
Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society

(incorporating the Cambs and Hunts Archaeological Society)

Volume XCI
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Cambridge Antiquarian Society**

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**Volume XCI
for 2002**

Editor Alison Taylor

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Editorial

After two themed volumes these *Proceedings* return to the usual PCAS format of mixed papers, covering excavations, local history, landscape archaeology, architecture and historical geography. Indeed, in the finest antiquarian tradition many of the papers involve more than one of these disciplines. There should therefore be something to interest all members in this miscellany.

Two departures from recent practice are the inclusion of Conference synopses and an abbreviated *Conduit*. The synopses are by popular request, rising from a realisation that many members would be grateful to have a lasting reminder of these important papers. We are grateful to the authors who supplied copy so conscientiously after the event (naturally we had not thought of this in advance), and to Derek Booth who collected them all together. *Conduit* had to be an even more last-minute construct, when it became clear that the County Council could no longer keep up with the necessary production time-scale. This year's approach is a bit of an experiment, and it will be useful to know what reaction we have both from members and from affiliated societies.

Alison Taylor

President's Address

Two years as President is too short a time to see through any substantial programme of reform for CAS. When I was elected there were a number of initiatives I wanted to start in the hope they would mature in another President's time. To this end Derek Booth as Secretary and I put out a questionnaire in the year 2000 to profile our membership and to canvas opinion on possible changes.

It has been a central part of my Presidency to re-imbue the Society and its membership with confidence in its right to express opinion on heritage issues. It is essential that there remains a well-informed independent Society to safeguard archaeological and related services at a time when other pressures and agenda take precedence within local and central governmental organisations which we perhaps naively assume will be acting in our best interests in protecting the past. It is particularly regrettable that CAS has been excluded from representation within long-established fora to discuss and scrutinise public heritage services within Cambridgeshire at this time.

Another issue I hoped we could address was to reverse the decline of amateur archaeology, perhaps by re-establishing the Society's post of Director of Fieldwork, and to encourage research-led investigation in the County once more. This latter still awaits the right person and opportunity, but I am pleased there are encouraging signs in the way local groups have attracted grants which will give them solid research foci and draw in new members. Notable amongst these are Thriplow Society, Fulbourn Village History Society, Haverhill and District Archaeological Group and Cambridge Archaeology Field Group.

We asked members if it would be beneficial for CAS to develop other venues for meetings, and would there be interest in workshops on current research topics. We have developed the workshop idea with this year's conference dedicated to the archaeology, architecture and history of Ely, a town that has had considerable investigation in the past ten years, with some startling new discoveries but little co-ordination or academic discussion. Synopses of the talks are published within this volume. From October we shall be holding our monthly meetings in more comfortable and more accessible surroundings, in the newly built Divinity Faculty at the Sidgewick Site.

Other positive steps are that, after two years I can report that the Web page is now complete and will shortly appear at www.Cambridge-Antiquarian-Society.org.uk, and that the Society has taken back full ownership of *Conduit* which, over the past ten years, had been produced jointly with Cambridgeshire County Council.

In summary there has been good progress over the past two years and the Society will continue to build upon its strengths as the paramount amenity society guarding Cambridgeshire's heritage. Government policies at central and local level are capricious and we cannot afford to put faith in them without constant scrutiny and challenge. With the advent of regional government and root and branch reform of the planning system, a Cambridgeshire focus for our heritage provided by CAS will be ever more imperative. The Society is therefore essential and I thank you all for continuing to support and contribute to it. I am pleased to leave it in the capable hands of your secretary Liz Allan, and new President, Tony Kirby.

Tim Malim

Unravelling the Morphology of Litlington, South Cambridgeshire

Susan Oosthuizen

Villages in south Cambridgeshire are not obvious 'green' settlements, although there are some notable exceptions to this generalisation, for example Barrington, whose green is one of the largest in the country, and Eltisley, whose triangular green survives intact (RCHME 1968, 4–5 and 89–90). Nevertheless, many south Cambridgeshire villages have a small, residual, open space near the centre of the settlement and this small space is often the relic of a very large, often irregular, common or green, like those at Great Shelford, Comberton and Bassingbourn (Taylor 1983, 131–2; RCHME 1968, 48–9; Taylor and Oosthuizen, forthcoming; Oosthuizen, 1993). A study of the morphology of Litlington confirms this pattern.

Physical Background

The parish of Litlington in south Cambridgeshire lies on the south side of the broad, flat valley of the Ashwell branch of the River Cam, here flowing east. The northern end of the parish lies below 25m OD, in an area whose relative flatness and clay soils inhibit drainage. This area was used as grazing and waste until the early 19th century (Hesse 2000). The arable lands are sited over Lower Chalk which comprises most of the parish, gently rising towards the south. The north-facing Middle Chalk scarp of south Cambridgeshire rises sharply in the southern part of the parish from 60m to 125m OD on Therfield Heath on the southern boundary. This provided heathland grazing for over 300 demesne, plus an unknown number of peasant-owned, sheep in 1086 (VCH 1, 416). The boundary between the Lower and Middle Chalk – and hence also the spring line – lies at about 35m OD, on a line running roughly south-east to north-west across the parish. The medieval village lies at about 35m OD where a number of springs, including the Chardle Ditch, rise out of the chalk.

By 1830 settlement at Litlington was polyfocal (CCRO Q/RDc 46) (map). One focus, just east of Huntingfields Manor, lay on the edge of common or enclosed pasture. Another lay to the south of the settlement along South Street, and a third lay near Dovedales Manor. These foci were connected by a maze of small lanes and footpaths with no obvious pattern. Residual patches of open land lay at the inter-

section of Cage Lane and Church Street, and at the intersection of Cage Lane and Meeting House Lane.

Context

The area has been settled since prehistoric times. The Icknield Way, whose branches run south-west to north-east through the parish, has been in use for millennia: a Neolithic long barrow and a Bronze Age barrow cemetery lie on its course on Therfield Heath south-east of Litlington. Field names and aerial photographs show that many other barrows, since ploughed-out, were scattered across the area (Hesse 2000; CCC SMR). A major Iron Age settlement at Belhus Hill in neighbouring Abington Pigotts flourished until at least the 4th century AD (VCH 7, 58). There were Iron Age sites elsewhere in the area, notably west and south-east of the present village, suggesting a dispersed pattern of settlement in this period (CCC SMR). The triple Mile Ditches, running from Therfield Heath to Litlington, are also believed to be Iron Age in origin (Bryant & Burleigh 1995; Hesse 2000).

In the Roman period, a large villa was built at Litlington, on the west side of the present settlement (VCH 7, 46). The main building had at least thirty rooms arranged around a courtyard and occupied an area 150 x 90m, and it was furnished with a bathhouse, and mosaic and tessellated pavements (ibid). The tenantry were buried in an extensive walled cemetery nearby at Heaven's Walls on Ashwell Street, while at Limlow Hill a large conical barrow within an enclosure may have served as a burial site for at least some of the villa owners.

Anglo-Saxon occupation of the area is indicated by a boar figurine, probably a helmet mount, which was discovered in a burial at Guilden Morden in 1908, and a collection of five or six *sceattas* found in Bassingbourn (Foster 1977, 166–7; CCC SMR). This brief summary does not include a wealth of other prehistoric and historic features known from aerial photographs and other sources (CUCAP; CCC SMR; Taylor 1979, 37).

The estate unit fossilised in the present parish has Anglo-Saxon origins. The name of the Litlington/Bassingbourn parish boundary – called

Litlington Mere in 1570 (CRO P11/28/1) – utilises the *gemaere* element and may indicate an early to middle Anglo-Saxon date for the origin of this unit, perhaps as a subordinate element within a multiple estate (Reaney 1943, 28 and 338). The place-name, first recorded in 1086, was *Lit(e)lingetona* – ‘the farm of the people of Lytel(a)’ (Reaney 1943, 57). Gelling has commented that ‘these names can date from as early as the eighth century but they were certainly still being formed in the tenth and eleventh centuries’ (Gelling 1993, 56).

Before 1066 Earl Algar held the Manor of Litlington, which was assessed at 5 hides.¹ It was made up of nearly the whole of Litlington together with another three virgates (90 acres), some of which was in Guilden Morden and some in Abington Pigotts. The Litlington manor was the demesne farm of a much larger estate, about half of which was sublet to Goda and centred on Shingay. Litlington’s 11th century manorial status was further underlined by the composition of its dependent population: there were 26 villeins, 11 bordars and 6 serfs, in contrast to the Earl’s other holdings, which had no villeins. It is tempting to infer that this late Saxon manor was the administrative descendent of the Roman villa estate. There is, however, little to support this conclusion and some tentative evidence to contradict it.

First, there is no evidence that there was a manorial centre at Litlington in the early or middle Anglo-Saxon period, as one might expect if there were continuity of administration from the villa estate into the later Anglo-Saxon period. Litlington – along with the other parishes in the study area – was held exclusively by the West Saxon royal family (or its closest courtiers) in 1065, and this makes it likely that it was part of a large estate, centred on Steeple Morden, acquired by the house of Wessex after the reconquest of this part of the Danelaw by Edward the Elder in 917. Litlington’s detachment from the estate centre is likely to have been relatively recent in 1086. Steeple Morden, for example, was not granted away from the royal family until 1015.

Second, the land of middle Saxon multiple estates was divided into ‘inland’ and ‘warland’ (Faith 1997). ‘Inland’ was farmed directly from the estate centre and generally found food rents for the owner; it is this core land which was most likely to represent continuity of administration from Roman to Anglo-Saxon owners. ‘Warland’, by contrast, was devolved to tenants of varying status, including sokemen, who performed a variety of functions for the estate owner such as finding escort, carrying services or paying wardpenny. Earl Algar’s manor at Litlington ‘paid wardpenny to the King’s sheriff or did ward’ and Litlington must have originated as ‘warland’ (VCH 1, 416–7). Its 11th century manorial status was probably relatively newly imposed upon it, rather than derived from an older ‘inland’ or demesne status. This slight and tangential evidence suggests that it is more likely that the manor at Litlington was created after 917 than before. This is consistent with Gelling’s comments on the dating of the *ingtūn* place-name element cited

above.

At present, therefore, it seems likely that Litlington was one of a number of subordinate units within a middle-Saxon multiple estate which was acquired by the kings of Wessex after 917. At some time between 917 and 1066 it was granted away as an independent estate, perhaps in the 10th rather than the 11th century, since its name does not seem to refer to the Earls of East Anglia who held it in the mid-11th century.

After the Norman Conquest, Litlington was held directly from the king, at farm, by two new tenants: William the Chamberlain and Odo the Goldsmith (Rumble 1981, 1:18). There is no documentary reference to suggest whether these two royal tenants farmed the estate as a single unit and simply divided the income it generated between them, or whether they divided the land physically and farmed each half separately. Litlington was treated by the Domesday Commissioners as a tenurial whole since it remained part of the royal estate.

However, the possibility that the manor was divided into two physical parts immediately after the Norman Conquest receives slight, inferential support from its later history. By 1147 it had been granted to the Honor of Gloucester, and perhaps by as early as 1166 it had been granted to Hamon de Valognes, the Earl’s constable (VCH 8, 55). Hamon de Valognes subinfeudated half of the manor almost at once and this may mean that it was already physically divided when he received it. These two halves were later named Huntingfields and Dovedales Manors after medieval owners.

An 11th-century creation of two manorial blocks may also be inferred from the history of the church and its relationship with Huntingfield’s Manor. The church was first mentioned in 1168 and contains architectural fragments of the 12th century (VCH 8, 63). The land belonging to the church – the vicarage, rectory and churchyard – forms a regular block *overlying* the northern boundary of the demesne of Huntingfields Manor (CCRO Q/RDc 46) (map). This implies that it was laid out after that manorial site had been created. Furthermore, the patronage of the church was retained by the earls of Gloucester after 1166, and this also suggests that the church was already built when Hamon de Valognes received the manor from the Honor of Gloucester in the same year. Since the church was built by the mid 12th century, and since its site overlies Huntingfields, this implies that the sites of Huntingfields – and, by inference, Dovedales – were laid out before that date, perhaps at the time of the post-Conquest grant to William and Odo.

Factors influencing the origin and development of the post-Conquest settlement

Two earlier features, one man-made and one natural, influenced the morphology of the medieval settlement at Litlington. The first was a pre-existing field system, and the second was a large, irregular area of

ill-drained, hummocky ground along the spring line.

1. *A pre-existing field system*

The landscape of this part of southern Cambridgeshire incorporates the multiplicity of south-westerly/north-easterly routes which ran along the Chilterns, known as the Icknield Way (Taylor 1979, 36–39). The present A505 fossilises one of these routes; others have been lost, but at least four – linking common pastures along the spring line – survived to cross Litlington from neighbouring parishes. These are Ashwell Street, now much straightened (Fox 1923, 147–8); the footpath which enters Litlington from Guilden and Steeple Morden south of Huntingfields Manor (its alignment preserved by the Bassingbourn/Kneesworth road). A third runs approximately along the present road from Steeple Morden, past Dovedales Manor. This veers north-east to join a fourth track running along the meadow in the north of the parish which leads towards North End and Richmonds Manor in Bassingbourn (Crawford 1937, map). Others can be inferred from footpaths. The existence of large areas of land more suitable for pasture than for arable in Litlington and its neighbours may have meant that a multiplicity of informal routes connected commons both within and between these parishes.

North of Ashwell Street, the medieval fields were arranged in long narrow furlongs on a south-easterly to north-westerly axis (Crawford 1937). The furlong boundaries and their internal divisions (the latter running parallel to Icknield Way and its subordinate routes) created a 'ladderlike' framework underlying the whole parish at right angles to the general direction of Icknield Way. An early date for this system may be inferred from the fact that the west and east parish boundaries generally follow, and are presumably contemporary with, or later than, these field boundaries. The pattern extends into neighbouring Bassingbourn and Steeple Morden, as far east as Thriplow and Whittlesford and west towards Guilden Morden, Dunton and Eyeworth (Hesse 2001; OS TL24/34 and 44/54). The medieval settlement in Litlington overlay two or three of these 'ladders' (Map). The first lies south-east of the village, bounded on the north by the Bassingbourn Road, while the second is bounded on the east by Church Street and on the north by the road to Steeple Morden.

2. *The influence of the spring line in creating an area suitable for common pasture*

The settlement lies at the point at which this underlying framework was disrupted by the effects of the spring line, creating a large area of 'hummocky ground' between the 'ladders' (Taylor 1981). Hummocky ground is most pronounced at springheads and close to streams all over south Cambridgeshire. It is found where the freeze-thaw conditions of late glacial and periglacial times created pingo-like features in areas prone to waterlogging. These ice lenses, their weight compacting the land beneath them, and leaving a hollow when they melted,

created ground that was poorly drained and difficult to cultivate, more useful as pasture than as arable. The effect of this in Litlington was to form a very large area of open pasture, perhaps underlying most of the present settlement site.

The original limits of this pasture or common are unknown. By the late 11th century it probably extended at least as far as the northern boundary of D'Ovedales Manor to the north²; the eastern boundary of old enclosures in 1830 on the east; and the western boundary of Huntingfields Manor on the west (see below). By the early 19th century, relics of this pasture survived at the intersection of Cage Lane and Church Street, and at the intersection of Cage Lane and Meeting House Lane. The irregular property boundaries characteristic of encroachment on open ground suggest that the area enclosed by Silver Street, Church Street and Cage Lane was also once part of the common, perhaps extending as far south as the line of the route from Bassingbourn to Steeple Morden, discussed above.

The origins of the present settlement

Litlington appears to have originated as a planned, nucleated settlement within which three distinct areas may be discerned: a manorial centre, and two planned blocks of occupation for villeins (villagers) and bordars (smallholders) respectively.

a. The Manorial Centre

Between Church Street and South Street lies an area of confused roads, footpaths and property boundaries. Careful analysis however reveals an irregular polygon defined by Church and South Streets on the west, south and south-east, Meeting House Lane to the north-east and Cage Lane to the north-west. These streets form a continuous boundary, an indication that they may once have formed a large enclosure in the southern central part of Litlington. A similar street pattern exists at Godmanchester, where traffic was diverted around the walls of the small Roman town by the barrier which those walls represented (Green 1977, 27–8 and 30). It is not suggested that there was a Roman town at Litlington, although it is suggested that the same process was at work here. That is, that the definition of an irregular area, perhaps by a fence or hedge, interrupted traffic along the natural route-ways through the settlement, and travellers were simply forced to go around the impediment. Ten out of thirteen internal boundaries within this polygon butt up against the boundary at right angles, confirming that they are later subdivisions of this area.

The irregular outline of this block is very like that of manorial demesnes laid out in Suffolk in the middle to late Anglo-Saxon period, often in close association with commons (Warner 1987). Similar features appear to be common in Cambridgeshire too (Oosthuizen 1994, 1996; Taylor and Oosthuizen, forthcoming). If so, the period of its formation is consistent with the place-name evidence, discussed above, of an

8th to 10th century date for the formation of the Anglo-Saxon estate, perhaps following with the West Saxon reconquest of the Cambridge Danelaw in 917.

Alignments of boundaries inside this unit with roads and footpaths outside suggest that it lay across one of the many intersections of north-south and west-east routes across the parish. An early west-east route is suggested by the footpath which enters Litlington from the west, forming the northern boundary of the bordar plots. Its alignment is taken up by continuous property boundaries across the putative demesne block (south of 57 and 55 and north of 56 and 54, and south of 47, 48, 46 and north of 50 and 49).³ To the east it forms the southern boundary of 103 and 104, suggesting that the Bassingbourn road was diverted a little to the north of its original course by a northward extension to the villein settlement. This line effectively bisects the demesne. Next, the demesne is crossed on a north-south axis by the southern section of Malting Lane, whose alignment was continued in 1830 by a lane running north from Burrs Lane to Dovedales Manor. Today the connection between the two lanes has been interrupted and diverted along the north-west section of Malting Lane. To the south the lane's alignment is continued by the boundary between 91 and 98 on the west and 92 and 99 on the east.

b. The villein holdings

A block of planned settlement lies south-east of the present settlement and south of the Litlington road between properties 103 and 104 in the north and 116 in the south. Deliberate planning is revealed by the way in which these properties all share a common front and back boundary, and are of a common – or multiples of a common – width. The front boundary was a lane, much of which survived until enclosure, while the continuous back boundary was defined by the surrounding arable (CCRO Q/RDc 46). In 1830 this block contained 13 properties of varying acreages. If, however, properties 105, 109, 110 or 112 are representative of the original width of these holdings (since they are all about the same area), then there were originally probably some 23 plots of about an acre each in this block. There were 26 villeins in Litlington in 1086. The relatively large area of each holding supports the suggestion that this block may have been laid out for the pre-Conquest manor's villein tenants.

There is other evidence to support the suggestion that this block was originally in domestic occupation and may have been held by villeins. In 1830 some had names ending in 'croft', indicating that they may once have been the sites of houses (Field 1993, 20). Settlement appears to have shifted away from this area by the late 16th century, if not earlier, since none of the properties with 'croft' names also had rights of common in 1830. However, about half the enclosed copyhold land in Litlington was clustered in this area and, while not conclusive evidence, it may just represent those villein tenants who could not afford to enfranchise their holdings in the later middle ages.⁴ (The regularity of a similar block to the west (between 89

and 97, and 96 and 102) is not the result of settlement planning. It was enclosed from arable land between about 1577 and 1653 (VCH 8, 59). None has a 'croft' name, and one is called Saffron Close, underlining its post-medieval origins.)

At some time after it was laid out, the block was extended northwards by the addition of plot 104, thus diverting the Bassingbourn Road a little to the north. It may also have been extended further to the south, since there was an isolated island in 1830 of three closes in the field south of the village whose front and back boundaries aligned with those of this block (CCRO Q/RDc 46).

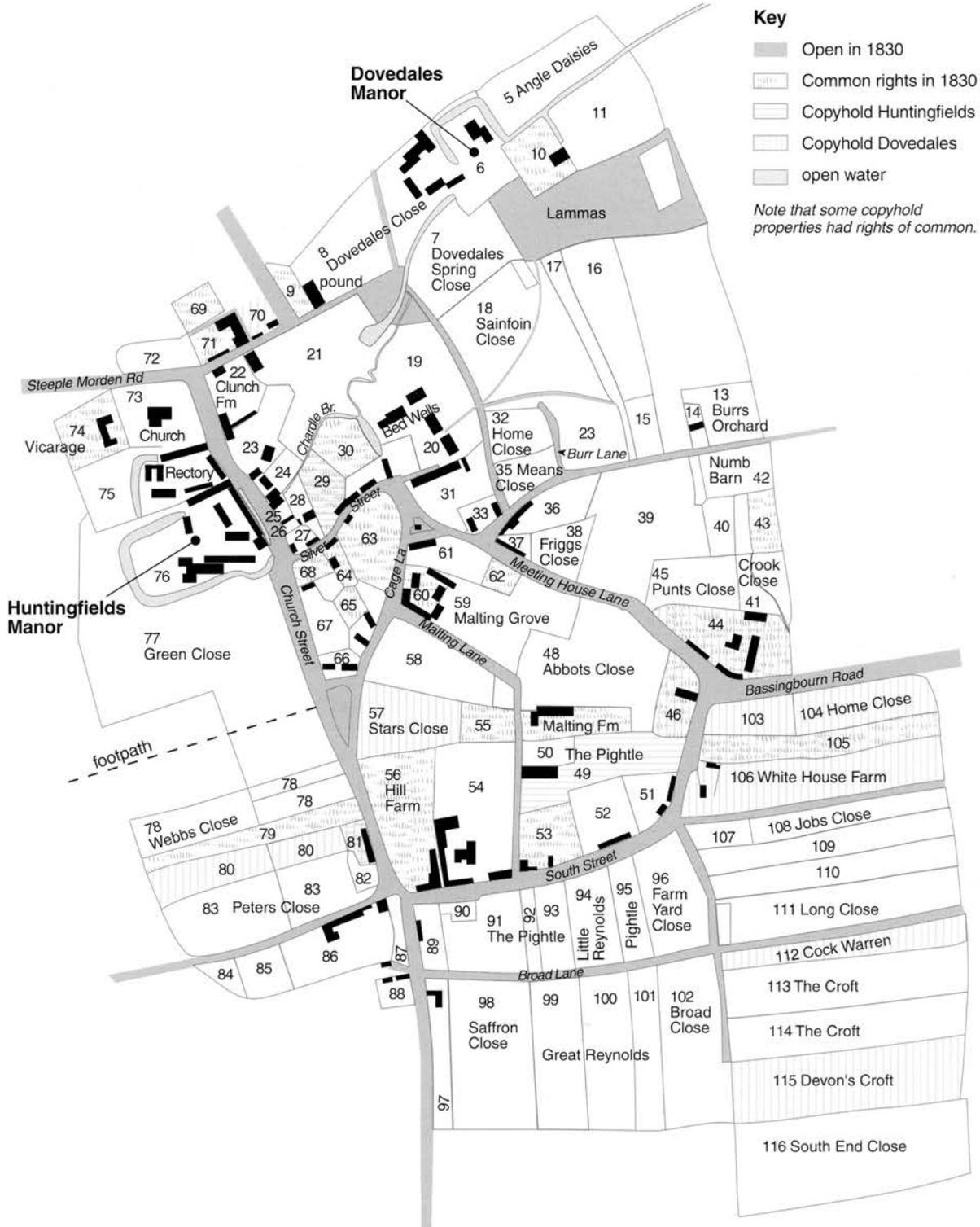
c. The bordar holdings

A second block of planned settlement lies west of Church Street between properties 78 and 82 to 83. It also appears to have been extended: the southern boundary of properties 84 to 86 south of the lane curves north at its western end to align with the corresponding curve of the western boundary of the main block. It thus forms a continuous back boundary with the block north of the lane. Church Street forms a common front boundary for most of these properties except for those bounded by the dividing lane. Holdings near the lane have been subject to later subdivision, settlement within them turning to face the lane.⁵

By 1830 this area had been divided into thirteen closes and messuages of irregular acreages, but property 79 – the most regular of all the surviving closes – may be representative of the original area of properties in this block, at about two roods. If so, there may have been nine properties in the northern block when it was first laid out, while the extension to the south will have added another three. There were eleven bordars in 1086. Perhaps significantly property 79 had a common right in 1830, and the properties immediately to the south (80 and 81) were all copyhold at the same date. The identification of this block with bordar settlement is further suggested by the smaller area of these properties compared with those east of the settlement; they are about half the size of the suggested villein holdings. The paucity of both copyholdings and common rights in this block indicates that it too, was subject to significant settlement shift before the later 16th century.

Summary and conclusion

In the Roman period Litlington was probably the centre of an estate focused on a substantial Roman villa which lay on the west of a large irregular common pasture. That estate seems to have disintegrated at the same time or soon after the villa was abandoned, since there is no indication of continuity of administration of the area into the Anglo-Saxon period. By the middle Anglo-Saxon period, Litlington appears to have been part of the 'warland' of a large multiple estate, centred on Steeple Morden. The tenants of the Roman and the middle Anglo-Saxon estate almost certainly



Key
 ■ Open in 1830
 ▨ Common rights in 1830
 ▤ Copyhold Huntingfields
 ▥ Copyhold Dovedales
 ■ open water
 Note that some copyhold properties had rights of common.

Map. Litlington, South Cambridgeshire in 1830 (after CCRO Q/RDc 45)

lived in hamlets and farmsteads dispersed about the parish (Taylor 1983, Ch.8).
 By the late 10th century the parish formed the manorial centre of a large estate of 20 hides and it seems likely that the detachment of this estate from Steeple Morden occurred after the West Saxon reconquest of Cambridgeshire in 917. The arguments for the creation of a late-Saxon manorial enclosure have

been explored above, and, perhaps significantly, locate the movement towards a new manorial centre in roughly the same period as the creation of the place-name. It may be significant that the putative Anglo-Saxon centre lies within 200 yards of the Roman villa, but it may simply be coincidence based on a common attraction to the large area of hummocky pasture ground.

It is likely that nucleation of the settlement occurred before the Norman Conquest. The blocks of possible villein and bordar occupation are each in single blocks, on either side of the demesne block. This physical relationship, and the close correlation between the numbers of Earl Algar's tenants and the number of properties in each block, implies that they were laid out before the manor was subdivided after 1066. It is impossible to know whether these three elements were laid out at the same time, or whether the manorial centre preceded the blocks of dependent tenantry. The villein and bordar blocks were unlikely to have been laid out after the Conquest, since the tenants of Dovedales and Huntingfields Manors would have been more likely to have been settled alongside each manor; that is, they would each have formed the focus of a separate planned settlement as happened, for example, at Duxford, Cambs. (Taylor 1977, 190).

A more precise date for this planning may be inferred, from the close correlation between the late 11th century villein and bordar population, and the number of properties in each block. Each had been extended to achieve the late 11th century numbers, which implies that they were laid out one or two generations before the Norman Conquest. Nevertheless, the relatively small difference made to the number of properties in each block by the additions, and the relatively close correlation between these numbers and the 1086 tenantry, suggests that the planning is unlikely to have been undertaken much before about 1000 AD.

After 1066 the Anglo-Saxon manorial demesne was abandoned, and new 'manorial' centres were laid out at (what later became) Huntingfields and Dovedales manors on the west and north of the common respectively, for the two Norman sub-tenants of the new king. This was a precursor of the later development of polyfocal settlement in Litlington.

The villeins and bordars seem to have continued to live in the planned settlement areas laid out for them for as long as there was direct manorial control by the two manors of these tenants. For example, in 1279 villeins' labour services were still exacted on all the manors (VCH 8, 59). Some population increase may have been accommodated by encroachment on the periphery of the common, since Hill Farm (Hellecroft) was mentioned in the 13th century (Reaney 1943, 68). There are indications that this control had, however, slackened by the early-mid 14th century. The owners of Huntingfields Manor were minors between 1316 and 1327 and again between 1337 and 1351, and the Manor was presumably let out or controlled by trustees; it had been alienated perhaps as early as 1368 (VCH 8, 57). Fifteen half-yardlands were sold to their tenants in the 1320s and between 1378 and 1392, and on Huntingfields Manor all the customary works were commuted for cash by 1337 (VCH 8, 59). This is the period in which place-names mark settlement shift and encroachment onto the common: Alan de Chaldewelle lived near the Chardle Brook in 1327, South End and Punt's Closes were first mentioned in the 14th century, and Church End and South End were each first mentioned in 1378 (Reaney 1943, 58 and 358;

VCH 8, 54).

The relationship between enfranchisement and settlement shift is interesting. There was little coincidence in 1830 between copyhold properties and properties with rights of common. It seems that these rights were restricted to enfranchised properties, since there do not seem to have been any new common rights created for sheep after 1578 when sheep were stinted to men 'having *their own arable* to plough [who] might keep more than four' (my emphasis; VCH 8, 60).⁶ The distribution of rights of common therefore reveals a pattern of settlement shift of enfranchised copyholders who moved nearer the common pastures as soon as they freed themselves from manorial constraint. Population decline in the same period may have been a contributory factor in the desertion of the earlier planned elements and shift to other parts of the settlement. There were fewer common rights in 1830 than tenants in 1150, even though the number of households in the parish had increased after the 1570s.⁷

The 320 sheep on the demesne in 1086 and the 31 peasants who contributed to the wool levy in 1347 underline the importance of rights to common pasture in the parish from an early period (VCH 8, 60). The right to graze cattle was not stinted until the late 18th century, since there was sizeable grazing on the common within the village and on the pastures of Bergh Meads and Cow Common in the north of the parish (Hesse 2000). Unlimited access to pasture for cattle may help to explain the development of further unplanned settlement on the edge of the common. This affected the area between Silver Street and the Chardle Brook, limited by Church Street to the west and a nodal point of access routes at about Bedwells, where Silver Street meets Malting Lane and Meeting House Lane, as well as by two footpaths, leading north-east and east respectively.

By 1830 Litlington had evolved into a polyfocal settlement with three late- or post-medieval foci, while the early medieval planned elements lay largely unoccupied. These new foci lay (1) along South Street and the southern part of Malting Lane; (2) on the common south of the Chardle Brook east of Huntingfields Manor; (3) at Dovedales Manor. The irregular property boundaries of the encroachments on the common pasture south of the Chardle Brook and on the former pre-Conquest Manorial demesne shows that this development was gradual and unplanned.

Endnotes

- 1 One hide is equivalent to 120 acres in Cambridgeshire (VCH 1, 341).
- 2 Dovedales was situated on meadow land immediately north of the Chardle Brook, which has been redirected to feed the moat. The curving boundary north of Dovedales, whose funnel shape narrows towards its western end, is suggestive of an entrance to pasture (CRO Q/RDc 46). The village pound was situated west of Dovedales where the funnel is at its narrowest (see map), supporting the identification of this part of the settlement as common pasture

on which the Manor encroached, since communal facilities like the pound are usually found on a green or common (ibid).

- 3 The property numbers cited in the text and on the map refer to those on the 1830 enclosure map (CRO Q/RDc 46).
- 4 Virtually no copyhold belonging to Huntingfields Manor survived within the settlement in 1830, except for three properties: 24, 29 and 49; a little more copyhold belonging to Dovedales still existed as shown on the map.
- 5 Crawford's map shows this lane continuing across the open field furlong to the west.
- 6 The number of households appears to have remained more or less constant from 1086, when there were 37 tenants, until the 16th century, when there were 36 households in 1563 (VCH 8, 54). However, there appears to have been a sharp rise in population in the later 16th century, since there were about 60 households in 1600 (ibid.), and this is likely to have been the trigger for the restriction of rights of common. There was a similar pattern of events at Bassingbourn, where no new common rights were created after 1634 (VCH 8,).
- 7 By 1830 there were only 24 surviving rights of common, although there were about 120 households in the village in 1831 (CRO Q/RDz 10; VCH 8, 54). This number is less than both the number of households in 1086 (37) and the number of tenants in 1150 (at least 32), and this suggests that there had been some attrition of population in Litlington. A 14th century date for this decline is suggested both by the enfranchisement of tenants in that period (since a declining population would have had more leverage on manors desperate for labour than a high population) and by the known decline in the population in general between about 1300 and 1400.

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