

natural explanation is available for the full range of indented grooves on the Exeter Street urchin based on entirely natural, commonly observed and well-known geological phenomena.

If, as argued above, a natural origin is to be accepted for the indented grooves on the Exeter Street fossil, then its archaeological significance must be reassessed. Even if the grooves are natural, perhaps the urchin was still a treasured possession? Can any such archaeological significance be drawn from its presence in an Anglo-Saxon rubbish pit? Unfortunately it cannot, because the occurrence of flint fossil sea urchins is common in the many soils around London derived from weathered flint gravel deposits. It is therefore most likely that the Exeter Street urchin was merely a natural constituent of some soil that was placed in the pit. It certainly does not have the clear human context of some flint fossil talismans⁵ and its identification as such must therefore be speculative.

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DAVID NOTTON

ANCIENT GREENS IN 'MIDLAND' LANDSCAPES: BARRINGTON, SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Huge greens — occasionally up to 100 acres in extent — are almost a defining characteristic of the 'ancient landscapes' of Suffolk and Norfolk, but in 'Midland' South Cambridgeshire, where open-field agriculture was well-established, sites like Barrington, whose green is one of the largest in the country, are apparently anomalous.⁶

Villages in South Cambridgeshire are not obvious 'green' settlements, although there are some notable exceptions to this generalisation — such as Eltisley, whose triangular green survives intact.⁷ 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 and Bassingbourn.⁸ Where these greens have been investigated, they have generally been shown to have pre-open field origins: that is, they are relics of an ancient landscape, retained when the open fields were laid out in the early Middle Ages, rather than a planned element of the 'Midland' landscape.⁹

Their place in settlement history is not well-understood. In the 'ancient' landscapes of Norfolk and Suffolk, some greens were the focus for settlement of Early, Middle or Late Anglo-Saxon demesne farms.¹⁰ In Norfolk Early and Middle Anglo-Saxon settlement has been found around the edges of low and easily floodable commons away from the higher heavy boulder clay, while in Launditch Hundred there was Middle Anglo-Saxon settlement

⁵ D. Wilson, *Anglo-Saxon Paganism* (London, 1992).

⁶ Royal Commission on Historic Monuments (England) (hereafter RCHME), *West Cambridgeshire* (London, 1968),

4–5.

⁷ RCHME, *op. cit.* in note 1, 89–90.

⁸ C. C. Taylor, *Village and Farmstead* (London, 1983), 131–2; C. C. Taylor and S. Oosthuizen, 'The morphology of Bassingbourn, Cambridgeshire', *Landscape Hist.*, forthcoming.

⁹ S. Oosthuizen, 'Saxon commons in South Cambridgeshire', *Proc. Cambridge Antiq. Soc.*, LXXXII (1993), 93–100.

¹⁰ P. Warner, *Greens, Commons and Clayland Colonisation* (Leicester, 1987), 32.

generally close to, although not at, the entrance to large commons in three of the seven parishes in which Middle Anglo-Saxon pottery was found.¹¹

The analysis of the settlement and green at Barrington in Cambridgeshire sheds further light on the relationship between Early Anglo-Saxon settlement and large common pastures, and is a pointer to future research, particularly by excavation.

SETTLEMENT ANALYSIS (Fig. 2)

Barrington is well-known for its enormous green. At nearly a mile in length, and more than 200 yards in width, it occupied 22 acres in 1968 — a size unchanged for at least the previous two hundred years.¹² It lies within 300 m of the river Cam. The area is easily waterlogged, particularly since several springs rise on it and, like many greens in South Cambridgeshire, it is characterised by 'hummocky ground'.¹³ 'Hummocky ground' is most pronounced at springheads and close to streams all over South Cambridgeshire, situated where freeze-thaw conditions of late glacial and peri-glacial times created pingo-like features. These exacerbated the post-glacial drainage of the area, creating ground that was poorly drained and difficult to cultivate.

The green may once have been more than twice its present size. Architectural and topographical evidence suggests that the 12th-century church and later rectory (nos. 2 and 7 respectively on Fig. 2) were inserted on to the NE. end of the green, while the 'island' in the middle of the green (10 on Fig. 2) was a 17th-century encroachment.¹⁴ Further encroachment, between the present green and the river, is suggested by the irregular boundaries of properties on the S. side of the green, and the numerous small lanes which both divided the properties and linked the green with the river. Retrogressive analysis — the removal of boundaries which are not continuous across other boundaries and which butt up against other boundaries at right angles — confirms this interpretation.

A late 5th- to early 7th-century Early Anglo-Saxon cemetery containing 114 inhumations and an unknown number of cremations was excavated just 50–100 m north-west of the green in the late 19th century.¹⁵

Analysis of the settlement plan sheds some light on earlier settlement in Barrington. Nucleation seems to have occurred only after the Norman Conquest. Before 1066 there were 25 free tenants, each holding between 15 and 40 acres; a further two hides were held by Chatteris Abbey.¹⁶ Work elsewhere has suggested that such holdings were separate settlements.¹⁷ By analogy the five entries for Barrington in Domesday Book together with the four pre-Conquest holdings subsumed into the entry for the main post-Conquest manor, which describe land-holdings before 1066, may represent at least eight separate Late Anglo-Saxon settlement foci.

After 1066 the land of 22 of the 25 sokemen was amalgamated into a single manor (later called Lancaster's and containing over seven and a half hides) by Robert Gernon,

¹¹ A. Davison, *The Evolution of Settlement in Three Parishes in South-East Norfolk*, (East Anglian Archaeol., 49, Gressenhall, 1990), pp. 18–19, 47 and 66; P. Wade-Martins, 'Village sites in Launditch Hundred', *East Anglian Archaeol.* 10 (1980), pp. 55, 65, 73.

¹² RCHME, *op. cit.* in note 1, 5; C. R. Elrington (ed.), *Victoria County History of Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely*, Volume 5 (hereafter VCH 5) (London, 1973), 147.

¹³ A. G. Taylor, *Late Devensian Ground-Ice Hollows in Southern Cambridgeshire* (unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, 1981, Council for National Academic Awards). I am indebted to Mr C. Taylor for this reference.

¹⁴ RCHME, *op. cit.* in note 1, 5.

¹⁵ W. K. Foster, 'An account of the excavation of an Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Barrington, Cambs.', *Proc. Cambridge Antiq. Soc.*, V (1883), 5–32; T. Malim and J. Hines, *The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Edix Hill (Barrington A), Cambridgeshire* (CBA Res. Rep. 112, York, 1998), 319–21.

¹⁶ *Domesday Book: Cambridgeshire* (hereafter DB), ed. A. Rumble (Chichester, 1981), 11:3, 14:39, 17:5, 21:5 and 32:18.

¹⁷ C. C. Taylor, 'Polyfocal settlement and the English village', *Medieval Archaeol.*, 21 (1977), 189–93, pp. 190–1.

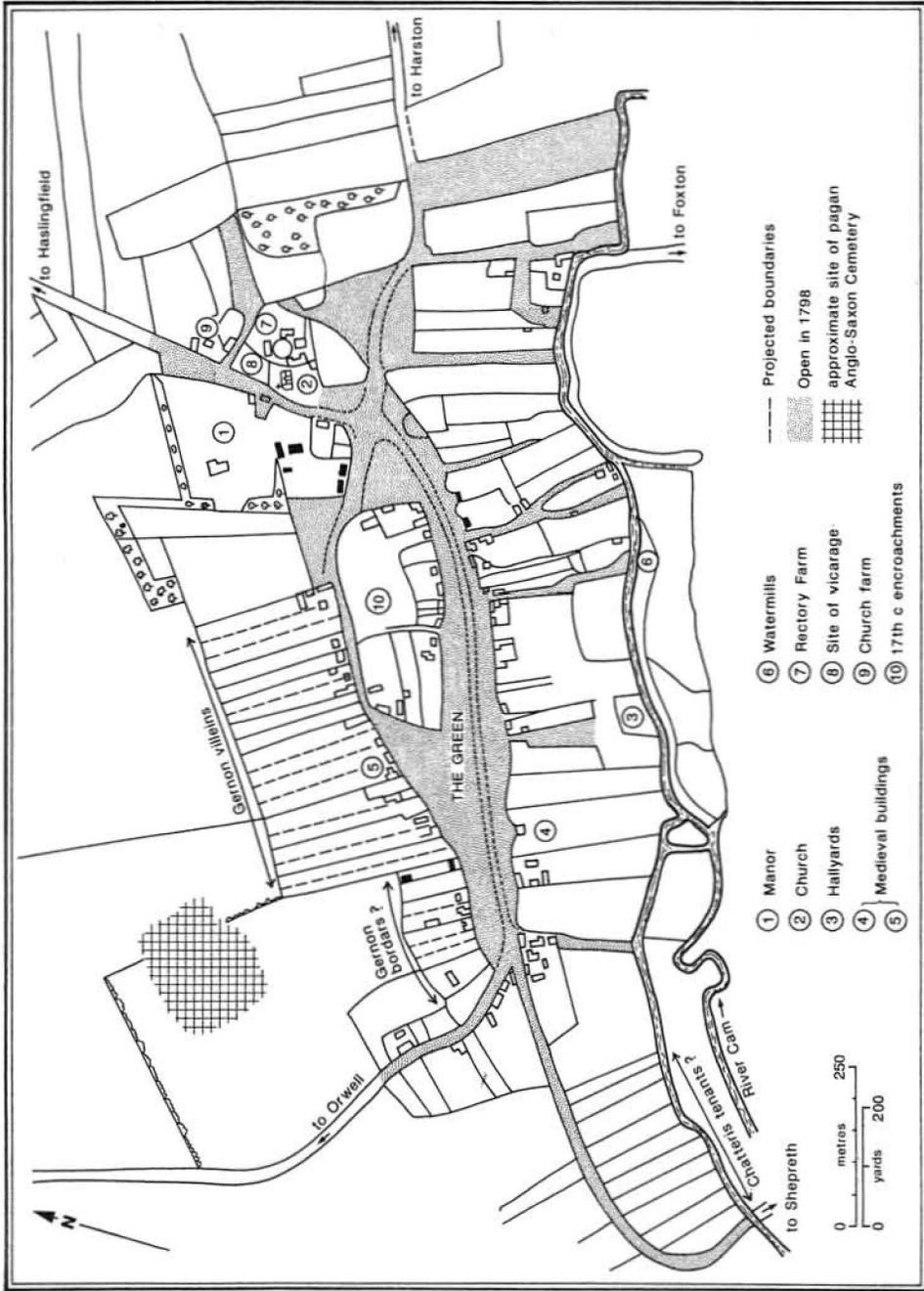


FIG. 2
 Barrington at enclosure in 1798 (after enclosure map, CRO P8/26/1).

the new Norman lord.¹⁸ The sokemen appear to have been reduced to villeinage, since they were absent in 1086 and Gernon had twenty villeins on his manor at that date.¹⁹ A planned settlement with common front and back boundaries, and with common widths, was laid out along the NW. side of the green. Ten of these properties survived at enclosure, many of them enlarged by taking in neighbouring plots; but if the four narrowest in 1797 — which were all about one acre in extent — were typical survivors of the medieval tenements, then the acreage of the amalgamated properties suggests that there were originally twenty such plots in this planned block. The close correlation between the Domesday population and the suggested number of original plots suggests that the identification of this block with villein tenements may be accurate. They were certainly occupied in the Middle Ages: a 13th-century aisled hall survives at point 5 on figure 2.²⁰

There were also ten bordars on Lancaster's manor in 1086, with just one acre of open field land each. It is just possible that they occupied a block immediately west of the previous one, with properties of commensurately smaller areas.

The new Norman manorial demesne may have been laid out immediately alongside and east of this block, facing the green. After the early 14th century the site was occupied by Bendyshe's Manor (no. 1 on Fig. 2), with which Lancaster's had no apparent connection.²¹ There are, however, two reasons to suggest that it was also the site of the Lancaster's manorial site:

(a) Michaelhouse (later Trinity College) used Rectory Farm as its manor house after it acquired Lancaster's Manor in 1326, rather than the original site of Lancaster's.²² This implies that the manorial site was owned by someone else. That someone may have been Thomas in the Willows, the founder of Bendyshe Manor, who bought land from Michaelhouse's predecessor in 1325, immediately before the manor was sold to the College.²³ The acquisition of the manorial site might have been attractive to a *parvenu*, intent on founding a gentle dynasty.

(b) Barrington church almost certainly originated as a manorial chapel, since Lancaster's manor held the advowson of the church and there is no evidence for a pre-Conquest church. All the land later occupied by church buildings in Barrington is therefore likely to have originated as part of the manorial demesne.²⁴ The proximity of the church and the putative manor is characteristic of the close physical relationship between manorial lords and their manorial chapels.

It is possible that another planned block near the junction of the road to Shepreth with the parish boundary was laid out to house the tenants of the Chatteris nuns, of whom there were thirteen in 1086.²⁵ The nuns had further holdings in Foxton and Shepreth. The date of this planned element is unknown, but it cannot be earlier than the founding of the nunnery in about 1006.²⁶ By the end of the 11th century, settlement in Barrington was

¹⁸ Since a Cambridgeshire hide was equivalent to 120 acres, Robert Gernon's estate contained at least 900 acres: VCH 5, *op. cit.* in note 7, 341.

¹⁹ DB, *op. cit.* in note 11, 21:5.

²⁰ RCHME, *op. cit.* in note 1, 9.

²¹ The small moated site near the river, called Hallyard in 1563 (no. 3 on Fig. 2), is unlikely to be that of the Norman manor. The moated site itself is too small and there is no indication of a demesne farm around it, unlike most major early medieval manors in South Cambridgeshire. It is more likely to be that of a peasant family, perhaps that of the de Barringtons, who were well-to-do 13th-century peasants with manorial aspirations: VCH 5, *op. cit.* in note 7, 149.

²² VCH 5, *op. cit.* in note 7, 150.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ As well as the church, this block included Rectory Farm east of the church, the site of the medieval vicarage north of the church and endowed in about 1330, and Church Farm, the 'special purpose' late medieval building north of the vicarage, which may have been the guildhall mentioned in 1495 (nos. 7, 8 and 9 respectively on Fig. 2): VCH 5, *op. cit.* in note 7, 156.

²⁵ DB, *op. cit.* in note 11, 11:3.

²⁶ L. F. Salzman (ed.), *Victoria County History of Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely*, Volume 2 (hereafter VCH 2) (London, 1948), 220.

therefore polyfocal, but its most important characteristic was that it was focused on the green.

The proximity of the green to the large Early Anglo-Saxon cemetery suggests that this Late Anglo-Saxon settlement pattern may have Early Anglo-Saxon precedents which, while shifting within the landscape, were nevertheless to be found within the vicinity of the green.

DISCUSSION

Barrington illuminates the relationship between large common pastures and early settlement in 'Midland' England. It exemplifies the hypothesis that settlement was attracted to common pastures because it thereby avoided 'wasting' potentially good arable land on domestic occupation, and it illustrates the truism that settlements are generally situated at the interface between arable and pastoral farming in order to achieve easy access to both.

There are other examples of the same relationships elsewhere in Cambridgeshire. At Bassingbourn Anglo-Saxon settlement was dispersed around a similarly enormous green.²⁷ At Whaddon, settlement focused on the funnel-shaped entrance to a huge common shared between three parishes; topographical analysis suggested that the green was at least of Middle Anglo-Saxon date, and was followed by excavation demonstrating dispersed Anglo-Saxon settlement on northern side of that common.²⁸ Perhaps most interestingly, Anglo-Saxon finds have been made on the huge 100-acre green at Haslingfield (the parish immediately neighbouring Barrington on the north): an Anglo-Saxon pot was found on the green itself, and other finds have been made on its eastern edge, near the river.²⁹ Significantly, a pagan Anglo-Saxon cemetery of the 5th and 6th centuries lay less than 500 m to the north of its northern edge (a distance based on the most conservative estimate of the green's original size).³⁰

These very large greens had not been suspected in South Cambridgeshire until recently. The parishes in which they are found are archetypal 'Midland' open-field parishes, yet their closest parallels lie in the 'ancient landscapes' of Suffolk, Norfolk and the fens. Where they lie in conjunction with datable features, they can be shown to pre-date the imposition of open-field landscapes and must therefore be assumed to be at least Roman and perhaps much earlier in date.

The relationship between Early Anglo-Saxon settlements and cemeteries and these large residual greens, as well as the retention of the latter in later landscapes, may be assumed to be linked to the climatic and economic recession of the 5th and 6th centuries, which saw some limited woodland regeneration and perhaps considerable conversion of arable to pasture in eastern England. In Norfolk, Davison has suggested that Early and Middle Anglo-Saxon settlement near low-lying commons might be the result of 'an increased dependence on pastoral farming bringing greater interest in valley pasture' and work elsewhere in East Anglia has suggested that there was 'a long-term trend toward increasing numbers of sheep and pigs and fewer cattle and horses in the Anglo-Saxon period'.³¹ This is consistent with Williamson's conclusion that while there was 'abandonment of Romano-British farms in some clay-land areas . . . intensive grazing of large areas

²⁷ Taylor and Oosthuizen, *op. cit.* in note 3.

²⁸ Oosthuizen, *op. cit.* in note 4; A. Hatton, *Archaeological Evaluation at Town Farm, Whaddon* (Cambridgeshire Archaeol. Field Unit Rep. No. A63, 1995).

²⁹ D. Haigh, A Correlation between Archaeological Sites and Field Names: A Survey of Parishes along the Line of the North and West By-Passes of Cambridge: An Interim Report (unpubl. report held in the Cambridgeshire Collection, Cambridge Central Library, 1975).

³⁰ *Ibid.*; S. Oosthuizen, *Discovering the Haslingfield Landscape* (Haslingfield Village Society, 1996); A. Taylor, *Archaeology of Cambridgeshire 1: South-West Cambridgeshire* (Cambridge, 1997), 65–8; Malim and Hines, *op. cit.* in note 10, 321–2.

³¹ Davison, *op. cit.* in note 6, 66; P. Crabtree, 'Animal exploitation in East Anglian villages', 40–54 in J. Rackham (ed.), *Environment and Economy in Anglo-Saxon England* (CBA Research Report 89, 1994, York).

must have continued throughout the post-Roman centuries'.³² This increased dependency on pastoral farming may help to explain the very tentative evidence for the relationships between Early Anglo-Saxon settlement and cemeteries and these large open areas of pasture.

The evidence from South Cambridgeshire suggests that excavations of Early Anglo-Saxon settlement need to be placed in a more secure topographic context, in order to establish whether the physical relationships hinted at in the local evidence have any wider basis in 'Midland' England.

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SUSAN OOSTHUIZEN

TWO LATE SAXON SPUR FRAGMENTS FROM SUSSEX AND HAMPSHIRE (Fig. 3)

The increase in metal-detecting has added considerably to our knowledge of Late Saxon horse-harness metalwork and other riding equipment and has expanded in great measure the number of artefacts, or records of artefacts, available for study. Although much work remains to be done, particularly in bringing this material together, recent studies amply demonstrate the wide range of artefact-type associated with riding gear, and their decorative treatment.³³ Among the items of metalwork commonly found are strap-mounts and terminals from stirrups, bridle cheekpieces, and harness links with their distinctive tri-lobed apertures. Most of these artefacts exhibit decoration directly inspired by Late Viking art styles together with a certain amount of decoration of indigenous or unknown origin. A series of zoomorphic harness pendants with adressed beasts (the decoration on which is similar to that found on stirrup-strap mounts of Class A, Type 1) has also recently been identified,³⁴ and no doubt there remain to be identified other harness-related artefacts such as decorative studs.

Amongst this wealth of Late Saxon material the dearth of fragments which could be identified as parts of spurs has been notable. This note draws attention to two recent metal-detecting finds of composite objects of copper alloy and iron from the South of England which may convincingly be identified as zoomorphic spur-necks of a type not previously recorded.

The first object (Fig. 3a) was found in or about 1990 at Race Hill, Lewes, East Sussex, and submitted by the finder, Mr Isted, to Barbican House Museum, Lewes, for identification and recording (1990/46). This object measures 56 mm in length and takes the form of the head and neck of a beast. Through the length of the object runs an iron rod which protrudes from the beast's mouth as well as from the opposite end. The original form of the rod is no longer clear and internal corrosion has caused a split approximately 33 mm long to appear along the right-hand side of the head extending back into the neck,

³² T. Williamson, 'Settlement chronology and regional landscapes: the evidence from the claylands of East Anglia and Essex', 153–75 in D. Hooke (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon Settlement* (Oxford, 1988), p. 171.

³³ E.g. J. Graham-Campbell, 'Anglo-Scandinavian equestrian equipment in 11th century England', *Anglo-Norman Stud.*, 14 (1991), 77–89; D. Williams, 'Late Saxon stirrup-strap mounts, a classification and catalogue', (CBA Res. Rep. 111, York, 1998); D. Williams, 'Stirrup terminals', *Finds Research Group 700–1700, Datasheet 24* (1999).

³⁴ Graham-Campbell, *op. cit.* in note 1, figs. 7–9.