



Wharram Percy: Deserted Medieval Village (English Heritage Red Guides)

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'For where as have been a great many householders and inhabitants, there is now but a shepherd and his dog.' Bishop Hugh Latimer, on the enclosure of arable land for grazing, 8 March 1549. Wharram Percy is among the largest and best preserved of the 3,000 or so deserted medieval villages known in Britain, and unquestionably the most famous. Perched on the side of a remote dale in the heart of the Yorkshire Wolds, the remains of the village present a perfect picture of desertion. The ruined church, begun in the early 12th century, is the last standing medieval building. Around it are the grassed-over foundations of houses, agricultural outbuildings and boundaries, as well as the broad, low ridges of 'strip fields', all connected by a network of 'green lanes'. Since 1948, when research first focused on Wharram Percy, a series of eminent archaeologists have pioneered new techniques here. Although field investigations ended in 2002, research continues to further our understanding of how and why such settlements came in to being, of their inhabitants' daily lives, and of the factors that led to their abandonment. Illustrated with a variety of photographs, maps, plans and historical images, this English Heritage guidebook to Wharram Percy gives a full tour and history of the site of this fascinating deserted medieval village.

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