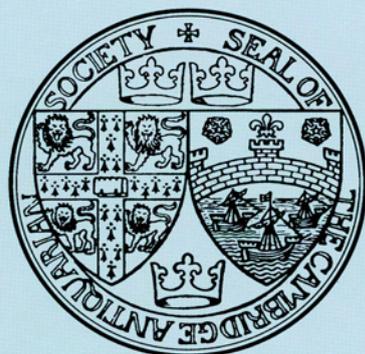

Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society

(incorporating the Cambs and Hunts Archaeological Society)

Volume XCVII
for 2008



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Cambridge Antiquarian Society**

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for 2008**

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Contents

Further Investigations at Arbury Camp, Cambridge: The Eastern Entrance – A Monumental Architecture Christopher Evans and Mark Knight	7
Iron Age settlement by the Dam Brook at Scotland Farm, Dry Drayton David Ingham	31
Excavation of a Middle Iron Age enclosure at Bushmead Road, Eaton Socon, Cambridgeshire Daniel Stansbie	41
Late Iron Age/Early Roman Pottery Kilns at Blackhorse Lane, Swavesey, 1998–99 Steven Willis, Alice Lyons, Elizabeth Shepherd Popescu and Judith Roberts	53
Iron Age Ditches and an Anglo-Saxon Building near the Mile Ditches, Bassingbourn, TL 3294 4335 Tom Phillips	77
A Zoomorphic Roman Handle from New Street, Godmanchester, TL 5246 2704 Nina Crummy and Tom Phillips	83
Excavations on a Roman Salting Site at Cedar Close, March, Cambridgeshire Tom Lane, Elaine L Morris and Mark Peachey	89
A Romano-Saxon Farmstead and possible 12th-century Dovecote or Windmill: Community excavations at Spring Close, Boxworth, TL 350 645 Aileen Connor	111
New work on old sites: Somersham and Pampisford revisited Christopher Taylor	121
Excavation of the Civil War bastion ditch of Cambridge Castle Craig Cessford	137
The Old Plough: a neglected property of Ely Porta Manor Michael Chisholm	149
Living on the Edge: Commons, Castles and Regional Settlement Patterns in Medieval East Anglia Robert Liddiard	169
West Cambridge: the two World Wars and the inter-war lull Philomena Guillebaud	179
Fieldwork in Cambridgeshire 2007 Elizabeth Shepherd Popescu and Sarah Poppy	195
Reviews Tim Malim and Sue Oosthuizen	215
Notes on Contributors	219
<i>Index</i>	221
<i>Abbreviations</i>	227
Recent Accessions to the Cambridgeshire Collection Chris Jakes	229

Living on the Edge: Commons, Castles and Regional Settlement Patterns in Medieval East Anglia

Robert Liddiard

East Anglia is characterised by a dispersed pattern of settlement, but with subtle variations between 'Northern' and 'Southern' East Anglia, the former comprising a landscape of primarily common-edge settlements and the latter one of minor nucleations. The siting of Norman castles reflects this sub-regional variation: in south Suffolk and Essex castles tend to be located in nucleations, while in north Suffolk and Norfolk they tend to be found in association with commons. The differences in siting can be related to antecedent structures but also to a desire on the part of incoming Norman lords to guarantee rights over specific resources in the regional economy.

Introduction

A steady stream of publications in recent years on the subject of 'castles and landscapes' has led to renewed interest in the relationship between castles and settlement patterns. A general conclusion of much of this work has been to demonstrate that variations in the settlement morphology of medieval England are often reflected at a local level in the location of seigneurial buildings: in Midland England, for example, castles are frequently associated with the nucleations typical of the region; whereas in the south west castles are often isolated, reflecting the highly dispersed settlement pattern of scattered farms and hamlets (Creighton 2005). Such discussions bring into focus specific questions concerning the reasons behind castle siting at a local level, but also raise more general issues concerning how the physical manifestations of lordship interfaced with, and were sustained by, regional societies and landscapes.

This article builds on research in this field by discussing the relationship between castle-building and settlement patterns in East Anglia, an area with distinctly regional characteristics in terms of its historic landscape. Much has been written in recent years both on the subject of the regional landscape of East Anglia and on its castles (Liddiard 2000a; Williamson 2003). Due to the differing historiographical priorities of those scholars who study the rural landscape and

those who study castles, however, links are often only intermittently made between what can often appear as two different subjects. This article will review the recent developments in both the fields of medieval settlement and castle studies and attempt to link the findings of both in order to arrive at a greater understanding of any regional characteristics in castle siting and distribution. It will concentrate on those castles raised in the two hundred years after the Norman Conquest and, in terms of geographical scope, will focus on the old kingdom of the East Angles, modern Norfolk and Suffolk, although, as will be seen, the divisions of county boundaries are not always the best criteria for discussing castles and settlement patterns and so a slightly different geographical model will be employed.

The Regional Landscape of East Anglia

It is well known that during the Middle Ages an idiosyncratic settlement morphology evolved in East Anglia, characterised by clusters of farmsteads grouped around the edges of commons and greens (Roberts and Wrathmell 2000). Extensive fieldwalking surveys over many decades have demonstrated that East Anglia's 'common-edge settlements' were established in the period from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries (Wade-Martins 1980; Davison 1990; Rogerson 1995; Martin 2001). In a process known as 'common-edge drift', settlements originally founded in the Middle Saxon period and associated with the site of churches gradually shifted to new locations. The new settlements of East Anglia developed around common waste, land too often dismissed in the past as 'marginal', but now accepted as a crucial resource in the regional economy. As existing settlements disintegrated by their constituent farms relocating to the edges of commons, churches remained in place; thus the process of 'common-edge drift' was responsible for the phenomena of isolated churches, one of the most obvious regional characteristics of the East Anglian countryside and, as will be seen below, an important factor in the structuring of regional castle landscapes.

Within the broader classification of East Anglia as an area dominated by common-edge settlements there are, however, subtle, but important, variations. Of particular relevance here is the broader distinction between 'Northern East Anglia' and 'Southern East Anglia', with the dividing line not precise, but which can be drawn as an imaginary line across Suffolk running from Ipswich to Bury St Edmunds, in large part approximating to the valley of the river Gipping (Figure 1). South of the 'Gipping Corridor' as it has come to be known, is south Suffolk and north and east Essex, while to the north lies most of east and north Suffolk and south and central Norfolk (Williamson 2006, 51–6). These two sub-regional landscapes display subtle, but significant, variations in settlement morphology. The countryside of Northern East Anglia is characterised by relatively high numbers of isolated churches, large commons and a high frequency of common-edge settlements. Southern East Anglia, by contrast, is a landscape of minor nucleations focussed on a smaller commons or greens, frequently associated with a church, and, in addition outlying farms and green edge hamlets. The cultural difference between these two landscapes is reflected by the names given to common wastes: in Northern East Anglia commons are referred to as 'moor', 'heath', or

'common', while in Southern East Anglia 'green' and 'tye' are more frequent, the latter term only occurring south of the Gipping (Martin 1999, 62–3).

The boundaries of regional landscapes are never easy to define and often blurred at the margins but, while the change is gradual, two further observations on the settlement morphology of East Anglia as a whole are highly significant. Firstly, the further north one moves into the region, and especially north of the Gipping valley, the greater instances of common-edge settlement and secondly, the area of those commons that attracted settlement generally becomes larger (Williamson 2007).

The reasons behind the emergence of these two distinct sub-regional landscape types are complex and do not warrant an extended discussion, but do demand explanation as it does help to explain the differing locations of castles across the region (Williamson 2003). While it is possible to suggest a date for the process of common-edge drift with some certainty, the causal factors behind this phenomenon remain a matter for debate. In Northern East Anglia, however, it appears likely that the desire to relocate settlements close to commons was a response to wider structural problems within the regional economy. From the eleventh century demographic pressure



Figure 1. Sites mentioned in the text and principal features governing castle distribution in East Anglia.

and consequent expansion of the area under arable, together with a shortage of meadow, ensured that the commons represented areas that provided late grazing essential for the seasonal economy of individual communities. In a climate where both lords and free peasants were anxious to safeguard their rights over common grazing, the physical act of moving one's farm and erecting a new structure on the edge of the waste constituted a visible display of those privileges. In Southern East Anglia, by contrast, where the availability of meadow was slightly greater, the seasonal requirement for labour for haymaking encouraged the development of small nucleations in major river valleys, but with settlement on outlying interflaves mostly comprising scattered farms and hamlets, often closely aligned on smaller ribbons of meadow or on greens that provided grazing for livestock.

At the time of the Norman Conquest and the initial stages of castle construction, the East Anglian landscape was thus undergoing a major re-structuring. In Northern East Anglia, settlements were increasingly shifting to new locations on the edges of commons, while in Southern East Anglia a pattern of minor nucleations with outlying farms was gradually taking shape. In 1066 both these landscapes were still in the process of development, but were already distinctly regional in character.

Historical Pattern of Building

The chronological outline of castle construction in East Anglia broadly follows the three-phase model proposed by Richard Eales (Eales 1990). Royal foundations in urban centres are likely to have been in place at an early stage, and royal castles were present at Norwich by 1075 and Colchester by 1076 and it seems likely that a royal presence at Ipswich was established by a similar date (Shepherd-Popescu 2005). A close reading of Orderic Vitalis' *Ecclesiastical History* suggests that Thetford castle was also in place by 1075: Orderic's discussion of the revolt of that year states that there was a failed attempt to capture Earl Ralph de Gael 'at his castle' between the battle of *Fagaduna* and prior to the siege of Norwich, the most likely place being Thetford (Chibnall 1969, 316–7).

The establishment of royal castles was quickly followed by baronial building, chiefly in the countryside. A burst of building seems to have taken place in the 1070s: archaeological and historical evidence suggests that the construction of Castle Acre took place c.1072 and the large mottes at Eye, Clare and Haughley also probably date to this decade, a suggestion supported by detailed work on the tenurial history of Domesday land holding (Martin 2005, 172–207). The building of castles by major tenants in chief was closely followed by those raised by associated lordly tenants. This 'third phase' building appears to have been limited in scope (although much here necessarily depends on how accurately 'campaign' castles have been identified, as discussed below) but a relatively secure example exists at Horsford in Norfolk where the motte and bailey castle of Walter of Caen, a tenant of Robert Malet of Eye was established, presumably

soon after the Conquest (Brown 1987, 470). The construction of castles continued long after the Norman settlement and East Anglia arguably became more 'incastellated' during the twelfth century, as the period c.1100–1190 saw the construction, or substantial rebuilding of, Castle Acre, Mileham, New Buckenham, Castle Rising, Bungay, Orford, Framlingham and Castle Hedingham.

The regional character of East Anglian castle-building was commented upon by David King in 1983, who observed that Norfolk and Suffolk had the lowest density of castles in England, but that its major sites were frequently defined by formidable earthworks (King 1983, 305). The low number of Norman castles in East Anglia raises a paradox in as much as the high population density and wealth of the region throughout the Middle Ages has often been invoked as explaining phenomena such as the high numbers of parish churches and monastic foundations but such factors did not, seemingly, translate to widespread castle-building (Pestell 2004). A conventional explanation lies in the status of East Anglia as something of a military backwater, but such reasoning fails to convincingly explain why the eastern seaboard represented a thriving network for trade, but seemingly not an invasion route.

More recent interpretations have suggested that part of the answer, at least in Norfolk, may lie in the tenurial geography of the region in 1086, specifically a relatively small number of major barons with a landed base in the region to necessitate building (Liddiard 2000a, 22–3). For men such as William of Warenne or Gilbert de Clare, both of whom had substantial landholdings in Norfolk and Suffolk respectively, a regional *caput* was a necessity. By contrast, for those tenants in chief whose landed base lay outside the region, such as Ivo Taillebois, it is hardly surprising that his *caput* was located elsewhere, in this case Lincolnshire. How much weight can be placed on such an analysis – and how accurately it can be quantified – is difficult to judge, at its most basic level, there must be some link between distribution of landed wealth and castle-building and relatively paucity of barons in East Anglia in the decades following the Conquest with a sufficient landed base in order to necessitate castle construction, may help explain low overall numbers.

Although questions over the low number of castles have yet to be fully resolved, the distribution of castles across East Anglia does, however, lend itself to more specific observations and again, the pattern of castles can be linked to the broader tenurial geography of the region. The majority of castles in Norfolk lie to the west of the 'central watershed', a major interfluvial boundary that had a profound effect on the historical development of the county, while there is a distinct absence of castles in the west and south west of Suffolk (Williamson 1993). There is a clear correlation between the absence of large regional *capita* in areas of high free tenure, which, it has been suggested, deterred castle-building due to the problems of 'buying out' *liberi homines*. The relatively small number of tenants in chief who built castles in the

region after 1066 appear to have favoured compact manors, held as bookland and with limited numbers of free tenures. In Norfolk, the west of the county fulfilled these criteria and it is significant that it is here too that the majority of religious houses were established. In Suffolk major castles again avoid areas of free tenure and the existing liberties of St Edmund and St Etheldreda also deterred castle-building.

While issues of tenurial geography were clearly important in structuring the general pattern of castles across the region, antecedent structures appear to have played a direct role in the specific location of castle buildings in the landscape. There are a significant number of cases where the tenurial geography strongly suggests that, at the very least, the locations chosen for castles after 1066 were also manors of tenurial importance in the pre-Conquest period. Painstaking analysis of Domesday Book has highlighted continuity from the pre-Conquest period in terms of estate structure; thus the greatest East Anglian fiefs in 1086 (such as Warenne, Clare, Malet, Montford) had at their core a collection of Old English estates that had passed, more or less intact, to incoming lords (Marten 2005). The presumption in these cases is that the castle was not simply placed in an important manor, but that it was raised over existing lordly buildings, with the clear reason of the legitimacy implied by the re-building of an existing seigneurial seat (Coulson 1996). In the small number of instances where it has taken place, archaeological excavation confirms that Norman castles do indeed overlie earlier high status buildings. The clearest examples is at Castle Acre, where the stone hall of the 1070s built by William of Warenne was raised over an existing wooden structure – interpreted as a hall – that in all probability belong to the major pre-Conquest thegn, Toki (Coad *et al* 1987). A large wooden building was also excavated beneath the *donjon* at Castle Rising, but here it was not clear if the earlier structure was pre or post-Conquest (Morley and Gurney 1997). Although such examples represent only a small number of sites, it is in all probability symptomatic of a much wider pattern, especially when put alongside historical evidence to suggest tenurial continuity. At Haughley in Suffolk a hall is mentioned belonging to Guthmond in 1066 and at Clare the pre-Conquest lord, Whitgar, dwelt in a manor house with a *burh-geat* or lordly tower before the Conquest (Marten 2005). It does therefore seem to be the case that the essential pattern across the region was one where incoming Norman lords chose to raise their castles over existing high-status buildings, which in some way would suggest that the pattern of castles across the region reflects an earlier pattern of high-status settlement.

Thus far, the development of regional landscapes in East Anglia and the process of castle-building have been discussed separately. To do so is simply expedient due to the divergent trends in the secondary literature. The two themes will now be linked, in so far as is possible, in order to help shed light on how castle building might have reflected and influenced the regional landscape of East Anglia.

The Pattern of Castles

If, *a priori*, it is accepted that there is a close relationship between castles and settlement patterns then, as far as East Anglia is concerned, it might reasonably be expected to see the majority of castles to be associated in some way with commons or common edges. Perhaps unsurprisingly (even with due allowance for the inevitable examples that do not conform to the overall trend), this is indeed the pattern that emerges. In general terms, castles in northern East Anglia are associated with commons and common-edge settlements, while in southern East Anglia castles are closely connected with small nucleations. Of greater significance is that the location of castles appears to 'mirror' the dominant trend of the broader pattern of rural settlement: the further north into East Anglia, the stronger the association between castles and commons becomes. It should be noted that it is not only castles that display such a trend; it is a pattern that also holds true for moated sites. For whatever reason, castle siting in East Anglia was thus deeply rooted in the distinctly regional landscape (Figure 2).

Northern East Anglia

The relationship between castles and commons is immediately apparent on eighteenth-century county maps surveyed before the widespread enclosure of common in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (Barringer 1989; Dymond 2003; Chapman and André 1777). Where a castle lies on a common edge it can be surmised that settlement drift had already taken place and that the location of the castle was simply reflecting a pattern of settlement that was already in place. At sites such as Castle Acre, such a situation is suggested archaeologically by the fact that the earliest Norman castle overlaid pre-Conquest levels, suggesting that the settlement has already 'shifted' to the damp lower ground beside the river Nar, typical for west Norfolk. Here the development of the castle also appears to have been responsible for encroachment on this common at an early date, with the residue surviving only to the east and west. At new foundations of the twelfth century a similar pattern can be observed: at New Buckenham (c.1146), the castle town of William D'Albini II abutted directly on the common edge; effectively, the lordly *caput* is a common-edge settlement writ large (Liddiard 2000a).

A particularly clear example is Castle Rising. At the time of Domesday, Rising was a berewick of the major soke centre of Snettisham but following its acquisition by the D'Albini family in 1088 developed into a small manorial centre with church and presumed hall (Liddiard 2000b). Although in this case the 'shift' was not dramatic, by the late eleventh century settlement stood on the common edge. Rising was transformed c.1140 following the marriage of William D'Albini II to the royal widow Alice of Louvain and his elevation to the Earldom of Sussex, which was marked by the building of a *donjon*. The acidic soil in this part of Norfolk rendered the area unsuitable for intensive arable cultivation and was characterised well into the

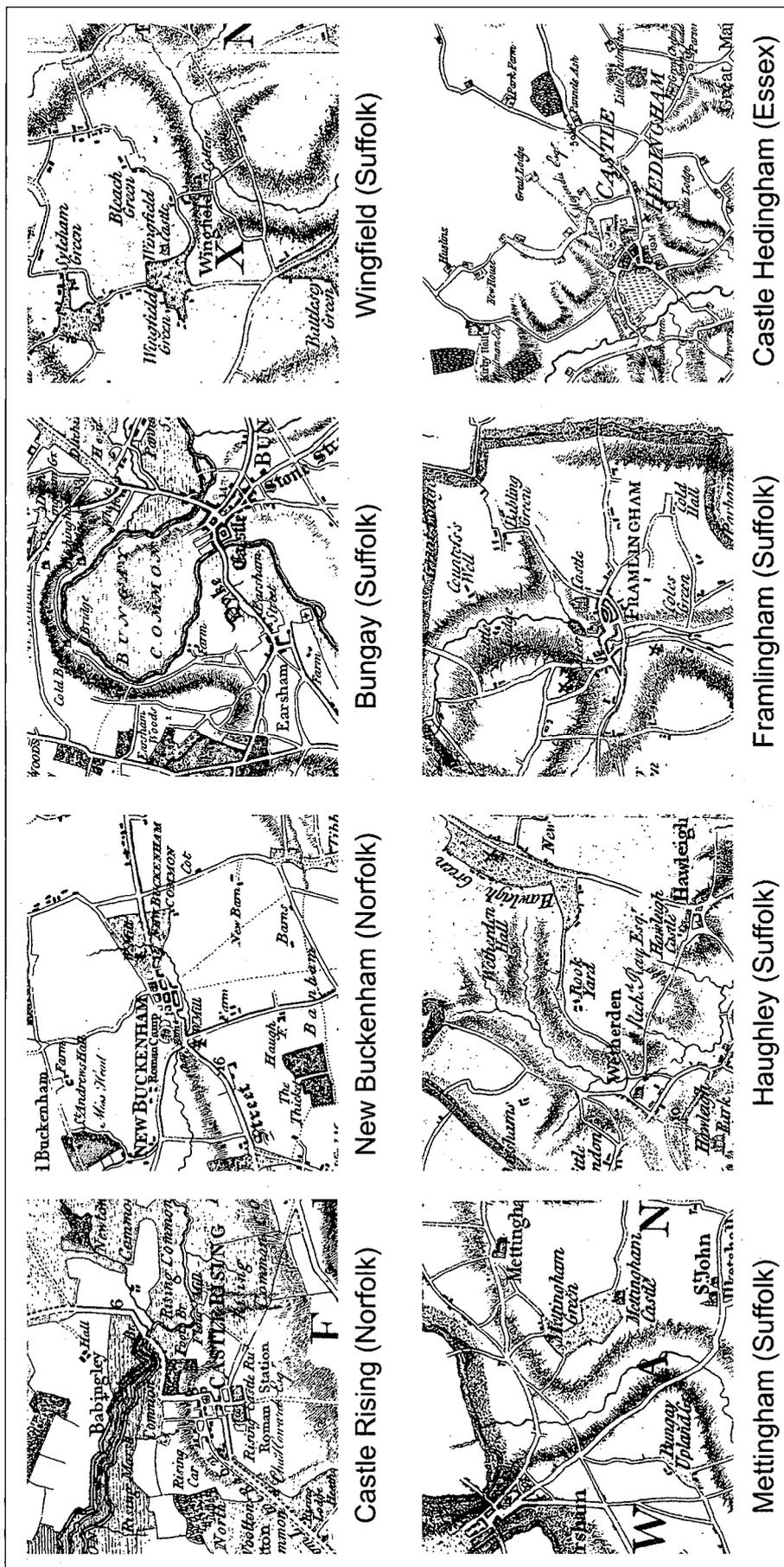


Figure 2. Maps of some Castles and Settlements in East Anglia. Note how those castles in Northern East Anglia (Castle Rising, New Buckenham, Bungay, Wingfield, Mettingham) tend to be found in association with commons and those in Southern East Anglia (Haughey, Framlingham, Hedingham) with nucleations. It should be noted that the dividing line of the 'Gipping Corridor' is only a general rule and is subject to variation; Framlingham has the characteristics of Southern East Anglia, yet lies to the north of the Gipping. From Faden's map of Norfolk (1797), Hodskinson's map of Suffolk (1783) and Chapman and Andre's map of Essex (1777).

nineteenth century by large expanses of sandy heath. The development of the castle in the twelfth century involved an expansion of lordly interests over this waste. To the south of the castle was deer park, the line of which is clearly visible on Faden's map of 1797, drawn up before enclosure. The creation of the park had encroached on the heathy common that made up much of the landscape in the medieval period. The wider landscape was also appropriated for the purposes of hunting, with the establishment of a substantial chase with a circumference of some fourteen miles (BL Harl. MS 380, fo.7).

The association between castles and commons continued into the late medieval period. Two examples from north Suffolk demonstrate this clearly. At Mettingham (1343) the castle is immediately adjacent to the green, with the isolated church some way to the north, while at Wingfield (1384) the common lies immediately to the east. Such an association can be explained by the fact that by the mid-thirteenth century, with the process of common-edge drift complete, any lord contemplating re-building his ancestral seat, by default, was re-building on the edge of the common or green.

The process of common-edge drift can therefore be seen to have been an important determinant in the siting of castles north of the Gipping and it also helps to explain one particular regional aspect of castle landscapes, that of the spatial relationship between castles and parish churches. Northern East Anglia

have few examples where church and castle lie in close proximity; the usual arrangement is for the church to be some little distance removed from the castle site. Here we can surmise that common-edge drift had occurred prior to castle construction and that the church site was not deemed an acceptable location for the noble building. At Mileham in Norfolk fieldwalking has traced the shift of settlement away from the church; the castle was placed some distance to the west, significantly where an area of common abutted the road that the castle complex straddled. Presumably the location of the castle marks the extent of the 'shift' before construction commenced (Wade-Martins 1980, 40-8). Another example comes from Wormegay in west Norfolk, an honorial barony held by Hermer de Ferrers at the time of Domesday (Figure 3). Prior to 1066 an English thane, Thorketel, held the manor and after the Conquest his lands passed virtually intact to Hermer, a particularly clear example of tenurial continuity (2000a). Detailed fieldwalking of the area has demonstrated that the Middle Saxon settlement at Wormegay was situated on the east of the island on the site of the parish church (Silvester 1988). At some point in the eleventh century this settlement shifted to the western tip of the island, leaving the church isolated. There is no reason to suppose that the building of the castle was necessarily the direct cause of settlement change; it is just as likely that the shift occurred before 1066 and that the castle was constructed in the pre-existing settlement. Given the

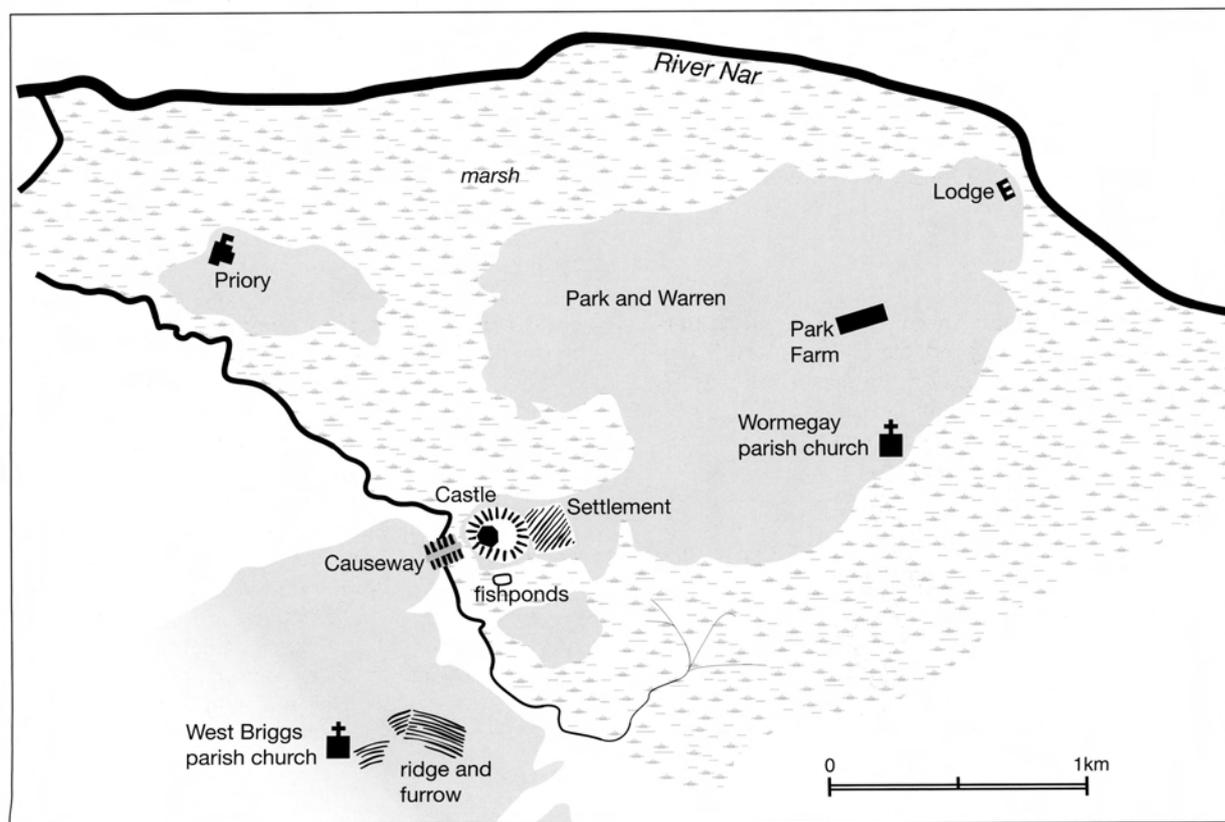


Figure 3. Wormegay, Norfolk. The castle landscape of the Middle Ages was, in part, regionally determined.

almost total absence of Thetford Ware from the church site, it is more probable that the latter was in fact the case. It is possible that the castle itself was only built in the twelfth century, in which case continued occupation in the pre-Conquest hall, or perhaps a re-built hall – like that seen at Goltho in Lincolnshire – is perhaps the most likely scenario. Whatever the precise chronology, the western side of the island became the focus for settlement; a priory was established in the twelfth century and the area between the church and castle was imparked. In the final event, the form of the castle landscape was, in part, regionally determined.

While a case can be made for explaining the close relationship between castles and commons in northern East Anglia with reference to the re-building of English seigneurial sites already on common edges, of greater significance are those cases where castles were placed close to commons, but where there was *little* antecedent occupation of the site. This is well illustrated by the motte and bailey castle at Horsford, to the north of Norwich. As was stated above, there is strong historical evidence for this being the castle of Walter of Caen, a major tenant of the Malet lords of Eye in Suffolk. Walter's castle stood immediately adjacent to a ribbon of common marsh that was itself adjacent to an area of sandy heath that originally stretched from Mousehold in Norwich some ten miles to the north to Aylsham. The seigneurial exploitation of this heath chiefly concerned hunting. There are documentary references to nine deer parks and, significantly, was also the setting for Horsford chase, one of only three medieval chases in the county (Yaxley 2005, 56–7). The castle itself occupied a somewhat isolated position, some distance removed from the settlement and parish church of Horsford and also the castle priory at Horsham St Faiths. In this instance, it was the desire to establish a lordly presence close to the waste seems to have been a strong motivation behind the location of the castle.

Southern East Anglia

In Southern East Anglia, by contrast, a slightly different pattern can be observed. Here, the pattern is one of castles usually centred on the minor nucleations in river valleys, rather than associated with outlying farms and greens closer to interfluves. The contrast between the two landscapes is well illustrated at Haughley in Suffolk, just twelve miles south west of Wingfield. Significantly, here the castle is not in close association with the common edge at Haughley Green to the north; rather, the castle is centred on a small nucleation in the valley of a major tributary of the Gipping. Again, the implication is that this nucleation was in place before the castle and, as was noted above, was the location for the pre-Conquest hall of Guthmond. A similar situation is seen at Clare in Suffolk. Clare is the site of one of the East Anglia's few Iron Age hillforts, which lay in the valley of the river Stour. Medieval settlement continued this focus on the river valley and by 1066 was one of the most significant manors in Suffolk and the residence of the

major pre-Conquest thane Whitgar with a *burh-geat* and college of priests. It is unsurprising that the castle (built c.1075x1090) perpetuated the pre-Conquest arrangements, in this case sited close the Stour. The pattern seen in south Suffolk continues south into Essex. At Rayleigh (in place by 1086) the motte and bailey of Earl Swein of Essex was also associated with a nucleation, in this case well away from the outlying farms towards the interfluves. A similar situation can be found at Ongar, where the castle is situated close to Crispey brook. Here the presumed line of pre-Conquest enclosure would certainly evidence that nucleation already existed in the river valley prior to the construction of the castle (Eddy 1983).

As is the case in Northern East Anglia, south of the Gipping corridor the existing pattern of settlement appears to have structured the development of broader elite landscapes. This is seen most clearly at Castle Hedingham in Essex, the principal residence of the de Vere family, the great magnatial dynasty at the heart of English political and court life from the Norman Conquest to the seventeenth century (Brown 1995). The social achievement of the de Vere's was symbolised by their castle, which is best known for the Norman *donjon* of c.1142 that marked the elevation of Aubrey de Vere III to the Earldom of Oxford (Dixon and Marshall 1993). The original eleventh-century castle comprised a motte and bailey and was sited on a spur of land overlooking the valley of the river Colne. The pattern of settlement around Hedingham is typical for this part of Essex, with relatively small nucleations along the Colne valley and outlying farms towards the interfluves.

The settlement of Hedingham was one such nucleation and the construction of the castle ensured that it remained the primary focus for settlement. The surviving village plan suggests a number of phases of development, but the re-building of the parish church and the creation of a market place points to a concerted period of re-organisation in the eleventh or twelfth century. The castle landscape also involved imparking. By 1263 'great' and 'little' parks to the north and east of the castle turned potential arable land over to the de Vere's recreational interests (ERO, D/DMh M1; TNA C132/31/1). Crucially, this expansion took place within the existing pattern of settlement. At Hedingham the outlying farms that were already in place were left *in situ*: a small farmstead at Rushley Green thus sat incongruously between the two parks. Thus both the siting of the castle and the layout of its attendant landscape were structured by the earlier settlement pattern. Aubrey de Vere III may well have intended to make his residence suitably magnificent, but he did so against a local setting that led in to the creation of a very regional castle landscape. This is seen, albeit with some exceptions, across both Northern and Southern East Anglia.

Minor Castles

As important to this discussion are those castle that do not conform to the general pattern. Such sites, such as Denton and Raveningham in Norfolk and Milden and Offton in Suffolk are frequently undocumented, do not appear to be related to earlier patterns of tenurial geography and the field remains are often degraded. Ascribing a date and possible builder to such castles is a frustrating problem for all such sites that exist across Britain and East Anglia is no exception. Such castles might represent abandoned sites most probably dating to the immediate post-Conquest period or the remains of temporary fortifications 'fieldworks' thrown up during a military emergency (Coulson 1994). It is tempting to ascribe the conventional date of the anarchy of Stephen's reign to such sites and indeed some were undoubtedly constructed at this time, at Milden and Offton in Suffolk there is documentary evidence to suggest that this was indeed the case (Greenway & Sayers 1989). How far such a methodology can be taken to ascribe a possible date to other such sites remains a moot point. Within an East Anglian context it is at least worth noting in passing that such 'campaign castles' – if that is indeed what sites such as Denton represent – might just as easily date from the rebellion of 1173, a period that saw the most intensive period of warfare in the region from the Norman Conquest to the Peasants' Revolt. What little excavated evidence exists is entirely consistent with such a suggestion: at Redcastle in Thetford the date of construction lies within an archaeological horizon of the twelfth century (Andrews 1995; Rogerson and Dallas 1984). It may also not entirely be without significance that the major protagonists in the events of 1173, William d'Albini II and Roger Bigod, held the manors of Denton, Raveningham and Quidenham in Norfolk, and had interests in the borough of Thetford. In other cases it is simply impossible to establish a date with any certainty, at Burgh Castle in Suffolk the excavation established that the Norman motte post-dated the Middle Saxon cemetery, but yielded no evidence as to the date of the motte itself (Johnson 1983).

A certain unity is given to these minor sites, however, when their relationship to the wider settlement pattern is assessed, as they tend to be unrelated to commons or common edges. The motte at Raveningham in south Norfolk is isolated and, to judge from field boundaries, appears to have been raised in what was once open field, while that at nearby Quidenham is placed adjacent to a road and in close proximity to a minor river crossing. For the purposes of this discussion, such sites contrast markedly with those castles that are outwardly 'residential' in character and only reinforce the idea that they are a separate category of site in their own right.

Castles, Lordship and the Regional Landscape

The evidence presented here would suggest that, in general, there was a close relationship between the

existing settlement pattern of East Anglia at the time of the Norman Conquest and the location of early castles. This should, in itself, not be surprising; it is well known that commons formed the focus of settlement across the region during the medieval period, it would be of greater interest if there was not a connection. Of some consequence, however, is the fact that castles appear to be strongly related to the *sub-regional* pattern of rural settlement and thus the siting of castles in accordance with a distinctly local settlement pattern demands some explanation. The conclusion from sites such as Horsford is that there was some greater significance to the choice of a common-edge site than simply antecedent structures; rather, other reasons why lords might want to *actively* exploit such locations.

In terms of the legitimisation of local power, the advantages to be gained by building a castle on the same site as the residence of an English predecessor were fully exploited by incoming Normans. The political reasons for the building of castles over existing settlements are increasingly well rehearsed, but it is how this need was played out in a regional context that is of interest in this case. Characterisations of the Norman settlement as a process necessarily involving 'repression' are easily justified with reference to the large numbers of new buildings being raised in the English landscape after 1066, but it has proved altogether more difficult to construct a narrative that seeks to explain the meaning of continuity, despite the fact that the archaeological evidence for manorial development across the Conquest does not reflect a view of 'tenurial disruption' (Gardiner 2007, 178).

In Southern East Anglia the desire to build castles in embryonic nucleations can be related to a wide variety of factors. Such places were centres of population, occupying good locations characterised by fertile, well-draining soil and were probably the locations for the manor houses of the pre-Conquest thegns whose estates were appropriated after 1066. In terms of the local economy, it was these places that would see greater reliance on haymaking and if the principal settlements of the region were already exploiting such valuable areas then building a castle in such a location would appear eminently sensible from an economic point of view and would, in effect, be 'hardening up' the settlement pattern.

In Northern East Anglia similar factors were at work, but here the desire to place the marker of lordship in many cases directly over an earlier building on a common edge or, where such a site did not exist, in an area of waste that is of crucial importance. To judge from fieldwalking, at the time of the Conquest common-edge drift was well underway but it was undoubtedly a process, rather than an event; we should probably envisage farms slowly moving to the edges of commons and by 1066 there were probably many places where farms still clustered around existing church sites. In such a fluid situation it is all the more interesting that Normans seemingly chose to locate their castles where they did, regardless of the presence of an earlier manor house or not, because if

common-edge drift was a response to concerns over pressure over pasture resources then in northern East Anglia castle-building in such a prominent location can also be interpreted as a highly visible sign of lordly rights over reserves of common grazing. By the early thirteenth century and the Statute of Merton – which ensured the rights of free holders over common grazing – the general issue of management of waste was clearly causing problems in the national economy. In a regional context where a lack of meadow led to a greater reliance on common grazing, the issue is likely to have been more important than elsewhere and to have become so at an earlier date. If we accept that Normans often chose to raise their castles on earlier seigneurial sites, and that such sites seem to have occupied common edges then, at the time of the Conquest, it would appear that pre-Conquest thegns were already anxious about their rights over such areas. Indeed, it would be distinctly odd if lords in eleventh-century East Anglia did *not* wish to guarantee their rights over such areas by building – this is, after all what the peasantry were doing – and look to increase those rights if at all possible. The extension of common rights is seen most obviously in the post-Conquest period in encroachment for the creation of parks and warrens, a phenomenon that may be observed at all the major castles of the region. The activities of the D'Albini family, with parks that, for the most part, had been imparked from common waste (Rutledge 1999) in conjunction with their castles at Rising, Wymondham, Old Buckenham and New Buckenham, are a case in point. It is particularly telling that, where it exists, charter material often reveals concerns over grazing; in the foundation charter of Old Buckenham priory (c. 1146) William D'Albini II was careful to detail the rights the canons were to have in his park, with later charters explicitly stating the number of animals and the time of year that their beasts were permitted within the pale (BL Harl. Ch 83. D9; Calendar of Charter Rolls vol.3, 367-7).

The idea that castle siting may be related to the expression of rights over common waste is not one that sits easily with traditional motivations for castle-building but may not be so far wide of the mark when it is considered that lords were undoubtedly keen to exploit all the resources at their disposal. In the particular regional context of East Anglia, it may also have provided an even stronger incentive for lords to reinforce the pre-existing settlement pattern when choosing a location for their castles.

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