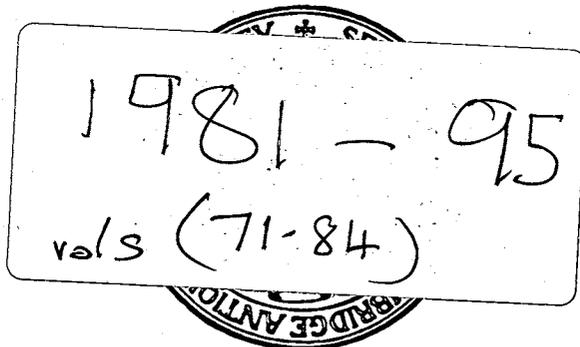

Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society

(incorporating the Cambs and Hunts Archaeological
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Volume LXXXIV

for 1995



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Erratum

In volume LXXXIII, p. 6, Journals exchanged with the *Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society*:

Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society, Macclesfield, Cheshire
should read

Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society, Manchester

Little Linton and the Linton Landscape

A.E. Brown & C.C. Taylor

Introduction

Little Linton is the name now given to a single farmstead situated on the western edge of Linton parish, Cambridgeshire, on the south-western side of the River Granta, on gravel at 50 m above O.D..

In 1987 the writers ran an archaeological survey course, jointly organised by the then Cambridge University Board of Extra-Mural Studies and Leicester University Department of Adult Education. One of the sites recorded was at Little Linton. This site comprised two separate parts: the remains of a former garden and moat, which have already been published in these Proceedings (Brown & Taylor 1991), and an area of slight earthworks southwest of the farmhouse which appears to represent former settlement.

This paper is intended to publish the results of this second survey and, more importantly, to explain why Little Linton is a deserted settlement. To do so requires an examination of the history of the whole landscape of Linton parish. The results will show that, unusually, Little Linton seems to have been deserted as a consequence of its inhabitants moving, or being moved, to a new settlement laid out as part of a thirteenth-century commercial development.

The Little Linton Settlement (TL 555473) (Fig. 1)

The remains of the former settlement of Little Linton lie in a field of old pasture. The surviving earthworks are in very poor condition and probably represent a number of phases of occupation. Little can be deduced from their plan except perhaps that they represent a

number of long closes possibly set along the southeastern side of a former track or street, now occupied by the present drive to the farm. A few sherds of thirteenth-century pottery were recovered from mole-hills on the site, but field-walking of the arable land immediately to the northwest produced no finds at all. The field of old pasture to the east and southeast is covered by the remains of what appear to be shallow gravel diggings. Excavations here in 1923 by W.M. Palmer revealed animal bones, pottery and tiles of both medieval and Roman date (Palmer 1926).

In 1991 the Archaeology Section of the County Council carried out limited excavations here during the construction of a pipeline which cut through the northeastern edge of the earthworks and prior to building work within the farmyard. The significant finds from the pipeline included further evidence of Roman occupation to the southeast of the site and features and pottery within the remains themselves dating from the ninth to the fourteenth centuries. Some pottery, described as Iron Age, was also discovered close to the southern edge of the settlement remains (Shotliff 1992). This, as well as similar wares from the farmyard excavation, has been re-examined, subjected to thermoluminescence tests and is now regarded as of early Saxon date. The excavations within the farmyard revealed evidence of occupation throughout the whole of the Roman period together with what may have been part of a ditched enclosure dating from very late Roman or early Saxon times. Further pottery and features dating from the late eleventh century to the thirteenth century were also discovered (Bray 1992).

There is no direct evidence as to the size of

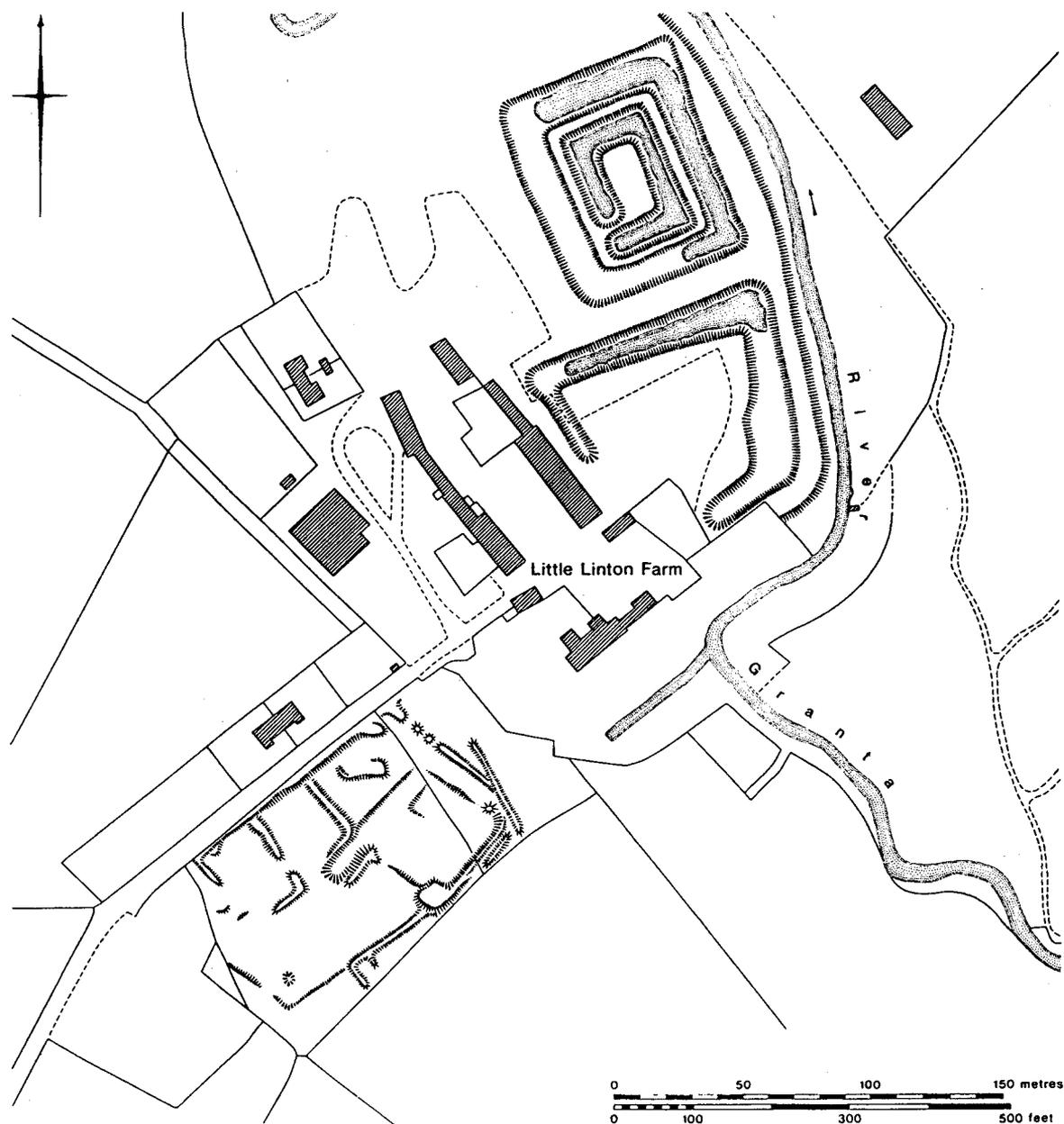


Figure 1. *Little Linton Farm: the archaeological survey.*

Little Linton at any time in the later medieval period. Only in Domesday Book, if the entry normally interpreted as Little Linton is accepted, is there a record of population. At that time there were 8 villeins, 2 bordars and 4 serfs, perhaps indicating a total population of between 45 and 55 (Rumble 1981: 14.13). Nor is there any clue as to the date of the desertion, beyond the fact that it had occurred before 1600. At that date a map now in Pembroke College archives (Barham Tic) shows that the site was already reduced to a single farmstead.

Linton in the Eleventh Century (Figs. 2 & 3)

The remains of the former settlement at Little Linton are only one part of a complex settlement pattern within the whole parish. To fully understand the development of that pattern it is necessary to establish the situation as early as possible in the medieval period. Although there is archaeological and documentary evidence for Saxon and even earlier occupation in a number of places, the first reasonably complete picture that can be established, albeit

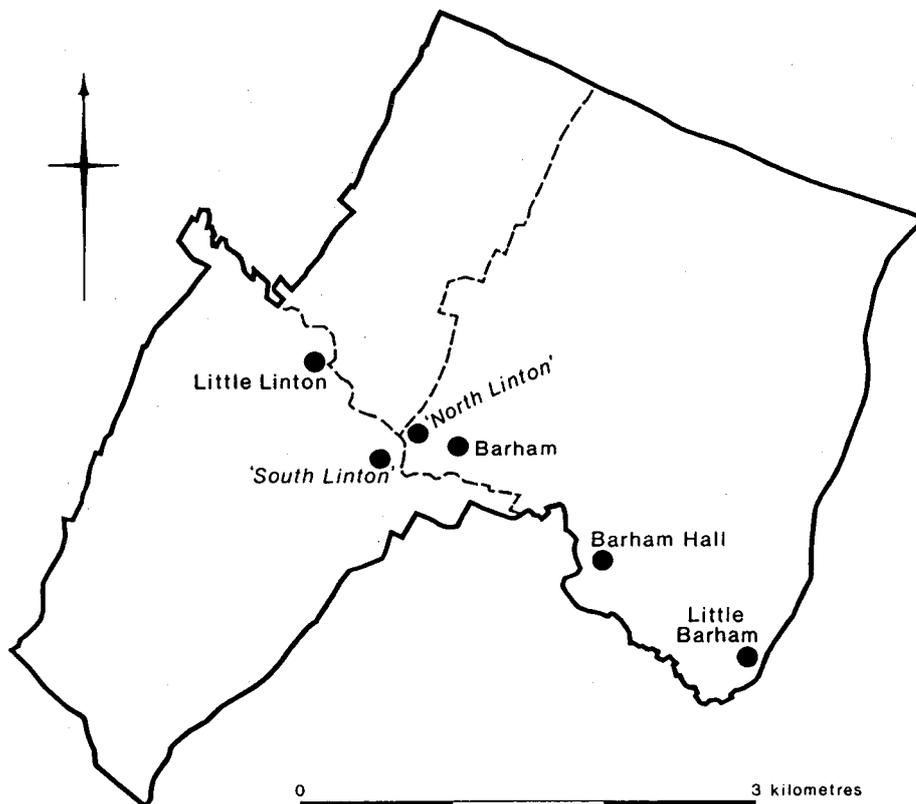


Figure 2. Settlements in Linton parish. The broken lines are the sixteenth-century manorial boundaries.

with some difficulty, is in the late eleventh century. In Domesday Book most of the land in Linton is described as four separate holdings of Count Alan. These comprised just under 4 hides in Linton, $2\frac{1}{2}$ hides in 'the other' Linton, $2\frac{3}{4}$ hides in Barham and another $1\frac{1}{2}$ hides also in Barham. In addition one sokeman held one virgate in Linton and another sokeman a virgate in Barham, the latter of the Abbot of Ely (Rumble 1981: 5.16, 14.8–11, 14.13).

Recent work in Cambridgeshire and elsewhere has established that separate holdings in Domesday Book such as these can sometimes be equated with separate settlements (Brown & Taylor 1978). If this hypothesis is applied to the existing settlements in Linton, however, problems arise. Linton village today, as well as on the 1600 map, falls into two quite separate parts (Fig. 3). There is a long east to west section north of the River Cam, hereafter called 'North' Linton, linked by the bridge across the river to a shorter, more compact, north to south section, hereafter called 'South' Linton, to the southwest. In addition, also north of the river and well to the southeast of 'North' Linton,

is the isolated Barham Hall. To the south of the river, and northwest of 'South' Linton, is the Little Linton Farm settlement (Fig. 2). Thus there seem to be four settlements in Linton and four holdings in Domesday Book. However, although Count Alan's Linton might be, and has been, equated with 'North' Linton, and his 'other Linton' with either 'South' Linton or Little Linton, this leaves one settlement too many south of the river. Likewise, the two holdings called Barham seem to be equated only with Barham Hall, producing one holding too many north of the river.

These difficulties can be partly resolved by examining the later history of the Linton and Barham manors. The descent of the Linton manor in 'North' Linton, later known as Great Linton, is reasonably straightforward. By the early thirteenth century it was in the hands of the de Say family from whom it passed to the Northwoods in the late thirteenth century. It was divided into moieties soon afterwards but was reunified under the Bustlers in the mid fourteenth century and then passed to the Parys family. The Parys family held it until the mid

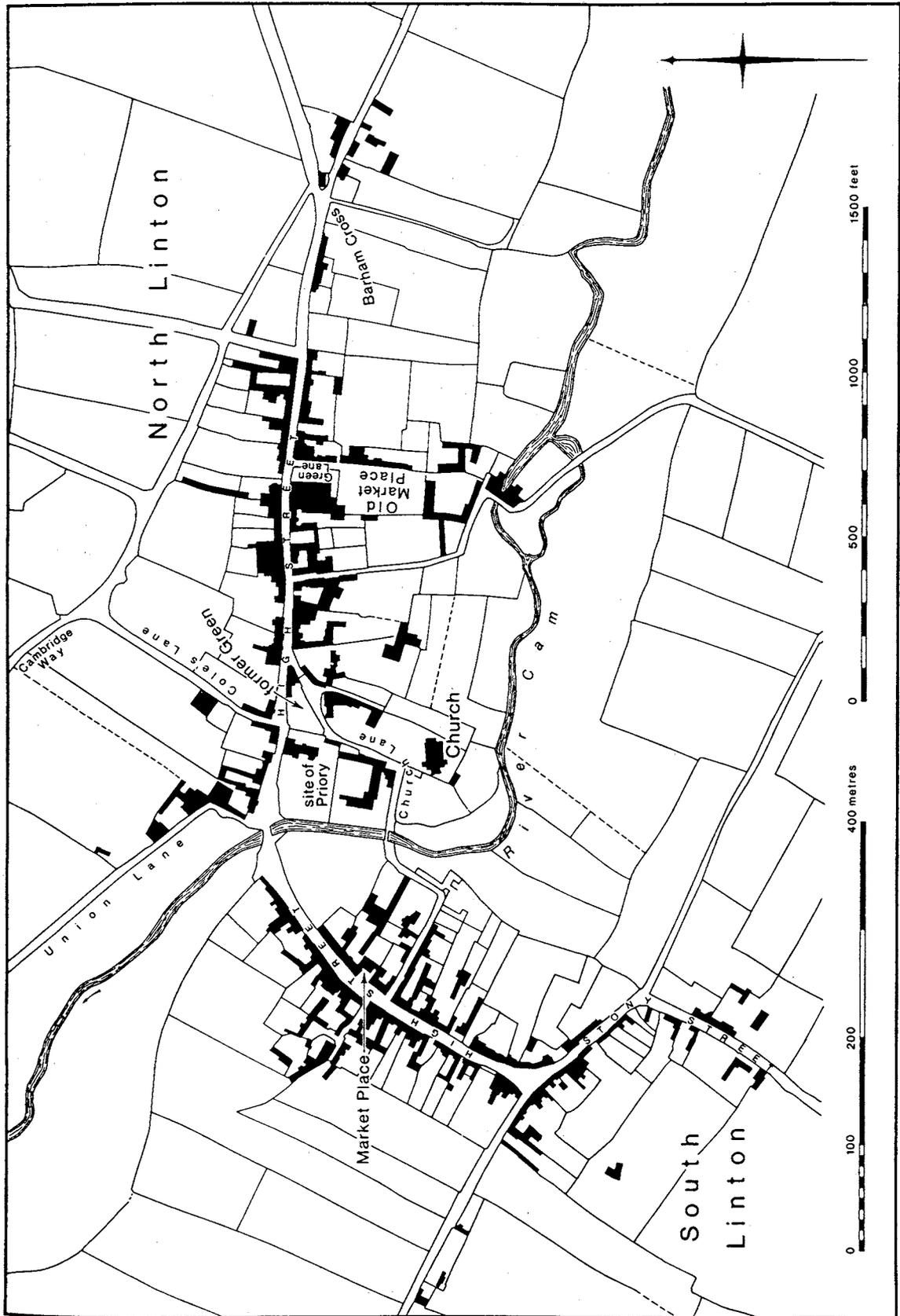


Figure 3. Linton village.

seventeenth century. It is possible to identify this manor more closely as the western part of 'North' Linton. This is partly because of the known location, immediately south of the parish church, of the site of the alien priory founded by the successors of Count Alan probably before 1163 (Fig. 3; VCH 1978: 84–5).

The history of 'the other' Linton manor is also clear. It was subinfeudated from Count Alan's holding by the 1190s and was held as two separate manors by the Follifoot and Belhus families until the mid thirteenth century when both manors were acquired by one Roger de Leicester. The unified manor passed to the Huntingfield family soon after 1302, by whom it was held until at least 1369. By 1428, however, the manor was held by the Parys family and thus the two main Linton manors became one (VCH 1978: 86).

From late medieval documents it is clear that by the fifteenth century at the latest what had been 'the other' Linton manor included not only Little Linton Farm but also the whole of the present village south of the river, that is 'South' Linton (VCH 1978: 80–105). Whether both these places existed as fully-fledged settlements in the late eleventh century is not certain. There is also a sokeman with one virgate said to be living in Linton to be accounted for. It is just possible that this sokeman may have lived at one of the two settlements south of the river, and that the second settlement may have been the 'other' Linton. This hypothesis will be further explored later.

The descent of the two Barham manors is again well documented (VCH 1978: 86–9). Certainly by 1236, and perhaps as early as 1100, both appear to have been united under the de Furneaux family. The de Furneaux held it until the late fourteenth century, after which it passed through a series of hands, finally coming to the Millicent family in the mid sixteenth century. In the mid thirteenth century the de Furneaux created a small sub-manor known as Michaelotts which was later acquired by the Parys family. Of more significance was the house of Crutched Friars which Robert de Furneaux established at Barham around 1293 (VCH 1948: 291–2). This was later known as Barham Priory and although it had little land in Linton, its site, the present Barham Hall, is important. After the suppression of the house in 1539 it was sold to the Millicent family who turned it into their manor house.

There is no doubt that Barham Hall was the site of this priory. Indeed some fragments of the medieval buildings survive there and earthworks, probably of outbuildings, exist to the north of the present farm. The problem is

to associate this farm and the former priory with the site of one or both of the early medieval manors of Barham. The *Victoria County History* made this association (1978: 88–9) but there is a body of evidence which suggests that at least part of Barham, and perhaps one of its manors, lay within 'North' Linton. Certainly J.H. Clapham made this connection (1932: 197).

At the eastern end of 'North' Linton, on the south side of the High Street, is a former open space, now divided into gardens, but still clearly recognisable as a large rectangular green. This area has for long been known as Old Market Place (Fig. 3). The history of Linton's markets has been discussed in an earlier paper (Taylor 1982) and will be examined in more detail later in this. Suffice it to say here that this market place is certainly that created by Simon de Furneaux in 1282 when he was granted a weekly market and an annual fair at his manor of Barham (VCH 1978: 96).

This being so, it is hardly likely that de Furneaux would have placed his new market place within the land and settlement of another manor. Thus there is every likelihood that the de Furneaux family owned at least part of what is now the eastern end of 'North' Linton. This suggestion is supported by three other pieces of evidence. The first is that, at least in late medieval times, the messuages of both the Great Linton and Barham manors lay in 'North' Linton and that large blocks of Barham tenements lay on the south side of the High Street (Clapham 1932: 197; Palmer 1932: 2–3; VCH 1978: 82). The second is that the tenants of the Barham manor in 1279 (*Rot. Hund.* 1818: 418–20) included a number of individuals apparently engaged in urban pursuits. These activities are likely to have taken place at 'North' Linton rather than at Barham Hall. The third piece of evidence is that of the arrangement of fields associated with the manors of Great Linton and Barham which are shown on the map of 1600. This map, partly redrawn in the *Victoria County History* (1978: 90), shows that at that date over two-thirds of the land of the parish north of the river lay within the Barham manor and only a relatively narrow strip in the northwest of the parish was the land of the Great Linton manor (Fig. 2). The division between the lands of the two manors was a continuous boundary extending from the northern parish boundary southwest to the present Back Lane near the northern end of Coles Lane. No boundary is shown farther southwest within the village itself, presumably because of the intermingling there of the properties of both manors. The earlier situation is likely to have been that the eastern half of

the present 'North' Linton was once wholly in the hands of the Barham lords. Indeed there is a presumption that the original name of this part of the village was Barham. Certainly its position, on a slight spur between the river to the south and a dry valley to the northwest, is a better situation for the place-name 'enclosure on the hill' than Barham Hall which lies close to the river in the bottom of a dry tributary valley (Reaney 1943: 109).

This interpretation seems to fit the geographical situation and the eleventh-century and later tenurial pattern north of the river. That is there were three medieval settlements, Great Linton and Barham, both in 'North' Linton, and Barham Hall, and three manorial holdings, one Linton and two Barhams. However, mere mathematical agreement is not enough. The priory at Barham Hall was very poorly endowed. Even at its most extensive it never had more than 84 acres of land in Linton and its original endowment was apparently only 32 acres or one virgate (VCH 1948: 291). Unless there had been a massive reorganisation of the Barham manor between 1086 and 1279, not of course impossible, Barham and its lands seem far too small a place for the centre of a large eleventh-century manor. Further complications also arise from the fact that on the map of 1600 an otherwise unrecorded and unnamed settlement is depicted in the extreme southeastern corner of Linton parish against the boundary with Bartlow and adjacent to the present Little Barham Hall. The name Little Barham is not apparently recorded until 1761 (Reaney 1943: 110) but the 1600 map shows at least five inhabited houses there. Some at least of these houses survived into the nineteenth century (OS 1834) but had disappeared and been replaced by the present farmstead by the end of the century (OS 1885).

The origin of this settlement is difficult to determine. It may have been an early medieval settlement, perhaps even the centre of one of the two Barham manors of 1086. As such it should be taken into account when trying to understand the early Linton landscape. On the other hand, it may date only from the sixteenth century. Between 1564 and 1590 waste land in this area was enclosed and divided into small rectangular fields (VCH 1978: 90, 92). The settlement here may have been the result of this enclosure. No firm conclusion can be reached on this matter. If the sixteenth-century date is accepted then the difficulty of equating the Barham manors with recognisable settlements remains, unless they were both located in 'North' Linton. The site of the house of the Cruched Friars at Barham Hall and its 32-acre

original endowment might be explained by assuming that both its site and its land were that of the single sokeman and his one-virgate holding recorded under Barham in 1086.

Linton and its Roads and Tracks

(Figs. 3 & 4)

The pattern of settlement at Linton in the late eleventh century which has been partly established in the foregoing section may be refined by looking at the postulated settlements in relation to the overall communication pattern of the area.

Many years ago one of the present writers pointed out that the majority of medieval settlements in South Cambridgeshire are arranged in a significant way in relation to the natural topography (Taylor 1979: 106-7; 1989: 210-13). That is, the great majority of the settlements lie along, and thus have their main streets on, roads or tracks aligned generally southwest to northeast at right angles to the adjacent rivers. This can be seen in the valley of the Saffron Walden Cam at both Great and Little Shelford, Whittlesford, Duxford (twice), Ickleton and on through to Great and Little Chesterford and Littlebury in Essex. The same feature occurs in the Granta valley at Stapleford, Babraham, Great and Little Abington and Hildersham. Even when the feature appears to be absent, as at Hinxton and Sawston, it is only later changes which are obscuring a similar underlying pattern (Taylor 1992: 13-15). This repetitive orientation is quite different from the main northwest to southeast river-edge routes which often pass through the villages on long dog-legs as at Great and Little Shelford, Duxford, Ickleton and Littlebury. It has been suggested that this southwest to northeast orientation reflects the earliest medieval pattern of roads in existence when the villages acquired their present layouts.

Linton is no different from its neighbours and close examination of the situation there may help to clarify the development of medieval settlements in the parish. The pattern of the main river-edge through-routes in Linton parish is very similar to elsewhere in South Cambridgeshire. On the north of the River Granta the present minor road from Little Abington continues the line of the present A604 from Cambridge, well to the northeast of Hildersham and northeast of the High Street of 'North' Linton, before dividing and running southeast along the river valley to Bartlow or on as the A604 to Haverhill and Colchester (Fig. 3). This, including the latter section to Haverhill, was obviously an ancient and primary route,

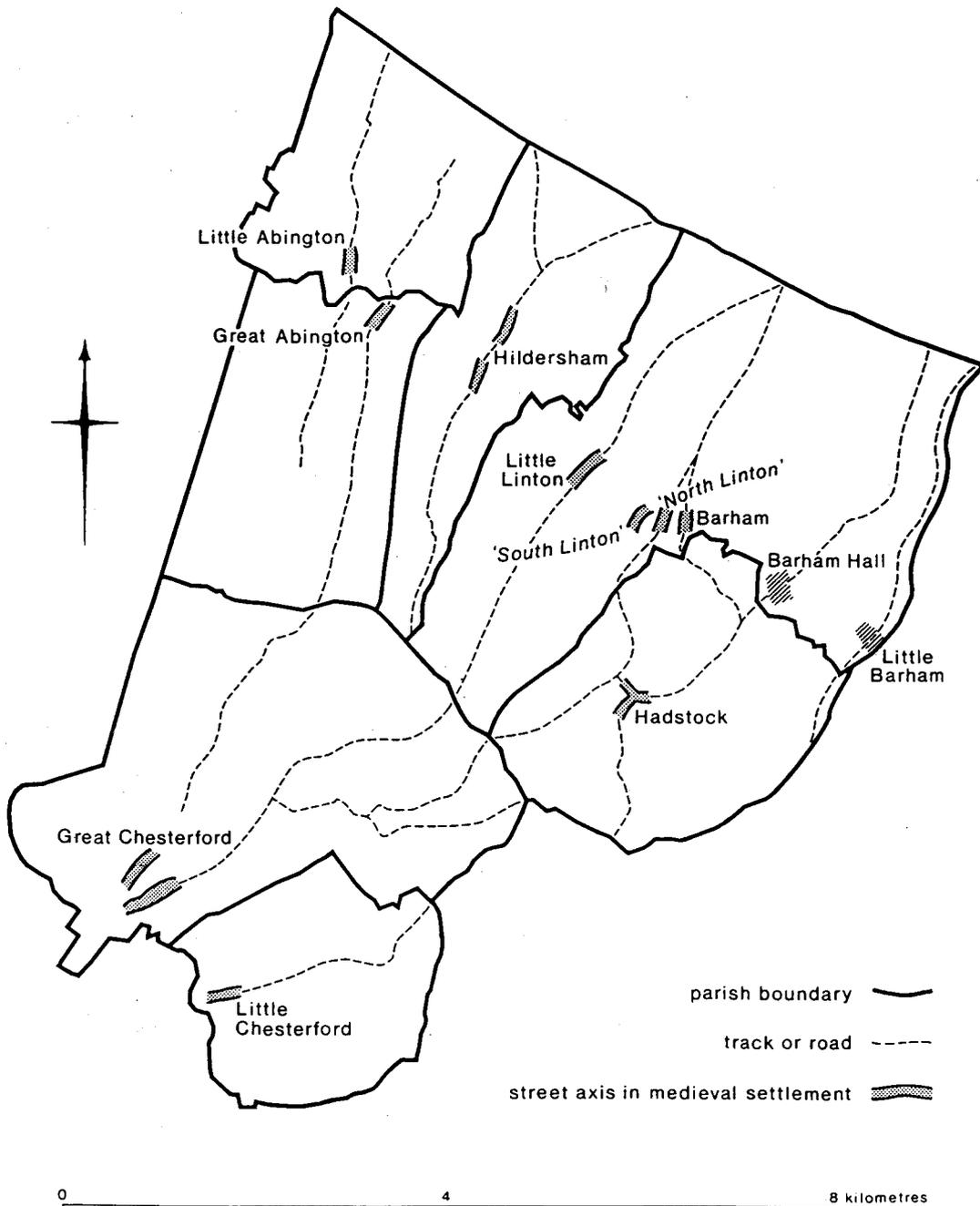


Figure 4. Cross-river roads and tracks in the Linton area.

perhaps the Saxon successor to the Roman road to the northeast. The map of 1600 calls the section of this road immediately northeast of 'North' Linton 'The Cambridge Way', which suggests that it had once been the main route to Cambridge. Yet, significantly, it effectively bypasses 'North' Linton High Street completely.

To the south of the river, if the modern bypasses at Linton and Abington are excluded, the recent main road from Cambridge to

Haverhill left the old Cambridge Way north of the river at Little Abington, crossed the river through two sharp right-angled bends at Little and Great Abington and passed along the south side of the river towards Linton. Although it now turns sharply northeast into 'South' Linton, originally it continued southeast towards Bartlow, effectively ignoring South Linton (Fig. 3). Again significantly, Little Linton, as well as Barham Hall and the presumed other

Barham, also have no direct relationship to either of the two river-edge roads. Yet all these settlements, with one exception, relate to the usual pattern of northeast to southwest cross-river routes. This pattern will now be examined (Fig. 4).

Little Linton has no modern river-crossing. The existing farm track southwest from Little Linton, however, connects directly with an ancient lane leading into one of the two main streets of Great Chesterford on the Saffron Walden branch of the River Cam. Further, the fragmentary earthworks of the settlement remains at Little Linton, for what they are worth, seem to be aligned along this farm track. Its presumed line northeast of the river is not attested in any way except by the track to the modern Chilford Hall. However, somewhere in the area was the river-crossing known as *Childeforde*, near which was the meeting-place of a Hundred in Saxon times (Meaney 1993: 74; VCH 1978: 1–2). At 'North' Linton a pattern older than the river-edge routeway also seems to have existed. The old route from Balsham, over Rivey Hill, ran down to the northeastern side of the village. Its alignment, much as now, is shown on the 1600 map. It seems likely that, somewhere close to the northeastern end of Coles Lane, it once divided into two. The western branch is the now deeply hollowed Coles Lane which runs southwest as far as the present High Street (Fig. 3). At its junction with High Street is a former triangular open space now almost entirely built over. The continuation of Coles Lane carries on as a footpath along the western side of the former open space and then on southwest as Church Lane. This lane now terminates at the parish church, just short of the river, though a side lane dog-legs its way across the river via a ford to 'South' Linton to the west. It is probable that this dog-leg was on or near an original river-crossing and that south of the river a track originally ran on along what is now the southeastern boundary of 'South' Linton. At the southern end of 'South' Linton it met what is now Stony Street. This street then continues south as the old route to Hadstock in Essex. The close correlation of Church Lane with the church, the site of the alien priory of Linton, the vicarage and the medieval guildhall, together with the former triangular 'green', suggests that Church Lane was indeed once the main street of Great Linton. Equally significant is that the overall extended alignment of Church Lane does not pass through 'South' Linton at all.

The eastern branch of the Balsham to Linton route, which joins another main route from the

north, the existing Greenditch Lane also shown on the 1600 map, becomes the present Green Lane in the Barham end of 'North' Linton (Fig. 3). This, as with Church Lane, is orientated almost northeast to southwest; it has the Old Market Place on its west side and an eighteenth-century house near its southern end, traditionally said to be the site of a manor house. Its alignment continues as a minor lane past Linton Mill. This lane crosses the river and then runs southeast until it becomes Chalky Road leading southeast to Hadstock. Again the central section of this overall alignment, Green Lane, can be interpreted as the former main street of the Barham settlement.

Further east (Fig. 4), Barham Hall, although now unrelated to any through-route except the river-edge road to Bartlow, a little to its north, perhaps once lay on another northeast to southwest track. A gated lane called 'Milsents Balk' is shown on the 1600 map extending north from Barham Hall to the present Linton to Haverhill road and beyond to the northern parish boundary as 'Wickhamway'. To the south of Linton parish its general alignment is followed by Chalky Road which runs on to Hadstock. Even the settlement of Little Barham, although its antiquity is in some doubt, has a similar relationship to a northeast to southwest through-route. The present road from West Wickham to Bartlow along the eastern boundary of Linton parish, which is shown on the map of 1600, passes alongside its site and may be continued south by an unnamed green lane leading to Ashdon.

The only Linton settlement which does not conform to this pattern is 'South' Linton (Fig. 3). The main street there is certainly aligned northeast to southwest but at its northern end it swings sharply east to cross the river and meets the present 'North' Linton High Street end-on. At its southern end it terminates at a T-junction which requires a sharp turn northwest to join the Cambridge road and a double dog-leg to reach the Hadstock road through Stony Street. The latter is, of course, aligned on the presumed main street of Great Linton across the river.

There is no apparent topographical reason for the disjunction of 'South' Linton from the road system. Thus the existence of this disjunction raises the question as to whether 'South' Linton is perhaps not an original settlement at all but is a later addition which has led to an earlier road pattern being modified to meet it. If this is so, then perhaps 'South' Linton may be connected to the development of Linton as a borough.

Interpretation of the Eleventh-Century Settlement Pattern

At this point a tentative interpretation of the Linton landscape in the late eleventh century may be attempted. On the north side of the river there were a number of discrete settlements. To the northwest was a settlement with its church and manor house, perhaps called Great Linton, lying along the Coles Lane/Church Lane axis and being related to Count Alan's three-hide and three-virgate holding. A little to the southeast was another settlement, presumably known as Barham, aligned on the Green Lane axis with its manor house and perhaps at least one mill close by. This settlement related to either one or both of the two Barham holdings of Count Alan. Further southeast again was perhaps a single farmstead held by a sokeman, now Barham Hall. Nearer to the Bartlow boundary there may have been another settlement, Little Barham, although this is not certain. If it did exist it presumably related to one of the two Barham holdings of Count Alan.

To the south of the river there was a settlement at Little Linton and another at 'South' Linton, one of which may have been only a single farmstead. It is tempting to assume that 'South' Linton was the major settlement, Count Alan's 'other' Linton, and that Little Linton was the farmstead of a single sokeman. However, three facts suggest that this relationship should be reversed and that Little Linton was the major settlement. The first is the matter discussed above, that the 'South' Linton settlement is the only one in the parish that does not fit the communication pattern, indicating perhaps that it was a relatively late intrusion into the landscape. The second is that although 'South' Linton had its own common field system to the south of it, until Parliamentary Enclosure in 1838, in 1600 the area was known as Little Linton Field. The land of Little Linton, occupying the extreme southwestern part of the parish south of the river, was then already enclosed (VCH 1978: 90, 91). This might mean that Little Linton was indeed the large 'other' Linton manor in the eleventh century and that either 'South' Linton did not exist or that it was merely where the other recorded sokeman, with his one virgate of land, lived. The third piece of evidence pointing to the identification of 'the other' Linton with Little Linton is that a mill is recorded at 'the other' Linton in 1086 (Rumble 1981: 14.13). A mill at Little Linton is mentioned in various documents (VCH 1978: 95), is shown west of the farm in 1600 and survived into the present century. No mill is

known at 'South' Linton.

Whatever the situation was in detail in the eleventh century, it is clear that in general terms Linton parish then comprised a group of settlements of varying sizes and all within a wholly rural economy.

Linton in the Thirteenth Century

By the late thirteenth century the pattern of settlement in Linton was very different. Little Barham, if indeed it existed, remained an entirely rural settlement. Barham Hall was by then the site of a friary. Little Linton, if the archaeological evidence is accepted, was already deserted except for the single moated farmstead and the mill.

However, the two settlements of 'North' Linton and perhaps that of 'South' Linton had expanded and coalesced into a minor urban centre, indeed the only urbanised settlement in South Cambridgeshire except for Cambridge itself (Fig. 3). How had this come about? The answer lies partly in the documentary record and partly in the existing topography of the three former settlements. Neither is unequivocal with the result that the exact sequence of development is unclear.

At first sight the documentary record seems to be straightforward. By 1246 at the latest at least part of Linton had acquired commercial status, for in that year William de Say, lord of Great Linton, obtained a charter for a weekly market and annual fair (VCH 1978: 96). On his death in 1272 the urbanisation of the manor was even more marked. By that time not only had de Say introduced burgage tenure, but also over a quarter of the annual value of the manor came from the rents of free tenants, burgage and assize (Clapham 1932: 198). In 1279 (*Rot. Hund.* 1818: 416-18) the de Say manor was a town in all but name. The Hundred Rolls record that out of a total of 80 tenants 35 separate people held their land by burgage tenure. Over half of the latter had surnames which were both occupational and of an urban character. For example there was a cobbler, two bakers, a smith, two potters, a tanner, a tailor, a mercer and a fellmonger, as well as several unspecified merchants. Further, many of these people held only tiny pieces of land, suggesting that their livelihood did indeed come from trade not agriculture.

To the east, at the de Furneaux manor of Barham in 'North' Linton, a similar, although perhaps later, urban development took place. There the first indications are not until 1279 (*Rot. Hund.* 1818: 418-20). Then some 72

tenants are listed and although none held land by burgage tenure, again many of them had occupational surnames of an urban character. They included two bakers, a tanner, two tailors, a clothier and a merchant. Even more significant is that, three years later in 1282, Simon de Furneaux was also granted a weekly market and annual fair. These two factors indicate that the Barham manor too was at least partly urbanised.

The physical changes consequent upon these developments recorded in documents are also clear. Both of the 'North' Linton settlements had to accommodate markets and, presumably, an increasing population. The market places are still there. At the de Say manor, the former triangular open space at the junction of High Street and Church Lane can only be the remains of its market place. At the de Furneaux manor at Barham too the former large open space on Green Lane, known as the Old Market Place, was the centre of the commercial activity there. There is, however, other evidence to indicate the changes which occurred at 'North' Linton as its urban status developed. The growing importance of the two settlements must have led to their expansion and, in particular, to their growing together so that eventually they became one settlement aligned on a new east to west axis, the present High Street. That this took place cannot be doubted and must have led to the documented intermingling of the Barham and Great Linton properties which had occurred by the end of the thirteenth century. More interesting perhaps are the details of the expansion here, between the two older settlements. For even today a number of the property boundaries on the north side of High Street have marked curves. This feature has been widely recognised elsewhere (Taylor 1973: 226-7; Everson *et al.* 1991: 13-14; RCHME 1981) and normally indicates that such properties have been laid out on former arable strips. Undoubtedly this happened at Linton as the two older north to south settlements grew into an east to west one.

This east to west growth is also important from another aspect. Unlike the older settlements at each end, the new axis was the same as, although slightly to the south of, the presumed ancient Cambridge Way along the north side of the river. At its eastern end the High Street actually joins the older way at Barham Cross. To the west it is likely that the present Union Lane, which connects High Street with the Cambridge Way in that direction, is also part of a diversion of the Way south to pass through the developing urban 'North' Linton.

How did 'South' Linton fit into this new commercial centre? Here difficulties arise, for while the entrepreneurial activities of the de Says and the de Furneaux north of the river are well documented, there is no comparable record for the de Leicester holding at 'South' Linton. There is no market grant at 'South' Linton and the Hundred Rolls do not indicate any real urban growth there on the scale of 'North' Linton. In 1279 'South' Linton is by far the smallest of the three main parts of Linton, having only 23 tenants (*Rot. Hund.* 1818: 419). Nor are there occupational surnames to suggest marketing there, except for one shopkeeper. On the other hand, as at 'North' Linton, the free tenants include some half a dozen people who hold only land of an acre or so in extent which again hardly suggests they were engaged in full-time agriculture. The documentary record for urban activities at 'South' Linton in the late thirteenth century is therefore ambiguous and what there is could be explained by the proximity of the commercial activities on the other side of the river.

The landscape of 'South' Linton, however, suggests something quite different, for both its plan and its position indicate that it is a planned settlement with urban pretensions. The disjunction of 'South' Linton from its road system has already been noted. Its layout is even more significant. Overall 'South' Linton consists of a neat rectangle divided by a single north to south, almost exactly straight, street although with later growth at each end. The closely packed buildings on either side are also set on a straight and continuous building line. And although much altered the associated plots all seem once to have been 66 m long on the northwest side and probably 124 m on the southeast. Their widths now vary considerably but there are indications that originally they were a regular 17 m across, or multiples of that distance. Further, it is possible that there were once ten plots on each side of the street. All this produces what would normally be described as a regular two-row settlement. Equally notable is that at the north end of this settlement there was formerly a broad open area usually described as a market place and used as such until the nineteenth century (*VCH* 1978: 89, 96). Although now almost entirely built over its original form can be ascertained, its length being the overall width of the settlement and its width about 50 m, that is it occupied the equivalent of six house plots.

This neat rectangular pattern is clearly shown on the 1600 map of Linton although because of the schematic cartography the scale is inaccurate. The only explanation for such a

regular settlement with a market place is that 'South' Linton is a planned unit created for commercial purposes. However, its location, with its northern end meeting the western end of 'North' Linton across the river, meant that it was awkwardly situated to meet the existing road from Hadstock. As a result the double dog-leg at Stony Street was produced. Further, for the new settlement to be successful a new road from Cambridge was necessary. This developed, or was perhaps deliberately created, from Abington on the south side of the river, but it still required a sharp bend in order to enter the new 'South' Linton.

Interpretation of Thirteenth-Century Linton

When could this third urban unit at Linton have been created, and by whom? Did it precede the mid to late thirteenth-century urbanisation north of the river, or did it postdate it? Or was it contemporary with it? Its creation almost certainly led to the desertion of Little Linton, which is the prime concern of this paper. Regrettably there is no certainty in the matter, only a series of arguments for and against each possibility.

A date before the mid twelfth century is possible although there is little firm evidence for it. Such an early origin, predating the developments north of the river, could have resulted in an improvement to the road from Cambridge and thus assisted in the growth of urban functions in 'North' Linton shortly afterwards. Against this is the limited evidence for urbanisation at 'South' Linton in 1279 with only one shopkeeper recorded and no evidence of a market grant there. On the other hand the twenty free tenants listed are, perhaps coincidentally, close to the estimated twenty or so plots in 'South' Linton. Perhaps the most cogent argument against an early date, however, is the lack of a suitable lord to instigate such development. Prior to the purchase of two-thirds of the manor of Little Linton by Roger de Leicester in 1266 and his acquisition of the rest in 1275, Little Linton had been divided between non-resident minor lords since at least 1190. Unless 'South' Linton was created well before that date, not impossible but unusually early for a relatively minor urban centre, it seems very doubtful that it predates the 'North' Linton changes.

A date roughly contemporary with the 'North' Linton developments, that is perhaps between 1270 and 1300 for 'South' Linton, is possibly more likely and certainly more convincing. Such a hypothesis would see the de Say manor of

Great Linton beginning the urbanisation in the 1240s with the other two manors and settlements, Barham and 'South' Linton, following rapidly. The expansion of 'North' Linton village and the alteration to the road system both north and south of the river would then all have been part of the same process. Again, however, the lack of documented urbanisation in 'South' Linton in 1279 makes this difficult to accept unless 'South' Linton was very new at that time. On the other hand the alleged existence of a single resident lord at Little Linton and 'South' Linton, Roger de Leicester, between 1260/75 and 1302/16 at least provides a possible instigator of the 'South' Linton development. Unfortunately Roger de Leicester is a shadowy figure. He is described in the Hundred Rolls as 'justiciar'. But the only contemporary references to someone of this name and rank are to a man whose family and estates lay in Cheshire and who may not have been resident in Linton (Foss 1851; *Cal. Fine Rolls*).

The third and last possibility is that 'South' Linton was created after the main developments in 'North' Linton and perhaps as late as the fourteenth century. This would explain the lack of a market charter for 'South' Linton and its apparently limited urbanisation in 1279. Against this there is again no important resident lord at Little Linton in this period. Indeed it is not until the mid fourteenth century, when the Parys family, originally from Norfolk, began buying land in South Cambridgeshire including some at Linton, that a major resident lord appears (*VCH* 1978: 8-9, 62, 193, 207, 251-2). Even then it was the early fifteenth century before the family finally owned all of Little and 'South' Linton as well as the bulk of 'North' Linton (*VCH* 1978: 85). Further, a date after 1300 would be late for a deliberate urban foundation. Although Beresford's figures for the foundations of 'new towns' are perhaps suspect in detail, he records very few after 1280 (Beresford 1967: 637-41). Nor would the overall economic climate of this period be conducive to such urban development. This does not, of course, preclude a fourteenth-century date for 'South' Linton, but it makes it less likely and an early fifteenth-century date is probably impossible. Finally of course, if 'South' Linton was not established until after 1279 then the references in the Hundred Rolls must relate to the Little Linton settlement. This again is very unlikely for it would mean that Little Linton had a much larger population and thus covered a greater area than the field evidence would suggest. It would also be difficult to explain the apparently incipient commercialisation in a settlement entirely cut off from the main urban

centre of the parish as well as from the through-road system. On the whole a date towards the end of the thirteenth century for the creation of 'South' Linton is the most likely. Such a date would agree with the admittedly very weak archaeological evidence for the abandonment of at least part of Little Linton by the fourteenth century.

There is one final piece of evidence which may indicate that 'South' Linton dates from before, and perhaps not long before, 1279. This emerges from a comparison between the land-holding structure recorded in Domesday Book and that in the Hundred Rolls. The method has been used before by the writers (Brown & Taylor 1989) and is based on the assumption that the ploughs recorded in Domesday Book are actually *ploughlands* and that, with four virgates to the ploughland, if these are multiplied by four the resulting figure is the number of virgates there in 1086. Because the land recorded in the Hundred Rolls is expressed in virgates it is possible to note changes in the patterns of land-holding between 1086 and 1279. If therefore such a comparison is made between the two Lintons and the Barhams at these dates the results are significant.

For Great Linton Domesday Book records 3 ploughs in demesne, that is the equivalent of 12 virgates, and 5 ploughs held by villeins and bordars, that is 20 virgates. In 1279, there were 11.25 virgates in demesne and 19.89 held by customary and free tenants. The close correlation between the figures for the two dates suggests that little had changed in the land-holding at Great Linton by 1279. On the two Barham manors the situation was slightly different. In 1086 there were 20 virgates in demesne and 14 held by villeins and bordars. By 1279 peasants still held 15.3 virgates but the demesne virgates had apparently declined to only just over 12. However, some of the 7 lost virgates can be accounted for by earlier gifts of land to religious houses, for the latter held a total of 3.8 virgates in 'North' Linton in 1279. So, although changes had occurred in Barham since 1086 these were not considerable.

At Little Linton however the figures indicate a significant change in the pattern of land-holding. In 1086 there were only 8 demesne virgates but these had increased to 13.25 by 1279. Conversely the 12 peasant virgates of Domesday Book had declined to 7.5 in 1279. What explanation can be offered for these changes? Perhaps the best interpretation is that the lords of Little Linton had deliberately increased the size of their demesne and cut down on the peasant holdings. It is not without interest that the bulk of the peasant virgates

at Little Linton in 1279 were in the hands of freeholders, many of whom also held shops in Great Linton. Presumably the demesne at Little Linton, perhaps by then the enclosed land southwest of the farm, was being worked by waged labour and some of the small freeholders may have provided this.

If this hypothesis is accepted then there is a strong possibility that the original settlement of Little Linton may have been reduced in size deliberately in the thirteenth century by its lord in order to develop the perceived commercial opportunities by creating and populating 'South' Linton. This would be a remarkable and so far unique explanation for settlement desertion.

There is an alternative mechanism for the abandonment of Little Linton at this time which would have given rise to the same evidence and produced the same result. So far it has been accepted that it was manorial lords who provided the direction and leadership in the market foundation and settlement reorganisation at Linton. This seems to be irrefutable for 'North' Linton but at Little Linton and 'South' Linton it seems to be less certain. If Roger de Leicester and his predecessors were indeed non-resident then strong lordly control may have been absent at Little Linton since the late twelfth century. Could therefore 'South' Linton have been laid out not by lordly power but by the initiative of the manorial peasantry? On witnessing the success of the new urban development north of the river the peasant community at Little Linton might have created a new settlement, albeit with the tacit approval of the lord. Such action would have produced the same change in the pattern of land-holding in 1279 and the same form of new settlement. The role of peasant communities in reorganising settlement in places such as 'South' Linton, where lords were perhaps non-resident, has been discussed by a number of scholars (Dyer 1985; Harvey 1989). The lack of any formal reference to a market at 'South' Linton may be significant in this respect.

Conclusion

The urban growth within Linton parish in the thirteenth century was thus perhaps the result of a combination of deliberate encouragement, entrepreneurial flair, satisfactory location and a suitable economic climate on three manorial near-neighbours. As Clapham said in 1932 (201), this produced a combined settlement larger, more prosperous and better-organised than many other places which had true borough status in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. And again, as Clapham also noted,

Linton's failure to become a fully-fledged borough may have been precisely because of the intricacies imposed on the place by its divided lordships rather than because of any broader economic considerations.

Certainly, although Linton survived as a marketing centre until the nineteenth century, it never fulfilled its early promise. The market place at Barham was being described as 'old' in 1363 (VCH 1978: 96). This may have been the result of the sale of the Barham manor by the de Furneaux family soon after 1350 which was followed by a rapid succession of absentee lords until the sixteenth century. The only market place to survive in 1600 was the one at 'South' Linton, perhaps encouraged by the Parys family who between the mid fourteenth and the mid sixteenth centuries lived at manor houses in Little Linton, 'South' Linton and Hildersham (VCH 1978: 85; *Misc. Gen. Her.* 1916-17: 123-6).

So finally, the origins, development, decline and abandonment of Little Linton emerge, albeit dimly. Certainly occupied in Roman and Saxon times, it grew up along an ancient trackway leading to an important crossing of the river. The settlement became the centre of a late eleventh-century manor with its own field system, but was, probably deliberately, abandoned or cleared in the thirteenth century and replaced by a newly planted settlement nearby. This settlement was placed close to a developing urban area, perhaps by the same lord who depopulated Little Linton, or possibly by the peasant community there. In addition Little Linton was also bypassed as a result of the growth of a new communication pattern, associated with the new urban area. From then on it became first a moated manor house with an elaborate garden and then, from the seventeenth century, a working farmstead.

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