.<sup>404</sup>

Whilst there was little sentimentality felt for their workforce by farmers, an additional factor that may have slowed the adoption of new technology was that farmers felt the social costs of mechanisation outweighed the economic benefits that machinery could bring. When they considered labourers wages rates, the levels of labour they required, and the importance of labour relations, it was, in some cases, not worth replacing labourers with machinery.<sup>405</sup>

So, whilst the Victorian rural exodus was once explained by the mechanisation of farming, it is now accepted that the situation that occurred as new technology was developed and made available to farmers was more complex than previously assumed. In some cases farmers had to utilise these machines because of a decline in rural populations, in other cases farmers could ensure their businesses were economically viable by reducing their labour force and introducing machines, and in other cases they could not justify the change

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<sup>403</sup> Ó Gradá, C., "British Agriculture, 1860-1914", *The Economic History of Britain Since 1700: Vol 2 1860-1939*, Floud, R. and McCloskey, D. (eds) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp 153 - 172. Collins, E.J.T., "The Rationality of Surplus Agricultural Labour, Mechanisation in English Agriculture in the Nineteenth Century", *The Agricultural History Review*, Vol 35, No 1, 1987, pp 36 – 46.

<sup>404</sup> Ibid.

<sup>405</sup> Collins, E.J.T., "The Rationality of Surplus Agricultural Labour, Mechanisation in English Agriculture in the Nineteenth Century", *The Agricultural History Review*, Vol 35, No 1, 1987, pp 36 – 46.

economically or socially. The impact of this was non-uniformity in the adoption of new technology and new farming practices in England and Lincolnshire.

### **Steam power**

One of the most important and high profile innovations of the 1840s and 1850s was the harnessing of steam power to aid agriculture.<sup>406</sup> In fact it is recognised that ‘the main bottleneck in the development of labour-saving technology remained the supply of motive power’<sup>407</sup> until the mid-nineteenth century. Once adopted, steam power was a stalwart for around 80 years, and whilst its form ‘had become established by the end of the 1840s and remained largely unchanged throughout the steam period’,<sup>408</sup> it is associated with constant innovation to the implements and machinery it was used to power; and its application to agriculture was continuous up until World War One, when farmers began to use imported tractors powered by combustion engines for increased production.<sup>409</sup> Steam power, then, is often seen as ‘the most persuasive symbol of mechanisation in the nineteenth century’,<sup>410</sup> but it should be noted that agriculture was the last of the great industries to adopt this power source.<sup>411</sup>

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<sup>406</sup> Brown, J., *Farming in Lincolnshire 1850-1950 (Studies in the History of Lincolnshire)* (Lincoln: History of Lincolnshire Committee, 2005).

<sup>407</sup> Van Zanden, J.L., “The First Green Revolution: The Growth of Production and Productivity in European Agriculture, 1870-1914”, *The Economic History Review*, New Series, Vol 44, No 2, May 1991, pp 215 – 239, p 233.

<sup>408</sup> Dewey, P., *Iron Harvests of the Field: The Making of Farm Machinery in Britain since 1800* (Lancaster: Carnegie Publishing Ltd, 2008), p 53.

<sup>409</sup> Fussell, G.E., *The Farmers Tools: The History of British Farm Implements, Tools and Machinery AD 1500-1900* (London: Orbis Publishing, 1981).

<sup>410</sup> Caunce, S.A., "Mechanisation and Society in English Agriculture: The Experience of the North East, 1850-1914", *Rural History*, Vol 17, No 1, April 2006, pp 23 – 45. Dewey, P., *Iron Harvests of the Field: The Making of Farm Machinery in Britain since 1800* (Lancaster: Carnegie Publishing Ltd, 2008), Binswanger, H., “Agricultural Mechanization: A Comparative Historical Perspective”, *The World Bank Research Observer*, Vol 1, No 1, January 1986, pp 27 – 56.

<sup>411</sup> Dewey, P., *Iron Harvests of the Field: The Making of Farm Machinery in Britain since 1800* (Lancaster: Carnegie Publishing Ltd, 2008).

Despite its late application in agriculture, Brown stated that 'Lincolnshire farmers...[were] among the first to adopt steam cultivation'.<sup>412</sup>

In 1849 Robert Richie's *Farm Engineer* dedicated most of its pages to the subject of steam power, and in 1855 Robert Scott Burn wrote a series of articles in *The Journal of Agriculture* focusing on how the steam engine could be applied to agriculture. By the 1850s, early steam ploughs began to appear at exhibitions and country shows.<sup>413</sup> At the 1851 Great Exhibition, Lord Willoughby d'Eresby exhibited a set of steam ploughing tackle. Its description highlights its complexity and potential impact on farming:

It was a double engine set, and two furrow ploughs on Lowcock's turnwrist principle were carried on a frame, the whole of which regulated the depth of the furrow. Two engines stood on the headlands at opposite sides of the field, and each alternately hauled the plough towards it by means of a chain, the other engine idling. This apparatus proved capable of ploughing four acres a day.<sup>414</sup>

By 1867, the Royal Show was conducting an enquiry into steam cultivation, producing detailed reports describing the cost of working this type of machinery, the effect on crops, and how the economy in horsepower would be affected.

They also recommended that the advantage of steam power over horse power

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<sup>412</sup> Fussell, G.E., "The Making of Lincolnshire", *Agriculture: The Journal of the Ministry of Agriculture*, Special Lincolnshire Number Vol 54, No 4, July 1947, pp unknown, p 152.

<sup>413</sup> Dewey, P., *Iron Harvests of the Field: The Making of Farm Machinery in Britain since 1800* (Lancaster: Carnegie Publishing Ltd, 2008).

<sup>414</sup> *Ibid.* p 78. Also note that d'Eresby is recognised as a leader in the embracing and promotion of steam power in Lincolnshire. He promoted steam ploughing by carrying out trails on his Grimsthorpe Estate between 1850 and 1855, cf. Brown, J. *Farming in Lincolnshire 1850-1950 (Studies in the History of Lincolnshire)* (Lincoln: History of Lincolnshire Committee, 2005), p 105.

for powering threshing machines was so great at this point in time that prizes for 'horse-drawn threshing machine should be discontinued'.<sup>415</sup>

Despite such contemporary concerns, hopes, and feelings about steam power, historical research has argued that the impact on horse power was minimal, as there were inherent issues in trying to replace horsepower with an inanimate power source such as the stationary engine.<sup>416</sup> Caunce puts forward the proposal that horses actually increased 'in numbers in virtually identical proportions...nationally over the whole period' from the 1850s until 1914'.<sup>417</sup>

This lack of impact is also suggested by Ó Gradá who stated that 'the failures [of mechanisation] included the steam plough'.<sup>418</sup> Caunce has examined the impact of steam in a national and regional context and questions the 'high profile of agricultural steam engines in popular and academic literature'.<sup>419</sup> He states that they were simply

too large, heavy, and expensive to be practical for British farmers except in specialist niches, notably threshing, and their unsuitability was proven

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<sup>415</sup> Harwood Long, W., "The Development of Mechanisation in English Farming", *The Agricultural History Review*, Vol 11, No 1, 1963, pp 15 – 26, p 19. Dewey, P. *Iron Harvests of the Field: The Making of Farm Machinery in Britain since 1800* (Lancaster: Carnegie Publishing Ltd, 2008).

<sup>416</sup> Collins, E.J.T., "The Rationality of Surplus Agricultural Labour, Mechanisation in English Agriculture in the Nineteenth Century", *The Agricultural History Review*, Vol 35, No 1, 1987, pp 36 – 46.

<sup>417</sup> Caunce, S.A., "Mechanisation and Society in English Agriculture: The Experience of the North East, 1850-1914", *Rural History*, Vol 17, No 1, April 2006, pp 23 – 45, p 34. Dewey, P. *Iron Harvests of the Field: The Making of Farm Machinery in Britain since 1800* (Lancaster: Carnegie Publishing Ltd, 2008).

<sup>418</sup> Ó Gradá, C., "British Agriculture, 1860-1914", *The Economic History of Britain Since 1700: Vol 2 1860-1939*, Floud, R. and McCloskey, D. (eds) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp 153 - 172, p 153.

<sup>419</sup> Caunce, S.A., "Mechanisation and Society in English Agriculture: The Experience of the North East, 1850-1914", *Rural History*, Vol 17, No 1, April 2006, pp 23 – 45, p 36.

after 1914 when they, rather than horses, became the prime victims of the internal combustion engine.<sup>420</sup>

This statement is corroborated by Van Zanden, who concurs that whilst mechanisation progressed in areas such as threshing and dairying where production was geographically static, ‘the main agricultural activities remained dependent on horse power and human labour’.<sup>421</sup> Brown’s research also supports Counce in the idea that steam power was specialist in its application, stating that the ‘most striking application of steam power was in ploughing’.<sup>422</sup> It is also important to contextualise the extent to which steam power was used on the land. Both Harwood Long and Dewey estimated that in 1867 200,000 acres out of 12 million (Harwood Long) or 14 million acres (Dewey) were steam-tilled.<sup>423</sup> This equates to around 1.5% of land being under steam cultivation, arguably at the height of its success. It may be this limited application, both in terms of variety or tasks and by farmers, which led Ó Gradá to surmise that steam ploughing was a failure.

### **Real horse power and tractors**

The horse was the primary source of power for farmers throughout the nineteenth and well into the twentieth century. Horses were an economical and efficient source of power that ‘could be bred on the farm, or bought relatively

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<sup>420</sup> Ibid.

<sup>421</sup> Van Zanden, J.L., “The First Green Revolution: The Growth of Production and Productivity in European Agriculture, 1870-1914”, *The Economic History Review*, New Series, Vol 44, No 2, May 1991, pp 215 – 239, p 233.

<sup>422</sup> Brown, J. *Farming in Lincolnshire 1850-1950 (Studies in the History of Lincolnshire)* (Lincoln: History of Lincolnshire Committee, 2005), p. 103.

<sup>423</sup> Harwood Long, W., “The Development of Mechanisation in English Farming”, *The Agricultural History Review*, Vol 11, No 1, 1963, pp 15 – 26, p 25. Dewey, P., *Iron Harvests of the Field: The Making of Farm Machinery in Britain since 1800* (Lancaster: Carnegie Publishing Ltd, 2008).



cheaply, and almost all farmers could use at least one economically by 1900'.<sup>424</sup> In his memoir *The Lost Farmyard*, which relates to his experiences of growing up in Pode Hole near Spalding in the early twentieth century, Mr Harold Brighton remembered that 'grandfather and father would always try to breed a foal every year'.<sup>425</sup> Mrs H. from Cowbit could also remember her uncle breeding horses, and Mr S. remembered 'travelling sires' in the area north of Spalding.<sup>426</sup> Demonstrating that in the area around Spalding, at least, it was common practice to breed horses on the farm. However, their numbers did decline throughout the period due to the adoption of motor-powered tractors on farms and due to the advent of the motor car which replaced horses in terms of town transport. Horses were used as the power for both public and private transport during the Victorian period, with Thompson estimating that by 1890 there were 280,000 horses employed in urban bus and tram haulage alone.<sup>427</sup> However, as the twentieth century dawned and the motor bus and electric tram were developed the decline of the urban horse began.<sup>428</sup> These motorised versions of the previously horse-drawn transport proved to be quicker, able to carry more passengers, and most importantly were more cost effective than their

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<sup>424</sup> Counce, S.A., "Mechanisation and Society in English Agriculture: The Experience of the North East, 1850-1914", *Rural History*, Vol 17, No 1, April 2006, pp 23 – 45, p 36.

<sup>425</sup> Brighton, H., *The Lost Farmyard* (Spalding: Self-Published, 2006), p 5. Also Mr S. OH.SouthHolland.002 provided similar evidence of this occurring in Gosberton Clough.

<sup>426</sup> Mrs H. OH.Southholland.005 and Mr S. OH.Southholland.002.

<sup>427</sup> Thompson, F.M.L., "Nineteenth Century Horse Sense", *Economic History Review*, *Second Series*, Vol 29, No 12, 1976, pp 61 – 80.

<sup>428</sup> Bonnett, H., *The Camden Town Group in Context*, online. Available from: <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/camden-town-group/helena-bonett-in-these-english-farms-if-anywhere-one-might-see-life-steadily-and-see-it-r1104361>. [Accessed 30th May 2013]. Armstrong, J., "From Shilliber to Buchanan: Transport and the Urban Environment", *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, Volume III 1840 – 1950, Daunton, M. (ed) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp 229 – 260. Douglas, I., Hodgson, R. and Lawson, N., "Industry, Environment, and Health through 200 Years in Manchester", *Ecological Economics*, Vol 41, 2002, pp 235 – 255.

predecessors.<sup>429</sup> There was a pivotal shift in the 1930s with the advent of the cheap motor car, which allowed urban middle class people to invest in their own private transport, a trend that was interrupted by World War Two, but resumed after the war, signalling the end of horse-drawn urban vehicles.<sup>430</sup>

The centrality of the horse throughout the period is reflected in the development of new machinery introduced during the nineteenth century, which for the most part was designed to be drawn by horses (although often designed with the aim of using fewer horses to pull them),<sup>431</sup> and Dewey has asserted that as late as 1913 the ‘number of working horses on farms...was 1.07 million’,<sup>432</sup> although it is worth being mindful that Collins has claimed that official figures from the period were exaggerated and that in 1910 the number of horses may have been over-estimated by as many as 170,000 animals.<sup>433</sup> In Lincolnshire first hand accounts reflect how important the horse was, for example one recollection from someone living near Coningsby in 1912 states that ‘there was little mechanisation, all implements were horse-drawn’.<sup>434</sup> This importance is also represented in the number of large horse fairs held in the county in towns such as Horncastle, Brigg, and Lincoln in the north of the county, and villages such as Donington in the south. David Robinson wrote an article entitled “Horncastle and the Great August Horse Fair” which gives a sense of occasion that these

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<sup>429</sup> Armstrong, J., “From Shilliber to Buchanan: Transport and the Urban Environment”, *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, Volume III 1840 – 1950, Daunton, M. (ed) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp 229 – 260.

<sup>430</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>431</sup> Brown, J. *Farming in Lincolnshire 1850-1950 (Studies in the History of Lincolnshire)* (Lincoln: History of Lincolnshire Committee, 2005).

<sup>432</sup> Dewey, P.E., *British Agriculture in the First World War* (London: Routledge, 1989), p 60.

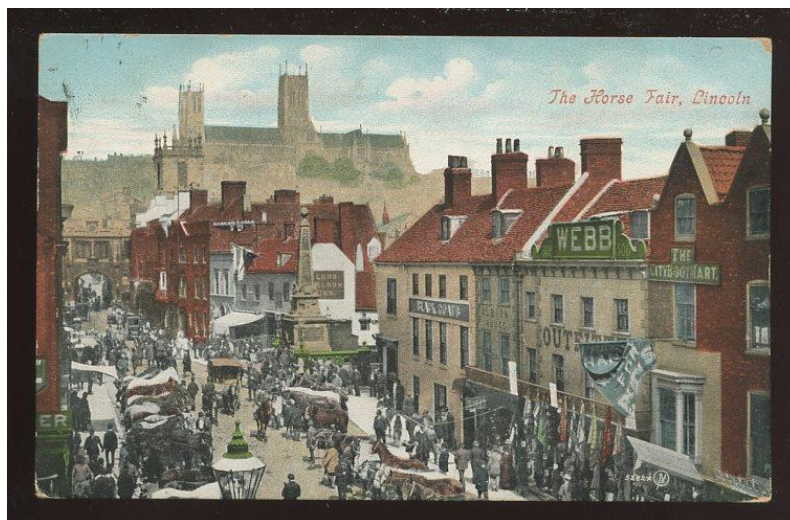
<sup>433</sup> Collins, E.J.T., *Power Availability and Agricultural Productivity in England and Wales 1840 – 1939 (Issue 1 of Discussion Papers Series)* (Reading: University of Reading, 1996).

<sup>434</sup> Lincolnshire Federations of Women’s Institutes, *Lincolnshire Within Living Memory* (Newbury: Countryside Books, 1995), p 136. Note the term mechanisation here is understood to refer to tractor power.

events had. By the nineteenth century the horse fair in Horncastle was considered to be one of the most important in the county and region. The fair had started 600 years before, and an official charter was granted in 1229, but it grew in importance during the nineteenth century as Wolds' farmers utilised huge amounts of horse power on their large arable farms. The fair was attended by dealers and buyers from the great agricultural counties of England, but also the continent, and could last for up to two weeks.<sup>435</sup> Brigg horse fair was also granted a charter in the thirteenth century, in 1204, and did not decline until the 1970s when a local auction house won the right to sell the horses which impacted on the Romany community who were at the heart of the fair's activities. Lincoln horse fair was also large and well known, and was captured by artists for creative and commercial purposes. W.H. Turner painted a scene of the fair in the nineteenth century (see fig 4, p 132). His painting depicts a very rural and sedate scene that is perhaps gentrified, and quite different from a 1907 postcard which shows the fair taking place right in the middle of the city on the High Street (see fig 5, p 132).

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<sup>435</sup> Robinson, D. N., *Horncastle and the Great August Horse Fair*, online. Available at: <http://www.horncastleuk.com/historydetail.php?id=1089&cid=1207&f=Horncastle>. [Accessed 18<sup>th</sup> April 2012].

Fig 4. W.H. Turner's Lincoln horse fair<sup>436</sup>Fig 5. Postcard of Lincoln horse fair 1907<sup>437</sup>

<sup>436</sup> National Trust, *Turner, W.H. Lincoln Horse Fair*, Date Unknown, Copyright National Trust Images/Angelo Hornak, online. Available from:

<http://www.nationaltrustimages.org.uk/image/14434>. [Accessed 10<sup>th</sup> June 2012].

<sup>437</sup> Rarity Collector, *The Horse Fair Lincoln, 1907*, online. Available from:

<http://www.raritycollector.com/stockimages/p11a15150p1.jpg>. [Accessed 17th January 2013]. I also have my own copy of this postcard, purchased for this research, but could not scan it effectively.

Stow also held a medieval fair charter which evolved into a horse fair that survived until 1954. Whilst not a huge event like that of Lincoln, photographic evidence shows that during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the fair took place at the centre of the village and was a social occasion. The children and adults in plate 1 (p 133) are obviously dressed in fine clothes for the occasion.

Plate 1. Stow horse fair<sup>438</sup>



Tractors utilising the internal combustion engine had been available in America since the 1880s, and the first farm tractor proper to be manufactured in Britain was made by Dan Albone in Bedfordshire in 1903.<sup>439</sup> However, tractors did not become more widely available until World War One, not because the horse was no longer deemed an effective power source, but because the government

<sup>438</sup> Vennett Smith, *Stow Fair*, Date unknown, online. Available from: <http://www.vennett-smith.com/catalogues/pa100112/lot0542-0.jpg>. [Accessed 10<sup>th</sup> June 2012].

<sup>439</sup> Dewey, P., *Iron Harvests of the Field: The Making of Farm Machinery in Britain Since 1800* (Lancaster: Carnegie Publishing Ltd, 2008).

acquired horses for the Front whilst publicising tractors and ploughs to farmers by organising demonstrations, particularly in the eastern counties of England. Essentially, 'state sponsored mechanisation'<sup>440</sup> heralded a new age in farm power. Tractor production and procurement was raised, with the government purchasing and distributing 500 tractors between 1914 and 1916,<sup>441</sup> and it is estimated that there may have been as many as 5,000 motor tractors in use in Britain by 1917.<sup>442</sup> Mr B. was able to clearly remember his grandfather's first tractor that the family acquired some time between 1917 and 1919:

Oh yes I can remember the first tractor. Yes. Well I was only about two or three. My Grandfather had one and that was the first one I ever knew, but it didn't do a lot of work in them days.<sup>443</sup>

If it is accepted that the work load was not reduced in any way this suggests that Mr B.'s grandfather was still using that other power source; real horse power. Mr B.'s family had a small farm at Pode Hole near Spalding in the Holland Division of the county, but shared a common experience with the Dennis family who farmed potatoes on a huge scale near Boston (also in the Holland Division of the county). By 1919, the Dennis family owned 19 tractors and in Brown's opinion 'were looking to eliminate the horse within a few years'.<sup>444</sup> Mr B.'s recollection (above p 134) suggests that whilst this new technology was available to farmers, small farmers were perhaps not embracing

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<sup>440</sup> Brown, J., *Farming in Lincolnshire 1850-1950 (Studies in the History of Lincolnshire)* (Lincoln: History of Lincolnshire Committee, 2005), p 191.

<sup>441</sup> Ibid.

<sup>442</sup> Dewey, P.E., *British Agriculture in the First World War* (London: Routledge, 1989), p 62.

<sup>443</sup> Mr B. OH.Southholland.004.

<sup>444</sup> Brown, J. *Farming in Lincolnshire 1850-1950 (Studies in the History of Lincolnshire)* (Lincoln: History of Lincolnshire Committee, 2005), p 226.

it to its full extent, whereas the Dennis family were obviously embracing it in a bid to improve and move forward, albeit unsuccessfully as they still had several horses on their farms in the 1930s due to the nature of the fenland they farmed.<sup>445</sup> Whilst the application of this new technology heralded a slow decline in horsepower on the farm in England and Lincolnshire over the next forty years, and the tractor managed to achieve what the steam engine could not, this was not necessarily a one-way process, and similarities can be drawn to the arguments surrounding decline in the rural workforce facilitating mechanisation. In 1983 Collins argued that during the 1930s a shortage of horses available to farmers actually allowed for the circulation, purchase, and implementation of expensive tractors by farmers.<sup>446</sup>

In 1917 the government made a decision to standardise farm power alongside its campaign to plough up grassland for arable usage, and ordered 5,000 Fordson tractors. It also published weekly notices regarding the achievements made through the use of tractor power and held monthly ploughing competitions where prizes were awarded for the greatest number of acres ploughed rather than for the best or straightest furrow.<sup>447</sup> However, the government also supported the production of steam ploughing engines, perhaps suggesting that there was recognition that although new technology was available, old technology was not yet obsolete. For instance, the government ordered the production of 100 sets of steam ploughing tackle from the Leeds firm Fowlers,

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<sup>445</sup> Ibid. Collins, E.J.T., "The Rationality of Surplus Agricultural Labour, Mechanisation in English Agriculture in the Nineteenth Century", *The Agricultural History Review*, Vol 35, No 1, 1987, pp 36 – 46.

<sup>446</sup> Collins, E.J.T., "The Farm Horse Economy of England and Wales in the Early Tractor Age 1900 – 1940", *Horses in European Economic History: A Preliminary Canter*, Thompson, F.M.L. (ed) (Reading: British Agricultural History Society, 1983) pp 73 – 100.

<sup>447</sup> Brown, J. *Farming in Lincolnshire 1850-1950 (Studies in the History of Lincolnshire)* (Lincoln: History of Lincolnshire Committee, 2005), p 226.

although much of the machinery was not operational until the inter-war years as the order was not completed until after the war had ended.<sup>448</sup> The retention of old technology suggests that whilst the potential of the tractor as an efficient source of power was recognised during World War One, it was not yet the dominant machine on the farm. Harwood Long's research supports this supposition stating that it was not until 'the 1939-45 war that the tractor became the almost undisputed source of motive power on the farms of Britain'.<sup>449</sup>

Mechanisation in the form of the introduction of the tractor continued during the inter-war years with a steady rise in their numbers. In 1920 there were 10,000 tractors recorded in the United Kingdom, and in 1930 there were 30,000.<sup>450</sup>

Lincolnshire farmers were described by contemporary commentators as 'machine-minded' in the 1930s.<sup>451</sup> This willingness to adapt to new technologies is reflected in figures captured on the number of tractors in the county. For example, a random sample of 63 farms on the Wolds in 1928 recorded that 25 tractors were held between them, whereas in 1938 a similar survey recorded that 60 farms held 62 tractors.<sup>452</sup> These results suggest a sharp rise in tractor ownership in this area during the period. However it must not be assumed that the Wolds represent the whole of Lincolnshire; for example, on a farm between Ludford and Louth in the 1930s

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<sup>448</sup> Ibid.

<sup>449</sup> Harwood Long, W., "The Development of Mechanisation in English Farming", *The Agricultural History Review*, Vol 11, No 1, 1963, pp 15 – 26, p 20.

<sup>450</sup> Binswanger, H., "Agricultural Mechanization: A Comparative Historical Perspective", *The World Bank Research Observer*, Vol 1, No 1, January 1986, pp 27 – 56, table p 39.

<sup>451</sup> Brown, J. *Farming in Lincolnshire 1850-1950 (Studies in the History of Lincolnshire)* (Lincoln: History of Lincolnshire Committee, 2005), p 226.

<sup>452</sup> Ibid.



all the work in the fields, ploughing, harrowing, drilling, muck spreading and reaping was carried out by horse and manpower, as there were no tractors in use on the farm at that time.<sup>453</sup>

In 1937 the Ministry of Agriculture conducted a tractor census which recorded that there were 43,000 wheeled and track-laying tractors in England and Wales. The number held in Lincolnshire was 3,800, which was the highest return for any county. The greatest density was in the Holland Division, which might be attributed to farmers investing profits made in potatoes.<sup>454</sup>

In 1939 there were 38,000 tractors in Britain, but horses were still kept in significant numbers across the country: the 885,000 horses kept for agricultural use before the war had fallen to 563,000 in 1935-1939, showing that although in decline, the horse remained an important source of power in England.<sup>455</sup> It is important to note that at this point in time the rate of decline in Lincolnshire followed the same trends seen across England and Wales.<sup>456</sup> Brown provided a range of figures which show a steady decline during the interwar years, and during and after World War Two (see fig 6, p 138). However, this does demonstrate a significant number of horses still in use, matched by the perception of local people that 'all the land was worked in the same way...everything was done by man and horse' in the interwar years.<sup>457</sup>

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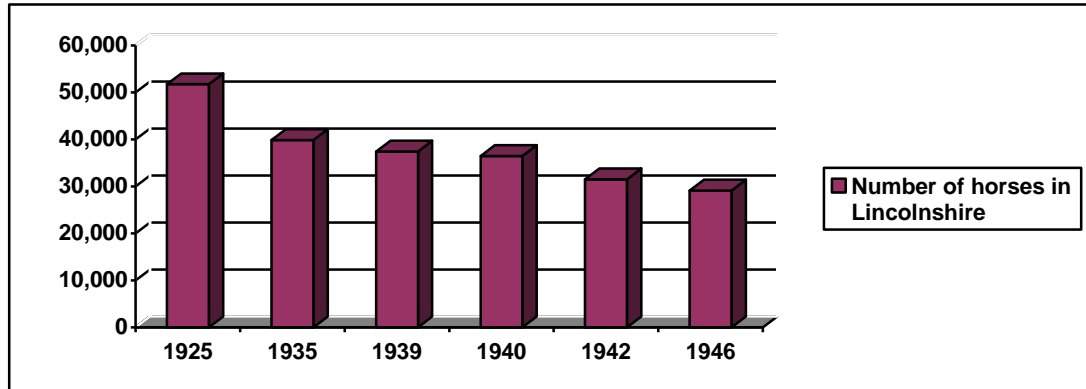
<sup>453</sup> Lincolnshire Federations of Women's Institutes, *Lincolnshire Within Living Memory* (Newbury, Countryside Books, 1995), p 138.

<sup>454</sup> Brown, J., *Farming in Lincolnshire 1850-1950 (Studies in the History of Lincolnshire)* (Lincoln: History of Lincolnshire Committee, 2005).

<sup>455</sup> Mingay, G. E., *A Social History of the English Countryside* (Routledge: London, 1990).

<sup>456</sup> Brown, J., *Farming in Lincolnshire 1850-1950 (Studies in the History of Lincolnshire)* (Lincoln: History of Lincolnshire Committee, 2005).

<sup>457</sup> Lincolnshire Federations of Women's Institutes, *Lincolnshire Within Living Memory* (Newbury, Countryside Books, 1995), p 126.

Fig 6. Graph of decline of the number of horses in Lincolnshire 1925 – 1946<sup>458</sup>

Alongside the reduction of horses the numbers of tractors increased considerably during the war, with *Agriculture: The Journal of the Ministry of Agriculture* reporting in 1943 that there were ‘150,000 tractors on British farms’,<sup>459</sup> and Brown citing a 90% increase in the number of tractors on farms in England and Wales between 1942 and 1946.<sup>460</sup> It is clear from contemporary evidence that the government was once again engaging in activities to promote the adoption of the tractor, for example in the Penguin-published treatise *British Agriculture: The Principles of Future Policy*, the final four pages are dedicated to the promotion of the Fordson tractor through scenes of spring, summer, autumn and winter, representing the farming year and human aging. The spring tableau reads:

Last April, a man was drilling 7 acres of barley with 2 horses. He finishes at 4.45. I brought my Fordson to his field that evening. With a double set of horse harrows, 18 feet wide, I went over the whole field in one hour,

<sup>458</sup> Data taken from Brown, J., *Farming in Lincolnshire 1850-1950 (Studies in the History of Lincolnshire)* (Lincoln: History of Lincolnshire Committee, 2005).

<sup>459</sup> Brew, B.G., “The Women’s Land Army”, *Agriculture: The Journal of the Ministry of Agriculture*, Vol 50, No 6, September 1943, pp 275 – 278, p 275.

<sup>460</sup> Brown, J., *Farming in Lincolnshire 1850-1950 (Studies in the History of Lincolnshire)* (Lincoln: History of Lincolnshire Committee, 2005).

using 1 ½ gallons of paraffin. A few days later I ploughed 12 acres of land in two days. It was a race against time, and I was never more glad to have Fordson power with me.<sup>461</sup>

However, it should be noted that this was a promotional piece of writing that had a clear political agenda. This was a sales pitch to farmers by the government and Fordson, that reflected the assertive post-war government intervention in farming in a bid to make the country self sustaining in terms of food production.

This thesis argues that whilst there was a decline in horse power it was far slower than often assumed by historians, and was by no means a uniform experience across England, or even Lincolnshire itself. This research uncovered a continued use of horses until relatively recently in two parts of the county, although it might be argued that these are extreme cases. Just north of Lincoln at Sturton on Stow, Mr C. gave an interview that outlined his life-long experience of working with horses. He described his experience of them as a child, recalling that his father was resistant to replacing his horses on their family farm, only getting a tractor in 1944. He said of his father; ‘He didn’t like anything on wheels. He wanted everything on legs!’<sup>462</sup> He then described his early working years on another farm and his disappointment when his boss told him that he wouldn’t need his horse anymore as ‘a grey fergie is arriving for you tomorrow’.<sup>463</sup> Mr C. decided that if he was successful enough to buy some of his own land then he would continue to use horses, and that is exactly what he did from 1964 until around 2005. Whilst he admitted that he had to use a tractor to

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<sup>461</sup> Astor, Viscount and Seeborn Rowentree, B., *British Agriculture: The Principles of Future Policy. (Pelican Special Series)* (Middlesex: Penguin, 1939).

<sup>462</sup> Mr C. OH.Westlindsey.005.

<sup>463</sup> Ibid.

plough the heavy land his farm was on, he described the range of tasks real horse power had been applied to on his smallholding, such as drilling corn, spreading fertiliser, cutting and turning hay, and binding.<sup>464</sup>

Research also uncovered another extreme example in the south of the county at Holbeach St John's, near Crowland. On 16 August 2011, *The Lincolnshire Free Press* "Through our Archives" section reported on an article that had featured in the paper in 1971. The article recounted the story of siblings Sam Bailey, Dan Bailey, Alf Bailey, and Alice Bailey who lived together on a 60 acre smallholding at Holbeach St John's. The siblings had not modernised their smallholding, living without electricity or gas and mains water, and had retained horses and the associated machinery to work their land.<sup>465</sup> Mr B. from Pode Hole near Spalding, also maintained in his oral history interview that he had used horses well into the 1970s to work on his farm, saying in his interview that 'about thirty year ago we went out of horses'.<sup>466</sup> Whilst these examples do not fall within the usual time frame for the end of the use of horses in Lincolnshire, they are worth consideration as they demonstrate that horses could be found working the land into the 1970s.

Fig 7 (p 146) shows the decline of the use of horses in the county during the twentieth century, as represented in the oral interviews conducted for this research. Whilst this information cannot provide exact data, it presents empirical data that show a general pattern of decline and some regional patterns. It shows a divide between the upland areas of the county such as the Wolds and Heath, where farmers appear to have ceased to use real horse power earlier

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<sup>464</sup> Mr C. OHWestlindsey.005.

<sup>465</sup> Lincolnshire Free Press, *Through our Archives*, 16<sup>th</sup> August 2011, p 45.

<sup>466</sup> Mr B. OH.SouthHolland.004.

than on the lowland Fenland in the south of the county. This is clearly related to the soil and farming types practiced in these areas. The light upland soils were able to cope with heavy machinery and were producing arable crops on a scale that warranted investment in, and adoption of, new machinery. But, early machines were not designed for the heavy lowland peats and silts, and the abundance of small holdings meant that farmers could continue to have profitable businesses without major investment in technology.<sup>467</sup> It is possible to conclude that the use of horses ended during the 1950s and 1960s, although there are the anomalies discussed above. This decline links well to Harwood Long's summation in 1963 that 'English farming is probably the most mechanised in the world',<sup>468</sup> and reflects the indication of a highly mechanised county from the 1937 returns. A complex pattern of change appears in the map that suggests that in the Wolds and the land around Sleaford horses were replaced as a power source during the 1950s, at a faster rate than in the Fens. This may relate to the land types in two areas, and farm sizes, as the southern fenlands could support smallholdings that did not need to modernise to survive during this period.<sup>469</sup> The land in the Fens was also not necessarily suited to early and mid-twentieth century tractors as they were heavy, without great weight distribution, and could therefore easily sink in to the ground, or damage crops.

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<sup>467</sup> Collins, E.J.T., "The Rationality of Surplus Agricultural Labour, Mechanisation in English Agriculture in the Nineteenth Century", *The Agricultural History Review*, Vol 35, No 1, 1987, pp 36 – 46.

<sup>468</sup> Harwood Long, W., "The Development of Mechanisation in English Farming", *The Agricultural History Review*, Vol 11, No 1, 1963, pp 15 – 26, p 15.

<sup>469</sup> See chapter 2.

The change in power on the farm between the 1940s and the 1970s was phenomenal, and by the 1960s there were 400,000 tractors in England.<sup>470</sup> At the end of World War Two there were around 7,200 tractors in Lincolnshire, and less than thirty years later there were around 23,000 tractors in the county.<sup>471</sup> This demonstrates an increased level of adoption of the tractor, not seen before this date. The findings of this research conform to earlier research by Ewart Evans in Suffolk, confirming that by and large the working horse disappeared from most of farms during the decade 1950 – 1960 in Lincolnshire as well as Suffolk.<sup>472</sup> But it must be recognised that mechanisation began in earnest at the end of World War Two, when the tractor truly began to replace the horse with an increase in the number of tractors owned in England from less than 56,000 in 1938 to more than 180,000 by 1945.<sup>473</sup>

It should also be considered that whilst horses were kept well into the 1960s, particularly in the south of the county where they were utilised for potato harvesting well into the decade,<sup>474</sup> they steadily worked in a more limited capacity as time passed. However, there is evidence to suggest that mechanical implements such as the horse drawn reaper-binder were in use as late as 1955.<sup>475</sup>

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<sup>470</sup> Harwood Long, W., "The Development of Mechanisation in English Farming", *The Agricultural History Review*, Vol 11, No 1, 1963, pp 15 – 26.

<sup>471</sup> Holderness, B.A. "Agriculture", *Twentieth Century Lincolnshire*, (*History of Lincolnshire Vol. xii*), Mills, D. (ed) (Lincoln: SHLA, 1989), pp. 37 - 70.

<sup>472</sup> Ewart Evans, G., *Where Beards Wag All: The Relevance of Oral Tradition* (London: Faber, 1970).

Ewart Evans, G., *Ask the Fellows Who Cut the Hay* (London: Faber and Faber, 1975). Ewart Evans, G., *The Crooked Scythe: An Anthology of Oral History* (London: Faber and Faber, 1994).

<sup>473</sup> Dewey, P., *Iron Harvests of the Field: The Making of Farm Machinery in Britain since 1800* (Lancaster: Carnegie Publishing Ltd, 2008).

<sup>474</sup> Mr A. OH.Southholland.006.

<sup>475</sup> Mr W. OH.Southholland.009 and Mr G. OH.SouthKesteven.003.

Oral history interviews undertaken for this research suggest that the 1950s were the point at which modernity was realised by many farmers,<sup>476</sup> and was a turning point in history as the impact of finally losing real horse power was recognised. The capturing of the human reaction to this experience has been largely neglected by academics to date, whilst the decline of traditional practice and rise of modernity has been well captured in the secondary sources utilised for this chapter. It might be argued then that the recording of how people experienced this cultural shift is therefore a new contribution to the body of knowledge relating to changes in agricultural practice and can enhance our understanding of these changes by measuring impact through experience, something that Martin has acknowledged as hard to achieve.<sup>477</sup> It would appear that farmers often kept horses for sentimental reasons from the 1950s to the 1960s, allowing them to live out their days on the farm rather than being sent for slaughter, perhaps using them as cart horses to keep them working,<sup>478</sup> or retaining light horses for leisure purposes, such as Mr W.'s family who kept horses for riding into the 1960s.<sup>479</sup> It was suggested in oral history interviews that tasks became minimal for the horses as they grew older and obsolete, with farmers claiming to use them for tasks such as carting crops such as potatoes into the 1960s,<sup>480</sup> and peas and hay into the 1950s.<sup>481</sup> Research by Collins supports the suggestion of a reduced work load; as these animals reached old age they would have not been of much use to the farmers as a working horse

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<sup>476</sup> In terms of the indicator identified in chapter 2, p 72. 'iii The adoption and application of large, labour saving, machinery powered either directly or indirectly by the internal combustion engine (1930s in some cases, but in significant numbers from 1960s)'.  
<sup>477</sup> Martin, J., *The Development of Modern Agriculture: British Farming Since 1931* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000).

<sup>478</sup> Mr. W. OH.Southholland. 009.

<sup>479</sup> Ibid.

<sup>480</sup> Mr A. OH.Southholland.006.

<sup>481</sup> Mr H. OH.Southkesteven.001.

aged 15 – 20 only has half the physical capacity of a horse in its prime.<sup>482</sup>

Several interviewees recalled the loss of the last horse from the farm with great emotion: Mr S. from Skellingthorpe remembered how their last horse had got fatter as it did less work on the farm, and the pressure they were under to produce more food; both factors led to his decision to get rid of the animal in the early 1960s:

I was the one that sold the last horse and I remember feeling a bit upset because it really upset the man who'd been the Waggoner.<sup>483</sup>

In contrast to this sense of loss there was an unexpected recurring theme in interviews linked to this change; the affection for the first tractor they or their family had owned. Most male interviewees could recall the first tractor they owned and or worked on in great detail. For example, Mr S. in Silk Willoughby still had the first tractor he had bought and had kept it in working condition despite the fact that it was no longer a working machine. He took me to look at it in his barn, where it appeared to take pride of place amongst the remnants of agricultural tools and machinery. Mr J. B. of Holland Fen stated that his son owned a 1936 Allis Chalmers tractor that had worked the land in Holland Fen; a tractor that he had driven when it was a working vehicle. The tractor was desirable to his son because of the family association with it, and the link it had with their sense of place and past as a family.<sup>484</sup> However, there was also some resistance by farmers to change that impacted on the adoption of the new power source. Mr S. recalled of his father in the inter-war years:

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<sup>482</sup> Collins, E.J.T., "The Farm Horse Economy of England and Wales in the Early Tractor Age 1900 – 1940", *Horses in European Economic History: A Preliminary Canter*, Thompson, F.M.L. (ed) (Reading: British Agricultural History Society, 1983) pp 73 – 100.

<sup>483</sup> Mr S. OH.Northkesteven.007.

<sup>484</sup> Mr J.B. OH.Bostonborough.003.



My father wasn't really interested in machinery, erm liking his livestock. And so most of the work on the farm was done either by labour or real horse power. Horses were used to do the majority of jobs.<sup>485</sup>

There was also an issue with tractors and associated machinery. Mr S. recalled his experiences of finding that it was easier to keep using horses as the machinery they pulled was not suitable for tractors and agricultural engineers had not yet brought out machinery to work alongside the tractor.<sup>486</sup> Davies also recorded in 1947, whilst there may have been a claim that England had the most highly mechanised in the world, the tools pulled by tractors in Lincolnshire were, in fact, designed to be horse drawn implements.<sup>487</sup>

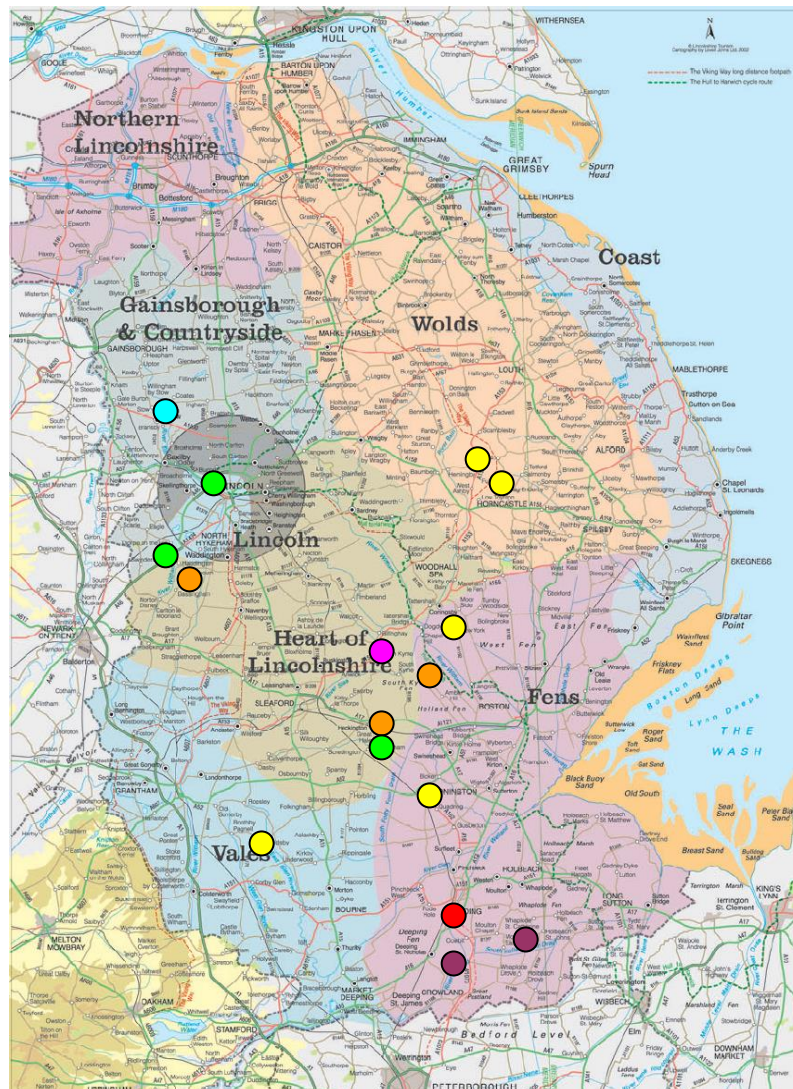
The decline, end, and replacement of horse power in Lincolnshire, was a complex process that took several decades to complete. It is clear, however, that the final stage in the process was the most defined in terms of personal experience, as evidenced by strong emotional responses to the loss of the last horses and the introduction of the tractors replacing them on farms. This reaction allows us to pinpoint the turning point in history when modernity was realised in farming in Lincolnshire; during the 1950s and 1960s.

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<sup>485</sup> Mr S. OH.Northkesteven.007.

<sup>486</sup> Ibid.

<sup>487</sup> Davies, D., "The Mechanisation of Lincolnshire Farms", *Agriculture: The Journal of the Ministry of Agriculture*, Special Lincolnshire Number, Vol 50, No 4, July 1947, pp 37 - 70.

Fig 7. Map showing last use of horses as captured by oral history<sup>488</sup>

Key: ● 1950s    ● 1950-1955    ● 1955-1960    ● 1960-1965  
● 1965-1970    ● 1970s    ● 2000s

<sup>488</sup> Mr B. OH.Southolland.004, Mr and Mrs A. OH.Southolland.006, Mr and Mrs G. OH.Southolland.008, Mr W. OH.Southolland.009, Mr H. OH.Southkesteven.001, Mr S. OH.Northkesteven.001, Mr B. OH.NorthKesteven.004, Mr L. OH.NorthKesteven.005, Mr S. OH.Northkesteven.007, Mr M. OH.Northkesteven.006, Mr W. OH.Northeastlincs.002, Mr C. Snr, Mr C. Jnr, Mrs C. OH.Eastlindsey.001, Mr R. OH.Eastlindsey.002, Mr W. OH.Eastlindsey.004, Mr L. OH.Westlindsey.001, Mr C. OH.Westlindsey.005. Map is from: Visit Lincolnshire, *Lincolnshire Map*, online. Available from: <http://mediafiles.thedms.co.uk/Publication/LM-Lincs/cms/pdf/Areas%20of%20Lincolnshire%20Map.pdf>. [Accessed 13<sup>th</sup> January 2013].

### **Continuity and change: From threshing machines to combine harvesters**

During the period under examination there were also developments in the equipment associated with the various harvests, and 'the most notable advance was in the mechanisation of the cereal harvest'.<sup>489</sup> There were three key pieces of equipment developed to harvest crops during the period: the reaper and the binder (both utilised during the late summer harvest), and the threshing machine (utilised during autumn and winter). This section will focus on the threshing machine and its metamorphosis into the combine harvester. Whilst the threshing machine has been subject to extensive historical research, the history of the combine harvester is less well documented. When examined through a range of sources it is possible to draw out a complex picture of the adoption of new technologies in Lincolnshire from that of the threshing drum in the nineteenth century and then the shift to the utilisation of combine harvesters in the twentieth century.

The adoption of new harvesting technology was not uniform across the county, with Brown citing examples of an agent at Brigg in the north of the county receiving a number of reaping machines in 1872 and 1873, but contemporaneous farmers in Long Sutton in the south of the county retaining labourers to thresh by hand.<sup>490</sup> Brown does not explain why these differences occurred, but it is possible to surmise that this might be related to the scale of cereal farming in the north, which was far greater than in the south of the county where vegetables were favoured due to the rich fenland soil. The size of farms may also have impacted on levels of adoption: in the north, farms were

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<sup>489</sup> Brown, J., *Farming in Lincolnshire 1850-1950 (Studies in the History of Lincolnshire)* (Lincoln: History of Lincolnshire Committee, 2005).

<sup>490</sup> *Ibid.*

generally larger or part of large estates owned by great landowners who were willing to invest in technology on behalf of their tenants, whereas the south, particularly in the Holland Division and the area south of Spalding, was covered with smallholdings held by owner occupiers who may not have had the capital or the need to invest in new technology.<sup>491</sup> Van Zanden also suggested that this was generally the case across Europe between the 1850s and the 1870s, stating that ‘costly machines could only be purchased by rich farmers, as the use of them would have sharply increased the attractions of large scale production’,<sup>492</sup> and Ó Gradá argued that the simple economics of the cost per acre of buying machinery for smaller farmers was prohibitive.<sup>493</sup>

The threshing machine is perhaps the most iconic of the machines utilised at harvest times and has been described as being as ‘basic to agriculture as agriculture was to the national economy’.<sup>494</sup> Small threshing machines with separate mechanisms for winnowing and dressing were developed in the 1840s and were originally designed to be powered by horses. But by the end of the decade they were large machines that combined threshing, winnowing and dressing, and needed a steam engine to drive them.<sup>495</sup> The threshing machine was a key piece of machinery in increasing agricultural output from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, increasing a labourer’s productivity ‘four or

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<sup>491</sup> Ibid.

<sup>492</sup> Van Zanden, J.L., “The First Green Revolution: The Growth of Production and Productivity in European Agriculture, 1870-1914”, *The Economic History Review*, New Series, Vol 44, No 2, May 1991, pp 215 – 239, 216.

<sup>493</sup> Ó Gradá, C., “British Agriculture, 1860-1914”, *The Economic History of Britain Since 1700: Vol 2 1860-1939*, Floud, R. and McCloskey, D. (eds) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp 153 - 172.

<sup>494</sup> Macdonald, S., “The Progress of the Early Threshing Machine”, *Agricultural History Review*, Vol 23, No 1, 1975, pp 63 – 77, p 63.

<sup>495</sup> Brown, J., *Farming in Lincolnshire 1850-1950 (Studies in the History of Lincolnshire)* (Lincoln: History of Lincolnshire Committee, 2005). Harwood Long, W., “The Development of Mechanisation in English Farming”, *The Agricultural History Review*, Vol 11, No 1, 1963, pp 15 – 26.

fivefold',<sup>496</sup> and its use expanded tremendously between 1850 and 1875 as cereal farmers felt confident in investing in new technology during this period of economic stability.<sup>497</sup> If farmers could (or would) not invest in the machinery, they would hire it from contractors. Beastall provides an 1867 account by John Iles of Binbrook, Lincolnshire, regarding the hiring in and use of threshing drums:

Women came to my farm with a threshing machine. They are employed on the 'stage' of the machine to cut the bands. There is a man at Binbrook who owns several machines, and hires men and women to go with them to the different farms.<sup>498</sup>

What is interesting about this account in relation to this particular study is that despite the new harvesting method, gangs of women were still a crucial part of the agricultural workforce. The system of hiring in equipment is also of importance, as it suggests an unwillingness or inability to purchase large scale, expensive equipment, both of which are a feature of the period.<sup>499</sup>

Threshing machines were developed and improved throughout the nineteenth century, and by the 1880s 'a high degree of perfection had already been reached',<sup>500</sup> resulting in little alteration in design over the next 80 years. It was not until the mid-twentieth century that they were replaced with a much more

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<sup>496</sup> Ó Gradá, C., "British Agriculture, 1860-1914", *The Economic History of Britain Since 1700: Vol 2 1860-1939*, Floud, R. and McCloskey, D. (eds) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp 153 - 172.

<sup>497</sup> Dewey, P., *Iron Harvests of the Field: The Making of Farm Machinery in Britain since 1800* (Lancaster: Carnegie Publishing Ltd, 2008).

<sup>498</sup> Beastall, T.W., *Agricultural Revolution in Lincolnshire* (Lincoln: The History of Lincolnshire Committee for SHLA, 1978), p 122.

<sup>499</sup> See chapter 3.

<sup>500</sup> Harwood Long, W., "The Development of Mechanisation in English Farming", *The Agricultural History Review*, Vol 11, No 1, 1963, pp 15 – 26, p 19.

technologically advanced piece of machinery: the combine harvester. In fact, constant smaller-scale innovations to threshing drums meant that they were in use throughout the period 1850-1950, remaining in use despite combine harvesters being introduced in the late 1920s.<sup>501</sup>

Steam threshing was still a common sight before World War Two. Descriptions of this process highlight both the amount of labour still needed in the fields at this time and a manual system that had remained the same since the Victorian era. Mr B. recalled his memory of steam in South Lincolnshire during his participation in the oral history project, and in his own memoir:

Boys were usually given the job of carrying water for the steam engine. Using a yoke with 2 buckets they had to fetch the water from the nearest dyke. If they were too enthusiastic they would fill the engine too full and it would run into the engine's firebox – that upset the engine driver.<sup>502</sup>

Similarly to the steam engine, the impact of this particular piece of equipment has been challenged by academics, such as Morgan in the 1970s, who put forward the argument that

Only towards the end of the nineteenth century did machinery begin to have any real impact either on production methods or on the working lives of country people. The four basic tools in use, the sickle, the reaping hook, the fagging hook and the scythe – were all hand tools.<sup>503</sup>

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<sup>501</sup> Macdonald, S., "The Progress of the Early Threshing Machine", *Agricultural History Review*, Vol 23, No 1, 1975, pp 63 – 77.

<sup>502</sup> Brighton, H., *Changing Fields* (Spalding: Self-Published, 2003), p 5.

<sup>503</sup> Morgan, D.H., "The Place of Harvesters in Nineteenth Century", *Village Life and Labour*, Samuel, R. (ed) (London: Routledge, 1975), pp 27 – 69, p 29.

However, Dewey has argued that by 1914, just a few years into the twentieth century

British farming was the most highly mechanised of all European agricultural systems. This was particularly apparent in field operations, grass mowing, haymaking, and corn harvesting had long been performed by machine rather than by hand.<sup>504</sup>

The idea of a highly mechanised industry in the earlier part of the twentieth century is reflected in the fact that the first combine harvester was introduced to Britain in 1928, and purchased for use on a farm in Redbourn, Hertfordshire. The first recorded owner of this new machinery in Lincolnshire was G.H. Neville of the Wellingore Estate near Lincoln. After 1930 and the passing of the Wheat Act farmers felt secure enough to invest in combine harvesters and by 1934 there were 38 combine harvesters in England. Of these 38 machines, five or 13% were owned by farmers in Lincolnshire on four farms, and it is recorded that they cut 1,230 acres of that year's cereal crops between them. There were four more machines that were owned by contractors in the county, but these only cut 357 acres of cereal crops in the same year, suggesting that they were significantly underused.<sup>505</sup> Brown suggests that at the outbreak of World War Two there were no more than 100 combines in England, and 12 of these machines were being used in Lincolnshire on large farms on the Wolds, the Heath, and in North Lincolnshire, a figure that Martin has suggested needs

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<sup>504</sup> Dewey, P.E., *British Agriculture in the First World War* (London: Routledge, 1989), p 62.

<sup>505</sup> Brown, J., *Farming in Lincolnshire 1850-1950 (Studies in the History of Lincolnshire)* (Lincoln: History of Lincolnshire Committee, 2005).

further substantiation in his feedback on the assessment version of this thesis, an area that might warrant further research in the future.<sup>506</sup>

Combine harvesters were used in larger numbers post-World War Two, but Hill describes the combine harvesters of the period as ‘unsophisticated by modern standards’.<sup>507</sup> He does note, however, that they were effective in a reduction in the amount of labour required as the associated tasks of ‘binding, stooking, leading, stacking and threshing’<sup>508</sup> became redundant. Holderness argued that it was not until as late as after 1960 that the combine harvester transformed the harvesting operation, the technology having developed into ‘powerful and capacious machines’.<sup>509</sup> It has been argued that adoption of this new technology was slow because of low post-war labour costs, the frequency of small field and farm sizes, and the need for associated equipment, along with the initial capital costs that farmers had to lay out.<sup>510</sup> In the post-war period it was recognised that agriculture in Lindsey and Kesteven was being held back due to shortages of machinery, with reports stating that ‘combined harvesters [are] gradually being worked into the farming system. There is no rush to obtain them as they are new’,<sup>511</sup> although ‘for this year’s beet harvest there is likely to

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<sup>506</sup> Ibid. Information referenced as being ascertained from: Mills, D., Early Combine Harvester, Especially in Lincolnshire, A Report for the Museum of Lincolnshire Life, 1993, unpublished. Fleming, I., Lists of Early Combine Harvesters, 1994, and Bridgen, R., Farming in Partnership: The Leckford Estate and the Pursuit of Profit in Inter-War Agriculture, PhD Thesis, (University of Reading 1990), unpublished.

<sup>507</sup> Hill, D., “Changes on the Farm”, *The Lincolnshire Wolds*, Robinson, D. N. (ed) (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2009) pp 91 – 100, p 91.

<sup>508</sup> Ibid.

<sup>509</sup> Holderness, B.A. “Agriculture”, *Twentieth Century Lincolnshire, (History of Lincolnshire Vol. xii)* Mills, D. (ed) (Lincoln: SHLA, 1989), pp. 37 – 70, p 49.

<sup>510</sup> Brassley, P., “Output and Technical Change in Twentieth Century British Agriculture” *Agricultural History Review*, Vol 48, No 1, pp 60 - 84.

<sup>511</sup> Wells, G.B. and Mann, A., "Farming in Kesteven and Lindsey", *Agriculture: The Journal of the Ministry of Agriculture*, Special Lincolnshire Number Vol 54, No 4 (July 1947), pp 153 – 158, p 157.



be a marked increase in mechanisation'.<sup>512</sup> Brown's research concluded that the requirement for corn driers was a real sticking point for many farmers and cites this as impacting on farmers' decisions on whether or not to invest in this new machinery.<sup>513</sup> This is also exemplified by Worth's farms who did not construct their first grain store and drier at Fleet in the Holland Division of the county until 1955, despite having introduced their first two combine harvesters (a pair of Massey Harris 21 petrol combines in 1948).<sup>514</sup> This information conflicts with a contemporary government account by Davies, who reported in 1947 that combines and driers existed in Lincolnshire in 'numbers which eight years ago would have been thought fantastic'.<sup>515</sup> This conflict might be explained through the government's enthusiasm for modernising farming immediately after the war to end rationing and to ensure the country was more self-sustaining, and 'fantastic' does not necessarily mean that Davies was referring to substantial numbers in absolute terms.

This clearly demonstrates that the immediate post-war period did not herald the emergence of modern farming across the whole of Lincolnshire, which was dependent on the availability of machinery and individual farmers' priorities for investment, this interpretation is further substantiated by Brown's belief that 'those farms that pioneered the use of combine harvesters were in general highly mechanised'.<sup>516</sup> The slow pace of the adoption of machinery also

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<sup>512</sup> Ibid.

<sup>513</sup> Brown, J., *Farming in Lincolnshire 1850-1950 (Studies in the History of Lincolnshire)* (Lincoln: History of Lincolnshire Committee, 2005).

<sup>514</sup> Worth Farms, *Our History*, online. Available from: <http://www.worthfarms.co.uk/our-history.php>. [Accessed 4<sup>th</sup> April 2012].

<sup>515</sup> Davies, D., "The Mechanisation of Lincolnshire Farms", *Agriculture: The Journal of the Ministry of Agriculture*, Special Lincolnshire Number, Vol 50, No 4, July 1947, pp 37 – 70, p 40.

<sup>516</sup> Brown, J. *Farming in Lincolnshire 1850-1950 (Studies in the History of Lincolnshire)* (Lincoln: History of Lincolnshire Committee, 2005), p 231.

indicates that relative continuity in practice still existed.<sup>517</sup> This is supported in statements in oral testimonies, such as ‘the corn harvest was a very long labour.....the first combine harvester I saw was in the 1950s’.<sup>518</sup> The Lincolnshire experience, therefore, is not necessarily reflective of progress made nationally despite being a highly mechanised county, as by 1958 there were 40,000 combine harvesters in England.<sup>519</sup> Fig 8 (p 157) shows the introduction of combine harvesters in Lincolnshire as captured in the oral history interviews conducted for this research. This is sparse, and of course only captures a small part of this introduction. However, it is possible to see that the introduction of the combine harvester was not uniform across the county: this research would suggest a range of thirty years for the introduction of the machinery. The pattern shown is not surprising and reflects the secondary evidence discussed in this chapter, with the Wolds results reflecting the early introduction of the combine, although the introduction of the combine on farms outside of the Wolds was ten to twenty years later than the first documented combines in the Wolds. As with much of the general discussion on mechanisation, the combine is recorded as arriving in the south of the county later, and it is highly likely that this reflects the land ownership and usage patterns of the area.

The early combine harvesters did not always impact on labour levels as one might expect, as they still required men to assist the operation. Mr J.B. stated that he remembered the same number of men working with early combines that

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<sup>517</sup> Brassley, P., “Output and Technical Change in Twentieth Century British Agriculture” *Agricultural History Review*, Vol 48, No 1, pp 60 - 84.

<sup>518</sup> Lincolnshire Federations of Women’s Institutes, *Lincolnshire Within Living Memory* (Newbury: Countryside Books, 1995), p 128.

<sup>519</sup> Harwood Long, W., “The Development of Mechanisation in English Farming”, *The Agricultural History Review*, Vol 11, No 1, 1963, pp 15 – 26.

had worked on earlier harvests. He explained that this was because of the manual labour still required. The corn was bagged on the combine, but men were required to take the bags off when they were full and put a new bag on the machine, they then had to pick up the full bags with a trolley and take them to the trailer.<sup>520</sup> However, Davies argued that when compared with the 'economics of stooking, carting, stacking, and later threshing gangs', there was no competition between traditional and modern practices because only three or four men were needed to work with a self-propelled combine.<sup>521</sup> By 1953 the success of the adoption of increased mechanisation accompanied by the amalgamation of farms encouraged by the government could be seen in a more dramatic decline in the labour force.<sup>522</sup>

Mechanisation reached levels we are familiar with today during the 1960s and 1970s, with large-scale machinery introduced for all crops and the tractor becoming the only source of power on the farm. By the latter half of the 1970s, equipment had become so sophisticated that most aspects of agricultural activity utilised specialised equipment and required less labour than ever before. The increased size in equipment such as combine harvesters coupled with the union of smaller farms and the reduction in tenanted farms had a huge impact on the landscape during this period, as miles of hedgerows were ripped out to allow a more efficient operation through the creation of large fields.

What should also be noted was impact of the introduction of combine harvesters on farmers during the 1960s and 1970s in terms of personal

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<sup>520</sup> Mr J.B. OH.Bostonborough.003.

<sup>521</sup> Davies, D., "The Mechanisation of Lincolnshire Farms", *Agriculture: The Journal of the Ministry of Agriculture*, Special Lincolnshire Number, Vol 50, No 4, July 1947, pp 37 - 70.

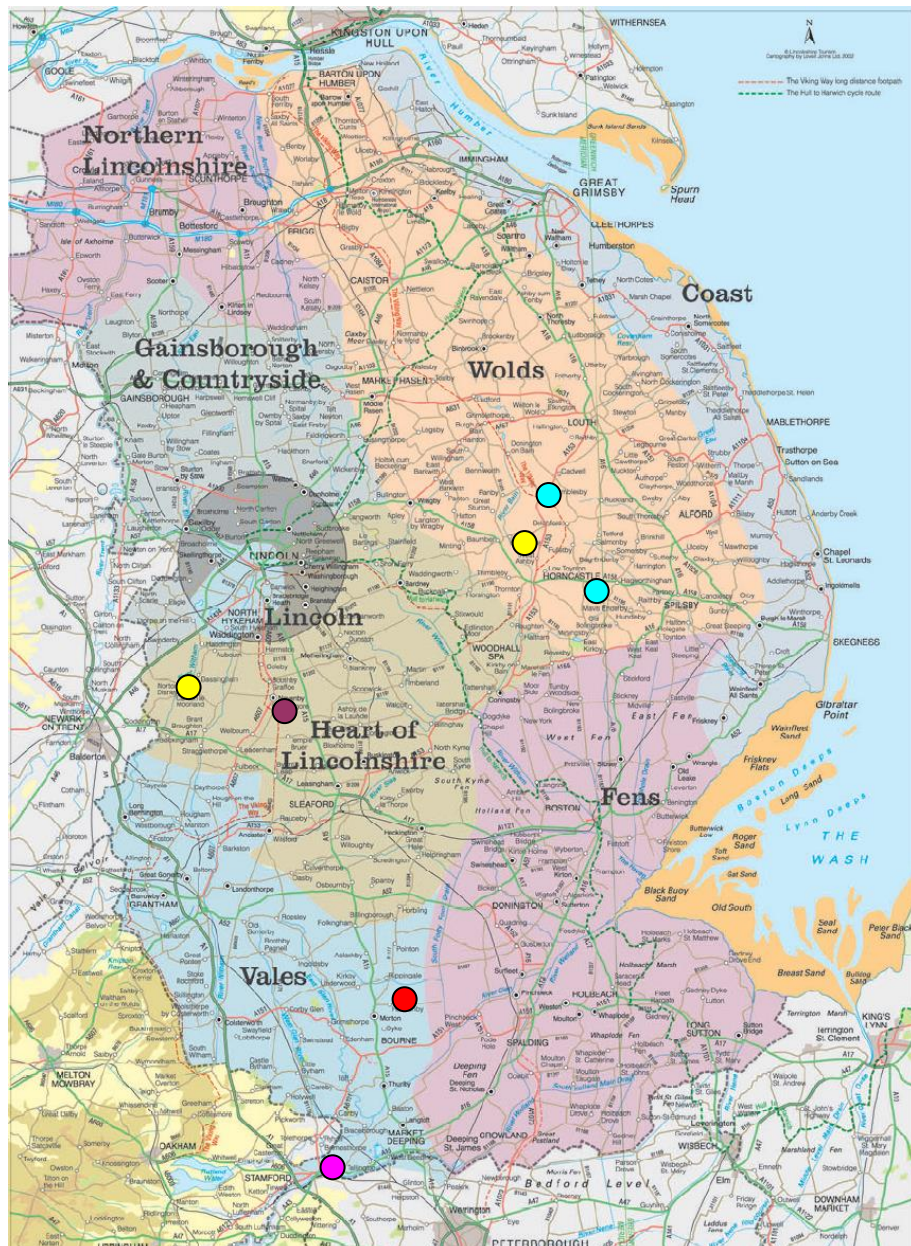
<sup>522</sup> Holderness, B.A. "Agriculture", *Twentieth Century Lincolnshire, (History of Lincolnshire Vol. xii)*, Mills, D. ed (Lincoln: SHLA, 1989), pp. 37 - 70.

experience. Mr L. provided an excellent example of this as he listed the combine harvesters he and his father bought during the period between 1965 and 1988 in incredible detail. Their first combine harvester was an International with a six foot bed, which they replaced with a self propelled Massey Ferguson combine with an eight foot bed; this was followed by another International combine with a ten foot bed, then a Ransome's combine with a twelve foot bed, and finally a John Deer combine with a sixteen foot bed and 'all the mod cons!'.<sup>523</sup> This shows that the family owned five combine harvesters over a 23 year period; each one was larger and more complex than its predecessor, and as they developed they ended up only needing one person to operate them. This constant innovation and increased mechanisation in farming has been driven throughout the twentieth century, and reflects the ever-growing 'need to maintain profitability', and the impact the new machinery had on their working life.<sup>524</sup>

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<sup>523</sup> Mr L. OH.Westlindsey.001.

<sup>524</sup> Leggot, M., "Twentieth Century Agriculture", *Farming in Lincolnshire 3000 BC to 2000 AD*, Bates, E. (ed) (Sleaford: Heritage Lincolnshire, 2004), pp, 60 – 66, p 60.

Fig 8. Map showing introduction of combines as captured by oral history <sup>525</sup>

Key: ● 1930s ● 1939-1945 ● 1945-1950 ● 1950s ● 1960s

<sup>525</sup> From interviews: Mr and Mrs P. OH.Southkesteven.002, Mr G. OH.Southkesteven.003, Mr W. OH.Northeastlincs.002, Mr R. OH.Eastlindsey.002, Mr and Mrs K. OH.Eastlindsey.003, Mr W. OH.Eastlindsey.009. Map from Visit Lincolnshire, *Lincolnshire Map*, online. Available from: <http://mediafiles.thedms.co.uk/Publication/LM-Lincs/cms/pdf/Areas%20of%20Lincolnshire%20Map.pdf>. [Accessed 13<sup>th</sup> January 2013].

### Root crops and hand work.

Large parts of Lincolnshire, especially the Fens of the Holland Division in the south and of the Isle of Axholme in the north of the county, were given over to root crops during the period under examination. Potatoes were a key crop throughout the period, and from the 1920s sugar beet became an increasingly important crop as the British government encouraged farmers to grow it by offering subsidies.<sup>526</sup> As the twentieth century progressed, sugar beet was grown in increasing quantities in Lincolnshire and replaced other more traditional aspects of farming in the county, such as the keeping of sheep on the lighter soils.<sup>527</sup>

There was mechanical innovation between 1850 and 1950 in relation to both potato and beet crops,<sup>528</sup> but manual labour continued to be an important part of producing these crops until after 1950. Mechanical potato lifting machines were invented in the 1850s,<sup>529</sup> and circa 1905 A.H. Worth invented and introduced a horse-drawn machine that 'dusted' potato crops with a powder for the control of potato blight.<sup>530</sup> Decent potato harvesters were not invented and adopted until the twentieth century, and Worth's farms cite on their history pages that the introduction of a Johnson's single row harvester in 1956 was 'a turning point in our history of potato production'.<sup>531</sup> Worth's worked closely with the

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<sup>526</sup> Mingay, G. E., *A Social History of the English Countryside* (London: Routledge, 1990).

<sup>527</sup> Leggot, M., "Twentieth Century Agriculture", *Farming in Lincolnshire 3000 BC to 2000 AD*, Bates, E. (ed) (Sleaford: Heritage Lincolnshire, 2004), pp 60 - 66.

<sup>528</sup> Brown, J., *Farming in Lincolnshire 1850-1950 (Studies in the History of Lincolnshire)* (Lincoln: History of Lincolnshire Committee, 2005).

<sup>529</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>530</sup> Worth Farms, *Our History*, online. Available from: <http://www.worthfarms.co.uk/our-history.php>. [Accessed 4<sup>th</sup> April 2012].

<sup>531</sup> *Ibid.*

manufacturer of this machinery, Johnson's of March, and in just four years they owned

three Johnson mark five harvesters which saw the demise of hand-picking, and under reasonable conditions each machine would average four acres a day which was not bad.<sup>532</sup>

It should be noted, however, that the mark five machine was still only a single row harvester, but in 1964 a six row potato harvester was launched and applied by Worth's farms to lift 25 acres of potatoes a day.<sup>533</sup> This represents an improvement of nearly six times the amount of potatoes being lifted in a day in the space of four years, and reflects the investment in harvest machinery made possible by the lucrative potato crops.<sup>534</sup> Mrs H. also spoke about the potato harvest at length during her interview for this thesis. She recalled in particular that as potato harvesters during the 1970s were brought in she moved to sorting potatoes on a machine rather than picking them out of the ground by hand, and that the introduction of potato planters meant that she sat on the back of the planter filling cups rather than setting by hand.<sup>535</sup> Mrs B. and her sister Mrs D. also recalled moving up onto machines in the 1970s.<sup>536</sup> Mr J., a retired potato merchant from Firsby, confirmed that these changes from hand to mechanical work in potatoes occurred during the 1970s with the introduction of Grimme potato harvesters from Germany. He explained that the introduction of

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<sup>532</sup> Ibid.

<sup>533</sup> Ibid.

<sup>534</sup> Brown, J., *Farming in Lincolnshire 1850-1950 (Studies in the History of Lincolnshire)* (Lincoln: History of Lincolnshire Committee, 2005).

<sup>535</sup> Mrs H. OH.Eastlindsey.005.

<sup>536</sup> Mr B and Mrs B. OH.Bostonborough.004 and Mr D and Mrs D. OH.Bostonborough.005.

machinery was driven by the economics of farming: labour had remained expensive whilst the value of crops had dropped.<sup>537</sup>

Sugar beet crops were originally labour-intensive and farmers relied on skilled labourers to manage them. As early as 1928, Bardney's sugar beet factory (one of two in Lincolnshire along with Spalding) began to run competitions designed to encourage cultivation of the crop by local farmers, and there were points awarded for cultivation, fertilisation, sowing, soil management, accuracy of planting, plant growth, and housekeeping.<sup>538</sup>

This not only encouraged farmers to produce this crop, but raised the quality of what was grown, and several aspects under scrutiny such as gapping and singling were tasks undertaken by labourers. This experience is reflected in an oral testimony collected in the Women's Institute 1995 project:

When Bardney Factory was built in 1927 farmers in the area began to grow sugar beet, which was sown with a horse-drawn drill. The plants were too thick, so men hoed at plants at two-leaf stage, leaving space for the beet to grow.<sup>539</sup>

Chapter 3 demonstrates that there was significant continuity in the amount of hand labour carried out on farms between 1850 and the 1950s, particularly by women and children. Several interviewees recalled the levels of handwork carried out by labourers in living memory; for example, Mr B. said of his grandparents' farm at Ruskington in the 1930s when asked about manual

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<sup>537</sup> Mr J. OH.Eastlindsey.007.

<sup>538</sup> Miles, D. *The First and Last Lincolnshire Beet Sugar Co.Ltd* (Place:Tucann Books, 2002).

<sup>539</sup> Lincolnshire Federations of Women's Institutes, *Lincolnshire Within Living Memory* (Newbury: Countryside Books, 1995), p 137.



labour, 'Mangold cutting was done by hand, everything was done by hand'.<sup>540</sup> Mangold seeds, much like beet produced several plants, which meant there was a need to single the crops by hand, as well as harvesting them in this way. When Mrs H. from Stickney was visited to be interviewed she would not start the interview until her worn hand hoe that she had used throughout her thirty years as a farm labourer and gang worker around the Boston area had been correctly identified. It was obvious that this tool was important to her as it represented her working life, and identified her as a labourer. Mrs H. had extensive experience of hand work and could recall the innovations that led to less work for her, which was typical of the Lincolnshire experience. During her interview she spoke about her work on the sugar beet crops, from hand chopping the tops of the beet that had been lifted for harvest to the loss of singling work because of the innovations in seed breeding.<sup>541</sup> This experience was captured several times during this research, but has also been recorded by other oral history projects. A participant in the Lincolnshire Federations of Women's Institutes project said of sugar beet in the Fens:

[it] had to be hoed out every seven to eight inches and then we had to single each plant the same distance apart...At harvest time it was ploughed out before being knocked...The beet was laid in rows before we chopped the tops off...The beet was picked up by hand or pitchfork and thrown into a cart.<sup>542</sup>

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<sup>540</sup> Mr B. OHSouthholland.001.

<sup>541</sup> Mrs H. OH.Eastlindsey.005.

<sup>542</sup> Lincolnshire Federations of Women's Institutes, *Lincolnshire Within Living Memory* (Newbury: Countryside Books, 1995), p 129.

A recent letter to the *Lincolnshire Free Press* contained the memories of Mr Gordon Paul, who was inspired to write in about the sugar beet harvest near Crowland in the south of the county in 1946. He recalled a tractor lifting the beet and labourers pulling, lifting, and knocking the beet and then using a beet knife to chop off the tops before putting the crop into small heaps ready to be loaded into a trailer using a beet fork.<sup>543</sup>

The sugar beet harvest became mechanised in the 1950s. For example, Worth's purchased their first sugar beet harvester in 1952.<sup>544</sup> But it was not until during the 1960s that much of the work done by hand stopped, although this might also be attributed to chemical innovation in herbicides along with selective plant breeding rather than mechanisation alone.<sup>545</sup> Whilst selective plant breeding started as long ago as 140 years ago with the goal of attaining high yields for farmers, intensive hybrid breeding programmes began in the 1960s.<sup>546</sup> One of the key biological innovations was that of the development and introduction of the 'genetically monogerm sugar beet varieties introduced in the mid-1960s'.<sup>547</sup> The monogerm variety of beet meant that plants no longer had to be singled as they grew, removing the need for labourers to undertake this task, and making it a much less labour intensive crop.<sup>548</sup> At the same time the

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<sup>543</sup> Paul, G., "Memories of Sugar Beet Harvesting" *Lincolnshire Free Press*, 10<sup>th</sup> April 2012, p 7.

<sup>544</sup> Worth Farms, *Our History*, online. Available from: <http://www.worthfarms.co.uk/our-history.php>. [Accessed 4<sup>th</sup> April 2012].

<sup>545</sup> Holderness, B.A. "Agriculture", *Twentieth Century Lincolnshire, (History of Lincolnshire Vol. xii)* Mills, D. (ed) (Lincoln: SHLA, 1989), pp. 37 - 70. Brassley, P., "Output and Technical Change in Twentieth Century British Agriculture" *Agricultural History Review*, Vol 48, No 1, pp 60 - 84.

<sup>546</sup> KWS, *Sugar Beet Breeding Goals*, online. Available from: [http://www.kws.de/aw/KWS/ireland/About\\_KWS/Breeding/Artikel\\_breeding\\_allgem/\\_/~zmd/Sugar\\_Beet\\_Breeding\\_Goals/](http://www.kws.de/aw/KWS/ireland/About_KWS/Breeding/Artikel_breeding_allgem/_/~zmd/Sugar_Beet_Breeding_Goals/). [Accessed 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2012]

<sup>547</sup> Zimmerman, B., and Zeddies, J., "Productivity Progress in Sugar Beet Production – With Special Emphasis on the Contribution of Breeding", *Paper Prepared for Presentation at the 13th International Farm Management Congress, Wageningen, The Netherlands, July 7-12, 2002*, p 6.

<sup>548</sup> Ibid.

practice of applying herbicides, such as Betanal which was developed by Bayer CropScience in the late 1960s,<sup>549</sup> to control weeds on young crops reduced the need for labour to weed the crops.<sup>550</sup> The cessation of work such as singling and weeding by labourers also contributed to the decline in the number of people working on the land, which Holderness estimates had declined in Lincolnshire from around 48,000 workers during the Edwardian period to 23,533 if seasonal workers and casual workers are omitted from the calculation or 35,283 if they are included. This shows a drop of more than 12,000 people within a 60 year period, within the county of Lincolnshire alone.<sup>551</sup> When Mr K. was asked about the changing relationships between landowners and labourers (topic excluded from the thesis) he summed up his opinion of the situation in late twentieth century Lincolnshire by stating that there wasn't one, because 'there's nobody left on the land.'<sup>552</sup>

## Conclusion

This chapter argues that the decline of the horse was much slower in Lincolnshire than often presented in traditional histories of English farming. Although, the decline did mirror that of Suffolk, as proven by Ewart Evans in the 1960s and 1970s. It surmises that whilst there are examples of horses being used in the 1970s, generally horses stopped being used for proper work during the 1950s and were essentially removed from farms by the end of the 1960s in

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<sup>549</sup> Bayer CropScience, *Why Sugar Beet Matters to Us*, online. Available from: <http://www.cropscience.bayer.com/en/Products-and-Innovation/Key-Crops/Sugar.aspx>. [Accessed 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2012].

<sup>550</sup> Coyette, B., Tencalla, F., Brants, I., Fichet, Y. and Rouhouze, D., *Effect of introducing Glyphosate-Tolerant Sugar Beet on Pesticide Usage in Europe*, online. Available from: <http://www.researchinformation.co.uk/pest/2002/B205914B.PDF>. [Accessed 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2012].

<sup>551</sup> Holderness, B.A. "Agriculture", *Twentieth Century Lincolnshire*, (*History of Lincolnshire Vol. xii*), Mills, D. (ed) (Lincoln: SHLA, 1989), pp 37 - 70.

<sup>552</sup> Mr and Mrs K. OH.Eastlindsey.003.

Lincolnshire. There was also a clear period of overlap that stretches several decades between the introduction of tractors and the eradication of real horse power on the farm. Whilst change is more abrupt on the farms that form large upland estates, it is much slower in the lowland areas, which can be explained by a resistance to change from farmers, underpinned by a lack of necessity to change immediately in many cases. What was unexpected, but proved to be important, in the story of real horse power and the tractor was the human experience of change. The oral histories presented evidence of complex relationships with agricultural practice, a desire to retain the traditional by some farmers, and to embrace the modern by others. It is easy to think of the process of mechanical modernisation as being only about the machinery itself, but the changes created by progress obviously had an impact on farmers emotionally as well as professionally and financially.

This chapter demonstrates that there was relative continuity in terms of mechanisation from the 1850s until the 1950s. But, it does not deny that there were innovations, for example the steam engine, but does question the impact of the adoption of this technology in farming. It is quite clear that there is not necessarily a significant impact on labour levels through the introduction of steam engines and associated machinery such as threshing drums in the nineteenth century. Following continuity of eighty or so years in the use of threshing drums there was once again an overlap of decades as combine harvesters were introduced and adopted. This new technology was adopted far more quickly in the Wolds and upland areas where cereal crops were grown in greater quantities and the owners of large estates had the financial buoyancy to invest in new machinery, and combines were seen on the Wolds as early as the

1930s. In other parts of the county adoption was much slower, due to less cereal production and a lack of necessity for change on small holdings.

Arguably, there was not a complete shift to the modern until the 1960s, and once this shift had taken place the rate of technical innovation and the need to adopt it quickened significantly. It would appear that from the 1960s onwards the combine was improved on an almost yearly basis, constantly becoming larger, more efficient, and less dependent on large levels of labour. Most importantly this lessened the need for labour, but there was also an impact on the landscape as buildings became redundant and fields have to be extended to accommodate the new equipment and ensure value for money in terms of the investment made.

Biological and chemical innovations impacted on the need for hand work from the 1950s onwards, gathering pace in the 1960s. But increased mechanisation in the 1970s finally eliminated the need for hand work as explored in this chapter and chapter 3. This essentially signalled the shift from large numbers of people working on the land to virtually none, changing the character of agriculture irrevocably.

## Introduction

In Chapters 2, 3 and 4 of the thesis the idea that Lincolnshire emerged from World War Two as a county with modern farming was shown to be remarkably pervasive, largely because of historians' reliance on macro-economic indicators which inevitably average out a more complex and protracted change. It was demonstrated in these chapters (through two case studies: female and child labour patterns and mechanisation) that the shift from traditional to modern practices was in fact more complex than presented in existing narratives, with modern practices being adopted in different areas of the county from the 1930s to the 1960s.

The narratives presented in chapters 3 and 4 were created through the utilisation of traditional and non-traditional historical sources. Oral histories were used alongside other primary sources such as newspaper reports, census returns, directories, and government bills, acts, commissions, and reports.<sup>553</sup> And published memoirs were employed alongside secondary sources such as articles from peer – reviewed journals,<sup>554</sup> monographs by leading academics,<sup>555</sup> and edited collections by experts in the history of Lincolnshire.<sup>556</sup> This

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<sup>553</sup> For example: *Reports of Special Assistant Poor Law Commissioners on the Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture*, 1843, *The Lincolnshire Chronicle*, *The Stamford Mercury*, and census returns from 1881, 1891, and 1901.

<sup>554</sup> For example: *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology* and *The Agricultural History Review*.

<sup>555</sup> For example: Thirsk, J., *English Peasant Farming: The Agrarian History of Lincolnshire from Tudor to Recent Times* (London: Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1957). Brown, J., *Farming in Lincolnshire 1850-1950 (Studies in the History of Lincolnshire)* (Lincoln: History of Lincolnshire Committee, 2005).

<sup>556</sup> For example: Mills, D., (ed) *Twentieth Century Lincolnshire (History of Lincolnshire Vol. xii)* (Lincoln: SLHA, 1989). Bennett, S. and Bennett, N., (eds) *An Historical Atlas of Lincolnshire* (Hull: The University of Hull Press, 1993).

demonstrates that sources that are considered to have nostalgic leanings, such as oral histories, can be used to integrate the experience of change with its indicators, showing that the embracing or resisting of novelty was an important determinant to the speed and extent of such modernisation.

Chapters 5 and 6 of the thesis engage with the same debate as earlier chapters, but in the museum, or public history, context. The perpetuation of a mythical past through nostalgic museological narratives is explored, and it is argued that this is not actually as problematic as might be assumed by museologists, who have raised similar concerns to historians regarding the impact of nostalgia on the interpretation of the past. Whilst chapter 2 argues that historians should rethink the nostalgia debate and move towards discussions on the value of utilising a range of traditional and non-traditional sources to challenge accepted historical narratives, chapter 5 argues that museologists should shift their attention from the impact of nostalgia on the representation of the past to other factors that have a greater influence on this aspect of museology. Just as chapters 3 and 4 feature two case studies to exemplify the arguments put forward in the thesis, chapter 5 contains a detailed case study of museums in Lincolnshire and the challenges staff face in representing the past to illustrate the arguments asserted in this research.

This chapter explores the theoretical and methodological frameworks that have shaped the approach to this research and provides the context for the examination of how agricultural practice in Lincolnshire during the twentieth century is represented in the county's museums. The chapter begins with an examination of the representation of the past within the museum context; the

partial past, the commodified past, and the mythical past (it is impossible to look at them individually). It is accepted that the past will always be partial in museums, public history is a commodity in the modern world, and myth plays a major role in how we engage with the past.<sup>557</sup> The central debate around representation in museums, then, is one of power and control, which will be explored in this chapter. There are three important questions in this debate; the first is which group of people have the greatest power and control in how the past is represented in the museum context; the public or the museum professionals? The second is what is the impact of this relationship on the representation of the past? The third is how can this situation be managed to present a balanced, albeit partial, commodified, and nostalgic, view of the past in museums?

The chapter argues that in order to understand the ways in which these debates actually impact on representation, we need to look at very specific contemporary museum issues; the subjective nature of donation and collection, the issue of professional skills being more important than subject knowledge, and the influence of external political factors on museums. This in turn leads to the conclusion that nostalgia is not really a problem for museums; it is simply an inherent part of how we engage with the past as individuals or groups, as contributors or consumers of the past. The more significant, and less

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<sup>557</sup> Merriman, N., "The Crisis of Representation in Archaeological Museums", *Cultural Resource Management in Contemporary Society: Perspectives on Managing and Presenting the Past*, Hatton, A. and MacManamon, F.P. (eds) (London: Routledge, 2007) pp 300 – 309. Anderson, J., "Living History: Simulating everyday Life in Living Museums", *Public History Readings*, Leffler, P.K., and Brent, J. (eds) (Malabar, Florida: Krieger Publishing Company 1992), pp 456 – 470. Durrans, B., "Behind the Sciences; Museums and Selective Criticism", *Anthropology Today*, Vol 8, No 4, August 1992, p 11 – 15. Baram, U. and Rowan, Y., "Archaeology after Nationalisation: Globalisation and the Consumption of the Past", *Marketing Heritage: Archaeology and the Consumption of the Past*, Baram, U. and Rowan, Y. (eds) (Walnut Creek: Altamira, 2004), pp 3 – 24. Trotter, R., "Nostalgia and the Construction of an Australian Dreaming", *Journal of Australian Studies*, Vol 23, No 61, 1999, pp 19 – 26.



researched, issues that affect how the past is represented in museums are in fact those listed above. With this in mind the chapter ends with an explanation of the research methodology applied to the museum fieldwork conducted for this research, justifying and validating the approaches taken.

### **The representation of the past in museums**

Museums are a major feature of life in modern Britain, with the Museums Association estimating in 2008 that there are

Between 2000 and 2500 [museums] depending what you include. There are about 1860 museums accredited by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council as meeting their minimum standards, while the Museums Association Yearbook, which uses a broader definition, lists 2500.<sup>558</sup>

These institutions have not remained static since their inception, instead evolving over time along with the philosophical and scientific strands of thought that underpin them. They are not 'just packed with things from the past; they are riddled with past thoughts',<sup>559</sup> an idea which is key to understanding how they represent the past. Spalding describes them as institutions that are alive,<sup>560</sup> and the subjects covered in them are extremely wide-ranging. Vergo highlighted this when he wrote that they represent

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<sup>558</sup> Museums Association, *Frequently Asked Questions*, online. Available from: <http://www.museumsassociation.org/about/frequently-asked-questions>. [Accessed 12<sup>th</sup> June 2012].

<sup>559</sup> Spalding, J., *The Poetic Museum: Reviving Historic Collections* (California: University of California, 2002), p 13.

<sup>560</sup> *Ibid.*

Virtually every field of human endeavour – not just art or craft, or science, but entertainment, agriculture, rural life, childhood, fisheries, antiquities, automobiles: The list is endless – it is a field of enquiry so broad as to be a matter of concern to almost everybody.<sup>561</sup>

Whether or not it is their current main purpose, all museums originate in ‘a desire to order, collect and classify a realm of material things in a highly specific manner’,<sup>562</sup> which provides shared characteristics within this diverse sector. This also leads to a shared concern with how the past is represented through collection, classification, and interpretation (whether that is through display, events, or education activities). Every day curators are faced with complex decisions based around ‘evidence, fairness, accuracy, facts, opinion, values and representativeness’ in their collecting and interpretative activities.<sup>563</sup> The choices they make, and thus the representations of the past, are influenced by factors such as the donations made to the museum, knowledge of existing collections, storage space, collecting policies, political agendas, funding, education programmes, and the visual appeal of the object.<sup>564</sup> In fact, it might be argued that the public, and then curators actually decide what is and is not history through this selective process.<sup>565</sup>

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<sup>561</sup> Vergo, P., “Introduction”, *The New Museology*, Vergo, P. (ed), (London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 1989), pp 1 – 5, p 1.

<sup>562</sup> Tilley, C., “Introduction, Identity, Place, Landscape, and Heritage”, *Journal of Material Culture*, Vol 11, Jul 2006, pp 7 – 32, p 8.

<sup>563</sup> National Museum of Australia, *How Do Museums Represent History?*, online. Available from: [http://www.nma.gov.au/shared/libraries/attachments/schools/classroom\\_resources/how\\_do\\_museums\\_represent\\_history/how\\_do\\_museums\\_represent\\_history\\_part\\_1/files/19779/How\\_do\\_museums\\_p1.pdf](http://www.nma.gov.au/shared/libraries/attachments/schools/classroom_resources/how_do_museums_represent_history/how_do_museums_represent_history_part_1/files/19779/How_do_museums_p1.pdf) [Accessed 31<sup>st</sup> December 2011].

<sup>564</sup> 1807 Commemorated, *Embodied Memory in the Museum*, online. Available from: <http://www.history.ac.uk/1807commemorated/exhibitions/museums/embodied.html>. [Accessed 1<sup>st</sup> January 2012].

<sup>565</sup> Black, G., “Museums, Memory and History”, *Cultural and Social History*, Vol 8, No 3, September 2011, pp 415 - 427.

Understanding the representation of the past in the museum context along with the nature of history itself is crucial if we are to understand why there can be diverse versions of the past with different emphasis, or importance, placed on particular historical themes. Museums are one of the most popular and accessible ways in which people engage with the past.<sup>566</sup> They have the power to influence how people think about the past, and influence how individuals and groups create personal and societal historical narratives at local and national levels.<sup>567</sup>

Whilst there is an 'extensive literature'<sup>568</sup> associated with representation in museums by academics such as Hewison, Shanks and Tilley, Lumley, Vergo and Merriman (all of whom are referred to in this thesis), this body of work all dates from the last twenty-five years, suggesting that this is a relatively new area of study for museologists.<sup>569</sup> This perhaps reflects the highly abstract nature of the concept of representation, and that questions relating to it can only be answered once collections are managed effectively through documentation and conservation (a contemporary issue for many institutions). It became clear during the course of this investigation that many museums in Lincolnshire had

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<sup>566</sup> Jamieson, S., "How do People Engage with Culture in Scotland?", *Northings: Arts and Culture in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland*, 31<sup>st</sup> August 2012, online. Available from: <http://northings.com/2012/08/31/how-do-people-engage-with-culture-in-scotland/>. [Accessed 28<sup>th</sup> December 2012]. Department for Culture Media and Sport, *Culture on Demand Ways to Engage with a Broader Audience*, July 2007, online. Available from: <http://www.culture.gov.uk/images/research/cultureondemand.pdf>. [Accessed 28<sup>th</sup> December 2012].

<sup>567</sup> Durrans, B., "Behind the Scenes Museums and Selective Criticism", *Anthropology Today*, Vol 8, No 4, August 1992, pp 11 – 15. Ovenden, C., *A Cumberland Lodge Conference 17<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> September 2004 Conference Essay*.

<sup>568</sup> Merriman, N., "The Crisis of Representation in Archaeological Museums", *Cultural Resource Management in Contemporary Society: Perspectives on Managing and Presenting the Past*, Hatton, A. and MacManamon, F.P. (eds) (London: Routledge, 2007) pp 300 – 309, p 300.

<sup>569</sup> Ibid. Hewison, R., *The Heritage Industry* (London: Methuen, 1987). Shanks, M. and Tilley, C., *Social Theory and Archaeology* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987). Lumley, R., *The Museum Time Machine* (London: Routledge, 1988). Vergo, P., (ed) *The New Museology* (London: Reaktion Books, 1989).

not yet reached the point at which they are able to consider how, and indeed if, they represent the county's agricultural and rural past due to issues with non-selective collecting, poor documentation, and a shift in focus from curatorial to audience development related activities.<sup>570</sup> This piece of research then is the first time these issues have been considered in relation to Lincolnshire.

For the purpose of this research representation in the museum context is understood as the way in which objects are selected and presented to the visitor to experience. Visitors will experience these objects by engaging with the pre-existing narratives embedded within objects and communicated through interpretation, and through the creation of their own historical narratives. The past is communicated to the public through a variety of media including text, images (both still and moving), sounds, performance, and material culture. This is the way in which museums provide their visitors with the historical narrative; a historian might do this in a similar way through a written text supported by quotations and images. Museums can use this communication to either provide clear narratives that present a particular view point, or they can use it to promote debate and discussion between their visitors in order to encourage them to consider different versions of the past, or their own perspectives on historical events.

The media listed above are understood as being forms of interpretation, which are inextricably intertwined with representation, although it is accepted that the two terms differ in meaning. Lord has defined these terms thus:

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<sup>570</sup> See chapter 6.

Interpretation in the museum is the way that objects are conceptually explicated. Representation...is the space between things and ways of conceptualizing them.<sup>571</sup>

In 1999 Merriman examined the existing literature on the issue of representation in museums and established that 'the essential critique that emerges from this literature is that museums represent a partial, commodified and mythical past'.<sup>572</sup> To provide context for this research these three key issues are briefly explored in this chapter. However, the central issue of power and control in the representation of the past in relation to partiality, commodification, and nostalgia, is focussed on as this has a strong relationship with the newer areas of research that this thesis cites as the real challenges in the representation of the past in museums.

### **The partial past, the commodified past, and the mythical past; key debates**

It has long been accepted by professionals and academics that museums cannot reconstruct the past in its entirety. In 1992 Anderson explored the extent to which the past can be represented through the discussion of earlier articles that had posed questions around this area of debate:

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<sup>571</sup> Lord, B., "Foucault's Museum: Difference, Representation, and Genealogy", *Museum and society*, Vol 4, No 1, March 2006, pp 11 – 14, p 5.

<sup>572</sup> Merriman, N., "The Crisis of Representation in Archaeological Museums", *Cultural Resource Management in Contemporary Society: Perspectives on Managing and Presenting the Past*, Hatton, A. and MacManamon, F.P. (eds) (London: Routledge, 2007) pp 300 – 309, p 300.

lowerth Peate, Curator of the Welsh Folk Museum, asked “how far can a folk museum go in reconstructing the past?” His answer, based on “practical, financial, and all other grounds,” was, “not too far.”<sup>573</sup>

The past then can only be symbolically represented through the selection and presentation of objects and explained by accompanying interpretation in the museum setting. Durrans has also argued that by its very nature ‘any form of representation is bound to omit and distort to some degree’.<sup>574</sup> There are some good examples where museum practice has revealed the impossibility of achieving a full representation of the past within the museum context, for example at the University of Reading’s Museum of English Rural Life. The museum was set up in 1951 with an ambition ‘to conserve the material culture of the English Countryside and to collect together records of past methods of practices while there were still people alive who remembered them’.<sup>575</sup> However Jewell asserts that within ten years of the foundation of the museum

it became very clear that within the very limited funds which the university could make available, a systematic collection, representative of the rural folk culture of the country as a whole was unlikely to be achieved.<sup>576</sup>

There is also the issue that museums, the material they house, and ultimately the historical narrative presented in them, has been ‘created and constructed by

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<sup>573</sup> Anderson, J., “Living History: Simulating Everyday Life in Living Museums”, *Public History Readings*, Leffler, P.K., and Brent, J. (eds) (Malabar, Florida: Krieger Publishing Company 1992), pp 456 – 470, p 462.

<sup>574</sup> Durrans, B., “Behind the Sciences; Museums and Selective Criticism”, *Anthropology Today*, Vol 8, No 4, August 1992, p 11 – 15.

<sup>575</sup> Jewell, A., “The Museum of English Rural Life, Reading”, *Museum*, Vol 24, No 3, 1972, pp 168 – 173, p 168.

<sup>576</sup> *Ibid.*

someone for a purpose. The purpose may be to inform, to challenge, to persuade, to argue or all of these'.<sup>577</sup> It has already been recognised by Cruickshank that whilst a 'notion of putting words and things in museums and archives as though they are discrete, unmediated, objective artefacts'<sup>578</sup> exists it 'is one that continues to be contentious'<sup>579</sup> and is a topic still open to academic debate. In fact in the June 2011 edition of the *Museums Journal* Heywood reported that she was inspired by the curator of a recent temporary exhibition at University College's Petrie Museum being open and honest about how she as an individual impacted on the exhibition, stating in the interpretation: '...who I am informs this exhibition'.<sup>580</sup>

Whilst it is impossible to commodify the 'past itself (as a linear configuration of time)',<sup>581</sup> commodification is understood in the museum context to mean that history, in the form of 'aspects of social life and localised objects',<sup>582</sup> has been transformed in to something that is consumable by the public.<sup>583</sup> It is understood that in the modern world

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<sup>577</sup> The National Museum of Australia, *How Do Museums Represent History?*, online. Available from:

[http://www.nma.gov.au/shared/libraries/attachments/schools/classroom\\_resources/how\\_do\\_museums\\_represent\\_history/how\\_do\\_museums\\_represent\\_history\\_part\\_1/files/19779/How\\_do\\_museums\\_p1.pdf](http://www.nma.gov.au/shared/libraries/attachments/schools/classroom_resources/how_do_museums_represent_history/how_do_museums_represent_history_part_1/files/19779/How_do_museums_p1.pdf). [Accessed 16<sup>th</sup> May 2011].

<sup>578</sup> Cruickshank, J., "Oral Tradition and Material Culture: Multiplying Meanings of 'Words' and 'Things'", *Anthropology Today*, Vol 8, No 3, June 1992, pp 5 – 9, p 6.

<sup>579</sup> Ibid.

<sup>580</sup> Heywood, F., "Petrie Exhibition Stops Short of Answering Question", *Museums Journal*, June 2011, p 19.

<sup>581</sup> Intellectual Property Issues in Cultural Heritage, *Commodifications of the Past? Working Group*, online. Available from: <http://www.sfu.ca/ipinch/working-group/commodifications-of-the-past>. [Accessed 18<sup>th</sup> January 2013].

<sup>582</sup> Baram, U. and Rowan, Y., "Archaeology after Nationalisation: Globalisation and the Consumption of the Past", *Marketing Heritage: Archaeology and the Consumption of the Past*, Baram, U. and Rowan, Y. (eds) (Walnut Creek: Altamira, 2004), pp 3 – 24, p 6.

<sup>583</sup> Walsh, K., *The Representation of the Past: Museums and Heritage in the Post – Modern World* (London: Routledge, 1992).

Heritage has become a commodity: something that can be marketed, managed, and presented as evidence of longevity, brilliance, perseverance, and power.<sup>584</sup>

This has changed the nature of museums, transforming them from ‘exhibition spaces that represent the knowledge and the truth of histories they represent’,<sup>585</sup> to ‘sites where people...participate, interpret and buy, rather than just visit and become educated’,<sup>586</sup> which in turn has lessened the value placed on subject knowledge and increased the value placed on the ability to manage sites effectively.<sup>587</sup> One of the major concerns of academics of this shift in museum practice is that commercially driven museums present a version of the past that has a broad appeal to visitors motivated by escapism; one that is sanitised, entertaining, and above all inauthentic.<sup>588</sup> Museums have been criticised by Goulding for consequently presenting versions of gender, class, and ethnicity, that excludes particular groups from the historical narrative,<sup>589</sup> and Halewood and Hannam comment on the invisibility of labour in the

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<sup>584</sup> Costa, K.A., “Conflating Past and Present: Marketing Archaeological Sites in Ireland”, *Marketing Heritage: Archaeology and the Consumption of the Past*, Baram, U. and Rowan, Y. (eds) (Walnut Creek: Altamira, 2004), pp 69 – 92, p 69.

<sup>585</sup> McPherson, G., “Public Memories and Private Tastes: The Shifting Definitions of Museums and their Visitors in the UK”, *Museum Management and Curatorship*, Vol 21, No 1, March 2006, pp 44 – 57, p 45.

<sup>586</sup> Ibid.

<sup>587</sup> Baram, U. and Rowan, Y., “Archaeology after Nationalisation: Globalisation and the Consumption of the Past”, *Marketing Heritage: Archaeology and the Consumption of the Past*, Baram, U. and Rowan, Y. (eds) (Walnut Creek: Altamira, 2004), pp 3 – 24.

<sup>588</sup> Goulding, C., “The Commodification of the Past, Postmodern Pastiche, and the Search for Authentic Experience at Contemporary Heritage Attractions”, *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol 34, No 7, 2000, pp 835 – 853. Hewison, R., *The Heritage Industry: Britain in a Climate of Decline* (London: Methuen, 1987). Shaw, G., “Culture and Tourism, The Economics of Nostalgia”, *World Futures, The Journal of Global Education*, Special Issue: Culture and Development: European Experiences and Challenges A Special Research Report of the European Culture Impact Research Consortium, Volume 33, No 1 - 3, 1992, pp 199 – 212.

<sup>589</sup> Goulding, C., “The Commodification of the Past, Postmodern Pastiche, and the Search for Authentic Experience at Contemporary Heritage Attractions”, *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol 34, No 7, 2000, pp 835 – 853. Halewood, C., and Hannam, K., “Viking Heritage Tourism: Authenticity and Commodification”, *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol 28, No 3, 2001, pp 565 – 588.



commodified past.<sup>590</sup> Bennett also argued that one of the issues at Beamish, was that the representation of the past at the site, which used the working-class north-eastern accent to present the history of the region to the visitor and a disparate range of buildings from different places and times to represent one moment in time,<sup>591</sup> shored up the political and commercial interests of the site and silenced other imaginings of the past. These critiques raise the question of the authenticity of sites like Beamish. Visitors may go to Beamish for an experience which feels authentic, 'as it really was';<sup>592</sup> or they may go for a fun day out with concern only for entertainment. Attempting to satisfy all visitor motivations is probably the most difficult challenge which the issue of 'authenticity throws up'.<sup>593</sup>

Any museum is of course a contrived space, and there is a tendency to reduce the past to a particular set of material props, which can make it easier to market and sell. National Trust properties feature rooms which are 'dressed' like sets, open air museums like the Weald and Downland museum function to conserve buildings from different locales and time periods in one small geographical area, and local history museums like Ayscoughfee Hall Museum use historic buildings to exhibit objects that represent local history narratives and have nothing to do with the building itself.

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<sup>590</sup> Ibid.

<sup>591</sup> Bennett, T., *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (Routledge: London, 1995).

<sup>592</sup> Halewood, C., and Hannam, K., "Viking Heritage Tourism: Authenticity and Commodification", *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol 28, No 3, 2001, pp 565 – 588.

<sup>593</sup> Goulding, C., "The Commodification of the Past, Postmodern Pastiche, and the Search for Authentic Experience at Contemporary Heritage Attractions", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol 34, No 7, 2000, pp 835 – 853

The mythical, imagined, or nostalgic past is another aspect of the museum inextricably linked to representation, and has been at the forefront of museological debate for the last thirty years. In 1985 Lowenthal wrote that

Charged with neglecting the real miseries of the past in pandering to nostalgia, museum curators nowadays often bend over backwards to present the seamy side of things.<sup>594</sup>

Asserting that nostalgia impacted on museum representations of the past. Lowenthal charges this approach with being 'false for analogous reasons',<sup>595</sup> suggesting that neither approach is better than the other as all museums produce fictitious versions of the past. In 1992 Walsh explored the museum in terms of simulating the past, which in itself alludes to the fact that it is accepted that the past that is represented in the museum is not 'real', but an imitation of what went before, which is arguably all it can be.<sup>596</sup> The mythical, nostalgic past, is often presented with 'aesthetics and ambience'<sup>597</sup> in mind as museums try to create a sense of place to enhance the visitor experience, although Walsh has highlighted that the heritage aesthetic drive actually resulted in many places being the same.<sup>598</sup> On the other hand, heritage nostalgia can play a vital role in encouraging a sense of roots among communities; familiarity is essential here in encouraging visitors to heritage attractions to identify their own pasts with that of their locality. Hewison, Bennett, and West, all recognised the general public's

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<sup>594</sup> Lowenthal, D. "Nostalgia Tells it Like it Wasn't", *The Imagined Past: History and Nostalgia*, Shaw, C. and Chase, M. (eds) (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989), pp18 – 32, p 28.

<sup>595</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>596</sup> Walsh, K., *The Representation of the Past: Museums and Heritage in the Post – Modern World* (London: Routledge, 1992).

<sup>597</sup> Brisbane, M. and Wood, J., *A Future for our Past: An Introduction to Heritage Studies* (London: English Heritage, 1996), p 8.

<sup>598</sup> Walsh, K., *The Representation of the Past: Museums and Heritage in the Post – Modern World* (London: Routledge, 1992).

desire to consume the past in this way in the 1980s. They suggested that there was a normative desire by people to explore a familiar past they were rooted in; especially during times of change and instability, and that this was exploited by the heritage industry.<sup>599</sup>

Whether consciously intended or not there may always be an element of nostalgia connected with museum representation as people engage with objects they see and make sense of them by relating them to their own experiences and memories.<sup>600</sup> This would suggest that if nostalgia is a driver in people engaging with the past in museums this should also be viewed as a positive aspect of museum visiting,<sup>601</sup> as Trotter argued in his 1999 article *Nostalgia and the Construction of an Australian Dreaming* which called for ‘a more positive interpretation [of nostalgia]: one that accepts nostalgic reminiscence as a valid way of accessing the past’.<sup>602</sup> If people are unable to access the past because they have no empathy with it or it holds no meaning for them as an individual then historical narratives will be lost completely. If we understand nostalgia is a cognitive and sensory process by which people try to relate to and make sense of the past (Goldman and Papson’s ‘abstracting and

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<sup>599</sup> Goulding, C., “Romancing the Past: Heritage Visiting and the Nostalgic Consumer”, *Psychology and Marketing*, Vol 18, Issue 6, 2001, pp 565 – 592. Hewison, R. *The Heritage Industry* (London: Methuen, 1987). Bennett, T., “Museums and the People”, in Lumley, R. (ed), *The Museum Time Machine* (London: Routledge, 1988). West, B., “The Making of the English working Past: A Critical View of Ironbridge Gorge Museum”, in Lumley, R. (ed), *The Museum Time Machine* (London: Routledge, 1988), pp 63 – 84.

<sup>600</sup> Tilley, C., “Introduction, Identity, Place, Landscape, and Heritage”, *Journal of Material Culture*, Vol 11, July 2006, pp 7 – 32. Brisbane, M. and Wood, J., *A Future for our Past: An Introduction to Heritage Studies* (London: English Heritage, 1996), p 5. Spalding, J., *The Poetic Museum: Reviving Historic Collections* (Prestel: London, 2002).

<sup>601</sup> Kirby, S., *Industrial Heritage – Eliciting Nostalgic Wealth*, Undergraduate Dissertation, University of Lincoln, 2012. Available from: [http://www.academia.edu/1480026/Industrial\\_Heritage\\_-\\_Eliciting\\_Nostalgic\\_Wealth](http://www.academia.edu/1480026/Industrial_Heritage_-_Eliciting_Nostalgic_Wealth). [Accessed 28<sup>th</sup> December 2012]

<sup>602</sup> Trotter, R., “Nostalgia and the Construction of an Australian Dreaming”, *Journal of Australian Studies*, Vol 23, No 61, 1999, pp 19 – 26, p 19.

rerouting meanings' in the museum context),<sup>603</sup> then it is a natural, and essential, part of the museum experience.<sup>604</sup> This is exemplified in museum reviews by visitors; for example on Trip Advisor (an internet site where people review their holiday experiences), one visitor to the Lakeland Motor Museum has titled their review "Nostalgic Experience", and wrote that it 'evoked memories and in particular those from the fifties and sixties',<sup>605</sup> other reviewers have also written about the memories the exhibits triggered for them. This would suggest that some people are aware that nostalgia is a part of their leisure and museum visiting experience.

Even though I assert that nostalgia is not problematic it is essential that museums are open and transparent about their inclusion of the mythical, imagined and nostalgic. Beamish does this well, stating on its website that it is 'rooted in history, brought to life by its people...captures the spirit of the North-East'.<sup>606</sup> It is open and explicit in its intentions to present the visitor with a positive picture of the North East during two points of profound change in the region's history, 1825 and 1913.<sup>607</sup> It is also essential that nostalgia does not

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<sup>603</sup>Goldman, R. and Papson, S., "Advertising in the Age of Hypersignification", *Theory, Culture and Society*, Vol 11, No 3, August 1994, pp 23 – 53.

<sup>604</sup> Goulding, C., "Romancing the Past: Heritage Visiting and the Nostalgic Consumer", *Psychology and Marketing*, Vol 18, No 6, 2001, pp 565 – 592. Kirby, S., *Industrial Heritage – Eliciting Nostalgic Wealth*, Undergraduate Dissertation, University of Lincoln, 2012. Available from: [http://www.academia.edu/1480026/Industrial\\_Heritage\\_-\\_Eliciting\\_Nostalgic\\_Wealth](http://www.academia.edu/1480026/Industrial_Heritage_-_Eliciting_Nostalgic_Wealth). [Accessed 28<sup>th</sup> December 2012].

<sup>605</sup> Trip Advisor, *Lakeland Motor Museum: Traveller Reviews, Nostalgic Experience*, May 2012, online. Available from: [http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-g499564-d1931395-r130096848-Lakeland\\_Motor\\_Museum-Ulverston\\_Cumbria\\_England.html](http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-g499564-d1931395-r130096848-Lakeland_Motor_Museum-Ulverston_Cumbria_England.html). [Accessed 28<sup>th</sup> December 2012].

<sup>606</sup> Beamish the Living Museum of the North, *About*, online. Available from: <http://www.beamish.org.uk/getdoc/ad229aaa-85de-4f43-8921-878340a5073c/AboutBeamish.aspx>. [Accessed 13<sup>th</sup> December 2008].

<sup>607</sup> Beamish Museum, *Beamish: the North of England Open Air Museum* (Norwich: Jarrold Publishing, 2003) pg 2.

become the only rationale for existence, as visitor motives differ.<sup>608</sup> But, it does suggest that there is a place for nostalgia in today's museums, and perhaps the academic debates from the 1980s are now moot, and had little impact on how museums deal with nostalgia, and indeed how people seek to understand the past. I would argue that nostalgia is not problematic as, a 'true' version of the past does not exist, and all histories are relative.<sup>609</sup> It should, therefore, not be of as much concern to academics as it was thirty years ago.<sup>610</sup> In fact, it would seem that nostalgia is positive in relation to museum visiting as it motivates people to engage with the past, and helps them make sense of it in relation to their own lives. I believe that in the context of a past which is partial, commodified and mythical, it is essential to look instead at the specific mechanisms of museum representation, such as the subjective nature of donation and collection, professional skills versus academic knowledge, and external political factors. It is, in fact, these issues which now require further exploration rather than the nostalgia debate.

### **Power and control in representing the past**

If museums can only ever partially represent the past, commodification is part of the museum experience, and nostalgia is a process by which we engage with the past,<sup>611</sup> then what is the dynamic process that impacts on the representation

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<sup>608</sup> Spalding, J., *The Poetic Museum: Reviving Historic Collections* (Prestel: London, 2002). Sigurdsson, S., *Systems, Toys and Nostalgia: Technological and Museological Journeys*, November 2001, online. Available from: <http://www.raunvis.hi.is/~sksi/reise.html>. [Accessed 28<sup>th</sup> December 2012].

<sup>609</sup> See chapter 2.

<sup>610</sup> Although, it should be noted that there were academics who disagreed with Hewison's view, most importantly Raphael Samuel.

<sup>611</sup> Merriman, N., "The Crisis of Representation in Archaeological Museums", *Cultural Resource Management in Contemporary Society: Perspectives on Managing and Presenting the Past*, Hatton, A. and MacManamon, F.P. (eds) (London: Routledge, 2007) pp 300 – 309.

of the past in museums? I assert that it is the relationship between the public as contributors and consumers and museum professionals, along with other outside factors such as engagement with academics (or lack thereof) and government policies.

The first aspect of this relationship to explore is which group of people (the public or the museum professionals) have the greatest power and control in how the past is represented in the museum context. The process of representation begins with the selection of material for donation by individuals or groups of people; when a decision is made that material has significance or cultural value or importance ascribed to it and should be placed in a public repository, and is continued throughout the process of acceptance into and inclusion in museum collections and interpretation by museum volunteers and staff.<sup>612</sup> It is clear that the selection, collection and display of objects to represent the past, is usually undertaken by an individual or small group of people associated with a particular institution. This process is not just random: museum professionals use a combination of historical knowledge, ethical guidelines, and museum policies regarding collecting and interpretation parameters to make an informed decision about what is accepted into, or rejected from the museum.<sup>613</sup> However, it must also be acknowledged that this

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Anderson, J., "Living History: Simulating Everyday Life in Living Museums", *Public History Readings*, Leffler, P.K., and Brent, J. (eds) (Malabar, Florida: Krieger Publishing Company 1992), pp 456 – 470. Durrans, B., "Behind the Sciences; Museums and Selective Criticism", *Anthropology Today*, Vol 8, No 4, August 1992, p 11 – 15. Baram, U. and Rowan, Y., "Archaeology after Nationalisation: Globalisation and the Consumption of the Past", *Marketing Heritage: Archaeology and the Consumption of the Past*, Baram, U. and Rowan, Y. (eds) (Walnut Creek: Altamira, 2004), pp 3 – 24. Trotter, R., "Nostalgia and the Construction of an Australian Dreaming", *Journal of Australian Studies*, Vol 23, No 61, 1999, pp 19 – 26.

<sup>612</sup> Gielen, P., "Museumchronotopics: On the Representation of the Past in Museums", *Museum and Society*, Vol 2, No 3, November 2004, pp 147 – 160. Ovenden, C., *A Cumberland Lodge Conference 17<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> September 2004 Conference Essay*.

<sup>613</sup> Johnson, M., *Archaeological Theory: An Introduction* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009).

professionalism and expert knowledge can in itself be used to exclude material from collections. M<sup>C</sup>Combe's research into the rejection of the Faussett collection of Anglo Saxon antiquities by curators at the British Museum during the nineteenth century clearly demonstrates that this expert approach can be exclusive and therefore impact on the representation of material culture in the museum setting.<sup>614</sup> It is important to recognise that despite knowledge and professionalism, a person's decisions on what is important will be shaped both consciously and sub consciously by education, cultural background, age, gender, values, and beliefs. Johnson exemplified this point in his exploration of the need for a theoretical underpinning to archaeology when he wrote that 'all scientists of all disciplines need to be aware of the assumptions they are making if they want to be productive'.<sup>615</sup> The person dealing with the material is clearly making a decision about what parts of the past are important and should be represented, which does not necessarily reflect their actual importance at the point in time when they were created, used, or discarded. Nor does it necessarily reflect what external individuals or communities consider important parts of their history, as Carnegie insightfully emphasised when she wrote that 'these decisions [about what is historically important] determine what is deemed appropriate to display, when and how and thus impressionistic histories and present contexts are created and recreated'.<sup>616</sup> This does not imply that this process is in some way wrong or flawed, but recognises that it is directly

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<sup>614</sup> M<sup>C</sup>Combe, R. "Anglo Saxon Artefacts and Nationalist Discourse: Acquisition, Interpretation and Display in the Nineteenth Century," *Museum History Journal*, Vol 4, No 2, July 2011, pp 139 - 160.

<sup>615</sup> Johnson, M., *Archaeological Theory: An Introduction* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), p 6.

<sup>616</sup> Carnegie, E., "'It Wasn't all Bad": Representations of Working Class Cultures with Social History Museums and their Impact on Visitors", *Museum and Society*, Vol 4, No 2, July 2006, pp 69 – 83, p 73.

affected by a range of intrinsic and extrinsic factors that influence the histories created in the museum context.

This approach suggests that museum professionals have traditionally been in the greatest position of power when deciding how the past is represented. For example national museums like the British Museum can be highly selective about what they collect because they are not dependent on donations of material. In contrast to this many small, local, museums require donations of objects much more and therefore the power balance in the relationship is not the same. Despite this traditional approach there are recent examples of a move to put the public in this position of power and control over the representation of the past in national museums. Engaging the public in the debate about selection and representation can be done in an interesting and creative way that provokes thought and debate amongst the audience, professionals and academics. In 2009 Manchester Museum did exactly this with a project called 'The Manchester Hermit'. Between the 27<sup>th</sup> June and 5<sup>th</sup> August artist Ansuman Biswas lived in the museum to explore the notions of collecting and exhibiting and the extinction of the human race. One aspect of the project, 'the Hermit's blog' was designed 'to engage members of the public in debate about why museums collect and preserve objects, whilst allowing species and cultures to become forgotten and extinct'.<sup>617</sup> Biswas wrote on his Hermit blog that:

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<sup>617</sup> The University of Manchester, *The Manchester Museum, Manchester Hermit, Press Release* 27<sup>th</sup> May 2009, online. Available from: <http://www.museum.manchester.ac.uk/aboutus/pressreleases/fileuploadmax10mb,155296,en.pdf>. [Accessed 30<sup>th</sup> May 2011].



Over the last few months I have been exploring the museum stores and collecting my own little cabinet of curiosities. Each day over the next forty days I will choose an object from my collection and offer it up in a spirit of sacrifice. The object will be announced through a variety of media, including this blog.

I will then destroy it.

This destruction will inevitably take place unless someone cares for the object.<sup>618</sup>

Experts and the general public were then invited to follow each object as it was selected and debate whether or not the object was of cultural value and should remain in the collection. 'Care' for the object could be expressed in any way, as long as it was expressed.

The first object offered was a human skull, and the debate between academics, museum professionals, and members of the public which follows the object on the blog site is enlightening not only in how people respond and relate to the skull and its fate, but how the process of acquisition, care and disposal can be communicated between the different stakeholder groups in museums in a creative and open way. It also demonstrates the complete transparency called for by the Museum Matters blogger, much needed if people are to feel museums are a justified organisation. This approach not only allows the external and internal stakeholders to decide which aspects of history are important, but allows them a greater understanding of why museums can only

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<sup>618</sup> Biswas, A., *You Don't Know What You've Got Til its Gone, Hermit's Blog*, 29<sup>th</sup> June 2009. Available from: <http://manchesterhermit.wordpress.com/2009/06/29/you-dont-know-what-youve-got-til-its-gone/>. [Accessed 30<sup>th</sup> May 2011].

represent a partial past, and the processes that museum professionals go through in order to re-present this past to the public. There is of course a flaw in the use of new technology as it is well recognised that there are groups of people who do not have access to, or choose not to use, the internet. In 2008 it was reported that '70% of those aged 65 or over had never been online', along with low usage rates by groups with few or no formal qualifications, and a lower percentage of women accessing the internet than men.<sup>619</sup>

This project skilfully revealed the human, or emotional, aspect of the decision making process whilst remaining informed by policies and ethical guidelines. It also demonstrated a way forward in openly accepting the notion of a partial past and addressing the public's understanding of how and why museums represent the past in a particular way.

In 2010 the British Museum worked in partnership with the BBC on the project 'The History of the World in 100 Objects'. This multimedia project used television, radio, a website, and social networking to create an interactive exhibition online featuring objects that project participants (school children, the general public, museums, and audiences) felt represented the history of the world.<sup>620</sup> This represents a huge shift in power; the museum allowed the public, not their staff, to choose objects that symbolised key moments in history.

Whilst this shift in the relationship between the public and museum professionals is more democratic and arguably allows new museological narratives to be created it also allows the potential for conflict as there can be

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<sup>619</sup> BBC News Magazine, *Who Doesn't Have the Internet?*, online, 2009. Available from: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/magazine/8057158.stm>. [Accessed 4<sup>th</sup> August 2011].

<sup>620</sup> BBC, *A History of the World; About the Project*, online. Available from: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ahistoryoftheworld/about/>. [Accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2012].

conflicting goals of 'national and regional collective and individual histories'.<sup>621</sup> Museums in countries that have suffered conflict or political upheaval often deal with groups that have opposing memories of the past. For example Kattago cites the challenges museum staff in the Baltic States, such as Estonia, have in representing communism as it is regarded by some as occupation and others as liberation.<sup>622</sup> Dubin has explored at length the conflict in how museums represent African communities in the post-apartheid South Africa, when they once served as ambassadors for the apartheid philosophy, representing native Africans as curiosities.<sup>623</sup> Whilst these are not necessarily issues that staff in British museums are widely faced with, our museums are still politicised entities. In fact, Watson argued that museums represent the privileged in society, particularly those that have power through status, who often serve as museum owners, governors, trustees, professionals, and consultants.<sup>624</sup> In addition to this Carnegie has emphasised the power of these privileged people to present the past to suit their own meanings,<sup>625</sup> which can also lead to conflict. It is very hard to find documented evidence of this conflict, but I have actually experienced this first hand in a museum in Britain. Between 2004 and 2005 I worked for an independent museum as a Museum and Heritage Development Officer. There was constant conflict between two of the groups of museum stakeholders; the Trustees who owned the museum and the collections and were responsible for its strategic management, and the Friends who

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<sup>621</sup> Molyneaux, B.L., "Introduction: The Represented Past", *The Presented Past: Heritage, Museums, and Education (One World Archaeology Series)* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp 1 – 12, p 9.

<sup>622</sup> Kattago, S., *Memory and Representation in Contemporary Europe: The Persistence of the Past* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012).

<sup>623</sup> Dubin, S., *Transforming Museums: Mounting Queen Victoria in a Dramatic South Africa* (New York: Palgrave, 2006).

<sup>624</sup> Watson, S., (ed) *Museums and their Communities* (London: Routledge, 2007).

<sup>625</sup> Carnegie, E., "Trying to be an Honest Woman: Making Women's Histories", *Making Histories*, Kavanagh, G. (ed) (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1996), pp 54 – 66.

represented regular visitors to the museum and were responsible for its operational management. The Trustees comprised in the main older, wealthy, landed or professional males, whereas the Friends comprised younger, working-class people. Some of the conflict arose from the way in which the history of the company that the museum celebrated should be presented to the public with the Trustees wanting to conserve associated buildings and high status objects, and the Friends wanting to show other aspects of the history of the company. For example, the Friends spent months working on the creation of a small display that showed how machinery in the company worked, without the support of the Trustees, who believed that they had not given permission for this activity, and wanted the space for the display of an object they were trying to purchase.<sup>626</sup> Despite the difficulty of uncovering such conflict, because they are rarely aired publically, it clearly has the potential to affect representation in a large number of museums

Museums in Britain also have to meet consumer demands whilst adhering to their ethical duty to represent the past fairly and 'represent ideas, personalities, events and communities with sensitivity and respect',<sup>627</sup> and conflict can arise from this. It should be accepted that museums are leisure destinations that are unable to represent the past in its entirety, therefore there is a need for museums to arrive at versions of the past and present which are acceptable to mixed audiences of tourists and locals, and which at the same time, meet the political agenda of Local Government and staff.<sup>628</sup> Traditionally there has been

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<sup>626</sup> Please note that I have tried not to identify the museum.

<sup>627</sup> Museums Association 2011, *Code of Ethics for Museums*, Available from: <http://www.museumsassociation.org/publications/code-of-ethics>. [Accessed 7<sup>th</sup> May 2011].

<sup>628</sup> Carnegie, E., "It Wasn't all Bad": Representations of Working Class Cultures with Social History Museums and their Impact on Visitors", *Museum and Society*, Vol 4, No 2, July 2006, pp

a struggle between providing visitors with an enjoyable experience whilst representing the past in a way which accords with the wishes of those in power within the museum organisation.<sup>629</sup> This arises from the fact that the museum staff are, by definition, accountable to society in general, as their function is to 'enable people to explore collections for inspiration, learning and enjoyment' and they hold objects 'in trust for society',<sup>630</sup> but they also have to meet the demands of those in positions of power within their organisations.

This suggests a dynamic relationship between the museum visitor and the museum, and calls for a re-evaluation of the idea that museums try to motivate people in to visiting them by repackaging the past in to a consumable experience.<sup>631</sup> Perhaps the visitor is actually in the position of power as museum staff face 'an increasing impact of commercial considerations',<sup>632</sup> in a highly competitive tourism market that is based on experience.<sup>633</sup>

The conflict created by the delicate balance of power and control in museums must be managed as; 'to ignore how memories of the past are emotionally and existentially linked to collective identity does not solve conflict, but rather wishes

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69 – 83. Kirby, S., *Industrial Heritage – Eliciting Nostalgic Wealth*, Undergraduate Dissertation, University of Lincoln, 2012. Available from: [http://www.academia.edu/1480026/Industrial\\_Heritage\\_-\\_Eliciting\\_Nostalgic\\_Wealth](http://www.academia.edu/1480026/Industrial_Heritage_-_Eliciting_Nostalgic_Wealth). [Accessed 28<sup>th</sup> December 2012].

<sup>629</sup> Carnegie, E., "Trying to be an Honest Woman: Making Women's Histories", *Making Histories*, Kavanagh, G. (ed) (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1996), pp 54 – 66.

<sup>630</sup> Museums Association, *Frequently Asked Questions*, online. Available from: <http://www.museumsassociation.org/about/frequently-asked-questions>. [Accessed 12<sup>th</sup> June 2012].

<sup>631</sup> Hewison, R. *The Heritage Industry* (London: Methuen, 1987). Shanks, M. and Tilley, C., *Social Theory and Archaeology* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987).

<sup>632</sup> Liddiard, M., "Changing Histories: Museums, Sexuality and the Future of the Past", *Museum and Society*, Vol 2, No 1, March 2004, pp 15 – 29, p 16.

<sup>633</sup> Goulding, C., "The Commodification of the Past, Postmodern Pastiche, and the Search for Authentic Experience at Contemporary Heritage Attractions", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol 34, No 7, 2000, pp 835 – 853.

it away.<sup>634</sup> And with public accountability, museum professionals have to meet the needs of all their stakeholders.<sup>635</sup>

This thesis asserts that current conflicts in museums are best represented in the practical, contemporary, issues of the subjective nature of collection and donation, the over emphasis of the importance of professional skills over subject knowledge, and the impact of external political forces on museums. These are under-researched areas of museology, and it is therefore difficult to put forward a solution to current conflicts. However, it is clear that the answers do not lie in repeated exploration of traditional debates around representation, including discussions on nostalgia as a concern, but in these new areas of research.

**The subjective nature of donation and collection, professional skills versus academic knowledge, and external political factors: the real issues?**

**Donation and collection**

The central issue in the donation of objects lies with the relationship people have with the items that they decide to donate, but it is also this relationship which gives objects meaning and significance and their personal biographies and thus makes them interesting to museums. Archaeologists and others have developed a multi layered approach to object biographies that can be used to

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<sup>634</sup> Kattago, S., *Memory and Representation in Contemporary Europe: The Persistence of the Past* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), p 98.

<sup>635</sup> Museums Association, *Frequently Asked Questions*, online. Available from: <http://www.museumsassociation.org/about/frequently-asked-questions>. [Accessed 12<sup>th</sup> June 2012].

explain why donation may be problematic and influence how the past is represented.

The concept of objects having biographies is a relatively new idea in archaeology, introduced by Igor Kopytoff in 1986.<sup>636</sup> The first fundamental theoretical concept linked to the biography of objects is that they have a life cycle, much as humans do. The selection of the raw material to create the object is its conception, manufacture is its birth, wear traces represent how it was used or the function it performed during its use-life, and finally the act of discarding the object and it becoming a deposition in the archaeological record represents its death.<sup>637</sup> The second is that objects are used to construct and maintain social identities and therefore the relationship people have with those objects.<sup>638</sup> There has been some debate amongst archaeologists about to which aspects of this relationship the most significance should be ascribed. Thomas put forward the idea that artefacts are used as active components in the process of constructing different identities, and identities are constructed through the juxtaposition and manipulation of sets of artefacts, and Tilley placed more emphasis on the symbolic identities of artefacts at various stages of their lives and how objects are perceived in relation to one another by people

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<sup>636</sup> Kopytoff, I., "The Cultural Biography of Things", *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspectives*, Appadurai, A. (ed) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp 64 – 94. Macdonald, S., "On Old Things: The Fetishization of the Past Everyday Life", *British Subjects: An Anthropology of Britain*, Rapport, N. (ed) (Berg: Oxford, 2002), pp 89 – 107.

<sup>637</sup> University of Leiden, *Ancestral Mounds*, online. Available from: [www.grafheuvels.nl](http://www.grafheuvels.nl). [Accessed 28<sup>th</sup> December 2012]. Gosden, C. and Marshall, Y., "The Cultural Biography of Objects", *World Archaeology*, Vol 31, No 2, October 1999, pp 169 – 178. Gilchrist, R. "Archaeological Biographies: Realizing Human Lifecycles", *World Archaeology*, Vol 31, No 3, 2000, pp 325 – 328.

<sup>638</sup> Gosden, C. and Marshall, Y., "The Cultural Biography of Objects", *World Archaeology*, Vol 31, No 2, October 1999, pp 169 – 178. Gilchrist, R. "Archaeological Biographies: Realizing Human Lifecycles", *World Archaeology*, Vol 31, No 3, 2000, pp 325 – 328. Thomas, J., *Time, Culture and Identity* (London: Routledge, 1996). Tilley, C., *An Ethnography of the Neolithic: Early Prehistoric Societies in Southern Scandinavia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). Hoskins, J., "Agency, Biography, and Objects", *The Handbook of Material Culture*, Tilley, C. (ed) (London: Sage, 2006), pp 74 – 85.

creating and using them.<sup>639</sup> The third concept is the Maussian idea of objects being gifts for exchange, carrying ‘something of the spirit of the giver with them’,<sup>640</sup> and forging lasting relationships between the people involved in the exchange. This last point is important because people select objects that in some way represent themselves or someone they care about for donation to museums, which does not necessarily mean that they are historically or culturally valuable items. Relationships between individuals or groups and museums are created through this process of donation and collection, and then interpretation and display.

This concept means that people have an evolving relationship with objects during their own lifetime and that of the object. People ascribe special meaning to objects, associate them with important events or parts of their lives, and create narratives which accompany the objects.<sup>641</sup> The objects that people decide to donate are special in some way, and have gone through a ‘process of value creation’,<sup>642</sup> where the owner has decided that they are historically significant or representative of the past based on personal experience. The idea of a gift in the form of a donation being used as a means by which to create, strengthen, or maintain the relationship between the donor and the museum is

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<sup>639</sup> Thomas, J., *Time, Culture and Identity* (London: Routledge, 1996). Tilley, C., *An Ethnography of the Neolithic: Early Prehistoric Societies in Southern Scandinavia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). Hoskins, J., “Agency, Biography, and Objects”, *The Handbook of Material Culture*, Tilley, C. (ed) (London: Sage, 2006) pp 74 – 85.

<sup>640</sup> Mauss, M., *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies*, Trans. Cunnison, I. (London: Routledge, 1967). Macdonald, S., “On Old Things: The Fetishization of the Past Everyday Life”, *British Subjects: An Anthropology of Britain*, Rapport, N. (ed) (Berg: Oxford, 2002), pp 89 – 107, p 90. Gosden, C. and Marshall, Y., “The Cultural Biography of Objects”, *World Archaeology*, Vol 31, No 2, October 1999, pp 169 – 178. Macdonald, S., “On Old Things: The Fetishization of the Past Everyday Life”, *British Subjects: An Anthropology of Britain*, Rapport, N. (ed) (Berg: Oxford, 2002), pp 89 – 107, p 90.

<sup>641</sup> Ibid.

<sup>642</sup> Gosden, C. and Marshall, Y., “The Cultural Biography of Objects”, *World Archaeology*, Vol 31, No 2, October 1999, pp 169 – 178, p 170.



also important as this will make it more likely that the object, or gift, has significance to the donor, and is seen as representative of their heritage, traditions, or identity.<sup>643</sup> These gifts are offered in the hope that the object will be preserved in a particular moment in time in the sacred museum space, and will ensure the continuation of a historical narrative that is important to the donor.<sup>644</sup>

Museums rely heavily on donations for two reasons; donation as a core way of collecting has been culturally embedded over the last three hundred or so years,<sup>645</sup> and the tradition of museums being not-for-profit organisations means that it is economically challenging for them to purchase objects.<sup>646</sup> This is not to suggest that purchase would be a more positive method of acquisition, as it is an even more subjective process than that of donation as the purchaser has to justify their expenditure to stakeholders, and has to ensure that the purchase has been worthwhile. However, the over reliance on donation only amplifies the issue of subjective donation and collection. On the surface, collection does appear to be a scientific and measured activity, with collections policies guiding those making decisions, and museums claiming that their expert staff make

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<sup>643</sup> Tilley, C., "Introduction, Identity, Place, Landscape, and Heritage", *Journal of Material Culture*, Vol 11, July 2006, pp 7 – 32.

<sup>644</sup> Macdonald, S., "On Old Things: The Fetishization of the Past Everyday Life", *British Subjects: An Anthropology of Britain*, Rapport, N. (ed) (Berg: Oxford, 2002), pp 89 – 107.

<sup>645</sup> Society of Antiquaries of London, *The Museum*, online. Available from: <http://www.sal.org.uk/history/>. [Accessed 26<sup>th</sup> February 2011]. Spalding Gentlemen's Society, *Collections*. Available from: <http://www.spalding-gentlemens-society.org/collections.html>. [Accessed 26<sup>th</sup> February 2011].

<sup>646</sup> Ikono, *Museums in the Age of the Mega – Collector: Can Public Institutions Compete?* online, Available from: <http://ikono.org/2012/02/museums-in-the-age-of-the-mega-collector-can-public-institutions-compete/>. [Accessed 29<sup>th</sup> December 2012]. Johnson, P. and Thomas, B., "Museums: An Economic Perspective", *Museum Economics and the Community*, Ed Pearce, S. (London: Athelone Press, 2001), pp 5 – 40.

informed decisions about the objects they will accept.<sup>647</sup> But, this is still a subjective process, because it involves decision making and judgement that can be affected by a number of factors, both conscious and unconscious, personal and professional, and political.

The collector that has the biggest impact on museum collections is often the founder. Many folk life collectors in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were male, middle-class professionals, which is also an important consideration as this raises questions about whether or not the collections and displays represent what was important to those living and working in the countryside, or what was perceived to be important by the collectors. For example the founder of Skansen, linguist and historian Artur Hazelius was influenced by ‘the romantic ideas and the patriotic spirit of the latter part the nineteenth century’,<sup>648</sup> and the University of Reading’s Museum of English Rural Life, which was opened in 1951, had academics ‘largely memorialising a history of change that had taken place within a living generation’;<sup>649</sup> changes that they perceived to be important.

Then there is the person making the decision at the point of donation. This person has to make the decision to collect the object based on a range of prescribed criteria such as the temporal, spatial, and historical parameters set out in the museum’s collecting policy, condition, and the potential to enhance

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<sup>647</sup> Canada Science and Technology Museum, *Objects, Artifacts, and Curators*, online. Available from: <http://www.sciencetech.technomuses.ca/english/collection/collecting02.cfm>. [Accessed 28<sup>th</sup> December 2012].

<sup>648</sup> Skansen, *Homepage*, online. Available from: <http://www.skansen.se/pages/?ID=1065>. [Accessed 14<sup>th</sup> December 2008].

<sup>649</sup> Bridgen, R. “Recording Change”, *Folk Life: Journal of Ethnological Studies*, Vol 48, No 1, 2010, pp 3 – 12, p 5.

the current collection.<sup>650</sup> These criteria may be also influenced by questions around the aesthetic, cultural, and historical value of the object and practical constraints such as the ability to conserve, store, and display the object,<sup>651</sup> the wishes of various stakeholders, and the Museum Association's ethical and collecting guidelines.<sup>652</sup> It is also accepted that these decisions will be influenced by the cultural background, age, gender, beliefs, knowledge, and interests of the individual. Johnson discusses this issue at length in relation to archaeological interpretation, calling for archaeologists to be aware of, and open about, these natural biases, in order to make informed decisions, which could also be applied to museum curators.<sup>653</sup> The Museum Association has tried to address this issue in museums through extensive research in to diversity in the museum workforce, and its highly successful, although now closed Diversify training and placement scheme.<sup>654</sup> However, it is impossible to change some aspects of the background of museum curators generally. For example they will, in the main, be educated to at least degree level, with a higher degree or professional qualification, which can preclude some people

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<sup>650</sup> Somerset Routes, *Donating Objects to Museums*, online. Available from: <http://somersestroutes.co.uk/page/donating-objects/27/> [Accessed 28<sup>th</sup> December 2012]. Clough, G. W., *How Do Smithsonian Curators Decide what to Collect?*, online. Available from: <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/How-Do-Smithsonian-Curators-Decide-What-to-Collect.html>. [Accessed 28<sup>th</sup> December 2012].

<sup>651</sup> London Art Consortium, *Curating Modern and Contemporary Art*, online. Available from: <http://www.londonconsortium.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/microsoft-word-curating-modern-art-seminar-series.pdf>. [Accessed 28<sup>th</sup> December 2012]. Clough, G. W., *How Do Smithsonian Curators Decide what to Collect?*, online. Available from: <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/How-Do-Smithsonian-Curators-Decide-What-to-Collect.html>. [Accessed 28<sup>th</sup> December 2012].

<sup>652</sup> Museums Association, *Code of Ethics*, online. Available from: <http://www.museumsassociation.org/ethics/code-of-ethics>. [Accessed 28<sup>th</sup> December 2012]. Museums Association, *Acquisition: Guidance on the Ethics and Practicalities of Acquisition* (London: Museums Association, 2004).

<sup>653</sup> Johnson, M., *Archaeological Theory: An Introduction* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009).

<sup>654</sup> Creative and Cultural Skills, *The Cultural Heritage Blueprint: A Workforce Development Plan for Cultural Heritage in the UK* (London: Creative and Cultural Skills, 2008). Museums Association, *Diversify*, online. Available from: <http://www.museumsassociation.org/careers/diversify>. [Accessed 28<sup>th</sup> December 2012].

from a working-class or minority ethnic background entering into the profession.<sup>655</sup>

The gift exchange concept can also be problematic for curators, as potential donors can be offended when their objects are not accepted, and there can be pressure from the donor for the object to be taken in to the museum collection. Many museums now combat this by explicit statements on their websites about what they will and will not collect, and by offering advice on how to make a donation.<sup>656</sup>

In short, as donation and collection are core, dynamic, museum activities that take place on a daily basis,<sup>657</sup> they have a significant impact on the representation of the past. The processes of donation and collection are complex in that they do not just represent a single transaction, but a series of relationships, ascribed meaning and historical significance, power and control in deciding how the past is represented, and potential conflict. This area is currently under researched because museums cannot consider such issues until their collections are well documented, and staff know what the collection comprises. The first step in solving this problem is collaborative working between academics, museum professionals, and the public. Firstly, it is

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<sup>655</sup> Creative and Cultural Skills, *The Cultural Heritage Blueprint: A Workforce Development Plan for Cultural Heritage in the UK* (London: Creative and Cultural Skills, 2008).

<sup>656</sup> There are numerous examples available. Two good examples are: The Science Museum, *Object Donations*, online. Available from: [http://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/about\\_us/collections/enquiries/object\\_donations.aspx](http://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/about_us/collections/enquiries/object_donations.aspx). [Accessed 28<sup>th</sup> December 2012] and National Maritime Museum, *Donating Objects*, online. Available from: <http://www.rmg.co.uk/researchers/collections/borrowing-and-donating/donating-objects/>. [Accessed 28<sup>th</sup> December 2012]. A weaker example from Lincolnshire is Lincolnshire County Council, *Loans, Donations, and Bequests*, online. Available from: <http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/residents/leisure-culture-and-learning/heritage/loans-donations-and-bequests/38390.article>. [Accessed 28<sup>th</sup> December 2012].

<sup>657</sup> Merriman, N., *Museum Collections and Sustainability*, 2004, online. Available from: [http://www.cloreleadership.org/cms/user\\_files/fellow\\_fellowship\\_research\\_projects\\_download\\_report/54/Clore%20research%20final%20version.doc](http://www.cloreleadership.org/cms/user_files/fellow_fellowship_research_projects_download_report/54/Clore%20research%20final%20version.doc). [Accessed 28<sup>th</sup> December 2012].

essential that museums continue to strive to document their collections in line with Accreditation guidelines.<sup>658</sup> As many museums face huge back logs in documentation,<sup>659</sup> universities have moved towards producing employable graduates, and volunteering has had a renaissance,<sup>660</sup> there is the opportunity to address this issue by recruiting volunteers and interns to contribute to museum life. Only once this is achieved can museum professionals, academics, and the public start to investigate ways of addressing some of the inherent issues linked to donation and collection through an open discussions and democratic processes.

### **Professional skills versus academic knowledge and external political factors**

A central argument explored in this thesis is that levels of representation are directly linked to the rise of a 'New Museology' as defined by Ross in his 2004 article "Interpreting the New Museology", in which he argued that there has been a distinct shift in focus by museum professionals from collections to the visitor (something that was facilitated by external political policy).<sup>661</sup> Whilst Ross did explore the important external reasons for this shift in museum practice he neglected changes in the discipline of history at the time which may have also contributed, whether consciously or not, to the New Museology. It might be argued that this shift in focus from collections to visitors facilitated the use of

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<sup>658</sup> Arts Council England, *Accreditation Scheme for Museums and Galleries in England: Guidance for Section Two – Collections*, December 2011, online. Available from: [http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/pdf/Accreditation\\_guidance\\_section\\_two.pdf](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/pdf/Accreditation_guidance_section_two.pdf). [Accessed 19<sup>th</sup> January 2012].

<sup>659</sup> Merriman, N., *Museum Collections and Sustainability*, 2004, online. Available from: [http://www.clareleadership.org/cms/user\\_files/fellow\\_fellowship\\_research\\_projects\\_download\\_report/54/Clore%20research%20final%20version.doc](http://www.clareleadership.org/cms/user_files/fellow_fellowship_research_projects_download_report/54/Clore%20research%20final%20version.doc). [Accessed 28<sup>th</sup> December 2012].

<sup>660</sup> Weinstien, H., "Going Local", *Museums Journal*, February 2012, pp 23 – 27.

<sup>661</sup> Ross, M. "Interpreting the New Museology", *Museum and Society*. Vol 2, No 2, July 2004, pp 84 – 103.

non-traditional sources by some social historians such as oral history, memoirs, and reminiscences, as explored in earlier chapters, in the last decades of the twentieth century, and thus the idea of the ordinary individual became more widely accepted and popular. It may be further argued that when new thoughts on historical philosophy were introduced to the highly politicised museum environment of the 1990s, driven by the desire of 'New Labour' to include and engage with hard to reach audiences and provide high levels of customer satisfaction, museums were spurred on to become 'deliverers of knowledge [and] mass education',<sup>662</sup> in addition to repositories for objects, and viable commercial concerns. Museum professionals began to consider and apply the use of non-traditional sources to retell traditional histories and to connect with local communities and non-users, creating active and participative audiences,<sup>663</sup> in line with the role of museums as agents of social change.<sup>664</sup> This might be considered the positive aspect of this shift, but it was accompanied by the emergence of the museum manager at the expense of the museum curator.

This disappearance of 'the Curator' and emergence of 'the Manager' and the 'Agent for Social Change' in museums began in the 1980s under Margaret Thatcher's Conservative Government, and continued from 1997 under New Labour.<sup>665</sup> In 2001 Boylan addressed a Joint Seminar of ICOM Committees for Management (INTERCOM), Museology (ICOFOM) and Training of Personnel

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<sup>662</sup> Vergo, P., (ed) *The New Museology* (London: Reaktion Books, 1989).

<sup>663</sup> Hooper – Greenhill, E., "Changing Values in the Art Museum: Rethinking Communication and Learning", *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, Vol 6, No 1, 2000, pp 9 – 31.

Merriman, N., "The Crisis of Representation in Archaeological Museums", *Cultural Resource Management in Contemporary Society: Perspectives on Managing and Presenting the Past*, Hatton, A. and MacManamon, F.P. (eds) (London: Routledge, 2007) pp 300 – 309.

<sup>664</sup> Sandell, R., "Museums as Agents of Social Inclusion", *Museum Management and Curatorship*, Vol 17, No 4, 1998, pp 401 – 418.

<sup>665</sup> Kawashima, N., *Museum Management in a Time of Change: Impacts of Cultural Policy on Museums in Britain 1979 – 1997*, Research Papers No 3, Research Papers, Bennett, O. and Aherne, J. (series eds), Centre for Cultural Policy Studies, University of Warwick, 1997, p 16.

(ICTOP) on Barcelona with a paper titled “A Revolution in Museum Management requires a Revolution in Museum Professional Education and Training”.<sup>666</sup> In this paper he explicitly referred to the shift in the cultural sector to train and employ effective managers as ‘effective, strategic business decisions [had become] crucial’<sup>667</sup> in modern museums, and individuals were now charged with running museums as effective businesses whilst adhering to their ethical and social responsibilities.<sup>668</sup> Five years later, in 2006, McPherson described this shift as ‘the main change which the curatorial profession has seen in recent times’,<sup>669</sup> highlighting a move from museum professionals being subject specialists engaged in research, publishing and communicating with the public, to being a commercial operator engaging with, and providing services for, the visitor.<sup>670</sup> Both Boylan and McPherson called for existing museum professionals to be retrained to meet the new demands on them, and also commented on the issues caused through the appointment of managers from unrelated areas.<sup>671</sup> But, what they both failed to recognise were the inherent problems caused by the impact of these demands training in the sector. During this period museum training changed to respond to the new requirements of the

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<sup>666</sup> Boylan, P, J., *A Revolution in Museum Management requires a Revolution in Museum Professional Education and Training*, Joint Seminar of ICOM Committees for Management (INTERCOM), Museology (ICOFOM) and Training of Personnel (ICTOP), July 2001, Barcelona, online. Available from: <http://www.city.ac.uk/ictop/boylan-2001.html>. [Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> April 2010].

<sup>667</sup> The Museum and Heritage Show, *Exhibitor Products and Services*, May 2011, online. Available from: <http://www.museumsandheritage.com/visitors/exhibitor-products-a-services>. [Accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2011]. For further consideration also see Lawley, I., “Local Authority Museums and the Modernising Government Agenda in England”, *Museum and Society*, 1 Vol 1, No 2, 2003, pp 75 - 86.

<sup>668</sup> Museums Association 2011, *Code of Ethics for Museums*, Available from: <http://www.museumsassociation.org/publications/code-of-ethics>. [Accessed 7<sup>th</sup> May 2011].

<sup>669</sup> McPherson, G., “Public Memories and Private Tastes: The Shifting Definitions of Museums and their Visitors in the UK”, *Museum Management and Curatorship*, Vol 21, No 1, March 2006, pp 44 – 57, p 51.

<sup>670</sup> Ibid.

<sup>671</sup> Ibid. Boylan, P, J., *A Revolution in Museum Management requires a Revolution in Museum Professional Education and Training*, Joint Seminar of ICOM Committees for Management (INTERCOM), Museology (ICOFOM) and Training of Personnel (ICTOP), July 2001, Barcelona, Online. Available from: <http://www.city.ac.uk/ictop/boylan-2001.html>. [Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> April 2010].

industry, which has resulted in strong managers but ‘very few object specialists...coming into the sector now’,<sup>672</sup> to quote Mastoris in the January 2010 edition of the *Museums Journal*. It might be further argued that many museums are now at a critical point where:

Within the next few years we are going to have a whole generation of curators who have really quite important collections, but probably don’t fully appreciate their significance.<sup>673</sup>

And that this situation has come into being as the role of the curator has been redefined from a custodian of historical objects to a manager of a commodity.<sup>674</sup> Mastoris’ comment is of course general, and represents local and regional museums far better than it does ‘the Nationals’ who have managed to retain specialist knowledge along with skills. For example the Science Museum state on their website that

our staff also provide specialist subject knowledge expertise, advice and guidance about a number of activities, including collections care and management, interpretation, methods of display and presentation.<sup>675</sup>

This also suggests a current gap in specialist knowledge in the sector, along with recognition of the issue, albeit implicit. Ewin mirrored Mastoris’ concerns in 2012, but developed the argument by considering the impact of this loss of knowledge to both museums and local communities. He surmised that a loss of

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<sup>672</sup> Steel, P., “Ordinary Lives”, *Museums Journal*, January 2010, pp 25 – 27, p 26.

<sup>673</sup> Ibid. p 27.

<sup>674</sup> Ross, M. Interpreting the New Museology pp 84 – 103, *Museum and Society*, Vol 2, No 2, July 2004, pp 84 – 103, p 84.

<sup>675</sup> Science Museum, *Our Work with Other Museums*, online. Available from: [http://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/about\\_us/sharing\\_expertise/loans\\_advice\\_collaboration.aspx](http://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/about_us/sharing_expertise/loans_advice_collaboration.aspx). [Accessed 28<sup>th</sup> December 2012].



specialist knowledge in museums over the last twenty years has resulted in a poorer visitor experience, primarily because important historical narratives are not represented in collections or interpretation.<sup>676</sup> Contemporaneously to Ewin's 'provocation' *The Museums Journal* featured a call by Miller for curators with specialist curatorial skills, such as database management, conservation skills, and understanding of acquisition and disposals to be saved, signalling the introduction of an additional layer to this debate.<sup>677</sup> However, the replies to his article reflect Ewin and Mastoris' concerns more than Miller's, with museum professionals raising issues in being able to identify objects brought in to the museum, the generalist nature of Local Authority job specifications, and the need for curatorial research to develop specialisms.<sup>678</sup> This would suggest that the decline of the collections-focussed curator and rise of the audience-focussed manager, which was encouraged through external political policy, is indeed more influential on how the past is represented than nostalgia. This is not to argue that there should be a shift back to purely curatorial staff, or the employment of both curatorial and managerial staff (which would be totally unrealistic in the current economic climate and unnecessary). Once again there is the potential to solve this issue by creating collaborative partnerships; if museums require managers rather than curators then they can look to the public and academics to work with them in identifying objects, deciding on historical significance, and in creating meaningful and accurate interpretation that reflects different view points and promotes debate between visitors. This is

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<sup>676</sup> Ewin, T., *Open Culture 2012 Provocation: In Defence of the Curator*, online. Available from: <http://www.collectionslink.org.uk/discover/new-perspectives/1266-openculture-2012-provocation-in-defence-of-the-curator-by-dr-tim-ewin>. [Accessed 28<sup>th</sup> December 2012].

<sup>677</sup> Miller, G., *Do we Need Specialist Curators?* online. Available from: <http://www.museumsassociation.org/comment/03072012-do-we-need-specialist-curators>. [Accessed 28<sup>th</sup> December 2012].

<sup>678</sup> Ibid.

not an unrealistic goal, and has been achieved by staff and volunteers at Nottingham City Museums and Galleries.<sup>679</sup>

## **Approaches to fieldwork**

### **Introduction**

In order to test the assertion that nostalgia is not as problematic in museums as the subjective nature of donation and collection, the development of professional skills over academic knowledge, and external political influences, fieldwork was carried out in the form of a museum survey and interviews with museum professionals. This was done to provide a case study that can be used to better understand the nature of representation in museums in general, and to better understand the concept of relative histories and the nature of the narrative history created during the research process.

This part of the chapter will critically analyse the methodology applied to the museum survey. It will justify the methodology selected in relation to the desire to understand how the past is represented in museums, and what factors influence the presentation of the past in this context.

### **The Investigative questionnaire**

In order to produce meaningful research, sites for the investigative survey could not be selected at random and had to represent a cross-section of museums in Lincolnshire. Initially internet research and research through personal

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<sup>679</sup> Inscker, A., *A letter, a Volunteer, and a Numismatics Collection*, online. Available from: [http://www.midlands.specialistnetwork.org.uk/asset\\_arena/textual/05%20Ann%20Inscker.pdf](http://www.midlands.specialistnetwork.org.uk/asset_arena/textual/05%20Ann%20Inscker.pdf). [Accessed 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2013].

communication was undertaken to identify a representative and appropriate sample of the museums and heritage sites across Lincolnshire; this involved reading museums' mission statements, collecting policies, events guides, and exhibition details.

There were challenges in quantifying and defining the exact number and type of museums and heritage sites in Lincolnshire for quantitative analysis, as there was little information available in 2009. Lincolnshire was part of the East Midlands section of the now defunct Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, which in 2009 stated that of the 213 museums in the region, 52 were in Lincolnshire.<sup>680</sup> However, figures provided by Lincolnshire's Regional Museum Development Officer differed slightly, possibly owing to definition and detail. In January 2009 the Development Officer provided the following figures for this research. There were 60 organisations in Lincolnshire, including some heritage associations that wanted to set up new museums. Of these organisations, 53 could be defined as museums. Forty-nine of these museums were open to the public; the remaining four were not, as their governing organisations were running virtual museums, seeking new premises, or developing new museums. In terms of governance seventeen were independent, four were operated by the Ministry of Defence, sixteen were private, and six were run by Local Authorities. The East Midlands Museum Service stated on its website at the time of the survey that there were over 240 museums in the counties that comprise the East Midlands: Lincolnshire, Rutland, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Leicestershire, and Northamptonshire. The variety of these museums

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<sup>680</sup> Museums, Libraries and Archives Council. *East Midlands*, online. Available from: [http://www.mla.gov.uk/about/region/East\\_Midlands](http://www.mla.gov.uk/about/region/East_Midlands). [Accessed November 23<sup>rd</sup> 2009].

'reflect[ed] the contrasts, diversity and rich cultural heritage of the region'.<sup>681</sup>

There were 30 members of the East Midlands Museum Service in Lincolnshire listed on the site, ranging from museums and heritage sites to historic houses and sacred spaces. For a more comprehensive list, the website directed the viewer to the Culture24 website. The Culture24 site provided a list of 67 'venues' in Lincolnshire including museums, historic houses, and archives. However, the listing was not entirely accurate as some sites were listed on the site's database under different categories. For example, The Collection was listed as a museum and an archaeological site and was, therefore, counted twice. For the purposes of this research, the information provided by the Regional Museum Development Officer was taken as most accurate and was used as a point of reference. A total of 35 appropriate sites in Lincolnshire were identified based on specific criteria that aimed to create a representative sample:<sup>682</sup>

- a) The geographical areas of the county as featured in other sections of the thesis should be covered to ensure the historical chapter and the museums chapter explore local particularities and regional patterns.
- b) Sites should focus on the time period examined in the thesis, to ensure primary data can be applied to secondary material.
- c) A range of site types should be represented, for example museums, libraries, heritage sites and historic houses with collections. There should also be a range of status represented in the sample: local authority, independent, volunteer-run. Sites will be put into categories based on

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<sup>681</sup> East Midlands Museum Service, *Home*, online. Available from: <http://www.emms.org.uk/> [Accessed 5<sup>th</sup> April 2010].

<sup>682</sup> Two sites were actually just outside the county boundary, but have collecting policies that include areas of Lincolnshire.

their own definitions of their type of site, as determined by marketing material available.

- d) A range of collection types should also be represented, including archives, photographic collections, working collections, and buildings.

This rationale is particularly important as agricultural history can exist in terms of material culture in all of these collection types.

Curators or managers at these sites were sent a short survey based on themes identified as important from primary and secondary sources (see appendix 5 list of museums surveyed and appendix 6 blank survey). The survey was investigative, or explorative,<sup>683</sup> and rather than seeking to answer any question in depth it was designed to provide a broad overview of which themes discussed in the thesis were represented in the county's museums. This survey was used to provide broad quantitative baseline information from which a more detailed survey could then be derived. There are inherent issues with this type of approach, as 'all research employing questionnaires is intrusive and competes for the time and attention of study participants, who likely have little incentive to answer questions',<sup>684</sup> a statement proved true by the lack of response in the case of some museums, which impacted on the results gathered. However, it was decided nevertheless that this method was justifiable as it meant that the museums could answer without pressure from the investigator, therefore minimising external influence on the responses given.<sup>685</sup> It is possible that some of the cases of non-response were due to lack of

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<sup>683</sup> McCormack, B and Hill, E., *Conducting a Survey: The SPSS Workbook* (London: International Thomson Business Press, 1997).

<sup>684</sup> Peterson, R.A., *Constructing Effective Questionnaires* (London: Sage Publications, 2000), p 3.

<sup>685</sup> Diamond, J., *Practical Evaluation Guide Tools for Museums and Other Informal Learning Educational Settings* (Lanham: Altamira Press, 1999).

knowledge regarding the collections. The sample size did provide enough information to make initial quantitative statements, as patterns were identified in the results. It was particularly important in this case for a questionnaire to be sent out as the investigator had detailed prior knowledge regarding several of the sites, and had known some staff for several years, which could have influenced initial findings. In some cases this proved to be useful, as people were very candid in their responses as they felt there was an existing understanding of the issues they faced.

The thesis attempts to provide explanations for the ways in which Lincolnshire's agricultural history is represented in the county's museums. These explanations centre on the idea that in many museums today staff are proficient managers, but face issues relating to donation and collecting inherited from the collecting of the 1960s and 1970s, know little about the history of the geographic area within which they are based, the subject area that they curate, or the collections they are custodians of, and are working in a sector heavily influenced by external political factors.<sup>686</sup> It was therefore imperative that subjects engaged in self-assessment to test this hypothesis. This is drawn out in detail in the interviews with museum staff.

### **The Interviews with Museum Professionals**

The questionnaire also asked respondents if they would be willing to take part in interviews. This decision may receive criticism as museums self-selected, but it was a method of gaining 'explicit consent'<sup>687</sup> from participants, which impacted

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<sup>687</sup> Peterson, R.A., *Constructing Effective Questionnaires* (London: Sage Publications, 2000), p. 3.

positively on the levels of openness in the interviews, as demonstrated in chapter 6. The participants that agreed to an interview were in fact some of the most appropriate among the sample, as they hold major collections relating to agricultural practice and rural life and met the specification set out for the original survey. Staff and volunteers at The Museum of Lincolnshire Life, Normanby Hall, Church Farm Museum, Alford Manor House and Hackett Barn, and Spalding Gentlemen's Society were interviewed using the same methodology used for the oral history interviews. This method worked well, as it allowed for discussion between the interviewer and participants and allowed staff to be candid about the state of their museums and their feelings about them. The findings of these surveys are examined and evaluated in chapter 6 of the thesis (see appendix 7 museum interview questions).

Secondly, the lack of academic material written about the development of curating during the twentieth century proved challenging. There is limited research exploring curation the mid to late twentieth century in museums, with scholars tending to focus on the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For example, a recent special edition of the *Museum History Journal* exploring issues surrounding curatorship in museums focused on museums such as the British Museum and the Pitt Rivers Museum during the nineteenth century.<sup>688</sup>

Alberti has produced work dealing with the topic of curation during this time period, and whilst his discussions could be transferred to various fields, it might also be argued that his research is too specific to his particular subject and location to produce a wide-ranging discourse. For example, he specifically

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<sup>688</sup> Hill, K., (Guest ed) *Museum History Journal*, Vol 4, No 2, July 2011.

examined natural history within the museum context in “Constructing Nature Behind Glass”, and his latest work is essentially a history of the Manchester Museum.<sup>689</sup> Kenyon, however, completed work that may provide a basis for comparison: a survey into the collecting habits of museums in Yorkshire and Humberside during the 1990s, in which he argued that the ‘conclusion could be applied to many museums in the UK’.<sup>690</sup> Kenyon started his survey by stating that whilst

museum collections are built up with the aim of producing a ‘comprehensive’ or ‘representative’ three dimensional record of the area they serve[,]<sup>691</sup>

they do not always meet this intention successfully for a variety of reasons. He attributed the issues impacting on collecting to a lack of policy, poor documentation, a lack of selectivity, passive collecting, and the availability of material, and argued that this had resulted in omissions and duplications in the collections he surveyed.<sup>692</sup> Kenyon’s work was completed nearly twenty years ago in 1995, but some of the issues he identified were evident in the data collected for this project, thus making his project comparable. The areas of similarity were poor documentation, a lack of selectivity, passive collecting and to some extent the availability of material. However there was little evidence of a lack of policy in the museums surveyed both initially and further, with the exception of the Spalding Gentlemen’s Society. Furthermore, there has been a

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<sup>689</sup> Alberti, S., “Constructing Nature Behind Glass” *Museum and Society*, Vol 6, No 2, July 2008, pp 73 – 97.

<sup>690</sup> Keynon, J., “Collecting in the Twenty First Century”, *Collections Management*, Fahy, A. (ed) (London: Routledge, 1995), pp 119 – 122, p 122.

<sup>691</sup> *Ibid.* p 119.

<sup>692</sup> Keynon, J., “Collecting in the Twenty First Century” “in *Collections Management*, Fahy, A. (ed)(London: Routledge, 1995), pp 119 – 122.



shift in museum practice since Kenyon's survey, resulting in the exploration of the focus on audiences in this survey.

Kenyon's data came from surveying the collections themselves, something that was not possible within the confines of this particular project (although a further post-doctoral research project might have the capacity to do this, to further support or challenge the conclusions in this thesis). The approach of surveying collections and creating a narrative from these data sets is a well-established practice, used extensively by academics other than Kenyon. For example Pearce has used this type of data to examine archaeological collections to consider their meaning in terms of social organisation and culture, because she believes that objects have the ability to provide the researcher with unique information about the nature of people within past societies: their beliefs and ideas, cultural activities, and social constructs.<sup>693</sup>

### **The Survey**

All in all, surveys were sent out to 32 museums across the county (see appendix 5 list of museums surveyed and appendix 6 blank survey).<sup>694</sup> 17 responses were returned from the following sites:

- Alford Manor House and Hackett Barn
- Burghley House and Estates
- Burgh Le Marsh Mill and Museum

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<sup>141</sup> Pearce, S.M., "Thinking about Things", *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, Pearce, S.M. (ed) (London: Routledge, 1994) pp 125-132.

<sup>694</sup> North Lincolnshire Museum Service were actually sent three surveys to three individual sites, but sent one response representing the service as a whole. Therefore they are treated as one survey.

- Church Farm Museum
- Fenscape Discovery Centre
- Gainsborough Heritage Centre
- Grantham Museum
- Grimsby Library Local History Collection
- The Lincolnshire Archives
- Louth Museum
- The Museum of Lincolnshire Life
- North East Lincolnshire Archives
- North Lincolnshire Museums Service (including Normanby Hall)
- Pinchbeck Drainage Engine
- Spalding Bulb and Horticultural Museum
- Spalding Gentlemen's Society Museum
- Wisbech and Fenland Museum

This provided a 53% response rate from which to work, and considering that there are around 60 museums in the county, it is possible to say that 28% of Lincolnshire's museums are represented by this survey. This percentage provided a good sample on which to comment, and it may be viewed as representative of the county. However, a number of these responses might be termed negative as they returned blank forms, stating that they did not hold collections, or have displays, relating to agriculture or rural life. In the case of Burghley this is in line with the collections that the house contains, which include '17th century Italian masterpieces, an exceptional collection of Oriental

and European ceramics, fine furniture, textiles and works of art'.<sup>695</sup> However, the House and Estate was approached because of the historic agricultural buildings on the estate. It might be argued then that the site does represent the agricultural and rural past, but not consciously, and certainly not as part of its status as a visitor attraction which is centred on the stately home. Burgh Le Marsh Windmill and Local History Museum did not return a completed questionnaire, but instead sent a DVD and leaflet about the site demonstrating links with the agricultural history of the area; unfortunately this information did not present data that could be processed. Gainsborough and District Heritage Organisation returned a blank questionnaire with a comment written on the bottom that stated 'our aim is the preservation of Gainsborough and district['s] industrial and cultural past. However, we do not hold much agricultural themed material'. Further, a comment across the form stated: 'closed 2004, but hope to re-open shortly in recently acquired premises'.<sup>696</sup> These comments are a likely indication that the accession registers and collections were in storage at the time that the survey was conducted, and that the only detail available to the volunteer completing the form was that only a small amount of agriculture-related material existed in the collections. Staff from Louth Museum and Pinchbeck Drainage Engine also wrote to confirm that they had nothing of relevance in their collections or displays. Nonetheless, it is not felt that the negative, or incomplete, responses from these organisations had a detrimental effect on the results of the data collected overall.

The following organisations did not respond to the questionnaire at all:

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<sup>695</sup> Burghley House, *Collections*, online. Available from: <http://www.burghley.co.uk/html/collections.html>. [Accessed 30<sup>th</sup> August 2010].

<sup>696</sup> MS 6.

- Ayscoughfee Hall Museum Spalding
- Boston Guildhall Museum
- Doddington Hall near Lincoln
- Ellis Mill in Lincoln
- Elsham Hall near Brigg
- Grimsthorpe Castle near Bourne
- Heckington Mill
- Kirton in Lindsey Mill
- Lincoln Central Library
- Maud Foster Mill
- Newark Town Museum
- Sibsey Trader Mill
- Sleaford Virtual Museum
- Stamford Museum
- Wainfleet Museum

On reflection, it is felt that it was perhaps not appropriate to send questionnaires to the mills in Lincolnshire, as although they are inextricably linked to agriculture, the majority function simply as mills (working pieces of industrial archaeology), and tend not have collections or display space. Further investigation also revealed that the survey was not relevant to Doddington Hall, Lincoln Central Library Local Studies Collection, or Newark Town Hall Museum (despite it having a collections policy that covers a small part of Lincolnshire).

In the case of some sites that did not respond, an answer might have altered the results of the data collected. The fact they did not respond is felt to be of

interest in itself, as it suggests that there were factors that prevented curators and managers from being able to respond to the survey. It might be assumed that if they received the questionnaire and were aware of the relevance of their site to the study, they simply did not have time to answer and return it. This is plausible, as the survey was sent out at a time '[w]hen many museums... [were] feeling under pressure to increase visitor numbers and performance while being faced with budget cuts and, at times, very low morale.'<sup>697</sup> This difficult situation was reflected in a letter to the *Museums Journal* by the Curator of Ayscoughfee Hall Museum in April 2010, in which he stated that 'the district council museum in which I work will soon be subject to huge cuts that will result in job losses of curatorial staff'.<sup>698</sup> It might be assumed therefore that the decision to cut funds had been under review for some time, and may have hindered participation in this particular project.

Staff at Elsham Hall near Brigg did not respond to the survey, although there was a page showing a farming museum on the attraction's website in 2008 (removed by 2010). However in 2013 they still are still advertising a small farming museum under the heading 'working blacksmith' on a page promoting facilities within the Georgian Courtyard.<sup>699</sup> It would appear that the farming museum is not considered a major attraction by the owners, who present the

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<sup>697</sup> Thompson, M., "Strike Action", *Volunteering Magazine* 110, Sept 2005, online. Available from: <http://www.volunteering.org.uk/resources/goodpracticebank/Core+Themes/creatingvolunteerroles/strikeaction>. [Accessed 12<sup>th</sup> September 2010] For a global perspective. Seligson, J., Day in the Life: Assistant Director and Curator, online. Available from: <http://www.aam-us.org/pubs/webexclusive/potvin.cfm>. [Accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2010]. Alberta Museums Association, *Working in Alberta's Museums: Challenges of the Museum Sector*, online. Available from: <http://www.museums.ab.ca/workingmuseums.aspx>. [Accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2010].

<sup>698</sup> Davies, R. "A Parallel Universe" *The Museums Journal*, Month unknown, 2010, p 5.

<sup>699</sup> Elsham Hall Gardens and Country Park, *The Georgian Courtyard*, online. Available from: <http://www.elshamhall.co.uk/facilities.html>. [Accessed 14<sup>th</sup> November 2010]. Checked 27<sup>th</sup> January 2013.

house to potential visitors on the strength of its gardens (much like Burghley being presented on the strength of the house and collections). Grimsthorpe Castle, near Bourne in the south of the county, is a large stately home at the centre of gardens and a working farming estate.<sup>700</sup> They also have a small farming exhibition on site and were therefore asked to participate in the survey. There is one manager for the site who has a range of tasks which includes managing the heritage business as well as the estate itself. Time constraints may have also impacted on the manager's ability to respond to the survey.

The responses received provided good geographical coverage, and therefore also encompassed areas of local distinctiveness across the historical county which now comprises the Local Authority areas of Lincolnshire, North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire. The Museum of Lincolnshire Life and the Lincolnshire Archives both have historical county-wide collection policies; the Museum of Lincolnshire Life states clearly on its website that its 'rich and varied social history collection reflects and celebrates the culture of Lincolnshire and its people from 1750 to the present day',<sup>701</sup> and the 2007 Lincolnshire Heritage Services Collections Development Strategy confirms that the Archives collect items

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<sup>700</sup> Grimsthorpe Castle Lincolnshire, *The Castle, Park and Gardens*, online. Available from: <http://www.grimsthorpe.co.uk/index.php?ID=3>. [Accessed 14<sup>th</sup> November 2010].

<sup>701</sup> Lincolnshire County Council, *Welcome to the Museum of Lincolnshire Life*, online. Available from: <http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/section.asp?sectiontype=listmixed&catid=7838>. [Accessed 30<sup>th</sup> August 2010].

from the historical county of Lincolnshire, and those within North and North East Lincolnshire that pertain to existing collections at Lincolnshire Archives.<sup>702</sup>

The Local History Collection held at Grimsby library also represents the 'Historic County of Lincolnshire from the Humber to the Wash prior to 1974, and the Counties of Humberside and Lincolnshire and their component districts 1974 – 1996'.<sup>703</sup> This dovetails neatly with the time period examined in the present thesis. However, since 1996 collecting has focused on the area within the boundaries of the North East Lincolnshire Unitary Authority.

Church Farm Museum also represents agriculture and rural life on a county-wide scale, although located on the remains of an east coast farm with the original farmhouse and animal sheds still *in situ*. The museum was opened in 1969

as a result of collaboration between East Lindsey District Council, who owned the land, and the donation of a substantial agricultural collection to the County Council by Mr. Bernard Best.<sup>704</sup>

Since its opening, several agricultural and rural buildings have been moved to Church Farm Museum, including a traditional mud and stud agricultural labourers' cottage from the Wolds village of Withern, a brick barn and waggon hovel from Havenhouse just south of Skegness, and a weatherboarded and pan

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<sup>702</sup> Lincolnshire County Council, *Collections Development Strategy Position Statement* (Lincoln: Lincolnshire Heritage Services, 2007), p 18.

<sup>703</sup> North East Lincolnshire Council, *Local History Library*, online. Available from: <http://www.nelincs.gov.uk/art-culture-and-leisure/libraries/local-history-library/>. [Accessed 30<sup>th</sup> August 2010].

<sup>704</sup> Lincolnshire County Council, *Collections Development Strategy Position Statement*, (Lincoln: Lincolnshire Heritage Services 2007), p 18.

tilled barn from Boothby near Lincoln.<sup>705</sup> The collections also represent the whole of the county, as the museum was primarily operated as a satellite site of the Museum of Lincolnshire Life until 1998, and

has never actively collected in its own right, apart from items which have a strong association with the Skegness area and fell within the agricultural or social history theme.<sup>706</sup>

In addition to its representation at the Museum of Lincolnshire Life and the Lincolnshire Archives, North Lincolnshire is represented by Normanby Hall and Country Park which aims to 'look at the story of agriculture and rural life in and around Scunthorpe'.<sup>707</sup> North and North East Lincolnshire are also represented by the North East Lincolnshire Archives, which 'collects, preserves and opens to the public historic documents from North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire'.<sup>708</sup>

The distinctive area of the Lincolnshire Wolds is represented through the participation of Alford Manor House and Hackett Barn, which have come to stand for the history of this area

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<sup>705</sup> Ibid.

<sup>706</sup> Ibid.

<sup>707</sup> Underwood, S., *Normanby Park Farming Museum Design Brief* (Unpublished manuscript, 1988), p 1.

<sup>708</sup> North East Lincolnshire Council, *Records and Archives*, online. Available from: <http://www.nelincs.gov.uk/art-culture-and-leisure/records-and-archives/>. [Accessed 30<sup>th</sup> August 2010]



because local people just kept donating their items to the local museum, which was us. I don't think it was a strategy or carefully thought out plan; it was just somewhere people could bring stuff and leave it.<sup>709</sup>

This is of particular importance as the Wolds hold national significance as a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and one of the outcomes of the Landscape Character Assessment of Lincolnshire was the recognition that the Wolds feature characteristics of historical importance linked to intense arable farming practice.<sup>710</sup>

Social history museums formed the bulk of the museums studied in depth for this piece of research which reflects their prominence and popularity in the museum and heritage sector, and of three museums that took part in the interviews two were under the control of local authorities. Staff and volunteers from The Museum of Lincolnshire Life, Normanby Hall and Country Park Farm Museum, and Alford Manor House and Hackett Barn, all took part in the interviews conducted for this thesis, providing a vivid, detailed, picture of both social history and local authority museums in the twenty first century.

The Museum of Lincolnshire Life and Alford Manor House are the oldest of the three museums and the Museum of Lincolnshire Life 'originally opened to the public in 1969 as an independent museum run by the Lincolnshire

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<sup>709</sup> MI1 AMHandHB.

<sup>710</sup> Natural England, *Lincolnshire Wolds Character Area 43* 1993, online. Available from: [http://www.naturalengland.org/ourwork/landscape/englands/character/areas/lincolnshire\\_wolds.aspx](http://www.naturalengland.org/ourwork/landscape/englands/character/areas/lincolnshire_wolds.aspx). [Accessed 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2010]. Lincolnshire Wolds AONB, *Landscape Character Areas* 2010, online. Available from: <http://www.lincswolds.org.uk/landscapecharacter.htm>. [Accessed 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2010].

Association'.<sup>711</sup> Whilst it began life as an independent museum by '1974 the county council took the whole thing over as a museum of social history for Lincolnshire'.<sup>712</sup> From its inception the museum represented the county through 'agricultural, industrial, social history, costume and regimental' collections.<sup>713</sup> However, its origins partly lay in the folklife movement as during the 1960s the 'Lincolnshire Local History Society, which had meanwhile been gathering material for a folk museum, saw an opportunity'<sup>714</sup> and the Lincolnshire Association had been assembling an agricultural collection which was later to become the core of the museum's extensive agricultural collection which 'has regional, if not national significance'.<sup>715</sup> This significance is highlighted in the description of key pieces in the collection in their performance and provision profile which states:

The Museum collections include Lincolnshire farm wagons and machinery, a unique World War I tank, steam and oil engines, locomotives and road rollers. There are also Victorian period room settings and shops, an interactive Royal Lincolnshire Regimental gallery as well as a rare Doctors Coupe Bullnose Morris.<sup>716</sup>

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<sup>711</sup> Lincolnshire County Council, *Collections Development Strategy: Museums, Archives and Local Studies, 2011 – 2015*, April 2011, p 24.

<sup>712</sup> Cavendish, R. "Museum of Lincolnshire Life", *History Today*, Volume 46, No 12, December 1996.

<sup>713</sup> Lincolnshire County Council, *Collections Development Strategy: Museums, Archives and Local Studies, 2011 – 2015*, April 2011, p 24.

<sup>714</sup> Cavendish, R. "Museum of Lincolnshire Life", *History Today*, Volume 46, Issue 12.

<sup>715</sup> Lincolnshire County Council, *Collections Development Strategy: Museums, Archives and Local Studies, 2011 – 2015*, April 2011, p 25.

<sup>716</sup> The Museum of Lincolnshire Life, *Profile – Provision and Performance 2009/10*, online. Available from: <http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/section.asp?sectiontype=listmixed&catid=7838>. [Accessed 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2009].

The mention of the farm wagons (usually spelt waggon in relation to Lincolnshire) and agricultural machinery alongside internationally important pieces such as the World War One tank could be understood as an indication of the importance of the collections being studied in this thesis. However, this description, and a visit to the site, gives the impression of the collections almost being random in nature, divided between the domestic and the industrial.

Alford Manor House was purchased by Dorothy Higgins, a descendent of an earlier occupant, local doctor and member of Alford Town Council, in 1958. In 1967 she gifted the house to the town, which led to the formation of Alford Civic Trust to manage the property. Initially areas of the house were rented out to provide the Civic Trust with an income to maintain the house and Alford Folk Museum was established.<sup>717</sup> Alford Civic Society's culture of collecting cannot be ascertained from the documentation available, however the fact that a folklife museum was set up does imply that they were influenced by the folklife movement and its ethos of preservation.

However, following a major Heritage Lottery Fund financed refurbishment between 2003 and 2006, the folk life collections were put into storage 'so that the house itself, which is the most important and notable asset, can become the focal point of public attention',<sup>718</sup> thus removing the focus on folk life and tradition from the main building. However Hackett Barn Museum still retains this approach with agricultural history at its centre, displaying objects relating to

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<sup>717</sup> Alford Manor House, *History*, online. Available from: <http://www.alfordmanorhouse.co.uk/History.html>. [Accessed 20<sup>th</sup> July 2011].

<sup>718</sup> *Ibid.*

agriculture, industry, crafts, retail, and domestic life.<sup>719</sup> Much like the Museum of Lincolnshire Life its collections and displays did seem random in nature.

Normanby Park Farming Museum was opened in 1988 by Scunthorpe Borough Museum and Art Gallery. In the design brief written by Susan Underwood the aims and scope of the museum were clearly laid out 'The museum will look at the story of agriculture and rural life in and around Scunthorpe, and the way in which the community was affected by the use of land.'<sup>720</sup> Whilst the Museum of Lincolnshire Life and Alford Manor House are based in pre-existing buildings, a Victorian barracks and a manor house, 'a modern timbered construction, to reflect a type of building which could be found on a farm'<sup>721</sup> was purpose built to house existing collections. In fact the whole museum was planned and designed around pre-existing collections collected by North Lincolnshire Museum Service during the twentieth century to represent the agricultural heritage of the area. This is common museum practice, but means that the displays will reflect material already collected rather than a broad history decided by consultation. Once again a large number of topics are covered, but agriculture is at the core and the museum (see plate 2, p 221) aims to represent 'a fascinating microcosm of North Lincolnshire's rural past'<sup>722</sup> that includes the domestic and working aspects of rural life.

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<sup>719</sup> Alford Manor House, *Hackett Barn*, online. Available from:

<http://www.alfordmanorhouse.co.uk/HackettBarn/index.html>. [Accessed 20<sup>th</sup> July 2011].

<sup>720</sup> Underwood, S., *Normanby Park Farming Museum Design Brief* (Unpublished manuscript, 1988), p 1.

<sup>721</sup> Ibid.

<sup>722</sup> North Lincolnshire Council. *Farming Museum at Normanby Hall and Country Park*, online. Available from:

<http://www.northlincs.gov.uk/NorthLincs/Leisure/museums/normanbyhall/FarmingMuseum.htm>. [Accessed 4<sup>th</sup> August 2011].

Plate 2. Displays at Normanby Hall Farming Museum<sup>723</sup>

The southern fenland area of the county is well represented, in spite of the aforementioned absence of data due to non-response from Ayscoughfee Hall Museum, Boston Guildhall Museum and Grimsthorpe Castle. The Spalding Bulb Museum represents the industry the south of the county is most famous for, the daffodil and tulip bulb industries. Another site near Spalding, Fenscape, was opened in 2004, but closed in 2011. It represented the fen areas of south Lincolnshire. In 2009 the heritage site's website described it thus:

[It] uses state of the art interactive technology to bring to life the myths and legends, from the marshlands and the Fen Tigers through drainage, opium and tulip fields to modern day horticulture.<sup>724</sup>

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<sup>723</sup> Author's Own, Date Unknown.

<sup>724</sup> Springfields Gardens, *Our Features: Fenscape*, online. Available from: <http://www.springfieldsgardens.co.uk/feature.asp?featureid=15>. [Accessed 14<sup>th</sup> November 2010].

It was designed to act as a tourism hub for the wider fens area, and therefore covered a range of subjects, including agriculture and horticulture in brief. The manager was willing to take part in an interview, but felt that there was not enough material available at the time to warrant further research as the site did not have a core collection.

Wisbech and Fenland Museum (which much like Newark has a collecting policy that covers a small area of Lincolnshire) and the Museum of the Spalding Gentlemen's Society were both important inclusions in the study, not only because of their collections, but also because they represent the earliest form of museum: the collection of an antiquarian who purposefully gathered, displayed and studied a selection of objects as a way of making sense of the eighteenth century world. These institutions reflected new, enlightened knowledge as understood through the burgeoning disciplines of modern science and philosophy, seeking to fill the vast gaps in the human understanding of the natural world that still existed at this time.<sup>725</sup> Wisbech and Fenland Museum purports to be 'one of the oldest museums in the United Kingdom', based on collections started by Wisbech Literary Society in 1781 and Wisbech Museum Society in 1835, and opening to the public in 1847.<sup>726</sup> Whilst Spalding Gentlemen's Society claims that their museum 'is, with the exception of the Ashmolean, the oldest in the Kingdom'.<sup>727</sup> These museums are in essence the product of an earlier time period than the others in the study, and therefore face different challenges to those formed as part of the folk life movement. Whilst

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<sup>725</sup> Spalding, J., *The Poetic Museum: Reviving Historic Collections* (Prestel: London, 2002). Vergo, P., (ed) "Introduction", *The New Museology* (London: Reaktion, 1989), pp 1 - 5.

<sup>726</sup> Wisbech and Fenland Museum, *Homepage*, online. Available from: <http://www.wisbechmuseum.org.uk/index.htm>. [Accessed 14<sup>th</sup> November 2010].

<sup>727</sup> Spalding Gentlemen's Society, *Collections*, online. Available from: <http://www.spalding-gentlemens-society.org/collections.html>. [Accessed 14<sup>th</sup> November 2010].

they are both the product of antiquarianism, they are very different in their management. Wisbech employs professional staff and has an acquisitions and disposals policy which 'complies with the Registration Scheme for Museums & Galleries in the United Kingdom'.<sup>728</sup> Spalding Gentlemen's Society, by contrast, has not engaged with modern museum practice and has continued in the antiquarian vein:

Historically the society was set up in 1722 and the idea was the gentlemen got together for discussion on a wide range of topics and then it became a custom that if you wanted to join you donated something. So the collection built up over all those years from people donating, so we've always relied on donations.<sup>729</sup>

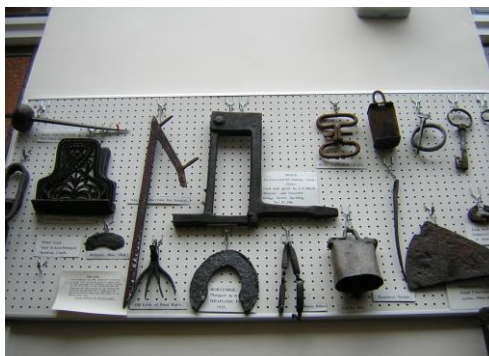
Subsequently, there is little focus in regard to management and collecting. Both of these museums have agricultural collections relating to the south of the county of Lincolnshire, with Wisbech holding 'a collection of Fenland drainage and agricultural tools',<sup>730</sup> and Spalding Gentlemen's Society having a small display area dedicated to agriculture (see plate 3, p 224).

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<sup>728</sup> Please note that the former Registration Scheme is the Accreditation Scheme. Wisbech and Fenland Museum, *Acquisition and Disposal Policy*, online. Available from: <http://www.wisbechmuseum.org.uk/CollectionDownloads/WFM%20Acquisition%20and%20Disposal%20policy.doc>. [Accessed 14 November 2010].

<sup>729</sup> MI4 SGS. See appendix 8 museum response codes.

<sup>730</sup> Wisbech and Fenland Museum, *Acquisition and Disposal Policy*, online. Available from: <http://www.wisbechmuseum.org.uk/CollectionDownloads/WFM%20Acquisition%20and%20Disposal%20policy.doc>. [Accessed 14<sup>th</sup> November 2010].

Plate 3. Agricultural displays at Spalding Gentlemen's Society Museum<sup>731</sup>

In terms of the type of site that is represented in the sample, museums are in the majority representing 58% of the sample, with archives, windmills, historic houses, visitor attractions, and heritage centres comprising the remaining 42% of the sample (see fig 9, p 225). If this is broken down further, it is possible to see that responses from the windmills, historic houses, visitor attractions and heritage centres are negligible (as most failed to respond), and responses from archives are limited. In effect, it might be argued that this survey equates, in the main, to a survey of museums. These results therefore mean that it is only possible to comment on museums, due to the lack of data collected for other site types. It was with this in mind that the sites for interview were chosen from those that had indicated an interest in participating in the project further through an interview. These interviews took place in July 2008.

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<sup>731</sup> Author's Own, Date Unknown.



Fig 9. Table showing breakdown of responses into site types<sup>732</sup>

Site Type	Number of responses	Proportion of sample
Museum	10	58%
Archive	3	18%
Windmill	1	6%
Historic House	1	6%
Visitor Attraction	1	6%
Heritage Centre	1	6%

The museum professionals were surveyed and interviewed to ascertain how the agricultural past was represented in their museums in 2008, and what aspects of museum practice had influenced how they were able to present the past to visitors through their collections and interpretation. Chapter 6 contains the findings of the questionnaire and interviews and analyses the concrete processes leading to museum representation. It is presented as a case study that could be developed in to a nation-wide discussion on how the past is represented in museums in the twenty first century.

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<sup>732</sup> Data taken from investigative questionnaires.

## Introduction

Perhaps more by accident than by design, this current period in time is incredibly important in relation to museums, as in the second quarter of 2008 - the exact time these interviews were being carried out - Britain entered a period of recession which is still ongoing at the time of writing.<sup>733</sup> In the wider heritage sector, the government closed the Museums, Libraries and Archive Council (which has provided central funding and support for museums since 1997) in April 2012 as part of the rationalisation of cultural spending.<sup>734</sup> On a national level it has been reported that many of the national galleries and museums made free under New Labour may now have to start charging the public entrance fees once again in an attempt to prevent museum closures and job losses.<sup>735</sup> On a local level, local authority managed museums in Lincolnshire have undergone a period of difficulty, with staff at Ayscoughfee Hall Museum made redundant, and Lincolnshire County Council withdrawing funding from both Grantham and Stamford Museums as well as Church Farm Museum in October 2010.<sup>736</sup> Lincolnshire County Council also withdrew its funding of Fenscape in March 2011, this along with the fact that the company that managed the attraction announced that they were not going to renew their

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<sup>733</sup> Financial Advice, *When did the UK Recession Kick In?*, online. Available from: <http://www.financialadvice.co.uk/news/12/ukeconomy/9795/when-did-the-uk-recession-officially-start-to-kick-in.html>. [Accessed 12<sup>th</sup> August 2010].

<sup>734</sup> Sharma, S., *MLA Plan Smooth Transition*, 26<sup>th</sup> July 2010, online. Available from: [http://www.mla.gov.uk/news\\_and\\_views/press\\_releases/2010/mla\\_gov\\_announcement](http://www.mla.gov.uk/news_and_views/press_releases/2010/mla_gov_announcement). [Accessed 12<sup>th</sup> August 2010].

<sup>735</sup> Nikkah, R., "Recession May Force Museums and Galleries to Charge Visitors Entrance Fees", *The Telegraph*, 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2009.

<sup>736</sup> Steel, P., "Cuts Start to Take Effect at Local Authority Museums", *Museums Journal*, April 2011, p 5.

contract, which resulted in the closure of Fenscape at this time.<sup>737</sup> The recession has signalled the end of a boom period for museums, and as it continues will confront staff with a whole range of issues that will impact on the ways museums are managed both at present and in future. This research therefore provides a picture of museums at the end of a relatively stable era governed by the New Museology as defined by academics such as Vergo and, in particular, Ross.<sup>738</sup> It is acknowledged that the many ways in which the heritage sector is changing at present must remain outside the scope of this study.

This chapter will explore how the changes in agricultural practice explored in chapters 3 and 4 (the labour patterns of women and children and mechanisation), were represented in the county's museums at the time of the fieldwork by examining the historical narratives that appear in the museums studied. It will ascertain whether or not there is any correlation with the accepted written or the alternative oral historical narratives featured in these chapters, and why or why not there is a relationship between the historical and the museological narratives. The chapter will also examine the factors that influence the way in which the past is represented in the museums studied to demonstrate the most problematic factors; establishing whether it is nostalgia, or the nature of donation and collection, or the loss of specialist knowledge and external political influences that have the greater impact on historical narratives presented in museums. In order to achieve this, the key findings of the investigative survey and interviews with museum professionals are critically

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<sup>737</sup> Author Unknown. "The Cuts are Coming", *The Spalding Free Press*, 25<sup>th</sup> January 2011.

<sup>738</sup> Vergo, P., (ed) *The New Museology* (London: Reaktion Books, 1989). Ross, M., "Interpreting the New Museology", *Museum and Society*. Vol 2, No 2, July 2004, pp 84 – 103.

reviewed. Both quantitative and qualitative data collected are analysed, and the data sets are used to discuss the factors that shape the collections and ultimately determine the interpretative content of the museum, whether this is transmitted through exhibitions, events or education programmes.<sup>739</sup>

It is argued that the huge surge of public donation in the 1960s and 1970s, followed by Thatcherite and New Labour imperatives for museums to have high visitor figures and to engage disadvantaged groups, have impacted on the representation of the past in museums to a far greater extent than nostalgia. It is also demonstrated that museum professionals have used people's desire to experience a bygone age directly (which falls under the auspices of nostalgia)<sup>740</sup> as a tool for encouraging people to visit their museums, particularly in relation to events such as steam threshing at Church Farm Museum. This has been positive as it has facilitated museum engagement by thousands of people in the county and introduced them to historical narratives focussing on agriculture.

The investigative survey covered nineteen themes related to changes in agricultural practice (see fig.10, p 230). These themes were determined by the initial extensive secondary and primary research undertaken for this project. The most highly represented of the historical themes identified through this research were:

- Traditional skills and knowledge (as a part of rural culture, and its loss)

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<sup>739</sup> See appendix 8 museum response codes to ascertain which museum references refer to in this chapter.

<sup>740</sup> See chapter 1.

- Mechanisation (including the change from horse power to tractors, the introduction of new machinery and the effects of mechanisation on labour)
- Community celebrations and traditions linked to farming
- Social structures on the farm and in rural communities
- Female, child and gang labour

It was immediately recognised that it would be unwise to attempt to explore all nineteen themes at length within the constraints of an 80,000 word thesis.<sup>741</sup>

Therefore, themes had to go through a selective process, through further research to determine which best represented the complexities of continuity and change in agricultural practice in Lincolnshire. After further secondary research into the most prominent subjects represented in the survey it was decided that patterns in female and child labour and mechanisation should be the focus of the investigation and developed into detailed case studies which comprise chapters three and four of the thesis.

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<sup>741</sup> Brabazon, T., "How Not to Write a PhD Thesis", *Times Higher Education*, 28<sup>th</sup> January 2010. Rüger, S., *How to Write a Good PhD Thesis and Survive the Viva*, 2011, online. Available from: <http://people.kmi.open.ac.uk/stefan/thesis-writing.pdf>. [Accessed July 20<sup>th</sup> 2012].

Fig 10. Table showing responses to questionnaire<sup>742</sup>

Theme	Number of sites representing themes through different museum activities					
	Collections	Education	Events	Displays	On line	Other
1. Traditional Skills and Knowledge	8	2	1	7	0	loan box 1
2. Change from Horse Power to Tractors	6	0	1	5	0	0
3. Effects of Mechanisation on labour	5	1	1	3	0	loan box 1
4. Social Structures on the Farm and in Rural Communities	5	1	0	4	0	oral history 1
5. Introduction of New Machinery	6	0	1	3	0	0
6. Community Celebrations and Traditions Linked to Farming	5	0	1	3	0	0
7. Female Labour on the Farm	4	0	1	2	0	oral history 1
8. Child Labour on the Farm	4	1	0	1	0	0
9. Gang Labour on the Farm <sup>743</sup>	4	0	0	1	0	0
10. The importance of the Market Town	4	0	1	2	0	0
11. Changes in Communities	4	1	0	1	0	0
12. Continued Development of Machinery	4	0	1	1	0	0
13. Effect of Processing Industries on Farming	3	1	0	2	0	0
14. Lincolnshire Dialects	3	0	0	0	0	quiz 1  Museum library 1
15. Migrant Labour on the Farm	3	0	0	0	0	0
16. The Use of Pesticides and artificial fertilisers on the land	1	0	0	1	0	0
17. The Effect of Farming on the Environment	1	0	0	0	0	0
18. The Organic Movement	1	0	0	0	0	0
19. Reuse of Farm Buildings for Housing	1	0	0	0	0	0

<sup>742</sup> Based on data collected from investigative surveys.

<sup>743</sup> Note that if all labour types were combined, they would be at the top of the table on a par with traditional skills and knowledge.

Museum curators or managers were asked to identify which themes were represented in the core museum activities of collection, interpretation, and education. These core activities were determined from the Museum Association and the International Council of Museums' (ICOM) definitions for what constitutes a museum. Whilst the language used in the two definitions is different, both agree that museums collect and care for items that represent the past and that they make these items accessible to the public for leisure and educational purposes through a range of engaging activities.<sup>744</sup>

### **Representation in Collections**

The data displayed in fig. 10 (p 230) demonstrates that every theme identified in the secondary and primary historical research is represented most strongly in the collections held by the sites which responded, which points towards the fact that museums only display or utilise a fraction of their collections for educational purposes or at special events. The data is ordered by the occurrences of representation in the museums' collections, as museological research by Keene and Barker suggests that the size of collections generally outweighs items on display or utilised for education and events.<sup>745</sup> There are conflicting contemporary academic estimations as to what percentage of their holdings museums display, which is due to the individual and disparate nature of museums and their collections, along with the fact that many museums do not

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<sup>744</sup> ICOM, *Museums Definition*, online. Available from: <http://icom.museum/the-vision/museum-definition/>. [Accessed 31<sup>st</sup> December 2012]. Museum Association, *Frequently Asked Questions: What is a Museum?*, online. Available from: <http://www.museumassociation.org/about/frequently-asked-questions>. [Accessed 31<sup>st</sup> December 2012].

<sup>745</sup> Keene, S., *Fragments of the World, Uses of Museum Collections* (Oxford: Elsevier, Butterworth – Heinemann, 2005). Barker, A.W., "Archaeological Ethics: Museums and Collections", *Ethical issues in Archaeology*, Zimmerman, L.J., Vitelli, K.D., Hollowell – Zimmer, J.H. (eds) (Oxford: Altamira Press, 2003), pp 71 – 84.

know 'what they hold in their collections'.<sup>746</sup> Ten years ago in 2003 the National Museum Directors' Conference publication "Too Much Stuff? Disposal from Museums" acknowledged that there was disparity between the size of collections and the numbers of objects held in national museums in the UK by stating 'it is widely observed that many objects in national collections are not on display'.<sup>747</sup> Even considering the rise of open storage in Europe and North America from the 1990s onwards, Redman estimated in 2006 that 'most major museums display less than ten percent of their collections, while smaller museums may display a larger percentage'.<sup>748</sup> And in 2008 Wylie and Brophy explored this issue focusing on North America, arguing that whilst art museums might display 3% to 4% of their collections, natural history museums might only display 1%.<sup>749</sup>

Collections are a dominant factor in terms of how the past is represented, as donating and collecting have always been dynamic activities compared to interpretation through exhibition. Whilst donation and collection are ongoing processes interpretation through exhibition can be staid as exhibitions are often

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<sup>746</sup> Merriman, N., *Museum Collections and Sustainability*, 2004, online. Available from: [http://www.cloreleadership.org/cms/user\\_files/fellow\\_fellowship\\_research\\_projects\\_download\\_report/54/Clore%20research%20final%20version.doc](http://www.cloreleadership.org/cms/user_files/fellow_fellowship_research_projects_download_report/54/Clore%20research%20final%20version.doc). [Accessed 28<sup>th</sup> December 2012].

<sup>747</sup> National Museums Directors' Conference, *Too Much Stuff? Disposal from Museums*, 2003, p 5. online.

<sup>748</sup> Redman, S.J., *Visible Storage: Museums Displaying more of their Collections*, online, 2006. Available from: <http://museumhistorystudies.suite101.com/article.cfm/visiblestorage>. [Accessed 17<sup>th</sup> January 2009].

<sup>749</sup> Wylie, E. and Brophy, S., *Saving Collections and the Planet*, online, 2008. Available from: <http://www.aam-us.org/pubs/mn/savingcollections.cfm>. [Accessed 17<sup>th</sup> January 2009].

Fabrikant, G., "The Good Stuff in the Back Room", *New York Times*, 2009. online. Available from: [http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/19/arts/artsspecial/19TROVE.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/19/arts/artsspecial/19TROVE.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0). [Accessed 29<sup>th</sup> December 2012] quotes a museum professional from Boston as saying 2 to 4 percent of collections are on display.



expected to have a planned lifespan of ‘ten or fifteen years’,<sup>750</sup> although there are examples where exhibitions have remained in place for thirty five years.<sup>751</sup>

This research suggests that the dynamic relationship between museum and donor is not equally balanced in those museums which took part in the museum interviews, with donors appearing to be the proactive partner in the relationship, leading (perhaps surprisingly) to their having more control over what is in the collections than the museum curators and managers.<sup>752</sup> This should not be viewed as being detrimental to the museum in any way, especially as it is agreed that modern museums exist to care for objects on behalf of society, and to engage the public with history through these objects.<sup>753</sup> This could also represent a shift to museums being more democratic in their approach to collecting, something that has recently been trialled through innovative projects by Manchester Museum and The British Museum.<sup>754</sup> This involvement could

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<sup>750</sup> Porter, G., “Seeing Through Solidity: A Feminist Perspective on Museums”, *Museum Studies An Anthology of Contexts*, Messias Carbonell, B. (ed) (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), pp104 – 116, p 112.

<sup>751</sup> Kavanja Mirara, F., *Leading Creativity: Creating and Sustaining Visits to Museums in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, online. Available from: <http://www.intercom.museum/documents/FrederickKaranja.pdf>. [Accessed 30<sup>th</sup> January 2011].

<sup>752</sup> See chapter 5. Society of Antiquaries of London, *The Museum*, online. Available from: <http://www.sal.org.uk/history/>. [Accessed 26<sup>th</sup> February 2011]. Spalding Gentlemen’s Society, *Collections*, online. Available from: <http://www.spalding-gentlemens-society.org/collections.html>. [Accessed 26<sup>th</sup> February 2011]. Ikono, *Museums in the Age of the Mega – Collector: Can Public Institutions Compete?*. Johnson, P. and Thomas, B., “Museums: An Economic Perspective”, *Museum Economics and the Community*, Pearce, S. (ed) (London: Athelone Press, 2001), pp 5 – 40.

<sup>753</sup> Museums Association, *Frequently Asked Questions*, online. Available from: <http://www.museumsassociation.org/about/frequently-asked-questions>. [Accessed 12<sup>th</sup> June 2012]. International Committee of Museums, *Museums Definition*, online. Available from: <http://icom.museum/the-vision/museum-definition/>. [Accessed 31<sup>st</sup> December 2012].

<sup>754</sup> BBC, *A History of the World; About the Project*, online. Available from: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ahistoryoftheworld/about/> [Accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2012]. University of Manchester, *The Manchester Museum, Manchester Hermit*, Press Release 27<sup>th</sup> May 2009. Available from: <http://www.museum.manchester.ac.uk/aboutus/pressreleases/fileuploadmax10mb,155296,en.pdf>. [Accessed 30<sup>th</sup> May 2011].

also strengthen museums, as greater public involvement could lead to knowledge transfer between those who are familiar with the objects and their historical significance (the donors) and the museum professionals. This has the potential to address the shortage of specialist subject knowledge in museums.

It is clear that it is only recently that collection activities have become more 'industry' regulated. For example, in February 2009 the Museums Association wrote that it 'agree[d] that collecting need[ed] to be supported in museums to enable strategic collections development',<sup>755</sup> in reaction to ongoing industry collections development strategies. In the past, museum professionals were at greater liberty to collect objects without adhering to institutional policies, and it would seem that some folk life museums' curators in Lincolnshire responded in a reactionary manner to agricultural change and the potential loss of culture by collecting almost any object offered or made available to them. This suggests donors were able to determine the nature of collections in the past as well. In the case of the Museum of Lincolnshire Life and Alford Manor House, this reaction appears to have left a legacy of large collections that continue to be difficult to manage. Evidence of this at the Museum of Lincolnshire Life can be found in the Group for Regional Studies in Museums first newsletter: Wilson and Page provided the meeting with information about the Museum of Lincolnshire Life and their main activities as staff. The newsletter reports that, 'the museum started six years ago, and their first object was to build up a

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<sup>22</sup> The Museums Association, *MA Response to NIMC Collections Development Strategy Consultation*, 2009, online. Available from: <http://www.museumsassociation.org/publications/17935>. [Accessed 17<sup>th</sup> January 2010].

collection, now they are bogged down with objects'.<sup>756</sup> The impact of this extensive, or even excessive, donation and collection is evident; staff were overwhelmed by the amount of objects being offered, which would inevitably lead to backlogs in collections work, staff struggling to find appropriate storage for objects, or being able to conduct research to be able to display objects effectively. Evidence of this at the Museum of Lincolnshire Life is provided in plate 4 (p 235) which shows wooden waggons in various states of disrepair being stored under open cover outside. It might be supposed that if other museums faced the same problems in the 1970s that they too are still trying to deal with issues created during this time.

Plate 4. Waggon storage at the Museum of Lincolnshire Life<sup>757</sup>



<sup>756</sup> Social History Curators Group. *Group for Regional Studies in Museums Newsletter*, Issue 1, December 1975, p 9, online. Available from:

[http://www.shcg.org.uk/scripts/resources\\_journal.asp](http://www.shcg.org.uk/scripts/resources_journal.asp). [Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> April 2010].

<sup>757</sup> Author's Own, Date Unknown.

There is also evidence to demonstrate that Alford Manor House had comparable issues, albeit on a smaller scale. The 2008 report 'Clearing out the Cupboard' reported that 'the collection is too large and not all of it is directly relevant to the house or the Alford area'.<sup>758</sup> Suggesting that a flurry of non-selective collecting had taken place in previous years.

The result of indiscriminate collecting is that some museums in Lincolnshire (such as the examples given) have large, in some cases almost unmanageable, collections that feature duplicate objects. It is apparent that collections must be investigated as a priority. Interviewees were asked: 'what or who predominately drives collecting in your museum?' It is possible to see from the responses that in nearly all cases museums were still coping with the legacy of the acceptance of a multitude of objects earlier in their history, as discussed in the previous chapter. For example, the Manager at Alford Manor House was very clear about her organisation's policy towards their collections, which appeared to be a sensible decision in light of the need to document existing collections at professional standards. She said collections were driven by

Existing collections at the moment as since the renovation of the property two and a half years ago we officially, although we sometimes make exceptions, officially closed the accession register ermm so that we could actually catalogue ermm, and accession things properly which had not been done in the past.<sup>759</sup>

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<sup>758</sup> Blunt, N. and Harrop, E., *Clearing out the Cupboard. Alford Manor House: Moving Forward 2008 – 2011* (Leicester: Arts Training Central, 2008), p 5.

<sup>759</sup> MI1 AMHandHB.

The Site Coordinator at Church Farm Museum was less clear when she stated that ‘historically a lot of the stuff at Church Farm was left here’.<sup>760</sup> However the position at Church Farm Museum and the Museum of Lincolnshire Life was clarified by the Keeper of Collections at the Museum of Lincolnshire Life, who said:

I think in the past we both – you know Church Farm Museum and the Museum of Lincolnshire Life were managed by the same team – but I think certainly in the past that ermm collecting was driven very much by the curators who made that decision ermm...But, I certainly think that the curators had a huge influence on the museum ermm in the collecting and also donors to some extent, as I do think they collected virtually everything they were offered. So, depending on what the donors thought was appropriate for the museum I think that helped shape the collections as well.<sup>761</sup>

These three answers imply that in 2008 there was a distinct lack of active collecting because of the issues created by the acceptance of so many objects in the past. This problem was, in some cases, compounded by logistical issues; for example the interviewee at the Museum of Lincolnshire Life highlighted that ‘today I don’t feel we actively collect because we have a huge storage problem’.<sup>762</sup> Another example is furnished by Normanby Hall Country Park, which at the time of interview (July 2008) had ‘no Social History Curators in post therefore the museum is not actively seeking donations’.<sup>763</sup> These findings also

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<sup>760</sup> M12 CFM.

<sup>761</sup> MI3 MLL/CFM.

<sup>762</sup> MI3 MLL/CFM.

<sup>763</sup> MI5 NHCP.

suggest that perhaps the donors are in the strongest position in relation to driving the collecting in the museums. However, in some cases this has been counteracted by the interests and aims of staff, for example in relation to the Museum of Lincolnshire Life as shown above, and the Spalding Gentlemen's Society Museum where the interviewee stated the impact of the members on what is collected:

...although we've got three hundred members it is only a small percentage that do the work and those that do have very eclectic interested [over] a wide range of topics and most of them are experts in their subjects and whoever is on the council at the time, or President, tended to shape the Society.<sup>764</sup>

The argument that the donors are the driving force behind the development of collections in the museums surveyed was strengthened further by the interviewees' responses when asked if they were engaged in contemporary collecting. Both the interviewees from Normanby Hall and Country Park and Alford Manor House confirmed a lack of activity related to contemporary collecting but both expressed the desire to engage in it in the future.<sup>765</sup> Both interviewees from Church Farm Museum and the Museum of Lincolnshire Life agreed that they were not engaged in contemporary collecting due to the cost and the size of the objects. The interviewee at the Museum of Lincolnshire Life simply said in regard to reasons for the lack of collecting that 'the main one is space. It's just lack of space',<sup>766</sup> which tallies with comments from the

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<sup>764</sup> MI4 SGS.

<sup>765</sup> MI5 NHCP and MI1 AMHandHB.

<sup>766</sup> MI3 MLL.

interviewee at Normanby Hall and Country Park who illustrated this issue in further detail, along with other associated problems:

There are limitations [because of the] sheer size of the farming kit, for example combine harvesters, and problems with storage and display. Maintenance can also be an issue as if something comes in, in working order; we want to keep it so.<sup>767</sup>

These issues are not particular to Lincolnshire, but in fact reflect the national situation in England. They are exemplified by the development and delivery of the Heritage Lottery Funded 'Collecting 20<sup>th</sup> Century Rural Culture' project at the Museum of English Rural Life (MERL).<sup>768</sup> In a lecture given as part of the 'Lunchtime Network' Lecture Series at MERL on 20 January 2010, Dr Roy Bridgen provided some context to the situation seen in Lincolnshire:

In the first place, our collection, in common with rural museums everywhere, is dominated by the nuts and bolts of working on the land. MERL was established in the early 1950s to memorialise the passing of the countryside powered by the horse to one powered by the tractor and the internal combustion engine.<sup>769</sup>

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<sup>767</sup> MI5 NHCP.

<sup>768</sup> Museum of English Rural Life, *Collecting Cultures*, online. Available from: [http://www.reading.ac.uk/merl/research/merl\\_collectingruralcultures.aspx](http://www.reading.ac.uk/merl/research/merl_collectingruralcultures.aspx). [Accessed 5<sup>th</sup> December 2010].

<sup>769</sup> Bridgen, R., *Collecting 20<sup>th</sup> Century Rural Culture at MERL, Lunchtime Network, Museum of English Rural Life, University of Reading, 20<sup>th</sup> January 2010*, online. Available from: [http://www.reading.ac.uk/web/FILES/merl/Collecting\\_20thc\\_Rural\\_Culture\\_\(online\).pdf](http://www.reading.ac.uk/web/FILES/merl/Collecting_20thc_Rural_Culture_(online).pdf). [Accessed 5<sup>th</sup> December 2010].

This notion is inextricably linked to the representation of a mythical rural past. It reflects the challenges that museums face in deciding how to represent the past. Museums can not recreate the entirety of the human past, and so to create a coherent narrative, sense of place, and positive visitor experience, museum professionals have to select periods of time to represent. They do this using a disparate range of buildings, and objects, that have the theme of the display and time period in common, and set dressing. For example Beamish tells ‘the story of life in North East England in Georgian, Victorian, and Edwardian times’.<sup>770</sup> Blists Hill boasts a ‘recreated Victorian town’,<sup>771</sup> which comprises historic buildings rescued and moved to the site alongside modern replica buildings.

Bridgen also commented on the way in which the collection at MERL has grown over the last 60 years, describing a process of ‘almost automatic accrual’<sup>772</sup> dominated by donations, which is evidenced by Lincolnshire museums in the discussion above. He also observed that

Technology dominates the collection, but we’re not collecting the more recent technology of the countryside partly because it’s just too big and difficult to deal with.<sup>773</sup>

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<sup>770</sup> Beamish the Living Museum of the North, *Things to See and Do*, online. Available from: <http://www.beamish.org.uk/areas-of-beamish/>. [Accessed 20<sup>th</sup> January 2013].

<sup>771</sup> Ironbridge Birth of Industry, *Blists Hill Victorian Town*, online. Available from: <http://www.ironbridge.org.uk/our-attractions/blists-hill-victorian-town/>. [Accessed 20<sup>th</sup> January 2013].

<sup>772</sup> Bridgen, R., *Collecting 20<sup>th</sup> Century Rural Culture at MERL, Lunchtime Network, Museum of English Rural Life, University of Reading, 20 January 2010*, online. Available from: [http://www.reading.ac.uk/web/FILES/merl/Collecting\\_20thc\\_Rural\\_Culture\\_\(online\).pdf](http://www.reading.ac.uk/web/FILES/merl/Collecting_20thc_Rural_Culture_(online).pdf). [Accessed 5<sup>th</sup> December 2010].

<sup>773</sup> Ibid.



This again demonstrates that the issues faced by museums in Lincolnshire are representative of the challenges of England's rural museum sector as a whole.

The initial findings of this study's Lincolnshire survey, which show that the replacement of the horse, the impact of mechanisation on labour, and the introduction of new machinery are three of the five best represented themes, confirm that museums in the county were founded with an aim also seen in other areas of the country. This reflects the levels of organisation in the social history movement in museums from the 1950s onwards, demonstrating cohesion still represented by organisations such as the Social History Curators Group and the Rural Museums Network. It also represents a link between academic interests in rural history at the time and practicing museum professionals; for example, Ewart Evans investigated these topics in great detail in his research on East Anglia, and it is known that he addressed the Social History Curators Group in their earliest incarnation.<sup>774</sup> It also demonstrates that there was a strong relationship between museums and members of the public during the 1960s and 1970s, as the sheer volume of objects donated could be interpreted as recognition of the role of the museums in conserving the prior culture which was disappearing.

This research suggests that whilst there is still some evidence of this cohesive approach to agricultural history in the twenty first century as demonstrated by the Rural Museums Network which 'exists to bring museums of farming and the

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<sup>774</sup> Social History Curators Group. *Group for Regional Studies in Museums Newsletter*, Issue 1, December 1975, online. Available from: [http://www.shcg.org.uk/scripts/resources\\_journal.asp](http://www.shcg.org.uk/scripts/resources_journal.asp). [Accessed 6<sup>th</sup> April 2010].

countryside closer together for mutual benefit'<sup>775</sup> and has a strong academic underpinning because its founding member is the University of Reading's Museum of English Rural Life, academic and museum practice have become largely fragmented. Whilst social history has continued to develop in universities, becoming more complex and further reaching it appears to have almost stood still in the museum context, despite having a promising start that 'transformed the way in which collections are interpreted'.<sup>776</sup> And whilst there has been development in collaborative research projects between universities and museums, in particular through the Arts and Humanities Research Council's (AHRC) Museums and Galleries research programme which funds networks, collaborative PhDs and collaborative research projects,<sup>777</sup> there generally appears to be a culture of non-collaboration between local museums and academic institutions, as identified in 2004 in the Museum Association's response to the report on the AHRC's support of university museums and galleries. The response stated that in 2004 it was 'clear that there is an under-exploited potential for greater collaboration between museums and universities, as well as a dearth of serious research in museums'.<sup>778</sup> Evidence also suggests that collaboration between museums and the general public tends to take place in museums in Lincolnshire that are run by voluntary community groups, rather than those run by local authorities. For example, Church Farm Museum now

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<sup>775</sup> Culture 24, *Rural Museums Network*, online. Available from: <http://www.culture24.org.uk/am18756>. [Accessed 30<sup>th</sup> January 2011].

<sup>776</sup> Steel, P. "People's Choice", *Museums Journal*, January 2010, pp 22 – 27, p 22.

<sup>777</sup> Arts and Humanities Research Council, *Museums and Galleries Research*, online. Available from: <http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/Funding-Opportunities/Research-funding/Pages/Museums-and-Galleries.aspx>. [Accessed 1<sup>st</sup> January 2013].

<sup>778</sup> Museums Association, *Response to Report on The Arts and Humanities Research Board's Support of University Museums and Galleries*, 2004, online. Available from: <http://www.museumsassociation.org/publications/10123>. [Accessed 1<sup>st</sup> January 2013].

appears to be at the heart of local community activity in Skegness, benefitting from the enthusiasm, specialist knowledge, and expert skills of volunteers.<sup>779</sup>

A lack of contemporary collecting may also account for the deficiency in representation regarding changing communities, the continued development of machinery, the impact of the processing industries, the use of pesticides, the impact of agriculture on the environment, the organic movement, and the reuse of farm buildings for housing. These are all relatively new transformations in agriculture and rural life which were happening contemporaneously with or just after many of the museums were set up during the folk life movement of the 1960s and 1970s. It can be argued further that these topics, along with that of migrant labour, are in fact contentious, for if these museums were set up in a nostalgic vein 'to memorialise the passing of the countryside',<sup>780</sup> the more challenging aspects of agricultural history and rural life may well have been excluded whilst the collections were amassed, as 'hidden, contentious and diverse histories' are only becoming mainstream today.<sup>781</sup> If the subject of migrant labour is taken to exemplify this argument it is possible to see that when groups have initially entered Lincolnshire there has been animosity towards them. When Irish labourers came to Lincolnshire in the early to mid nineteenth century their presence caused unease amongst the local population, and there is evidence to suggest that this would often erupt into violence. For example, in 1830 in Newton on Trent, which is situated in the north west of county, a gang

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<sup>779</sup> Weinstien, H., "Going Local", *Museums Journal*, February 2012, pp 23 – 27.

<sup>780</sup> Bridgen, R., *Collecting 20<sup>th</sup> Century Rural Culture at MERL, Lunchtime Network, Museum of English Rural Life, University of Reading, 20 January 2010*, online. Available from: [http://www.reading.ac.uk/web/FILES/merl/Collecting\\_20thc\\_Rural\\_Culture\\_\(online\).pdf](http://www.reading.ac.uk/web/FILES/merl/Collecting_20thc_Rural_Culture_(online).pdf). [Accessed 5<sup>th</sup> December 2010].

<sup>781</sup> Werner, A., *Museums and History*, online. Available from: [http://www.history.ac.uk/makinghistory/resources/articles/museums\\_and\\_history.html](http://www.history.ac.uk/makinghistory/resources/articles/museums_and_history.html). [Accessed 1<sup>st</sup> January 2013].

of around 40 Irish workers were attacked by local men for no other reason than being ‘bloody Irishmen’.<sup>782</sup> Collins actually describes the nineteenth century anti-Irish feeling as

intense rivalry, to a point of open warfare, between natives and “foreigners”. The coming of the Irish was often a signal for riots and disturbances’.<sup>783</sup>

Farmers, however, did not share these views of their labourers and were grateful for the Irish labour, recognising that ‘the Lincolnshire harvest could not be gathered without their help’,<sup>784</sup> perhaps spurred on in the knowledge that this was a convenient workforce who were 30 – 40% cheaper than the local labourers.<sup>785</sup> There is little evidence of general animosity towards the Irish in the twentieth century, by which time they had become a regular part of the workforce, and many participants in the oral history project discussed the groups with fondness; recalling the same gangs of men returning year upon year to work on the same farms. There was also an appreciation for how the men contributed to the local economy, with many spending their wages in the village pubs and shops. It would appear that by the twentieth century they were an accepted part of the labour force and temporary community members. However, the pattern of the mistrust and dislike by local populations for new comers who are working as transient agricultural labour is currently being

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<sup>782</sup> Lincolnshire County Council, *Nineteenth Century Miscellany*, online. Available from: <http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/section.asp?catid=23034&docid=75965>. [Accessed 26<sup>th</sup> July 2010].

<sup>783</sup> Collins, E.J.T., “Harvest Technology and Labour Supply in Britain, 1790-1870”, *The Economic History Review*, New Series, Vol 22, No 3, December 1969, pp 453 – 473, p 257.

<sup>784</sup> Barber, S., “Irish Migrant Agricultural Labourers in Nineteenth Century Lincolnshire”, *Saothar: The Journal of Irish Labour History*, Vol 8, 1982, pp 10 – 23, p 18.

<sup>785</sup> Collins, E.J.T., “Harvest Technology and Labour Supply in Britain, 1790-1870”, *The Economic History Review*, New Series, Vol 22, No 3, December 1969, pp 453 – 473, p 257.

repeated in and around Lincolnshire with the influx of migrant labour from Eastern Europe.<sup>786</sup>

If donors have significantly shaped the collections in the museums surveyed, then it is important to develop a profile of these people to see how this could impact on the types of objects offered. Interviewees were asked whether or not gender impacted on their collecting, with answers overwhelmingly showing a strong male connection to agricultural items in all cases. The interviewee at Normanby Hall and Country Park detailed their recent experience:

In the last six months all farming items have been offered by men and clothing has been offered by women. People who enquire about machinery [are usually] men.<sup>787</sup>

And in the case of Alford Manor House, the Manager was of the following opinion:

I would say there's a strong male influence ...you'll see in the Hackett Barn, ermm Alice has tried to make certain areas are more female friendly without sort of being overtly sexist about it as well. But there is a definite male trend with the large agricultural equipment we've got ermm. The textile collection and the Victorian glass plate collection...we probably have more women look at those – textiles especially.<sup>788</sup>

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<sup>786</sup> The Poles are Coming! BBC Two Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2008, 21.00hrs.

<sup>787</sup> MI5 NHCP.

<sup>788</sup> MI1 AMHandHB.

This pattern of men donating to the agricultural collections and women to the domestic was also seen at Church Farm Museum and the Museum of Lincolnshire Life:

We get predominantly men I suppose trying to give us things for the agricultural collection, but then there might be women...giving us lampshades for the farmhouse and things like that.<sup>789</sup>

Yes, absolutely, unless its somebody's wife and they've died and they just want rid of the thresher in the barn or the tool collection.<sup>790</sup>

It could be seen at the Museum of Lincolnshire Life that widows tended to donate items their husbands collected after their husbands' death. Women also can be instrumental in their husbands' donation of items, as highlighted by the interviewee at Spalding Gentlemen's Society who stated that

They tend to be the ones who say to their husbands: "clear it out and take it to Spalding Gentlemen's Society".<sup>791</sup>

This pattern might further strengthen the argument that these larger agricultural items are collected and cherished in the main by men, and that women have little sentimentality or interest when it comes to them. This is somewhat strange if considered in conjunction with the evidence presented in Chapter 3, which proposes that women engaged in a range of activities, both within the traditionally male and female spheres of agricultural work. However the chapter also suggests that a woman working within the male sphere was not considered

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<sup>789</sup> MI2 CFM.

<sup>790</sup> MI3 MLL.

<sup>791</sup> MI4 SGS.

acceptable,<sup>792</sup> which may have impacted on women's attitudes towards the items. If it is accepted that there are 'gender associations [with] the objects collected'<sup>793</sup> by people and that 'a collection is closely linked to the collector's identity',<sup>794</sup> this pattern of behaviour might also suggest that women themselves do not view the machinery and their agricultural work as feminine 'things', something their identity is bound up with.<sup>795</sup> It might be argued that this attitude is further reflected in the reluctance of women to take part in the oral history project associated with this research.<sup>796</sup> Whether or not this stems from the women themselves, or the attitudes of men towards women in a male dominated sector, would require further research by a social scientist. This research also confirms the established view that girls and women who engage in collecting tend to collect and identify with domestic and decorative objects.<sup>797</sup>

There is also an argument put forward by Belk et al. which suggests that whilst young girls and boys are as likely as one another to collect, in adults men are more likely to develop collections than women. Belk put forward the assertion that the gender split in collecting is driven by gender roles and social constructs in the modern western world, and society's perceptions of 'men's purchasing...viewed as serious and purposeful collecting, while women's

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<sup>792</sup> See chapter 3.

<sup>793</sup> Belk, R.W. and Wallendorf, M., "Of Mice and Men: Gender Identity in Collecting", *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, Pearce, S. M. (ed) (London: Routledge, 1994), pp 240 – 253, p 241.

<sup>794</sup> Ibid. p 240.

<sup>795</sup> Tilley, C., "Introduction, Identity, Place, Landscape, and Heritage", *Journal of Material Culture*, Vol 11, July 2006, pp 7 – 32. Macdonald, S., "On Old Things: The Fetishization of the Past Everyday Life", *British Subjects: An Anthropology of Britain*, Rapport, N. (ed) (Berg: Oxford, 2002), pp 89 – 107, p 90. Thomas, J., *Time, Culture and Identity* (London: Routledge, 1996). Tilley, C., *An Ethnography of the Neolithic: Early Prehistoric Societies in Southern Scandinavia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

<sup>796</sup> This was experienced during several interviews with husbands and wives. However, once women were encouraged to take part they contributed a wealth of information to the interviews.

<sup>797</sup> Belk, R.W. and Wallendorf, M., "Of Mice and Men: Gender Identity in Collecting", *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, Pearce, S. M. (ed) (London: Routledge, 1994), pp 240 – 253.

buying has been perceived as (and confined to) frivolous consumption'.<sup>798</sup> It might be argued that if this view impacts on the individual, women would be less likely to want to donate their personal collections to museums through fear of ridicule and rejection.

This chapter demonstrates that in the case of agricultural collections the more prevalent donors are men which must impact on how the roles of women are represented within the collections. Whilst women as part of the labour force appear well represented in museum collections according to this survey, this is highly likely to be from a male perspective, influenced by ideas of the aspects of women's labour that are considered acceptable and the separation of the male and female spheres in agriculture.<sup>799</sup> This could be tested further by examining collections documentation such as accession registers and computer databases (although it is likely that databases will be fragmentary and only represent a small fraction of the accession register and collections) and statistically analysing the gender profile of donors for particular categories of objects.

It can be argued that there is evidence from the surveys that the representation of women within the agricultural and rural context may be distorted further by a lack of academic research into the topic and the lack of knowledge on this subject of staff.<sup>800</sup> The view presented by the Site Coordinator at Church Farm Museum exemplifies this: 'men would have been doing the agricultural things

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<sup>798</sup> Belk, R.W., Wallendorf, M., Sherry, J.F. Jnr. And Holbrook, M., "Collecting in a Consumer Culture", *Highways and Buyways: Naturalist Research: The Consumer Behaviour Odyssey*, Belk, R.W. (ed) (USA: Association of Consumer Research, 1991), pp 178 – 215, p unknown.

<sup>799</sup> Brandon, L., "Looking for the 'Total' Woman in Wartime: A Museological Work in Progress" *Gender, Sexuality, and Museums, (A Routledge Reader)*, Levin, A.K. (ed) (London: Routledge, 2010), pp 105 – 114.

<sup>800</sup> Verdon, N., "The Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture: A Reassessment of Agricultural Gangs in Nineteenth Century Norfolk", *Agricultural History Review*, Vol 49, No 1, 2001, pp 41 – 55.



and women would have been in the house, maybe apart from a few land girls or something'.<sup>801</sup> This view is diametrically opposed to the argument presented within this thesis, which is that women were engaged in both domestic and agricultural activities during the period under scrutiny.<sup>802</sup> It may also affirm concerns raised in the *Museum Journal* in 2010 by Dr Mastoris regarding the impact of the rise of the museum manager and demise of the subject specialist within museums.<sup>803</sup> This was commented on by the participant representing Normanby Hall and Country Park in relation to contemporary collecting:

[We are] not able to at the moment [because of a] lack of collections and expertise in house. None of the current staff have [a] specialism in [the] area which is limiting. [It] holds [us] back.<sup>804</sup>

It can be argued that there are two key factors that have also shaped what people have preserved and then donated to the museums in the survey: survival and the relationship people have with objects. It is well recognised in archaeology that the issue of the survival of material remains can impact on what is found in archaeological and historical records. The consequence of this is a bias in the records that can lead to the misinterpretation of the past.<sup>805</sup> It is reasonable to assume that survival has impacted on the types of agricultural objects available to donate and collect. Large mechanical equipment has always been expensive and a major investment for farmers, so it has been cared for and kept in working condition for as long as possible, it is also made of

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<sup>801</sup> MI2 CFM.

<sup>802</sup> See chapter 3.

<sup>803</sup> Steel, P., "Ordinary Lives", *Museums Journal*, January 2010, pp 25 – 27, p 26.

<sup>804</sup> MI5 NHCP.

<sup>805</sup> Orton, C., *Sampling in Archaeology (Cambridge Manuals in Archaeology)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

durable and robust material such as metal. Hand tools also survive in large numbers as they were prolific, although wood constituents are likely to have been replaced; they could also be used in the domestic setting after they became redundant in the workplace which also aided survival. However, I believe there is a stronger force at work that has shaped how people donate to museums; people's relationships with these objects. It has aided their survival and allowed people to place significant meaning on objects, resulting in them coming to represent aspects of social identity.<sup>806</sup> I recorded some evidence of strong emotions in the generation of farmers that preceded interviewees, as their world finally emerged in to the modern, with the death of the last horse on the farm.<sup>807</sup> On several occasions after an interview had taken place I was led to a barn where a significant piece of machinery from the past was still stored, although it had long been made redundant. Most common were early, or even the first, tractors the farmer or his father had owned, kept as a memento of the past.<sup>808</sup> As recounted in chapter 3, one interviewee would not let her interview commence until I had correctly identified the hand hoe she had used throughout her working life and regarded with immense pride.<sup>809</sup>

Perhaps what is more apparent from the themes identified in the research is that some of them are intangible and one would not expect much evidence to be left in the material record deposited in the museums surveyed; for example, dialect would leave very little evidence in the historical record except for folk

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<sup>806</sup> Tilley, C., "Introduction: Identity, Place, Landscape and Heritage", *Journal of Material Culture*, Vol 11, July 2006, pp 7 – 32. Gosden, C. and Marshall, Y., "The Cultural Biography of Objects", *World Archaeology*, Vol 31, No 2, October 1999, pp 169 – 178. Macdonald, S., "On Old Things: The Fetishization of the Past Everyday Life", *British Subjects: An Anthropology of Britain*, Rapport, N. (ed) (Berg: Oxford, 2002), pp 89 – 107.

<sup>807</sup> See chapter 4.

<sup>808</sup> For example Mr S. OH.Northkesteven.001.

<sup>809</sup> Mrs H. OH.Eastlindsey.005.

songs and oral histories. This particular aspect of dialect, combined with the fact that Survey of English Dialects was undertaken at the time most of the museums were being developed (between 1964 and 1983), as well as the issues discussed in Chapter 2, has resulted in a lack of preserved evidence in the record within Lincolnshire itself, when it might be expected that social history curators at the time would be interested in this aspect of the past, particularly if links to Ewart Evans are considered.<sup>810</sup>

However, it would appear that particular objects, both domestic and industrial, have survived in abundance and have been donated and collected. The manager at Alford, for instance identified that

The problem with the collection is that there are many duplicate items erm and the smaller the item the more duplicates we have. So, tools and erm hand ploughs and things like that, and bikes, we've got a lot of bikes. We've got a lot of washing machines for some reason, 1950s/1960s washing machines. Erm Mangles we had about 6 or 7.<sup>811</sup>

This is representative of comments made by interviewees from other sites, with a repeated representation of 'tools, pitchforks that kind of thing...[they] get left in barns and people can acquire quite a collection of them'<sup>812</sup>. This could perhaps be explained by their proliferation and continued use before agricultural change in the 1960s and 1970s, which made them redundant relatively quickly. Once they were no longer in use, they were easy to collect due to their frequency and

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<sup>810</sup> Leeds University, *The Survey of English Dialects*, online. Available from: <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/english/activities/lavc/PDFs/SEDIM.pdf>. [Accessed 21<sup>st</sup> December 2010].

<sup>811</sup> MI1 AMHandHB.

<sup>812</sup> MI3 MLL.

size. Domestic items, though often less durable, might also fit into this suggested model. These factors could have combined with people's feelings about changes taking place and their individual sense of identity, as explored later in the chapter, leading these objects to be donated and collected in large numbers.

There is little or no academic research on the nostalgic agricultural heritage preservation movement in Britain, although a significant amount of information can be gained from enthusiasts' websites and specialist publications which can be collated to provide evidence for the size of the private agricultural movement in Britain. No work has been identified which has investigated exactly what objects private individuals collect, although it is accepted that steam engines and related items and tractors are popular objects to collect, preserve, and show (usually at public events). It is difficult to find information regarding private collections of steam engines, which may be because many are not open to the public and owners do not want to advertise the collections they hold due to their monetary value; the market value of an agricultural engine in 2010 started at £140,000.<sup>813</sup> Information regarding vintage tractors is more accessible, with enthusiasts for particular makes and models producing information on private collections; for example, the Friends of Ferguson list 23 collections which feature Ferguson tractors in the UK and Ireland, of which five are identified as belonging to individuals.<sup>814</sup> Tractors are worth considerably less than agricultural engines, ranging in price from £750 for a tractor which needs

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<sup>813</sup> Berry Brook Steam, Telephone Conversation, 20 December 2010.

<sup>814</sup> The Friends of Ferguson Heritage Ltd, *Museums and Private Collections in the British Isles*, online. Available from: <http://www.fofh.co.uk/museums/museumsgb.htm>. [Accessed 20<sup>th</sup> December 2010].

extensive restoration<sup>815</sup> to '£50,000 for the right tractor'.<sup>816</sup> This might explain why information is more readily available, whilst the fact that a collector may well have 20 or 30 tractors in their collection may account for evidence still being scant.<sup>817</sup>

One website that promotes the aforementioned events is *Morgan's Yearbook*, a publication published and distributed by the Rotary Club of York Vikings. The *Yearbook* provides an insight into the size of this movement, listing 'over 900 events organised by over 600 individuals belonging to 450 clubs and organisations'<sup>818</sup> covering an area which stretches from Shetland in the north to the counties of Rutland, Leicestershire, and Staffordshire in the south. However, it should be noted that these events include

classic car shows, steam fairs, steam rallies, autojumbles and other events involving veteran, vintage and classic cars, commercial vehicles, motor cycles, tractors, buses and steam-propelled vehicles.<sup>819</sup>

Although there are issues in using this data in terms of its limited geographical coverage (southern counties are not covered) and the wide scope in the events covered by the publication, it can be argued that the movement is significant in Britain. Other specialist websites that have features allowing agricultural, steam and classic vehicle show organisers to upload their events also demonstrate the popularity of collecting and showing collections.

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<sup>815</sup> Tractors and Farming, *Listings of all Used Farm Machinery*, 2010, online. Available from: <http://www.tractorsandfarming.com>. [Accessed 20<sup>th</sup> December 2010].

<sup>816</sup> Berry Brook Steam, Telephone Conversation, 20<sup>th</sup> December 2010.

<sup>817</sup> Ibid.

<sup>818</sup> Morgan's Yearbook, *Geographical Location of Events*, 2010, online. Available from: <http://www.morgansyearbook.co.uk/Page10.html>. [Accessed 20<sup>th</sup> December 2010].

<sup>819</sup> Ibid.

Whilst not consistent and precise, these figures provide the sense of a nationwide network of private collectors of steam-related items and a large audience. This network and demand by enthusiasts and the general public alike is exemplified by the Great Dorset Steam Fair which is now in its 44th year. The event takes place on a showground which is more than 600 acres in size, features around 1000 trade stands and 2000 exhibitors, and boasts that the 'total number of people expected to see the show [annually] is in excess of 200,000'.<sup>820</sup>

What is clear is that this movement is driven by nostalgia for the agricultural past (understood in this context as the representation, consumption, and understanding of the past),<sup>821</sup> with the Great Dorset Steam Fair organisers encapsulating this in their promotional material; 'The Great Dorset Steam Fair is a typically British event offering a unique blend of nostalgia and entertainment'.<sup>822</sup> It might therefore be assumed that the demand from nostalgic private collectors coupled with the desirability of steam and internal combustion engine technology might have impacted on museum collections. In the case of MERL the purchase of these items is highlighted by Bridgen, whilst other items are not:

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<sup>820</sup> The Great Dorset Steam Fair, *Interesting Steam Fair Statistics*, 2010, online. Available from: [http://www.gdsf.co.uk/visitors\\_information/did\\_you\\_know.aspx](http://www.gdsf.co.uk/visitors_information/did_you_know.aspx). [Accessed 20<sup>th</sup> December 2010]. Also see chapter 1.

<sup>821</sup> This can be gauged from the types of publications produced for steam collectors and enthusiasts.

<sup>822</sup> The Great Dorset Steam Fair, *Welcome to the Great Dorset Steam Fair Website*, online. Available from: <http://www.gdsf.co.uk/>. [Accessed 1<sup>st</sup> January 2013].

Apart from a few high status bits of technology – the special steam engine or the special tractor - there is almost no convention within rural museums of purchasing material for the collection.<sup>823</sup>

This may hint that this private popularity, and therefore nostalgia, may not be an issue as first assumed. This is also reflected in the interviews conducted in Lincolnshire, with the Collections Manager at the Museum of Lincolnshire Life saying that there was no issue in collecting these high status items:

No. The private market might drive the price up. But we've experienced no problem in collecting.<sup>824</sup>

However, it must be taken into account that the museum is currently not actively seeking to acquire objects as described earlier in the chapter, and that when it was during the 1960s and 1970s, these pieces of equipment were considered defunct and were being scrapped due to their low commercial value. The nostalgic steam movement was in its infancy, perhaps in a similar state to that of the vintage tractor movement today, so demand did not outstrip supply. The Collections Manager at Normanby Hall summarised this point well when she commented that she had 'not noticed this [competition], but wouldn't be surprised [if we see this] when we start actively collecting'.<sup>825</sup>

It would appear from this research that the most influential factor on how the past is represented through collections is the subjective nature of donation and

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<sup>823</sup> Bridgen, R., *Collecting 20<sup>th</sup> Century Rural Culture at MERL, Lunchtime Network, Museum of English Rural Life, University of Reading, 20<sup>th</sup> January 2010*, online. Available from: [http://www.reading.ac.uk/web/FILES/merl/Collecting\\_20thc\\_Rural\\_Culture\\_\(online\).pdf](http://www.reading.ac.uk/web/FILES/merl/Collecting_20thc_Rural_Culture_(online).pdf). [Accessed 5<sup>th</sup> December 2010].

<sup>824</sup> MI3 MLL.

<sup>825</sup> MI5 NHCP.

collection. It is clear that donors have shaped the collections in the county through dominance in the donor-collector relationship. Individuals have been able to gift prized objects with significant meaning to them, and in many cases museum staff have been unable to make an informed decision about acquisition due to the huge backlogs in collections documentation; a result of indiscriminate collecting during the 1960s and 1970s. A lack of subject knowledge, and even confidence, has influenced those responsible for accepting objects in to the collection, and therefore how the past is represented. Nostalgia appears to have little impact as there is a separate nostalgic movement for agricultural history that operates alongside, or separately from museums. This movement appears to have been far less developed during the 1960s and 1970s when museum professionals and academics also had the same interests as these groups of people in rescuing traditional practice, which may account for why this movement is largely separate from museums.

### **Education**<sup>826</sup>

In 2000 Hooper-Greenhill wrote that 'the educational role of the museum is long-standing and well established as a concept',<sup>827</sup> but its nature was subject to debate due to the changing meaning of the term 'education'. Under New Labour, education came to encompass formal education, life long learning and social inclusion, altering the educational role of museums within the community. However, formal education remained at its core as school visits contributed significantly to visitor figures and income generation.

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<sup>826</sup> Please note that whilst education programmes may have been altered since the interviews, the National Curriculum has not.

<sup>827</sup> Hooper-Greenhill, E., *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture* (London: Routledge, 2000), p 1.



This thesis argues that the New Museology, in particular the visitor and target focus as encouraged by government, has impacted on museums in a detrimental way. It can be argued that one consequence of this focus is the absence of the agricultural and rural themes identified as important in this thesis in education programmes in the museums surveyed. It is clear that in order to attract vital visitor numbers in the form of school visits, the museums surveyed have developed education programmes to directly meet the requirements of the National Curriculum.

At the time of the interviews Alford Manor House and Hackett Barn offered both full and half day activity workshops to primary schools based on the Victorian period. These workshops were multidisciplinary in approach and covered core curriculum subjects including history, art, maths and science. A 'Victorian washday experience' was particularly highlighted to teachers on the Manor House's education internet pages for that year.<sup>828</sup> Their core programme was aimed at Key Stage 2 children aged between seven and eleven. Of particular importance is the link with the Victorian Britain element of the history curriculum, which focuses on 'a study of the impact of significant individuals, events and changes in work and transport on the lives of men, women and children from different sections of society'.<sup>829</sup> When interviewed, the manager said of the National Curriculum that 'it shapes entirely what we do with schools',<sup>830</sup> confirming its influence on what was on offer. It might be argued that in this case, the impact of the National Curriculum greatly limited what education

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<sup>828</sup> Alford Manor House, *Education at Alford Manor House*, online. Available from: <http://www.alfordmanorhouse.co.uk/Education.html>. [Accessed 22<sup>th</sup> December 2010].

<sup>829</sup> Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency, *History Key Stage 2*, online. Available from <http://curriculum.qcda.gov.uk/key-stages-1-and-2/subjects/history/keystage2/index.aspx>. [Accessed 28<sup>th</sup> December 2010].

<sup>830</sup> MI1 AMHBB.

activities were on offer at Alford Manor House, and that due to these constraints and a lack of staff the themes identified through this research were not represented. Children clearly received a Victorian domestic experience when visiting the site, but did not engage with the agricultural collections 'because we don't have...just the one person to facilitate education days'.<sup>831</sup>

The Site Coordinator at Church Farm Museum stated in the investigative survey that child labour was represented in the education programmes. These themes featured as part of several of the education sessions on offer. The 'it's a kid's life' session examined 'the harsh reality of a kid's life in Victorian England'<sup>832</sup> by offering the opportunity to meet the blacksmith Seth, who taught the children to make horseshoes, to engage in a classroom session with Miss Black, to participate in a wash day and to play Victorian games. This session was aimed at Key Stage 1 and 2 primary school children, and tied in with the National Curriculum in history at both levels. At Key Stage 1, children are expected to examine 'changes in their own lives and the way of life of their family or others around them and the way of life of people in the more distant past who lived in the local area or elsewhere in Britain'<sup>833</sup> which matches the learning aims of the 'kid's life' session, whilst at Key Stage 2 it is clear that this session links to the topic of Victorian Britain. The session had a clear link with traditional rural skills and knowledge, much like the steam threshing event hosted by the museum. This event once again ties in with the learning aims and topics for Key Stage 1

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<sup>831</sup> MI1 AMHNB.

<sup>832</sup> Learn With Museums *Church Farm Museum – It's a Kid's Life Education Session*, online. Available from: <http://www.learnwithmuseums.org.uk/MuseumServices.asp?MID=26&Sid=30>. [Accessed 29<sup>th</sup> December 2010].

<sup>833</sup> Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency, *History Key Stage 1*, online. Available from <http://curriculum.qcda.gov.uk/key-stages-1-and-2/subjects/history/keystage1/index.aspx>. [Accessed 28<sup>th</sup> December 2010].

and 2, with an emphasis on labour as indicated in the investigative survey. However, there was evidence that the representation of Lincolnshire's past was problematic in this case, as teachers were told that children can 'watch the farm labourers at work, and talk to the engine driver and his men',<sup>834</sup> when it is clear from this research that women would have played an active role in the harvest.<sup>835</sup> Stereotypical gender roles for rural and farming women were further embedded in the Christmas event where children could 'visit Elsie in the kitchen'.<sup>836</sup>

Other education sessions and resources with a focus on the lives of children in the past included an evacuee experience, a Victorian holiday session, and loan boxes on toys and World War Two, all of which fit in with the Key Stage 1 and 2 history curriculums, but had little to do with the site itself. There was however, a food workshop which was very apt for a farming museum.<sup>837</sup>

It appeared that the subject matter at Church Farm Museum had been manipulated to produce an education programme that fitted the requirements of the National Curriculum to ensure school visits, and that staff had allowed the National Curriculum to 'shape[s] [the education programme] entirely'.<sup>838</sup> The impact of this type of interpretation of the National Curriculum is that the past is misrepresented to varying extents to this particularly impressionable audience

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<sup>834</sup> Learn With Museums, *Church Farm Museum – Steam Threshing Event*, online. Available from: <http://www.learnwithmuseums.org.uk/MuseumServices.asp?MID=26&Sid=35> [Accessed 29<sup>th</sup> December 2010].

<sup>835</sup> See chapter 3.

<sup>836</sup> Learn With Museums, *Church Farm Museum – Victorian Christmas Education Session*, online. Available from: <http://www.learnwithmuseums.org.uk/MuseumServices.asp?MID=26&Sid=36> [Accessed 29<sup>th</sup> December 2010].

<sup>837</sup> Learn With Museums, *Church Farm*, online. Available from: <http://www.learnwithmuseums.org.uk/museum.asp?MID=26>. [Accessed 29<sup>th</sup> December 2010].

<sup>838</sup> MI2 CFM.

and to teachers who are not history specialists, thus compounding issues relating to the general public's view of the countryside both in the past and present.

The Collections Manager at the Museum of Lincolnshire Life indicated that the effects of mechanisation on labour were included in the education programme, although this was difficult to identify within the descriptions of activities on offer two years later.<sup>839</sup> The museum's education programme relating to history focused on the Victorian period and World War Two, and a science-based activity based around mechanisms and forces was also on offer. The Victorian activity day offered was themed either around Victorian childhood or the Victorian household. The World War Two activity was divided between an exploration of the domestic and the experience of soldiers during the conflict.<sup>840</sup> These sessions once again matched the Victorian element of the Key Stage 2 history curriculum, but also offered those learners studying Britain since 1930 instead of Victorian Britain the opportunity to 'study the impact of the Second World War'.<sup>841</sup> Much like Church Farm Museum, role play and living history techniques were utilised for domestic or school room activities and there was an emphasis on learning from 'primary sources of evidence'<sup>842</sup> as advocated in

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<sup>839</sup> The Grain Trail activity appears not to run any longer. This covered these themes very well.

<sup>840</sup> Lincolnshire County Council, *Museum of Lincolnshire Life: Activities for KS 1 and KS 2 Pupils*, online. Available from: <http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/visiting/museums/museum-of-lincolnshire-life/schools-and-education/activities-for-ks1-and-ks2-pupils/59424.article>. [Accessed 29<sup>th</sup> December 2010].

<sup>841</sup> Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency, *History Key Stage 2*, online. Available from <http://curriculum.qcda.gov.uk/key-stages-1-and-2/subjects/history/keystage2/index.aspx>. [Accessed 28<sup>th</sup> December 2010].

<sup>842</sup> Lincolnshire County Council, *Museum of Lincolnshire Life: Activities for KS 1 and KS 2 Pupils*, online. Available from: <http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/visiting/museums/museum-of-lincolnshire-life/schools-and-education/activities-for-ks1-and-ks2-pupils/59424.article>. [Accessed 29<sup>th</sup> December 2010].

government guidelines.<sup>843</sup> It is not surprising that there were parallels with Church Farm Museum, as both sites were operated by Lincolnshire County Council at the time of the interviews. It might be argued that despite its significant agricultural collection, the Museum of Lincolnshire Life did not carry out more agriculturally themed activities as this would generate competition with Church Farm Museum. Once again, the need to meet the demands of the National Curriculum was confirmed by the Collections Manager who commented that it 'absolutely dictates it'.<sup>844</sup>

Spalding Gentlemen's Society Museum did not have a formal education programme, although it welcomed school visits. None of the themes were therefore represented under education in the investigative survey.<sup>845</sup>

The response from North Lincolnshire Museum Service (including Normanby Hall) indicated that none of the themes identified in this research were part of their education programme. Once again, the educational offer focused on the periods covered in Key Stage 2 history such as the Romans, Victorians, and World War Two; education was 'linked to the National Curriculum as much as can be'.<sup>846</sup> The sessions on offer linked to the domestic sphere once again, with the Victorian laundry experience offered to children from foundation level to Key Stage 2.<sup>847</sup> However, North Lincolnshire Museum Service's 2010 education programme did have a session based on farming entitled 'Living with the Land'

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<sup>843</sup> Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency, *History Key Stage 2*, online. Available from <http://curriculum.qcda.gov.uk/key-stages-1-and-2/subjects/history/keystage2/index.aspx>. [Accessed 28<sup>th</sup> December 2010].

<sup>844</sup> M13 MLL.

<sup>845</sup> M14 SGS.

<sup>846</sup> M15 NHCP.

<sup>847</sup> M15 NHCP. North Lincolnshire Museum Service, *Inspired Learning Schools Programme 2010 – 2011*, online. Available from: [http://www.northlincs.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/3E9DA49E-6E6B-4F81-AB62-82971099D0BC/43942/Inspiredlearningnewsletter2010\\_Layout1.pdf](http://www.northlincs.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/3E9DA49E-6E6B-4F81-AB62-82971099D0BC/43942/Inspiredlearningnewsletter2010_Layout1.pdf). [Accessed 29<sup>th</sup> December 2010].

aimed at Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils, which was introduced after the interviews took place. This session aimed to allow children to 'discover more about farming during the Victorian period [and] handle real farming equipment'.<sup>848</sup> This obviously once again links to the Key Stage 2 Victorian topic, and represents the 'changes in work'<sup>849</sup> that should be investigated in this unit as well as the theme of mechanisation explored in this thesis. This clearly demonstrates that it is possible to explore themes that are relevant to Lincolnshire's agriculture within the confines of the National Curriculum, as also demonstrated at Church Farm Museum. This would suggest that creative thinking and a strategic approach could further interweave agricultural and rural history and the National Curriculum in the museums with significant agricultural collections.

As well as the particularities of each site that have already been discussed, there were more general patterns demonstrated in the sample. There was an almost homogenous educational experience on offer to primary school pupils at these sites that was driven by the demands of the National Curriculum. The experiences offered were firmly set in the periods examined in the history curriculum, and they were almost all domestic in focus. These sites did not appear to be catering for Key Stage 3 or 4 pupils at secondary schools, suggesting that they could not easily meet the requirements of the curriculum at these stages. The two farming museums in the sample both managed to incorporate agricultural themes deemed important in this research into their

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<sup>848</sup> North Lincolnshire Museum Service, *Inspired Learning Schools Programme 2010 – 2011*, p. 12, online. Available from: [http://www.northlincs.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/3E9DA49E-6E6B-4F81-AB62-82971099D0BC/43942/Inspiredlearningnewsletter2010\\_Layout1.pdf](http://www.northlincs.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/3E9DA49E-6E6B-4F81-AB62-82971099D0BC/43942/Inspiredlearningnewsletter2010_Layout1.pdf). [Accessed 29<sup>th</sup> December 2010].

<sup>849</sup> Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency, *History Key Stage 2*, online. Available from <http://curriculum.qcda.gov.uk/key-stages-1-and-2/subjects/history/keystage2/index.aspx>. [Accessed 28<sup>th</sup> December 2010].

programmes, although it might be argued that Normanby Hall had done this with more integrity than Church Farm Museum.

It would appear that external political factors have had the greatest influence on the representation of the past through educational activities in the museums surveyed. Nostalgia does not feature in the debate linked to education as provision is determined by the National Curriculum and the need to meet visitor targets. It might be argued that greater subject knowledge might make education provision more diverse within the confines of the curriculum demands. For example Weald and Downland Museum staff have developed medieval farming sessions linked to Key Stage 2 and 3.<sup>850</sup> But, the Weald and Downland Museum also offers schools the opportunity to meet the Victorian Blacksmith and Victorian experience days,<sup>851</sup> and the Museum of English Rural Life, offers sessions on evacuation in World War Two and a Victorian Christmas experience,<sup>852</sup> demonstrating similarity and continuity in provision at other museums the UK.

### **Interpretation**

Museum interpretation can be defined as making the meaning of the objects in museums through various forms of communication.<sup>853</sup> It may take the form of written explanation, artistic impression, reconstruction, comparison, events, or first or third person interpretation through oral history or living history. It is

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<sup>850</sup> Weald and Downland Museum, *Medieval Farming*, online. Available from: <http://www.wealddown.co.uk/Schools/Medieval-farming> [Accessed 1<sup>st</sup> January 2013].

<sup>851</sup> Weald and Downland Museum, *Museum – Led Workshops*, online. Available from: <http://www.wealddown.co.uk/Schools/Museum-led-workshops>. [Accessed 1<sup>st</sup> January 2013].

<sup>852</sup> Museum of English Rural Life, *Schools*, online. Available from: <http://www.reading.ac.uk/merl/LearnatMERL/merl-schools.aspx>. [Accessed 1<sup>st</sup> January 2013].

<sup>853</sup> Hooper-Greenhill, E., *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture* (London: Routledge, 2000). Lord, B., "Foucault's Museum: Difference, Representation, and Genealogy", *Museum and Society*, March 2006, Vol4, No 1, March 2006, pp 11 – 14.

complex in that it not only serves as a form of education, but also creates enjoyment for visitors to museums.<sup>854</sup>

In this case, events, exhibitions, and an internet presence were examined as part of the survey. Fig 10 (p 230) shows that the levels of representation for the nine most common themes in events, exhibitions, and museum web pages follow the pattern of representation in collections, albeit at a slightly lower level. This makes sense in light of the argument regarding the percentage of items on display, namely that they constitute only perhaps one or two percent of the actual holdings of a museum. The important questions relating to the investigation of occurrences in interpretation in this case is how these themes have come to be displayed, and to what extent the selection process has been driven by the public, either directly or indirectly. They are important because they can contribute to discussions on power and control in representing the past. The answers to these questions will further draw out who is the dominant party in deciding which aspects of history are portrayed, the motivation for this, and the impact on the representation of the past.

The occurrences of representation of the themes in events was negligible, with only Spalding Gentlemen's Society, the Museum of Lincolnshire Life, and Church Farm Museum responding positively to this aspect of the survey. Spalding Gentlemen's Society Museum's only event programme is its annual lecture series, which might suggest that if the speakers and lectures change each lecture series the themes identified as being covered by events are not done so on a regular basis. The fact that all the aspects relating to

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<sup>854</sup> Packer, J. and Ballentyne, R., "Motivational Factors and the Visitor Experience: A Comparison of Three Sites", *Curator*, Vol 45, No 3, July 2002, pp 183 – 198.



mechanisation on the survey were covered that year could be attributed one guest lecturer on the programme.<sup>855</sup> Staff from the Museum of Lincolnshire Life indicated that only female labour on the farm featured as part of the events programme (although they did not specify the event) and staff from Church Farm Museum indicated that only traditional skills and knowledge featured in events such as steam threshing. A conclusive decision on what this suggests it impossible from this work. It may suggest that the public are interested in mechanisation, women's labour, and traditional skills and that the museums used their events programming to 'capitalize on opportunities to attract numerous people who are not greatly motivated by culture but have some level of interest',<sup>856</sup> this, it might be argued, was another product of the increasingly target driven 1990s. It might represent the nature of the sites themselves and the working collections that can be used for events. For example Church Farm's working collections were essentially a traction engine and threshing drum at this time, or it could represent the skills and interests of staff and volunteers.

This study did not look at visitor motivation for attending events and therefore there is no data in this thesis to suggest what could motivate people to attend these events. An area for further research might be to examine if the interest is generated by nostalgia, in particular a desire to consume the mythical rural idyll explored at length by academics such as Newby and Burchardt.<sup>857</sup> Research carried out in 1999 by Goulding at Blists Hill demonstrated the impact of

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<sup>855</sup> M14 SGS.

<sup>856</sup> Silberg, T., *Cultural Tourism and Business Opportunities for Museums and Heritage Sites, Paper Presented at Conference of School of Business, University of Victoria, Quality Management in Urban Tourism : Balancing Business and Environment*, November 1994.

<sup>857</sup> Newby, H., *Green and Pleasant Land? Social Change in Rural England* (Hounslow: Wildwood House, 1979). Burchardt, J., *Paradise Lost Rural Idyll and Social Change since 1800* (London: I.B. Taurus, 2002).

nostalgic events on elderly visitors. Discussed at length in the article “Heritage, Nostalgia, and the “Grey” Consumer” is the re-enactment of men returning from war which is presented nostalgically or as Goulding surmises, as ‘memory with the pain taken away’.<sup>858</sup> She suggested that this type of event has the potential to encourage repeat visits to the sites based on the emotions and feelings the event rouses in the visitor.<sup>859</sup> This was confirmed by those interviewed for this research who all agreed that people were bought into the museums by ‘this false sense of nostalgia’.<sup>860</sup> However this comment is made from the staff perspective rather than that of the visitor, which does raise the question of validity. Further research could be undertaken to examine this aspect of the thesis from the visitor perspective if the scope of the investigation was widened. This study therefore asserts that the museums studied have exploited this desire in their events programmes, perhaps focusing on particular types of events such as the Victorian Christmas, which do not necessarily reflect Lincolnshire’s agricultural and rural past accurately, but attract large numbers of visitors. This was reflected in comments made by the Site Coordinator at Church Farm Museum who said:

We’re more about increasing, or maintaining, our visitor figures. It’s difficult because we are expected to do an events programme with very little budget...We’ve got to put on things people want to see.<sup>861</sup>

Just over two years after this interview in October 2010 ‘lack of footfall’,<sup>862</sup> was cited by Lincolnshire County Council as the reason withdrawing funding from

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<sup>858</sup> Goulding, C., “Heritage, Nostalgia, and the “Grey” Consumer”, *Journal of Marketing Practice: Applied Marketing Science*, Vol 5, No 6/7/8, 1999, pp 177 -199, p 178.

<sup>859</sup> Ibid.

<sup>860</sup> MI3 MLL.

<sup>861</sup> MI2 CFM.

Church Farm Museum along with Grantham and Stamford museums in a cost saving exercise.

Fig 10 (p 230) shows that the representation in displays for the nine most common themes follows the pattern of representation in collections, with representation being slightly lower in the exhibitions. This is to be expected as museums tend only to display a fraction of their collections.

The interviews provided site specific information about what or who was shaping the displays at the time of interview, and in most case it did not appear that the desire to represent Lincolnshire's agricultural past autonomously was at the forefront of the professionals' minds. The responses from the Manager of Alford Manor House, the Manager at Normanby Hall, and the Committee Member from Spalding Gentlemen's Society all indicated that staff and volunteers shaped exhibitions at the site, whilst the Site Coordinator at Church Farm Museum declined to answer.<sup>863</sup> However the Collections Manager at the Museum of Lincolnshire Life provided a detailed candid answer that illustrated the influence of the visitor focussed approach developed during the 1990s, and her feelings towards it:

It is very politics driven. We've been restructured so we don't have a site based exhibitions person anymore. The Collections and Community Engagement Teams are teams that aren't really site based. They link across all the museums in the City and the service. So it is really down to that Community Team, and I think that is very much driven by the social

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<sup>862</sup> Author Unknown. "Meeting Speaks Out against Museum Closure Plan", *Stamford Mercury*, 12<sup>th</sup> July 2010. p unknown.

<sup>863</sup> MI1 AMHandHB, MI2 CFM, M14 SGS, M15 NHCP.

trends of the time. You know, this push to dumbing down to make it accessible for more people.<sup>864</sup>

However, it appeared that this approach had had little impact on the agricultural displays at the Museum of Lincolnshire Life or Church Farm Museum, which had largely been left unchanged from the 1980s. This suggested that either the new teams with responsibility did not view agricultural history as having little social relevance, despite Lincolnshire being a largely agricultural and rural county or they had little material evidence to work with to represent contemporary concerns and debates that may involve and attract new groups of visitors. This is well reflected in the information collected in the surveys and was confirmed by the Museum of Lincolnshire Life's Collections Manager who stated that 'I can't think of anything in the collection to do with GM crops, organics, subsidies, and migrant workers'.<sup>865</sup>

One striking feature of Fig 10 (p 230) is that despite being in a digital age none of the sites surveyed affirmed that they used the internet to allow public access to the themes identified in this research. Research by Kravchyna and Hastings suggested that the demand for this service did exist around the time of the interviews:

Virtual museum visitors expect to get needed information about museums collections. They assume that the museums they visit online will offer digital image collections full of paintings, artworks, historic

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<sup>864</sup> M13 MLL.

<sup>865</sup> M13 MLL.

illustrated manuscripts, photographs, drawings, and museum objects - images of items that are not normally accessible.<sup>866</sup>

It would therefore seem that the museums were lacking in this area. It appeared at the time of the interviews that the museum's websites were used for promotional purposes rather than a virtual visit as described by Kravchyna and Hastings,<sup>867</sup> although the Lincolnshire County Council sites were working towards their collections being available on line at the time of the interviews, through a grant funded project.<sup>868</sup> This might be attributed to the fact that the museums surveyed are 'local' in their nature, they concentrate on a relatively small geographic area and have collections and displays relating to that area. The demographic of their stakeholders may also have been a contributing factor in their decision not to develop their websites to have advanced functions.

It is clear that in terms of interpretation nostalgia had a huge impact on the types of events on offer at the museums. Museum staff directly designed events that would appear to the nostalgic desires of the visitor, and were not concerned with the impact on the representation of the past. However, I do not think this is problematic as this method was employed to encourage people to engage with the past in the museum setting, something they may have not done otherwise. It is of interest that external political factors including the justification of existence and value for money though increased visitor numbers was a motivating factor

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<sup>866</sup> Kravchyna, V. and Hastings, S.K., "The Informational Value of Museum Websites", *First Monday: Peer Reviewed Journal on the Internet*, Vol 7, No 2, 4<sup>th</sup> February 2002, online. Available from: [http://131.193.153.231/www/issues/issue7\\_2/kravchyna/](http://131.193.153.231/www/issues/issue7_2/kravchyna/). [Accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2011].

<sup>867</sup> Ibid.

<sup>868</sup> MI3 MLL.

in the types of events selected by museum staff, suggesting that this had a significant role in how the past was re-presented to visitors.

### **Correlation between the historical and museological narratives**

What is interesting about these results is that the coverage of themes in representation do, to some extent, mirror the intensity of representation of the themes in the oral histories collected and the popularity of themes in secondary literature. For example, it is possible to see from the table that female and child gang labour are some of the more popular themes represented by the survey participants, whereas migrant labour sits in the bottom half of the table. In terms of the oral histories collected, female and child gang labour was discussed in almost every interview as most participants had first hand experience of this: either they themselves, or family members had worked as part of these groups, or their family had employed them; experience seemed almost uniform across the county. However, migrant gang labour was discussed much more in the south of the county, and seemed to focus on Irish labourers involved in the potato harvests. Secondary sources also followed this line, with plenty of information available about all the groups except migrant labourers. There was, in fact, only one significant piece of research identified about Irish labourers in Lincolnshire that was however almost thirty years old.<sup>869</sup> A lack of research interest could be attributed to a lack of research material being left in the historical record by this group of people. There are only minor traces left on Lincolnshire farms and in regional cultural references. The gangs of workers would live on the farms during their period of employment, usually in an

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<sup>869</sup> Barber, S., "Irish Migrant Agricultural Labourers in Nineteenth Century Lincolnshire", *Saothar: The Journal of Irish Labour History*, Vol 8, 1982, pp 10 – 23.

outbuilding equipped with somewhere to cook, known colloquially as a 'Paddy Hut'.<sup>870</sup> There are also brief and scant references to Lincolnshire in verses, as discussed by Barber, and indeed Lincolnshire versions of Irish ballads, such as the 'Kerry Recruit'.<sup>871</sup> But as the Irish workers did not tend to settle in this area as they did in other parts of the country, there is little more evidence than this still in existence. This lack of evidence suggests that their transitory nature meant that the impact they had on rural life was immediate and generally lasted for the length of time they were present.

This observation raises further questions about why there is a close correlation between what academics, the general public in Lincolnshire, and the county's museums feel are important themes in Lincolnshire's modern agricultural and rural history. In terms of academic history it could be suggested that these themes are prevalent because they appear in the historical record both globally and nationally.<sup>872</sup> In terms of the museums that participated in the study, it is highly likely that this is because this is what the general public (donors) and museum professionals thought was important during the 1960s and 1970s when mass donating and collecting took place. Whilst exhibitions will have been updated the problems left by mass donation and collection mean that museum professionals have not been able to expand their collections, and therefore their interpretation, to represent changing views on important themes; they have to work with existing collections.

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<sup>870</sup> Mr A. and Mrs A. OH.Southholland.006.

<sup>871</sup> Author Unknown, *Article MT130 Glimpses into the nineteenth century Broadside Ballad Trade*, online. Available from [www.mustrad.org.uk/articles/bbals\\_05htm](http://www.mustrad.org.uk/articles/bbals_05htm). [Accessed 21<sup>st</sup> July 2010].

<sup>872</sup> See Chapters 3 and 4.

## Conclusion

It would be unrealistic to expect museums with a wide remit to represent Lincolnshire's agricultural and rural past to any great extent, although it can be argued that of the sites studied, the specialist museums such as the Museum of Lincolnshire Life (which 'has a rich and varied social history collection [that] reflects and celebrates the culture of Lincolnshire and its people from 1750 to the present day'),<sup>873</sup> Church Farm Museum, Normanby Hall Museum and Country Park ('a fascinating microcosm of North Lincolnshire's rural past')<sup>874</sup> and Hackett Barn should represent a wide range of themes in a variety of ways.

However, no matter how specialist they are museums and the activity of donation and collection are selective and subjective in their nature. This selectivity and subjectivity combined with other external forces such as survival in the material record, logistical issues, desirability of objects, and public demand mean that the past can never be 'truly' recreated in the museum environment. However, there is evidence to suggest that when there are strong relationships between curators, academics, and the public, such representation is at least fuller.

The museums surveyed all had strengths and weaknesses in their representation of Lincolnshire's agricultural past, and whilst each was subject to unique influences on their representation there were common factors impacting

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<sup>873</sup> Lincolnshire County Council, *The Museum of Lincolnshire Life Experience a Cornucopia of Yesteryear (About)*, online. Available from: <http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/visiting/museums/museum-of-lincolnshire-life/about-the-museum-of-lincolnshire-life/>. [Accessed 31<sup>st</sup> December 2010].

<sup>874</sup> North Lincolnshire Council, *Farming Museum at Normanby Hall Museum and Country Park*, online. Available from: <http://www.northlincs.gov.uk/NorthLincs/Leisure/museums/normanbyhall/FarmingMuseum.htm>. [Accessed 31<sup>st</sup> December 2010].



on the representation of the past. It would appear that in this case the donors were the dominant force in shaping what the museums held in their collections, and that collecting, particularly contemporary collecting, had become static. External political factors appeared to have impacted greatly on the museums surveyed, with government policy determining education programmes, social inclusion agendas influencing interpretation, and a culture driven by performance indicators and targets putting pressure on museum staff. Whilst a visitor focus was needed in museums and welcomed by academics such as Black who claimed in 2005 that, 'It is a wonderful time to be working in museums - at long last audiences are being given the priority they deserve',<sup>875</sup> this thesis concludes that this shift in professional practice has resulted in a detachment from the core activity and aim of the museum – to collect and represent a particular historical theme as determined by the museum's mission statement. The shift in practice from the curator to the manager is of particular concern as it is impossible to represent the diversity and richness of the past without understanding the subject matter being dealt with. Museums have a duty to engage the public with the past in a way that lets them create their own narratives, and without an academic underpinning museums cannot do this in a meaningful way. However, this does not mean that there should be a shift back to curatorship at the expense of museum management, as museums are accountable to the public in a number of ways and do need to be managed effectively. This actually presents an opportunity for museums to work collaboratively with academics and members of the public that have the specialist knowledge currently lacking in the sector.

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<sup>875</sup> Black, G., *The Engaging Museum: Developing Museums for Visitor Involvement* (London: Routledge, 2005), p ix.

## Introduction

I set out to examine the role of historians, museologists and the public in putting forward narratives of agricultural change in twentieth century Lincolnshire, and to see what role, if any, nostalgia played in these narratives. It is apparent from this research that historical narratives have become polarised into the nostalgic popular, and the anti-nostalgic academic.

Nostalgia has had very little impact on museological narratives on agricultural history in the county's museums. This does not mean that nostalgia was not a motivating factor in people making donations and visiting museums, and it was clearly part of the expected, modern, museum experience. Nor does it mean that nostalgia was omitted from museological narratives; it had become an embedded part of museology. But, it was not the most significant factor impacting on how the past is presented in the museums studied in this thesis.

I also wanted to suggest that far from being problematic in relation to scholarly and public histories as suggested in some key academic works from the 1980s and 1990s,<sup>876</sup> nostalgia has the power to enhance historical narratives. It does this as it is a process by which people engage with and make sense of the past, and allows the formation of personal narratives through this connection.<sup>877</sup>

Contributors to this project were able to offer new perspectives on the past through the collection of oral histories, which is often criticised for its nostalgic

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<sup>876</sup> Hewison, R., *The Heritage Industry: Britain in a Climate of Decline* (London: Methuen, 1987). Bennett, T., *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (Routledge: London, 1995).

<sup>877</sup> Goldman, R. and Papson, S., "Advertising in the Age of Hypersignification", *Theory, Culture and Society*, Vol 11, No 3, August 1994, pp 23 – 53.

leanings. In the museum context, nostalgia was found to influence the types of events museums put on, and arguably the desire to consume a nostalgic past by museum audiences had ensured the continuation of historical narratives that might otherwise be lost, such as the stories of female agricultural workers.<sup>878</sup>

Whilst it was established that nostalgia is not problematic as once considered in the historical and museum contexts, it was demonstrated that there are were other factors that influenced the representation of the past to a greater extent. The first was historians' continued reliance on traditional approaches to historical research,<sup>879</sup> resulting in similar historical narratives being produced repeatedly. Consequently, there was not the room for the development of new histories that represent the variety of the human perspective. The thesis suggested that use of sources considered nostalgic, such as oral history and memoirs, may allow for the development of these new narratives. The second factor was that in museums, professionals still had to deal with the mass donation and collection of agricultural objects in the 1960s and 1970s. This meant that the impact of museum donation and collection, and in particular the exploration of who drives what is held in museum collections (the public in the form of the donor or the museum professional) has not been fully considered to date. This research argued that whilst museums in Lincolnshire cannot enter in to this debate until their collections are managed effectively; there is the potential to develop more balanced relationships through collaborative working.

The shift in museum practice in the 1990s, which resulted in the focus on the importance of professional management skills rather than academic knowledge

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<sup>878</sup> See chapter 6.

<sup>879</sup> See chapter 2.

and the external political influences on museum staff, was also found to be more influential on the representation of the past than nostalgia.<sup>880</sup> The museum professionals interviewed were highly qualified and effective managers, but they did not necessarily have the specialist subject knowledge to create complex historical narratives through object collection and interpretation. They had also come under increased pressure to maintain and increase visitor numbers and to engage with new audiences in recent years. Employing more staff is not the answer to this problem, but collaborative working may offer the opportunity to remedy this issue. Universities can offer the specialist historical knowledge needed to create new narratives, and the public may offer specific experience and knowledge that can aid in ensuring these narratives offer different stories, opposing viewpoints, and points of debate. This has led to the conclusion that historians, museologists, and museum professionals now need to move away from debates solely surrounding the pitfalls of nostalgia that have dominated discussions on representation for the last three decades in academic and public history in order to examine these other key factors and their influence on how the past is presented in narrative and object form. Exploration of these issues will develop theoretical and practical approaches in representing the past in both disciplines, and will offer the public new perspectives, and more complex narratives, on well established historical themes.

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<sup>880</sup> See chapter 6.

## **Key research questions and conclusions**

This thesis sought to test the hypothesis that

the subjective nature of donation and collection, a focus on the importance of professional skills rather than academic knowledge, and external political agendas, have impacted on the representation of Lincolnshire's twentieth-century agricultural history in written and museological narratives, and are far more problematic than nostalgia in relation to the presentation of the past.

In order to conduct this test four broad research questions were developed, all of which were accompanied by several detailed sub questions. The first area under scrutiny was the popular orthodoxy on changes in agricultural practice between 1850 and 1980 and the reason for its emergence and acceptance. The relationship between the prevailing view and the types of sources typically used by agricultural historians was examined, and the possibility of creating a new historical narrative was explored. The second key area to be examined was the shift from the prior to modernity, with the specific aim of ascertaining at what point in the twentieth century modern agriculture emerged in Lincolnshire. The key features of traditional and modern agricultural practice were identified in order to distinguish which practices could act as indicators of continuity and change, these features were then studied to see if change could be identified at particular point in time. I then searched for patterns of continuity and change across the county.

The third area of investigation was how museums represented agricultural history. The types of historical narratives that appear in museums were examined, and their relationship to the accepted and new historical narratives was considered. I also sought to answer why or why not there might have been a correlation between the historical and the public narratives, whether or not the past presented in the museum context was steeped in nostalgia, and was this problematic. The fourth line of enquiry focussed on ascertaining why agricultural history was represented in particular ways in the county's museums. The main factors influencing the representation of the past were identified and explored in a bid to discern which the strongest influences on how the past was represented were, and how and why these factors impacted on the museum narratives.

The first two questions were addressed in chapters 2, 3, and 4 of the thesis. The key conclusions to these questions were that the prevailing attitude on the emergence of industrialised and modern agriculture was that change occurred directly after World War Two. Rather than simply being wrong this argument is an over-simplified view of a complex period of continuity and change, which has come in to being because of three factors; the traditional approaches used by historians to investigate and explain agricultural history,<sup>881</sup> the complete rejection of nostalgic sources in prospect histories,<sup>882</sup> and the acceptance of the assumptions that modern practices did not exist before World War Two and that government invention immediately after the war resulted in the uniform adoption of modern practices.<sup>883</sup> The identification of these issues is important to the

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<sup>881</sup> See chapter 2.

<sup>882</sup> Ibid.

<sup>883</sup> Ibid.

research because history cannot develop as a discipline without the critical review of theoretical and practical approaches, and historians cannot contribute new knowledge to historical problems without challenging existing historical narratives. A critical review of social and cultural history did start in the early 2000s with Fass calling for social history methodologies to be applied to questions about cultural activities,<sup>884</sup> and there has been a shift in both social and cultural history to reflect this new way of working. However, research carried out for this thesis indicated that this approach had not been applied to agricultural history, which allowed for this idea to be trialled in order to meet a call by Woods to temporally reposition agricultural change in the twentieth century.<sup>885</sup> The attempt to achieve this was successful and a new historical narrative that better reflects the complexity of the shift from a prior to modern culture was produced.<sup>886</sup> In order to produce this narrative indicators of traditional and modern practice, and therefore continuity and change had to be developed. Extensive secondary research led to indicators being developed that identified a shift from traditional to modern practices in terms of land ownership patterns across the county, fieldscape patterns, power sources on the farm, the size and diversity of the agricultural labour force, the nature of agricultural labour, and patterns in farming practice.

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<sup>884</sup> Fass, P., "Cultural and Social History: Some Reflections on a Continuing Dialogue", *Journal of Social History*, Special Issue, Vol 37, No 1, Autumn 2003, pp 39 - 46.

<sup>885</sup> Woods, A., "Rethinking the History of Modern Agriculture: British Pig Production, C1910-65", *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol 23, No 2, 2012, pp 165 – 191. See chapter 4.

<sup>886</sup> Ewart Evans, G., *Where Beards Wag All: The Relevance of Oral Tradition* (London: Faber, 1970). Ewart Evans, G., *Ask the Fellows Who Cut the Hay* (London: Faber and Faber, 1975). Ewart Evans, G., *The Crooked Scythe: An Anthology of Oral History* (London: Faber and Faber, 1994).

The thesis clearly demonstrated in chapter 3 that there was a gradual decline in child and female labour throughout the twentieth century except during the extraordinary times of war.<sup>887</sup> However, there was relative continuity in the need for a large workforce comprising women and children, until the 1960s and 1970s. This was directly linked to the final removal of real horsepower from the farm, and the wide-spread adoption of large and complex modern machinery. This does not mean that modern machinery and mechanical process did not appear until this time as they were utilised in the arable uplands from the 1930s onwards. What happened from the 1950s onwards was that the development and application of innovation gained pace, and highly industrialised, modern, agriculture, become common practice in Lincolnshire until the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>888</sup> It was at this point in time that the changes in practice were so dramatic and widespread that farming in Lincolnshire changed irrevocably.

In terms of changes in the labour patterns of women and children, and mechanisation, farmers in the upland areas of the county, and in particular the Wolds, were often the first to adopt new practices. This is linked to the fact that holdings in the upland areas tended to be owned by large scale, wealthy, landowners who could afford to invest in new technology, crops, and land. These areas were also where the poorer soils lay, which incentivised landowners to invest in their farms, and farms to adopt new practices to maintain the productivity, and therefore the profitability of the farm. In the lowland areas, particularly the fenlands in the south of the county, smallholders (owner occupiers and tenants) had the advantage of working rich soil which did

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<sup>887</sup> See chapter 3.

<sup>888</sup> See chapter 4.



not need the same levels of intervention to maintain its profitability. In these areas then, changes in practice occurred at a much slower rate, and therefore at a later date.

It is clear from this research that child labour was an integral part of the agricultural workforce until the 1970s. Children were used primarily for handwork on root crops, for harvesting cereal crops, and for animal husbandry well into the mid twentieth century. Gangs of school children from across the county were also mobilised during and after World War Two (into the 1950s) to compensate for labour and food shortages. It would appear that children helping on family farms were still common in the south of the county well into the 1960s. Several factors contributed to child labour no longer being required or considered acceptable on farms in Lincolnshire. Mechanisation gathered pace in the 1960s, which meant that there was a significant drop in the amount of labour needed to harvest crops, and resulted in farms becoming much more dangerous places to work. Farmers from across the county also moved away from keeping livestock in the 1970s due to falling profits, which was a traditional area of work for children. Finally, education legislation raised the school leaving age to 16, removing children from the core labour force. However, it is impossible to gauge the extent of child labour on farms because the tasks they traditionally undertook was not considered proper work in farming communities. This, coupled with the fact that children working for their families were unpaid and therefore unofficial labour, has resulted in them being largely hidden from historical narratives.

Women were also a significant part of the agricultural work force during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, working as gang labourers, day labourers, and free family labour. Agricultural labour was, in the main, considered unacceptable for women apart from during times of economic and social stress such as the two world wars, and so they were also a largely invisible labour force. Much like the child labourers they were employed for basic labouring tasks relating to root crops and cereal harvests. As farming became highly mechanised less female labour was utilised by the county's farmers, although where women were still used they retained their traditional jobs. For example on Holland Fen near Boston they moved from following the spinner to pick potatoes to riding on top of a potato-harvesting machine sorting the potatoes after the machine had lifted them from the ground. Similarly to child labourers, the tasks women undertook were not necessarily viewed as proper work, and the part-time nature of gang labour, and the unpaid work completed for families, supported this belief. This has led traditional historical narratives to suggest, incorrectly, that many women became divorced from the land in the 1970s. For example contemporary research carried out by Bishop Grosseteste College in 1978 suggests that most women in rural East Lindsey were housewives.<sup>889</sup>

Mechanisation was not consistent in Lincolnshire. Once again large-scale cereal landowners and farmers in the upland areas, particularly the Wolds, were quick to adopt steam and harvest technology, and the internal combustion engine. Those smallholders and smaller farmers in the lowland areas tended to maintain the usage of older technology longer. For example the research shows

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<sup>889</sup> Bishop Grosseteste College, Centre for Rural Social Studies, *A Survey of Women's Institutes* (Lincoln: Bishop Grosseteste College, 1978).

a distinct pattern of the retention of real horse power well in the 1960s. In fact there is a clear overlap between the use of horses and tractors, and the tractor did not replace horses immediately. In some cases this is because there was no benefit for the farmer in investing in or utilising a tractor, but more often than not horses were kept for sentimental reasons and because of resistance to change. Old fashioned implements like horse-drawn binders were consistently used until the 1950s for harvesting, and combine harvesters were not adopted quickly, apart from in the Wolds, and were not commonplace until the 1960s. Root crops such as potatoes and sugar beet grown on the clay marshlands were also harvested by hand well into the 1960s. This suggests that modern, or industrial, farming as characterised by mechanisation was not commonplace in Lincolnshire until the 1960s.

The second two questions were answered in chapters 5 and 6 of the thesis, which examined how the case studies explored in part two were represented in the county's museums, if there was any correlation with the themes presented in accepted historical narratives relating to agricultural change in Lincolnshire, and why they had come to be represented in a particular way.

The museum survey and interviews demonstrated that there were similarities between the themes of the established historical narratives and those presented in the museum context. However, the museums that took part in this study generally did not present changes in practice to the same extent that narrative histories discussed them, and certainly omitted aspects presented in the new narratives produced in the case studies in part two. Whilst it would be unrealistic to expect museums with a broad social history remit to represent Lincolnshire's

agricultural and rural past in detail, it was surprising to find that specialist museums such as the Museum of Lincolnshire Life, Church Farm Museum, Normanby Hall Museum and Country Park, and Hackett Barn struggled to present agricultural change. I expected them to be able to present complex narratives because they were agricultural museums, but came to recognise that the impact of donating and collecting patterns, gaps in knowledge, and the pressure of external political agendas meant that this was impossible.

It was concluded that the most significant factor affecting the museums in the sample in their ability to collect and present the past was the selective and subjective nature of donation and collection. Whilst there were issues of survival, a key influence on what donations museums received might be attributed to relationship that donors have with objects. People ascribe meaning to objects and associate them with their social identity; they select objects to gift to a museum that they 'feel' are significant.<sup>890</sup> Whilst nostalgia might be triggered by these objects, meaning and social identity are separate issues that are related to how we make sense of our own pasts and our place in the world.<sup>891</sup> This issue was compounded by museum staff not having the knowledge and confidence to make fully informed decisions about rejecting or accepting objects into the collection. Perhaps more importantly museum staff

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<sup>890</sup> Gosden, C. and Marshall, Y., "The Cultural Biography of Objects", *World Archaeology*, Vol 31, No 2, October 1999, pp 169 – 178. Gilchrist, R. "Archaeological Biographies: Realizing Human Lifecycles", *World Archaeology*, Vol 31, No 3, 2000, pp 325 – 328. Thomas, J., *Time, Culture and Identity* (London: Routledge, 1996). Tilley, C., *An Ethnography of the Neolithic: Early Prehistoric Societies in Southern Scandinavia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). Hoskins, J., "Agency, Biography, and Objects", *The Handbook of Material Culture*, Tilley, C. (ed) (London: Sage, 2006), pp 74 – 85.

<sup>891</sup> Ibid.

were hindered by logistical problems created by indiscriminate collecting in the 1960s and 1970s, including backlogs in documentation and storage issues.<sup>892</sup>

External political factors, particularly in terms of visitor engagement and education, appeared to have impacted greatly on the way in which the museums surveyed selected which aspects of the past would be represented in their interpretation. Government policy clearly determined what was included in education programmes, resulting in several museums offering similarly themed activities. The museums were very visitor focussed, and there was a clear emphasis on maintaining and increasing visitor figures and attracting new audiences to the sites, rather than addressing the almost overwhelming collections issues. The pressure to meet visitor targets resulted in the overt utilisation of nostalgic desire to attract visitors to the museums surveyed through events evocative of a mythical bygone era. This did not appear to be problematic in terms of people's understanding of the past as this mythical representation of the past was often countered by less nostalgic exhibitions that the visitor could engage with once inside the museum; nostalgia was more of a marketing tool in the museums than anything else.<sup>893</sup>

The museological aspect of the work suggests that museologists and museum professionals must refocus their debates on the representation of the past to reflect the other issues highlighted in this work. These are new areas of discussion and a significant body of material in relation to these subject areas does not yet exist. This study, then, has made a new contribution to our understanding of how and why the past is represented in museums in the way it

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<sup>892</sup> See chapter 6.

<sup>893</sup> Ibid.

is and provides a platform for further debate on managing collections, levels of specialist skills and knowledge in the sector, and how political agendas have changed museums in the last twenty years. Whilst it cannot offer a definite solution to these issues, as this is new information requiring further research, it might be used as a platform to work towards practical solutions in the future. This may not be possible until museums have overcome the collections management challenges they face, and have well catalogued and thoroughly researched collections, and should be addressed through collaborative working.

### **Limitations**

The approach of this thesis posed several interesting challenges that had to be overcome to make it a cohesive piece of work. Key historical themes that were represented in the narrative and public histories had to be identified and explored in chapters 3, 4, and 6. Whilst this did provide focus for the thesis it was also restrictive in some ways. The examination of two sets of histories within an 80,000 word limit meant that only two historical themes could be explored in depth. Whilst these two topics are well explored, there are themes that held significance in the oral histories collected and the museums surveyed that could not be included. It was particularly challenging in ensuring that the two distinct aspects of the thesis linked closely to one another and that they did not remain entirely separate from one another. These challenges perhaps explain why narrative and public history are often considered separately from one another, although they are both inextricably linked. To quote Scheiner

Yes, writing makes history. And in order to build history, it uses oral narratives and cultural processes as they develop in space and time, crystallizing intangible references in the form of archival documents, in successive operations of preservation and accumulation.<sup>894</sup>

Scheiner identified that it is accepted that there is a distinction in the ways that history is created; in writing (the production of narrative histories) and through the production, preservation, and collection of material culture (the museological approach), which may suggest that historians prefer to deal with one form or the other. By dealing with both the narrative and the material this thesis has been able to consider how the past is re-presented in narrative and material forms and why there are differences in the aspects of the past that are selected for these media when they use the same historical approaches and draw on the same historical material to tell the story of the past. This is essential as the general public tend to engage with both narrative and museological forms, drawing on both to develop their understanding of the past and create and disseminate historical narratives.

### **Future research**

There are several areas of research arising from this thesis that warrant further serious investigation. The first is the development of the indicators of continuity and change, and traditional and modern agriculture, alongside the utilisation of new historical approaches, into a model that can be applied to other areas of agricultural practice and geographical areas of England. This could aid in the

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<sup>894</sup> Scheiner, T. C., *Museology and the Interpretation of Reality: The Discourse of History (Provocative Paper)*, Date Unknown, online. Available from: [http://www.museoliniers.org.ar/museologia/ICOFOM\\_TerezaScheiner-in.pdf](http://www.museoliniers.org.ar/museologia/ICOFOM_TerezaScheiner-in.pdf). [Accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2012].

production of a more complex and representative picture of agricultural change in twentieth century Britain, creating new, detailed, historical narratives that reflect commonalities and particularities in experience.

The second is the further exploration of women and children as labourers on family farms from the 1970s to the present day. It is clear that whilst official documents tell the historian they are not working on the farms, it is likely that the reality of the situation is very different. There is the potential to establish whether or not they have continued to contribute to the agricultural economy, and the difference this has made to the survival of family farms in ever challenging times. Secondary literature would suggest that they ceased to be part of the workforce in the 1960s, but some of the oral histories collected for the thesis suggest that this might not be the case. For example, Rahikainen suggests that education prevailed in the battle to keep children in school and away from agricultural work in the 1960s, whereas Mrs C. was adamant that she had worked on her father's farm during the 1980s.<sup>895</sup> And whilst Strauss, Wilkinson, and Bowlby, all mention the resurgence of the Gangmaster and gang labour in the 1970s, they do not explicitly mention women as being part of that workforce.<sup>896</sup>

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<sup>895</sup> Rahikainen, M., *Centuries of Child Labour: European Experiences from the 17<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004). Miss C. OH.Eastlindsey.001.

<sup>896</sup> Strauss, K., *Challenging Hegemonic Deregulation? The UK Gangmaster Licensing Authority as a Model for the Regulation of Casual Work*, online. Available from <http://www.geog.ox.ac.uk/research/transformations/wpapers/wpg09-18.pdf>. [Accessed 4<sup>th</sup> November 2012]. Strauss, K., "Unfree Again: Social Reproduction, Flexible Labour Markets and the Resurgence of Gang Labour in the UK", *Antipode*, Vol 45, No 1, January 2013, pp 180 – 197. Wilkinson, M., *Forced Labour in the UK and the Gangmasters Licensing Authority* (Hull: Contemporary Slavery Research Centre, 2010). Bowlby, C., *Gangmasters are back with a Vengeance*, online. Available from: <http://www.historyextra.com/feature/gangmasters-are-back-vengeance>. [Accessed 24<sup>th</sup> November 2012].



The third area for future research must be the call for the traditional nostalgia debate to be laid to rest, and the exploration instead of the impact of donation and collection, subject specialism, and external political factors on how the past is represented in museums. This requires further investigation if museums are to be able to offer richer, more diverse, relative narratives relating to the agricultural past to their visitors. The model of questionnaires and interviews is fairly well established,<sup>897</sup> but wider testing within agricultural museums of different types is required to substantiate the results, open up discussions on the issues, and to seek solutions to the problem. At a time of distinct changes in funding, it may be of use to consider how new pressures to generate income through visitor engagement may impact on these collections in particular.

This thesis, then, has tackled the historical and museological questions posed, to contribute new knowledge and understanding to the field. But, it has also raised points that warrant further investigation and which could form the basis of post-doctoral research.

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<sup>897</sup> Keynon, J. "Collecting in the Twenty First Century", *Collections Management*, Fahy, A. (ed) (London: Routledge, 1995), pp 119 – 122. Ross, M., "Interpreting the New Museology", *Museum and Society*. Vol 2, No 2, July 2004, pp 84 – 103.

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**Interviews (Oral History)**

OH.Southholland.001	Cllr Bray
OH.Southholland.002	Mr Smith
OH.Southholland.003	Mrs Jackson
OH.Southholland.004	Mr Brighton
OH.Southholland.005	Mr and Mrs Higham
OH.Southholland.006	Mr and Mrs Ashton
OH.Southholland.007	Miss Padley
OH.Southholland.008	Mr and Mrs Greetham
OH.Southholland.009	Mr Watts
OH.Southholland.010	Mr Brown and Mr Bell
OH.Bostonborough.001	Group of People – unusable
OH.Bostonborough.002	Mr and Mrs Ulliyat
OH.Bostonborough.003	Mr Bourne and Mr Briggs
OH.Bostonborough.004	Mr and Mrs Bailey
OH.Bostonborough.005	Mr and Mrs Dawson
OH.Southkesteven.001	Mr Harrison
OH.Southkesteven.002	Mr and Mrs Perkins
OH.Southkesteven.003	Mr Genever
OH.Northkesteven.001	Mr Seymour
OH.Northkesteven.002	Mrs Hewitt and Mother Mrs Wilkins
OH.Northkesteven.003	Mrs Sardeson – meeting nothing recorded

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OH.Northkesteven.004	Mr Bannister
OH.Northkesteven.005	Mr Line
OH.Northkesteven.006	Mr Marsh
OH.Northkesteven.007	Mr Scarborough and Mrs Read
OH.Northkesteven.008	Mr Macham – meeting nothing recorded
OH.Eastlindsey.001	Mr Casey Snr and Jnr, Mrs Carr
OH.Eastlindsey.002	Mr Read
OH.Eastlindsey.003	Mr and Mrs Kelsey
OH.Eastlindsey.004	Mr Wood
OH.EastLindsey.005	Mrs Hayes
OH.Eastlindsey.006	Mrs Bowers
OH.EastLindsey.007	Mr Jackson
OH.Eastlindsey.008	Mr Farrow
OH.Eastlindsey.009	Mr Waters
OH.Westlindsey.001	Mr Longston
OH.Westlindsey.002	Mrs Major and Mrs Sykes
OH.Westlindsey.003	Mr and Mrs Laming
OH.Westlindsey.004	Mr Brownlow
OH.Westlindsey.005	Mr and Mrs Cliff
OH.Westlindsey.006	Mrs Hather
OH.Northeastlincs.001	Mr Snell
OH.Northeastlincs.002	Mr Whitten

Abigail Hunt (University of Lincoln): Oral History Project  
Copyright and Consent form for Oral History Recordings

The purpose of this form is to enable the University of Lincoln to permanently keep and use the recordings of individuals made by Abigail Hunt to illustrate her research. This form will also allow Abigail Hunt to use the recordings in her thesis and in future publications relating to this work.

In respect of the content of a sound recording made by and, or, being deposited with the University of Lincoln, consisting of the recollection of a contributor and constituting a literary work as defined by the Copyright, Designs and Patent Act 1988:

As present owner of the copyright in the contributor content (i.e. the words spoken in the interview), I hereby assign copyright to the University of Lincoln.

I hereby waive any moral rights which I presently own in relation to this work on the understanding that the content will not be used in a derogatory manner and that the author of the contribution will be correctly identified in all uses of it.

I understand that no payment is due to me for this assignment and consent.

In assigning my copyright, I understand that I am giving the University of Lincoln the right to use and make available the content of the recorded interview in the following ways:

- Use in schools, universities, colleges and other educational establishments, including use in a thesis, dissertation or similar research.
- Public performance lectures or talks.
- Use in publications, including print, audio or video cassettes, or CD Rom.
- Public reference purposes in libraries, museums, archives, or public records offices.
- Use on radio or television.
- Publication worldwide on the internet.

Abigail Hunt (University of Lincoln): Oral History Project  
 Copyright and Consent form for Oral History Recordings

I also understand that in assigning my copyright I am giving Abigail Hunt the right to use the content of the recorded interview in the following ways:

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- Public performance lectures or talks in relation to the thesis or similar research for the University of Lincoln.
- Use in publications, including print, audio or video cassettes, or CD Rom in relation to the thesis or similar research for the University of Lincoln.
- Use on radio or television in relation to the thesis or similar research for the University of Lincoln.
- Publication worldwide on the internet in relation to the thesis or similar research for the University of Lincoln. Do you want your name disclosed: YES/NO

Signed:..... Date.....

Print Name:.....

Address.....

.....

Postcode:.....

Telephone:.....

Email:.....

Signed:..... Date.....

Print Name: A Hunt

---

If you need any further information relating to the recorded interview please contact:  
 Andrew Walker The Faculty of Media and Humanities, Department of Humanities, The University of Lincoln, Brayford Pool, Lincoln LN6 7TS, 01522 882000.

## Key Themes and areas

Subjects will not be asked about all areas. These are guides for interviewing.

### Childhood Memories

- Where they grew up
- Schools and education and relationship to agriculture
- Rites of passage
- Leisure time
- Going to work and learning skills
- Parents jobs and roles

### Community

- What does the term 'community' mean to you
- How have communities changed
- Exit and influx of people and the effect it has had on communities
- Where did people go and where have they come from
- Is their still a 'Lincolnshire' dialect?
- Tensions and divisions in society
- Difference between classes in society and how this has changed
- Community activities, festivals celebration
- Leisure
- Rural housing – prices, reuse/conversion of farm buildings
- Role of religion in community
- Relationships between landowner and labourer

### Employment

- Changing levels of labour needed
- Key roles on the farm
- Multi employment
- Women and children on the farm
- Domestic Service
- Migrant workers – have the groups of people changed and are they settling, what they bring with them
- Gang workers and labour
- Traditional crafts and trades and their disappearance and the link to agriculture
- Politics/wages/unions
- Government and Europe

### Folk life and Customs

- Particular customs related to agriculture
- Are there customs and traditions you know of that have died out
- Dialect – words or terms no longer used
- Holidays
- Leisure time
- Distinctions of culture

### Skills and Knowledge

- How did you learn about farming and trades
- Apprenticeships
- How did you pass knowledge on

### Practice

- Horses on the farm
- Steam, threshing contractors
- Tractors on the farm and difference they made
- Innovations in technology and the difference they have made
- Organics
- Relationships with the processing industries and meeting demands of this
- Competing in a global market
- Marketing products
- Diversification

### The Rural Idyll

- How do you think people view farming and the countryside
- Do you think images shown in the media are realistic – why
- Public perception of Lincolnshire and is it right
- How would you describe the reality of living in rural Lincolnshire

### Museums and heritage sites

- Visited museums in Lincolnshire
- Do you think they tell the story of rural life well
- What do you like
- What's missing



A Hunt

[REDACTED]

T: [REDACTED]

E: [REDACTED]

24/02/2008

Re: University of Lincoln PhD Project

Dear Sir or Madam

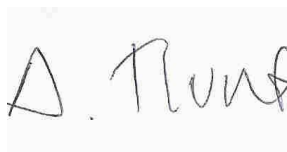
I am a PhD student at the University of Lincoln researching changes in agricultural practice and rural culture in Lincolnshire between 1930 and 2000, and its representation in the county's museums.

I have produced a brief survey which is designed to provide a broad overview of which themes within agricultural and culture change identified in my research are represented in museums and heritage sites. I would be very grateful if you could complete the survey and return it to me in the stamped addressed enveloped included in this letter. If you would like to contribute to my research further, by answering a more detailed questionnaire, or featuring as a case study in my thesis (which will involve a site visit and interview), please indicate this on the survey.

If you would like more information about my research before completing the survey, or have any information that might assist with my thesis please contact me using the details above.

Thank you for your assistance with this project.

Yours Faithfully



Mrs Abi Hunt BA (Hons) PGDip AMA

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List of Museum Surveyed

- Alford Manor House and Hackett Barn
- Ayscoughfee Hall Museum
- Baysthorpe House
- Boston Guildhall Museum
- Burghley House and Estate
- Burgh Le Marsh Mill
- Burgh Le Marsh Museum
- Church Farm Museum
- Doddington Hall
- Ellis Mill
- Elsham Hall
- Fenscape Discovery Centre
- Gainsborough Heritage Centre
- Grantham Museum
- Grimsthorpe Castle
- Hallgarth collection (Grimsby Library)
- Heckington Mill
- Kirton in Lindsey Mill
- Lincoln Central Library
- Louth Museum
- Newark Town Museums
- Normanby Hall Country Park and the Farming Museum

- North East Lincolnshire Archives
- North Lincolnshire Museum
- Maud Foster Mill
- Museum of Lincolnshire Life
- Pinchbeck Drainage Engine
- Sibsey Trader Mill
- Sleaford Virtual Museum
- Stamford Museum
- The Lincolnshire Archives
- Spalding Bulb and Horticultural Museum
- Spalding Gentlemen's Society
- Wainfleet Museum
- Wisbech and Fenland Museum

Appendices

Appendix 6

A Hunt University of Lincoln PhD Project

Name of Museum :

Main theme of museum:

Time period covered by museum:

Contact Name:

Contact Details:

Times you are available:

Would you be prepared to take part in a more in-depth survey:

Yes/No

Theme represented in (please tick)						
Theme 1939 - 2000	Collections	Education	Events	Displays	On Line	Other (Please state)
Female labour on the farm						
Child labour on the farm						
Migrant labour on the farm						
Gang labour on the farm						
Effects of Mechanisation on labour						
Social structures on the farm and in rural communities						
Traditional skills and knowledge						

Theme 1939 - 2000	Collections	Education	Events	Displays	On Line	Other (Please state)
Change from horse to tractor power						
Introduction of new machinery						
Continued development of machinery						
Effect of processing industries on farming						
The effect of farming on the environment						
The use of pesticides and artificial fertilisers on the land						
The organic movement						
Importance of the 'Market Town'						
Changes in communities						
Community celebrations and traditions linked to farming						
Reuse of farming buildings for housing						
Lincolnshire dialects						

Interview questions for Museum Professionals

Collecting (in terms of agricultural and rural collections)

1. What or who predominately drives collecting in your museum?

- Donors (who are they?)
- Staff and their knowledge/interests
- Existing collections
- Current policies and strategies

1. Is there tradition of collecting particular areas of social history within your organisation? For example things that might come under the heading of 'folklife'/traditional skills etc.

2. Do you think that gender impacts on your collecting, for example are men collecting and donating agricultural items?

3. Are there particular types of items that are easier to collect due to survival, size etc. Equally are there any areas of rural/agricultural history that are hard to collect, for example the stories of migrant workers?

4. Are you actively engaging in collecting contemporary objects?

- Ways of collecting information utilised
- Limitations

6. Is your collecting effected by private collectors? Do you find there are gaps in your collections because of the popularity of collecting certain objects, e.g. steam engines or tractors? Are you able to capitalise on slumps in markets etc?

7. Are there any issues that relate specifically to your museum in relation to collecting agricultural and rural objects?

### Interpretation

1. Who or what predominately drives interpretation in your museum?

- Staff and their knowledge/interests
- Visitor interests
- Local people
- Strengths in collections
- Current Policies and Strategies
- Funding opportunities

...and how have interpreted themes been selected?

2. To what extent do you feel nostalgia, and the public's desire to engage in nostalgic memory shapes your exhibition and event programmes?

3. To what extent are you able to engage in contemporary popular debates or controversial issues, e.g. farming and the environment, organics, rural housing?  
What sort of limitations are there?

4. To what extent are your exhibitions representative of your collections?

5. What drives the choice of event you might run?

- Historical importance
- Public demand
- Opportunity to raise income
- Links to collections
- Staff knowledge and interests

6. Do you feel there are innovative or new ways agricultural/rural collections can be interpreted to the public?



7. Are particular objects more desirable to display because of their aesthetic value?

8. Why do you think that of all that responded to the survey do not use the internet to enhance public access to their collections?

### Education

1. How far does the National Curriculum shape your schools programme?

2. How far does modern agriculture and rural life feature in the NC?

3. Do you find that meeting the needs of the NC means that you are encouraged to focus on certain areas of rural life; for example Women during World War Two and Children during Victorian times/WW2?

4. Does this mean that other important aspects of rural history are left out of educational activities for children?

5. If there are changes in the NC how far to you have to respond to retain your audience?

6. Are you able to explore themes that don't feature in the NC in other lifelong learning activities?

3. Information required for further analysis (if available)

- Mission or vision statement
- Development strategy or forward plan
- Collection and disposal policies
- Interpretation policy
- Education policy
- A history of the museum

**Museum response codes and interviewees**

MI 1 AMHandHB	Alford Manor House and Hackett Barn	Sara Blair – Manning
MI 2 CFM	Church Farm Museum	Janice Nikolls
MI 3MLL and CFM	Museum of Lincolnshire Life	Sara Basquill
MI 4 SGS	Spalding Gentlemen’s Society	Stuart Gibbard
MI5 NHCP	Normanby Hall Country Park	Rose Nicholson (not recorded but notes taken)