

INTRODUCTION

Ever since the 1970s and the publication of the book "Heckington in the 1870s" by the Village Trust there has been an underlying thought that one day the Heritage group would produce an overall history of the village. A great deal of information gathered at that time was put to one side for future use and over the years more and more research has been done. Contributions have come from many sources and from many local people. A great many hours have been spent by members of the group specialising in different timeframes and trawling through the dusty records of various archives. However a place such as Heckington has so much history that there comes a time when a decision has to be made about publication or the research would go on indefinitely with no end result. Thus, about two years ago the group decided that it was time to work towards the production of a history of Heckington from the earliest times.

With so many *village history books* now available why write another one? Partly pride, because we want our village to be represented. Partly because Heckington has a long and interesting history, a story that is worth telling. Mainly because Heckington has seen tremendous changes through more than five thousand years of history, but has always provided a home for its inhabitants.

If you climb the Church Tower in Heckington and look out across the surrounding countryside, almost everything you will see is either directly man-made or the incidental result of centuries of human activity. This is true not only of the buildings within the village itself, but also the hedges, the field boundaries, the roads, the dykes and drains, the trees and crops, and the whole pattern of the landscape. So the early history of the village is about how this tale of transformation began. It is about the first people to settle down in the place we now call "*Heckington*". It is about how those people began to make a living from the land and from the sea that swept in much closer to the village than now; and it is about the way their activities set in motion a chain of events which has created the environment we live in today. We hope this book will lead to a greater understanding of the ever changing nature of village life and a deeper appreciation of the value of the community. It is as much a handbook for the future as a record of the past.

Heckington Village Trust
Heritage Group.