

6. OVERARCHING RESEARCH THEMES

The published Research Assessment and Agenda defined a series of four overarching research themes and, within each of these, a number of sub-themes¹. This useful scheme has been amplified here to take account of subsequent work and stakeholder comments, with further subdivision of certain themes and the addition of an environmental research theme.

For ease of reference, these overarching research themes are present here in a tabular format with indications of period correlations.

¹ Cooper, N.J. 2006. Cross-period research and the foundation of a research strategy, in Cooper, N.J. (ed) *The Archaeology of the East Midlands*, 287-291.

Period Overarching themes	Palaeolithic	Meso-lithic	Neolithic to MBA	LBA and Iron Age	Roman	Early Medieval	High Medieval	Post-Medieval	Modern
Environment									
Pleistocene and Holocene climatic change (as evidenced, for example, by palaeochannel deposits)	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Potential impact of future climate change upon the environment and the historic environment resource	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Changes in sea level, the configuration of sea and land, the drainage network and the spatial extent of wetlands	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Submergence of Doggerland	•	•							
Changes in the regional vegetation and anthropogenic impacts		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
The impact of human activity upon soil development and geomorphic processes (notably alluviation, colluviation and aeolian deposition)			•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Exploitation and settlement of diverse ecological zones (including study of the pivotal highland-lowland contrast)	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•

Overarching themes \ Period	Palaeolithic	Meso-lithic	Neolithic to MBA	LBA and Iron Age	Roman	Early Medieval	High Medieval	Post-Medieval	Modern
Settlement									
Distribution, density and character of hunter-gatherer cave and open sites	•	•	•						
Development of agriculturally-based settlement patterns			•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Growth of urban centres and settlement hierarchies				•	•	•	•	•	•
Relationship between town and country					•	•	•	•	•
Vernacular building traditions							•	•	•
Food procurement strategies									
Hunter-gatherer subsistence strategies and mobility patterns	•	•	•						
Transition from hunter-gatherer to agricultural subsistence strategies		•	•						
Developments in crop and animal husbandry and changes in diet and health			•	•	•	•	•	•	•
The Agricultural Revolution and the industrialisation of agriculture								•	•
The rural landscape									
The development of fields and field systems				•	•	•	•	•	•
The development of parks, gardens and estates								•	•
Systems of woodland management		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•

Overarching themes \ Period	Palaeolithic	Meso-lithic	Neolithic to MBA	LBA and Iron Age	Roman	Early Medieval	High Medieval	Post-Medieval	Modern
Development of monastic estates and post-Dissolution developments					•	•	•	•	
Industry, craft and trade									
Systems of artefact production and exchange (lithics, pottery, metals, etc)	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
The origins and development of the Industrial Revolution								•	•
Environmental impacts of industrialisation								•	•
Industrial building traditions								•	•
Communications									
The role of rivers as movement corridors, sources of power and social/political boundaries	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
The role of coastwise routeways		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Constructed routeways: wooden/brushwood trackways, roads, canals, tramways and railways			•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Waterborne transport (riverine and marine)			•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Social, religious and political structures									
Development of prehistoric monument complexes			•	•					
Development of funerary monuments and changing burial and memorial practices			•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Development and use of shrines, temples, churches, monasteries and other religious buildings				•	•	•	•	•	•
Development and use of defended sites (hillforts, castles, etc)				•	•	•	•	•	•

Overarching themes \ Period	Palaeolithic	Meso-lithic	Neolithic to MBA	LBA and Iron Age	Roman	Early Medieval	High Medieval	Post-Medieval	Modern
Battlefield and skirmish sites					•	•	•	•	
Development of territorial and administrative (e.g. parish) boundaries				•	•	•	•	•	•
Social and religious building traditions							•	•	•



*Laxton, Nottinghamshire: a case study in landscape survival. Part of a map recording the cultivation strips and other features of the open fields, compiled by Mark Pierce in 1635. Laxton is the only English parish where open-field farming is still conducted under the guidance of a court leet, and provides a unique landscape resource (Beckett, J.V. 1989. *A History of Laxton: England's Last Open Field Village*. Oxford: Blackwell). © Manuscripts and Special Collections Section, University of Nottingham*