# SIX DESERTED VILLAGES
# IN NORFOLK

East Anglian Archaeology

EAST ANGLIAN ARCHAEOLOGY

# Six
# Deserted
# Villages
# in Norfolk

## by Alan Davison

with contributions from
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Cover Illustration

Site of the deserted village of Letton, from the north, after ploughing in 1978. *Photo:* Norsk-Hydro Ltd (*copyright Messrs Eglington, S. S. Eglington and Sons Ltd*)

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# Acknowledgements

# Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used for bibliographical, documentary and other source references.

| | |
|---|---|
| A.D. | : Archdeaconry of Norfolk |
| Blomefield | : Blomefield 1805-10 (see bibliography) |
| Cal. Charter Rolls | : Calendar of Charter Rolls |
| Cal. Misc. Inq. | : Calendar of Miscellaneous Inquisitions |
| Cheshire R.O. | : Cheshire Record Office |
| CUCAP | : Cambridge University Committee for Aerial Photography |
| C.U.L. | : Cambridge University Library |
| FCB | : Faculty Book |
| NAU | : Norfolk Archaeological Unit |
| NCC | : Norfolk Consistory Court |
| NCM | : Norwich Castle Museum |
| N. Dioc. Prob. Inv. | : Norwich Diocesan Probate Inventory |
| Norf. Archd. Wills | : Norfolk Archdeaconry Court Wills |
| Norf. Norwich Arch. Dep. | : Frere Mss: Norfolk and Norwich Archaeological Society Deposit |
| NRO | : Norfolk Record Office |
| NRS | : Norfolk Record Society |
| PRO | : Public Record Office |
| SMR | : Sites and Monuments Record |
| Suffolk R.O. | : Suffolk Record Office |
| *Valor Eccles.* | *Valor Ecclesiasticus Temp. Henry VIII* |
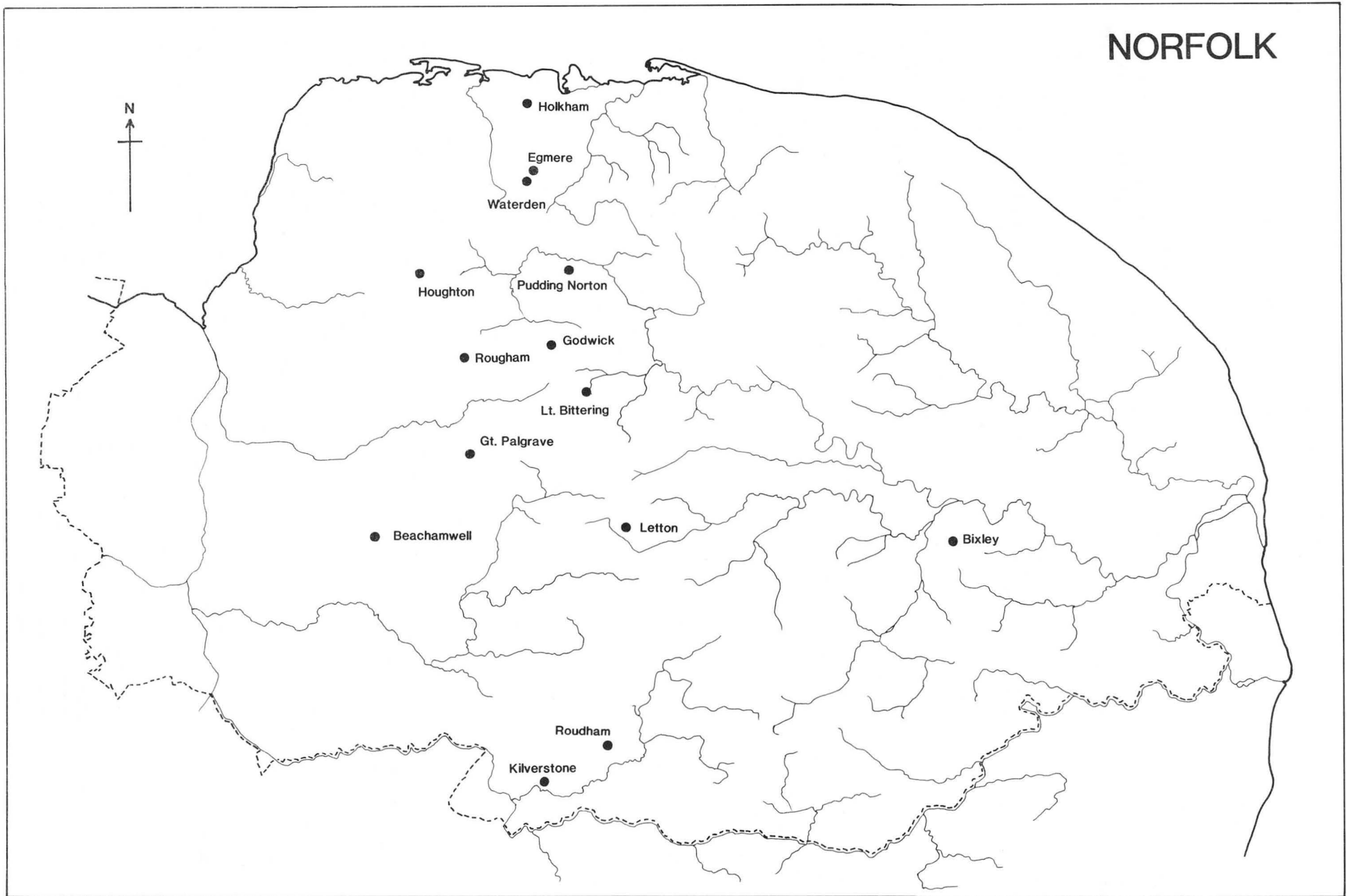
Figure 1  Map of Norfolk showing sites described in this volume and in the first set of deserted medieval villages published  in *East Anglian Archaeology* 14 (1982), 40-107.

# 1. Introduction
## by Alan Davison and Peter Wade-Martins

## I. Introduction
(Fig. 1)

This report sets out the evidence for a second set of deserted villages in Norfolk following the publication of the first in *East Anglian Archaeology* No. 14 (Cushion *et al.* 1982). The first eight represented a collection of most of the best preserved earthwork sites in the county. These were: Little Bittering, Bixley, Egmere, Godwick, Great Palgrave, Pudding Norton, Roudham and Waterden. For each the documentary evidence was summarised and the site and church described. This pattern is repeated as far as possible for the second set, although in order to provide a better balance, the churches are this time described in less detail.

In this second group, only two sites have substantial remains of earthworks; these are at Rougham and Beachamwell. With two more, Letton and Kilverstone, the earthworks were recorded on 1946 RAF vertical air photographs, but have since been destroyed. With the remaining two, Holkham and Houghton, the villages were well documented on estate maps before they disappeared under parkland in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, leaving few surface traces.

Norfolk is fortunate to have ten earthwork sites in an arable region where so little permanent pasture survives the never-ending expansion of cereal farming. In contrast, Suffolk is less lucky; it is now without any village earthworks of note following the destruction of its last surviving example at Little Livermere in 1960.

The fourteen sites examined reveal certain differences although they may all be classed, in some sense, as Deserted Medieval Villages. Holkham and Houghton are in a group of their own since they are examples of villages displaced by emparking. The study of Houghton shows the stages in planning the removal of the village and the construction of the new landscape. The study of Holkham disposes of a misconception in showing that the Staithe was not a new village. The presence of an isolated church here raises some questions as to the original nucleus of the medieval and earlier settlement.

Of the remaining twelve sites there are notable variations in form and in the date and in circumstances of desertion. The location of the fourteen sites discussed in this text and in the previous report (*East Anglian Archaeology* No. 14) is shown in Figure 1.

## II. Village Plans

Several villages would appear to fit the description 'street village' more or less closely. Roudham was basically of this plan, with an east-to-west orientation and access ways to marshlands to the north. Pudding Norton was a street village with earthworks revealing some signs of planned, orderly extension. Godwick was focussed on a street running from east to west and Kilverstone seems to have developed along streets parallel to a west-flowing river, possibly from a nucleus near the church.

Other settlements appear to have been associated with greens or commons. Waterden was sited in the bottom of a valley and grouped around a small central green. Great Palgrave had a recumbent Y-shaped street plan with a common to the south-east of the fork. Similarly, Little Bittering was situated along a road which extended eastwards from a V-shaped common. The main village at Holkham was grouped along various roads radiating from a small central common. Letton seems to have been a green-side village with a church a short distance from it.

The remaining villages exhibit various complexities. Bixley serves as a link with the last class since it appears to be at a late stage of evolution or modification including two streets, dispersed tofts and, possibly, a small green. Egmere was of rather indeterminate shape, including a north-to-south street along what is now an ill-drained valley joining an east-to-west road. The second road runs, in part, along the parish boundary, with signs of occupation only on the side within the parish, and leads to the church where there are some signs of earthworks. There is another, even more uncertain, area of earthworks to the north. The two other members of this group are both 'shrunken' villages. Beachamwell, on the evidence available, was shaped like an irregular crescent with three churches at the time of its greatest extent. This might be seen as a polyfocal settlement produced by the coalescence of three distinct centres. Contraction seems to have been followed by some form of planned re-organisation, possibly in more than one stage. Rougham, on the other hand, shows no signs of a planned layout though clearly there was contraction from southern and, especially, western extensions. It is just possible that this too developed from more than one centre.

## III. Causes of Desertion

The causes and timing of desertion or contraction are varied and difficult to distinguish in some cases. Sadly, documentary evidence for Pudding Norton, Waterden, Great Palgrave, Egmere, Bixley and Little Bittering was inadequate to provide more than a basic chronology of abandonment. Beachamwell was only moderately documented, Roudham, Godwick, Rougham, Letton, Kilverstone and the two emparked villages have documentation ranging from good to very full. In the cases of Rougham and Kilverstone, clear light is thrown on medieval topography, especially in Rougham, and on certain unusual details of the circumstances surrounding desertion. For these reasons their treatment in the pages following is at greater length. Similarly, the existence of an unusually full sequence of maps has permitted a detailed account of the park landscape at Houghton.

Some of the desertions appear to fit the pattern suggested by Keith Allison (1955) for the sixteenth century, though the absence of documents does not permit the cause to be determined; Egmere and Pudding Norton are obvious examples. Godwick was also a sixteenth-century desertion; the decline was accompanied by enclosure and acquisition of holdings but there is an

underlying hint of an unsuitable environment. Of the others, Kilverstone was a later depopulation: although large-scale sheep farming is well-documented by the end of the sixteenth century, monastic sheep flocks seem to have been a feature of the medieval village, and it was later seventeenth-century estate expansion which seems to have been the agent at work here. Roudham was also a late desertion: some late medieval or early post-medieval shrinkage at its western end seems likely and the conclusion, from fieldwork, that life continued in the eastern end until the eighteenth century seems confirmed by the minute sketch of the village on Ogilby's Road Map of 1675.

Letton and Bixley appear to have dwindled slowly to become dispersed communities of yeomen farmers; in Letton, the process reached its end by the seventeenth century, in Bixley the timing is not clear. Holkham and Houghton were emparked in the eighteenth century. Waterden, Great Palgrave, Little Bittering, Rougham and Beachamwell all appear, from varying amounts of evidence, to have experienced decay in the late medieval period. In Rougham it was possible to date this to about 1400; in Beachamwell the dating could be given only approximately as about 1500. Waterden seems to have been in decline for some reason which is not apparent from the few documents surviving and no cause for the disappearance of tiny Little Bittering is evident; perhaps these were simply victims of a general decline in population. This may well be the explanation for the contraction of Beachamwell. In Great Palgrave and Rougham, however, an unusual factor made its appearance; both were targets for attack by mobs in 1381. In Rougham some of the inhabitants joined the militant intruders. In both villages it was the property, and in Palgrave the records, of one wealthy individual which were looted. In each case the landlords were engaged in large-scale sheep farming. This is, perhaps, the most positive evidence for unpopular oppressive landlords in the villages reviewed here (Cornford et al. 1984).

It is clear, even from this small number of intensively studied villages, that it is difficult to be precise in dating and explaining desertion. It is all too easy to assume, in the absence of firm evidence, that one badly-documented sixteenth-century desertion must be attributed to the same cause as others in the same period where the full circumstances are known. Caution must be observed when drawing conclusions.

The fourteen studies completed by the group considered in this volume take their place alongside the work which has been carried out since Keith Allison first surveyed the incidence of 'lost' villages in Norfolk. After the six detailed descriptions which follow this introduction, Alan Davison concludes with an assessment of how our understanding of medieval villages in Norfolk has changed since Allison was writing in the early 1950s and makes some observations about the lines along which future investigations might be carried out.

## IV. A Note on Fieldwalking

Three of the studies in this volume include information obtained by fieldwalking. This was undertaken purely to determine the extent and date of known or suspected areas of occupation. At Rougham an intensive examination, by 3-5 m transects, of each ploughed field in the vicinity of the surviving earthworks was carried out in the course of one winter. The smaller sites at Beachamwell and Kilverstone were each walked by similar transects in the course of a few days. Pottery was also collected from molehills and other disturbed ground on grassland. In no case was fieldwalking of a total parish attempted or envisaged.

# 2. All Saints', Beachamwell

Beachamwell is situated 8 km to the south-west of Swaffham in the northern part of Breckland. The present civil parish includes Shingham, formerly separate and not considered here. Beachamwell, besides the existing village centred on the church of St Mary, has the ruined churches of All Saints' and St John, indicating that, at the very least, the settlement once consisted of three ecclesiastical parishes.

## I. Summary

All Saints, Beachamwell, poses two problems. The first is to ascertain whether it was ever a separate settlement distinct from the rest of the village, the second is to discover the time and cause of its desertion. Its status in 1086 has been obscured by the varying interpretations and attributions which have been placed upon the entries in *Domesday Book*.

Documentary and field evidence show that in medieval times there was virtually one sprawling settlement which was often commonly known by the name Beachamwell though the constituent parishes were, on occasion, distinctively named.

By the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries at the very latest, settlement had concentrated in substantially its present position; before final manorial consolidation. It can be shown that in the sixteenth century the parish of All Saints' had only a small population; some amalgamation of manors had taken place by that time but no real explanation of the depopulation has yet come to light.

The name of the village occurs in various spellings: *Bechamwell, Bichamwell, Bychamwell, Bitchamwell, Bytchamwell* and *Birchamwell*. Two forms are still current: Beechamwell and Beachamwell. The latter is adopted here except where the argument makes older alternatives necessary.

## II. The Documentary Evidence
by Alan Davison

Beachamwell 'though now looked upon and accounted as one town was, at the time of the grand survey, two distinct and separate towns, Well and Bicham. Well was the southern part, near the river that arises at Shingham'. This statement (Blomefield VII, 286) has governed most comment upon the deserted site near the ruins of All Saints' church. The name 'Well' is certainly apt for the southern portion of the modern parish, bordering as it does a clear fast-flowing stream (Smith, A.H. 1956, II, 250). Ekwall (1960, 34) suggests that the original name was 'Bicham' and the addition 'well' seems to refer to some spring or springs. The name appears in a pre-Conquest grant by King Edward (*c.* 1053-7) to the Abbey of Ramsey of the soke within *Bichamdic* (the linear earthwork which once formed the western boundary of the village (Hart 1966, 95).

The identification of Well as a separate settlement seems to derive largely from the entry in *Domesday* for *Wella* which Blomefield (VII, 286-7) ascribed to Beachamwell All Saints', but which Johnson and Salisbury (Doubleday and Page 1901-06, II, 155) refer to Upwell. There are other divergences in attribution; an entry for *Hekeswella* identified as Beachamwell (Doubleday and Page 1901-06, II, 174) seems to be regarded as an entry for Bexwell by Blomefield (VII, 303). Bexwell is recorded elsewhere in *Domesday* as *Bekeswella* or *Becheswella*, while other entries for Beachamwell give the name as *Bycham* or *Bicham*; Johnson and Salisbury, though committed to Upwell in the text of their translation, nevertheless show a problematic *Wella* in southern Beachamwell on their accompanying map. The most recent edition of *Domesday* (Brown, P. 1984) shows *Wella* as Upwell (21, 5) and *Hekeswella* as Beachamwell (31, 29). *Feudal Aids* (III, 401) show that in 1302 there were two lords in Bexwell, one of whom was the Abbot of Ely, and this seems more in accord with Blomefield than the *Victoria County History* which names only the Abbey as holding in Bexwell.

However, other evidence suggests that Blomefield was right in asserting that the entry of *Wella* among the lands assigned to Reynold, son of Ivo, did concern part of what is now Beachamwell. Before the Conquest it had, like lands of Reynold in neighbouring Barton Bendish and Wereham, been held by a freeman called Toli. Reynold also had lands in Crimplesham in 1086. This group of holdings later passed to the Clares, who made certain grants to their monastic foundation at Stoke-by-Clare in Suffolk. A number of their charters, given between 1136 and the early-thirteenth century, refer to tithes given to the Priory from Crimplesham, Wereham, Barton (Bendish St Andrew) *et de Welles* (or sometimes *Well* or *Velles*) (Harper-Bill and Mortimer 1983, I, 17-112; III, 19). The church at *Welles* was All Saints' Beachamwell, thus demonstrating that the name of the southernmost vill in 1086 and in at least the earlier part of medieval times, was Well.

In the later medieval period the settlement of Beachamwell was called either *Bicham Welles* (1212; *Book of Fees*, I, 127), *Bichamwell(e)* or *Bicham* (1302, 1316, 1346 and 1428; *Feudal Aids*, III, 339-400, 451, 508-9, 570-72). In 1302 the two latter forms were used side-by-side, suggesting a possible distinction between parts of the total settlement. In 1334 and 1336 the Lay Subsidy rolls record one settlement named as *Bicham Well* or *Bychamwell* (Hudson 1895, 286; Glasscock 1975, 203).

Greater diversity appears in the list of the Norwich Taxation of 1254 which gives three names: *Bechamwell; Bricham* or *Bicham St Mary*; and *Parva Bicham, Bricham* or *Brecham* (Lunt 1926, 407). As the 1254 Taxation was levied on ecclesiastical property, these must be the three parishes of what is now Beachamwell. This is confirmed by the will of Thomas Skarlett, a yeoman of Beachamwell (NRO, NCC Wills (1592), 325 Apleyarde) which mentions a messuage and croft lying in Little Bicham, and another will (NRO, NAW, (1588/9), 31 Carter, Will of T. Harper alias Wylkyn) which mentions 5 acres of land 'in St John's Ende otherwise called Little Bycham in Bychamwell'. With two of the three places of 1254 identified, the third (*Bechamwell*) must refer to the area around All Saints' church. Blomefield (VII, 291) suggested that a certain Martin, who styled himself Rector of Great Bicham in
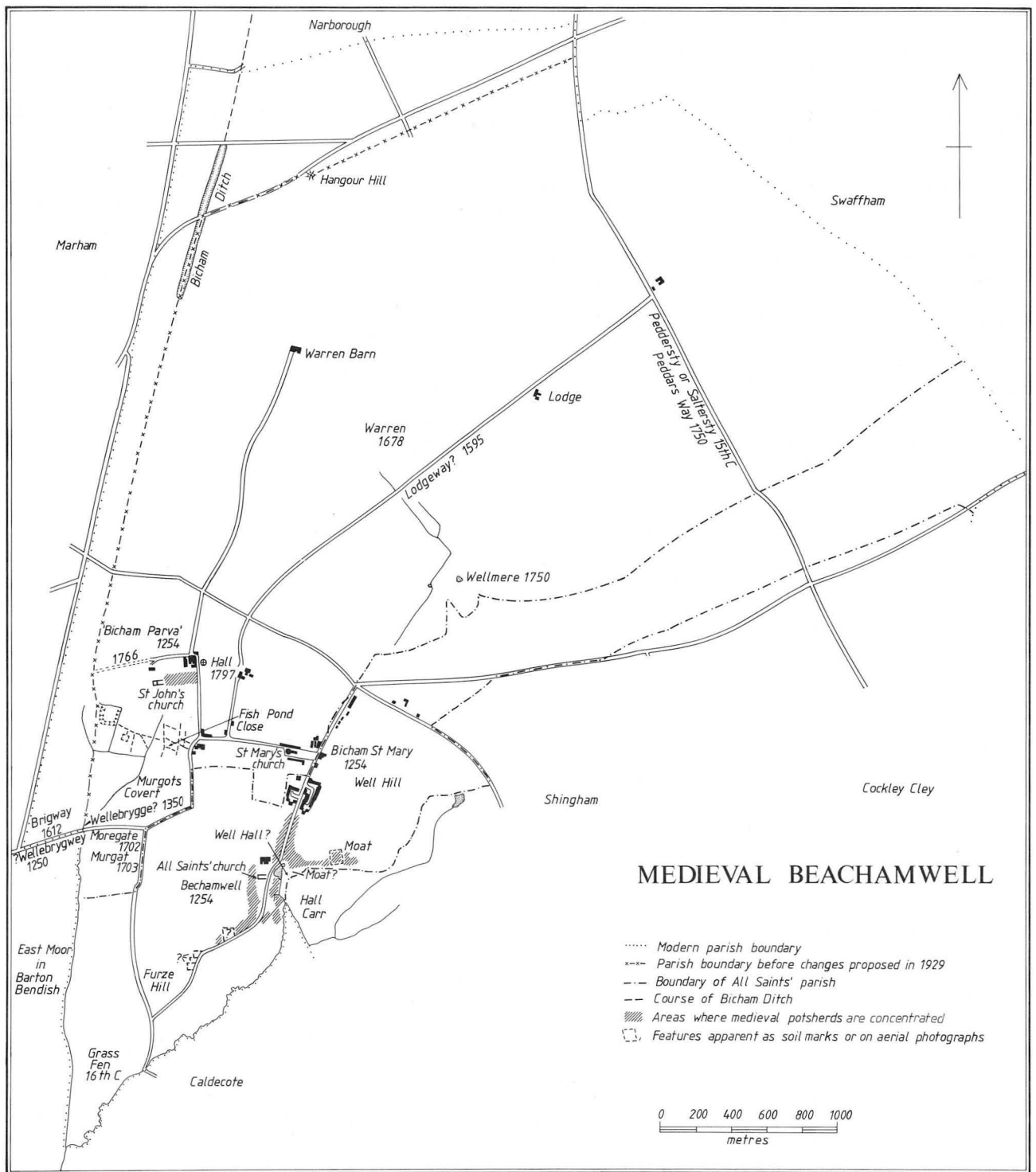
Figure 2 Medieval Beachamwell including the settlements and churches of St John, St Mary and All Saints'.
Scale 1:35,000.

1260-61, was, in fact, Rector of All Saints'. It appears that the stem *Bicham* or *Brecham* was shared by all three parishes, 'well' being added to the southernmost. In medieval times the village seems to have been considered as one place, in which there were three distinct parish localities, Little Bicham (Beachamwell St John), Bicham St Mary (Beachamwell St Mary), and Bechamwell (Beachamwell All Saints) which may also have been known as Great Bicham. The details of the minor settlements, though definite, are based on only a small number of

references; in many other documents, including Hundred Court Rolls, charters and wills, the whole group is simply called by one collective name. It is notable that the southern part, by 1254, should have the name later borne by the whole settlement: not quite in the way suggested by Blomefield. However, the name 'Well' continued in use for the manor and also, possibly, on occasion, for the southern part as a whole. There is, in a fourteenth-century document, a reference to Edward de Well of Bicham (NRO Hare MSS., 199 f4, Box 185×4); on the other hand there

4

is in the same source, a cartulary, a reference to a John de Litlewel in a charter concerning Fincham. Some caution is necessary as the 'Well' name occurred in several places in West Norfolk, for instance, Upwell, Outwell, Fincham and Gayton. There is a reference (NRO, Hare MSS 180, 185×4) to a *Wellebrygwey* in Barton Bendish, probably the road which crossed the parish boundary into Beachamwell.

The 1334 Lay Subsidy (Glasscock 1975, 203) gives some indication of the prosperity of Beachamwell. The amount assessed represents 1/15th of the value of movable goods of the community as a whole, with certain exceptions. These were people whose goods were valued at less than ten shillings, clerical property as listed in the 1291 Taxation of Pope Nicholas (Hudson 1910, 119-21), and the value of rents and services paid to their lords by the villeins of the clergy. Considered together these valuations suggest that Beachamwell was a relatively prosperous settlement in Clackclose, which was third among Norfolk hundreds in order of average assessments of townships in 1334. Beachamwell, in that year, was one of sixty places in the county taxed at £10 and upwards (Hudson 1895, 291, 294). The information for Clackclose for 1291, 1334 and the reduced valuation for 1449 (Hudson 1895, 186) is tabulated below in order of size.

Reference to these figures, as far as they can be considered reliable, suggests that Beachamwell did not suffer significant decline in the critical fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In 1428, parishes having less than ten households were granted exemption from taxation; none of the Beachamwell parishes was exempted (*Feudal Aids*, III, 609).

Little more can be ascertained about medieval Beachamwell. Blomefield (VII, 287) mentions the manor of Well Hall, said to be in the southern portion of Beachamwell, Ashfield and Joces manor, and Cherville's manor. In 1316, Robert Belet and Roger de Chervile were recorded in the *Nomina Villarum* as holding lands in Beachamwell (*Feudal Aids*, III, 451); Blomefield associated Belet with Well Hall. An Inquisition of 1403 (Cal. Misc. Inq., VII, 104) records that Robert Asshefeld, the elder, had died seised of his manor called Dersyngham's and other lands and tenements in Beachamwell worth 20 shillings net annually, and his manor called Josys in Shingham worth 10 shillings net annually. In 1346, Richard de Dersyngham is recorded as holding land in Beachamwell which had formerly been held by Robert de la More in 1302 (*Feudal Aids*, III, 509, 400) and this in some measure confirms Blomefield's account.

Two possible manorial sites (moats) are visible in Beachamwell; the first lies just to the south-west of the remains of St John's church, very close to the old boundary with Barton Bendish (NRO, C/SR 1/434A). The other, not shown on Ordnance Survey maps, lies immediately to the north of the boundary with Shingham, at about TF 7944 0473 and to the north of Hall Carr which is itself in Shingham. Both moats are shown on aerial photographs taken in 1965 (CUCAP: AKQ 25, 26), and the second one on a photograph taken in 1976 (NAU: TF 7404/D/A JS 5). In addition the Tithe Apportionment Map of 1845 for Beachamwell All Saints' (NRO E1) shows a feature containing water and called 'The Moat' at the north-west corner of Hall Carr just to the east of the remains of All Saints' church. According to Blomefield (VII, 291) this church stood in a close near to Well Hall. The site has been so modified by recent construction that there is now little to be seen. If it was a moat it may have been a third manorial

site, or it may have superseded the moat at 7944 0473.

Fieldwalking discoveries, discussed in full below, indicate the possible extent of the medieval settlement(s) of Beachamwell (Fig. 2). Concentrations of sherds of various types of medieval and, in some cases, earlier pottery lie to the immediate east, south-east, south, south-west and west of the site of All Saints' church. Less definitely, they also link the area of the church with the moat lying further to the east (Figs 3 and 4) and, most significantly, there is a rich

| 1291 | | | | 1334 | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | £ | s. | d. | | £ | s. | d. |
| Fincham | 28 | 13 | 4 | Fincham | 14 | 0 | 0 |
| Barton Bendish | 28 | 3 | 4 | Upwell and/or | 13 | 0 | 0 |
| Runcton Holme | 17 | 6 | 8 | Outwell | | | |
| Watlington | 16 | 13 | 4 | Watlington | 10 | 14 | 0 |
| Crimplesham | 14 | 13 | 4 | Marham | 10 | 10 | 0 |
| West Dereham | 14 | 0 | 0 | Barton Bendish | 10 | 7 | 0 |
| Marham | 13 | 0 | 0 | West Dereham | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| Southery | 12 | 13 | 4 | **Beachamwell** | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| Shouldham | 12 | 10 | 0 | Shouldham | 8 | 10 | 0 |
| Bexwell | 11 | 6 | 8 | Hilgay | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| West Brigg | 11 | 6 | 8 | Fordham | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| Hilgay | 9 | 6 | 8 | Denver | 7 | 4 | 0 |
| Wereham | 9 | 6 | 8 | Runcton Holme | 7 | 4 | 0 |
| Boughton | 9 | 6 | 8 | Wimbotsham & | 7 | 1 | 0 |
| **Beachamwell** | 9 | 4 | 0 | Stow Bardolph | | | |
| Denver | 8 | 13 | 4 | Bexwell with | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| Riston | 8 | 10 | 0 | Ryston | | | |
| Stow Bardolph | 8 | 0 | 0 | Downham Market | 6 | 14 | 0 |
| Wimbotsham | 7 | 13 | 4 | Wereham | 5 | 16 | 0 |
| Downham Market | 7 | 6 | 8 | Crimplesham | 5 | 14 | 0 |
| Stoke Ferry | 6 | 13 | 4 | Stoke Ferry | 5 | 11 | 0 |
| Outwell | 6 | 13 | 4 | with Wretton | | | |
| Shouldham Thorpe | 6 | 13 | 4 | Stradsett | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| Stradsett | 6 | 0 | 0 | Southery | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| Foston | 5 | 6 | 8 | Wormegay | 4 | 12 | 0 |
| Wormegay | 4 | 6 | 8 | Boughton | 4 | 10 | 0 |
| Upwell | 4 | 0 | 0 | Shouldham Th. | 2 | 16 | 0 |
| Wretton | 4 | 0 | 0 | Watlington & | 1 | 13 | 0 |
| Thorpland | 1 | 0 | 0 | Thorpeland Foston | 1 | 10 | 0 |

| 1449 | | | | 1449: % decline from 1334 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | £ | s. | d. | | |
| Upwell & Outwell | 12 | 0 | 0 | Wormegay | 29 |
| Fincham | 10 | 13 | 4 | Wereham | 25.9 |
| Wallington | 9 | 14 | 0 | Fincham | 23.9 |
| Barton Bendish | 9 | 7 | 0 | Shouldham | 23.6 |
| **Beachamwell** | 9 | 2 | 0 | Crimplesham | 23.4 |
| West Dereham | 8 | 13 | 4 | Foston | 22.3 |
| Marham | 8 | 10 | 0 | Runcton Holme | 20.9 |
| Hilgay | 7 | 6 | 8 | Denver | 20.9 |
| Fordham | 6 | 13 | 4 | Watlington with | 20.3 |
| Shouldham | 6 | 10 | 0 | Thorpeland | |
| Wimbotsham & | 6 | 0 | 0 | Stradsett | 20 |
| Stow Bardolph | | | | Marham | 19.1 |
| Bexwell with | 6 | 0 | 0 | Fordham | 16.7 |
| Ryston | | | | Downham Market | 15 |
| Denver | 5 | 14 | 0 | Wimbotsham & | 14.9 |
| Downham Market | 5 | 14 | 0 | Stow Bardolph | |
| Runcton Holme | 5 | 14 | 0 | Boughton | 14.9 |
| Stoke Ferry with | 5 | 0 | 0 | Bexwell with | 14.3 |
| Wretton | | | | Ryston | |
| Southery | 4 | 13 | 4 | West Dereham | 13.4 |
| Crimplesham | 4 | 7 | 4 | Shouldham Thorpe | 12.0 |
| Wereham | 4 | 6 | 0 | Stoke Ferry with | 10.0 |
| Stradsett | 4 | 0 | 0 | Wretton | |
| Boughton | 3 | 16 | 8 | Barton Bendish | 9.7 |
| Wormegay | 3 | 5 | 4 | Wallington | 9.4 |
| Shouldham Thorpe | 2 | 9 | 4 | Hilgay | 8.4 |
| Watlington | 1 | 6 | 4 | **Beachamwell** | 8.0 |
| Thorpeland | | | | Upwell and/or Outwell | 7.7 |
| Foston | 1 | 3 | 4 | Southery | 6.7 |

Table 1 Assessments for taxation of settlements in Clackclose Hundred for 1291, 1334 and 1449.

concentration joining it with the area of the present village. Between St John's church and modern Beachamwell similar material, together with Ipswich Ware, has been found; St Mary's church has a Late Saxon tower (Taylor and Taylor 1980, 60-1). There is thus a suggestion of an almost continuous area of medieval and even earlier settlement ranging from the western boundary south-west of St John's to a point slightly south-west of All Saints' church, the shape of the settled area being that of a rough crescent. The existence of earthworks, now ploughed out, in a field called 'Fish Pond Close' (Fig. 2) on the Tithe Map (NRO, E2) and visible on aerial photographs (CUCAP 124/743055 AKQ 26 and 26) adds support to this suggestion. There is some similarity between medieval Beachamwell and Barton Bendish which had three churches in the main village (two of which remain) and also had a southerly projection of settlement, the detached hamlet of Eastmoor; which had a chapel of St Mary *ad Marisco* (NRO, Hare 241, 185×5). Documents often mention individuals holding lands in Barton Bendish, Eastmoor and Beachamwell (NRO, 3933 209×3 and others), suggesting community of interest, while the site of Eastmoor as it survives today, is broadly comparable to that of the vanished All Saints' portion of Beachamwell; on a low spur with marshland valuable for turbary nearby (NRO Hare 257, 185×6). The shape of medieval Beachamwell, as suggested, would not have been untypical of the area.

An Inquisition of 1414 (Cal. Misc. Inq. VII, 265) mentioned that the advowson of the church of All Saints' in Beachamwell was extended at 100/-annually when it befell, compared with those of St Andrew in Barton Bendish at 80/-, Caldecot (now lost) at 40/-and Shingham at 40/-. This suggests that All Saints' was no mere parochial chapel. The Tithe map of All Saints' shows the parish still in existence as a unit; possibly its long survival, despite substantial desertion, reflects its past significance; certainly in 1535 (*Valor Ecclesiasticus* 1817, III, 381) it had a higher valuation than either of the other churches in Beachamwell.

Blomefield (VII, 291) seems to imply that there were no buildings near All Saints' church apart, possibly, from Well Hall (Fig. 2). An estate map of Beachamwell and Shingham made and surveyed for Patrick Blake by Thomas Spencer of Wickhambrook in 1766 (NRO, P 153A accn. 24/7/1979) shows a few buildings near the site of the church; unfortunately the key and description which must have accompanied the map are lost. A pair of cottages, now vanished, are shown on the All Saints Tithe map but the larger building which stood in front of them in 1766 had disappeared (fragments of building materials occur frequently here). Other buildings, probably farm buildings, stood close to the church in 1766; part of their site is occupied by the present group which seems to include much re-used brick. The 1766 map also shows the village virtually confined to the neighbourhood of St Mary's church with a layout somewhat reminiscent of deliberate design. The road which now passes to the east of St John's Church (Fig. 2) has, at some time, replaced an earlier road which ran north to south further to the east and which survives as a private road to Beachamwell Hall. In 1766 a road ran westwards towards St John's church; Blomefield (VII, 295) stated that poor people had, in his day, built little cottages on the site of St John's, suggesting a limited recolonisation. At some time between the close of the medieval period and the mid-eighteenth century a radical change had certainly taken place; that this may have been,

to some degree, planned, receives partial support from the field system as shown in 1766. No open fields survived in Beachamwell by that date, it was an enclosed landscape with the exception of a large warren in the north. For this reason it seems that the decline of the All Saints' area may have to be seen as only a part of the picture of the whole settlement, and cannot with justice be separated from it. Unfortunately, very little documentary evidence from this lengthy period survives.

It is certain that the All Saints' site was virtually empty by 1721. In that year a faculty (NRO, FCB/1 559(b)) recorded the ruinous condition of the disused church (p. 12). The inhabitants had not been able to rebuild; they consisted of only seven families. The annual value of all lands and tenements within the parish bounds, occupied by inhabitants or outsetters was only £170. The people were also said to have been going to St Mary's 'which standeth near and is very convenient for them to go to'. St Mary's church could hold all of them as well as its own congregation. It is not necessary even to see the seven families as being on the old site as the Tithe map shows that part of the present group of houses near St Mary's (the eastern fringe) is within All Saints' parish and the surviving church indeed 'standeth near'. If the thirty-three year interval is taken literally it means that this had been the state of affairs since 1688; it may have been longer. Other evidence suggests formal recognition of the contraction which had already happened. Another faculty (NRO, FCB/1 124) dated 29th May 1686, records the consolidation of St John's with St Mary's though the condition of the church ruins in the eighteenth century (Blomefield VII, 295) (the foundations, part of the tower and part of one wall only remaining) point to a much earlier dilapidation, as Bryant suggested (1904, 31). Its absence from the 1552 Inventory of Church Goods (Walters 1941, I, 98-9) points to a rapid post-Reformation abandonment of St John's. Leet Bills and Verdicts of the Township of Beachamwell with Shingham for 1688-1730 (NRO, Hare 388, 186 x 6) all refer to Beachamwell as one place with no distinction of parish, even Shingham is scarcely separated. Small references in the Bills reinforce the idea of one Beachamwell only: 'the Common Green' on which no geese were to be kept after harvest; 'the parish church' in which the Constables gave notice of swine ringing; the phrase 'the inhabitants of the Town of Beachamwell'; and references to the North Field and West Field.

It seems certain that contraction had taken place earlier than 1680 and it is the late-fifteenth, sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries to which we must look for the desertion of the All Saints' site. Pottery found near All Saints' church includes only small quantities of post-medieval material which gives some support to this view; post-medieval pottery is, however, found near St John's church. The anonymous Chorography of Norfolk, dating from about 1605 (Smith and MacCulloch 1977, 327), includes a somewhat confusing description of Beachamwell: 'It hath 2 churches vct Alhalowes and another in the feelde, that in the field being the lesser is not served' (Hood 1938, 86). With one church in isolation and unused and a marked alteration in the condition of the churches in the seventy years since the *Valor*, contraction of settlement is indicated, but the chorographer may well have confused St Mary's with All Saints.

Blomefield (VII, 288) records that the Lovel family purchased the manor of Well Hall in the reign of Henry VI, and Ashfield's in that of Henry VII. The Lovels were

recorded as holding land in Beachamwell, among other places, in 1302, 1346 and 1428 (*Feudal Aids*, III, 399, 508, 570) and there are various documents extant which show that they were active in Beachamwell in the 1530's (NRO, Hare MSS 294/3 and 294/4 186×1; 305/1, 305/2, 305/3, 305/4 and 306 186×2). They were succeeded by the Athows. In a Valuation and Survey of the Hundred of Clackclose (NRO, Hare 39A 184×4) there is a valuation of Beachamwell dated 1650 in which various persons were listed as farmers to, or hirers from Sir Christopher Athow (one of them, John Cooke, had 300 acres of arable, 98 acres of pasture and a sheep's course). Another was listed as farmer to Lady Ann de Gray; the de Grays, according to Blomefield (VII, 290), had held Chervile's manor since the fifteenth century. There had thus been some manorial amalgamation by the beginning of the period of possible abandonment. Blomefield records that William Athow, being without issue, sold his estate to the Taylor family, and in 1760 Andrew Taylor acquired the de Gray manor also. This sequence is confirmed by entries in the Visitation Books of the Archdeaconry of Norfolk (NRO, ANF/1/5), where, in 1667 and 1668, members of the Athow family were accused of not receiving the Sacrament on Easter Day, and also by a Rental of Certainties payable to Sir Thomas Hare at Michaelmas, 1759 (NRO, Hare 46, 186×4). This names Andrew Taylor Esq. for the Manor of Beachamwell Hall and also for the Manor of Shingham. Final amalgamation of the manors suggested elsewhere (Allison 1955, 160) as a cause of the depopulation of All Saints, Beachamwell, seems to have taken place later than the critical period.

A survey of seventy-four wills made in Norwich Consistory and Norfolk Archdeaconry Courts between 1384 and 1693, forty-eight of them dating from the sixteenth century and fifteen of them after 1600, gives certain information which may be significant. The earlier wills usually give specific directions for burial or some other reference to the parish of the person concerned. Out of eleven wills surviving from before 1500, six name All Saints, four name St Mary's and one St John's, in some way indicating them as home parish. Of the sixteenth-century wills, only eight name All Saints' in this way, one names St John's and, apart from five which indicate no definite parish (one names an All Saints' witness), the remainder name St Mary's. The last will seen which names All Saints' and the only one to do so in the seventeenth century, is that of a husbandman, Anthony Clements (NRO, NCC Wills, 1633, 394 Tuck); he was of some substance, leaving houses and lands in Beachamwell and Shingham. The eight sixteenth-century wills naming All Saints' are distributed evenly through the century. This suggests strongly that, in the sixteenth century, the majority of people already lived in St Mary's parish, so that All Saints' parish must have been sparsely inhabited. St John's church was not mentioned after 1541 when Sir William Minsewe, parson of St Mary's, left his short gown to the parson of St John's (NRO, NCC 131 Deynes). A will of 1588/9 (NRO, NAW, Will of T.Wilkyn, 31 Carter), mentions land of the parsonage of St John; the church was still in mind if not in use.

Throughout the period covered by the wills, it is evident that Beachamwell was regarded as a single community; the earlier ones often record gifts to the various gilds and to all the churches in the village, as well as, in some cases, St Botolph's in Shingham (NRO, NAW, Will of John Cooke, 1528, 133 Brokehole). The parson of

All Saints' sometimes witnessed the will of a St Mary's parishioner (NRO, NAW, 1562, 484 Postyll), and money was left for the poor of the whole township (NRO, NCC Wills, Will of T.Scarlett, 325 Apleyarde).

Some details about Beachamwell can be gathered from Court Rolls, and from wills and inventories of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and from Leet Bills and Verdicts of 1688-1730 (NRO, Hare MSS 388 186×6). There is disappointingly little topographic reference to the depopulated areas; in 1649 John Cooke was presented for not 'scouring his drain [ditch] running at the end of the church ... into Little Fen' (NRO, Hare MSS 86 184×5); a description which must fit the St John's site best as Little Fen was in Barton Bendish at about TF 7380 0460, while, in 1627, William Wright was fined 'for not keeping of a sufficient fence next the Kinge's high way in St John's Street'. The lands lay in furlongs in the North Field and the West Field; crops grown included rye, barley and *mixtlyn* (maslin) as well as hemp. The hemplands may correspond to some of the small enclosures surviving among earthworks. Wills and Inventories mention malt querns, a mustard quern, woollen wheels, linen wheels and a fulling trough. A windmill was recorded in 1650 (NRO, Hare 39A 184×4). There were several named commons: Ryshill, Claverton, Cutting Green and Cowhill, and whins were cut on Fircroft Hill. Grass Fen lay between Caldecot Fen and the common of Beachamwell, and there, and in other places, the inhabitants of the whole township were expected to scour out ditches; the fens were valuable as turbary. A lodgeway was mentioned in 1595 (NRO, NAW, T.Tooke, 65 Bale), while John Cooper, whose will was proved in 1678, was a warrener. Sheep seem to have been important being frequently mentioned in wills; the will of Thomas Fowler (NRO, NAW, 1598/9, 168 Bradfield), mentions legacies of over 200 ewes and 100 lambs.

The 1603 communicant census gave a figure of 224 persons in Beachamwell; these were adults aged 16 or more. If 40 per cent of the total population was made up of persons below this age (Patten 1975, 47) then the figure for Beachamwell would have been about 370. The Hearth Tax of 1664 (Palgrave-Moore 1983, 1-6) shows that Beachamwell had seventy-nine hearths (twenty-one of them belonging to Sir Christopher Athow) among some thirty-five chargeable persons (there were omissions and erasures). Among the twenty-nine villages listed in the Hundred, Beachamwell ranked thirteenth in totals of hearths and chargeable persons.

If the evidence of the wills is reliable and the sixteenth century saw only limited occupation of the All Saints' site, then shrinkage must have taken place at about the end of the fifteenth century at latest. No explanation of the change has as yet come to light. The church of All Saints' must have been used by only a small number of parishioners thereafter, and this is in keeping with the obvious patronage of the Athows, embodied in the coat of arms still visible on the west end of the ruin, and described by Blomefield (VII, 291), who records that it was a dereliction of this responsibility by new lords that brought on its destruction.

## III. Site Description
(Figs 2-5; Pl. I)
by Brian Cushion

The northern part of the parish of Beachamwell, rising to over 30m above OD, has a not untypical Breckland

# BEACHAMWELL ALL SAINTS

MOAT

CHURCH

N

0    50    100    150    200

METRES

BRC 1979
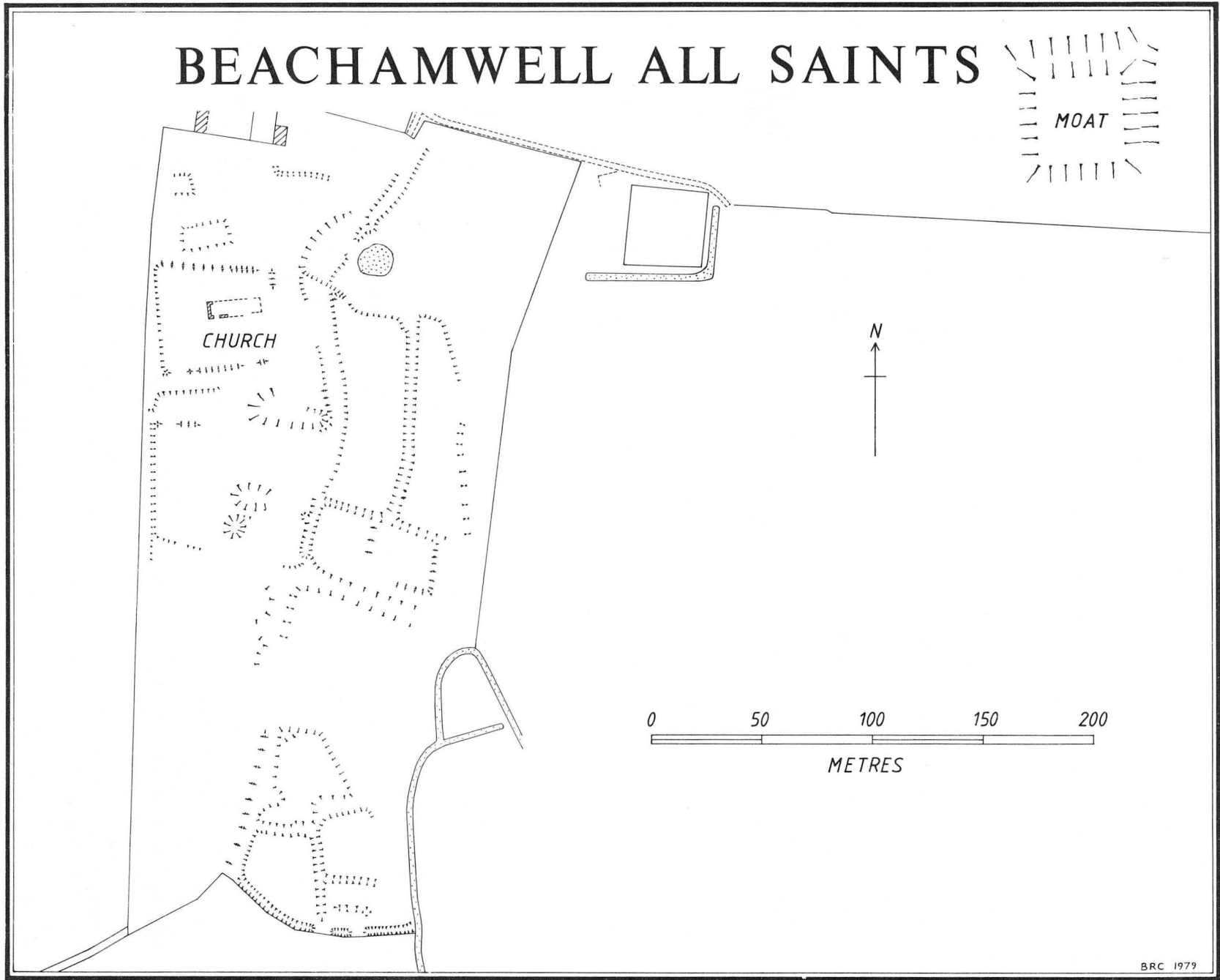
Figure 3 Beachamwell: All Saints' earthworks. Scale 1:2500.

landscape associated with light sandy soils with some coniferous afforestation, while the medieval settlement was concentrated below 15m OD in the southern portion, between two shallow valleys which drain south-westwards and join at the south-western extremity of the parish.

The earthworks which have been surveyed (Fig. 3) are in the vicinity of All Saints' church and lie on the north-western side of the valley which divides Beachamwell from Shingham to the east and Caldecot to the south, and are approximately 800m to the south of the existing village.

The deserted settlement appears to straddle the continuation of an existing roadway leading from the present village south-westwards towards Caldecote, and a sinuous linear depression, seems to correspond with this course (Fig. 4).

To the west of the roadway the church ruin (Pl. I) stands within an almost completely discernible churchyard boundary bank of which only the south-eastern corner is ill-defined. A large enclosure, partially sub-divided, exists to the south, possibly separated from the churchyard by a short lane. The smaller section of the enclosure appears to have an entrance on its western side. The eastern part of the large enclosure has three depressions of varying size and depth, one or more of which may have originated as clay pits. Within this part of the enclosure, close to the

suggested roadway, fieldwalking has produced a scatter of over fifty sherds of medieval coarse ware, five of Grimston Ware and nine of Romano-British grey ware, while, near the church, one more Romano-British sherd was found. The grassland south of this enclosure has no surviving earthworks, but fieldwalking finds in the extreme south-western corner include one piece of a Thetford-type rim, sixty-five predominantly medieval unglazed sherds and ten of shelly wares, including one medieval rim.

To the north of the churchyard two possible building platforms exist.

To the east of the roadway, at the northern end of the earthworks, there is a large shallow pit which sometimes contains a little water and which is being partly filled by tipping. It dominates this end of the site and has destroyed part of the supposed roadline. To the south of this, a well-defined toft enclosure is evident, ditched to the south and east, with another, narrower, enclosure to the east which is overgrown and has, as part of its eastern boundary, an irregular ditch which followed the line of the parish boundary. Fieldwalking within the two enclosures revealed, among a general scatter of finds, two distinct concentrations. Among these finds were sixteen Romano-British grey ware sherds, some pieces of shelly wares of which at least one was Romano-British, one piece of samian



Plate I  Aerial photograph of All Saints, Beachamwell from the west, showing the ruined church in centre foreground, slight traces of the earthworks around the church (Fig. 3) and the cropmark of a moat in the top, left-hand corner. 28 July 1977

# BEACHAMWELL ALL SAINTS
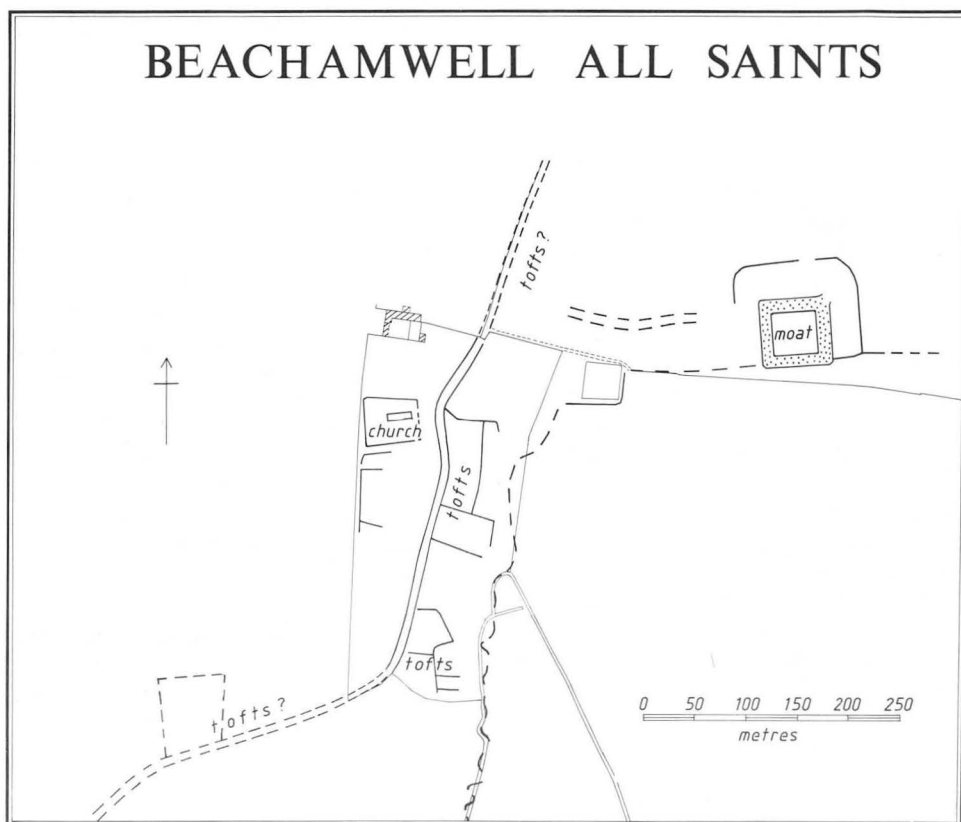
Figure 4 Beachamwell: All Saints' interpretation. Scale 1:7500.

and three colour-coated sherds. Apart from four Thetford-type rims and a portion of a St Neots-type bowl, the remaining finds were medieval: 225 sherds of coarse ware and nine of glazed Grimston Wares.

Another enclosure immediately to the south of these yielded thirty-seven sherds which were almost entirely of medieval coarse ware and four of Grimston Ware. Further south is a low-lying, somewhat flat area of land, extending south to a series of irregularly-shaped and ditched enclosures, noticeably raised above the general level of this part of the site, and divided from the Carr to the east by a watercourse. The flat area gave a thin scatter of coarse ware sherds; twenty-three of them medieval, two Romano-British, one rim of Thetford-type, a rim of shelly ware (presumably Saxo-Norman), and a few post-medieval pieces. In the irregular enclosures over sixty sherds, chiefly medieval coarse wares, were found together with one rim of Thetford-type, two pieces of shelly ware and a few of Grimston Ware.

On the northern edge of the wood called Hall Carr, approximately 200m east of the church, an L-shaped portion of the former parish boundary ditch appears to form part of a toft boundary. A shorter L-shaped section of wall at ground level is visible, now that vegetation has been cleared, to the north-west of the sewage works which covers the eastern part of this possible toft. Much post-medieval building material and many pottery fragments confirm local knowledge of a pair of cottages still standing on this site at about the turn of the century. The Tithe Map (NRO E1 of 1845) and the Estate Map of 1766 (NRO P153A 24/7/1979) also show a building on this site (the 1766 map shows a second building in front of these cottages), while a few sherds of medieval pottery suggest an earlier presence as well.

A further 200m, east-north-east, in the arable land, a well-defined but shallow moated enclosure is evident. Air photographs (Pl. I and O.S. 76 125 458) suggest a roadway leading to it from the west, and also an outer enclosure to the north and east, and these have been transposed onto the interpretation plan (Fig. 4). Within the moat fifty sherds of coarse medieval wares, forty-one of glazed Grimston Ware, a few other glazed medieval pieces and one fragment of a shelly ware have been found, while a scatter of coarse ware and Grimston Ware thins out quickly to the north, but extends further to the east.

Westward of the moat and towards the cottage site a thin scatter of coarse medieval sherds together with one of Grimston Ware, four of Romano-British grey ware and one of Romano-British shelly ware were found, while extending northwards and to the east of the roadway to the present village, a continuous dense spread of pottery was found with a slightly greater concentration in the south. These finds, which extended to the limit of present habitation, consisted of two flint-gritted early Iron Age or Neolithic sherds, 340 pieces of coarse ware, mainly medieval but including some Thetford-type Ware, five rims of Thetford-type Ware, twelve sherds of shelly wares (chiefly of St. Neots type), and sixty-seven fragments of glazed Grimston Ware as well as a medieval copper alloy brooch and a copper alloy sheet folded into a tube with one end notched (of unknown date). To the west of the roadway a recently-disturbed surface of grassland gave a very thin scatter of fifteen medieval coarse ware sherds (one shelly) and three glazed Grimston Ware pieces.

When the arable land to the west of the church was examined it was found that for some 100m to the north and south there was a consistent yield of coarseware pottery including one sherd of Ipswich-type Ware (or a

contemporary import), one rim of Thetford-type Ware and twenty-six other pieces, mainly medieval, but possibly with some Romano-British and Thetford-type Ware fragments. The finds soon petered out westwards on the higher, lighter land.

Further to the south-west, for some 180 m from the earthworks, fieldwalking on arable land lying to the north of the supposed road (which may once have formed a boundary between a settled area to the north and valley-floor meadow to the south) produced a further consistent distribution of coarse wares, with a concentration close to the south-west corner of the earthwork site. The finds consisted of over 150 sherds, predominantly medieval, but including three Thetford-type rims, one rouletted sherd, nine pieces of shelly ware, two of them St. Neots-type, as well as nine of Romano-British grey wares, one Romano-British colour-coated sherd, seven pieces of glazed Grimston Ware and one Raeren stoneware base.

A further find of a few sherds of medieval coarse ware and a rouletted piece of Thetford-type Ware a little to the west suggests the possible existence of an isolated site there. Some traces of what may be an enclosure in this part of the site are visible on an aerial photograph (O.S. AP 76125 458), and this has been plotted on Figure 4.

It is apparent from the distribution and quantity of pottery finds that the surviving earthworks represent a limited proportion only of the former settlement associated with All Saints' church. It was essentially a linear settlement, continuous with that around St Mary's church to the north; all the earthworks and pottery scatters described lie within the bounds of All Saints' parish as shown on the Tithe Map of 1845. The moated site to the east probably indicates a projection of the settled area in that direction, but the extent of the medieval settlement on the lighter soils to the west is less clear. The land to the south of the earthworks and of the roadway leading south-westwards seems not to have been settled: it is low-lying and its surface is irregular. It probably served as rough pasture until comparatively recent times; ploughing does not appear to have revealed any proof or suggestion of settlement.

## IV. The Churches
by George and Alayne Fenner

### All Saints'
(Fig. 5; Pls I and II)
The ruins of the church are situated in a meadow, some 500 m south of the present village. Although some outlines of the nave and chancel are visible as earthworks, all that survives above ground is the west wall of the nave, standing almost to its full height, its inner face having a limestone-capped plinth 70 cm high, and short lengths of the north and south nave walls. Aerial photographs show a long rectangular chancel the same width as the nave (Pl. I).

The fabric was originally of regularly coursed whole flints and occasional limestone laid over a flint rubble core, with limestone dressings at the quoins and openings. Most of the limestone has been robbed, the north-east and north-west quoins have gone, except for three pieces of limestone on the north side, as has much of the facing flint.

The south wall is broken by a gap, presumably the south doorway, and fragments of limestone remain from the dressing. The north wall is approximately the same length as the west section of the south wall, probably indicating opposing north and south doorways.

In the middle of the west wall is a blocked Norman doorway, recognisable only because of the shape of the blocking (Pl. II). Almost all the limestone dressings have been robbed leaving large holes through the wall, apart from two plain voussoirs in the head of the door, some limestone at the base, and externally, what appear to be the stone pads on which flanking shafts rested. South of the doorway is a drawbar hole running two metres into the wall. The blocking of the door on the inside of the church is a mixture of limestone and clunch, but on the outside it is mostly medieval brick, partly robbed out to reveal the rubble core.

Above the west doorway is a window-opening with limestone jambs and hoodmould, its two-centred arch set in brick. Fragmentary remains of tracery indicate that it was a three-light Perpendicular-style window. The rear-arch and splay of the window are brick, and the inner jambs are

BEACHAMWELL ALL SAINTS
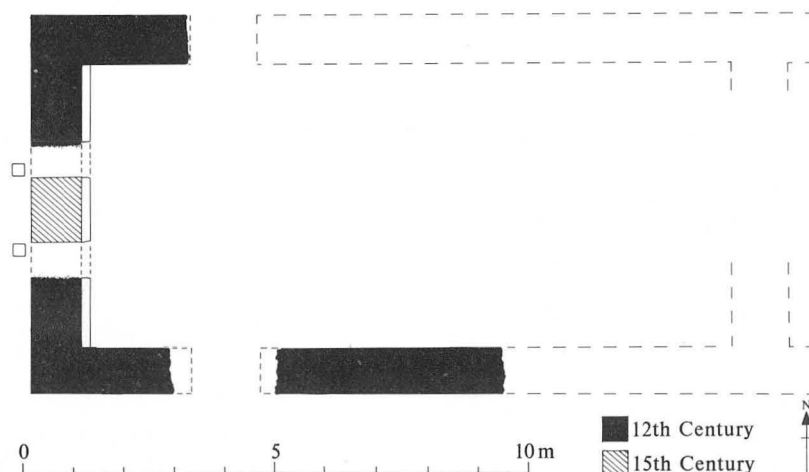


Figure 5 Beachamwell: All Saints' church. Scale 1:150.
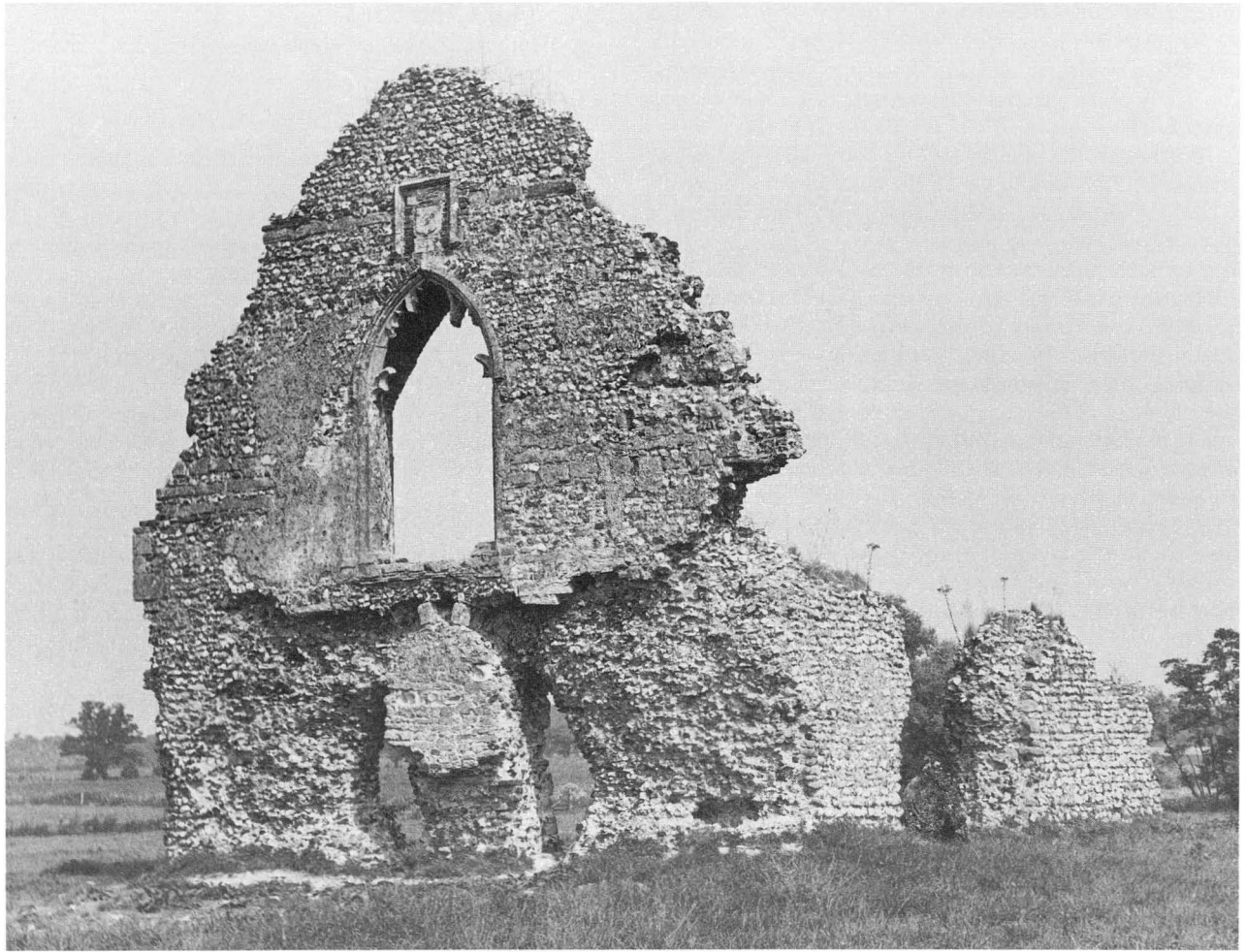
Plate II Beachamwell: Ruins of All Saints' church from the south-west. (Photo: Hallam Ashley, *copyright National Monuments Record*)

of limestone up to the springing. The north jamb continues 40 cm below the present sill level, indicating that the inner sill was also splayed. However the point at which the sill splay met the inside of the wall would have cut the top of the Norman door, seriously weakening the structure. This was probably the reason for the blocking of the west door. The splayed inner sill was subsequently built up to the outer sill level.

In the west face of the wall, above the apex of the window, are set the arms of Athow and the date 1612, within a deep limestone hoodmould (Pl. II).

*Interpretation and dating*

The original church appears to be Norman, of the early twelfth century, as evidenced by the 1 m thick walls, regularly coursed masonry and the west door. The Norman chancel may have been enlarged in the fourteenth century when the patronage of the church, which had been in the hands of the Earls of Clare until 1322, passed to the Despenser family (Blomefield VII, 291). The tile floors found in the excavations of 1868 and 1902 (Bryant 1904, 22) were probably laid at this period. In the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century, the west window was inserted, which necessitated the blocking of the west door, and presumably the construction of the north and south doors. There is no sign of a west tower or tower porch to house the two 'steple bells' of 6 cwt and 5 cwt mentioned in the

*Inventory of Church Goods* of All Saints' of 1552 (Walters 1941, I, 99). These bells are too heavy to have been in a bellcote, so they must have been mounted in a separate clocher, possibly of timber.

By the late sixteenth century, depopulation had frequently enabled one incumbent to serve all three Beachamwell churches (Blomefield VII, 296) and the maintenance of the fabric became neglected. In the early seventeenth century the Athow family acquired the manor, and it was Serjeant Thomas Athow (who died in 1630) who repaired the church in 1612 (Blomefield VII, 292).

The Faculty of 1721 for consolidating All Saints' with St Mary's graphically described the state of the church by the late seventeenth century (NRO FCB/1. 559):

'the whole roofe of the chancell and body of the Parish Church of All Saints' in Beecham Well aforesaid hath been for three and thirty years last past decayed & fallen in & the walls, windows, the Pulpit Reading Desk, seates and pavement are thereby soe greatly ruined and dilapidated that the church has been utterly disused & that the Inhabitants which consist only of seven familyes have not been able to rebuild & refit the said church.'

Parkin gives an eye-witness account of the church in 1721:

'the greatest part of the walls, both of the church and the chancel, were lately standing with the east gable of the chancel, and the west one of the church: whereon are the arms of Athow impaling

Wingfield, and the year 1612. The length of the church was about 42 feet, and the breadth about 18; ... The chancel in length, about 34 feet, and the breadth the same with the nave; and a very neat arch of stone between the church and the chancel, is still standing ... The church (as I have observed) is now in ruins; weeds, briars, elders etc., growing therein, and lies open for cattle etc. to enter. Its fall was owing to this: the lords of the manor of Well Hall having the privilege of burial in the chancel, were obliged, by immemorial custom, to keep in repair that part of the chancel to which their burial places belonged; and, on conveyance of the lordship to the late lords, this being contested, and not set aright in time, not only the chancel, but the whole church fell by this neglect.' (Blomefield VII, 291)

## St John's
(Fig. 6; Pl. III)

The ruin of St John's stands to the west of St John's Farm on a roughly circular mound approximately 35 m in diameter. It consists of a square west tower, to the height of the belfry windows, the west wall and fragments of the north and south walls of the nave (Pl. III). A heap, approximately 17.5 m from the west wall probably marks the east end of the chancel. Parkin says that the church was about 56 feet long and that 'some poor people had made themselves cottages' on the site (Blomefield VII, 295).

It must have been out of use by the mid-sixteenth century as it does not feature in the inventories of church goods for the parish of 1552 (Walters 1941, I, 98-9).

The tower appears to have been built against the west wall of the nave, for subsidence has caused the straight joints between them to gape, revealing rendering on the former external surface of the nave wall.

The fabric of both parts of the building is basically coursed flint and limestone, but most of the limestone dressings and all the tracery has been robbed out, except for the sharply cut upper quoins and string courses of the tower. The nave also contains clunch, re-used limestone and some pieces of iron-bound conglomerate, with putlog holes of shelly limestone and clunch. The tower has brick putlog holes and one or two courses of large carstone blocks on the external west face at the height of one metre (Pl. III), with two or three similar courses on the internal north, west and south faces. Fragments of plaster indicate it was

also rendered externally, and there appears to have been no plinth. There was a west window, now totally robbed of its jambs and tracery, and there is a small ringing chamber window high on the south side which has an internal splay of plastered brick.

Internally the tower is staged on the north, south and west sides, decreasing in thickness at heights of approximately 6 m and 9 m.

The original nave roofline shows as a fossil gable on the east face of the west wall, and the nave appears to have been heightened when the tower was added for there is another, higher, fossil gable outlined by a limestone weathercourse, which continues (as a stringcourse) round the other three faces of the tower. A second, upper, stringcourse ran below the belfry windows. Neither stringcourse has any relationship with the internal staging.

The north-west and south-west external corners of the nave have diagonal buttresses, both being ruinous, that on the north-west, however, retaining the lower offset and plinth. The west wall of the nave is thicker than the north and south walls and the tower arch which has been cut through it stands about 6 m high. It has been robbed of all its dressings, and above its apex are approximately six courses of clunch.

The south wall of the nave which is barely a metre long, contains re-used limestone in its internal quoining. The north wall continues for 1.4 m beyond the north-west buttress and there are two further small stumps to the east, the second, approximately 3 m high, containing a recess, possibly an aumbry.

In the absence of tracery, dating can only be tentative, probably a fourteenth-century nave with a fifteenth-century tower.

## St Mary's
(Fig. 7; Pl. IV)

The church stands in a large walled churchyard on the present village green. The walls of nave and chancel are continuous but a difference in roof level (Pl. IV) indicates the position of an earlier nave/chancel division. There is a south aisle, a north porch, and a round tower with an octagonal top.

BEACHAMWELL ST. JOHN



| | 14th Century |
| | 15th Century |

0    5    10 m
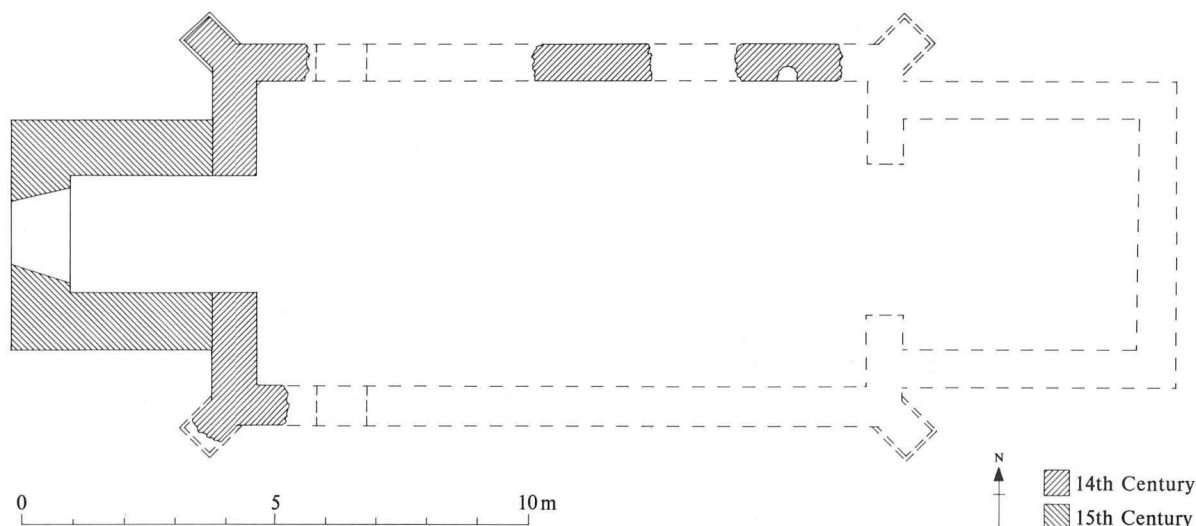
Figure 6 Beachamwell: St John's church. Scale 1:150.

Plate III Beachamwell: Ruins of St John's church tower from the west. (Photo: Hallam Ashley, *copyright National Monuments Record*)

The fabric is flint, both plain and knapped, with limestone quoins and dressings. A good deal of clunch is used in the arcades, as well as for tracery and decorative features, and the entire north side of the church is rendered. The nave and chancel are thatched, the aisle is lead-covered and the porch tiled.

*Description* (Pl. IV)
The east window is of three lights in the Perpendicular style. The remains of the north jambs of a much wider window survive. Ladbroke shows a two-light east window.

The east end of the chancel has been repaired many times over the years. Above the height of the window sill the fabric is mixed flint, brick and stone. The rebuilt gable edge is finished in modern brick, and the top third of the quoining is of nineteenth-century bricks. The wall below sill level has been refaced in flint alone, and this has been carried, without a break, right across the east face of the north-east buttress, which is flush with the east chancel wall. The plain limestone-capped plinth also continues across the buttress and round the corner on the north side. This buttress has two offsets, that in Ladbroke's drawing

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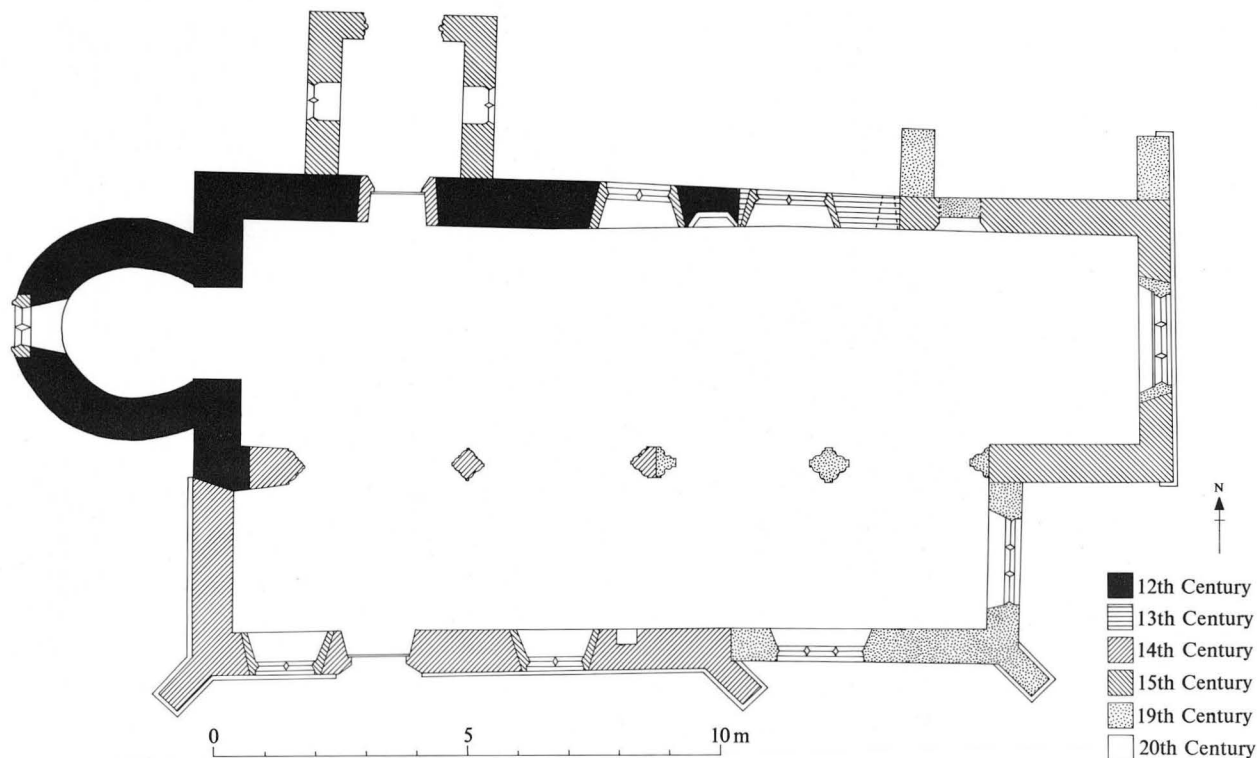
Figure 7 Beachamwell: St Mary's church. Scale 1:150.

**Legend:**
- 12th Century
- 13th Century
- 14th Century
- 15th Century
- 19th Century
- 20th Century

has three and appears to be diagonal. There are a few apparent long-and-short quoins on the south-east corner above the plinth (Pl. IV), and four others are enclosed by the buttress on the north-east corner. The Taylors call these 'dubious' (Taylor and Taylor 1980, 60).

On the north side of the chancel, immediately to the west of the western buttress, the rendering has dropped off revealing a piece of limestone, which looks like the springing of a round-topped or lancet window (although it could simply be a random piece of re-used stone). The chancel is very long compared with the nave, and it may have been lengthened to accommodate the building of a vestry against the north chancel wall. According to Parker, this was lead-covered and had an upper chamber (Blomefield VII, 296) and though the vestry has now gone, its ornate fifteenth-century doorway, (now blocked) with limestone jambs, decorated spandrels, and embattled cornice of clunch, survives inside the church. The present western chancel buttress is at the presumed junction of the chancel extension, and may even be formed from a stump of the west wall of the vestry. The south side of the chancel is discussed below with the south aisle.

On the north side of the nave there are two Perpendicular-style fifteenth-century windows. The western is of limestone and is of two lights with a deep hoodmould and simple uncusped tracery. The western window has a square-topped limestone hoodmould, its labels cut away, with jambs and tracery of clunch. It has two cusped lights below, and a quatrefoil with mouchettes above.

The fifteenth-century porch has a stepped gable and an outer arch with hoodmould and plain labels. It has a continuous outer moulding and shafts with octagonal bases

and caps. The inner door has continuous moulding and no shafts. The north-west nave quoin has long-and-short work.

The south side consists of a fourteenth-century aisle of knapped and galletted black flint (with occasional limestone) which was extended in the nineteenth century. The original aisle had diagonal buttresses at the south-west and south-east corners and a continuous, elaborate double plinth of moulded limestone round the west, south, and, presumably, east sides, including the buttresses. When the aisle was extended by six metres, the original south-east buttress was left in place, and a matching one provided for the new south-eastern corner. The fabric was skilfully matched in knapped black flint, which continues round the east end of the aisle, and also along the south side of the chancel, this latter junction being marked by brick quoins. There is, however, no plinth on the aisle extension or the south chancel.

The fourteenth-century south doorway has a simple hoodmould under a limestone relieving arch (Pl. IV). On either side of it are a pair of matching Perpendicular-style two-light windows under deep limestone hoodmoulds. They have limestone jambs and clunch tracery. Ladbroke's drawing shows three-light windows. The western window has a renewed embattled transom, the other has been renewed with a plain transom. The south window of the extension has limestone tracery in Perpendicular style, and a deep hoodmould. It is of three lower lights with three cusped ogee double lights above. The east window of the aisle is the same, and both are heavily restored.

The tower is of three stages divided by stringcourses. The two lower stages are circular, the top, belfry stage is octagonal (Pl. IV) and fourteenth-century. The octagon is

Plate IV  Beachamwell: St Mary's church from the north-east. (Photo: Hallam Ashley, *copyright National Monuments Record*)

of flint with limestone quoins, and it has four cusped two-light belfry windows, alternating with matching flushwork tracery. The roof is surmounted with a lead-covered shaft. The two lower stages are of flint, the upper of which has four double-arched openings. Those on the north and west have triangular heads, and those on the south and east are round-headed. The northern opening has a through-stone supported on a plain chunk of limestone; the southern has a through-stone on a central squared pillar with a capital. Below this, on the stringcourse, is a slit opening. The through-stone of the eastern opening is supported by a squared, carved shaft, and that on the west by a rounded pillar, set further back than the others. There is a chamfered stone slit opening on the stringcourse below. On the ground floor of the tower is a fifteenth-century two-light west window, square-headed, with cusped ogees and mouchettes above.

Inside the church the line of the north nave wall changes noticeably at a point 8.55 m from the west end, which marks the original north-east corner of the nave. To the west of this point the wall thickness is 83 cm, to the east of it it is 74 cm. The south aisle is separated from the nave by a four-bay arcade. The two westernmost bays have quatrefoil piers with fillets, of the mid-fourteenth century. The capitals, bases and lower courses of the western pier and the west respond are of limestone; the upper courses are of clunch. The west respond bears incised graffiti of a demon, and quantities of (possibly) building materials: 600 quarters, 3 lbs and 434 lbs. The two nineteenth-century

easternmost bays, the eastern pier and east respond have continuous moulding. They are plastered, and probably of brick. The central pier of the arcade is partly fourteenth century, of limestone, and partly nineteenth century. Opposite to it on the south wall is a piscina with a cusped trefoil arch of clunch. The tower arch has no imposts and is 'built of rubble with dressed stone round the salient angles.' (Taylor and Taylor 1980, 61). The wall above the arch is reduced in thickness by an offset, and above this, to the north of centre, is an opening with splayed jambs, its head cut by the arched plaster ceiling.

*Dating and interpretation*

A church is mentioned in *Domesday Book*. The Taylors consider St Mary to be Late Saxon in date from the presence of long-and-short work on the north-west corner of the nave, and, more doubtfully, on the north-east and south-east corners of the chancel, and from the structure of the belfry windows. The proportions of the original nave are also 2:1.

The chancel was probably widened in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century, if the evidence of the fragment of window jamb on the north side is to be believed.

The two-bay south aisle was added in the fourteenth century, possibly as a chantry chapel for the Chervyll family, who were lords of the manor at the time. Parkin records that the brass of an unknown priest (now in the chancel) lay before the altar there. This may have been Thomas Chervylle, rector from 1349 to 1384, or his

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successor John Mannyng (1384-1425) (Blomefield VII, 297). The tower received its top stage during this time.

In 1460, Ralph Grymston bequeathed money to glaze a window in the tower (NRO NAW Grey 21) and the fifteenth century also saw other building activity. The chancel was lengthened and the vestry added, new windows inserted and the north porch was built.

By the eighteenth century the church still had its screen and stained glass in a south chancel window (Blomefield VII, 296).

According to a plaque on the north wall of the south aisle at its east end, 'This wall belongs to the chancel the aisle south of it was added by John Motteux esq. Anno 1832' (sic). This date must mark the end of a lengthy building programme, for the aisle extension was in position when Ladbroke drew the church from the south-east in the early 1820s. It was certainly not there in 1748 when the squire's pew was described as abutting on the church wall to the south and the chancel to the east (NRO FCB2/Book 2, 141).

The present central pier of the four-bay arcade must originally have been the east respond of the fourteenth-century two-bay arcade to which Motteux added his two-bay arcade. There was no further attempt internally to copy the fourteenth-century work (the arcade extension being plain) but externally on the south and east walls, the nineteenth century knapped flint facing is a skilful match. The fifteenth-century south chancel window opening disappeared under this new facing, and the tracery was probably re-used wholly or in part in the windows of the aisle extension.

More work was done on the church in 1835, and in 1896 the east window was erected as a memorial (Bryant 1904, 34). The brickwork in the east gable probably dates from this time.

# 3. Kilverstone

## I. Summary

Kilverstone is contiguous to the town of Thetford, lying on its north-eastern side in the shallow valley of the River Thet, some short distance upstream from its confluence with the Little Ouse. In medieval times Kilverstone was a small settlement in the part of Shropham Hundred which lay within Breckland. It was somewhat less wealthy even than some of its immediate neighbours. It survived the period of economic decline in the fourteenth century, but fieldwork suggests some shrinkage in later medieval times. Even before the manors passed into lay hands sheep were important in the economy of the village and this became more obvious in the later sixteenth century when the manors had been amalgamated. That period was one of complex disputes in Kilverstone; much evidence exists to support this but the community survived until late into the seventeenth century when the transition from village to estate seems to have been accomplished. An area of earthworks survived at the eastern end of the former village and can be seen on the aerial photograph of 1946 (Pl. V). They were removed as a result of agricultural operations and had not been surveyed.

## II. The Documentary Evidence
by Alan Davison

### The Middle Ages
The entries in *Domesday* (Doubleday and Page 1901/06, II, 55, 78 and 199) are the first record of Kilverstone; there it was called *Culvertestuna, Culverstestuna* or *Culvercestona*. There were two manors, one belonging to the King, the other to Robert Malet. Both were said to include a mill and a fishery and the description of Malet's lands mentioned a flock of 288 sheep which had numbered 300 in 1066 (the third entry referred to an 'invasion' or territorial dispute concerning a freeman holding 11 acres). The total recorded population, including the freeman, was seventeen: within the Hundred of Shropham there were only six vills with lower totals than this (one of the Wrethams, Baconstorp, Besthorpe, Hockham Parva, Snetterton and Essebei). The places with larger totals were mainly in the eastern end of the hundred, an area which has heavier soils. In addition to the *Domesday* variants, the name appears variously as *Kelewerdestone, Kilvertstun* and *Kilverdestun* in the thirteenth century. Its meaning is obscure; ON *Kylfu-vordr*: 'one who defends the prow of the ship' has been tentatively suggested (Ekwall 1966, 276).

Kilverstone does not appear in the *Nomina Villarum* of 1316 or in any of the lists of Aids (*Feudal Aids* III). Some indication of its wealth by comparison with its neighbours is given by the valuations of 1291 (Taxation of Pope Nicholas), 1334 and 1449. In 1291 (Hudson 1910, 102-03) Kilverstone contributed a small sum: only two places in the hundred (Illington and New Buckenham (the latter newly established)) were assessed for smaller sums, though Hargham was omitted from the listing. This subsidy was levied on ecclesiastical property only; the 1334 Lay Subsidy is a far more accurate guide. Again Kilverstone paid a small sum of 50 shillings with only Hargham and

Eccles paying less. Of its six nearest neighbours (including Croxton and Snarehill in Grimshoe and Guiltcross respectively) only Snarehill (itself 'lost') paid less than Kilverstone in 1334; the average total paid by the six was about 62 shillings (Hudson 1895, 276-7). No immediate relief from subsequent subsidies was afforded to Kilverstone after the Black Death (Allison 1955, 151), but a deduction of between 13 per cent and 14 per cent was allowed in 1449 when the ranking of 1334 was maintained. The average deduction for the six neighbours was 11.6 per cent, but this included two spectacular reductions for Roudham (27 per cent) and Snarehill (33 per cent) while Brettenham and East and West Wretham were allowed no relief. In summary, Kilverstone appears to have been a settlement of no great importance; taking the 1291 and 1334 figures together as affording, despite the limitations of the ecclesiastical figures, some indication of lay and ecclesiastical wealth combined, it seems that Kilverstone was less wealthy than some of its neighbours on the light soils of Breckland. It does, however, appear to have withstood the economically difficult period of the fourteenth century.

Some court rolls survive from the medieval period; the earliest of these (NRO MS 15165 37 B6) from the years 1361-66 show the normal business of admissions and surrenders of messuages and lands. It is clear, too, from place-name and other evidence, that much of the topography of the human landscape of Kilverstone which is apparent in later records was already established by the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Despite the relatively low level of wealth suggested by the evidence already reviewed, it is possible that Kilverstone contained a substantial population. Two entries show that holdings could carry more than one household. In 1468 surrender was made of a messuage built with an adjacent croft of three rods of bond land (NRO MS 15166 37 B6); a certain widow had her small dwelling in this messuage with freedom of ingress and egress, that is to say a room with a garden attached situated in the eastern end of the messuage, divided from it by a ditch or embankment. In 1471 (NRO MS 15166 37 B6) Robert Inggeman had a room called *le Soler* in the eastern end of a messuage with ingress and egress for the term of his life at 6s 8d a quarter.

In the later medieval period the two manors of Kilverstone were in ecclesiastical hands. According to Blomefield (I, 543) the one which had been in the hands of Malet in 1086 was granted in 1249 (confirmed in 1320) to the Priory of Coxford. The other manor remained in royal hands until Henry I granted it to the D'Albini family who gave it to the Priory of St Mary in Thetford (Blomefield I, 542); this manor was known as Monkshall.

### The sixteenth century
The first significant change in Kilverstone was the passing of the manors into secular hands. Coxford manor was sold in 1528 to the Duke of Norfolk for 400 marks (NRO MSS 15054-57 37 B3). After the Dissolution, Monkshall was granted also to the Duke in 1539 (NRO MS 15067 37 B3).

He had sold Coxford manor to Sir John Cornwallis (NRO MSS 15062, 15064 37 B3) who had leased it to Thetford Priory (NRO MS 15063 37 B3) at a nominal rent, but at the Dissolution this was granted again to the Duke. When he was attainted it passed to the Crown (Bryant 1913, 250-6) and Edward VI sold the lease to Sir John Cornwallis (NRO MS 15071 37 B3). Coxford remained in the hands of this family until it was sold to Thomas Wright (NRO MSS 15111-15113 and 15122 37 B4). Monkshall remained with the Duke or his feoffees and trustees until 1584 when it was sold to Thomas Lovell (NRO MS 15099 37 B4); Lovell in turn sold to Cornwallis (NRO MS 15105 37 B4) in 1586 and in 1588 he, in his turn, sold it to Thomas Wright, so that the entire village was in single lordship before the century was out (NRO MS 15108 37 B4). The community itself showed little immediate response to these changes.

Sheep were important in the township; in 1536 the Prior of St Mary's in Thetford leased to a burgess of Thetford (NRO MS 15065 37 B3) all the sheep pasture which had belonged to Coxford Priory in the town and fields of Kilverstone. Mention was made of 400 ewes pasturing on ground called Monks Hall Pasture. The Prior's farmer in Kilverstone had to find hurdles for the fold and also pay the shepherd and his 'page' their wages, 'metecorne and alecorne'. The farmer was to be allowed the 'tathyng and compos' of the sheep on the pastures as well as the furze lands as had been the custom with the shepherd's tathe. A similar lease of 1536/7 (NRO MS 15066 37 B3), for sixteen years between the Prior and two inhabitants of Kilverstone, concerned the manor and farm which had formerly belonged to Coxford Priory, with all arable and the pasturing of three score sheep in the flock grazing there, together with the 'compot of the tathe' of that flock, and the pasturing of the close belonging to the manor from Crouchmass (14th September) until All Saints' day (1st November). The Priory reserved the right to keep the rams in the manor close 'in competent and seasonabell tyme of the yeare', and to have access to the alder carr growing there. The farmers paid the wages and provided hurdles as in the previous instance and also had to pay the Priory 3s 4d every year for tar and pay all out rents pertaining to the manor. They had to pay the tenants of the manor for grazing their lands and to keep all the 'eggys' [hedges] in repair. They could 'loppe or shredde' trees without 'stroppe or waste'. The farmers were not permitted to break up, harrow or sow more lands unless the flock had sufficient pasture. A lease of the same lands in 1529 (NRO MS 15061 B3) to a mercer and an innkeeper of Thetford laid down that carts must not be allowed to destroy the grass in the closes and that if any 'doosye' or 'weke' sheep were in the flock, the Prior's shepherds or servants were permitted to put them into these closes. It is obvious that sheep farming was a valuable commercial activity in Kilverstone; in 1548/9 the court of the manor of Croxton Sylbeton heard that the shepherd of the Kilverstone flock unjustly pastured his flock on the several [held by an owner in his own right and not jointly or in common (Adams 1976, 193)] pasture of Blakedon to the east where he had no right and that this had been a frequent practice of his at that and other places in Croxton belonging to Sir Richard Fulmerston (NRO Frere MSS., Norf. Norwich Arch. Dep., K9(b), Kilverstone Bundle). In 1578 the Duke of Norfolk let to Richard Loveday the manor of Monkshall with a foldcourse and liberty of foldage, together with a flock of 400 ewes grazing upon it. He also let to Loveday the remainder of a lease on a foldcourse called the ewecourse belonging to Coxford manor together with its flock of 200 ewes (NRO MS 15081 37 B3). A particular of this manor (NRO Frere MSS., Norf. Norwich Arch. Dep., K9(B), Kilverstone Bundle) mentions a sheepwalk of 600 ewes, beside the allowance of sheep for the shepherds' covenants, valued at £480 and another sheepwalk of 400 ewes, in addition to a similar covenant, valued at £320. An endorsement states that by an extent made in 1554/5 it appears that there were only 492 acres of arable on the manor. In 1535 the manor of Monkshall was recorded (*Valor Ecclesiasticus* 1817, III, 310) as having liberty of foldage and pasture for 300 ewes.

It was not just the larger owners who found sheep an important source of wealth in this period. Small numbers of sheep were mentioned in wills surviving from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In 1444 Robert Sad (NRO NCC Wills 45 Wylbey) left six sheep to each of his sons, William Dubney in 1505 (NRO NCC Wills 201 Eyre) left twenty ewes to his son as well as a tenement called Harmans to his wife with 14 acres of land and meadow, a pightle with 24 acres of land to two other sons and a messuage to the east of his house to his daughter Anne. In 1527 Thomas Stalham (NRO NCC Wills 96/7 Attmere) left twelve sheep to his wife, a ewe and a lamb to each of four named persons and a lamb to each of a number of children. James Baldewyn (NRO NCC Wills 196 Briggs) in 1525 left five tenements in Kilverstone to his wife, his other houses, lands, tenements, meadow and pasture in Kilverstone to his son John and two other named tenements to Alice his daughter; among other things his wife received six ewes and six lambs, John received twenty-four ewes and Alice six ewes and six lambs. John Stalham (1548: NRO NAW, 230 Hynde) bequeathed a number of lands and tenements in Kilverstone with the exception of one, significantly called Shepehowse crofte, and 18 acres of land in the field which was surrendered to others for the use of his son. This croft is mentioned on several occasions in various forms: Shephouse croft (1508/9: NRO MS 14986 37 B2), Shepecotehouscroft (1559/60: NRO MS 15018 37 B2), Shepecotehouse (1578: NRO MS 15041 37 B2), the last reference to it being dated 1595 (NRO MSS 15020-21 37 B2). Two wills of shepherds survive (Ralphe Geste 1552/3: NRO N.A. Wills 482 Cranforthe; Christian Carver 1552/3: NRO NAW 483 Cranforthe) while another, that of Elizabeth Just (1556/7 NRO NAW 43 Beales) records Edmond Launce of Kilverstone, shepherd, as supervisor.

The size of the community can only be guessed although some useful evidence exists. The first survey for the 1524 Subsidy recorded only fourteen names (PRO E 179 150/202; Bradfer-Lawrence trans. NRO B-Law. XIB p. 55), the fourth lowest total for the hundred; the sum contributed was also small, though five places paid less. In comparison with other settlements which can be regarded as being in Breckland proper, Kilverstone appears to be of typical size and wealth especially as Roudham had, somewhat anomolously, the third highest payment of the hundred with only eighteen contributors, but on the second survey for this subsidy (Sheail 1968) it reverted to a more characteristic sum with one less contributor. The subsidy roll for 1581 (Stone 1944, 93-127) shows that four inhabitants of Kilverstone were assessed for lands and seven for goods; the total number of personal names is comparable with those for other places in the Breckland portion of the hundred, indeed four places have smaller

ones (Illington, West Wretham, Brettenham and Hargham). The 1577 Muster Returns (Bradfer-Lawrence and Millican 1935-6, II, 152) list thirteen individuals for Kilverstone, a small total even for Breckland though the same four other places had fewer names. Much depends on the circumstances in which the list was made and the terms on which it was drawn up, but there are only four Kilverstone names common to the two lists which are only four years apart; the combined total of different surnames is twenty. The Muster list for 1574 (Bradfer-Lawrence and Millican 1935-6, II, 10) gives only four names of which one only appears in either of the two other lists.

There is other evidence of various kinds which gives some impression of the size and condition of the community in the sixteenth century. One interesting court roll of 1527 for Monkshall (NRO MS 15167 37 B6) records an encroachment upon the common on which Symon Baxter had built a shop. In the surviving documents certain surnames persist over substantial portions of the century (Stalham, Sygo, Kepas, Lost, Pinner, Brewet, Cunstable, Mower, Harper, Ives (a migrant from Little Livermere) and Canceller). Some, notably the Stalhams and Pinners, are especially persistent. This seems to indicate a stable community. A rental of Kilverstone for 1591 (NRO MS 15176 37 B6) supplies names of tenants for the village as a whole (the manors were in a single hand) and there were twelve of them. This is unlikely to have been the whole tally since the name Stalham, certainly still current in the settlement, does not appear. The final concord between Wright and Cornwallis of 1597 (NRO MS 15122 37 B4) lists for Coxford manor sixteen messuages, one toft and one watermill as well as various acreages; though the latter may mean little the buildings may be more accurately told. From the many documents of this period there seem to have been ten named messuages or tenements in Kilverstone as a whole besides Shepehousecroft, but there was a substantial number of others which were unnamed in the various deeds, court rolls and court roll extracts. In some houses wills reveal that accommodation was divided or that persons of different surnames shared. In 1556/7 Elizabeth Just had stipulated (NRO NAW 43 Beales) that her kinswoman Marion Stephenson should dwell in the backhouse and John Pinner (1559; NAW 421 Moundeford) gave his wife 'her dwellings in my backhowse' for the term of her life. In 1525 James Baldewyn (NRO NCC Wills 186 Briggs) asked his brother-in-law and sister to live in his house in Kilverstone to take care of his son John.

One of the tenants in 1591 was named Mower and there is an inventory (NRO N. Dioc. Prob. INV/12, 108) of the goods of John Mower of Kilverstone dating from August 1595. The Mower household had a hall, a parlour, a kitchen, dairy house, buttery, kitchen chamber, buttery chamber and a hall chamber. Items were also listed from the yard, the stable, the barn, the backhouse and the backhouse chamber. Among the items in the hall was 'a salter boke bossed'; in the buttery there were three pewter platters, seven pewter dishes, a latten mortar and two salts, a 'vingar' and three old pewter pots and a warming pan. Other interesting items included a sheaf of arrows and a bow in the kitchen chamber, and, among carts and implements in the yard, an old boat indicating that the river must have figured in some way other than providing power. In the barn there were hay, peas, rye in the sheaf and hemp in the sheaf: there were over 40 acres of barley in the field, ten combes of malt in the backhouse chamber,

there were malt querns and mustard querns, and there were, in store, eight combes of malt, eight bushels of rye and some mustard seed. Stock numbered eight milch cows, four yearlings, four calves, one bull, one 'rode gelding', two cart geldings, two mares and a foal, and ducks, hens and chickens as well as four hogs and a sow. The total value of these and many other items in the inventory was £134.17s.7d. That hemp was grown in Kilverstone is borne out by a court roll entry for 1536 (NRO MS 15167 37 B6) which records that a man was fined for placing his 'hemp or flax' in the river. Rye and barley are mentioned in bailiff's accounts of 1547/8 (NRO MS 15173 37 B6) while specific mention of barley lands, a barley field and a barley shift come in various rentals including that of 1591 (NRO MS 15173 37 B6).

There are two subsidies dating from the turn of the sixteenth century. One of 1598 (NRO Walsingham (Merton) MSS XVII/I 410×5, f36d) is particularly uninformative as it lists only one person, Thomas Constable. The other, of 1601 (NRO Walsingham (Merton) MSS XVII/I 410×5, 112) shows Kilverstone assessed at a low total. Only Hargham and Eccles were assessed for less, while Brettenham, Roudham, Illington and East Wretham had totals which were only a little larger. This, even allowing that the subsidy was on a very artificial basis, suggests that Kilverstone was a rather poor place.

Although Kilverstone was not a wealthy village it was comparable with other places nearby in Breckland, and there is evidence which shows that it was a settlement with no obvious sign of immediate decay in the sixteenth century.

## The topography of sixteenth-century Kilverstone
(Figs 8 and 9)

As Kilverstone appears to have been still an active settlement in this century it is perhaps appropriate to attempt a reconstruction (as far as the fragmentary information permits) of the form of the village and the lands and roadways surrounding it. The site of the village lies on the north side of the Thet; of the original settlement only the church, much altered, remains. Earthworks, a large proportion of which have since been destroyed by ploughing, are shown on an aerial photograph of 1946 (Pl. V). Documentary evidence provides some street names; Kilverstone Street (NRO MS 14995 37 B2) is mentioned in 1537 as having a messuage to the south of it, and there is another reference to this messuage in 1560 when it was said to abut north upon the king's highway called Kilverstone Street (NRO MS 14996 37 B2). This document also refers to a road in Kilverstone leading towards Brettenham. The name 'Brettenham Way' seems to have been applied to more than one road; a document of 1508/09 (NRO MS 14986 37 B2) mentions an acre of land which lay between 'Nether Brethenham Way' to the south and another Brettenham Way to the north. Later on in the same document 'between Brethenham bothewei' is possibly an inclusive reference to the two. A court roll entry of 1546 (NRO MS 15168 37 B6) refers to a messuage lying between Overgate Way to the north and Nethergate Way to the south and an earlier reference in 1538 to the same property shows that Nethergate Way was also named the 'Streteway' (NRO MS 15168 37 B6); presumably identical with Kilverstone Street. In 1584 there was reference (NRO MS 15087 37 B3) to both Brettenham Netherway and

THE PAST LANDSCAPE OF KILVERSTONE
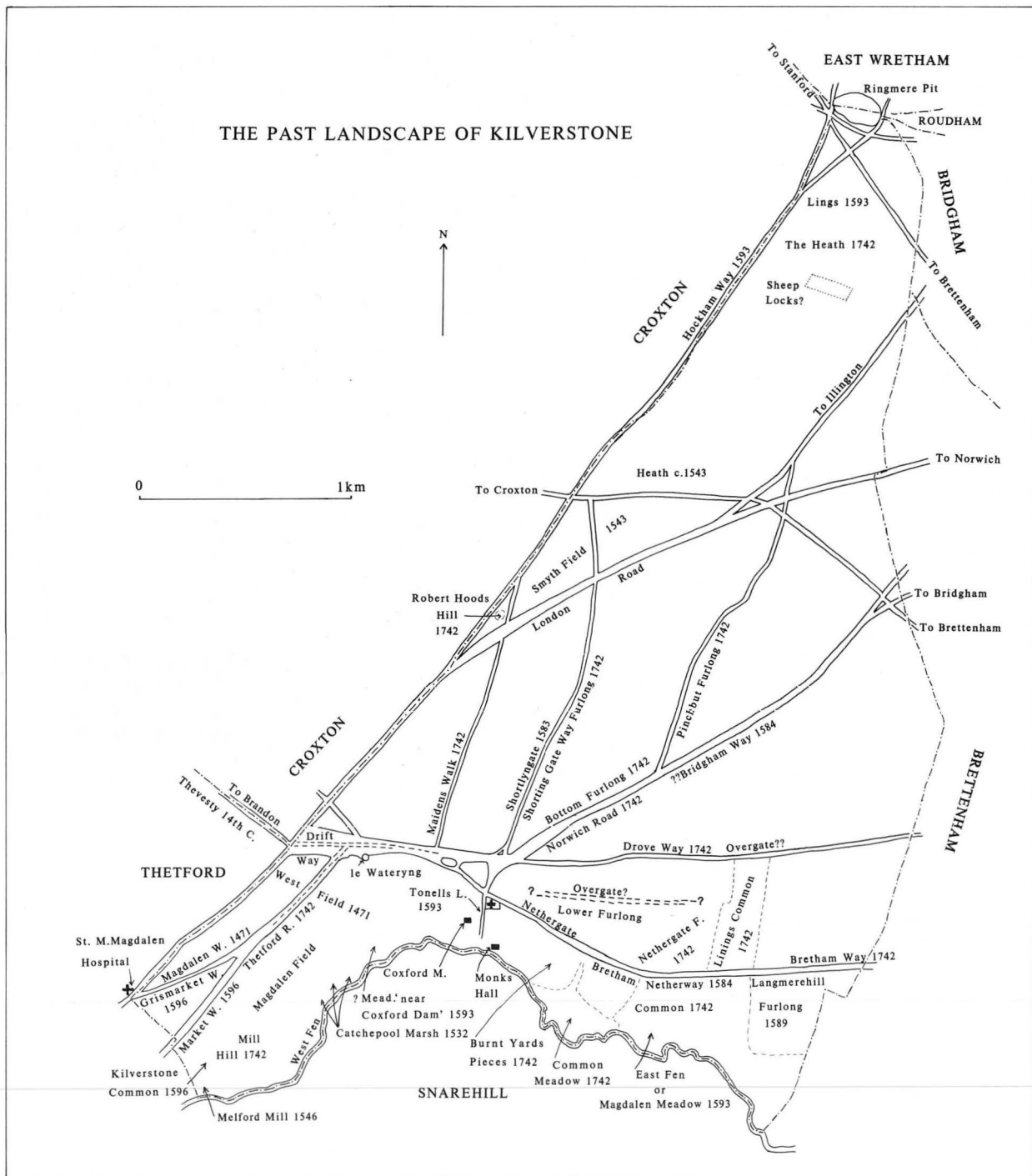
Figure 8  The past landscape of Kilverstone. This is a tentative reconstruction based partly on information from Fousoe's map of 1742 and partly on earlier documentary evidence. Only two village streets, Tunny Lane and Nethergate, can be shown with certainty. Many features mentioned in the text cannot be marked precisely though their general locations on the map may be inferred.

Brettenham Overway and this suggests that the Over-and Nethergate Ways were identical with the two Brettenham Ways already mentioned; this document refers also, however, to a piece of land which had Brettenham Overway to the south of it and Bridgham Way going through it so that the picture is far from clear. What seems to be fairly certain is that within the village proper there were two streets, variously named, which lay roughly parallel in an east to west direction. Fousoe's Map of 1742 (*Town and Manors of Kilverstone ... the estate of Thomas Wright Esq*) (NRO Reel 173/7) shows a Bretham Road leading from just north of the Hall (on the present site) and running eastwards to the north of the church (Fig. 9). This is visible on the 1946 aerial photograph (Pl. V). Fousoe also shows a track called the Drove Way to the north of the Bretham Road leading eastwards, but on a slightly divergent course). In 1593 there is mention of a lane called, variously, Tonells or Tunny Lane which began at the high street in Kilverstone towards the north and led south between the sites of the two manors (PRO E 134/35/Eliz

Easter 24). Blomefield (I, 545) calls this lane Tunney Lane and says that it ran from the street, by the west end of the church, to the river. He implies that Coxford manor lay to the east of it but Fousoe's map (Fig. 9) suggests that Coxford lay to the west and Monks Hall to the east of the southerly end of the lane.

Of other roads of more significance, Norwich Way is mentioned in many documents and in some instances this certainly seems to apply to a road following approximately the same course as the modern one; in 1532/3, for example, a piece of land was described as having a marsh called Catchepole to the east and Norwycheway to the west; this can only refer to land between the present Norwich road and the river Thet in the south-west corner of the parish (NRO MS 15013 37 B2). However, Fousoe (1742) called this road London Road and showed another Norwich Road running east north-east from a point just to the north of the church. Traces of this second road are still visible as soil marks on Plate V, at TL 897 844. Another important roadway must have been that leading from Thetford Market Place to Kilverstone; in 1596 (NRO MS 15119 37 B4) an acre of land in the west field lay with this road to the west and the Kilverstone common to the east, while a five-acre piece lay with this same road to the east and the way leading to Norwich to the west. This road seems to be what is now called Green Lane; Fousoe called it 'Thetford Roads'. In the same document of 1596 there are references to Market Way and also to Grismarketway; the latter could be another name for this road. However, evidence from Thetford (T/C1/10 dated 1338 and NRO P 150 B16) suggests that the Grismarket or Gressemarket occupied the area of the present market-place and so Grismarket Way may have been leading either from Kilverstone or from the Norwich Way into Magdalen Street and so to the Grismarket. It would thus have crossed the open fields between Norwich Way and Green Lane.

It is clear from fifteenth-and sixteenth-century documents that, besides these major routes linking Kilverstone with other settlements, there was a network of other trackways. Some may well be alternative names of roads already identified, others roads of minor importance. Lynsy Way lay somewhere to the east of Norwich Way, Smalegate way lay in the east of the parish not far from Brettenham field and there were also references to Grymsty Way, Shortlyngate Way and Lynsted Way (NRO MS 15087 and 15092 37 B3). There were also smaller tracks or access paths which were often named: Dame Anne's (or Agnes') Mere lay in lands to the west of the Norwich Way and was described as 'meta' in 1513 (NRO MS 15087 37 B3); also various headlands: Westsennehevedys in the West Field (NRO MS 15166 37 B6) in 1463, Clerkyshefdlond which was near Dame Agnes Mere (1467) and Cattishondland (NRO MS 15168 37 B6) which in 1513 lay to the west of Overgate hill. There are references to Magdalen Way in the West Field in 1471 (NRO MS 15168 37 B6) and the way leading to Magdalen Chapel (NRO MS 15167 37 B6); this building was the Hospital of St Mary Magdalen which lay within the north-east boundary of Thetford. The lands of Kilverstone next to it were called Magdalen Field.

Although messuages are often mentioned only a moderate number can be located with any certainty; however they are sufficient to suggest that the village lay along the roads called Overgate and Nethergate Ways in part at least. In 1503 (NRO MS 14974 37 B2) two messuages, Boystons and Fishers, were recorded as having

marsh in their southern portions, while the northern head of another lay on Overgate Way with its southern head on Nethergate Way. The marsh referred to must be that on the northern banks of the Thet which flows westwards to the south of the area to which these descriptions belong. The same settlement pattern is suggested again in 1584 (NRO MS 15097 37 B4) when a tenement edified had a highway (which seems to have been Brettenham Netherway, a variant name for Nethergate, judging by another part of the document) to the north and common to the south. Further emphasis is given by a court roll entry of 1538 (NRO MS 15168 37 B6) which records two messuages with northern ends abutting on Overgate Way and southern ends on Nethergate Way or 'Streteway'.

The location of the manor houses on either side of Tonells Lane to the south has already been mentioned. There are records in court roll entries of 1468 and 1471 (NRO MS 15166 37 B6) of a messuage which abutted upon the entrance to Kilverstone churchyard. Blomefield (I, 546) recorded, in 1737, an old house standing in decay by the church and suggested that this had been in the hands of the Priory of Butley in Suffolk. He also stated (p. 545) that the rectory house had stood to the west of the churchyard but had been pulled down in 1554 by William Fisher, the rector, but this information does not appear to agree entirely with documentary evidence to be reviewed below.

There was a fulling mill in Kilverstone; in 1546 a Thetford man was presented (NRO MS 15167 37 B6) for encroaching with his cart on the common leading to it. At the same court a man was fined for not scouring out the separate stream which flowed from Kilverstone to Melford Mill. This was situated well away from the village close to the boundary with Thetford; Fousoe's map shows a piece of land called Mill Hill and a Mill Carr just to the south of Green Lane Farm. Despite the field name it was almost certainly a watermill (as late as 1656 its annual rent included a stick of eels (NRO MS 15169 37 B6)). The Particular of Coxford manor (NRO Frere MSS Norf. Norwich Arch. Deposit, K9B, Kilverstone Bundle) values the fishery of the river at £20; as early as 1230 there had been a dispute between Thetford Priory and Coxford Priory over the Kilverstone fishery (Saunders 1910, 309).

The lands of the village lay to the north and north-east as well as to the west of the settlement area. The only field named as such is the West Field in 1471 (NRO MS 15166 37 B6) and in 1596 (NRO MS 15119 37 B4) and this seems to have been the name given to the whole area of cultivated land which lay to the south-west of the village between the riverine land and the road from Norwich to Thetford. The present Green Lane (road to Thetford Market place) seems to have been one of a number of roadways dissecting this field. Magdalen Field appears to have been the name given to that portion of these lands which lay close to the Hospital in Thetford; Fousoe's map shows a Magdalen Field in the extreme south-west of the parish. Of the many furlong names which survive in documents it is possible to place only a few but these indicate that arable lands lay on the northern side of the village. Crostfeld furlong (NRO MS 15166 37 B6) lay immediately to the north of Bridgeham Way in 1471, the Lower Furlong had Brettenham Netherway to the south (NRO MS 15176 37 B6) while the name Stret Furlong in the same document suggests a location close to the inhabited zone. There were two furlongs called *le Breche*, one had a furlong next to it which had, in turn, Overgate Way to the south; according to another document (NRO MS 15087 37 B3) lands lay to

the east of Shortlyngate Way; Fousoe's map shows a Shorting Gate Way Furlong to the north of the Church and Shorting Gate Way leading from the north and linking with the junction of the other Norwich Way. An unnamed furlong lay between Bridgeham Way and Dryberstie Way (NRO MS 15176 37 B6), there was arable land between the two Brettenham Ways (NRO MS 14986 37 B2); Fousoe showed a Nethergate Furlong which lay north of the Brettenham Way which survived in 1742 somewhat to the east of the probable village area, and there are references (NRO MSS 15089/90 37 B3) to a furlong which lay 'against the great gates of the Town of Kilverstone'. This and another description: *quarentena erga portas ville* ['furlong against the gates of the town'] (NRO MS 15176 37 B6) suggest the possibility that the gates in question may have been foldgates rather than gates (ON *gata*) in the sense of streets. A Stret furlong is mentioned quite separately in the second document. In the eastern extremity of the parish there was Langmerehill furlong (NRO MS 15176 37 B6) which according to the modern map lay against the Brettenham boundary at TL 910 836 (Fousoe, 'Long Moore'), and there are other references to lands with Brettenham lands to the east. At the other end of the parish Potterowe, Potrowe or Potterhowghe Furlong lay in the West Field (NRO MS 15166 37 B6) as did Procession Furlong (NRO MS 15089 37 B3).

There was still a great deal of open field although closes, of course, existed and were still being made; the rental of 1591 (NRO MS 15176 37 B6) begins 'at the lower furlonge next my newe clos'. Differing intensity of land use or of tenure is shown by a reference in 1589 (NRO MS 15047 37 B2) to an acre of bond land lying in *le Innefeld* in the furlong called Fourteen Acre Furlong towards the town.

An important alder carr grew in Coxford Manor Close which lay to the south-west of the church (NRO MS 15066 37 B3). The riverine lands between Kilverstone and Thetford were often described as common and part of this area was a marsh called Catchepole or Cachepool (NRO MS 14971 37 B2). There is mention (PRO E. 134/35 Eliz Easter 24) of low grounds which were used as mowing meadows, one piece lying on the east side of the township near Brettenham, another on the west side called West Fen or Mill Hill lying near Melford Mill, and a third lying near 'Cockesford Damme'. Some of the tenements in the village include marshland in their southern portions and there are references to a feature called Burrell's Well in the area on the south-east margin of the village (NRO MS 14995 37 B2). To the south-west, not very far from the site of the present Hall, the ground seems to have been especially marshy; *le Watering* is mentioned (NRO MS 15092 37 B3) and Fousoe shows a Watering Pit in this area. Fousoe also records Turf pits near this point. In 1593 some land was described (NRO MS 15119 37 B4) as heading west on Market Way and east upon the hemp pits and, again, must refer to this area. Early in the seventeenth century, a hempyard was mentioned (NRO MS 15142 37 B5) as being with a messuage and Fousoe's map shows a hempland a little to the east of the Watering Pit.

In the northernmost extremities of the parish (NRO MS 15141 37 B5) lay Kilverstone Heath, one portion lying close to Ringmere, the other next to the heath of Brettenham; within these there were 'ling grounds', 'shepes lockes' or 'coots', and 'places of furres' (PRO E. 134/35 Eliz. Easter 24). The 1:25,000 OS map shows 'Old Locks' at TL 908 871.

## Disputes in Kilverstone

Despite the outwardly stable appearance of the community at this time, there were various disputes in progress. Some previous reference (Allison 1955, 137) has been made to a disagreement over rights of common in 1592 involving Thomas Wright, the lord of the manors; in fact this, though of great significance, was not the only quarrel and was, in itself, quite complicated.

An undated letter from a man called Pytts and addressed to Charles Cornwallis at Carrow Abbey is still in existence (NRO MS 15190 37 B7); the letter was intended to inform Cornwallis how 'yt is w$^{th}$ your Kylverston matter' and appears to be a summary of the findings of a visit to the village. Pytts, with a man called Hardy, had inspected Cornwallis' lands and had had confidential talks with the shepherds to ascertain their wages and to listen to what they had heard reported of the disquiet among the townsmen. The shepherds said that their wages had declined and 'yett ther allowance reasonable the flock beinge unyted'. The townsmen were opposed to Constable and unlikely to yield to him; their malice towards him had meant that the sheep had been denied the feed from the greater part of the infield that year and a piece of land of about an acre had been sown where the sheep's drift should have led to the field of 40 acres. The shepherds agreed that the grounds were as sufficient to keep the united flock as had been the case when they were separate, the first field being so large. The field lands lay as conveniently for Cornwallis as if they had been divided into four shifts, taking into account the exchange of lands which Cornwallis might have given at the rate of 1½ acres of land for 1 acre of the townsmen's. But 'that lytle lust they [the townsmen's lands] had ys clean worn out' and, therefore, as they were asking the maximum allowance in exchange they would be at too great an advantage and Cornwallis, correspondingly at a disadvantage. It was very likely that the townsmen, in any case, would not have cultivated the lands for which they were being compensated. Some interesting advice was given to Cornwallis; it was pointed out that he might plough up 10-12 acres breadth of land by the Croxton boundary and stretching from Ringmere down to the edge of the culivated grounds. With that he might have a good 40 acres in tilth annually and 'laye for it as much in the fylde adjoyning to that heathe a very comodyous place yt wyll be'. Cornwallis would have 'layes' in it and also, by this means, enlarge his fold course in breadth at a point where there was greatest need for it, where 1400 sheep passing would so wear and befoul the ground that it would not recover for a fortnight after the presence of the flock. The shepherds admitted that Croxton sheep often strayed onto this area and either grazed it or soiled it so that it was little use to Kilverstone flocks. Cornwallis might also 'arre' [plough up] a patch of heath over towards Brettenham 'w$^{ch}$ sydeth upon Mr. Gawdyes flock for it doethe you small pleasure and you shall from ytt such a profytt as yett your hosboundry in tyllage nor yett in contryvinge of any grownde ever brought you'. Cornwallis, the writer commented, had 'layes' enough as it was if they had not been spoiled 'but surely nowe of late they have hindred the choysest parte of yt greatly, yea & that done w'hout any discreasyon or care in the world but as yt may be thought of meere spyte & not otherweys as I hope custable have not left yt unbewrayed unto you'

Constable was the name of a family living in Kilverstone (Stone 1944, 93-127); the position of the

individual of that name mentioned in this letter is not clear, perhaps he was bailiff or steward to Cornwallis. The letter shows that, at some time between 1586 and 1588, the lord had united the demesne flocks. Pytts records the uncooperative acts of the townsmen; denying much of the feed from the infield to the demesne flock, ploughing up an access driftway and, apparently, neglecting the lands which they would exchange with the lord. It is tempting to see this as a reaction to some form of pressure from the lord. It may not have been so. The nature of Pytts' visit and the reference to Constable suggest that it may have been directed at an unpopular individual.

It seems that the distribution of field land within Kilverstone would permit four shifts. A shift was an area under the same crop, or lying fallow, at the same time. It was associated with the foldcourse system. A foldcourse was the area over which the flocks of a manor were entitled to graze and included heath or common pasture as well as field land. The shifts provided compact areas of fallow or stubble grazing which were essential in winter. It was customary for lords to compensate tenants when most of their strips lay in a fallow shift; it was one of the marks of change which could lead to desertion when oppressive lords refused to compensate. This had not occurred in Kilverstone. Pytts suggested that areas of heath should be ploughed in order to improve the shifts and enlarge the foldcourse, possibly to achieve a measure of relief from the disadvantages brought about by the action of the tenants. Denial of the tenants' rights to place their own sheep with the lord's flock (cullet right) was another way in which an oppressive lord might act. It seems not to have occurred in sixteenth-century Kilverstone as cullet sheep were still listed in a rental of 1591 when Wright had become lord (NRO MS 15176 37 B6).

When Wright purchased the manors (NRO MS 15112 37 B4) in 1588 it is clear that at least two disputes between the lord of the manors and the inhabitants were in progress. The parson of Kilverstone claimed to have the right to a foldcourse belonging to the parsonage for a certain number of sheep in the fields and heaths; if this disputed claim upon Coxford manor were to be subsequently upheld in law then Cornwallis undertook to compensate Wright to the value of the foldcourse. The same document refers to a dispute over a tenement, part of Monkshall manor, with all its lands wrongfully detained by John Pinner who claimed copyhold. Cornwallis agreed to pay costs of suits against Pinner. Here again manorial pressure on some of the inhabitants is suggested.

John Stalham seems to have been especially militant in dispute in Kilverstone; he figures as Wright's antagonist in the major clash which Allison noted (Allison 1955, 137). The surname had been current in Kilverstone throughout the sixteenth century, though some individuals of that name are described as being of Thetford, as was the John Stalham in this case. This legal dispute over common rights on Kilverstone Heath seems to have been a protracted affair concerning which some quite detailed documentary evidence survives. There is a series of writs issued at Westminster (NRO MS 15116 37 B4) three of which, those dated 1591, 1592 and 1593, were served on Thomas Wright and the other, dated 1595, on John Stalham. The earliest of the writs, besides naming Stalham, mentions that the subject was a common or piece of waste with appurtenances called Kilverstone Heath. In April 1593 an enquiry commissioned by Her Majesty's Court of Exchequer was held in Thetford before Henry Warner,

Robert Buxton, Robert Downes and Thomas Plesaunce. The Commission was armed with questions which had to be put to witnesses appearing for Stalham the plaintiff and Wright the defendant (PRO E134/35/Eliz Easter 24 6994). Stalham's witnesses had a total of twelve interrogatories to answer: nineteen were posed to those appearing on behalf of Wright.

Apart from routine questions concerning identification of persons and places, Stalham's witnesses were asked whether the Queen's tenants in Kilverstone and in the Hundred of Shropham had rights of common, time out of mind, on the Heath and whether they had the right to cut and carry away furze, brakes and wood from the Heath and low grounds ('the Lowes'). They were asked if the tenants had the right to mow hay on the low grounds and at what time of the year this was done, and whether they had the right to feed their cattle there after the hay had been carried away and for how long. A further question concerned the number of cattle and sheep which Thomas Wright was stinted or rated to keep on the Heath and Lowes and whether he was accustomed, between the feasts of the Annunciation (25th March) and of Holy Rood (14th September), to feed sheep or any other cattle in the Lowes. The witnesses were asked whether Wright had enclosed part of the common and when. They were asked whether Wright had increased the number of cattle and sheep on the grounds and commons and by how many. Stalham's witnesses were asked whether it was not true that the Queen was the owner of the Heath and Lowes and whether the inhabitants of Kilverstone had been forced to find other pasture and provision for their cattle. There was also a question about a case at the Norfolk Assizes in which Wright sued Stalham for trespass; they were asked why full evidence had not been given and how long before the date set for the case had Stalham had knowledge of it.

Stalham's witnesses were Thomas Porter of Thetford and Thomas Constable of Kilverstone. Porter testified that the inhabitants of Kilverstone had for twenty years past had common with their great beasts and that this had been so from time out of mind. They had carried away furze, bracken and wood and had mown, from the 3rd of May each year, the Lowes for hay. These low grounds were the West Fen (Mill Hill), mown after St Peter's Day (29th June), and the East Fen mown after St Mary Magdalen's Day (22nd July); this was Magdalen Meadow. In some years of drought these were used for grazing. Porter and Constable both stated that the manors of Kilverstone which Wright now held had usually kept 1400 sheep (at six score to the 100) upon the Heath and Lowes, and had not used to feed cattle or sheep in the Lowes between 25th March and 14th September; Constable added that Wright had, some three or four years before, enclosed a piece from the common which had been open to the inhabitants of Kilverstone for forty years previously. Constable's evidence, going back forty years, confirmed Porter's testimony about the rights of the people of Kilverstone to common and to take furze and wood, but he said that he knew of no right of tenants of the rest of the hundred to common. He also supported Porter's evidence about the Lowes adding that after hay-making, the tenants had grazed cattle there. Neither witness could answer the other questions put to them.

The questions put to John Pinner of Kilverstone and Christopher Gascoyne of Illington, witnesses on behalf of Wright, were greater in number. In addition to questions as to the length of time they had known Kilverstone, they

were asked if they knew, and for how long they had known the two manors, whether Thomas Wright and James, his brother, were the owners of these and for how long they had been so and who had owned them previously. Questions concerning the low grounds identified three areas: West Fen (Mill Hill), a piece near 'Cockesford Damme' and a portion near the low grounds of Brettenham, and they were asked to which manor these low grounds belonged. Inquiries about the Heath referred to two specific areas of 80 acres each, within the total area of 280 acres, one lying near Hockham Way on the west with Ringmere to the north and another lying next to Brettenham Heath, and asked if they were not part of the manor of Coxford. The witnesses were asked if the remainder of the Heath did not belong to Monkshall. Another sequence of questions concerned a piece of lyng ground in the Heath lying near Ringmere, the presence of old sheep locks or cotes on the Heath and whether there were any other places in Kilverstone where lyng grounds or sheep cotes were to be found. They were asked about the presence of areas where furze was preserved for the layes of the sheep and about the number of such areas and whether they had been cut down and by whom. Enquiries followed about the ploughing up and sowing with corn of parts of the Heath by farmers or occupiers of the manors, the number and acreages of such parts, the identity of those who had done the ploughing, the lapse of time since it had been done and whether there had been any objections. They were asked about the number of foldcourses and the numbers of sheep kept on them before Wright had come into possession together with the nature of other associated customs and rights. The members of the Commission asked whether the sheep walk included the Heath, the Lowes and fields before Wright's day and whether any person other than the lords kept sheep on the Heath. They next asked about the number of sheep kept by Wright on the foldcourses, what year or years had this been so and the occasion when Wright had given the tenants other land of his in exchange for theirs, and whether he had layed more land in the infield solely for the feed of the sheep than previously recollected and, if so, how much.

Some significant queries followed about certain messuages or tenements (Thomas Ives', Judyes and one previously John Stalham's) now in Wright's hands and whether they carried common rights on the Lowes at all times and, if so, how many 'great Beasts' were kept there before Wright took possession of the holdings. The next question concerned the number of beasts Wright now kept on these grounds for the manors and tenements. Questioning was then directed towards a tenement in Kilverstone at that time occupied by Stalham; the witnesses were asked who had held the tenement before and whether it had been considered to be the parsonage house in which the parson commonly dwelt. The names of parsons previously dwelling there were asked for and whether it had ever been credibly reported that they had paid rent for the house and whether there had been any other parsonage house in Kilverstone. The Commissioners inquired if any of the parsons had common rights in the Heath and Lowes, to mow grass in the town and to take furze, brakes and wood. They next asked whether Stalham had been farmer to the Queen in this tenement and, if so, what rent he had paid, whether he had since purchased the fee simple, who delivered it and whether they had witnessed this act. They asked if any rent was still being paid to the Crown, whether the Queen had any other holdings in Kilverstone and

whether any of her tenants in the rest of Shropham hundred had any common rights in Kilverstone.

The questioning then turned to certain of Wright's alleged actions in the village: the witnesses were examined on the subject of the blocking of the southern end of Tunny Lane. The interrogation sought to establish the length and position of the lane and where it led, and drew attention to the two manors which lay on either side of its southern end. The witnesses were asked whether Wright had taken a portion of the southern end of the lane to add to the manorial sites and rationalise access and fencing and sought to establish whether anyone's access had been impeded by this action. They were asked if Wright had inclosed any part of the common and, if so, its location and acreage; they were also asked if it were not so that the tenants had enclosed anciently from the common additions to their lands which lay adjacent to it.

The last two groups of questions put to Wright's witnesses asked if they had been subpoenaed (at Stalham's suit) to appear at the Norwich Assizes the previous summer in a case concerning Stalham's claim to liberty of common furzes on Kilverstone Heath, and whether the plaintiff had produced a deed in evidence. They were asked if they had been present when, at the Norwich Assize the previous summer, the dispute between the Crown and Wright as to the title of Kilverstone Heath was heard and much evidence was produced in court by Stalham and his counsel on behalf of the Crown to show the Queen's title to the Heath; they were asked if there was anything further they could say about the matter.

Christopher Gascoyne, in his answers, said that he had known Kilverstone and its two manors for about fifty years; he knew that Thomas Wright was reputed owner of the manors though he was not sure how much influence his brother James had in the matter; before Wright, Charles Cornwallis was the owner. He knew the three areas of low grounds near the river to lie in Kilverstone but could not say to which manor they belonged. As to the Heath, he said that the two pieces near Ringmere and Brettenham Heath were part of Coxford manor whereas the remainder was part of Monkshall. He knew of lyng grounds near Ringmere and also the old sheep cotes within the Heath, but knew of no other piece called the lyngs; he knew two or three furze grounds which had been destroyed but did not know who was responsible. His father, Lawrence Gascoyne, had farmed the manors in the time of Thomas, the old Duke of Norfolk, and about fifty years before had ploughed up some 12 acres from the Heath next to Smyth field and sowed them with corn and no-one had made any objection. Gascoyne said that 1400 (long hundreds) was the usual number of sheep on the foldcourses, together with a covenant of nine score for each of the two shepherds and that the sheep fed on the Heath and fields of Kilverstone and in some of the low grounds at shack time or in a drought.

Gascoyne knew the tenement Stalham was occupying and said that over forty years he had known three parsons: Goddard, Sir William Fisher, a parson of Rushford College, and Sir John a Badham, to occupy it as the parsonage house; it was generally known as the parsonage so far as he was aware, he knew of no rent or farm paid by the parsons and of no other house known as the parsonage in Kilverstone. He said that the crown had no lands, manors or tenements in Kilverstone, and no person within Shropham hundred had rights there. Finally, he said that he had been present at the Assize in Norwich where,

despite much evidence produced by Stalham, the verdict was in Wright's favour.

John Pinner said that he thought that the three parcels of low grounds were part of Coxford manor, or at least one was, and not of any other; the areas of heath were as detailed in the interrogation and were part of the manor of Coxford, while the remainder was part of Monkshall. Pinner mentioned the piece of land ploughed up by Gascoyne's father and added that some five or six years before, another piece had been ploughed and sown with corn by the servants of Charles Cornwallis, again, without objection from any. Pinner's account of the lyng grounds, the sheep cotes and the furze grounds was the same as that of Gascoyne, as were his replies concerning the foldcourse and the flock. He added that Wright had layed about 40 acres more in the infield for the feed of his sheep than had been the case previously. Pinner states that he knew that Wright possessed the various messuages named in the interrogatory and that the former occupiers had common rights, keeping such numbers of cattle as could be conveniently maintained by their tenements and that Wright had retained this right to the number of nine or ten milch cows and seven or eight horses.

Pinner's answers confirmed Gascoyne's statements about the parsonage except that he had no knowledge of Parson Goddard; he said that, so far as he knew, the parsonage tenement did not carry any rights of common in heath or low grounds, or entitlement to mow grass in the Lowes or to take furze, brakes or wood. However, within the last fourteen years, John a Badham had kept three beasts and a gelding there by agreement with the inhabitants. Regarding Stalham's occupation of the parsonage tenement, he only knew what Stalham himself had said; that he had a lease from the Crown for twenty-one years. He, too, stated that the Queen had no manors or lands in Kilverstone and no outdwellers in other places in Shropham hundred had rights of common in Kilverstone.

Pinner knew Tunny Lane, confirmed its position and extent, and said that Wright had taken a little piece of this lane at its southern end to save fencing, and that this action impeded none. He said that Wright had not enclosed any more common, merely thrown up a bank, but the inhabitants of the village had enclosed more land next to their holdings. Pinner had been at the Norwich Assizes and his evidence as to the happenings there was in complete agreement with Gascoyne's. Pinner, a husbandman, had known Kilverstone for almost thirty years.

The outcome of this wrangle seems to have been in Wright's favour. An exemplification of record at the Exchequer (NRO MS 15141 37 B5) given in 1613 recounts the events of 1591 and subsequent years and records that the two 80-acre portions of the Heath, one near Ringmere and Hockham Way, the other next to Brettenham Heath, were part of Coxford manor, while the remainder of the Heath was part of Monkshall. The enquiry and case seem to have exonerated Wright from the charge of making unjust claims to the heathland. Pytts' earlier letter suggests that certain of the things had been happening before the manors passed to Wright. Whether he had ploughed or enclosed common land is not clear as testimonies clash, but it is evident that for some fifty years a lord, a farmer and the tenants themselves had taken pieces for ploughing or enclosure without dissent. Wright had certainly layed more lands in the infield for flocks than could be remembered; this information had come from one of his witnesses. The questions of the alleged misuse of low grounds, the

destruction of the furze, the overstocking of the commons by Wright seem to have been unsubstantiated.

There are two points in the body of information which throw considerable light on what was actually happening in the village. It is clear that certain tenements and the rights pertaining to them had been acquired by Wright and they are mentioned by name. Judyes was a messuage which lay between Nethergate Way and the river (NRO MS 15092 37 B3) and may have been the 'tenement edified' which T. Porter had received from Cornwallis in 1583 (NRO MS 15087/88 37 B3). Thomas Ives' will was proved in 1597 (NRO NAW 133 Bradfield). The family had come to Kilverstone from Livermere Parva in Suffolk as mentioned in the will of John Pinner (1559, NRO NAW 421 Moundeford); at that time lands had recently been sold by Pinner to Ives. Although Ives had a cousin who received a small legacy, he had no son and bequeathed most of his goods to his widow; there is no evidence to suggest that the cousin lived in Kilverstone and it is likely that, in this case, Wright acquired the holding from an ageing man with no heir in the village.

The second point is that concerning the parsonage tenement: taken with other evidence the questions put to the witnesses become clear in their implication. It seems by the will of William Fisher, (1558, NRO NCC Wills 204 Woodcocke) parson of Kilverstone, that he was related to the Stalham family and this may account for their interest in the parsonage. John Stalham had a son called Richard and there is undated evidence (NRO MSS Bundle 15180 37 B7) that he continued in dispute with Wright's son. In this Stalham was the defendant and Wright was complaining that Stalham's previous replies had been 'uncertayne and insufficient'. Wright maintained that he was not sure that the dragge of Kilverstone in the defendant's hands was a copy of the original and requested that Stalham should produce it in court to establish the truth, Wright alleging that he knew it to be a copy made by John Stalham at his own expense and that his father had sued Stalham's father for the same copy.

Other documentary evidence (NRO MS 15184 37 B7) of 1619 throws more light on the activities of the Stalhams and their acquisition of the parsonage. The documents concern actions between John Poynton, the parson, with Joseph Poynton and Robert Reve, and Richard Stalham with John and Thomas Stalham. The parsonage (messuage and tenement) had a dovehouse, a barn, a stable and houses belonging to it, an adjacent croft and other glebe lands. It had once been impropriated to the Priory of Butley (*Valor Eccles.* III, 1817, 421) which had presented to the vicarage of Kilverstone; the vicars had always dwelt in the tenement until the dissolution, paying 6d rent annually. After the Dissolution it had been disimpropriated and made presentable and the parsons had successively dwelt there paying only first fruits, tenths and the usual subsidies. In 1577/8 however, John Stalham, father of Richard and described as a yeoman of Thetford, supposing it to have been a concealed tenement because of the 6d rent paid to the Priors, had caused a certain James Chambers to take a twenty-year lease of the tenement from the Crown ('did stirre up diverse concealed and pretended titles'); this meant that Fisher and his successor John Abadon (a Badham) should have been liable to pay rent. Stalham caused an Information of Intrusion to be referred in the Court of Exchequer against John Abadon 'who was a verie poore aged man' and 'being overburthened w[ch] the multitude of suites w[ch] the saide John Stallham had

commenced against him for the s^d parsonage house' could not go to London to plead in his defence and died a short time afterwards. The remembrance of the injunction expelling Abadon exists and records the date as 28th November 1585. It is, perhaps, a comment on the value which should be placed on legal language of the time that the injunction describes this eighty year old cleric as 'entering in most Rytous manner' and expelling John Stalham. Stalham in 1588/89 purchased the reversion and willed it to Richard Stalham who had enjoyed the profits ever since. Abadon's successor was John Poynton who, on learning the circumstances, had leased it to his son with Reve as farmer, but Stalham had responded and Poynton 'was violentlie kept out of the said parsonage house, croft and premisses'.

On the 15th June 1619 the Stalhams were called upon to show cause why an injunction should not be made prohibiting them from doing any further waste to the parsonage until the case came to court; it was said that they had 'of late time wasted divers of the edifices and buildings of the said rectorie and suffered the same to decay and fall downe and converted the timber thereof to there own use'. Another document in this bundle gives another account of the main events in the history of the dispute, mentioning that Abadon was aged eighty when he was ejected and that, later, Richard Stalham was encouraged by two other sons. It goes on to say that the present parson (Poynton), lacking a house, could not carry out his duties and, failing a speedy court decision, would have to seek a living elsewhere 'whereby youre poore orators John Pinner, Thomas Taylor, Thomas Mower, Thomas Harper, the residue of the Inhabitants of the saide Towne of Kilverstone being many in number shall be driven to some other place or parish church to heare divine service for that there shall be noe hows or habitation for the complt or his successors to dwell in'. Pinner and Taylor were churchwardens; the other two represented 'the residue'. Stalham was summoned to the Court of Exchequer to answer for this and to show cause why it should not be recovered.

The dispute between Wright and Stalham seems not to have been a simple conflict between designing landlord and resisting tenant: Stalham appears as an astute opportunist employing a similar tactic in gaining possession of the parsonage tenement and in contest with Wright. Blomefield's statement that Fisher had demolished the parsonage in 1554 does not fit the evidence just reviewed (545).

**The last years**

Amid the evidence of the great disputes the fact that certain tenements had come into the hands of the lord has already been shown; on the other hand the inhabitants of the town of Kilverstone were said, in or about 1619, to be many in number.

A rental book of 1591 (NRO MS 15176 37 B6) lists 'such lands as the tents hold in occupaycion', and records the names of twelve: Ives, Brewet, Tomson, Pinner, Walker, Mower, Hogan, Colman, Constable, Gonthorpe, Ranson and Harper. A list of collet sheep owed includes names not on this list: Stalham, Sigo (widow), Burndishe, Cloyde and Peck. This source mentions a barley field and an exchange of land with Pinner to compensate for Pinner's land 'wch did laye for my sheepe'. Wright, in 1591, was certainly a flock-master; flock accounts for that year survive giving details of collet sheep, of deliveries and

purchase, of skins and even of strays found after clipping, the ewe killed at clipping and of the 'one more wch the shepd. cofessed told at Croxton'.

According to Blomefield (I, 545) there were sixty communicants in 1603; the total population may thus have been in the region of one hundred (Patten 1975, 47) though this is essentially an imperfect estimate. What seems certain is that Wright continued to take holdings into his own hands. In 1596 (NRO MS 15121 37 B4) a tenement edified called Broadmeadow Close was sold to Thomas Wright by Robert Mower of 'Collyweston, in the County of Norff', son of John Mower of Kilverstone. A schedule of lands of that year (NRO MS 15120 37 B4) mentions Wright's name where, in an earlier document of 1584 (NRO MS 15097 37 B4), tenants' names had been in descriptions of bounds. In 1583 (NRO MS 1509137 B3) Cornwaleys had leased over 30 acres of land in twelve pieces to a Burgess of Thetford named John Shering; in 1604 Shering released this to the Thomas Wrights, father and son, for £90 (NRO MS 15125 37 B5). In 1605 Edward Clere of Blickling had sold a holding of 30 acres in Kilverstone to John Green of Upton Snodsbury in Worcestershire for £20 (NRO MS 15129 37 B5); in 1620 a Henry Green of Kempley in Gloucestershire released to Wright 30 acres of land (formerly belonging to Edward Clere and formerly in the occupation of Richard Stalham, yeoman, of Kilverstone) for £60 (NRO MS 15145 37 B5). In 1608 there were two transactions which also seem significant. In one (NRO MS 15135 37 B5) a deed of feoffment by Henry Green of Upton Snodsbury gave lands in Kilverstone, formerly in the occupation of Richard Stalham to Wright. In the second (NRO MS 15132 37 B5) Richard Hill of Upton Snodsbury conveyed in fee simple some 30 acres of land in Kilverstone to Wright for £120. In 1608 Thomas Constable sold 7 3/4 acres in Kilverstone to Robert Wright for £160 (NRO MS 15130/31 37 B5), while in 1609 the widow and son of this man made a deed of quit claim for his messuage and tenement in favour of Thomas Wright (NRO MS 15137 37 B5). An Extract of Court Roll for 1608 shows that Robert Wright was admitted to 30 acres of land and another acre in the Infield on the surrender of John Pinner and in the same year Thomas Wright obtained from Richard Hill and John Burbage of Upton Snodsbury, for £60, 30 acres of arable land in Kilverstone fields (NRO MS 15136 37 B5). In 1619 (NRO MS 15144 37 B5) Richard and John Stalham, sons of John Stalham, sold to Thomas Wright a messuage lying between the 'vastis' of the manor of Kilverstone on the east and another messuage of Thomas Gest on the west, as well as 4 acres of land in Magdalen Field in the West Field for £40. Finally, in 1621, Mathew Colman surrendered one tenement, 8 acres of land and meadow, one other messuage and 3 rods of land to the use of Thomas Wright (NRO MS 151477 37 B5). A Mathew Colman of Kilverstone was acquiring lands in Roudham later in the century (NRO MSS 6576, 6577, 6579; 6D.7 BRA 63). This web of land transactions of various kinds and complications certainly shows the Wrights strengthening their grip on holdings in Kilverstone and what appears to be the beginnings of estate building.

The decline of population which might have been expected to accompany these processes is not immediately apparent. In 1637, for example, a rate was made by the Constable and Churchwardens (NRO MS 15185 37 B7) for ship money and this listed, besides Thomas Wright (who was levied £160), John Poynton, the vicar, Richard Mower, Thomas Racke, John Harper, John Pinner, John

Beales, Francis Wakefield, William Hanson, Stephen Wasse, Frances Bosworth (widow), Mary Harrison (widow), Peter Chinery and Stephen Mower. Seven outdwellers were also listed and rated for their possessions in Kilverstone. In 1653 and 1654 Rates levied by Parliament (NRO MS 15186/15187 37 B7) show, apart from the Executors of Thomas Wright (who had been High Sheriff in 1652 and died in office), and Clement Chaplin for his parsonage, twelve other persons as contributors with five 'outsitters' in Thetford. The family names in these lists differ somewhat from those of 1637, but Racke, Wasse, Poynton, Beales and Harper remain.

Some impression of the standing of the kind of person who appeared in these lists can be gained from wills. From his will of 1616 (NRO NCC Wills 218 Sayer) Thomas Bosworth of Kilverstone was a yeoman who left freehold houses and lands in Shropham, as well as his goods in Kilverstone, to his widow. Katherine Harper, a widow, in 1642 left a copyhold tenement in Kilverstone with its hempland; her will shows that she was a Poynton before marriage (NRO NCC Wills 25 Sone, Original Will 24). The will of John Pinner, yeoman, of 1634 (NRO NCC Wills 175 Playford) names John Pinner his youngest son as heir to his house and land. His inventory (NRO N Dioc. Prob. Inv. Box 55 Inv/40 No.40) describes his house as having a hall, one chamber and a kitchen, and there was also an upper chamber in which dressed rye and barley were stored. The total valuation was £25.18s. (Table 2). Kilverstone still seems to have been a small close-knit community with evidence of possessions of moderate material substance, at least among the established families.

That there were poorer folk who did not qualify for the rate lists seems probable and is suggested by the Accounts for the Overseers of the Poor which survive for the years 1658-1665 (NRO MS 15188 37 B7). In 1658, for example, all the persons, including outsitters, rated previously made contributions to the fund while John Brewet, whose surname was current in Kilverstone in the 1590s, received money for fifty-two weeks to maintain his wife and three children, and Robert Day received payments for a similar period for the maintenance of his wife and four children; smaller sums were laid out for hose and shoes. John Brewet, by 1660, was left with his three children; in 1661 Widow Day was left alone with her four children (the number was down to three in 1663). In 1663 one child, and in 1664, two children were boarded out and clad, and two widows received fifty-two weeks' maintenance in 1664 and coats were purchased for the poor.

At the other end of the social scale was the household of the lord of the manor. An estimate of the profits to be raised by the executors towards the performance of the will of Thomas Wright in the year 1653 (NRO MS 15176 37 B6) shows substantial sums for corn upon the ground (£230), wool in the chamber and 'upon the sheepe backs', lambs, hogges, wethers and crones, and rents variously in Kilverstone and in Weeting, Bridgham, Ovington, Thetford and Brettenham. The arithmetic is not clear but the tally ends by stating that out of the sum of £1468 various charges must be deducted. The son of the Thomas Wright who purchased Kilverstone, also Thomas, built the Hall which was standing in Blomefield's day, replacing the buildings of the two old manors. An inventory (NRO N. Dioc. Prob. Inv. Box 65 Inv/55 No.41) of 1667 for a later Thomas Wright gives some impression of this new Hall and values its contents and the crops and stock in Wright's possession at £1789.14s.08d. less debts of £650 (Table 3).

| 25 of Arill [sic] 1634 | |
|---|---|
| A full Inventorye of all ye good, and chattell of John Pinner lat of Kilverston deceased made & prysed by us whose names are hereunder written | |
| *Imp in ye hall* | |
| It. a frame table ii formes a chayr | 16s |
| It. a kettle ii brass potts ii candlestickes ii peawter dishes & a chaffing dish | 20s |
| *In ye Chamber* | |
| It. ii bedsteads, ii flockbeds, a frame bed iii coverings ii bowlsters & a pillow | 20s |
| It. iii payer of blankets | 10s |
| It. iii sheets & a table cloth | 6s |
| It. a cubbord, ii coffers, & other trash | 4s |
| *In the Kitchen* | |
| It. Twoe table, two formes, a bowlting trowgh a kneading trowgth, a salting trowgh, ii ferkins & other old trash | 10s |
| *In ye Yard* | |
| It. one milch cowe, ii bullocks | £3-10s |
| It. fyve carthorses & a colt | 8li |
| It. One cart, one plough, wth cart harnisse & plowgh harnisse | 3li |
| *In ye Field* | |
| It. iiii acres & a half of rye | 30s |
| It. ii acres & a rood of rye more | 20s |
| It. iii desperate debts | 12s |
| It. his apparell | 10s |
| *In an Upper Chamber* | |
| It. rye dressed about ii coombs; & barlye about 5 coombs | 3li 10s |
| Suma | £25-18s |
| per me Johem Poynton Clericus | |
| John Harper John Poynton | |

Table 2   Inventory of goods and chattels of John Pinner, 1634.

The annual rent of Kilverstone in 1654 (NRO MS 15176 37 B6) was given as £230.15s.; of this sum £160 was the rated value of what Wright had in his own hand. Others listed were Widow Racke (£26), John Tillet (£16), John Wasse (£2), Davy and Brewet (£2 jointly), John Pinner (£4.3s.04d.), William Bayly (£2), Thomas Beales (£3.6s.08d.), John Tomson (£3.5s.) and John Harper (£12.3s.04d.). Tomson, not rated in 1653-54, thus appears as a small tenant.

A court roll of 1656 (NRO MSS 15169 37 B6) gives the names of John Hare, John Pinner, John Tillet, John Wasse, Thomas Beales, Robert Wasse, Robert Day, Henry Davy, John Brewet, Benjamin Beales, John Davey, Robert Drake, William Rushbrooke, John Fell and Thomas Dew as Jurors. Here again, names appear which do not occur in previous lists; possibly some were servants at the Hall, but there are present other names of long standing in Kilverstone. Though there may have been poverty there was still a community which could be seen as a small village. At this court John Fell was made pinder, Magdalen mowing meadow was still being 'parted' and it was an offence to put beasts there until after parting day (the day after Thetford Fair). The owner of Melford Mill (John Buxton) owed twelve years' arrears of rent (at 6/6d. and a stick of eels per annum), Robert Wasse and John Racke were constables, inhabitants of the village were presented for ploughing up parts of the highways to Norwich and to Brettenham and all the small day-to-day affairs of a village seem to be proceeding normally.

Blomefield (I, 537, 545) said of Kilverstone 'Now wholly owned by Thomas Wright Esq. At this time there are no tenants belonging to the manor, the whole being
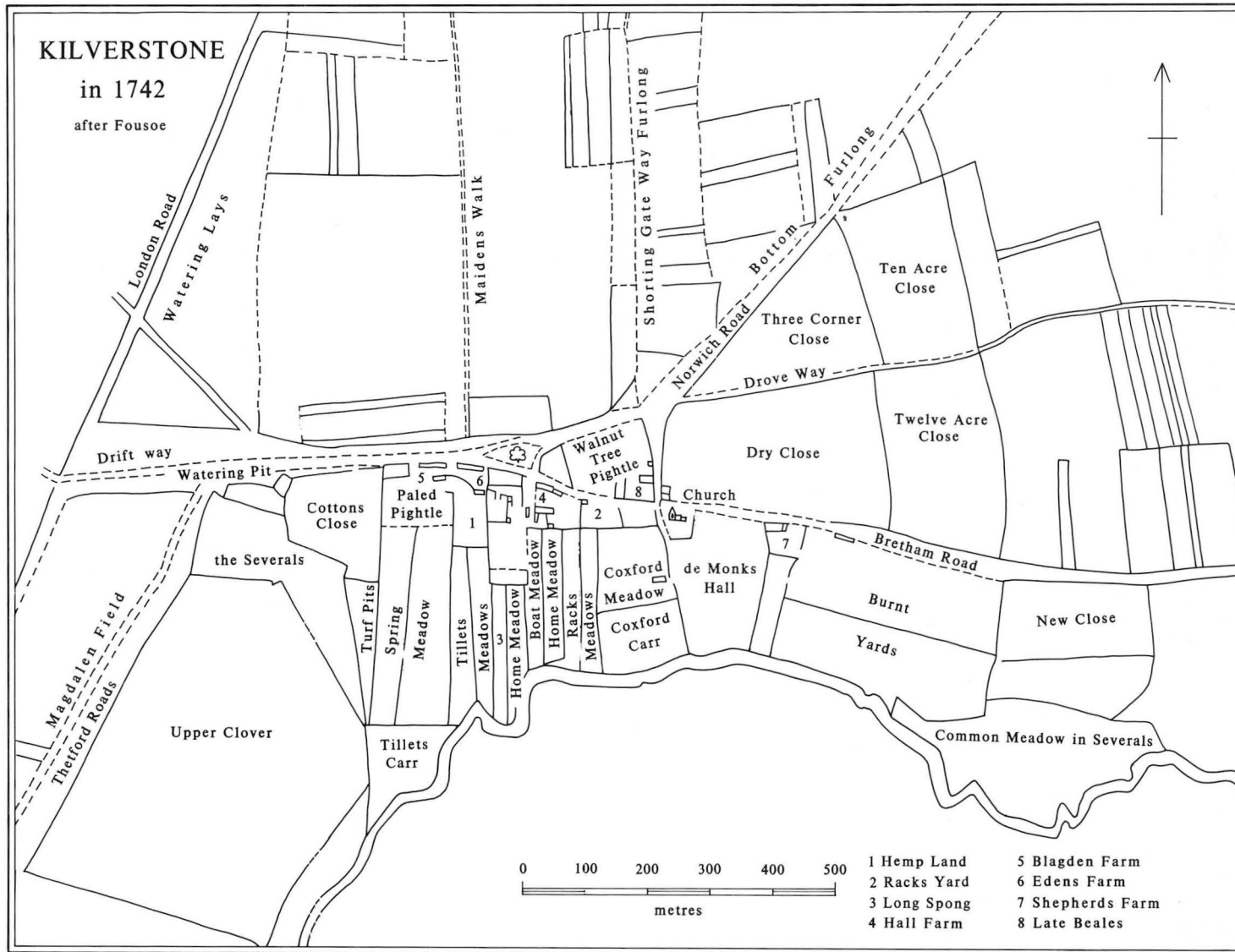
KILVERSTONE
in 1742
after Fousoe

London Road
Watering Lays
Maidens Walk
Shorting Gate Way Furlong
Bottom
Furlong
Norwich Road
Ten Acre Close
Three Corner Close
Drove Way
Drift way
Watering Pit
Twelve Acre Close
Dry Close
Walnut Tree Pightle
5    6
Paled Pightle
Cottons Close
4
8    Church
the Severals
1    2
Coxford Meadow
de Monks Hall
Bretham Road
7
Magdalen Field
Turf Pits
Spring Meadow
Tillets
Meadows
3
Home Meadow
Boat Meadow
Home Meadow
Racks
Meadows
Coxford Carr
Burnt
Yards
New Close
Thetford Roads
Tillets Carr
Upper Clover
Common Meadow in Severals

| 0 | 100 | 200 | 300 | 400 | 500 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

metres

1 Hemp Land       5 Blagden Farm
2 Racks Yard      6 Edens Farm
3 Long Spong      7 Shepherds Farm
4 Hall Farm       8 Late Beales

Figure 9 The village of Kilverstone in 1742, based on Fousoe's estate map. Scale 1:10,000. (*Published by kind permission of Lord Fisher of Kilverstone Hall*).

April 25th 1667 An inventorie of the goods and chattels of Thomas Wright of Kilverston in the Countie of Norfolk Esq. deceased, apprised and valued by John Kendall Esq. John Crosse and George Cooke Gentl⁵ whose names are heerunto subscribed.

| | li | s | d |
|---|---|---|---|

*In the Hall*
One long table, two formes, a paire of cobirons two side cupboards and an old iack — 003 - 00 - 00

*In the great Parlour*
One table, three cupboard-tables, sixteen high Turkie-work chaires, two low ones of the same, a couch of the same, and old carpett of the same, with three other carpetts on the side boards, a great and a little pair of Andirons, foure peeces of Turkie work hangings, a pair of bellows, a pair of tongs, a fire pann and a childs chaire. And in the closett thereunto belonging a desk one Turkie work chaire, one curtaine and rod and the hangings. — 004 - 00 - 00

*In the little Parlour*
One table, a side-board-table, five old green-cloth chaires, two low ones of the same, one plain wooden chaire, old hangings, a window curtain and rod, a paire of smal cobirons, a small coal-iron-grate an iron before the fire, a paire of tongs and an iron purr — 002 - 16 - 00

*In the Pantrie*
One hanging keepe, a little table, a case of knifes — 000 - 06 - 08

*In the Kitchen*
One table, one old plain forme, one iron-grate, an iron rack, one paire of tongs, an iron purr, two dripping panns, foure skillets, foure brass-pots, an iron pot, one iron-kettle, three brass kettles, one copper kettle, two brass skimmers, one basting-ladle, three pairs of pothooks, one brass-slice, seaven brass candlesticks, two gridirons, one iron candlestick, two spits, one iron flesh-hooke, a chopping-knife, a cleaver, two iron chafing-disshes, one brass chafing-dish, a broad iron before the coale grate, two brass sawce panns, and two tinne sawce panns one dosen of prettie large pewter disshes and nineteen pewter disshes of a small sort, six dosen of small pewter plates, a pewter bed-pann, five old pewter chamber pots, two pewter stanzes, two greater pewter stanzes with three feet each of them, a paire of pewter candlesticks, foure small tinn-candlesticks, three tinn-covers for disshes six pewter pye plates five small pewter sawcers, two flaggons, two frying panns — 010 - 00 - 00

*In the Presse howse*
One barrell charne on a frame, a cheese-presse, two iron brandeletts and a very old iack — 001 - 00 - 00

*In the Wash howse*
Three tubbs, six pailes, two wash keelers, and two wash baskets
In the meale howse a kneading trough — 001 - 00 - 00

*In the brew-howse*
One mash fatt, a guile -fatt, a cooler, eight brewing tubbs, two deale troughes, a iett and one baskett-strainer — 003 - 10 - 00

*In the dairie*
Two and twentie boules, halfe a dosen of earthen panns, a butter keler, a little hand churn, eight cheese fatts, three cheese-breads and one cheese-tubb — 001 - 00 - 00

*In the wett-larder*
fine powdring tub, one meate block, one butchers axe — 000 - 06 - 00

*In the three cornered chamber in the . . .* [left blank]
one posted bedstead, one featherbed, one bowlster and two pillows three blanketts, a paire of darnicke curtains, a little table a rug one chaire — 002 - 10 - 00

*In the garrett*
a low plain bedstead a feather bed a bowlster three blanketts a coverlet and and old chair — 001 - 06 - 00

*In the great Parlour-chamber*
One faire posted bedstead, a feather bed two bowlsters two pillows a rugg three blanketts, a painted counterpane, two paire of painted curtains belonging to the same bed, dubble vallins, two window-curtains of the same and rods, two table cloths, and one couch counter paine of the same, two small tables, foure small low stooles, three chairs, two pairs of cobirons, a firepan, a paire of bellows a paire of tongs, two large looking glasses, a couch-bed and two pillows thereunto belonging, gilt leather hangings, and a gilt-leather travers
    In the closet within a close-stoole — 030 - 00 - 00

*In the little Parlour-chamber*
A posted bedstead, a featherbed a bolster two pillows, three blanketts, a silk kwilt, a counterpane, dubble vallons, two pairs of curtains for the said bed, and rods, one little table cloth, foure curtains for the windows with hangings for the said chamber all of purple searge, five chaires of the same a looking-glasse, a paire of cobirons a paire of bellows apair of tongs. In the little chamber belonging to the same a little trundle-bedstead a little feather-bed a bolster and a coverlet — 016 - 00 - 00

*In the Wainscott-chamber*
A plain posted bedstead, a feather bed two bolsters, two pillows one rugg, three blanketts, wrought demetie-curtains, vallons lined and rods, a windowe curtaine and rod, a small couch, two stooles wrought sutable to the bed, a looking-glass a small table a paire of cobirons, a paire of bellows a paire of tongs a fire pann and two pictures — 008 - 00 - 00

*In Mrs Wrights Closett*
The hangings a table and cloth, two chaires a standish china ware & pictures. And in the roome the passage to the said closet, one iron chest, two other plain chests, one small presse, two old chaires a little table a curtain and curtain rod. — 006 - 08 - 00

*In the Maids Chamber*
A high bed-stead a trundell bed-stead, two feather beds, two bolsters five blanketts two stooles and a forme — 002 - 00 - 00

*In the Nurserie*
A plain posted bed-stead with old darnick curtains vallans and hangings of the same a trundle-bed-stead two feather-beds foure blanketts two bolsters, one rugg one coverlett, two cradles, a warming panne a chest of drawers a small paire of cobirons bellows and tongs, a liverie cupboard, three old stooles two old chaires and a warming pann — 005 - 00 - 00

*In the old Nurserie*
Two posted bedsteads, two feather-beds, foure bolsters, foure pillows five blanketts, two ruggs and a counterpane, two paire of searge curtains and rods, one paire of darnick curtains and rods two curtains for windows and rods, foure chaires, two stooles a cupboarde head, two small looking-glasses — 010 - 00 - 00

*In Mr Wrights lodging chamber*
One posted bedstead with curtains and vallans counterpane all of paragon together with the hangings, three chaires, two stooles, two window-curtains and table cloths of the same, one table, a chest of drawers, two cabinetts, one down-bed, two bolsters, two pillows two blanketts, one rugg, a paire of cobirons a paire of tongs, a paire of bellows a hanging shelf for glasses — 030 - 00 - 00

*In the Coachman's chamber*
A high bedstead and trundle bedstead, two small

| | |
|---|---|
| featherbeds, two bolsters, two blanketts two old coverletts and small lumber | 002 - 10 - 00 |

*In the drying chamber*

| | |
|---|---|
| a howse clock and other lumber | 001 - 00 - 00 |
| In plate towels watches and rings | 150 - 00 - 00 |
| Mr Wrights wearing apparell and linning | 020 - 00 - 00 |
| The household Linning | 030 - 00 - 00 |
| In debts due to the deceased and in readie money | 300 - 00 - 00 |
| Mr Wrights bookes | 003 - 00 - 00 |
| Mr Wrights pistolls and gunnes | 003 - 00 - 00 |
| *Corne* Five score and sixteen acres of rye at a mark an acre | 077 - 06 - 08 |
| Nine score combe of rye in the granaries | 045 - 00 - 00 |
| Twentie-two combe of wheate | 011 - 00 - 00 |
| Fiftie combe of barley and malt | 013 - 00 - 00 |
| Two comb of pease | 000 - 10 - 00 |
| Twentie comb of rye in the barn | 005 - 00 - 00 |
| Barley in the barne | 007 - 10 - 00 |
| Five score and sixteen acres of barley sown & to be sowne | 058 - 00 - 00 |
| Seaven tenne acres of pease tares and lintills | 005 - 13 - 04 |
| Fourtie combe of rye at Brandon | 010 - 00 - 00 |
| *Sheepe* Kilverston ewe flock foure hundred couples | 192 - 00 - 00 |
| Guiles barrages ewe and rammes tenscore and tenn | 052 - 10 - 00 |
| Ewe-ramme and weather-hogges three hundred and a halfe | 105 - 00 - 00 |
| Blaknee flock in Croxon couple three hundred & three score | 168 - 00 - 00 |
| Seaven score rammes guiles and barrages | 035 - 00 - 00 |
| *Sheep at Weting* | |
| The ewe-flock three hundred and two at thertie pounds the hundred | 090 - 10 - 00 |
| The weather-flock two hundred and fourtie pound the hundred | 093 - 06 - 00 |
| Fourtie crones at Carbrooke | 005 - 00 - 00 |
| *Cowes* Cowes sixteene two three yeare old two two yeare old bullocks | 040 - 00 - 00 |
| *Swine* Sixteene hoggs and seaven small pigs | 009 - 00 - 00 |
| *Horses* Two coach-horses, two coaches, foure paire of harnesse and the appertenances | 050 - 00 - 00 |
| Two saddle-naggs | 012 - 00 - 00 |
| Six cart-horses and trace | 030 - 00 - 00 |
| A mill-horse and two small naggs | 006 - 00 - 00 |
| A wagon one cart upon wheels, two tumbrills upon wheeles, and old buck of a cart a paire of harness a cartrope two plowes | 010 - 00 - 00 |
| Summa | 1789 - 14 - 08 |
| Debts due from the deceased | 650 - 00 - 00 |

Table 3 Inventory of goods and chattels of Thomas Wright, 1667.

purchased in'. At that time (1737) Blomefield said there were eight houses and about fifty inhabitants; he also mentioned an old house standing in decay over against the church and equated it with that assigned by the Prior of Butley, with half an acre of land, to the township. It is obvious from this that the final stages in the dissolution of Kilverstone must have occurred between the late 1650's and 1737.

It is unfortunate that the volume of evidence for the last decades of the seventeenth century is slight, though its very scarcity may be significant, indicating a seriously diminished community. The Hearth Tax returns, though much mutilated, give some support to this suggestion. One return (PRO E 179/253/45 of 1664) made before Thomas Wright died in 1667 (Blomefield I, 544-5) shows a total of thirty-five hearths for the village. Of these fifteen were set against the name of Thomas Wright; the remaining names and hearth totals were Thomas Harper (three), John Tillet (two), John Wast (two), Edmund Rack (two), John Barrett (one), William Pinner (two), Robert Wast (one), Thomas Beales (two), Benjamin Beales (two), and John Harper (three). There were no discharged households listed on that occasion. A later return, of 1672, (PRO E/179/154/697) shows that some changes had taken place. The list is headed by William Cropley with twenty hearths, followed by Benjamin Beales (five), John Wott (two), Thomas Beales (two), and William Pinner (two), totalling thirty-one hearths. To these were added on this return Wakefield and Roofe (two) and Brett and Bately who had not paid or who were exempted. Blomefield records that the widow of Thomas Wright married Mr Cropley in the year of her first husband's death and this explains the appearance of his name at the head of the return of 1672. Beales and Pinner appeared before, Wakefield as a name appeared on the 1637 rate list, possibly Brett and Wott are corruptions of Brewett and Wast, but the tally of names suggests a petering away of the original inhabitants. If the numbering of hearths was done consistently in the two returns (not, perhaps, a safe assumption) then some modification of the Hall and of Benjamin Beales' house is indicated, and others had disappeared. The presence of impoverished persons in the second list is not clear; were they elderly folk housed for company in two-hearth dwellings, or were they indigent people simply omitted from the earlier return? In general, decay is the overall impression given by comparing the returns though definitive statement is unsafe. The Compton Census of 1676 (NRO SMS 33, 147) records twenty-eight communicants for Kilverstone.

The only other piece of contemporary evidence is the will of Michael Barfoot, a weaver, of Kilverstone. His family name does not appear in any of the lists and it is perhaps significant that his goods, left to Susan Lambert of Kilverstone (another 'missing' surname), consisted of a messuage, tenement and lands in Shropham, where his mother-in-law (?stepmother) Susan Barfoot was living (1668/69, NRO NCC Wills 119 Proctor).

An Estate Account Book for the period 1720 to 1773 (NRO MS 11355 T 140 B) shows that about the time Blomefield was writing flocks of sheep were still the basis of wealth on the Kilverstone estate; in 1740 £1.6s. was paid 'for clipping 8 hundred & a half & 16 sheep' and in 1745 'There is in the flock 8 hundred one score and ten sheep'. In 1727 payments were made to shearers from Thetford; implying, perhaps, a dependence on outside labour in the absence of a substantial indigenous village population.

Fousoe's map of 1742 (Fig. 9), virtually contemporary with Blomefield, mirrors his description of the village and shows the kind of landscape in which this large-scale sheep-farming was carried on. Apart from the Hall and its outbuildings, since modernised and extended, in the present location and the church, there were only a few buildings. Four cottages are shown and a number of farms are listed in the descriptive panels besides that called Hall Farm; Blagden Farm, Eden's Farm, The Shepherd's Farm and a farm described as 'late Beales's'. This name, together with Rack's Yard and a piece called Rack's Meadow, a piece called Tillet's Meadow and Tillet's Carr seem to bear family names from a recent past since all appear in the Hearth Tax list of 1664. The map does appear to show a landscape in transition in which some old names: Mill Hill, Magdalen Field, Watering Lays and Pit, Nethergate furlong, Smith Field, Bretham (Brettenham) Way, probably Shorting Gate Way, and also Long Moore are recognisable (Fig. 8). The title of the map includes a

Plate V   RAF Vertical aerial photograph of Kilverstone showing village earthworks in Kilverstone Park, south and south-east of the church (Fig. 9). 2nd February 1946 (3G/TUD/UK/59 V5200: *Crown copyright reserved* )

'description of Breaks, Heath, Infield and Glebe lands, Roades, Dools'. There were still numbers of narrow parcels of land in the fields alongside larger closes and breaks; in keeping with the suggestion that the destruction of the old village had been finally accomplished at a time in the not-too-distant past. There were just over 20 acres of glebe land but the commons totalled only a little more than 82 acres.

In 1785 a diversion of the old road which led past the church to Brettenham was carried out (NRO C/Sce 1/13). The justices in their investigation on 19th November 1784, found that the proposed line, followed by the present road, offered the public a slightly shorter route by some seven rods. By the time of Faden's Map of Norfolk (1797), a park had been created around the Hall, covering much of the site of the old village. A track still led from a point to the north of the church across Kilverstone Common Field towards the Norwich Road, though Faden does not show it making a direct connection with it; instead it curves away across Bridgham Heath to Bridgham. Perhaps this was the Bridgham Way mentioned in some earlier documents although Fousoe named it Norwich Road. By the time of the Tithe Map of 1839 (NRO 659) this track had disappeared and the landscape was virtually as it was in the early years of the twentieth century.

## III. Site Description
(Figs 9-11; Pl. V)
by Alan Davison

Kilverstone lies on the northern side of the valley of the Thet at TL 8940 8401. The site is astride the 15m contour;

the church stands at this height and the earthworks which survived to appear on the 1946 aerial photograph (Pl. V) began some distance above this level and extended downslope to the edge of the flood plain. The church, now isolated, probably stood in the centre of the settlement. Since 1946 changes have occurred and the site must now be analysed using two complementary forms of evidence.

### Fousoe's map of 1742 and the aerial photograph of 1946
(Fig. 9; Pl. V)
The 1742 map (Fig. 9) shows 'Bretham Road' on the northern side of the churchyard leading slightly south of eastwards. This line can be traced as a feature on the photograph (Pl. V). It has been somewhat obscured by a modern track which has been superimposed on the most easterly part of its course. In 1742 it was shown as a very broad trackway. Its line led past a building, the forerunner of the present Burntyard Barn at TL 8965 8390. On the first edition of the OS map this was called Townsend Barn but it is likely that the other name is the earlier since, in 1742, the area to the south, divided in two, was called Burnt Yards. The name may be significant since the photograph reveals earthworks in this area; since obliterated by ploughing. The photograph shows five, possibly six, features running downslope parallel to one another; these may well have been property boundaries (Fig. 10). Some features cross these transversally dividing them into irregular rectangles; one of them may have been the remains of the boundary dividing the two parts of

Figure 10 Kilverstone: interpretation of earthworks shown on Plate V. Scale 1:7500.

Burnt Yards in 1742. The photograph does not show any feature surviving north of 'Bretham Road'. Part of a park landscape, some of this (east of the trackway leading from the modern road to Burntyard Barn) has been ploughed.

'Bretham Road' is traceable as a hollow way for some distance to the west of the church, extending in the direction of the Hall complex. This area of the site has been examined twice; in 1979 Mr E. Rose described the earthworks south of the Hall and north of a low flint wall or *ha-ha*. He noted two east-west hollow ways, one with banks each side, separating a number of house platforms. One of these hollow ways certainly is Brettenham ('Bretham') Way also previously called 'The Street' or 'Nethergate'. It lies immediately to the north of the low flint wall and has features on its northern side. Interpretation of this area must be made with caution as there is much evidence of minor landscape changes. Tunny Lane, which ran from north to south past the western end of the churchyard, has been straightened since 1742, the shape of the churchyard has probably been changed, possibly at the expense of the hollow way, some landscaping of the entrance to the churchyard and its approaches has been done, the construction of the ha-ha has modified the slopes, a landscape park had been created by 1797 (Faden) with possible greater consequences so close to the great house and, recently, the pens and fences of the Wild Life Park have been made.

The areas immediately north and south of the church appear to have been ploughed and resown with grass, except for those parts close to the river. The line of the modern driveway from the road to the church is continued past the western end of the churchyard but has been blocked off. This must approximate to Tunny Lane mentioned in 1593 and, later, by Blomefield. According to the evidence of 1593 (PRO E 134/35/Eliz Easter 24 6994) the sites of the two manors were separated by this lane. Fousoe's map suggests that Monks Hall lay to the east of it and Coxford to the west. Of these little sign remains. A wall was noted to the south of the existing churchyard wall some years ago (SMR Record); the 1742 map suggests that the churchyard extended further south at that time. There was also a report (pre-1970) of an 'inland quay' built of flint and mortar just south of the churchyard wall (NAU, SMR); whatever the nature of this feature it was probably associated with Monks Hall; unless it refers to the same wall as the other report. On the Monks Hall site (Fig. 8) some limited remains survive. They are at TL 8945 8385 and are of two platforms; the depression which separates them from the land to the north is markedly straight-edged and they are very close to the river. Also close to this point is a curving bank of some width approaching the river across the low-lying ground from the north; it has been suggested that this was a causeway and the presence of a fording point in the vicinity lends support to this.

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Since 1742 the outbuildings of the Hall have covered much ground and the building of the house itself, originally completed in the seventeenth century, may have obliterated the western end of the settlement. West of Tunny Lane and south of the Hall some slight signs of features are visible on the photograph (Pl. V). Some of them, which run north to south, seem to correspond with boundaries shown on the 1742 map. To the south-west of the site, outside the area shown on the air photograph interpretation plan (Fig. 10), and to the south of the outbuildings of the Hall, some markings are visible in grassland just to the north of the Thet; these agree with boundaries of meadow lands on the 1742 map and were almost certainly not part of the inhabited site. Mill Hill (TL 882 832; Fig. 8) shown on the map of 1742 is still pasture as it was in 1946; no conclusive sign appears on the photograph or on the ground of the site of Melford Mill.

The photograph shows soil marks in a field at TL 8950 8425 and these indicate the course of the vanished Norwich Road shown on Fousoe's map (Fig. 9). The Drove Way of 1742 seems to match, at least for some distance, the present road leading to Brettenham, though a re-alignment appears to have been made closer to the parish boundary. That the 'Bretham Road' hollow way was the more southerly of the two streets mentioned in documentary sources seems to be confirmed by the presence of Nethergate furlong on its easterly extension in 1742 and by the apparent absence of a road to the south of it on the air photograph. The Drove Way and Bretham Road met, in 1742, at a point now obscured within the grounds of the Hall; it does seem that the present road through Kilverstone has been deflected a little to the north to pass the park wall.

## Fieldwalking

(Fig. 11)

Fieldwalking has perforce been concentrated on a limited portion of the site; mainly that part of the eastern section which has been ploughed.

An initial examination of the site in 1977 revealed pottery in the southern portion of Burnt Yards; finds were mainly sherds of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries but there were some of post-medieval date and, most interestingly, small but significant quantities of Romano-British material, some of it shelly and some of it probably samian and imitations of samian wares (third-fourth century). There were also a few sherds of a possibly hand-made ware of uncertain age.

At a site just north-west of the church and north of the hollow way, a small quantity of medieval and post-medieval sherds was found and on the platforms of the Monkshall site to the south of the church, near the river, thirteenth- and fourteenth-century and post-medieval sherds were collected.

More detailed fieldwalking was carried out in 1980; although potsherds could be found generally, the areas of specific significance are shown on the plan (Fig. 11). One concentration lay in a band of arable close to the river at the southern end of the area in which Burntyard Barn lies, at the foot of a gentle slope just above the flood plain which has an irregularly scalloped margin. Finds included: fifty-two coarse ware sherds, mainly medieval, but possibly including some Romano-British material; four definite Romano-British grey ware fragments and four possible pieces of Romano-British calcite-gritted ware; eight coarse ware medieval sherds; seven glazed medieval pieces, mainly of Grimston type; a piece of stoneware and three glazed

post-medieval fragments. There were also portions of three roof peg-tiles, including one which was glazed. A second concentration occurred in a belt roughly parallel to the first and a little higher up the slope; it seems to coincide with the junctions of boundaries of earthworks as shown on the aerial photograph. A number of trees survive from the previous park landscape and some of the pottery was found on bare ground around them. This zone gives stronger evidence of a Romano-British presence:- twenty-six pieces of grey ware; twenty-one of calcite-gritted ware; four of buff oxidised ware and six colour-coated sherds including one with rouletted and stamped decoration. Of another 123 coarse sherds, probably half were Romano-British and half medieval. There were also seven definite medieval coarse pieces, five glazed pieces of Grimston type and two medieval or late medieval Grimston rims. Apart from two post-medieval sherds, a fragment of a lava quern and a few pieces of slag, there were three pieces of a lightly flint-gritted ware and one of a hand-made sandy fabric, all of uncertain date.

An examination of the area where the northern boundaries of properties were shown on the photograph, close to the line of the former road to Brettenham, produced surprisingly little pottery. A faint mound to the south-east of Burntyard Barn was included in the scrutiny and proved richer in finds. Four pieces of Romano-British grey ware and eight coarse pieces which could be Romano-British or medieval were found; two pieces of medieval coarse ware; three pieces of glazed ware of Grimston type; one post-medieval glazed piece; three lava quern fragments and four pieces of uncertain date, two of them oxidised ware, the others of lightly flint-gritted fabric, completed the finds.

The north-western corner of the cultivated area close to the barn and to a small wood which marks the position of Shepherd's Farm homestead in 1742, was also examined. In this small area finds were quite numerous in comparison with the previous context; one coarse piece of definite medieval age and thirteen similar sherds, predominantly medieval; four glazed medieval fragments of Grimston type and two late medieval glazed sherds; eight fragments of post-medieval glazed ware and two of stoneware were found together with a portion of a lava quern. Burnt Yards pieces were part of a different farm in 1742 and the increase in the proportion of post-medieval pottery here is in keeping with the proximity of a late-surviving inhabited site which was nevertheless separate from the ground under examination.

The significance of the overall distribution and dating of finds in the Burntyards area can be estimated as follows:

*Romano-British:* Material from this period can be found throughout the area as a whole but there does seem to be a definite concentration slightly below the mid-slope position and close to apparent boundaries now destroyed. It is regrettable that the surface features have been obliterated; the likelihood that some might date from that period is less likely, but cannot be ruled out. The pottery seems mainly late.

*Medieval:* Medieval pottery of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in the main occurring with Romano-British material, but with no obvious finds from intervening periods, suggests that the site was recolonised during the time of population growth by expansion from a core nearer the church. An alternative, less likely on the other evidence, is that there was a shift from the older site. It is surprising that finds near the known hollow way are so
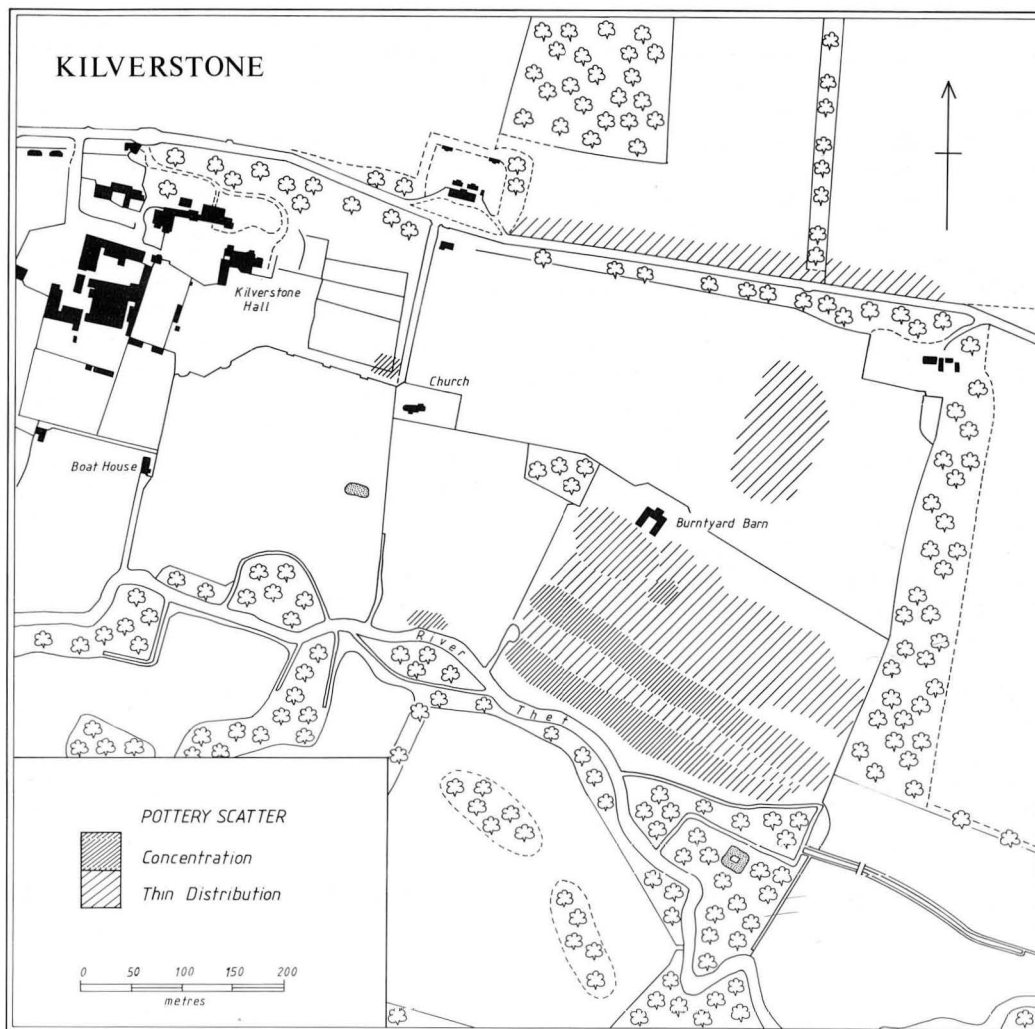
Figure 11 Kilverstone: distribution of recorded pottery scatters. Scale 1:7500.

scanty (apart from those close to the homestead site). There is a fair representation from about the same location as the majority of the Romano-British finds, though the surface features shown on the photo at that point suggest property boundaries rather than the banks of a hollow way. It is known from documentary sources that two roughly parallel streets existed in Kilverstone, but the visible route seems more likely to be the southern one of these. The occurrence of finds just above the margin of the flood plain is noteworthy; noted also in Roudham, this could be explained by the practice of making ground by depositing household rubbish. An oral tradition survives that fishermen's houses stood here.

Further search was made in the area of parkland grass surviving between Burntyard Barn and the modern road. Some documentary evidence suggests cultivation and settlement of an area between the two parallel streets and the possibility of this being such an area was explored. Only one portion had been ploughed and fieldwalking conditions were very poor. This limited area yielded eighteen probable medieval coarse pieces and five post-medieval glazed sherds and there was also one piece of the lightly flint-gritted ware of uncertain date. In the circumstances, enough finds were made to suggest some activity in the area.

Examination of the margins of the existing road was difficult: on both sides it is fringed by a shelter belt of trees and on the northern side only is there arable land divided into two fields by a belt of trees. Across the westernmost of

these fields a Norwich Road ran in 1742. Here only eight pieces were found, one being an abraded Romano-British grooved rim of a bowl, six being coarse, probably medieval, wares and the remaining one a piece of glazed Grimston Ware. Similar quantities (two probable pieces of Romano-British grey ware, four post-medieval glazed and one piece of a coarse ware medieval handle) were found in the easternmost field. The nature and quantities of finds in these two contexts suggest a position close to, but not part of inhabited areas rather than one itself colonised, and are insufficient to support a theory of an inhabited fringe, at least at this point, to the northern road (1742 Drove Way).

The weight of the evidence shows that the earthworks in the eastern end of the site, so obvious on Plate V, represent a medieval expansion of the village on which relics of habitation, as suggested by the homestead of 1742, may have survived into post-medieval times. It is possible that this Shepherd's Farm may have been the Shepehowse Croft mentioned in the sixteenth century. The absence of recognisable Saxo-Norman material here seems to support the theory of medieval expansion. This easternmost projection may well have been confined largely to the more southerly of the two roads running in the direction of Brettenham. It is the western end of the site, now under grass or obscured by the Hall buildings and Wild Life Park, which had the two manorial sites, and it is there that the original nucleus of the settlement may exist, close to the church.

## IV. The Church
by George and Alayne Fenner

The church of St Andrew stands in the park of Kilverstone Hall and consists of nave, chancel, south porch and round tower. The fabric is of flint, limestone and brick and it was formerly rendered. It was rigorously restored in 1906/7 when all the windows were replaced by mock plate tracery, and the interior stripped of almost all original features, and heavily plastered (Bryant 1913, 256/7).

### Description
(Fig. 12; Pl. VI)
The original fabric of the nave and chancel was of regularly coursed flints, now much patched with flint, brick and re-used limestone.

The Victorian east window is of three lights with a small glazed quatrefoil above it in the gable, which has been repaired in brick. Ladbroke's drawing of the 1820s, taken from the south-east, shows a church shrouded in ivy, and a three-light Tudor east window with a square hoodmould. The pairs of buttresses at the north-east and south-east corners are Victorian.

The north side of the chancel contains a Victorian gabled and buttressed organ bay, and the south side has a two-light window between Victorian buttresses.

There is a renewed trefoil opening in the east gable of the nave. The north side of the nave has two two-light windows separated by a Victorian buttress, with another supporting the west corner and west wall. However, a fourteenth-century piscina of decorated clunch, set in the wall at the east end, indicates the former presence of an aisle. There are faint traces of a blocked two-bay arcade. The west sides of the medieval brick and limestone relieving arches of both bays survive, and the buttress overlaps the position of the central pier. The walls have been heightened in flint and re-used limestone by approximately one metre.

The wall of the south side of the nave has also been raised, in flint and brick. There are Victorian buttresses between nave and chancel and embracing the west corner of the nave. The Victorian south porch is flanked by a two-light window and a western lancet. Inside the porch is a late Norman south doorway. It has one order of shafts with volute capitals, and the arch is decorated with roll mouldings and chevrons, the lower order of which is at right-angles to the rest.

The round tower appears to be rather low and squat. Its internal diameter is 3.65m north to south by 3.50m east to west, and the walls are 1.10m thick. The regularly coursed flints of the fabric are smaller than those of the nave and chancel. The battlements are modern. There are four round-topped double-light belfry windows, with limestone dressings and baluster central shafts. Beneath these are three slit openings, each with a single stone shaped for its round head. Internally the tower is staged at the original sill height of the belfry windows; these are now partly blocked by approximately 0.45m of brick and rubble. The slit openings were 1.20m high and are also blocked at the bottom by 0.30m of brick. The marks of the board formers are still visible on the rendering of their rear arches. The west window of the tower is Victorian. It is a larger, fancy version of the belfry windows, round-topped with two lights separated by a flower-capped pilaster, the outer arch having chevron decoration. It may have replaced a west door, for the disturbance in the fabric occasioned by its insertion goes down to ground level. The tower is now the vestry, and the tower arch to the nave has been reduced and a modern doorway made. The interior of the church is featureless apart from a low, ogee-headed opening in the north wall of the chancel.

### Dating and interpretation
There is no church recorded for Kilverstone in the *Domesday* Survey. The church is probably of one build, in spite of the slight fabric difference of the tower, and,
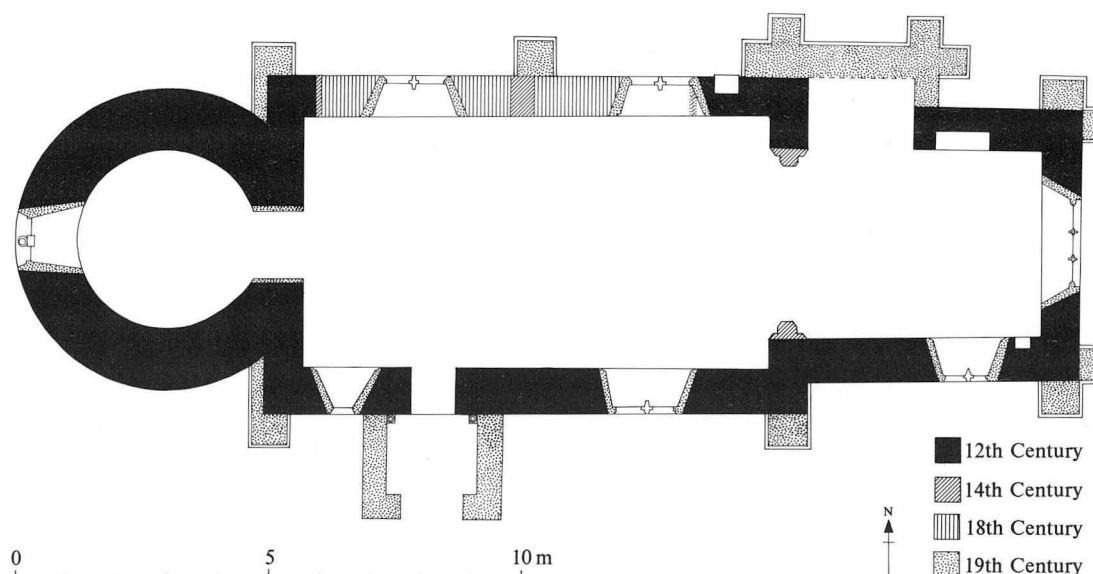
KILVERSTONE ST ANDREW



Figure 12 Kilverstone church. Scale 1:150.

Plate VI Kilverstone: St Andrew's church from the north-east. (Photo: Hallam Ashley, *copyright National Monuments Record*)

judging by the doorway, of the late twelfth century. The church was originally dedicated to St Mary the Virgin, according to early Norwich registers, and its appropriation to Butley Priory was confirmed by Bishop John Grey (1175-1200). A north aisle was built in the fourteenth century, when the chancel was probably widened. In 1525 there was a bequest towards a hallowing of the church and bells (Cattermole and Cotton 1983, 253) however, the Archdeacon's Visitation of 1560/1 describes the tower as ruinous (NRO ANF 1/1). On 9th March 1735 a great whirlwind damaged the church and blew the lead off the north aisle roof (Brooks 1969). The depopulated parish

would not have been able to afford repairs, and the aisle was probably demolished and blocked soon afterwards. Although both the north aisle and a north porch are mentioned in Blomefield's first volume, published in 1739, his information would have been collected a good deal earlier. At all events, the north aisle and porch had gone by the time of the restoration of 1857 (Bryant 1913, 256). The building of the organ bay was part of the drastic restoration programme of 1906/7 which included a complete reroofing of the church (Bryant 1913, 256). The nave walls were probably raised at this time, using limestone from the demolished aisle on the north side.

# 4. Letton

## I. Summary

Letton is a deserted village situated two kilometres south-east of Shipdham and about 7.5 km north-east of Watton. Its church was demolished in the sixteenth century when it was consolidated with Cranworth. It now forms part of the civil parish of Cranworth. The earliest surviving topographical description suggests that, by the end of the fourteenth century, Letton was congregated on the edges of its Green. The church, recorded in *Domesday*, was near the Green to the south of a road leading eastwards.

The village seems to have been somewhat poorer than its immediate neighbours and of moderate importance only in the Hundred of Mitford. Its demise appears to have been gradual and can be attributed to no obvious cause, though there are indications that the presence of manorial sheep flocks may have contributed in late medieval and early post-medieval times. By the seventeenth century the settlement had become a community of scattered farms, many of which were on the margins of the Green. Some further shrinkage in the eighteenth century seems to have made easier the disappearance of Letton Green and the building, between 1785 and 1788, of Letton Hall, replacing an older mansion house in a much enlarged park.

Extensive earthworks survived in the park until 1978 when they were obliterated. No plan had been made before the destruction took place.

## II. The Documentary Evidence

(Figs 13 and 14)
by Alan Davison

Letton is mentioned three times in *Domesday Book*. Under the lands of William de Schohies there was, in *Letetuna*, one freeman with twenty-seven acres, 1½ acres of meadow, one bordar and half a plough. He was worth thirty-two pence (Doubleday and Page 1901/06, II, 146). Among the lands of William de Warenne there were, in *Lettuna*, nine freemen at the time of King Edward who were reckoned for half a ploughland with two bordars, 8 acres of meadow and woodland for eight swine. There were, in 1086, three ploughs as there had been twenty years before, but its value had doubled to 20s. over that period. There was a church with 12 acres (Doubleday and Page 1901/06, II, 89). Among the encroachments of Hermer *Letuna* is also recorded (Doubleday and Page 1901/06, II, 198). Two freemen held 21 acres at the time of King Edward, in 1086 one freeman held it with 4 acres of meadow. There was woodland for four swine and the whole of this land was worth 3s. 4d.

In addition to the *Domesday* variants, *Lecton* is recorded for 1200; it is possible that the name stems from OE *lece* meaning 'brook' (Ekwall 1960, 296).

Assessing the relative importance of Letton within the hundred of Mitford is not entirely straightforward because of the difficulty in verifying with certainty the location and identity of some of the *Domesday* vills. Certain of the vills: *Flokethorp* and *Mantatestona*, may have been part of what is now Hardingham, *Cavelea* lay within Reymerston (or

Southburgh (Doubleday and Page 1901/06, II, 137)), *Torp* may have been Flokethorp or part of Shipdham and *Ocselea* and *Baskenea* are unidentifiable. *Appetorp* can be identified, possibly, with Honingham Thorpe in Forehoe. *Suatinga* (Swathing) has been suggested as another part of Hardingham (Doubleday and Page 1901/06, II, 50) but appears to have been associated with Cranworth and Letton. The valuations of other vills are included with those of other places.

Despite these obscurities, and allowing for the generally incomplete nature of *Domesday* figures, it is possible to gain some indication of the relative importance of Letton. A study of recorded population for Mitford reveals that, out of twenty-four places for which population is listed, Letton appears, with fourteen persons, nineteenth in the list. A table of valuations has Letton seventeenth in a list of twenty-two places for which a separate valuation was given. This suggests that in 1086 Letton was diminutive by comparison with other places in the hundred. Letton was one of a number of places in the hundred for which a church was recorded, the others being Thuxton, East Tuddenham, Southburgh, Whinburgh, Garvestone and Mattishall. Half a church was recorded for the neighbouring settlement of Shipdham while North Tuddenham was described as having two.

Subsidies from later-medieval times show Letton as being a place of moderate importance and prosperity. In the Lay Subsidy list of 1334 it is shown as being assessed at £3.10s. as were Garvestone and Yaxham; eight places were assessed for higher contributions (Glasscock 1975, 204-5). From the Ecclesiastical Subsidies of 1254 and 1291, it would appear that this is roughly the correct position for Letton in terms of overall prosperity; the value of ecclesiastical property in Letton in 1291, specifically exempted from the 1334 subsidy, was such that nine places in the hundred had higher valuations (Hudson 1910, 112-14). Compared with six of its immediate neighbours, which averaged £4.8s.05d. in 1334, Letton appears as a slightly poorer settlement, though its numbers, according to the 1379 Poll Tax, were actually above the average of those six neighbours (Allison 1955, 129). By the time of the 1449 Lay Subsidy, economic decline was evident in a number of settlements within Mitford Hundred. The percentage reductions of the 1334 totals made in 1449 vary from 33 per cent for North Tuddenham to 7 per cent for Shipdham; only three places had no reduction made: East Dereham (a prosperous place) and two much less prosperous ones, Cranworth and Westfield. Letton, with just over 17 per cent had, with Garvestone, the ninth largest reduction; the six immediate neighbours had reductions averaging only 7 per cent (Hudson 1895, 274; Allison 1955, 129). However, Letton was not one of the places exempted from the parish tax of 1428.

Details of Letton in medieval times are scarce. The *Domesday* holding of William de Warenne was split into two portions in the twelfth century (Blomefield X, 231-2) when Gilbert de Rysyng was lord; he was a benefactor of the Cluniac Priory of Lewes and granted one half of his holding, with the advowson of the church, to the Priory

(Cat. Ancient Deeds II, 140, A2969): the Priory manor remained in their hands until the Dissolution. The remaining portion, together with land in Shipdham, was held by various lords (*Feudal Aids,* III, 425, 489, 632) until it passed to the Bramptons and so, by the marriage of the daughter and sole heir of William Brampton (fl.1561) to John Gurdon (Dashwood *et al.* 1878, 68), came to the Gurdons of Assington in Suffolk. Descendants of this family still resided in Letton Hall well into the nineteenth century.

The lands seized by Hermer passed to the lords Bardolf and are traceable through medieval times as part of a holding which also included land in Shipdham and Yaxham (*Feudal Aids,* III, 489, 632).

Apart from these subdivisions, and the small 1086 holding of William de Scohies which appears untraceable, a further complication is added by the existence of the *Domesday* vill of Swathing (*Suatinga*): 'a town many centuries passed, destroyed and depopulated and the lands belonging to it now included in the townships of Cranworth and Letton' (Blomefield X, 198). The *Nomina Villarum* of 1316 seems to support this statement as it shows William de Swathinge as one of two lords in Letton (the other was the Prior of Lewes) and one of four in Cranworth (*Feudal Aids* III, 480-81). According to *Domesday,* Swathing had a recorded population of twenty-two and a valuation of £6.13s.04d.; obviously a not inconsiderable place. This addition of part of an apparently diminished vill to Letton might well add complication to the plan of the settlement, suggesting more than one nucleus of population by later medieval times.

Some evidence can be gleaned from the Cartulary of Lewes Priory (Bullock 1939). The charters refer mainly to the church, the vicarage and patronage. Charter 120 (p. 36), dated 1161, is that of Richard, son of Gilbert of Rising, granting to the Prior and convent of Lewes a half socage in Letton with rents and 'everything that I should have if I were holding it myself' to be held for fifteen years only and referring also to the other half socage which consisted of the tenement of Wulni the priest and John his brother and the advowson given to the monks for ever. An undated charter (no. 150, p. 46-7) deals with a tenement in Letton. Lands in *Sudfield* (one of which lay next the highway), *Hummelscroft* and *Cranewerdefeld* are mentioned and the total acreage was 4¼. Charter 226 (p. 72) is one by which Gilebert, son of Gilebert de Rising, confirmed to Lewes a tenement, of rental value 6s., held from Richard de Rising with all the men appurtenant to the tenement with sequeles and services. Those listed as holding rent-producing property on this tenement were six in number. As this was half the socage it suggests that the original, entire Rising holding supported, say, twelve families on rent-producing property. Assuming that there were at least as many families of similar status on the remaining portion this would put the population as twenty-four families, possibly over 100 people in the twelfth/thirteenth centuries; but this can only be hazardous speculation.

A little topographical evidence can be obtained from other medieval sources. From the year 1213-14 there is a fleeting reference (Rye 1881, 138-9) to the landscape of Letton in a plea for one half of a certain acreage in Cranworth and a half portion of 12 acres of meadow and pasture, a half share of a mill and a quarter share of a watermill and half of five marks of rent in Letton as dower. If the mills were indeed in Letton and not Cranworth then the watermill must have been sited on the small headwater

of the Blackwater in the south-west of the parish. A deed dated 2nd October 1386 (SRO(W), Ref.458/2/108/1) refers to a pightle of land which had messuages on its northern and southern flanks and which abutted westwards onto common pasture. Five witnesses, all from Letton, were named, one of them being called John attefaldegate. This suggests that there may have been a row of messuages along the eastern side of a common. Two other deeds (SRO(W), Refs 458/2/108/2, 458/2/109) dated 1416 and 1420, are of little significance apart from the names of witnesses which include the surnames Hendry and Fulborne which were still current in Letton in 1524-5. William Beumont, parson of Letton, a witness and participant in 1420, does not appear in Blomefield's list of clergy.

The Poll Tax assessment for Letton, as has been noted above, listed sixty-five names; the highest valuation was 2s., for William de Thelnetham. This person figured in a case in the court of King's Bench (1377), concerning an alleged breach of the Statute of Labourers, between Robert Penne, a shepherd, and himself. Penne succeeded in getting a previous verdict against him overturned because the Norfolk justices had made various technical errors. This suggests that William kept sheep and that he may have been unpopular as a result of invoking the Statute. The Indictments of rebels active in 1381 include one against Thomas Smyth of Letton (or *manens* in Letton suggesting that he might have dwelt permanently elsewhere) for theft from John Gegh of Saham and for extorting twenty marks by threat from the Master of Carbrooke Commandery. A chaplain of Letton called John Kentyng extorted two cows worth 20s. from William de Thelnetham. The Poll Tax list for Letton mentions a Roger Kentyng, but no John and does not mention Thomas Smyth. Perhaps the miscreants had used Letton as a sympathetic base for their depredations. William de Thelnetham does not appear to have been a very important person and he may have held the manor at farm or been merely a bailiff or reeve. Nicholas de Thelnetham was one of the recipients in the deed of 1386 already noted. Sheep farming thus figured in the economy of Letton and may have been the cause of disaffection. (For most of the information and suggestions embodied in this paragraph concerning events in 1379 and 1381, I am indebted to a personal communication from Mr A. Reid).

Some information about fifteenth-century Letton can be obtained from wills; until the years 1524/5 they are, apparently, the only surviving source. In 1471 the will of Robert Hend(r)y (NRO, NCC, 242/3 Jekkys) mentions property in Letton including the messuage called Cattons; he left money to repair both Letton and Cranworth churches. In 1492 Anabell Hyll, a widow (NRO, NCC, 63 Normande) besides numerous bequests to Letton church, left 10 acres of land in Southfeld in Letton and various brass and pewter vessels to one son and the messuage in which she was living to another. In 1494 (NRO, NAW, 18 Shaw) John Nycoll left his messuage and lands in Letton to his son. Other Norwich Consistory Court wills of 1502 (Robert Dyver, 164/5 Popy), 1510 (Thomas Hendry, 3 Johnson) and 1513 (Robert Warren, 160-161 Johnson) all mention messuages in Letton. Warren left one to his son and one to his wife. Hendry left a messuage to his wife, but his son had a room with a fireplace within the house. An interesting series of bequests were made by George Crome in 1519 (NRO, NAW, 296 Batman); he stated that 5½ acres of 'Macons lands' were to be sold to pay his debts. His wife was to have his place with all the land bond and free

and if she could not pay the balance of purchase money still owed, 2 acres of land 'at the lownde' were to be sold to raise the money. Mention of a lownde (or laund?) suggests the possibility of a park, but is more likely to refer to a wood. In 1512, William Bolne (NRO, NAW, 178 Sparhawk) left his place with all his lands bond and free to his wife and son, and, interestingly, the son received all the tools of his father's trade and 'all my latten'. A metal-worker was thus dwelling in Letton.

The Lay Subsidy of 1524/5 shows Letton to be of about the same standing in relation to the other settlements in Mitford; about eleventh in order of contribution to the list of the Commissioner's Certificate and on that of the second survey (Sheail 1968). The list for the first survey of Mitford is incomplete. Letton had twenty-five contributors to the first survey and thirty to the second. Though of only moderate size, Letton does not appear, on these figures, to have been in danger of dissolution. Of the twenty-five names on the list of the first survey (PRO, E179 150/214), eighteen were surnames which occurred just once, there were three persons bearing the name of Hendry(e), two of Hyll and two of Hall; one of them described as a weaver, thus hinting at economic activity other than farming. In 1529, Richard Hille (NRO, NAW, 174 Brokhole) left money to the repair of the church, 40d. for the 'repair of hyeways in Letton ther most nede is', his place in which he dwelt with 12 acres in a neighbouring close to his wife, and a tenement called Harmas with a close of 5 acres, next to the same house, to his son. This man had land in Shipdham and Cranworth as well; the supervisor and two witnesses were from Letton, another witness was the parson of Wood Rising.

An indenture dated 14th March 1534 (NRO, Gurdon MSS, MC 76/46) between Richard Southwell of Woodrising and William Brampton is important for the light it sheds on Letton at this time. Mention is made of Southwell's foldcourse for 400 sheep and no more and their feed and pasture in the fields and commons of Letton and Cranworth. Shack in the field of Letton was from the end of harvest until 3rd February. Throughout the year the 400 sheep should be fed on the commons of the towns of Letton and Cranworth, but not in the Southfield of Letton, or on Letton Green lying before the gates of Brampton's mansion. Letton Green is described as extending from a part of the common of Cranworth called Newell Moore to the common of Shipdham called Moore Rowe. Brampton and his heirs were to keep no more than 200 sheep in the field and common of Letton in right of all such messuages, lands and tenements as he held at the time of the agreement. Brampton could keep inclosed all the land and pasture inclosed in one close adjacent to his messuage (formerly Robert Hendry's) called North Crofts. Brampton agreed not to inclose any other lands, pasture or grounds within liberty of shack of foldage without licence from Southwell.

There are several indicators here: there were two manorial flocks totalling 600 sheep in Letton and part, at least, of Cranworth, some enclosure had been in progress, Brampton had acquired a holding from one of the families of longer standing in Letton (a Hendry was recorded in the deed of 1386 already noted), and we are given a description of the size of Letton Green which clearly bisected the parish at this time.

It should be noted that the 1517 Commission of Inquiry (retrospective to 1488) into enclosure and conversion, had recorded that Christina Warner, a widow,

had enclosed and converted to pasture 36 acres of arable in Letton; she was a tenant of the Prior of Lewes (Leadam 1892-3, 7, 208).

The fate of Letton church may be a sign of decay; its advowson had belonged to the Priory of Lewes until the Dissolution. The church was consolidated with that of Cranworth in 1546 (26th June) (Blomefield X, 233) and the Archdeacon's Visitation of 1560-61 (NRO, N. Dioc. Rec., ANF/1/1) records, apparently, that the church was ruined. The *Valor Ecclesiasticus* of 1535 (H.M.Record Commissioners 1817, III, 325) records that the valuation after all liabilities had been discharged was £7.14s.06½d., the eighth highest among the fifteen parishes of the hundred. Wills suggest, as will be shown elsewhere, that Letton church may have been quite elaborately furnished. Burials continued to be requested in the churchyard of Letton in wills up to 1541 (NRO, NAW 340 Dowsyng), and one request was made as late as 1557 (NRO, NAW 68 Wolston, will of William Wether). The first direction for burial in Cranworth churchyard appeared in 1547 (Will of William Cowper, NRO, NAW 97 Hynde). In 1557 Margaret Harryson 'of Letton within Cranworth' desired to be buried in Cranworth churchyard and left money to the altar of that church (NRO, NAW 113 Wolston). The closure of All Saints' church, though certainly not the sign of a growing community, did not signal the immediate end of the village. Cranworth church, as the crow flies, is only 1.25 km from the site of Letton church, and would have been convenient for the small population. Surprisingly, in 1541, Robert Hendry (NRO, NAW 340 Dowsyng) left a sum for the repair of Letton church.

Wills of the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries give details of life in Letton at that time. In 1547, William Cowper left the occupation and profit of all his houses and lands in Letton to his wife; meadow in Woodcrofte was to be sold to fulfil other bequests. In 1558 (NRO, NAW 395 Lyncolne) Robert Gawate left the house in which he dwelt (called Belfort) to his wife and another called Folshams Yard to his son John; another son was to inherit Belfort after his mother's death. Richard Garrarde in 1553/4 (NRO, NAW 219 Bulloke) left lands in Letton and Cranworth to his wife together with a tenement and land in Letton that he had recently purchased from Thomas Bermande. Nicholas Daye in 1585/6 left a house and land in Letton to his wife (NRO, NAW 597 Sherwood) while in 1593, Anthony Till, who was styled 'yeoman of Letton', left his capital messuage or house 'where I now dwell' with a barn and grounds belonging to and adjoining it and one other little tenement nearby, part of the premises where a man called John Baker was living.

The will of Margaret Barckeham (1601) a widow of Letton (NRO, NCC 90 Candler) mentions her messuage in the village; Stephen Drake (1603), a yeoman of Letton, left his house (NRO, NCC 56 Norfforthe) and ground in Letton to his wife (one of his sons owed him £200); James Bowne of Letton (1605) described himself as a plowwright and left tenements in Letton, Shipdham and Cranworth (NRO, NCC 223 Bowrne); Mark Love (1619), also described as a yeoman of Letton, left sums of money to his nephew and the nephew's children (NRO, NCC 20 Mason). These convey an impression of continuing well-being even though the community may have decreased in number.

A Subsidy list for the first collection of 7th June 1585 (NRO, DS 600 352×3) shows only four people assessed for lands and four for goods in Letton. If this is to be relied

upon then Letton was among the poorer places in Mitford; its immediate neighbours Cranworth, Woodrising, Westfield, Southburgh and Whinburgh were comparable.

The Gurdon papers give some information about the distribution of dwellings in Letton. An extent of Letton dated 1627 (NRO, Gurdon MSS MC 76/48), shows that there were at least fourteen inhabitants farming lands which were the estate of Brampton Gurdon. All the farms or holdings were close to Letton Green or named portions of this green or possibly others which cannot be precisely located.

One group of dwellings seems to have been close to the manor house (the Mansion House of 1783); Warners tenement, farmed by Robert Scott, with its yards, orchards and garden had common pasture to the north and east, and another very small holding lay to its west. This would place these dwellings within the inner bend of Letton Green (as shown on a map of 1783 (Fig. 13) to be discussed later). A road apparently crossing the green to Shipdham lay to the south of this. Thorpe's farm lay on the west side of Letton Green; it had Letton Green to the north and the Green also lay to the east and the common river called Newwell Head was to the south. It is thus possible to place this farm in the southern corner of the parish. Still in existence in 1783 (see below), it was cleared when the modern park was created.

Another group of buildings lay close to Ravensgreen. One tenement edified called Fulburn, where a tenant called Rous dwelt, had Ravensgreen on the west (it is described as a common street). In the list of lands farmed by this man there is reference to a 'plowed pitle sometyme edyfied' (evidence of decay). Edmund Clark's tenement was to the west of Ravensgreen, as was a cottage belonging to William Tripps. A farmer called Thomas Mallet dwelt in Goodrums tenement; it had Ulnhaugh, a common pasture of Letton to the north-west and south, and in part, had Ravensgreen to the south-east. This indicates that Ulnhaugh and Ravensgreen were names for parts of a continuous stretch of common pasture. Unfortunately the evidence is insufficient to locate them.

Simon Lawn's dwelling with yards and orchards was close to Cross Green which lay to the east of Letton Green and close to or within Cranworth in the southern corner of the parish (Figs 13, 14). Another group of holdings was close to the boundary with Shipdham. Soogats Farm consisted of a tenement (called Hewkes) and yards on the northern side of Moore Row (a common pasture of Letton) with the parish boundary on its western side. Heaslye Close lay a little to the east. On the other side of Letton Green near Moore Row, was a tenement called Belsers farmed by Steven Gaunt. Sibbs occupied a tenement edified in the Reed, with common pasture of Letton called the Inhaugh to the south-east; it had Hewkes Lane to the south-west so must have been near to Hewkes tenement. Several other holdings were described as being in the vicinity of Runsvall or Rounstall Green. As one of these had Runsvall Green to the south and Heasley Close to the north it would seem that Runsvall Green must have been near the boundary with Shipdham. One other tenement and a cottage were close to the Green on is northern side. It is possible to position approximately the Ravensgreen group in relation to the Runsvall Green cluster. Widow Coats dwelt in a tenement which had Hungate Lane at Rounstall Green on its western side and Northgate Lane to the south. As Tripp's cottage had Northgate Lane to the south and Ravensgreen to the east it is apparent that Ravensgreen and Runsvall Green must have been fairly

close. It would appear that the name Northgate and the fact that Ravensgreen had dwellings to the east and west, suggest that this was a tongue of common extending northward from the main Letton Green and it is more than likely that Letton Green, which in 1534 was described as extending across the parish, had, in 1627, limbs or portions named Moore Row, Rounstall Green, the Inhaugh (or Ulnhaugh) and Ravensgreen branching from it, or included within it. Although their approximate positions near to Shipdham can be deduced, none of these names appears on the map of 1783, so precise location is not possible, apart from Runsvall Green which, as shown below, may be placed with some certainty.

It is clear from the extent that, by 1627, much of the landscape of Letton was enclosed. There were still some furlongs of which Rawfurlong is the only one named; it lay to the south-west of the parish. The Southfield named in the extent had been partly enclosed, it lay to the south of the road from Cranworth to Shipdham. Meadows were located along the stream flowing south-eastwards. Also in this area of the parish were Cony Close, Gravel Pit Close (both shown on Fig. 13) and Millhill Close and a common pasture called Mill Moor; this suggests a site for one of the mills recorded in earlier times. One interesting survival from the medieval period was Humblecroft which was mentioned as Hummelscroft in one of the Lewes charters and also, as Humble toft in a terrier of Letton glebe (sixteenth century? NRO, Gurdon MSS MC 76/46). This terrier also mentions the mansion of Letton rectory which contained, within the yards, eleven acres, Lamas furlong, Raw furlong and Middow (meadow) furlong, Morgat Lane, the churchyard of Letton, and a highway leading from Letton Cros to Almans falgate (Almans furlong was in Cranworth). The ancient site of the rectory of Letton was near Rounsvale Green and Humblecroft. As the likely position of Humblecroft can be established from later evidence (see below) it would appear that Rounsvale, Runsvall or Roundstall was the name given to the crescent-shaped section of Letton Green extending from the vicinity of the Mansion House towards Shipdham. The terrier lists a pightle at Cros Grene which abutted south on Snayelgate Lane and this location is confirmed in the extent. The extent mentions Collerds Lane (or Collins Lane; Fig. 14), which, according to the Road Order map of 1783 (see below), extended south-westwards from Letton Green to Rawbridge. The other roads mentioned in 1627 were Hungat Lane and Hewkes Lane which were close to the Shipdham boundary, as was Northgate Lane but are otherwise unidentified. Punts Lane was a little to the west of Snalegate Lane and close to Cross Green. Punts Lane and Snalegate Lane may have been beyond the parish boundary in Cranworth. A sixteenth century rental lists land held by Mrs Brampton and mentions Lampit furlong (NRO, Gurdon MSS MC 76/46).

Three wills from the years after the extent was made may be representative of differing levels of society in the remaining community of Letton. John Ridgewell was a labourer and left two cows and a calf and all the implements of his husbandry to his wife (NRO, NCC 127 Brampton of 1641) and also made a bequest to the poor of the town; Michael Crowne, a yeoman, left his lands, messuages and tenements in Letton and Shipdham (NRO, NCC, 52 Alston, 1643); he also had land in Hardingham, Pickenham and Welborne. His will mentions a kinswoman who was the widow of a Letton man. The will of Richard Fowlsham (NRO, NCC, 433 Tennant 1661), described as

a linen weaver of Letton, dwelt in a tenement with houses, yards and homestalls with the land and closes adjoining and also had land and a messuage in Cranworth. He made bequests to the poor of Cranworth and of Letton. He had purchased another tenement in Letton from Henry Love; there was reference to a doale or planting in the common pasture belonging to the messuage. The population seems to have become one in which a number had reached the status of 'yeoman' and had holdings of land in neighbouring places and sometimes in others much further afield.

A Rental Book (NRO, Gurdon MSS, MC 76/47) gives rent lists for much of the seventeenth century for the manor of Buttlelers in Letton. As the century progressed, so the number of tenants listed decreased. In 1622 eleven different names were noted, by 1687 the number had declined to six, including Thomas Mott who paid 1s. 6d. as annual rent for his windmill. The windmill was first mentioned in the book in 1685. However, a Hearth Tax list for 29th October 1666 survives (NRO, Gurdon MSS, MC 76/49) and this shows twenty-one households with a total of fifty-nine hearths, ranging from the eighteen hearths of Brampton Gurdon (besides two built since Michaelmas) to ten houses which had only one. One house had seven hearths, another had four, four had three; two men are shown as sharing a house with one hearth. A subsidiary list of the poor gave six names and mentioned two poor houses. The rental lists for the early eighteenth century are quite brief:-

1700: three names and the miller,
1708: two names and the miller.

One interesting item from the seventeenth century is an undated plan (NRO, Gurdon MSS, MC 76/46) which shows that an area in front of the hall was taken in from Letton Green, precise measurements being given. This may be typical of other encroachments which led to the attenuated green of later times.

In the eighteenth century there was a brick kiln working in Letton: a loose sheet of paper inserted in a book dated 1757 (NRO, Gurdon MSS, MC 76/50) gives a brickmakers' wages 'at Letton kill' as follows:-

| | |
|---|---|
| Diging the earth per thousand | 1s. 0d. |
| First watering & picking per thousand | 4d. |
| Second watering & picking | 4d. |
| Treading per thousand | 6d. |
| Striking per thousand | 2s. 3d. |
| Setting, Burning & drawing per thousand | 1s. 6d. |
| | 5s.11d. |

A possible location for this kiln may have been in the north-eastern corner of the parish close to the boundary with Shipdham, if the existence of Brick Kiln Close shown on the Tithe Map of 1838 (NRO, PD 359/43(H)) refers to this. The same map shows a piece called Tile Kiln south-west of the park and to the south of the road from Shipdham to Cranworth. However, Lenny's map (1783, see below) shows Brick Kiln Piece on the northern edge of the green (No. 21, Fig. 13); in view of the date this is a more likely site.

Poor Rate lists for Letton exist for many years of the eighteenth century (NRO, Gurdon MSS MC 76/50). In 1748-9, the names of twenty-two parishioners and eight outsitters occur; in 1758-9, the numbers had declined to sixteen parishioners and eight outsitters; in 1768-9, to twelve parishioners and ten outsitters and, in 1778-9, twelve parishioners and eleven outsitters. The number of inhabitants seems thus to have been declining slowly but surely.

The ultimate transformation from village to estate, probably long in maturing, would seem to have occurred in the 1780s. In 1786-8 the present Letton Hall was built (Pevsner 1962, 244). Before that, in 1783, orders had been made to divert certain roads in Letton as part of the preparation for laying out a park as a setting for this house.

The most significant information about these changes is provided by a Road Order plan of 1783 (NRO, C/5b 1/1). This shows Letton Green stretching in a very irregular crescent from the southern side of the parish to the north-western corner where it merges with Shipdham Common across the parish boundary. Shipdham Lane and Cranworth Lane entered the Green from west and east respectively, each by way of a fallgate, one of which was called Cranworth Fallgate. Collins Lane crossed Shipdham Lane at right angles and entered the Green from the south by Collards Fallgate. The Mansion House, with its gardens lay in the angle of the crescent on the west side of the Green and a road from Cranworth Fallgate to Collards Fallgate, over the Green, led past it.

Cranworth Lane led south-eastwards to the small Cross Green. A Drove Lane led from the Green near the Mansion south-eastwards to Letton Street which was described as leading 'To the High Common'. From the southern end of Letton Street Cross Green Lane led into Cross Green; Wigg's Farm stood on its eastern side. Hook's Farm was on the eastern side of the narrow green called Letton Street; another farm was on the eastern side of Letton Green near the entry of the Drove Lane.

Cross Green Lane was replaced by a new road further to the east which led from Cross Green to a new entry on Letton Street further north; Wigg's Farm now stood on the western side of this linking road. Other diversions were of the Droveway and of the road from Cranworth Fallgate past the Mansion house to Collards Fallgate. Other modifications of the road system are shown by a Road Order plan of 1791 (NRO, C/5b 1/3) which gave details of a diversion of the former Cranworth Lane on to a more southerly line and another Road Order (NRO, C/5b, 1/13) shows that two small bridleways leading out of Collins Lane in the north-west corner of Letton were also stopped up.

A map (Fig. 13) entitled *A Draught of the Estate of Brampton Gurdon Dillingham, Esquire, lying in Letton and towns adjacent in the County of Norfolk*, made by Isaac Lenny of Beccles in 1783 (SRO, Ipswich, Ref. HA54:970/1312) confirms the impression given by the Road Orders. It shows Letton Green still extending from an area somewhat vaguely shown as 'Moor' in the south to the boundary of Shipdham and beyond to Blackmoorhaugh. Letton Street connected it with High Common. This map gives more information about the distribution of settlement within Letton. It was mainly grouped around the Green (Fig. 14); apart from the Mansion House there was a group of buildings to the south of the entry of Shipdham Lane and a cottage at Cranworth Fallgate opposite. Other greenside groups were opposite the Mansion House at the entry of Drove Lane, on the east

LETTON in 1783

*after Isaac Lenny*

Blackmoor Haugh

Lord Townshend's Land

Upper Park Piece

Lower Park Piece

Rushbrooke

Long Pightle

HIGH COMMON

Culyer's Dole

Parzis Pightles

Mr Cayner

Shipdham Glebe

Home Five Acres

Eales Four Acres

Great Grass Piece

Popes

Stacey's Meadows

Further Pasture

Mr Sutton

Reeves Meadow

Woody Pightle

Plow'd Hazle

Grove

Barret

Little Harts   13

Duffles

Long Hazles

Day Pasture

Leaves

Little Pasture

Great Pasture

Five Acre Meadow

Thoroughfare

14

Home Five Acres

First Colly's Pightle

Collards Close

Hazles

Home Piece

LETTON

Home Pasture

Home Day Pasture

Lower Three Acres

Further Pasture

Woodcroft Wind Pightle

Home Meadow

Old Hall Yards

B

Lower Home Field

Upper Home Field

Downhills

Four Acres

Two Acres

Cozenas Close

LETTON STREET

Home Mowing Pieces

Six Acres

Long Acres

Hardingham and Pightles

Night Pasture

Barn Close

11

Low Meadow

Further Home Close

Barn Meadow

Night Pasture

Home Plow'd Piece

Lower Day Pasture

Harveys

Backhouse Close

Long Lands

Downing's Yards

Common Pightle

Tile Kilns

Letton Field

Lemons

Nearer Home Close

Mansion House Gardens Yards

The Leys

Day Pasture

Fifteen Acres

Cranworth

Five Acres

Little Roots

Great Roots

Further Letton Field

Middle Letton Field

First Letton Field

Upper Horse Close

Lower Horse Close

Rushbrooke

Grove

Park

GREEN

Stackyard Meadow

Night Pasture

Long Four Acres

Horse Mead

Wright's Land

Meadow

Rawbridge Meadow

Lower Gravel Pit

Upper Gravel Pit

Sheeps Close

Humble Close

Wood Close

Mown Meadow

Brights and Websters

Gravel Pit Close

Lower Coney Close

Pumps Pightle

Broad Piece

Pond Piece

Eight Acres

Grove

Downs

Bramble Pightle

Great Field

Little Field

Mr Smith's Land

Meadow

Upper Coney Close

20

Blakes

Glebe

CROSS GREEN

Grove Piece

Gravel Pit Piece

Four Acres

High Field

Seven Acres

Somer's Fifteen Acres

The Pastures

Mr Wright's Land

Three Acres

Four Acres

Somer's Horse Close

Twelve Acre Meadow

Newell's Head

Nine Acres

12

Five Acres

Somer's Further Nine Acres

Somer's Pasture Close

Somer's Eight Acres

Somer's Nine Acres

Six Acre Meadow

Horse Meadow

A

Nine Acres

Three Acres

Home 3 Acres

Second Four Acres

Somer's Grove

Somer's Fourteen Acres

MOOR

Furze Close

Cranworth Church Green

Home 4 Acres

Sir Edward Astley's Land

MOOR

Features superimposed soon after survey

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Meadow |
| 2 | Glebe |
| 3 | Grove |
| 4 | House and Yards |
| 5 | Barn Meadow |
| 6 | Lower Barn Meadow |
| 7 | Lane Pightle |
| 8 | Calves Pightle |
| 9 | Stacy |
| 10 | Garden Pightle |
| 11 | Two Acre Pightle |
| 12 | Mr Partridge's Land |
| 13 | Harts Pightle |
| 14 | Cows Pightle |
| 15 | Corams Meadow |
| 16 | Second Colly's Pightle |
| 17 | Long four acres |
| 18 | Wronglands |
| 19 | Little Meadow |
| 20 | Driftway |
| 21 | Brick Kiln Piece |

Extent of Park

New roads

0 100 200 300 400 500

metres

Figure 13 Letton in 1783, based on Isaac Lenny's estate map. Scale 1:20,000. (*Published by kind permission of the Suffolk Record Office*).

LETTON c. 1783

before emparking and enclosure

SHIPDHAM

Blackmoor Haugh

SHIPDHAM

WHINBURGH

High Common

SHIPDHAM

SOUTHBURGH

Collards
Fallgate on
Letton
Green

Collins Lane

LETTON

Drove

Lane

LETTON STREET

High
Common

Shipdham Lane

Park

GREEN

Cross Green Lane

Wiggs
Farm

CRANWORTH

FALLGATE

Cranworth
Fallgate

CROSS
GREEN

+ Church

Almonds Lane

SHIPDHAM

Moor

CRANWORTH

0        500        1000

metres

44

Figure 14 Letton in 1780: the outlines of the streets and greens in relation to the modern topography. Scale 1:20,000.

side of the Green and on the west side opposite this. Further to the north-west, also on the western side of the Green, were buildings on the site of the present Gurdon Farm on the Shipdham boundary. Elsewhere, there were buildings on the sites of Home Farm (Wigg's Farm), Low Farm and the other isolated farmstead to the north-east of Almonds Lane and at five points on Letton Street. Of the enclosures near the Green (Fig. 13), two are of interest: a small Park was already in existence to the south of the Mansion and another, Humble Close, to the east, still carried the name of a medieval land area (Humblecroft). On the Lenny map (Fig. 13) are shown the courses of the new road from Cranworth to Shipdham and the replacement road for Cross Green Lane, and also the rough boundary of the new, much enlarged park. Letton Green, in the cartouche, was said to be 31 acres and 26 perches in area ('from A to B'); this carries manuscript comment 'now laid into Park'. A comparison with a modern map shows the extent of the changes made (Fig. 14).

By the time of Faden's map (1797) these alterations had been carried out. Collins Lane is shown as still existing and leading into the north-western remnant of Letton Green near the boundary with Shipdham where some dwellings are marked. Letton Street is also shown with dwellings on either side; it led to the very large Reymerston Common; the southern portion of this extensive common is termed by Faden Cranworth High Common. From the evidence of the plan of 1783 the whole common was most probably known as the High Common. The site of the old Mansion House was landscaped into a garden. In 1984 a part of this had been ploughed and much building rubble was visible on the surface. Immediately to the north is an L-shaped moat which could be a medieval feature adapted as part of the garden or a later imitation. In the shrubbery on the western side of the site is a summer-house which incorporates tracery of three windows and building stones possibly derived from Letton church, or some other church in the neighbourhood.

The Tithe Map of 1838 shows a landscape from which the last north-western vestige of Letton Green had gone. In that area lay a piece of land called Moat Piece, drawing attention to a moat which is marked on modern 1:50,000 maps at TF 967 064. The name Letton Green had become associated with a narrow strip of pasture on either side of Letton Street and the existence of closes with names such as Green Close and Letton Green Nine Acres on its northern side suggest that this may have been one of the lobes of the original Green. At the southern (Hall) end of it lay a pound and at its extreme opposite end 'Site of Gate' is marked. In addition to the Hall and its farm and lodge there were ten houses associated with the Letton Green (Street), two farms (Stebbings and Hooks) up against the boundary with Cranworth and another small one lay in the north-east angle of the parish near Whinburgh. A cottage (Nursery) stood near Moat Piece. Letton Street has continued to be known as Letton Green and appears as such on the First Edition of the Ordnance Survey and on the 1:50,000 map. Some of the houses in this area appear to have survived. The site of the church in 1838 was marked by Church Clump standing within Church Close. White's 1845 *Directory* (318) aptly described it as a parish of dispersed houses.

An aerial photograph of 1946 (Pl. VII) records the landscape of Letton Park before levelling; the significance of the visible earthworks is described below but it should also be compared with the map of 1783.

## The decay of Letton and its causes

There is, on the evidence available, no indication of sudden change in the existence of Letton. The form of the village as suggested by the earliest surviving documents after *Domesday Book* seems to have been that of a settlement congregated around the green and the earthworks revealed on the aerial photograph may show this phase. Whether there was an earlier focus around the church cannot be determined since that area is partly under woodland, partly under pasture levelled and resown. It was, in any case, very close to the green. The identity of the moat very near the Shipdham boundary is unknown; it could have been a fore-runner of the later manorial site on which the eighteenth-century Hall was to stand, or it may have been associated with one of the other holdings in medieval Letton. Despite the possibility that sheep farming had begun to be an irritant by 1381, neither the Poll Tax figures nor the 1449 Lay Subsidy suggest a really serious setback although economic decline was appreciable.

It is clear, however, that sheep were important in the parish by 1534 and the church was abandoned soon after, yet only a decade before the list of contributors to the Lay Subsidy was by no means negligible. By 1585 Letton appears to have dwindled in size and wealth; in common with near neighbours. In 1627 the community was still substantially located, though in very scattered fashion and on rather far-flung limbs, around the medieval green, but the portion represented by the earthworks shown on the aerial photograph (Pl. VII) had almost certainly been abandoned by this time. Although the Hearth Tax list is quite impressive it represents largely the village described in 1627 which may have suffered further dispersal and decline. By the eighteenth century this seems to have gathered pace and by the end of that century it is quite possible that settlement had deserted the central part of Letton Green, the little that was left clinging to the outer portions. If this is so it would have facilitated the creation of the park.

On the evidence available, it seems that a lingering decline initiated by the development of sheep farming was succeeded by a phase when an attenuated community, without a church, was dominated by a mansion house and some yeoman farmers. Late-eighteenth-century emparking wrought the final transformation.

## III. Site Description

(Fig. 15; Pl. VII)
by Peter Wade-Martins

The earthworks of the medieval village of Letton used to be extensive and well-preserved within the late-eighteenth-century park. Sadly, they were almost all destroyed in 1978 without any record being made beforehand except for the fine RAF vertical photograph, taken in 1946 (Pl. VII). The lighting conditions at the time the photograph was taken were such that the details of the earthworks show up clearly.

The village site coincided with the east side of Letton Green as it was until the green was enclosed and taken into the park in the late-eighteenth century. The line of the green edge was clearly visible before destruction as a ditch, and the toft boundaries joined this at right angles (Fig. 15). The line of about nine tofts started near Cranworth Fallgate and ran northwards. There seems to have been a gap before Drove Lane; then, in the angle between Drove

Plate VII RAF Vertical aerial photograph of Letton showing village earthworks in Letton Park, east of the hall (Fig. 15). 31 January 1946 (Crown copyright reserved)

Lane and Letton Street, there were a further two tofts. The southern end of the long narrow common called Letton Street also showed clearly as an earthwork within the park.

The Norfolk Archaeological Unit recommended the site for scheduling to the Ancient Monuments Inspectorate in April 1977 when the site was still intact. After the writer showed an Inspector around the site, the Department of the Environment decided to proceed with scheduling in September of the same year, and a letter was sent giving notice of that decision. On 9th November the farmer replied stating he wished to do 'a certain amount of levelling' to improve the pasture. The DoE replied to this on 23rd December, asking him not to level the earthworks and asked that pasture improvement be carried out by rotivation and re-seeding and not by ploughing. On 9th January the farmer telephoned DoE to ask for a site meeting; he was told that this would not be possible before March because of pressure of work. It was agreed that a meeting would be arranged and that in the meantime the farmer would take no action; DoE agreed in return to postpone scheduling until after the meeting. This meeting with an Inspector of Ancient Monuments did not then take place until 24th November. By that time the northern half of the site had been levelled so it was agreed that only the southern half should be scheduled and no levelling should

take place in that area. This reduced area was scheduled in 1979. How much cultivation did eventually take place in this southern area is unclear, but few traces of earthworks have survived except for the sunken roadway which led from Cranworth Fallgate past the church towards Cross Green. Even this is not as sharply defined as it was up to 1977. As a landscape feature, the site has been lost; how much evidence survives below ground can only be answered by excavation.

Pottery collection has not been possible on the site because, after destruction, the field was immediately returned to grass. Clearly there is scope for fieldwalking to identify areas of settlement which might be found along Letton Street, High Common and Blackmoor, as well as Letton Green, if the area is converted to arable. It is reasonable to assume, however, that the main nucleus of medieval settlement was centred on Letton Green.

## IV. The Church
by George and Alayne Fenner

The church of All Saints' appears in *Domesday Book* (Brown 1984, 8.83. f.166b) and the advowson was given to Lewes Priory in the twelfth century by Gilbert de Rysing (Cat. Ancient Deeds II, 140.A2969; Bullock 1939, 15-16).
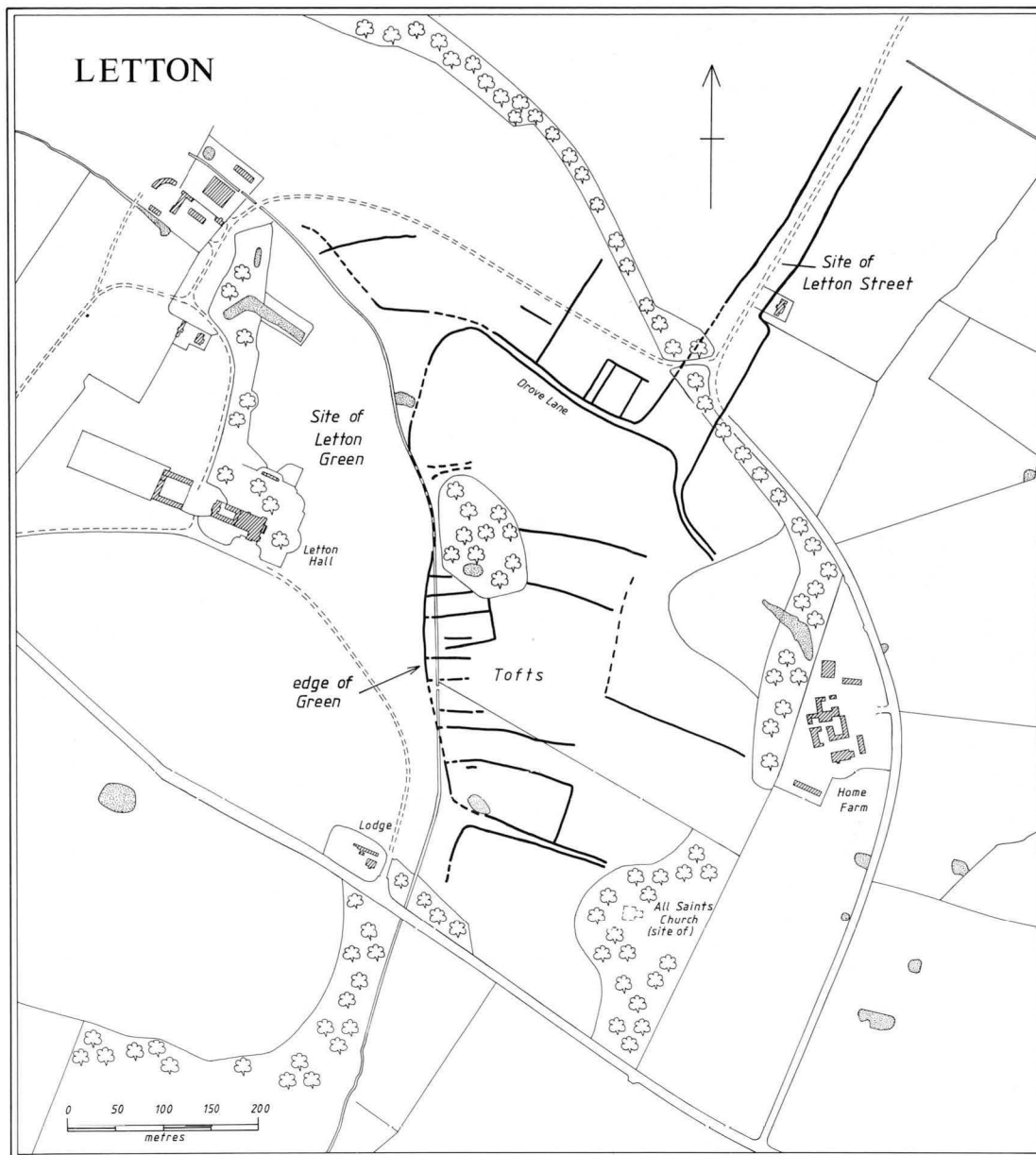
Figure 15 Letton interpretation of the earthworks shown on Plate VII. Scale 1:7500.

It was consolidated with Cranworth in 1546 (Blomefield X, 232), was ruinous by 1560 (NRO ANF1/1) and today has virtually disappeared.

Information from wills of the fifteenth and early sixteenth century suggest that the church consisted of nave, chancel and north aisle with a holy water stoup at the north door, side altars, an Easter Sepulchre and 'a glasse wyndow at our ladies awter' (NRO, NAW Shaw 61).

Investigation of the undergrowth of the heavily wooded site revealed some traces of flint foundations, largely corresponding to the outline on the 1:1250 OS map which indicates a church of two aisles and a chancel. There was a thick cover of nettles and dog's mercury over the presumed graveyard area.

Some 14 m from the west end of the church was a flint feature *c.* 3 m in diameter, but it was impossible to tell if this was the foundations of a tower or just a heap of demolition rubble. Wood Rising Hall (now demolished) is reputed to have contained stone from Letton Church.

A Gothick summerhouse in the garden of Letton Hall also contains much medieval carved stone, and three Perpendicular-style three-light windows, which may have come from the church. However, the tracery of two of these is similar to that in the chancel windows of neighbouring Shipdham church which underwent a thorough Victorian renewal. The owner of Letton Hall was proprietor of Shipdham church at that time.

# 5. Rougham

## I. Summary

Rougham is a shrunken village. It is about 13 km north of Swaffham and 16 km south-west of Fakenham and lies about 0.5 km north of the B1145. Surviving earthworks and evidence from documentary sources and from fieldwalking show that the present village was, in medieval times, the nucleus of a much larger settlement which extended for a considerable distance to the west and also, to a lesser extent, to the south. Part of the westward extension was a greenside settlement. The pottery finds suggest that contraction took place about 1400 and this is reflected in the fifteenth-century subsidy figures.

Although economic decline consequent upon famine, pestilence and climatic deterioration in the first half of the fourteenth century, and the increasing problem of drainage may have had some influence, the recession appears to have been associated with the acquisitive activities of a member of a Rougham family whose deeds earned him some attention by the rebels in 1381. The keeping of flocks of sheep seems to have been one of his interests. In the fifteenth century the Yelvertons may have continued the process.

When the Hon. Roger North purchased the estate in 1691 he found the village in sad case and he may well have ensured the survival of the community by his enlightened policies.

## II. The Documentary Evidence
by Alan Davison with Andy Reid

The Hon. Roger North, after purchasing the Rougham estate in 1691, compiled some notes for a brief history of the village about 1714 and these remain among the North family papers at Rougham Hall. In the late nineteenth century, the Rev. Augustus Jessopp, D.D., published an account of society in medieval Rougham under the title *Village Life Six Hundred Years Ago*. This appeared in a collection of essays entitled *The Coming of the Friars* in 1888, ten years after Jessopp had first examined the mass of surviving documents at Rougham Hall. The North Family Papers remain at Rougham, but microfilm copies are kept in the Norfolk Record Office (NRO) and it was the copies that were used in the compilation of the following account. The reference numbers are those used in indexes at Rougham and in the Norfolk Record Office.

Rougham was first mentioned in *Domesday* (Doubleday and Page 1901/06, II, 49, 88, 129) where it is named, in all three entries, *Ruhham*. Also recorded as *Rugham* or *Rucham* in the twelfth century, the name is thought to stem from OE *ruh*, meaning 'rough', perhaps in the sense of 'rough ground' (Ekwall 1966, 393-4). The *Domesday* manors were that of the King which lay entirely in the vill of Rougham and consisted of three ploughlands divided equally between the demesne and the sokemen; that of William de Warenne, which seems to have been mainly in Fransham, and one ploughland which Blomefield placed in Weasenham St Peter, though it was described as part of *Ruhham*. The Franshams, not separated in *Domesday*, are about 10 km to the south-west; Weasenham St Peter, not distinguished in *Domesday*, is separated from Rougham by Weasenham All Saints and is 3 km to the north-east. It is only possible with certainty to count the recorded population of the first manor as being in Rougham, giving a total of twenty-six. It is thus eleventh in order of size of recorded population among the thirty vills (including part of Dereham) listed in Launditch Hundred. Assessing its value in relation to the other vills poses greater problems. The valuation of the lands of the first entry was 60s. but an unknown fraction of the 60s. of the Fransham entry should undoubtedly be added; the valuation (10s.) of the third entry has been omitted because of its dubious identity. Eleven vills had higher valuations than Rougham among the twenty-five for which it is possible to attribute separate totals. However, there are many unavoidable inaccuracies contained in such a listing. Of the places having higher valuations, Mileham, with the largest total, includes unknown portions of Kirtling, Litcham, Dunham, Thetford and Stanfield. Dunham has a valuation of £8 on the basis of an entry of doubtful identity but it also had a portion valued in with Necton outside the hundred. Fransham (90s.) also had three ploughlands valued with Necton; as we have seen, it included part of Rougham. North Elmham (£32) included part of Beetley and there were places valued as much as or less than Rougham which had portions valued elsewhere. Horningtoft was not valued, Bittering, like Beetley, Godwick and Kirtling, was not separately valued.

Flawed though the evidence is, it suggests that Rougham was a place of moderate size and prosperity in a hundred dominated by three much larger and more prosperous settlements at North Elmham, Mileham and Swanton Morley.

The 1334 Lay Subsidy lists Rougham as contributing £8.5s. (Glasscock 1975, 207) which was the fourth largest total for Launditch, only Swanton Morley (£12), Scarning (£10.14s.), and Beeston with Bittering Parva (£9) being assessed for higher totals. The Ecclesiastical Subsidies of 1254 (Norwich Taxation) and 1291 (Pope Nicholas) both show Rougham as highly placed in valuation; fourth and fifth place respectively (Hudson 1910, 102, 103). As church property listed in 1291 was exempted from the 1334 taxation, the two taken together suggest that Rougham was by then one of the wealthiest places in the hundred; the Priories of Castleacre and Westacre each had lands there, received, according to Blomefield (X, 29), from persons holding land in small fees or lordships from Warenne's portion of Rougham.

In 1302 (*Feudal Aids* III, 416, 417) the heirs of William le Boteler held a knight's fee and one third of another in Rougham and Fransham. A fourth part of the Boteler fee was held by Ralph le Mareschal. What appears to be the earliest document concerning Rougham is a charter of Conan Duke of Brittany and Earl of Richmond (NRO, NRS, 6865) granting Roald (described as sewer or steward) son of Morvan and Juliana his wife lands in *Rucham* and other places. It is possible that this marks the arrival of the Butler family in Rougham. Conan's Dukedom dates from

1156 (Powicke and Fryde 1961, 445). The *Nomina Villarum* of 1316 (*Feudal Aids* III, 453) listed Richard atte Grene, Fulk de Brysyngham, John de Cressingham, John Hunte and Alice de Rugham as holding land in Rougham. In 1346 (*Feudal Aids*, III, 539), John atte Grene was stated to be holding the lands which the heirs of William le Boteler had at one time held. Alice of Rugham would appear to have been the Alicia Mareschal mentioned as holding a quarter of this fee. Richard atte Grene must be associated with one of the two manors of Rougham; Green's Hall alias Finchams (Blomefield X, 32).

By the fifteenth century, the Yelverton and Bedyngham families had appeared in Rougham beside the Huntes and Mareschals (*Feudal Aids* III, 595, 634, 635): the Yelvertons were to extend their hold over the whole of Rougham.

If, as it is asserted, the end of the thirteenth century saw the height of medieval prosperity and that there was a subsequent decline, then Launditch Hundred fits this pattern. The 1449 Lay Subsidy reveals an average decline of 14.2 per cent from 1334 among the thirty-two townships. Rougham had declined to a position of eighth largest total contributed with a percentage decline of 27.3; the fifth largest of the hundred. Of the four places with greater decline, Kempston and Godwick were destined to be deserted; Litcham (32 per cent) and Swanton Morley (41.7 per cent) were the two others.

The picture of contraction at some time in the later-fourteenth and fifteenth century shown by the lay subsidy figures compares well with the dating of the pottery finds from the vicinity of the earthworks, reviewed above. The finds range from the late-eleventh century to the late-fourteenth or early fifteenth century, giving dates of settlement and abandonment corresponding quite closely with those for *Domesday* and the 1449 Lay Subsidy.

## The topography of medieval Rougham
(Fig. 16; Pls VIII and IX)
Any suggestion that Rougham might be a village which has been moved from an earlier site on the area of the earthworks to its present location may be largely discounted by an examination of the extensive range of documents which survive, particularly from the later-thirteenth century. In the late-thirteenth century there was mention (NRO, NRS 6891) of a messuage built with a croft next to the churchyard and croft of the church of St Mary of Rougham; another thirteenth-century document (NRO, NRS 6919) mentions a messuage and croft lying between the cemetery and church croft on one side and another messuage on the other and abutting on the king's highway to the east. This highway was clearly the present village street on the western side of which lies the church and churchyard; it is possible that this road continued to the north past the site of the present Hall. By the sixteenth century this street was called 'Churchgate' (NRO, NRS 7068). There was also a chapel in Rougham; in 1351 (NRO, NRS 6741) a messuage at 'le Crouch' was described as being next the chapel 'between the road which leads towards the frerestownshende'. Blomefield recorded (X, 33) that an old chapel 'now called the Chapel-barn' lay at a distance from the church to the south. A document of the late seventeenth century (NRO, NRS 7690) mentions 15 acres lying in Dragg furlong with Chapel Barn and land belonging to it on the north side of the barn; Drag furlong, according to the Tithe map (NRO), lay just to the north-east of a site suggested by Mr Hooks as being that of the

chapel (SMR Site 13167). This lies at the point of a bifurcation of roads at the southern end of the village street (did 'le Crouch' indicate a cross or a forking of routes?). The reference to the cemetery of the *capella* of The Blessed Mary of Rougham seem to have been taken by Jessopp to mean that the chapel was at a considerable distance from the church, but much depends on the use of *capella* in the document (NRO, NRS 6933).

There were other properties which were described as abutting west on to what was clearly a north-south street (NRO, NRS 6470 (thirteenth century) and others).

The earliest reference to Southgate was in 1338 (NRO, NRS 6686) when a messuage was recorded there as abutting east on the highway and which had other messuages to the north and south; from this and other references it appears to have been a street running from north to south with a lane (Hyrnes Lane) entering it from the west (NRO, NRS 6526 of 1409). A messuage and croft stood on the northern side of this junction. A messuage called 'Bydekennes' stood on the eastern side of Southgate (NRO, NRS 6559 of 1428). There is, however, one reference (NRO, NRS 7377 of 1381) which suggests that Southgate may, in part, have turned in an east-west direction as it states that a messuage, with others on either side, headed north on to Southgate.

On the north side of the settlement lay Rudham Gate (also called 'Milgate', NRO NRS 6561 of 1429). There is a thirteenth-century reference (NRO, NRS 6897) to land *ad capud villani* lying on the east side of the road to Rudham with a courtyard to the south of it. A road seems to have joined Milgate from the east; a piece of land lay between Milgate to the west and Millesty to the east with the king's highway to the south (NRO, NRS 7174 of 1466). The 'Hall Mill' lay close to Milgate (NRO, NRS 7299 of 1369).

A road left Rougham for Weasenham; a close on this road had its western side on a path leading to the church (NRO, NRS 7171 of 1379), a tenement called 'Cobbs' (NRO, NRS 7439 of 1591/2) had its southern head on the Weasenham road and a lane called 'Walsingham Lane' to the east.

Of these roads or streets, Southgate cannot be identified with any confidence: as the majority of the evidence points to a north-to-south orientation it is possible that it may have been an alternative name for the southern portion of the main street which still has a lane joining it from the west. Rudham Gate may have been a road leading past the present Hall; this, as well as continuing the line of the present street, is itself continued by a track which extends some distance in the general direction of the Rudhams. The road to Weasenham may well be broadly identical with the one which leaves the north-eastern end of the village today, while Walsingham Lane might have been the minor road which leaves it on its northern flank.

Westgate was lined with messuages and crofts on both sides, the earliest reference being of 1323 (NRO, NRS, 6856); one messuage and croft at the eastern end had a path to the church at its southern end (NRO, NRS, 7259 of 1425). A way called 'Stanhowegate' led to the north from Westgate (NRO, NRS, 6613 of 1441) across the field, including 'Whetebredcrundel'. It is possible that Westgate led into two further roads which are mentioned and which were certainly to the west of the main village. One of these was Massingham Gate, the name of which suggests its position and direction. It was first mentioned in a document of 1283 (NRO, NRS, 6796) and references

## THE PAST LANDSCAPE OF ROUGHAM

1 Rougham Hall
2 Green Hall or Fincham's
3 Church of St. Mary
4 Chapel of St. Mary
5 Lodge
6 ?Lyng House
X Cross

≡≡≡ Possible course of road
– – – Possible course of path
⬭ Reported extent of pottery finds-not examined in detail

N

WEASENHAM ALL SAINTS (Part)

WEASENHAM St. PETER

WEASENHAM ALL SAINTS

?

NORTH FIELD 1292

?Mosihogh 1296

Rudham Gate or Millgate 1391

Walsingham Lane 1582

Common Path to North Field

GREAT MASSINGHAM

Overgate
Massingham Gate 13th C.

Bradmere Green 1393
Bradmere Sty 1393

WEST
?Westonnesende 1369

Heath

Market Gate 13th C.

Massingham Common

Hildemere G.1333 or Westgate or Lynn Way

2
?Broadmere

1
Westgate?

? ≡≡≡ ?

?Whitwell
Sty

EAST

3 ✚ Churchgate

Way to Weasenham

Way to

Turflyng 1294

Kilpit 1321
Kyllepit F. 17th C.

Westling 1294

FIELD 1442

?Grenegate 13th C.
?

?Wodegate,?Hyrnslane 13/14th C. Southgate
le Crouch

4 ✚

Dragg Furlong FIELD 13th C.

16175

Estlyngs 1296

16174

5 ■ ? le Conynger 1433

?Carthorngate 13th C.
?Utgong 13th C.

le Wasshepyt 1403

Kiln
Kilnwong
Hefeds

Luchamgate 1425
from Gt. Massingham
to Litcham

Afergate 13th C.

6 ■

X 16th C.
Peterstone Heath

Way to Lexham

Rygewey 1294
Riggeway Gate 1292

Westacregate 13th C.

Castlelakergate 1436

Wong 1292

SOUTH FIELD 1446,14th C?

Lynn Way 16th C.

Frereswong or Beggars Breach 16th C.

Mulcrundel 1318

?Castleacre Cross 1442

?Sciterhill 13th C.

?Stypersgate 13th C.

?Salteresdikes 13th C.

Merdell F.1318

Meresden 13th C.

WEST LEXHAM

CASTLE ACRE

0 —— 1 km

Figure 16 The past landscape of Rougham. The features shown are based on topographical references in the mass of medieval documents; some placings are tentative. The area surveyed and fieldwalked is that surrounding Massingham Gate, Hildemere Gate, West Gate and Bradmere Green to the north-west of the church.

continue until well into the fifteenth century (NRO, NRS, 7034 of 1443). The position of this road is confirmed by references to 'Bradmere' (NRO, NRS, 6568 of 1431); a common of that name lay to the east of arable land which had Massingham Gate to the south. The name survives in Bradmere Herne, a wood lying (at TF 822 212) just to the north of the suggested line of Massingham Gate. A messuage called 'Fyschus' or 'Fisshys' in 1379 (NRO, NRS, 7373, 7375) abutted northwards on Massingham Gate and had other messuages to the east and west. Fyschus messuage and croft had 'Lynn Way' at its southern end. This seems to have been the road which was called 'Hildemere Gate'; in 1379 (NRO, NRS, 7371), land in the west field of Rougham was described as lying between Hildemere Gate on the south and Massingham Gate on the north and other documents confirm this. It seems therefore that these roads must be the two hollow ways seen diverging in the surviving earthworks and the references to Fischus messuage suggest that some occupation continued to 1379 and, possibly, even 1439 (NRO, NRS, 6601). A road called 'Overgate' was recorded in 1350 (NRO, NRS, 6735) and in 1370 (NRO, NRS, 7310) as having a messuage located on its southern side; the record of 1350 mentions a croft of Simon Fysch heading north on this road with two messuages to the east. As a messuage called 'Fyschus' also headed north on Massingham Gate at this time, the roads would appear to be identical.

The possible destruction of earthworks by the making of the park by Hon. Roger North or his predecessors has made the reconstruction of topography somewhat speculative at this point and the common practice of using more than one name at the same time for a street or road may compound confusion. In one document (NRO, NRS, 7338) a messuage is mentioned as having Westgate to the south and Overgate to the north. As Overgate and Massingham Gate are almost certainly identical, it would appear that the hollow way to the south of this was called Westgate instead of, or as well as, Hildemere Gate. Alternatively, the portions of Massingham Gate and Hildemere Gate nearest the village may have been called Overgate and Westgate respectively.

There was a common well in Rougham (NRO, NRS, 6606 of 1439) lying a little distance to the north of the chapel (NRO, NRS, 7371 of 1379) and it stood on the eastern side of the street.

There was at least one outlying building in Rougham as early as 1283 as has been noted by Jessopp (1888, 62-3); this was the Lyng House. It seems to have stood on the western side of a track called the *Utgong* or *Hutgong* [*utgang* OE, *utganga* ON, an exit or way out (Smith 1956, II, 228)] as a thirteenth-century document mentions that 'lynghusstede' with a house and buildings and comprising 5½ acres had the way called the *Hutgong* on its eastern side (NRO, NRS, 6964). Another document of 1332 (NRO, NRS, 6656) mentions a piece of land on the western side of the *Utgong* which had its northern end abutting on 'lynghousyerd' and this appears to give confirmation. A bailiff's account (NRO, NRS, 7410) mentions both lynghousyerd and 'lynghouscroft'; in 1324 (NRO, NRS, 6861) an acre of land at lynghousyerd was described as having its southern head on the common heath of Rougham. Jessopp thought that Lyng House was near Weasenham Heath (1888, 62) and there were references to Estling next to Weasenham in 1319 (NRO, NRS, 6841). However, there were also a 'Westlyng' and a 'Turflyng'

mentioned together in a document of 1294 (NRO, NRS, 6775). Westlyng was near 'Wodegate' which was said to be, in the seventeenth century (NRO, NRS, 7267) close to 'Kylle Pyte' furlong. This was certainly in the south-west of the parish (Tithe Map). Turflyng was definitely near the way to Massingham (NRO, NRS, 6895 of the thirteenth century). It is just possible, therefore, that it was these western 'lyngs' which were next to Lynghouse. However, the westernmost concentration of pottery in (3) (see below) is much more likely to have been the property referred to as the 'Vestonessted' (NRO, NRS, 7273 of 1357) or 'Westtonnesende' in 1369 (NRO, NRS, 7294).

At the southern end of the present village area a messuage called 'Redlandestede' (NRO, NRS, 6741 of 1351) was described as being to the south of another messuage at le Crouch. This is nearest to the areas where Mr Hooks found scatters of medieval pottery. There were other sites at the southern end; a document of 1415 (NRO, NRS, 7135) mentions two messuages on the west side of the road to Castleacre where it crossed the road to Litcham. The more southerly of the two had its side on this road; the site is almost certainly where the south-westerly fork from the southern end of the village crosses the B1145 and is grass-covered.

Green Hall or Fincham's Manor has vanished. According to the Hon. Roger North 'the place or scite is now distinguished by an old spacious pond and a green by it, which from the pond is called mere grean, this lyes on the west and N.W. side of the towne & extends to Massingham border' (NRO, NRS, 7032b, apparently written about 1714). In this general area the existence of Bradmere has already been mentioned; a possible relationship to the pond called the Broad Water (Broad Mere?) should be noted. The distribution of pottery (Fig. 19) in (5) and (5a) and the existence of an area separating them which was void of sherds can be interpreted, with some confidence, as the result of settlement around the edges of Bradmere Green. The sherd-less zone can be seen as the central part of the green and the greater concentration at the eastern end of (5), near the pond, may be accounted for by proximity of the manor house. The identification of a high proportion of the pottery as Grimston Thetford Ware points to an early colonisation of the edge of this green.

The other manor probably stood, as Jessopp suggested, not far from the present site of Rougham Hall. The Hon. Roger North certainly extended and improved upon the manor house of the Yelvertons who became lords towards the end of the medieval period (Jessopp, 1887, 45). There were references to the Hall Mill in the thirteenth century (NRO, NRS, 6917) and to 'Hallemyllgate' in 1372 (NRO, NRS, 6473) and this seems to have been the 'Millgate' or 'Rudham Gate', which lay at the northern end of the main village, probably not far from the present Hall (NRO, NRS, 7299 of 1369). A fifteenth-century document (NRO, NRS, 6467) refers to a 'Hallemilnehill' and 'Hallelond'. An account roll of 1442 (NRO, NRS, 6441) mentions a 'Duffehouscroft'; in 1690/1, the Dovehous Close was in front of the manor house (NRO, NRS, 7613) and this may well be the dovehouse which remains.

There was at least one other mill in Rougham; whereas the Hall Mill was mentioned as early as 1297 (NRO, NRS, 6759), by 1330 (NRO, NRS, 6655) Hall Mill and Dykunes Mill (elsewhere 'Dekonesmyll') are mentioned in the same document. There seems to have been a mill somewhere well to the south of the village as there was a 'Millsty' or

Plate VIII   Aerial photograph of the earthworks of Rougham deserted village from the south-east (Fig. 17). 27 June 1980

path close to 'Riggewaygate' which was definitely in the south of the parish (NRO, NRS, 6811 of 1313). In 1322 there was a messuage in Rougham described as being with all the buildings of the windmill (NRO, NRS, 6854).

A crude sketch-map of lands in the south-east of Rougham (NRO, NRS, 7676), undated but probably of the late-sixteenth century at the earliest, shows a lodge with a chimney stack standing a little to the north of a cross. The map is centred roughly on TF 835 193 and the lodge, if accurately placed, would have been at TF 834 196. A document of 1576 (NRO, NRS, 7669) probably describes this area; it records the way leading from Rougham to West Lexham 'nere a boundstone or merstone called Peterstone standing on the west side of the said waye'. This stone is probably represented by the cross on the map; Peterstone is a reference to the Augustinian Priory of that name in Burnham Overy. There were lands in West Lexham next to Rougham called 'frereswong' or 'Beggars breach' which belonged to Peterstone, but which were bought by the Yelvertons (NRO, NRS, 7032b). Ogilby's map of the way from King's Lynn to Norwich (1675) shows 'Ruffum Lodge' in the position corresponding to that on the sketch-map of about 100 years earlier. It is possible that this building may have dated from medieval times since a terrier of Yelverton lands in West Lexham (NRO, NRS, 7727) refers to 'le Conynger' and 'le Conyngerdyke' and is dated 1450 showing that a warren existed in this quarter at that time.

The fields which supported this community appear to have been four in number: the 'Northfeld' (NRO, NRS 6772 of 1292), the 'Southfeld' (NRO, NRS, 6597 of 1437), the 'Estfeld' (NRO, NRS, 6958 of the thirteenth century) and the 'Westfeld' (NRO, NRS, 6441 of 1442). Each was divided into furlongs and it was the names of these which appeared most frequently in documents. References to Southfeld and Westfeld are later and fewer, perhaps this means a reorganisation of the fields into four in later medieval times.

A few furlongs are named as being in certain fields; 'Middlewong' was in Estfeld (NRO, NRS, 6631), while 'Medeweland' (NRO, NRS, 6996 of 1395), and 'Henlond' (NRO, NRS, 7034 of 1443) were in the Northfeld. It would appear that arable land in the North field extended virtually to the limits of the parish as, in 1445/6 (NRO, NRS, 6462), land was said to be next to Kipton, the deserted site in Weasenham St Peter. A feature called 'le Dole', presumably a boundary marker, was recorded for the North field in 1292 (NRO, NRS, 6772). The East field probably did not reach the bounds of Weasenham; it was said to abut east on Estlyng (NRO, NRS, 7308 of 1371) while land in Weasenham was said to abut on the Estlyng of Rougham to the south (NRO, NRS, 6841 of 1319). The South field seems to have extended to the southern and south-western bounds of Rougham; some minor place names in this area: 'Pitwong' (NRO, NRS, 6873 of the thirteenth century), 'Sondpittes' (NRO, NRS, 6772 of

Plate IX   Aerial photograph of the earthworks of Rougham deserted village from the west (Fig. 17). 9 February 1984

1292), 'Cleypit Way' (NRO, NRS, 7170 of 1461), 'Kylnepit' (NRO, NRS, 6679 of 1337), suggest that quarrying for various purposes went on there. In the west, as has already been shown, Westlyng and Turflyng lay beyond the fields, while some common land called Bradmere or Bradmere Green, north of Massingham Gate, had arable land on its western side (NRO, NRS, 6568 of 1431). A common pasture called 'Rougham Lyng' was also said to be close to Ryggeway Gate in the south of the parish (NRO, NRS, 6488 of 1442).

Several indications that intakes of land had been made by the thirteenth century are given by such furlong names as 'le Breche' (NRO, NRS, 6759 of 1297) or 'Brechewong' (NRO, NRS, 6868, early thirteenth century), 'Brakylond' (NRO, NRS, 6963, thirteenth century), 'Estbrakylond' (NRO, NRS, 6855 of 1324), 'Westbreche' (NRO, NRS, 6804 of 1311) and 'Estbreche' (NRO, NRS, 5679 of 1337). Westbreche certainly had several heath ['several' meaning held by an owner in his own right and not jointly or in common with others (Adams 1976, 193)] to its west and also, apparently, on the east and south where several heath was called 'le fryth', 'frix' or 'frich'. Some furlong names clearly reflect, directly or indirectly, the nature of the soil in various ways: 'Clotilond' (NRO, NRS, 6678 of 1336), 'Lampit' (NRO, NRS, 6873, thirteenth century), 'Lampelond' (NRO, NRS, 6958, thirteenth century), 'Stonylond' (NRO, NRS, 7350 of 1379), 'Stanemerefurlong' (NRO, NRS, 6772 of 1292), 'Thyslywong' (NRO, NRS, 6963,

thirteenth century) and 'Bromwong' (NRO, NRS 6754 of 1297). Others such as 'Nichweteacres'; (NRO, NRS, 6784 of 1296), 'Bullokesrode' (NRO, NRS, 6852 of 1322), 'Flaxcrundel' (NRO, NRS, 6796 of 1283), 'Flaxland' (NRO, NRS, 6613 of 1441), and 'Wetebredcrundel' (NRO, NRS, 6984 of 1342) are virtually self-explanatory.

Some field names mention pits and their owners or purpose: 'Sondpittes', 'le Marlepit' (NRO, NRS, 6927, thirteenth century), 'Gillionespyt' (NRO, NRS, 6818 of 1315), 'Stannardesmarlepit' (NRO, NRS, 6916, thirteenth century) 'Pitwong' (NRO, NRS, 6849 of 1321), 'Marlewong' (NRO, NRS, 6640 of 1328), 'Marledlond' (NRO, NRS, 6901 of 1292) and 'Manimarlepittes' (NRO, NRS, 6759 of 1297). Others are generally descriptive of the landscape: 'Depedele' (NRO, NRS, 6906 of 1292), 'Pondland' (NRO, NRS, 6725 of 1349), 'Bromhillwong' (NRO, NRS, 6473 of 1372) and especially the series of names (which appear in many documents) incorporating 'crundel' (Smith 1956, I, 116-117): 'Tocrundel', 'Depecrundel', 'Slocrundel', 'Redecrundel', 'Ane' (or 'Hann')- 'longcrundel', 'Mulcrundel', 'estbechescrundel', 'Herewardes crundel', 'Wydcrundel', 'Havelowecrundel', 'Tolyscrundel', 'Nunnecrundel', 'Hollecrundel', 'Grenecrundel' and 'albechescrundel', possibly implying some shallow fold or hollow of the ground.

Although some roadways are now visible only as hollow ways and other have disappeared, it is still possible to see some of the medieval trackways as they remain in

varying degrees of use. Apart from those already noted, a road at the southern end of the village called 'Akergate' (NRO, NRS, 6772 of 1292) or 'Castelakergate' (NRO, NRS, 6587 of 1436) led from the fork to Castleacre as it does today. Then it ran across open fields; in 1330 a piece of land was said to lie *ex transverso* (NRO, NRS, 6655). In 1371 there was a reference to a 'Schephouscroft' somewhere to the west of the track (NRO, NRS, 7312), presumably meaning a shepherd's house; it belonged to John Reed. References to 'Westacregate' (NRO, NRS, 6873, thirteenth century) indicate that this road probably branched off Akergate at a point some distance to the north-east of its present beginning (SMR Site 4064 is the line of the old road), at TF 826 193, a short length of track remains at an angle in the road; all that survives of the original line of Westacregate at this point.

The road to West Lexham led south-eastwards from the southern forking of the ways in Rougham: after crossing the B1145 this road persists as a trackway. It appears on the sixteenth-century manuscript map, as does the B1145 which is called 'the way from Massingham to Litcham'; this latter road is probably the 'Luchamgate' of 1425 (NRO, NRS, 7208). The minor road leading to Tittleshall and leaving the B1145 to the south-east of Rougham also appears on the manuscript map.

Several other trackways appear to have lain in the southern part of Rougham. Of these 'Rygeweygate' is the most interesting; first mentioned in the last quarter of the thirteenth century (NRO, NRS, 6910), it seems to have followed an east-to-west course. Its name may be significant being reminiscent of the raised agger of a Roman road; alternatively 'ryge' could mean 'rye' (Smith 1956, II, 91) or the name may simply refer to the general location of the road on a natural ridge (Smith 1956, II, 249). In 1442 this way was given the alternative name of 'Lynngate' (NRO, NRS, 6488) and so proves to have been the track which leads westwards forming, in part, the southern parish boundary; on the sixteenth-century manuscript map this road was shown as the road leading to Lynn and which runs westwards for some miles from TF 857 182. 'Stoupersgate' appears to have been south of Rygeweygate (NRO, NRS, 6604 of 1439).

'Wodegate', 'Grenegate' and 'Pechegate' (or 'Peg' -ate) are the names of other ways frequently mentioned in documents. Pechegate was certainly close to Rygeweygate (NRO, NRS, 6636 of 1328) and had arable land on both sides (NRO, NRS, 6775 OF 1294); 'Millesty' (NRO, NRS, 7044 of 1491) lay to the east of Pechegate, so giving evidence for the existence of the second mill in Rougham. Grenegate lay to the north of Rygeweygate and to the south of a way called 'Marketgate' and of Turflyng (NRO, NRS, 1780 of 1296, 6895 of thirteenth century). Wodegate also lay to the north of Grenegate (NRO, NRS, 6960 of thirteenth century) and to the south of 'Lyngside' (NRO, NRS, 6568 of 1431). There was a sheepfold ('Bercaria'; or just possibly a tannery) close to it (NRO, NRS, 6656 of 1332); Wodegate was described as a common way and to the north of it lay a mill hill (NRO, NRS, 7228 of 1445). A large portion of a millstone was noted at a point TF 8228 2066. Apart from a general south-westerly or southern location for all these tracks, impressions of exact position are vague and even slightly conflicting. The evidence of some of their names might mean that they led to features (a wood, a green) and when these vanished lost their significance and disappeared also. Some may be alternative names for others. Wodegate affords an example of this; as

already noted above it was, according to a seventeenth-century source, to the south-west of the village. In 1339 (NRO, NRS, 6694) a messuage and croft had another messuage on its northern side and Wodegate on its southern side. This appears to suggest that Wodegate was a road leaving the village in a south-westerly direction and may have been yet another name for a road already noted elsewhere.

To the north of Massingham Gate lay 'Bradmeresty', probably the same as the common path near Bradmere of 1413 (NRO, NRS, 7129), this seems to have led past the eastern end of Bradmere Green (NRO, NRS, 6984 of 1393) from Massingham Gate.

'Carthorngate' or 'Cartethorn Gate' had arable land on either side of it (NRO, NRS, 6874 of the thirteenth century) and seems to have had an east-to-west orientation. It is probable that this road (*regia via*) led to the east towards the Estlyng as 'Lyngmannescroft' had its northern side on this way (NRO, NRS, 6754 of 1371). In 1324 (NRO, NRS, 6755) 3 acres of land lying at the east end of Rougham had a southern head on Cartethorngate so confirming its easterly position. This road probably gave access to the field land which lay between the roads to Weasenham and West Lexham. If the Lynghouse lay to the east, then the *Hutgong* probably led north into Cartethorngate. The minor road to Tittleshall has something of an east-to-west direction; SMR Site 4065 (a small area of medieval and later pottery) lies just to the south of this road at TF 839 196 and is not far from Weasenham Lyngs and is a tentative position for the Lyng House.

Blomefield (X, 78), under Weasenham, has a reference to a claim to lands in 'Hey-Wesenham, Rugham Magna and Parva and Fransham' in 1281/2, and Carthew (1877/9, I, 174) repeated this information. The Hon. Roger North, in his manuscript notes for a history of Rougham (NRO, NRS, 7032b), commented upon the former size of the village as shown by remains of buildings, the magnitude of the old church 'and the distinction of Rougham Magna and Rougham Parva is found in some of the old deeds'. No supporting evidence for this interesting possibility has yet come to light. 'Parva' was a term which was sometimes applied to part of a large village; this is true of St John's parish at the west end of Beachamwell.

Of the economy of Rougham in this period it would appear that the keeping of sheep was especially important. In the thirteenth century there was mention (NRO, NRS, 6928) of a fold with a shepherd linked with reference to 2½ acres of land at Suillepit with a sheepfold in the same piece. In 1332 (NRO, NRS, 6656) there was a piece of land *ad bercariam* of Julian le Hunte while the Schepehouscroft of John Reed has already been noted. Bailiff's accounts of 1443 (NRO, NRS, 7426) mention 1081 fleeces valued at £27.7s. and refer to ewes belonging to the demesne and the tenants. The full significance of this activity when coupled with the acquisition of lands by certain individuals will be considered later in relation to other events.

Of other activities beyond the normal range of food production, a valor of the lands of William Yelverton dated 1463/4 (NRO, NRS, 6449 (attached)) mentioned hemp; in 1403 (NRO, NRS, 6491) John Smyth of Wesenham was presented for blocking up 'le Wasshepyt' with hemp and 'flakys'. The minor place-names 'Flaxcrundel' (NRO, NRS, 6796 of 1283) and 'Flaxland' (NRO, NRS, 6613 of 1441) suggest that this crop was grown for some time. Washpit Farm at TF 814 196 still carries the other name.

Place names also refer to kilns, either brick or tile kilns or, as is shown by bailiff's accounts (NRO, NRS, 6442, 6446 *et al.*), lime kilns.

## The decline

The Lay Subsidy of 1449 shows that Rougham had undergone a notable economic decline. The great quantity of pottery found gives evidence of a markedly clear-cut date of about 1400 for final desertion of the western area of the village and there is some documentary evidence pointing to removal in the last decades of the fourteenth century As the period of desertion in Rougham can be so clearly related to this century it appears appropriate to review potential causes peculiar to that time and their possible effects on the village.

The fourteenth century was generally one of considerable difficulty in England as a whole, as well as in other parts of Europe. The outbreaks of plague which began in 1348-9 certainly caused severe loss. The effect of this on Rougham is uncertain. The installations of two priests, John Brandon and Henry Pollard, within the year of 1349 may point to unusual mortality (NRO, N. Dioc. Arch., Inst. Bk.9, 98, 115). Some Court Rolls for Green Hall survive for 1348, 1350-51 and 1352, but not for 1349 (NRO, NRS, 6484). This was the manor which lay in the western, deserted extension of Rougham. The presentments at a court held in late July 1348 numbered 21, all apparently for petty offences, while John Mason was elected hayward. After the complete absence of recorded activity in 1349, the entries for 1350-1 are similar to those of 1348 and show no sign of drastic events, there being no admissions of new tenants. These would have occurred subsequent to deaths in 1349 and so would have been lost with the missing Roll.

In 1349, however, a flurry of land transactions which reached a climax in June was recorded in ten charters. Most of them record various transfers of land or tenements within and between the leading families of Rougham: Reed, Hoker, Aleyn and Hunt (NRO, NRS, 6734A, 6743, 6725, 6732, 6650, 6731, 6733A, 6726, 6734). Five charters survive for 1350, including one concerning a messuage in Overgate, but in subsequent years documents of this kind are few. It has not been possible to show that these transactions were in some way connected with the mortality but the coincidence remains.

Suggestions concerning decline in agricultural yields as the Middle Ages progressed have been made and disputed (Postan 1975, 63-79; Hallam 1981, 245-51). Bad harvests have been cited as a cause of pre-plague famine (Postan 1975, 37), but that this was true of East Anglia has been questioned (Hallam 1981, 42-5). Some bad harvests were attributable to wet seasons, particularly those of 1314, 1315, and 1316, and 1320 and 1321. Murrains caused losses among livestock (Miller and Hatcher 1978, 60, citing Kershaw 1973, 3-50).

As yet no documentary evidence has been found to show the fate of Rougham among the famines, pestilences and other misfortunes of the first half of the fourteenth century.

The climate in the fourteenth century became less stable, with periods of extremes and marked variability. There were some years, particularly between 1310-50, which were cooler and wetter (Lamb 1987, 133); the crop failures occurred within this interval. It is possible that increased rainfall may have posed problems on clay soils where house sites would have required greater effort to maintain drainage (Beresford and Hurst 1971, 121). Professor Lamb has pointed out (1986, pers. comm.) that the early years of the fifteenth century, in particular, were much wetter than usual. Some indications of drainage problems in Rougham come from various court rolls. In 1403 (NRO, NRS, 6491), Katrina Wythman was presented for blocking up the common stream on Massingham Gate; in 1440 (NRO, NRS, 6488), a woman was amerced for blocking this same drain. In 1450-1, William Fyncham was amerced for not scouring the watercourse which ran next to Massingham Gate so that water had flooded the corn growing on demesne land. During this period, references to offences relating to drains and flooding were quite frequent, not only here but in other named parts of Rougham which cannot now be identified; some concerned the aptly named 'Swelebek' which seems to have lain somewhere to the south of Massingham Gate. It is likely that in a settlement which was, for one reason or another, contracting, poor drainage in a particular portion of the settled area may have given added inducement to leave it. The very wet early months of 1981 demonstrated quite clearly that, even with modern drainage techniques and very deep ditching, the land on either side of Massingham Gate became very tenacious and even water-logged after a few days of heavy rain, even flooding of the B1145 occurred lower down the slope close to the line of the more southerly hollow way.

That these natural misfortunes, while not sufficient in themselves, may have helped bring about decline or partial desertion in Rougham is possible; the processes of economic and tenurial change may have been made easier. That acquisition of lands by certain persons was taking place is shown by a document, undated but of the fourteenth century (NRO, NRS, 6500), which lists lands purchased by John Reed in Rougham, lands and tenements which John Reed had *ex dono et concessione Richardi Hoker* in Rougham and also another list of lands acquired by the same Richard. This seems to suggest considerable acquisitions of land. The name of Elena Hokere appears in the 1379 Poll Tax assessment for Rougham; her relationship to Margaret, sister and heir of Richard Hooker, who married John Reed's son Richard is not known (A. Reid, pers. comm.). This marriage may explain the 'gift and grant'. The prominence of the Reeds and their probable relatives in purchasing and granting lands in Rougham makes it necessary to scrutinise the activities of this family as the fourteenth century drew to its close and, in particular, during the period of social unrest culminating in 1381.

## Rougham in 1381
by Andy Reid

1381 was the year of the English Rising or 'Peasants' Revolt'. The course and character of the events which took place in Norfolk in 1381 have been described in detail elsewhere (Cornford *et al.* 1984). In the western half of the county, the rebels confined themselves in the main to looting and extortion, undertaking, in the words of Reville, an 'immense pillage' (Reville and Petit-Dutaillis 1898, 86). These activities, however, were not entirely random and uncoordinated; they amounted to much more than mere 'village ruffianism' (Oman 1906, 111). The rebels' targets generally seem to have been people involved in local administration, as J.P.s, tax collectors or lesser officials.

There were several places in west Norfolk to which rebel bands were attracted from a wide surrounding area because they contained the residences of such persons; Rougham was one of them.

The attraction in Rougham for the rebels was the house of John Reed. On June 17th 1381 there was a considerable gathering there. Men had come from as far away as Wymondham, Lakenheath, Feltwell and Creake to form possibly the largest assembly of insurgents anywhere in west Norfolk during the rising. The indictments presented by local juries in the immediate aftermath provide some idea of what happened (PRO, KB 9 166/1). It appears that John Reed's property was devastated. Buildings were thrown down; a considerable quantity of lead was removed from the roofs; doors and windows were broken and their fittings were taken. A large amount of property was removed, including an iron-shod cart, a millstone, several horses, a saddle, sixteen pigs, wheat, barley, malt and wool. The total value of Reed's losses was well in excess of £50.

The scale of this attack on John Reed's property can be explained, at least in part, in terms of his role in the county as a whole. A wealthy man, with a poll tax assessment in 1379 of 10s. (PRO, E179 149/53), he was involved in a range of financial transactions both as creditor and debtor in various parts of west Norfolk (PRO, CP40 483-6). He was also involved in local administration. He had served on several commissions to assess and collect subsidies and was a collector of the hated poll tax in 1379 (Cal. Fine Rolls, 1377-81; PRO, E179 149/53). His appointment, barely a month after the rising, as escheator in Norfolk and Suffolk, is further evidence of his prominence at county level.

The events of June 1381 at Rougham, however, also had a local dimension. One of the indictments names three Rougham men, Walter Aleyn, John Munnyng and Walter de Tyl (in other sources, 'Trille') who, with John Clerk of Whissonsett (who was bailiff for the Earls of Arundel and Richmond, both of whom held land in Rougham) and John Cable (formerly of Weasenham), took a horse, a saddle and other goods and chattels worth £20. Another mentions that Walter Aleyn refused a request by John Bray, petty constable of Rougham (and a member of the jury which presented the indictments), that he should swear to keep the peace.

The evidence of the indictments is supplemented by that of an entry in the Rougham manor court roll for 26th September 1381 (NRO, NRS 7511). This provides a list of no fewer than forty-seven people (forty-two men and five women) who were punished (by small 'amercements' of 2d. or 3d. in most cases, 6d. or 1s. in a few) because they had 'committed hamsoken (i.e. housebreaking) against John Reed entering his close, and carried away his goods and chattels in the time of the rumour (i.e. the rising) and similarly received the goods and chattels of the said John'. The list includes the three Rougham men already named, and John Clerk of Whissonsett. It also includes the name of John Bray, the petty constable and juror.

In order to clarify the significance of what happened in Rougham in 1381, the names listed in the court roll entry have been compared with those provided by two other sources: the 1379 poll tax assessments for Rougham (PRO, E179 149/53); and an undated but apparently near-contemporary rent roll of John Reed (NRO, NRS 6468). The former provides the names of thirty-three people (twenty-eight men, including John Reed, and five women), of which seventeen (all men) appear in the court roll entry.

Since there was, probably, considerable evasion of the poll tax in Rougham, as elsewhere (Beresford 1958), the list of people assessed represents an uncertain proportion of the adult population of the village. The rent roll provides a list of forty-two people (thirty-seven men, five women; excluding three people who are stated to live elsewhere than in Rougham) of whom twenty-eight (twenty-seven men, one woman) appear in the court roll entry; and of the remaining nineteen people named in the court roll entry, over half may be discovered in other Rougham sources (including four whose names appear in the poll tax assessments). It is therefore possible to conclude that over half of those 'amerced' in the manor court for participating in the despoliation of John Reed's property were his tenants; that over three-quarters of them were residents of Rougham; and that the participants represented a substantial proportion of the population of the village. It would seem that about two-thirds of the adult male population were involved. Nine of the twelve men who served as the chief pledges at the manor court on 26th September 1381 (arguably the leaders of the village community (Dyer 1981, 8)) took part: the names of two more were originally included and then mysteriously deleted. This was not a protest by marginal elements: it was an insurrection of the major part of the community against its manorial lord and principal landowner, John Reed.

We have no statement of the motives of the insurgents; they have to be inferred from the available evidence. The reasons which drew rebels from a wide area to Rougham might also have some force locally; but it seems more likely that the most significant factors in promoting rebellion at the local level were John Reed's actions as a manorial lord and as an ambitious landowner; actions which were beginning to change the geography of the village.

There is ample evidence in the Rougham court rolls of 1379, 1380 and 1381 of Reed's assertion of his manorial rights. It seems reasonable to suppose that this caused resentment; resentment which would not have been lessened by the knowledge that, as a manorial lord, Reed was something of a parvenu, his forbears in the thirteenth century having been villeins (Jessopp 1888, 67-8).

As a landowner, John Reed had been for some years engaged in the expansion and consolidation of his demesne. In 1379, for example, he purchased a messuage on the south side of Westgate, which had other messuages which he had already purchased lying on each side of it (NRO, NRS 7370). The vendor on that occasion (Richard atte Green) is one of several in the period before 1381 whose names then appear in the court roll entry of 26th September 1381 as despoilers of John Reed's property at the time of the rising. There must be some doubt as to how willingly they had sold out to Reed. Walter Aleyn, one of the named Rougham rebels, lived in a messuage bounded by John Reed's properties on each side, one of which had been purchased in 1374. At the manor court in 1379, Aleyn paid a fine of 3d. for licence to place a boundary marker between his property and Reed's, evidence perhaps of the literally physical pressure being applied by the lord of the manor (NRO, NRS 7511).

It is possible that John Reed's consolidation of his property was associated with the keeping of sheep. The Rougham manor court was anxious to restrict the movement of other people's sheep. Reed had a shepherd in 1371 (p. 54), and his losses in 1381 included a quantity of wool. Wool was certainly important in the economy of Rougham at a later date. A desire to expand wool

production may form part of the rationale for Reed's actions in the late fourteenth century.

It is hard to avoid the conclusion that there is a direct causal connection between the expansion and consolidation of John Reed's demense and the desertion of part of medieval Rougham. It seems equally plausible that the insurrection of the people of Rougham was in part a response to those developments. If it is accepted that the motives of the Rougham insurgents to some extent related to their perceptions of the changes which they could see taking place around them, then the strength of their reaction might be seen as testimony to the significance of the changes. There are few other places where the opportunity presented by the rising of 1381 can be shown to have elicited such an overwhelming response from the community as a whole.

The failure of the rising may have helped to create an atmosphere in which there were fewer obstacles to the realisation of John Reed's ambitions. The expansion and consolidation of his property continued. In December 1381, Reed bought Walter Aleyn's messuage and sold him two elsewhere in the village (abutting on Southgate) (NRO, NRS 7376/7). Some of the entries in the manor court roll of 26th September 1381 also suggest that the acquisition of property by Reed was being accompanied by the closure of customary rights of way. Several individuals were presented (in two cases, with their whole households) for 'making an unlawful way beyond halle croft...to the great injury of the lord', and there were three other presentments for making unlawful ways elsewhere in the village. It was of course at the same court that the forty-seven people were amerced for 'hamsoken' against John Reed, the comparative mildness of the punishment perhaps indicative of a hard headed pragmatism on Reed's part, since he would, after all, continue to require their labour and co-operation.

## The decline *(continued)*

Some inkling as to the cause and circumstances of the depopulation of western Rougham can now be obtained. John Reed appears to have been engaged in the large-scale keeping of sheep. It has been shown in the preceding passage that he was also engaged in the consolidation of his properties within Rougham after 1381 and that some of the properties acquired lay in Westgate which was quite certainly in the deserted portion (NRO, NRS, 7370, 7338). The absence from this area of significant finds of pottery dated later than 1400 seems to point to the actions of John Reed, whatever his motives may have been, as an important factor in the abandonment of this area, if not its entire cause.

That large-scale sheep farming was important later in Rougham is revealed by the Commission of Inquiry of 1517, where William Yelverton was noted as having put down to sheep pasture 200 acres of land in Rougham which had been in cultivation (Leadam 1892-3, 7, 176). It was one of the largest acreages recorded for Norfolk by the Commission (Leadam 1892-3, 7, 156). The terms of the Commission allowed inquiry as far back as 1488 but an early sixteenth-century date for the enclosure is most probable. As the Yelvertons obtained the lordship of the manor by marriage with the Reed heiress (Jessopp 188, 68), it seems reasonable to suggest that they were furthering a process already begun.

An indenture of 1511 (NRO, NRS, 7071), in which Yelverton let part of his manor to the Priory of Castleacre, mentions both his pastures in Rougham (his hoge(t) pasture and his ewe pasture) with 400 acres of arable in the North and South fields, two closes (Huntes Close and the Neetes Close), a stable, a barn and a chamber in the manor and the shack assigned to the pastures, that is to say from Blakhyll in the south (somewhere to the south-east of the present village) to Wesenham field in the north, and from Lynnn Way on the south to Massingham Gate on the north. As this last area includes the land between Hildemere Gate and Massingham Gate it seems to confirm that this area had long been depopulated. Yelverton retained the right of free access to 'cherysh his conyes' and the Prior's shepherd was strictly enjoined not to harm any of the 'conyes nor rabettes' nor any other game of the warren. The Prior was not to be allowed to keep any more sheep in the pasture in shack time than he kept in 'severall time' as this would be to the 'undoyng of the towne'; the due number of sheep to be kept was laid down as nineteen hundreds. The right of the townsmen to feed their cattle through all the field at shack time as in times past was retained. The Prior was to have free access to 'Kylpit, the moor and Whytwell Wateryng place' such as were necessary for his 'catell and colyette'; he also had certain pasture rights in the common of Rougham 'lying in shack time'. Although the rights of townsmen were, in some degree, safeguarded, there was no doubt by this time that there was but one substantial farmer left in Rougham: various subsidy rolls show another William Yelverton as paying £6 in 1542 and 1543 (PRO, E 179 150/310 and 151/317) out of a total contribution by the township of just above that sum; none of the other persons contributing paid more than a few pence (for goods, not lands). This is clearly comparable with the scale of payment made by Pudding Norton, a village later completely deserted, where Sir William Fermor contributed £8, Alice Perne, a widow, 20s. and the four others listed paid 1s. 2d. between them.

## Rougham in later times

Rougham remained in the hands of the Yelverton family until the seventeenth century. A list of contributors to the monthly collection for the poor of Rougham made in April 1634 (NRO, NRS 7611e) is headed by Sir William Yelverton and contains names of fifteen other contributors. In 1649 the last male member of the family died; his sister had married Thomas Peyton who mortgaged and sold the manor to Sir John Bladwell of Swannington. Sir John lived in the Hall with Peyton and later gave the estate to Peyton's son, Yelverton. Yelverton Peyton sold Rougham to the Hon. Roger North in 1691 (Blomefield X, 32). A particular of the estate settled on Mr Yelverton Peyton by Sir John exists (NRO, NRS 7824). It shows that the manor was still much engaged in the keeping of flocks. The Lodge fold course contained some 500 acres and was reckoned to carry 1000 ewes; the Barly Close of 20 acres went with this for release of the said flock and was in the use of Sir John. He also had 30 acres of pasture called the Lower Wood and 10 acres of mowing ground next to it and two further closes of meadow and pasture totalling 40 acres. Other land was leased to farmers named Henry Johnson, Christopher Alcock and Thomas Safly. Johnson only leased some 90 acres of meadow and pasture in three closes, one of which was 'Broadmire hyrne Close'. The others had houses, barns, stables and outhouses, Safly having one additional tenement with barn, stable and homestall. Alcock and Safly each held on lease 80 acres of Breckground for corn, lying within the foldcourse. The particular also records that a

further 80 acres not valued was customarily left 'for Succour and Releife for these 1000 sheepe from Christmas untill ten dayes after our Lady; in white weather they come in ten dayes afore'. These breaks or brecks seem to have been of low fertility; they grew only oats and rye and were usually valued at '8/-a comb barly, now it is little more than half viz. 4/6d'. Peyton alleged that the value had dropped from 10s. (NRO, NRS 7844). Another document reveals the system under which the breaks were cultivated. A break of 43 acres was ploughed for four successive years giving a total of 172 acres of break under the plough in each foldcourse. Each year a new break of 43 acres was taken under the plough; nineteen years were allowed to lapse before a break was once again brought under cultivation. The total acreage of breaks in a foldcourse was 817 (43× 19) so that if 172 acres were under tillage in one year, the other 645 were in fallow and at a rent of 8s. per arable acre, the annual rent of the breaks in one foldcourse was thus £68.16s. (NRO, NRS 7856).

There are several documents recording Rougham as Yelverton Peyton prepared to sell. One (NRO, NRS 7639) describes the manor house as a large brick house with a new roof, a large square walled courtyard before it, a garden and orchard adjoining, two other walled-in yards where there was a large dairy and washhouse, a large brewhouse and other outhouses, all of them well-constructed of brick and stone in good repair, the roofs newly tiled within the year. Nearby was a large stackyard and a good barn and haystore, a fine stable built of 'cut flint' which included servants' quarters and granaries and hay stores over it and a large barn in the same yard of about 150 feet in length. There was a pasture with thirty fine ash trees in front of the house with a large dove house well-stocked with birds. There were two flocks of sheep and two foldcourses named as within the manor farm; the Lodge foldcourse and Fincham's foldcourse, each said to carry 1000 sheep. There were said to be 1200 rabbits in the warren. Meadow pastures divided and enclosed by quickset hedges with good wood and timber are mentioned. The breck ground was said to lie fourteen or fifteen years before it was broken again. There were 200 acres of arable infield. Further particulars (NRO, NRS 7639 ad) mention seven or eight farmers and their leases, and a blacksmith; among the details is the name of another foldcourse, Lady foldcourse. The later document suggests that some alteration in farming practice had occurred with more frequent cropping of breaks in the foldcourse. North obviously scrutinised the estate because his own observations are recorded (NRO, NRS 7613 am): one farm had its housing much out of repair; the warrener's house was almost ruined and not repaired and that individual was accommodated in the white house, said to be the house adjoining the churchyard. The Lodge foldcourse he dismissed as being only sufficient for 800 sheep, not 1000 as had been claimed.

It is obvious from the materials for a history of Rougham which Roger North compiled in various versions (NRO, NRS 7032 b) that the village had fallen on evil times. He noted the vestiges of farms and dwellings which could still be seen along with streets and some stone cisterns and wells. This, he said, together with the greatness of the old church bore witness to the former size of the village. The purchasing-in of farms and dwellings had left only four tenements and three pightles and there was subsequent neglect and destruction by fire 'wch calamity hath afflicted that village with more desolation than any other thereabouts and very little hath bin done

towards restoring what fires have destroyed'. There were scarce fifty families living in the village (another version says scarce forty) and they lived in a few houses which, with the manor house, lay near the church. This explanation of the contraction suggests that it was landlord action which caused it; however, it is not clear whether North was commenting on dilapidation within the general area of the present village or whether there were still visible remains on the greater extension to the west. North certainly described the church and churchyard as being 'in desperate decay' and the visitations, instead of listing faults, were wont to return a mere description of 'very ruinous'. By 1705 extensive repairs had been undertaken including that of the tower the interior of which had been exposed to the ravages of the weather for more than forty years. In fact a certificate of decay had been issued in 1689, the town being much depopulated 'and the inhabitants (by reason of the Iniquity of the times and other accidents) not able sufficiently to repair the whole fabrick'. This reference to depopulation and hard times seems to be more likely to concern comparatively recent dilapidation in the main village rather than a desertion which occurred some 250 years before on the western extension. In 1669, Yelverton Peyton had petitioned to be allowed to demolish an aisle to repair the church but nothing was done, instead he sold the lead off the roof and replaced it with unsatisfactory pantiles.

Roger North also improved the manor house: he found it of several sorts of building 'as ancient manor-houses usually are' extended and altered at various times for various purposes (Jessopp 1887, XLV). Jessopp has given in full North's description of the old house and this is summarised here: the west wing was of stone and brick two stories high, leaded and battlemented, the older east wing of timber. The central building had once had a hall extending to the roof but it had been converted to provide a large upper room. A third wing was also of some age and had in its second storey a bed-chamber which may have been a chapel; at the junction of this wing with the central block there was a massive strong and high stone tower, the original purpose of which had been forgotten. Other structures belonged to the house which time and need had caused to be demolished, the occupant being 'reduced as a farmer to the shift of room for necessary uses...'. North took possession on Lady Day 1691 and took a year to consider what should be done. He decided to rebuild the old house and seems also to have carried out necessary repairs in the village. In letters to a friend (Jessopp 1887, 230, 231), he tells of having contracted for hundreds of thousands of bricks, only a fraction of them for his own use 'for I do but contrive, for the benefit of mankind, to convert rascally clay walls, that the wind blows through and through, to brick that will keep folks warm and alive'. 'We purchasers come into decayed estates, and must pay the last payment to workmen'. Jessopp included plans and an elevation of the altered Hall (opposite XXV) drawn, in 1887, by an architect from Roger North's description.

Roger North's energies were also directed towards improving the landscape of Rougham (Jessopp 1887, XL); he laid out avenues, one of them a mile long, and plantations which grew for fifty years under his eye. The long avenue of lime trees which approached the house from a south-south-easterly direction remains though the house has gone. The chestnut trees which stand in the remains of the park are of great girth and of considerable age. Jessopp published an illustration (1887, opposite XLV) of these

trees 'planted by the Hon. Roger North'. They may be older than this as a terrier of 1725 (NRO, NRS 7399 aa) refers to half an acre of glebe in the midst of the lands of R. North, with its eastern side on the churchyard walk 'being the scite of the Ancient Vicaridge House' let to him 'where grow now handsome chestnut trees'. Newly planted trees are less likely to be described as handsome. The passage also partly confirms the possibility that the park overlies part of the old village. North also gave some attention to improving drainage, he proposed to hollow some trees to make water run from one ditch to another 'which is all the aqueducts we have' (Jessopp 1887, 257).

A map of the Manor of Rougham in Rougham Hall, surveyed and drawn in 1734 by John Haley, shows the estate of the Hon. Roger North with the avenues and the other trees planted in lines radiating from a point within the park and an enclosed landscape with the larger fields called 'breaks'.

The troubles of Rougham appear not to have ended. In 1760 a faculty (NRO, FCB/2, Book 3, 131) was granted to sell a cracked bell to apply the money to repairing the cracked walls and a crumbling buttress of the church tower, the roof and covering of the tower and the seats and flooring. If anything was done it was not very effective, for another plea was made in 1767 (NRO, FCB/3, Book 4, 68) to sell the lead and repair the church. The lead and the roof had decayed beyond repair; the upper parts of the walls had deteriorated so far that they needed rebuilding before they could bear the weight of a new roof; to be made of oak and covered with blue pantiles. It was said that Roger North, owner of all the land in Rougham, absolutely refused to contribute anything, all these lands were let to two tenants at a very high rack rent. The parish was described as being burdened with numerous poor and the parishioners were unable to afford the repairs. This Roger North was the son of the purchaser of Rougham; he seems to have been a very different person from his father, his son, Fountain, ran away to sea and rejected Rougham when he became squire. He ordered the destruction of the Hall so that only the foundations and a fragment of the building remain at the end of the long avenue (North 1892, 2).

**Conclusions**

Examination of all the evidence has shown that Rougham was an extensive village with a large area, deserted long since, on its western side and some signs of lesser shrinkage on its southern margin. The deserted area in the west was settled no earlier than the late-eleventh or early-twelfth centuries and was deserted about 1400. Settlement here was along at least two, possibly three streets, Massingham Gate, Hildemere Gate and possibly Westgate, the branches and stem of a Y-shaped extension of the village. These streets were not necessarily lined continuously by houses; there probably were gaps occupied by closes and pightles in the rows. To the north of Massingham Gate was Bradmere Green itself fringed by settlement in part. The occurrence of Grimston Thetford Ware in very significant quantities marks this as an early green-edge settlement.

The possible causes of desertion can be considered next; 1400 marked the close of a century of grave troubles in the country as a whole, including bad harvests, pestilence and climatic deterioration. How far the first two of these affected Rougham is not known but there is some evidence of poor drainage of parts of the site at this time. Of social unrest in 1381, there is ample evidence and it

focussed upon the representative of a family of humble origin which had been acquiring land in Rougham for some time. That this may have been for the lucrative purpose of sheep farming is likely. Certainly there is substantial evidence of acquisition of messuages and crofts in the western portion by the Reeds at almost precisely the time when the pottery record indicates abandonment. Conversion to pasture is known to have been carried out by the Yelvertons who may have been continuing a process begun by a family with whom they were linked by marriage inheritance. The rise of demesne sheep farming with very large flocks may have caused depopulation, taken advantage of a clearance due to other causes, or hastened a depopulation which had already begun. In Rougham, if this was so, the depopulators stopped short of removing the whole village, but they curtailed it sadly.

> *'Why, as men do a-land: the great ones eat up the little ones.*
> *I can compare our rich misers to nothing so fitly as to a whale; a' plays and tumbles, driving the poor fry before him, and at last devours them all at a mouthful; such whales have I heard on a'th' land, who never leave gaping till they ha'swallowed the whole parish, church, steeple, bells, and all'.*
>
> Shakespeare: Pericles, Act II Scene I

In the case of Rougham it appears that the swallowing began at a time much before the sixteenth century.

The reference made by the Hon. Roger North to decay brought by bad husbandry and fire seems to refer to misfortunes which befell the remainder of the village at a time nearer his own.

## III. Site Description
by Alan Davison

The existing village of Rougham consists of a single street on a NNW-SSE axis with the church and the present Rougham Hall at its northern end and on its western side. The street bifurcates at its southern end. To the west of the present village are some earthworks which indicate something of its former extent. Between the most prominent of the earthworks and the Hall are the remains of a small park with many chestnut trees of great girth and apparent age and a fine avenue of lime trees. A wire fence separates the earthworks from arable land to the south. To the north and west they are bounded by woodlands; the one to the north is a recent plantation.

Rougham, past and present, lies on the gentle south-facing slope of a low ridge, the highest point of which is 87m OD. The southern end of the existing village is at about 67m. Rougham lies close to the western boundary of the heavier soils of mid-Norfolk, but within the area designated 'Good Sands' by agricultural writers. The soils are rather inclined to clay and in some places they can be very tenacious and retentive of moisture in wet weather. The areas surrounding the earthworks and the crest of the ridge are very much of this nature.

**The earthworks**
(Figs 17-18; Pls VIII and IX)
The surviving earthworks lie in grassland which stretches for some 700m west of Rougham Hall. The area nearer to the house consists of a park planted with trees and has few earthworks. The more important section begins at some 200-250m from the house. This portion can be divided into

a western part in which the pattern of earthworks is distinct and an eastern one where there has been much modification and disfigurement, probably associated with a nineteenth-century brickworks which lay on its northern flank.

The western portion is distinguished by two well-marked hollow ways bounded by distinct banks; a substantial elm tree stands on the northern bank of the southern way. The ways are from 15 to 20m in width and converge on one another in an easterly direction. The space between the two is roughly divided into four segments by three boundary banks. The most westerly is prominent in its southernmost part though it does not reach the bank of the hollow way and turns through about 90° at its northern end, part of it then forming the southern bank of a small incomplete rectangular enclosure. There is a larger, more vague feature of a similar kind on the north-western flank of this first boundary. Pottery sherds have been collected from these two rather indistinct small enclosures; they may represent the site of a dwelling and associated yard; there are entrance breaks in the bank of the northern roadway (Fig. 17).

The second dividing bank is distinct, but less well-marked; it has a perceptible change of orientation at about the mid-point of its length and has an interrupted bank projecting eastwards at about 90° from its southern limb. The third boundary bank is very subdued and appears most prominent on oblique aerial photographs but does not reach the southern boundary.

To the south of the southern hollow way there are five boundary banks which, at irregular intervals, are roughly parallel. Truncation by ploughing to the south has obscured the picture here; at the southern end of the easternmost enclosure there is the remnant of a bank with some signs of another enclosure beyond that. The easternmost embankment has a projecting ridge extending some 25m north-eastwards from it; this ridge has been cut by a ditch which must obviously be later and which forms part of a group of features to the north which effectively seal off this clearly distinguishable western portion from what lies to the east.

The northern hollow way is only visible in part as it emerges from the north-west from the obscurity of a modern plantation of small conifers; as it progresses eastwards the northern margin of the way also appears. Though the plantation is so thick that an overall view is not possible it is likely that, considering the uneven ground surfaces, there are features concealed under the densely-packed trees. The course of the track becomes uncertain at the southern margin of a large pond which could be a natural feature; the mere said to be close to the site of Green Hall or Fincham's Manor (NRO, NRS 7032 b). It is at this point that there is a large deep channel-like trench, itself bordered by much shallower linear depressions, which cuts across the intervening space between the two hollow ways. The trench contains deeper portions and has part of its western slope stepped. In wet weather it contains water. It is too narrow to form a trackway but seems, possibly, to have been used as a drain and to be of later date than the other earthworks to which it is discordant. This may not be an entirely satisfactory explanation but it is supported by the existence of the shallow drain which leads away from its southern end in a direction slightly east of south, cutting across two minor banks and separated by an embankment from the southern hollow way. This embankment has a curious westward projection like a cutwater; its function is obscure. It is just possible, though on the whole unlikely, that the deep trench, associated with some modification of the large pond, may have been part of a system of fishponds. The construction of the brickworks could have obliterated any other remains of this system. The Hon. Roger North was certainly (1713) greatly interested in, and practised the making of fish-ponds, though his ventures in this field appear to have been confined to the surroundings of the family seat at Kirtling.

East of this hypothetical drain the earthworks are much less easy to interpret. Some faint signs (a few fragments of a bank, probably its southern boundary) remain of the southern hollow way. A large pond with a shallower, dry, southern lobe has been excavated across its path. On the eastern side of this a similar bank continues the alignment. Another roadway, about 10m in width, seems to have joined it from the south though the pond has obliterated the actual junction. This tributary roadway has what appears to be a possible yard enclosure on its eastern side and to the north of that parchmarks show that walling lies just beneath the surface.

Immediately beyond the pond there are faint indications that a trackway came in on the northern flank of the southern hollow way. It is possible that this may be the northern hollow way re-appearing, after passing the gently sloping margins of the mere, to join it. An aged tree stands on one of the banks of the hollow way just after the junction. Thereafter there is a narrower continuation of the hollow way eastwards towards the park where it peters out just short of the modern fence. This track is crossed by a drainage ditch which emerges from the wooded remains of the brickyard to the north where there are several pools. Its purpose is confirmed by the 1st Edition of the Six-Inch OS map which shows a sluice at this point. An account of Rougham Brickworks (Trett 1979) includes sketches which show this sluice. The track itself shows signs of being adapted as, or serving as a drain for the pasture in wet weather. How far the eastern section of this track may now be regarded as original may thus be open to question.

South of the combined hollow way and to the east of the track bordered by foundations of walling there is an area of confusing features. Two parallel banks approach from the ploughland to the south; they are linked at one point by a minor bank and they end in a small, rather formless raised area which has parchmarks which indicate the outlines of buildings which seem to be associated with a large rectangular depression on their eastern flank. Between these and the pond to the north-west are other, indeterminate hollows, the eastern one having rather steep pronounced sides.

At the easternmost tip of the main area of earthworks, on the edges of the park, there are a few banks. Two of these, parallel, might be the last vestiges of the hollow way. The more southern feature is of an inverted V-shape; potsherds have been found in this area.

Even the most westerly portion of the main earthworks is marred by pits and depressions. It is likely that many of these are later features, although some do respect the boundary banks rather than cut into them. Marling and brick-making may account for some but others are so small as to suggest that patching of the roadways which are likely to have remained in use for some time after desertion may be a cause.

Of the features in the park the most noteworthy are two hollow ways. The southern one emerges from the north-eastern corner of the neighbouring ploughland and

# ROUGHAM

PONDS

OLD HALL
(Site of)

Hall

| 0 | 50 | 100 | 150 | 200 |

METRES

HOSTE 1984
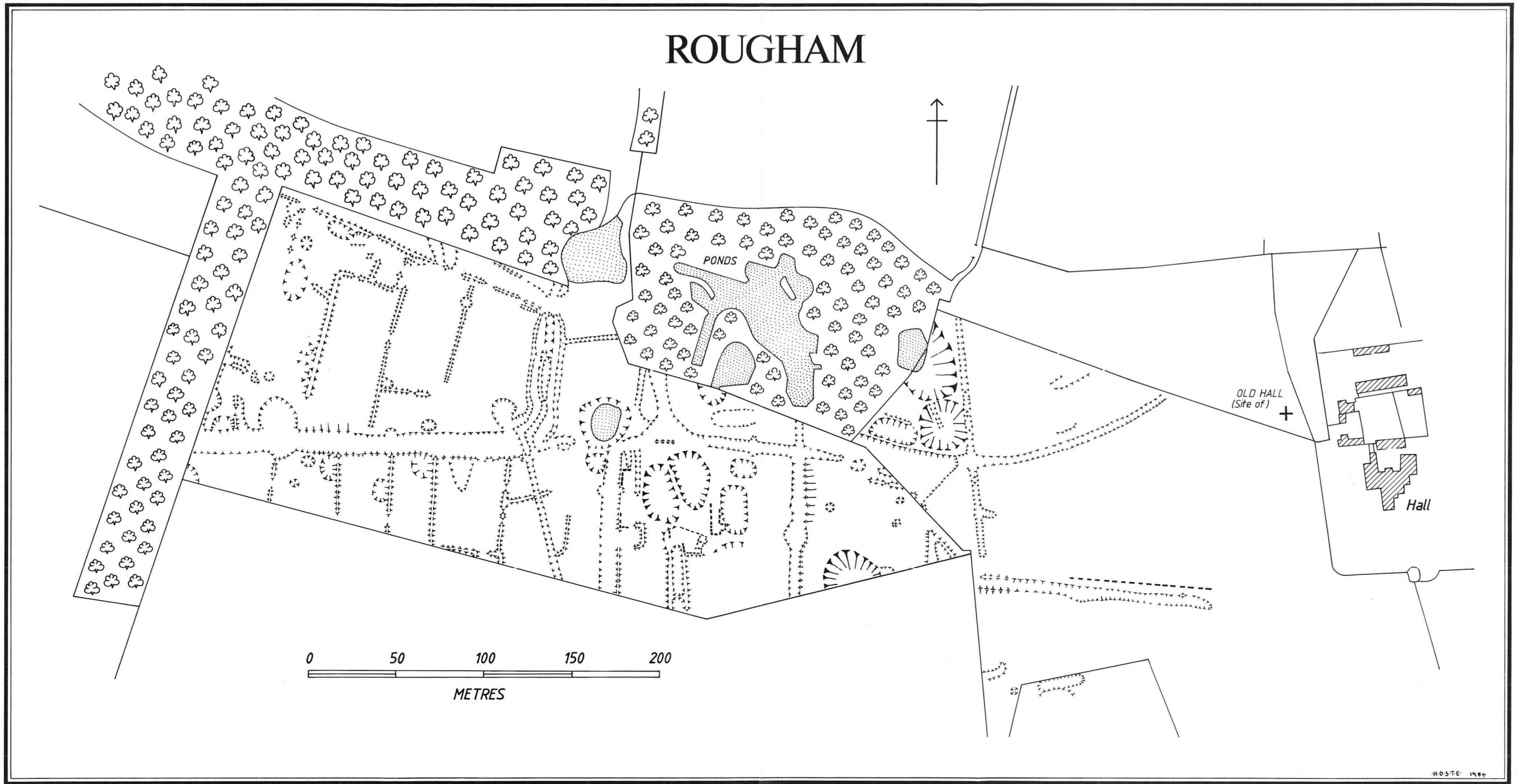
Figure 17 Rougham: Earthworks. Scale 1:2500.

# ROUGHAM

*tofts?*

*t o f t s*

*t o f t s*

Hall

Church

0  50  100  150  200
*metres*
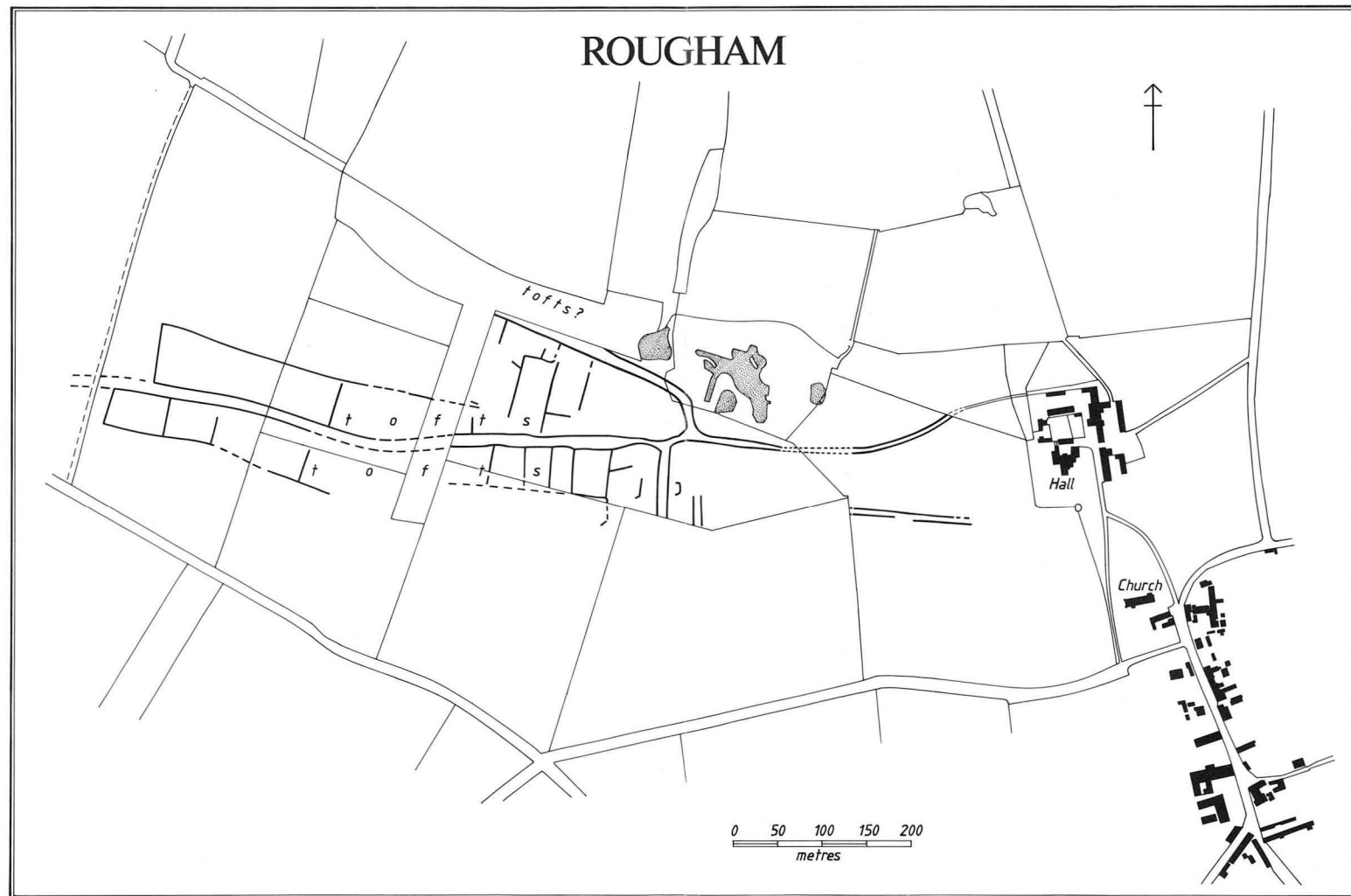
Figure 18. Rougham: Interpretation of earthworks and air photographs (Plate IX). Scale 1:7500.

has distinct banks on either side at first. These are soon obscured and the depression eventually peters out some 135 metres to the east. Parchmarks revealed that there are the foundations of a wall for the last 80 m of the hollow way on its northern flank and a little distance from it. It is not clear whether these features are part of the deserted medieval site; it is possible that the wall may have been associated with the landscaping of the park and the hollow way a perimeter track. The northern hollow way is much narrower and less distinct and curves away to the north-east. Although it appears to be in rough alignment with the hollow way in the main earthwork, it seems unlikely to be contemporary and is probably a later access track to the pasture or to the nineteenth century brickworks. However, there are vague banks and platforms to the north of it which have yielded coarse medieval potsherds. Coarse medieval wares have also been collected close to the southern hollow way; in each case a medieval presence is indicated, but the features may well be later.

The north-west corner of the park has confusing banks and hollows which are most probably outer parts of the brickworks. The north-east corner near the present Hall has a fragment of masonry and the parchmark outlines of part of the Rougham Hall enlarged by the Hon. Roger North after 1691 and later demolished by his grandson.

## Features on aerial photographs
(Pls VIII and IX)
Photography shows that the earthworks were, in 1946, much more extensive (R.A.F. 5026 3G. TUD. UK 100, Part I of 30/3/46; Pls VIII and IX; Fig. 18). The southern hollow way can still be seen crossing the strip of woodland bounding the existing earthworks to the west. It then crossed a field immediately to the west of this wood which was grassland in 1946. The 1946 photograph suggests that there were enclosures on either side of the way. A pit has been made in the southern part of this field, close to the major features; probably for marling. It has a steep ramp at its south-west corner and there are signs, on the 1946 photograph, of a track which led southwards to the B1145. The way then continued across the next field, already ploughed in 1946. An enclosure was clearly visible on its northern side at this time; a feature on the southern side is less distinct and may have a back lane on its southern side. Finally, the way was shown as crossing the corner of yet another field before merging with the line of the B1145. Traces of a small feature a little further north by the side of the modern bridle path, visible as a soil mark in 1946, mark the site of a demolished farm building of fairly modern date.

The northern hollow way which leaves the existing earthworks is to some extent traceable through the plantations to the north-west (Pl. VIII). A modern track which gives access from the bridle path is virtually on the same line. Further to the west of the bridle path, a section of parish boundary and a footpath continue this line until a by-road to Massingham is reached.

Another group of features is shown on the 1946 photograph to the north of the woodland which borders the northern side of the existing site; this land is now under the plough. They are less easy to interpret and may well be unrelated to the medieval village. They consisted of large, roughly rectangular features with some internal subdivisions and a linear feature leaving the southern margin and extending some distance eastwards to the north of the brickworks.

*Note*: At the time this survey was made (1980/81) some improvement in the drainage of this area was in progress; boundary ditches had been considerably deepened and the upcast thrown on the field, and drainage tiles had been laid mechanically. This is likely to complicate any pattern of soil marks or crop marks that may be visible. Some early drainage tiles were found among upcast suggesting that attempts to improve drainage were by no means all very recent.

## Pottery finds
(Fig. 19)
*Note:* In the years 1970-4 Mr Albert Hooks of Rougham carried out extensive fieldwalking in the parish. This gave valuable general information about the location of sites, subsequently confirmed and extended in greater detail during the survey under discussion here. Figure 19 shows the results of this later survey only.

During the survey small quantities of potsherds were collected from the surface of the pastures which cover the earthworks and the park. Of these finds the main areas of concentration were from the vicinity of the possible enclosures in the north-west corner of the main earthworks near the northern hollow way (A on Fig. 19), some from the areas between the boundary banks to the north of the southern hollow way (B), from the south-east corner of the earthworks (C) and from two locations in the park, one from vague platforms near the northern margin (D), and some from the vicinity of thc more southern hollow way (E). All the finds were either medieval grey ware or medieval glazed wares except for one piece of an off-white fabric from A and a Romano-British rim from E. One stray piece of later pottery (stoneware) was found. The pottery was retrieved from molehills and other small areas of disturbed ground and is insufficient to be shown as concentrations in Figure 19. Nevertheless, it serves to date the earthworks.

Much pottery was found on arable land to the north, south, west and south-west of the surviving earthworks. To the south there is a scatter of pottery for some distance down the gentle slope (Site 3673 Context 1) (1 on the plan) with sherds being especially numerous at the eastern end near the southern hollow way in the park, and at the western end near the wood where the hollow way is closest to the edge of the arable. Only two pieces of post-medieval pottery were collected, 323 of the finds were of unglazed, predominantly medieval pottery which, however, included pieces of Grimston Thetford Ware bowls and jars and other late Thetford-type Ware jars. There were seventy-eight sherds of glazed wares, mostly Grimston, of the thirteenth-fourteenth centuries, and two lava quern fragments. A large millstone was noted lying on the edge of the ploughed area.

Following the line of the southern hollow way through the wood to the west (where it is still visible as a depression) two arable fields are crossed before Fincham Lane is reached. The first of these fields was the one which was still grassland in 1946 (2 on Fig. 19). Levelling about thirty years ago has undoubtedly destroyed some of the distinctive features, but variations in level and in soil colouring remain. Pottery finds were particularly numerous, especially on the eastern side of the field but tend to die away to the north-west and pottery is apparently absent from the area south of a line drawn slightly south of westwards from the end of the woodland to the east. Finds

ROUGHAM

5a

5

6

7

A

B

C

D

E

1

2

3

4

Hall

Church

ROMANO-BRITISH POTTERY
Thin distribution
Concentration

MEDIEVAL POTTERY
Thin distribution
Concentration

+   Post-medieval brick kiln

0   50   100   150   200
metres

Figure 19  Rougham: Distribution of recorded pottery scatters. Scale 1:7500.

included: building materials (medieval brick, medieval peg-tiles, miscellaneous tile fragments, unglazed ?floor tiles); a hone; pieces of two iron knives and fragments of smelting slag (slightly more evident in the west); as well as twenty portions of lava querns. The pottery, particularly from the east and north-east of the field, included 1009 pieces of coarse unglazed ware (Grimston Thetford Ware, early medieval and medieval ware). Three hundred and sixty-four fragments of glazed medieval pottery, mainly of Grimston Ware but including 153 of glazed oxidised pieces (probably not Grimston Ware) were collected. One piece of medieval stoneware, a possible piece of Romano-British wheel-made grey ware with smoothed exterior and two burnt sherds possibly, but not probably, portions of crucibles, one later medieval or post-medieval glazed handle fragment and two pieces of post-medieval stonewares were the only variations from the general pattern of finds. There were also a few worked flints. There is a flooded pit, probably a marl pit, in this field. It is located on the southern margin of the area where pottery occurs and may well have caused some disturbance to portions of the site. Immediately to the west of it is a slight mound of indeterminate shape. From this small area came a considerable proportion (149) of the total of coarse ware, mainly portions of bowls and jars of Grimston Thetford Ware and early medieval wares. There was probably little medieval ware amongst the unglazed sherds here, but there were some glazed Grimston wares.

It is quite likely that the sherd count for glazed wares in this field (2) is under-estimated and that for coarse ware over-estimated. Abrasion has removed glaze, making it impossible to distinguish between body sherds from bowls of Grimston Thetford Ware with oxidised surfaces and earlier glazed Grimston wares from which the glaze has been removed.

The pottery finds on this field continued to be made up to its western margin and are clearly associated with the line of the roadway, particularly its northern side; the density of occurrence is, however, less.

The second field, which borders on Fincham Lane to the west (3 on Fig. 19), provided similar evidence though less of it. Again, finds were associated with the line of the roadway, particularly in the vicinity of rectangular soil marks where there are some signs of buildings. Well over 350 sherds were collected from this limited area of the field, the greater proportion (274) being early medieval and medieval unglazed wares. There were eleven Grimston Thetford Ware bowl rims and Grimston Thetford or late Thetford-type Ware jar rims. Glazed Grimston wares were numerous (seventy-seven) and there were two fragments of oxidised medieval glazed wares of another kind. Five pieces of lava querns and two possible medieval roof tiles and a brick fragment of possibly medieval date as well as two sherds of Romano-British grey ware were also found.

The small corner area of the third field crossed by the line of the old road (4 on the plan) gave only small quantities of pottery. Apart from one sherd of micaceous Romano-British grey ware, there were twenty-three sherds of medieval unglazed wares with one early medieval unglazed rim, a base of glazed Grimston Ware, a handle fragment possibly of Grimston Thetford Ware and a few post-medieval pieces. The remainder of this field was apparently barren of potsherds although a solitary medieval sherd occurred at the northern end near the line (inferred) of the northern hollow way. There is an area where recent building materials occur by the side of Fincham Lane; it

coincides with the soil mark visible in 1946 and represents the site of a small building shown on the 1891 edition of the OS Six-Inch map. Mr Albert Hooks, in earlier years, collected a quantity of flint tools from this field.

These fields (2, 3, 4) slope gently down to the B1145. At the northern ends of (2) and (3) there are water-filled pits. Pottery occurs very close to the one at the northern end of (2) but there is no indication that this pond is contemporary with the settlement. That in (3) is probably later than the settlement since it appears to interrupt the line of the northern hollow way which leaves the earthworks. The pit at the northern end of (4) is dry. During the wet winter of 1980-1 not only were the water pits full to overflowing, but the ditch between (2) and (3) (a very shallow depression at best) flowed vigorously on occasion; at the same time parts of (3) were saturated and water collected at the foot of the slope by the B1145, causing a flood.

To the north of the plantation on the northern side of the earthworks and to the east of Bradmere Herne other finds were made (5 on Fig. 19) in a belt of land of some breadth along the southern margin of the arable. The intensity of concentration varies from very thin in the west by way of steadier occurrence to a strong presence, particularly of rims, at the eastern end, where the band is much broader and lies close to a pond called the Broad Water (Broad Mere or Bradmere?). A very large number of sherds (682) were unglazed and, judging by the rims, about 70 per cent were of Grimston Thetford Ware or similar, the remainder being medieval. There was a possible Romano-British sherd and fifty-four pieces of glazed Grimston Ware, a roof tile, possibly medieval, some miscellaneous tile fragments, two pieces of lava querns, one base of post-medieval stoneware and three flint flakes, one retouched.

The middle of this field seems devoid of pottery, an interesting feature which was also noted by Mr Hooks. To the north of this field, however, there is a narrower belt where pottery again occurs (5a). Mr Hooks found 'large numbers' of rims of storage jars of Thetford-type Ware with thumb-impressed decoration and of large size. The recent investigation produced 129 pieces of unglazed wares, mainly Grimston Thetford Ware, with only five pieces of glazed Grimston Ware. There were four fragments of lava and some miscellaneous later pieces. At its western end, this site is overlapped by (7) and seven pieces of Romano-British grey ware, one base of samian, a possible *tegula* and a piece of slag were found. The full significance of the distribution of pottery in this field (5 and 5a) has been reviewed with the documentary evidence.

To the east of this field and to the north of the nineteenth-century brickworks (the 1891 Six-Inch map shows buildings on the site) pottery was also found though disturbance caused by the brickworks and its remaining debris has obscured matters (6 on the plan). A few pieces of Grimston Thetford Ware were found, mainly closer to the Broad Water, but the majority (104) of the significant finds were of medieval unglazed fabrics, with one piece of medieval stoneware and some post-medieval glazed wares and stonewares. Two probable medieval roof tiles were collected but there were, particularly close to the brick kilns, so many broken fragments of comparatively recent bricks and tiles that earlier material could well escape notice. Two pieces of Romano-British pottery, one a grey ware base, the other a flagon-sherd, were found in the extreme south-eastern corner close to the park. The

presence of pottery in this area suggests that the establishment of the brickworks must have obliterated a portion of the medieval site.

*Note*: Sites (1), (2), (3), (5) and (6) are all recorded in SMR under Rougham 3673 with various context numbers, while (4) is Rougham 16926 and (5a) is 16177.

### Sites 3670/71
(7) on Figure 19: A considerable quantity of finds (well over 1100 sherds of pottery alone) was amassed from this area to the north of the deserted portion of the medieval village. It occupies the low crest of the ridge and extends southwards to impinge slightly on (5a). The vast majority of the finds were Romano-British; although some first-and second-century material was present and there was a worn Ae sestertius of Faustina Senior or Junior, the bulk was third-fourth-century pottery, much of it from the Shouldham-Pentney kilns. The scarcity of fine wares and the relative absence of Nene Valley Colour-Coated and Grey Wares is outstanding, probably because of the proximity of the Shouldham-Pentney kilns. Among the finds were bonding tiles, *tegulae*, *imbreces*, combed flue tiles, two spindle-whorls made from grey ware and a fragment of the faceted head of a pin made of jet. The pottery included fragments of Oxfordshire, South Midlands fourth-century shell-gritted, Much Hadham, samian (late second-century Gaulish), Colchester Colour-Coated, and Icenian rusticated wares and a piece of a globular Spanish amphora. Apart from the Romano-British wares there were a few sherds of glazed Grimston Ware and, in (7SE) SMR Context 8, three unglazed medieval rims suggesting that a proportion of the grey ware could be medieval. In (7NE) SMR Context 4 there was one abraded bodysherd of 'pimply' Ipswich-type Ware, one Thetford-type rim, and, possibly, some late Saxon to medieval pieces among the grey ware. In (7NW) SMR Context 7 one rim of a hard, dark, grey, handmade upright vessel, diameter about 8 cm, and of possible Iron Age or Early Saxon date was found. One coarse flint-gritted sherd occurred in the southern part of (7SE). Site 3670 in this zone is that of a post-medieval brick kiln discovered by Mr A. Hooks.

The presence of this Romano-British site accounts for the occasional pottery of that period which come from the medieval village.

### Summary
The combined evidence of the pottery and the aerial photographs show that the earthworks which remain are only a fraction of the medieval extent. The occurrence of medieval pottery from the very limited exposed areas in the park suggests that the deserted site now discernible was physically connected to the main village and not a distinct entity. The belt of pottery north of the nineteenth-century brickworks appears to support this. The surviving earthworks are grouped around the bifurcation of two roads from a single stem and a prong of settlement extended for some distance to the south-west along the more southerly of the two roads. The more northerly way also appears to have been fringed by settlement but part of the record must be hidden under the plantation on its northern side into which the line of the road disappears. It does seem that the northern edge of the road must have been very close to the southern margin of the settled area in (5). Facing this area of settlement, across land which would appear not to have

been inhabited, is another zone which supported population. The south-eastern corner of this field appears to have formed something of a focus of intensity.

The dating of the pottery gives a settlement date not significantly earlier than the late eleventh century and the area, again on pottery evidence, must have been largely abandoned by about 1400.

The present village street of Rougham seems to have extended further south in earlier times. Mr A. Hooks reported finding pottery on Sites Rougham 16175 (Late Saxon-medieval sherds) and 16174 (medieval sherds). These sites are shown on Figure 16.

*Note:* Much of the information in this section is based upon the identifications and comments made by Mr T. Gregory (NAU) for the Romano-British finds and Mr A. Rogerson (NAU) for those of medieval and other post-Roman origins.

## IV. The Church
by George and Alayne Fenner

The church of St Mary stands on the west side of the present village street, at the eastern edge of the park of Rougham Hall. It consists of nave, with a north aisle and south porch, chancel and tower. The fabric is flint, with limestone dressings, some brick, tile and re-used limestone, and the roofs are tiled.

### Description
(Fig. 20; Pls X and XI)
The east end has north and south diagonal buttresses, each with a plinth and two offsets. The large, restored five-light Perpendicular-style window has a flattened head with a dripstone, and an embattled transom, flattened heads in the lower lights, ogee above, and a quatrefoil with mouchettes in the apex. Above it is a small stone trefoil opening, and the apex of the gable is crowned with a limestone cross. The fabric is of regularly coursed flints, and the upper part of the gable has been renewed.

The south wall of the nave and chancel is continuous, although the roofs are of different heights. In the chancel, the two restored three-light Perpendicular-style windows are of a similar pattern to the east window. Immediately east of the eastern window is a buttress scar, probably one of the two triangular buttresses drawn by Ladbroke against the chancel wall. The present two buttresses are differently positioned and are not bonded into the wall. The fabric is of regularly coursed flint with some tile, brick, and dressed and moulded limestone, including window mullions.

The north side of the church consists of a modern aisle which runs its entire length. Above the arcade are four fifteenth-century clerestory windows of moulded brick with cusped heads, set in a fabric of mixed flint and brick. The aisle has five three-light Perpendicular-style windows, with a re-used three-light Decorated-style window in its east end.

The features of the south side of the nave are a porch, set in the westernmost bay, and two renewed three-light windows of Perpendicular style without transoms. They have four-centred heads, dripstones with plain stops, and are set in flint and brick relieving arches. Between the windows is a single buttress, with a plinth and three offsets, which is not bonded into the wall. The fabric is regularly coursed flint, with some limestone, and what is probably Roman brick, including a piece of a tegula. There are a

number of patches, indicating many repairs, and above the height of the labels of the windows, a change of fabric marks the raising of the walls.

At the junction of the nave and chancel five dressed limestone blocks can be seen below the eaves. They indicate the position of the upper opening of a former rood turret.

The single-storey porch is built so far to the west that its west wall overlaps the east buttress of the tower. The fabric is of knapped and galleted flint with limestone quoins. The windows are Victorian. According to Richard Fawcett, the form of the mouldings suggests that the porch doorway is by the mason of Great Walsingham church, *i.e.*, of about 1350 (Fawcett 1980, 286).

The square tower is of two stages, and its fabric is of field flints, regularly coursed, with limestone dressings and putlog holes. It has a limestone plinth with moulded top and base, a limestone stringcourse below the belfry windows, and renewed battlements. The buttresses, which are diagonal to the west and in line with the east wall to the east, have three offsets and a plinth, and the north-east buttress has been rebuilt and widened to the height of the nave eaves. The four two-light belfry windows have cusped ogee lights with a quatrefoil and mouchettes, and there is also a small lancet on the south side. Fawcett also identifies the tracery of the belfry windows as that of the Great Walsingham mason (Fawcett 1980, 280). There is a two-light west window of plain Y-tracery (probably eighteenth century) under a fourteenth-century beaked hoodmould with corbelled heads. It seems disproportionally wide for its height. Below it is a delicately carved rood group, under a heavy square hoodmould, its top touching the sill of the window above. Below this is a fifteenth-century west door with a four-centred arch, the apex of which touches the

rood group. The grouping of these three elements is uncomfortably close.

The west door is a later insertion into the tower. The plinth is not moulded on the return, but stops abruptly on either side. The base of the west window has been blocked to make room for the door. Internally, the rear-arch of the west window is continuous with that of the west door, but the colour of the limestone of its quoins above the level of the top of the door differs from that below.

The full-length arcade of seven bays is unusual in many respects. The arch forms of simple hollow chamfer and plain soffit continue through the octagonal piers, interrupted only by capitals with slight mouldings on the abacus, and an elongated necking decorated with fleurons and ball-flowers. The resulting piers are only 0.57 m thick and 0.28 m wide, and the cross-section is further reduced by the substantial hollow chamfers. The form of the columns and arches is unusual for Norfolk, Pevsner describes the arcade as Decorated (Pevsner 1962, 295), and Cautley as Perpendicular (Cautley 1949, 237). However, the shallowness of the mouldings of the arches, columns and capitals, and the bell-shaped plinths of the bases all indicate a fifteenth-century date (Dr F. Woodman, pers. comm.). The ball-flower ornament must be a case of continuity of use of a fourteenth-century feature, for fleuron decoration, similar to that at Rougham, can be found elsewhere in Norfolk in fifteenth-century contexts, for example in the porch at Thurlton and in the south chapel at East Dereham.

The divisions between nave and chancel and chancel and aisle chapel are now made by modern screens, but that they are in their original positions is evident from the brackets for supporting the screens which are integral with the columns. Other decorated brackets for lights or images



Plate X   Rougham: St Mary's church from the north-east. (Photo: David Wicks)

Plate XI   Rougham: Undated photograph hanging in St Mary's church showing the rebuilding of the north aisle in *c.* 1910 (Fig. 20). (Provenance unknown).

are on the westernmost column, which has a delicately carved angel bearing a soul, and on the first column in the chancel.

The archbraced roofs of the nave and chancel are modern work of high quality.

**Dating and interpretation**
The church was appropriated to the Priory of Westacre by Bishop Walpole at the end of the thirteenth century (Blomefield X, 35) but nothing in the fabric of the present building appears to be of this early date. The estate passed, by marriage, to the Yelverton family in the late fourteenth century, and this event might well have initiated a rebuilding programme, though this would conflict somewhat with Fawcett's dates for the belfry windows and porch doorway. Sir William Yelverton (*c.* 1400- *c.*1477; Robbins 1936, 1-51) knighted in 1461, a Justice of the King's Bench, and an eminent local figure, is a likely builder of the original north aisle. The completion of this operation, bearing in mind the integral screen brackets on the arcade, is possibly indicated by a will of 1471, leaving ten marks to the making of a roodloft and (rood) tower (NCC Jekkys 228; Cotton and Cattermole 1983, 262). The insertion of the west door and Perpendicular-style windows, which necessitated the raising of the walls, were probably part of the same building campaign.

After the Dissolution the church seems to have fallen into decay, for in 1587, the Archdeacon's Visitation recorded that extensive repairs were needed to the walls,

roofs, floors and windows (NRO, ANW 3/1). In 1686, Yelverton Peyton obtained a certificate from the Bishop to demolish the north aisle to repair the rest of the fabric 'wch is capacious enough for 6 times as many people as now inhabit in the sd parish' (NRO, NRS 7032b).

The Hon. Roger North bought the estate in 1690 and more than a decade later wrote several memoranda about 'the state of the Fabrick of Rougham church and chancell About 1690 and before', a description of his extensive campaign of repair and renewal (NRO, NRS 7032b). He removed the rotten roof of the tower, raised the walls a yard, and made battlements with a new roof and gutters. Later a new bell-frame was inserted. The chancel was thatched, and 'The windoes Reduced' and to counteract the thrust of the walls which a large brick buttress 'near the east end' had failed to hold, tie beams were inserted and the chancel was ceiled. In the nave

'the span of the Roof had begun to thrust out the walls, and the crown joynts of the sparrs were opened, and the braces had lost their hold... the pillars between the church and the N. Isle were small and had no strength to stand agt a thrust as the south wall had... for cure of this, and substitute a strength sufficient, the North Isle as farr as the nave of the church went (for agt the chancell is seemed to be a solemne capella)... was pulled downe, and a very strong wall built, embracing 2 thirds of the pillars and Arching under the high wall, with a considerable

ROUGHAM  ST MARY

N

14th Century

15th Century

20th Century

0          5          10 m
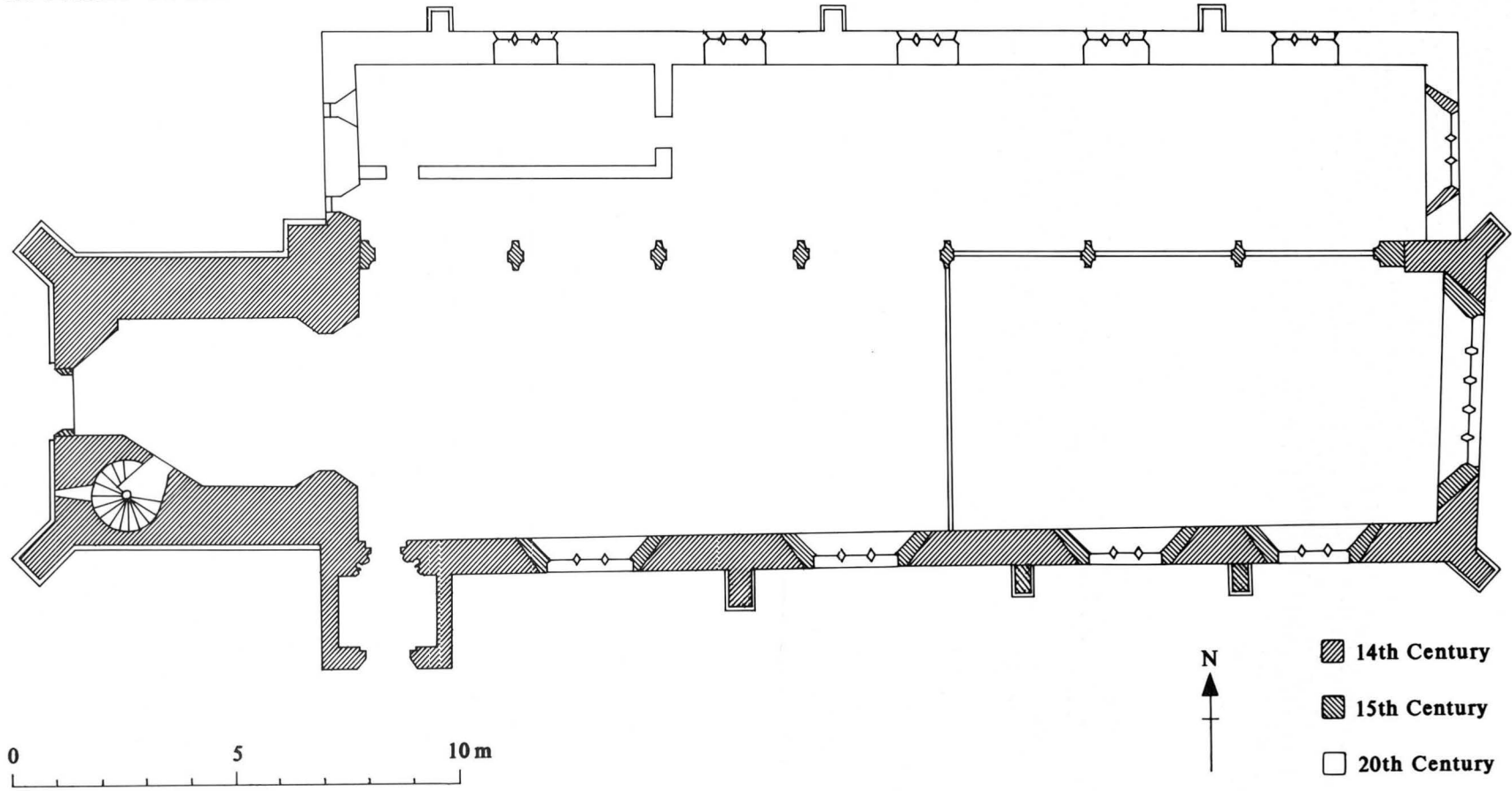
Figure 20 Rougham church. Scale 1:150.

thickness without all, wch hath united the walling on that side...'

Tie beams were also inserted, the roof stripped and releaded, and sufficient gutters added. Roger North also re-paved and whitened the interior, provided new seating, and raised the altar 'with proper steps ascending to it... since wch hath bin added an Architectonick Altar peice of 2 Columns fluted of the Corinthian order...'

In 1714 Roger North built a library 'In the cemetary and adjoyning to the south wall of the sd church towards the east... for the sake of pious and learned conference and searching for Authoritys' (NRO, NRS 7032b).

In view of this extensive work, it is a little surprising that, barely fifty years later, a Faculty petition of July 1760 (NRO, FCB 2 Book 3, 131) declares that

'the Principals Wallplates Sparrs & Braces of the roof... are greatly dilapidated and decayed. The roof and covering of the Steeple... are almost totally decayed... the walls of the sd Steeple are cracked on all Sides and one of the Buttresses greatly decayed... the seats and flooring... are much out of Repair and that the inside of the sd church ought to be speedily beautified.'

Nothing seems to have been done, however, for in August 1767 there is another similar petition (NRO, FCB 3 Book 4, 68).

Roger North's library was sold for waste paper in the early nineteenth century (Bryant 1902, 174) and the building demolished. There is no sign of it on Ladbroke's drawing. In 1867 the church was reseated and a flat lath-and-plaster ceiling was inserted, and in 1878 the ruinous north chancel chapel was pulled down, its window inserted into a new vestry, and the chancel restored (Bryant 1902, 174). The present east window of the aisle may be this old chapel window.

In 1910 there were extensive restorations. The north aisle was rebuilt on its old foundations, and a vestry incorporated into its west end. Photographs recording this rebuilding are on display in the church (Plate XI).

# 6. Holkham

## I. An Interim Documentary Summary
(Figs 21-23)
by Alan Davison

Holkham is a coastal parish about 2.8 km to the west of Wells-next-the-Sea. The coastline of earlier times is now concealed behind a wide fringe of sand dunes and reclaimed coastal marshes. The extensive park, which was created in the eighteenth century as a setting for Holkham Hall, occupies a large area of the parish. The church is isolated within the park. The village is on the coastal road although the small cluster of New Holkham lies at the southern entrance to the park. The modern civil parish of Holkham includes the small former parish of the deserted village of Quarles within its southern boundary.

For a variety of reasons it has not proved practicable at this juncture to explore the documentary sources which repose in the archives at Holkham Hall. A full examination of the development of the settlement of Holkham must await a thorough scrutiny of these sources at some future time. It has been considered desirable, meanwhile, to publish the important map of 1590 by Thomas Clerke (Fig. 21) and to provide some factual background in order to remove certain misconceptions which may surface. Holkham was no small, unsuccessful medieval settlement ripe for removal, nor was Holkham Staithe a new site chosen to replace the old village in the eighteenth century. That it is necessary to stress these facts is shown by a statement made by no less an authority than W.G.Hoskins '... at Holkham, the church stands all by itself, but there we know why. The old village, quite close to the church was completely demolished by Thomas Coke, Earl of Leicester, in 1734, in order to build his great house. The village stood in the way of his plans, and he rebuilt it down on the main road, outside the park'. (*The Listener*, 5th February 1976).

Holkham is mentioned several times in *Domesday Book* where it is named *Holcham* from OE *holc*, meaning a hollow or cavity (Ekwall 1960, 245). Among the King's lands was one carucate with three bordars and seven sokemen which belonged to Wighton; there were two ploughs (Doubleday and Page 1901-6, II, 43). The King also held another outlying estate of Wighton in Holkham with three carucates of land which had fallen into waste (Doubleday and Page 1901-6, II, 43). Ribald held from Count Alan two carucates valued at 40s., with eleven freemen and six bordars in Warham, Holkham and Wells (Doubleday and Page 1901-6, II, 71). Among the lands of William de Warenne was ½ carucate held by Walter with one bordar; it belonged to, and was assessed with, Burnham (Burnham Sutton?) (Doubleday and Page 1901-6, II, 93).

The land in Holkham of Bishop William de Bello Fago (Beaufour) of Thetford was held by William of Noyers; there was one freeman with 23 acres and the valuation had risen from 5s. in 1066 to 17s. 4d. in 1086. There was also another freeman in Holkham with 10 acres who belonged to Hindringham. This complete entry is apparently repeated a little later with a higher valuation (Doubleday and Page 1901-6, II, 115, 117).

Toki, a freeman, held 33 acres of land in Holkham from Peter de Valognes; there were two bordars and it was

worth two ounces (*orae*) and had been delivered to make up a manor. The most substantial entry is that listed among the lands of Tovi and held by Ketel, a freeman. There were three carucates of land, two villeins, eight bordars and, in 1066, five serfs. The demesne had two ploughs; the men had 1½ ploughs, but, by 1086, had only one. There was a mill and also a flock of 300 sheep. There were eighteen sokemen with 56 acres and two ploughs. Three freemen had been added to the manor by Harold and by Gyrth; under them were nine bordars. There were seven sokemen with 16 acres and, in 1066, four ploughs, which declined to only one in 1086. Its value had risen from £6 in 1066 to £8 in 1086.

It is clear from this array of entries that Holkham was not a small place. Apart from the existence of a mill there is no indication of its form. It could well be that the entries represent a scatter of settlement groupings rather than one nucleated place subdivided among various landholders. The varying degrees of linkage with Burnham, Wighton, Hindringham, Warham and Wells may also point towards scattered distributions. Most are neighbours: Burnham lies immediately to the west, Wighton is about 6 km to the south-east and Warham is at about the same distance to the east. Hindringham, however, is not contiguous and lies some 12 km to the south-east beyond the Walsinghams.

Indications of wealth and size may be obtained by comparing recorded populations and valuations in the various settlements of North Greenhoe Hundred. Of eighteen settlements arranged in order of size of recorded population, Holkham, with a total of sixty-two in 1086, was the second largest (in 1066, the population recorded was fifty-four). Of twelve places with stated valuations, Holkham was fourth (£9), far below Wighton (£23), Wells (£20) and Hindringham £19.10s.).

Holkham, in later days at least, figures as a coastal settlement and it may be profitable to compare it with other coastal places as recorded in *Domesday*. Wells, as we have seen, had a high valuation but its recorded population is insignificant; surely an indication that these figures must be treated with some caution. Stiffkey had the highest recorded population (sixty-seven) in the same hundred and a valuation a little less than that of Holkham (£8.2s.). Stiffkey had two mills and two halves of mills; Wells had one mill.

Nearby, to the west, lay the Burnhams in Gallow and Brothercross Hundreds. Burnham Overy was valued at £20, had a recorded population of fifty-six and had 2½ mills and one saltpan. Burnham Thorpe had a church, 1/3 of a mill, a population of fifty-eight and was valued at £5.10s. (Burnham) Deepdale had a recorded population of only four and a valuation of 10s. The rest of the Burnhams (presumably including some of what were later known as Burnham Norton, Sutton, Ulph and Westgate) had a total recorded population of seventy, a valuation of £6.5s., one mill and 2/3 of another. They had had a saltpan in 1066. Although these figures are undoubtedly only a partial

picture of the situation, nevertheless there is enough to suggest that Holkham was one of a string of populous and prosperous settlements along the coast.

The 1334 Assessment shows that Holkham paid the highest total of the Hundred of North Greenhoe (£9.10s.), a little more than Wighton (£9.9s.04d.) which, in turn, paid a substantially larger sum than Wells (£8.7s.). Of the neighbouring coastal settlements in North Greenhoe and adjoining hundreds, Stiffkey paid £8, Burnham Sutton £4, Burnham Thorpe £3.10s., Burnham Norton £8.4s., Burnham Westgate £12.10s., Burnham Deepdale £2.5s., Burnham St Clements (Overy) £10, Brancaster £8.4s., Thornham £6.14s., Holme £13.10s. and Titchwell £7 (Glasscock 1975, 197-200). It is evident also from the valuation of ecclesiastical property made in 1291 that Holkham was a prosperous place. Though these valuations must be treated with some reservation, its assessment was far above that of any other place in the hundred. Much of the ecclesiastical property was in the hands of the Abbey of Dereham, the Priory of Walsingham and the Priory of Castle Acre (Hudson 1910, 98-9).

The valuation of 1449 shows that Holkham had surrendered the highest place in the order of contribution to Wighton with a percentage decline of 15.8 on the total paid in 1334, the sixth largest in North Greenhoe. However, Wighton's payment had declined by 10.6 per cent on that of 1334, that of Stiffkey by 12.5 per cent, Wells 12 per cent, Holme 14.9 per cent, Titchwell 21.5 per cent, Burnham Sutton 16.7 per cent, Burnham Thorpe 28.6 per cent, Burnham Deepdale 18.6 per cent, Burnham Norton 20.8 per cent, Burnham Westgate 28 per cent and Burnham St Clement 37 per cent. Brancaster and Thornham received no reduction and presumably held their own economically in this difficult period. Holkham compares quite favourably with the other settlements in the region (Hudson 1895, 273, 280-2).

There had been change in Holkham by the early years of the sixteenth century. The Inquisition of 1517 (Leadam 1893, 179-80) showed that some enclosure had taken place. Two hundred acres of arable land with several tenements pertaining had been consolidated (the tenements were in decay), another 100 acres of arable had been converted to sheep pasture and a further 30 acres, formerly arable, to pasture. Leadam estimated that the *'diversa tenementa'* recorded were six in number. It would appear likely that some contraction of the village had taken place in the period between 1488 and 1517.

In the first survey for the Subsidy of 1524-5 Holkham contributed £5.4s.04d., a sum well below that paid by Little Walsingham (£58.3s.06d.): it was the ninth place in order of size of contribution out of sixteen. The number of contributors in Holkham was fifty while Little Walsingham had 232. Stiffkey had £6.14s.11d. paid by twenty-nine individuals and Wells £11.10s.02d. paid by 106 individuals. Of the various other settlements the Burnhams (Deepdale, Norton, Overy, Sutton, Thorpe and Westgate) were assessed for £20.10s.10d. paid by 180 contributors and Holme for £4.9s. by sixty-four contributors (Sheail 1968). It would seem that Holkham, on the basis of these figures, was still a place of standing whose inhabitants were moderately prosperous as were those of Wells, but below the average attained by the inhabitants of Little Walsingham. There seem to be no grounds for assuming that Holkham entered the post-medieval period in a feeble state ripe for clearance.

Detailed description of the form of the village in the medieval period must await an examination of the surviving medieval records when some topographical information may be recovered. The manorial history shows that Holkham, for some considerable time after *Domesday*, remained a settlement, or group of settlements, divided between several landholders. Some documentary evidence is provided by the feodary of lordships and tenants of Holkham of 1272-3 in the Holkham MSS (Deeds 5, 71, 120, 22a) where there is also a Roll of free and servile rents and customs (Deeds 4 and 4a; Dr W.O. Hassall, pers. comm., 1979). The fees are described under Wighton (Geoffrey Lesyney), Noion (Peterstone), Dakeney (Hillhall, Grigg's, later Wheatleys), and under Arundel, Montchensy (Boroughhall), Geoffrey le Brett (Lucas, Neales), John le Brett (Hillhall), (Hassall, pers. comm., 1979).

Manorial details are also traced by Blomefield (IX, 231-5) and Bryant (1898, 57-9). According to these the *Domesday* holding of Toki passed to the Montchensy family who held from the Earl of Arundel (d'Albini) and the holdings of Montchensy, Geoffrey le Brett and John le Brett can be traced in 1302, 1346 and 1428 (*Feudal Aids* III). The *Inquisition Post Mortem* of Dionisia de Montchensy of 1314 (PRO, C134/37(7)M9(u/2)) gives details of her manor of Burgh Hall. It had 140 acres of arable land valued at 70s. per annum, 2¼ acres of mowing meadow valued at 2s., salt marsh, valued as pasture, at 20s., a warren, the rabbits from which were valued at 12d. and a windmill valued at 10s. Burgh Hall eventually came, by purchase, to the Wheatleys, hence, with Hill Hall Manor, becoming Wheatleys Manor (Blomefield). In 1428 Gilbert Neel is shown as holding the manor formerly held by John le Brett (1320) and this, according to Blomefield, became known subsequently as Neale's or Lucas's Manor. Dr Hassall (1979) observes that the estate of Geoffrey le Brett (1272-3) was increased systematically by Richard Neel of Burnham and his two sons between 1282 and 1333. Edmund Lucas, son of Rowland Lucas of East Dereham, married a grand-daughter of Richard Neel and so Neales passed into the hands of descendants of the surname Lucas. Blomefield records that Thomas Neal had a lordship in Holkham in 1356-7. Lucas's Manor was eventually purchased and added to Wheatley's which, in 1572, passed to Coke, thus uniting the township under one lord.

Blomefield and Bryant both mention a fish market, associated with a manor held in the thirteenth century by Baldewin d'Akeney, from which, in 1285-6, the lords of Wighton received an annual toll. This appears to be the market granted by a charter of 1267 (Cal. Charter Rolls II, 74). This suggests that, within Holkham, there may have been some coastal focus of activity, possibly the Staithe.

It is only too tempting to visualise the site of an early medieval village of Holkham near the present isolated church, but the many thirteenth-and fourteenth-century documents in the Holkham archives contain no evidence for anything but arable strips in its vicinity (Hassall, pers. comm., 1979). If there was once a settlement clustered round the church it must have been in earlier times and the village mapped in the sixteenth century would, in that case, represent the result of settlement drift.

The village of Holkham as depicted by the map of 1590 (Fig. 21) lay at about 8 m above sea level with slightly higher ground rising to about 16 m immediately to the south and, on slight ridges, to the east and west. A small detached hill of just over 16 m, How Hill, lay to the north-west of the site of the old village, and to the south of the western ridge. Lying near the low gap between the ridges

**HOLKHAM PARISH 1590**

COMON MARSHE

Harlhe Furlong

CHURCHE FIELD

Dale waye

The waye from Burnelim market to Staith

The market pathe

Holkham Church

Clynte Breste

Clynte

Breste

Burgh hall

Calkpit furlonge

Reade

wheateley

Mr Manser

Burghall

Whea tley

Gonners Crofte

Mr Manser late Neales

The Comon

William Mason

Mr Manser

The Church pathe

The Church Path

The waye leading to Stathe and to Wells

Clynte

Sylte crofts

John Money

STATHE CROFTS

The waye from Stathe

Scaltow gateway

The waye from holkhm town to Stathe

Holkham to Welles called Wellgate Waye

Burgate Furlonge

Wheateley

Little Tubbers

Greate Tubberdes

The Waye heading from Holkham to Wighton called Wighton gate

Lackes meare

Statheate meare

Welles

The long side

Wheateley

Sabbe

Lucas Hill

The waye from Burneham Thorpe to Hoskm

granston waye

A waye leading to Sythe

A waye leading from Quarles to Holkham called Adowe

Lecher pits

john money late porters william mason

Gonnings wonge

Granceton Heades

St Phillipe Parkers xvij ar

Weste Caldowe

Highe Caldowe

Blacke Lande heandes

Caldowgate

Ythe iiij xx Acres

Wheateley

Peterston

Peterston xij ar

Wheateley

Brente hills

White ollandes

Burhall vij acr

The Waye leading from Creake to Welles

The waye ley-ding from Fakenham to Welles

The waye leading from Quarles to Welles

0  100  200  300  400  500

metres

Figure 21  Holkham in 1590, based on Thomas Clarke's parish map. Scale 1:25,000.
(*Published by kind permission of Lord Coke*).

Old Holkham thus looked seaward down a shallow valley called the Clynte. A detached settlement called the Staithe Crofts lay on the seaward side of the easternmost ridge below the 16 m contour.

Comparison with the modern map (Fig. 22) shows that the lake, formed from 1727 onwards, occupies much of the shallow Clynte valley and has obliterated part of the village site. The sites of the manor houses shown in 1590 are also separated by the southern end of the lake. The present Hall and its gardens are in the position once occupied by Wheatley's Manor. Neale's Manor lay to the north of the southern curved tip of the lake. Part of the Common and the sites of two houses on its western side must be under the southern end of the lake.

The bulk of the main village in 1590 is shown as having lain in two clusters related to the small central Common (Fig. 23). To the west lay a row of six dwellings with associated crofts facing northwards onto the road which left the Common westwards in the direction of Burnham Market. They were divided by a track which left southwards for the deserted village of Quarles and another called Granston Way. The sites of the three easternmost of

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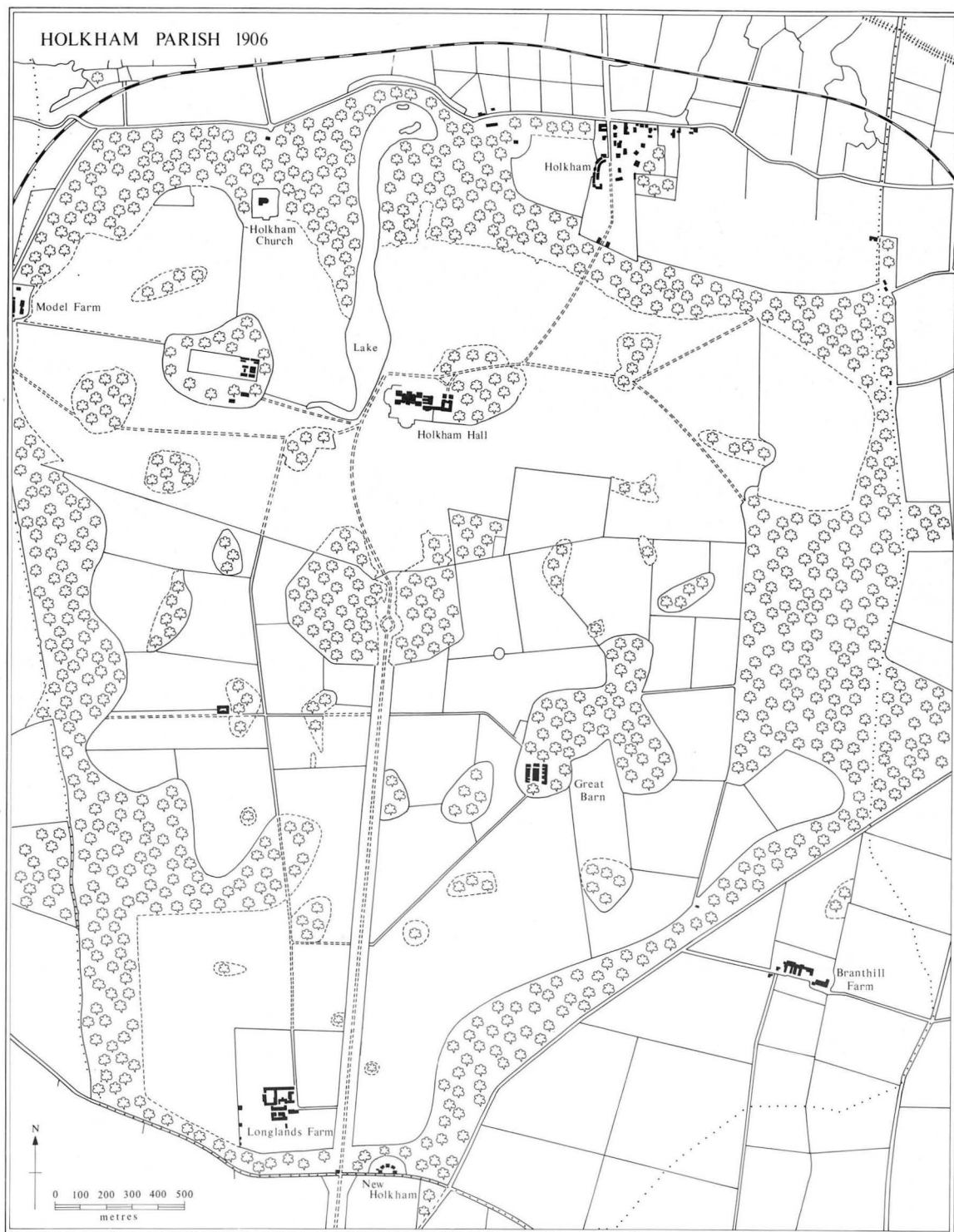
Figure 22 Holkham in 1906, based on *Ordnance Survey* 25 inch to the mile map. Scale 1:25,000.

these dwellings lay to the south of the southern end of the lake, the others extended westwards to a point south-east of the present walled gardens. The only other building in this area, apart from Neale's Manor, was a small building on the western side of that manorial enclosure.

The second major grouping associated with the Common was that at its north-eastern corner where a road, after skirting the eastern side of the Common, left for the Staithe and the coastal road. From this road the Market Path left westwards for Burnham Market, while Wellgate Way (to Wells) left by two converging lanes on the eastern

side. Six dwellings are shown on the western side of the road; four lay on its eastern side with two others lying further back from the road, one of them facing north on to one of the entrances to Wellgate Way. One dwelling or building is shown within the ground immediately attached to Wheatley's Manor house.

In 1590, little sign was evident of settlement along the Wighton Road which left the south-east corner of the Common. There was a small building standing within a triangle of land at the entrance to Wighton Gate and another on the southern side of this road at some distance.

Plate XII  Aerial photograph of Holkham Park from the south. Comparison between figures 21 and 22 shows that the site of the medieval village lies just to the west of Holkham Hall. Very little trace of the medieval landscape, as recorded on the 1590 map (Fig. 21), survives today. 6 July 1976

Presumably the road to Burnham Market must have been the Westgate of medieval times and Wighton Gate the medieval Eastgate. There were far fewer messuages in Eastgate in medieval times than in Westgate and it would appear that further shrinkage had taken place by 1590. The medieval evidence (Holkham Deeds 202, 205 and 300) shows that there were four messuages and one cottage on Eastgate while it would appear that the manor house of Tobers (later absorbed in Hill Hall or Wheatley's) was also on Eastgate (Great Tubberdes and Little Tubbers in 1590; Hassall, pers. comm.). According to fourteenth-century deeds (Holkham 76 and 300) a market place lay between the two manors of Wheatley's and Neale's; this may have been one function of the small Common shown in 1590.

Holkham Staithe is clearly shown as a separate area of settlement in 1590. Eight dwellings are depicted, six facing onto the coastal road and two facing westwards onto Sylte Crofts. The present buildings to the east of the Victoria Hotel occupy the sites. The road from Holkham joined the coast road and divided the six dwellings into two groups of three. There is evidence of the medieval Staithe from the fourteenth century (Holkham Deed 53) and fifteenth century (Holkham Deeds 71 and 120) when a series of messuages were said to abut on 'the Stath' (Hassall, pers. comm., 1979). The only other buildings shown in 1590 were two in isolation immediately to the north-east of the present Model Farm, and St Withburga's church, standing alone to the north-west of the main village, on a mound on the western ridge.

H.L. Gray (1915, 326-31) consulted the Holkham MSS and published a sketch-map of the village as it was in 1590 to accompany his commentary on agricultural arrangements in the parish of Holkham. Similar maps were produced by K.J. Allison (1957) and by M.R. Postgate (Baker and Butlin 1973, 316). Gray drew attention to the large South Field which was equal in size to the other two fields together, Church Field and Stathe Field. There were two large commons, one being the coastal marshes, the other the Lyng in the south-east. There were four foldcourses in Holkham; they were named the North

**HOLKHAM VILLAGE 1590**
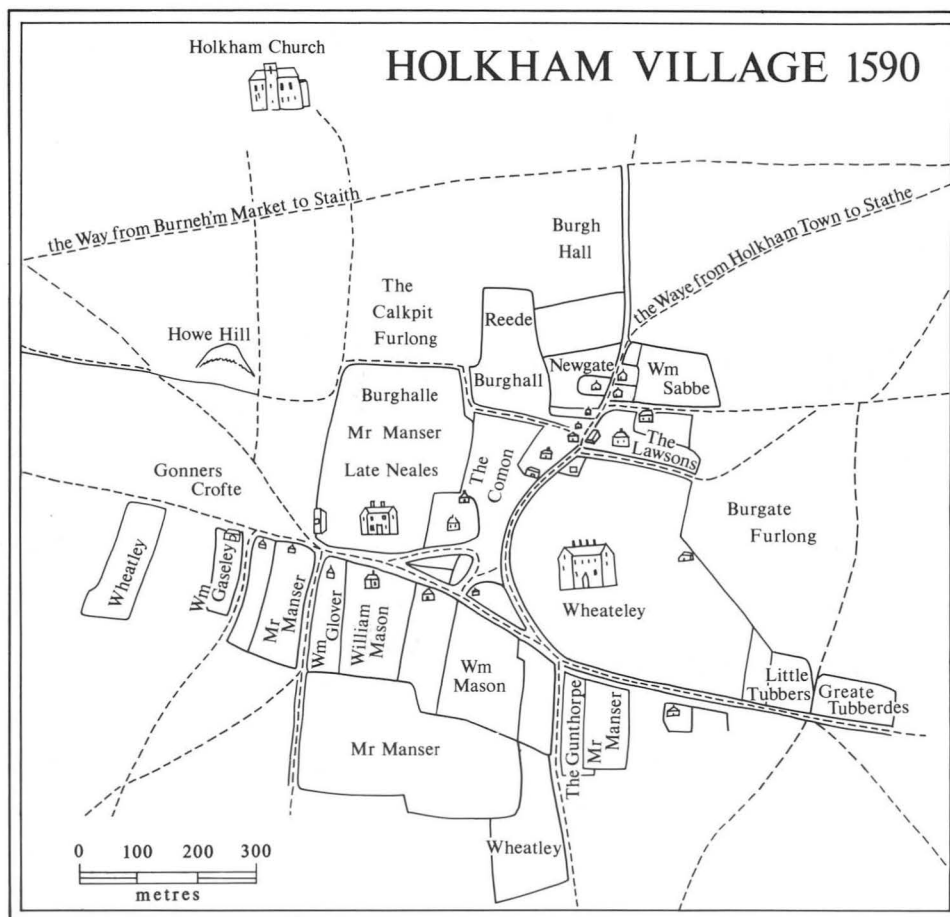
Figure 23 Holkham village in 1590, based on part of Thomas Clarke's parish map.
Scale 1:13,000. (*Published by kind permission of Lord Coke*).

Course, Caldowe, Wheatley's and Newgate's. A foldcourse was an area, partly field land, partly heath or common pasture, over which the flocks of a manor were entitled to graze. In Holkham, therefore, each flock must have had one quarter of the common waste and arable at its disposal. After harvest each would graze over the stubble within its foldcourse. Clearly, with what appears to have been a three-field (three-course) system of cultivation, cropping arrangements must have been on the basis of shifts. A shift was an area growing the same crop, or lying fallow, at the same time. Its bounds were flexible and did not coincide with those of the fields. This allowed the cultivation of winter-sown crops without hampering the winter grazing of the flocks. Gray quotes documentary evidence which shows that the village cattle were allowed to roam over the entire common waste throughout the year and over the unsown fields from October to February. For the rest of the year the fallow arable was reserved for flocks of sheep. Each flock was not permitted to go beyond the bounds of its foldcourse and each must have been prevented from straying on to sown portions of the arable within the course; presumably by folding with wattles. Gray also quoted evidence (p. 330) from a Holkham charter of 1392 to suggest that the arable land was under a three-course rotation, manured at least once every three years, and that the parcels of the individual holdings were distributed throughout the township arable just as they were at the end of the sixteenth century. This is testimony that post-medieval Holkham, notwithstanding the evidence of 1517,

did not differ markedly from that of medieval times, a conclusion for which Dr Hassall (pers. comm., 1979) has also found evidence in the archives of medieval Holkham.

There is, unfortunately, no information available at present about the condition of the village in the period between 1590 and 1719. Examination of the Holkham MSS for these years has yet to be undertaken.

Many of the details of the final disappearance of the old village of Holkham which follow have been supplied by Dr Hassall. The process began after the return of Thomas Coke from the Grand Tour in 1719; work started in 1722 with the decision in Chancery (24th June 1722) to allow the diversion of the Burnham Market to Wighton road along which many houses lay. By this time an embankment to reclaim areas of saltmarsh had been completed, thus freeing the necessary labour for the new undertakings which included digging up the old roads. In 1727, the building of a dam at the seaward end of the Clint allowed fresh water to begin to collect and to flood the way from Burnham Market to Wells together with various routes which linked the church with the houses which stood on the sites to the north of the present Hall. A canal to carry water from a formal basin south of the Hall to the south end of the lake was excavated along what had been Eastgate. This canal was removed at the end of the century. The demolition of houses began in 1728-9, though Neale's Manor House and the Inn and some other buildings in Westgate remained, and new houses were built for the parson, the gardener and the steward.

A second major series of alterations began in 1770 when the park which had been created in the first half of the eighteenth century was systematically extended so that it became twice its original size. The lake was extended in 1784 by adding a curve to the north end after the coast road had been diverted in 1780. The shape of the southern end was altered between 1801 and 1803 when a curve to the west was made. Further changes were made in 1847 when a southern island was removed and two northern ones created. All these operations must have meant considerable movement of spoil and, almost inevitably, the extensive destruction of archaeological evidence.

In 1775, there were six tenements and cottages left in Holkham village proper; there were also fourteen at Holkham Staithe as well as the Marsh House, the Stewards' House and an Inn. A roughly-drawn plan of roads near Holkham Park and intended new ones of 1778 (NRO, NRS 8712 21 D 1) shows that this Inn occupied one of the sites in the western row of buildings shown in 1590 on the south side of the road leading to Burnham Market (Westgate), to the east of the junction of Quarles Way. It was mentioned as the Leicester Arms by Arthur Young in 1768; the 1778 plan shows the position of the New Inn which replaced it on the western side of the Park.

Some impressions of the character of the final days of old Holkham are afforded by the examples which follow. A house occupied by two members of the Hagon family was pulled down in 1787, but the younger Hagon continued to work on the estate for many years. A house occupied by Edward Emerson was last mentioned in 1794; at this time (1793-5) Samuel Wyatt was building a model crescent of cottages called Longlands Village (rebuilt as New Holkham in 1913). Wyatt had just built model cottages called Rose Cottages near the northern side of the Park by the north end of the lake. A house near the first kitchen garden of Holkham Hall was removed with that garden. Another house was occupied by the estate architect until he was provided with a new one in Longlands Village: he had been responsible for the building of model cottages at the Staithe. It is clear that the last vestiges of the original main village were removed but the inhabitants were systematically rehoused in new dwellings built to replace them elsewhere on the estate.

## II. The Church: A Commentary on J.K. Colling's Description
(Fig. 24; Pl. XIII)
By George and Alayne Fenner

Any description of this church today is made difficult by the drastic restoration carried out in the 1860s by J.K. Colling F.R.I.B.A. His report to the Institute on 17th January 1870 describes the church after it had been stripped out and before restoration began (Colling 1869-70), and his interpretation is therefore unlikely to be improved upon. A shortened version of his address is given below (indented).

> During the progress of the late works at Holkham we came upon some foundations at the west end of the church (see A in plan) [Fig. 24] which appear to have been those of a western tower. Now, as the present tower dates from early in the thirteenth century, it is not unreasonable to suppose that these foundations

belonging to a tower formed part of the actual Saxon church which was erected to her [Withburga's] memory, and when the place was called after her, Withburgstowe. The foundations would form a tower about 18 feet 6 inches square, having walls 2 feet 7 inches in thickness.

Colling, however, produces no other evidence for an Anglo-Saxon date, and the foundations can be fitted into other building periods.

> There is, however, strong evidence that a Norman church existed here before the erection of the present one, or more probably an addition to the Saxon one. This is shown by the various and rather numerous remains of Norman stonework, consisting mostly of zig-zags, billet mouldings, and cushion capitals, which have been found built up in the walls. The Norman church, however, appears to have been soon destroyed to make way for an early English one, and much of the Norman stonework was reworked and used to form the thirteenth-century structure. In the east wall of the chancel were found the remains of an early English triplet window, of simple character, which had been worked out of Norman mouldings, and other details.

> What was the exact form the church of the thirteenth century assumed, and what was its extent, it is now impossible clearly to determine, but a large portion of it can be traced, the tower, which is on the south side of the church, and the western portion of the south aisle is of this date. It is of the simplest character, and probably is early in the style. The west window of the south aisle is a plain single early English lancet, and the south window of the westernmost bay, beyond the tower, is a double lancet. But there is some difficulty in following the plan of the thirteenth-century church eastwards; for upon examining the wall of the aisle next the tower, it was found that it had been rebuilt at some subsequent period against that of the tower, and the south door of the aisle, which is early English, had been taken down and re-erected in a very clumsy manner. Possibly the wall and doorway were obliged to be taken down and re-erected in consequence of settlements of the foundations or from having become fractured by the weight of the tower. Whether there was a north aisle to the church of the thirteenth century it is impossible to say-probably not, as no early English remains whatever have been found in the north aisle.

> The piers of the wide arch (see plan) on the south side of the nave are undoubtedly early English; they have nook shafts with foliated capitals on the angles next the aisle, and correspond with the work in the tower.

It is also possible that the decoration was re-cut on Norman piers.

> The arch carried by these piers is probably of a later date. But why this arch was built so much wider than any others in the church, or in this position, is very difficult to determine. From some cross foundations which were found (see B on plan) extending across the aisle from the arch, and again

# HOLKHAM CHURCH, NORFOLK.

PREVIOUS TO RESTORATION

**EARLY ENGLISH.**

**DECORATED.**

**PERPENDICULAR.**

**MODERN.**

*Plaster Panel*

NORTH AISLE

*Plaster Panel over*

VESTRY

*Wood coffins under foundations of Piers*

*Plaster Panel*

A

A

CHANCEL

NAVE

A

B

*Plaster Panel over*

SOUTH AISLE

CHAPEL

MONUMENT

*Plaster Panel*

MONUMENT

DOOR

B

B

TOWER

10  5  0     10     20     30     40     50

SCALE OF FEET.
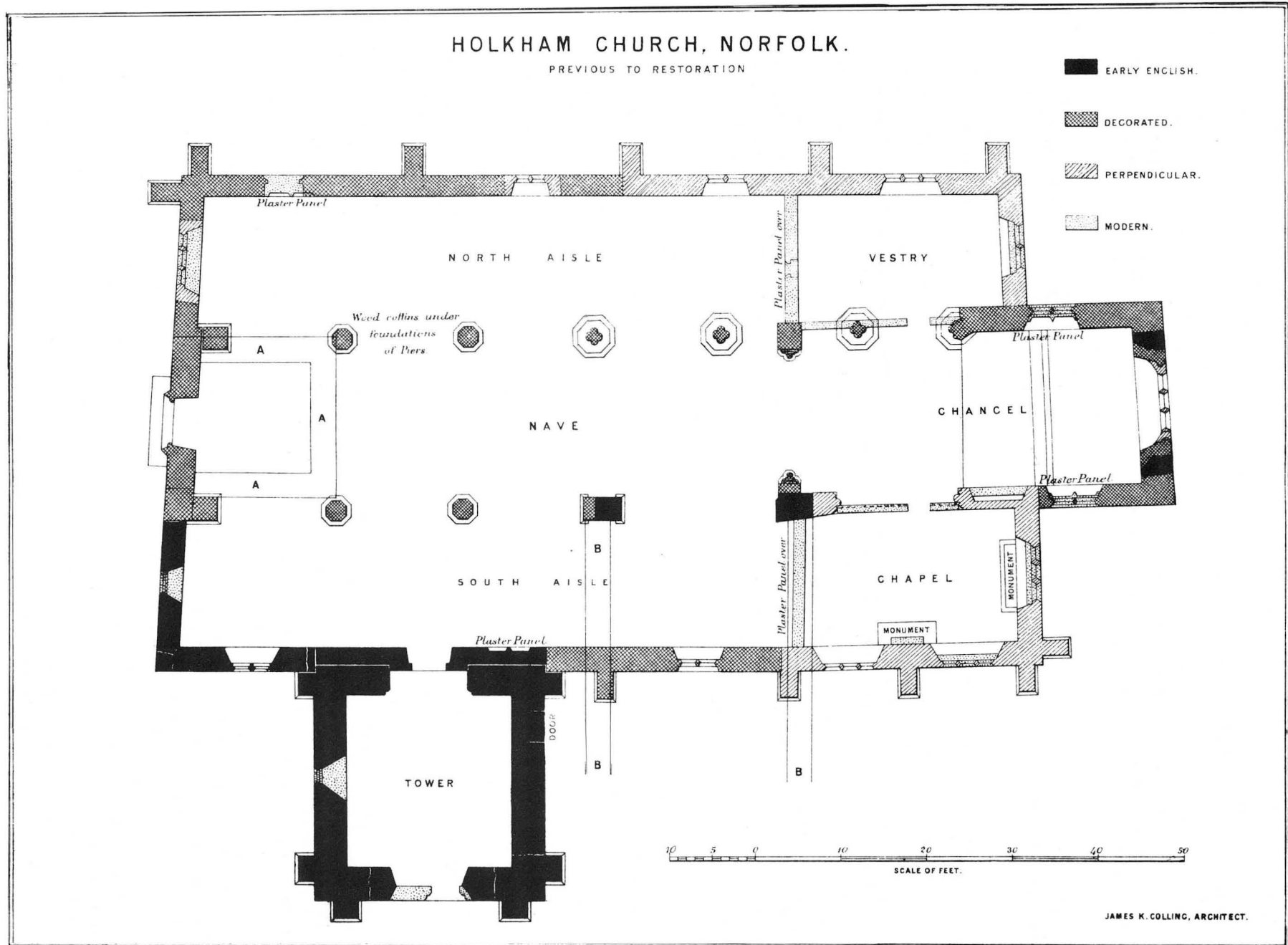
JAMES K. COLLING, ARCHITECT.

Figure 24 Holkham: St Withburga's church, plan by James Colling (Colling 1869). Scale 1:150. (*Published by kind permission of the British Architectural Library*).

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appearing on the outside of the church, it would suggest that it might have been a transept, but the position is peculiar, coming as it does within about four feet of the east wall of the tower. Some indication of a door was found in the east wall of the tower. Might not the transept, if it were one, have been connected with the tower by a small intermediate building giving access from the tower to the transept? A single transept again appears to be quite an anomaly; however, as will be seen, this wide arch has had a peculiar influence upon the plan of the church.

An alternative interpretation is that the transept was part of a Norman cruciform church. Colling, however, has no evidence for a north transept.

No part of the south wall eastward of the tower is early English. From this point it is decorated as far as the chancel aisle, where it ends with a straight upright joint. There was, however, an early English mutilated arch found over the decorated window of the south aisle, but it was evidently not in its original position, it appearing to have been put up in a very rough manner as a relieving arch to the inner portion of the decorated window. The mouldings were partially cut away and destroyed when the church was plastered. This window is probably worked out of early English stones-some of the early mouldings can be seen externally upon the stones of the window jamb.

Colling dates this wall from the existing window, and there is no reference in the text to the straight joint on the plan behind the north-east buttress of the tower. It is just possible that the Early English-style window was in its original position and that the wall is thirteenth century.

As I have already noticed, portions of an early English triplet window were found in the east wall of the chancel, and a part of it appeared to be in its original position, and never to have been disturbed. If so, this shows the early English church to have been of the same length as the present. No less than the remains of three distinct windows were found in the east wall. The first, the early triplet; the second, the jamb of a window which was probably decorated, as what remained of the side windows of the chancel indicated them to have been decorated; probably, therefore, the east window was of the same date. The third window, the one existing at the commencement of the present alterations, was a very late and poor perpendicular three-light window. From the number of worked stones and mouldings found mixed up in the wall, as well as in the two side walls, and no buttresses existing at the angles, there can be no doubt of the east end having been partially taken down and re-erected several times.

The whole of the tower, as high as the sill of the belfry windows, is of the thirteenth century. The walls, which are built of rubble-as is the case with the whole of the church-were in a very fractured condition, more especially the south face. Two enormous fissures extended from the foundations to nearly up to the base of the belfry windows, which necessitated the whole south wall of the tower between the buttresses to be taken down and re-erected.

The west window of the tower, lighting the lower story, was a single lancet, the arch of which was gone and the rest of the window entirely blanked up. Above this western lancet there is another similar one, and in the story above are two small lancets on the south face. With the exception of the four belfry windows, these four small lancets appear to have been all the windows in the tower. The angle buttresses are flat and broad, indicating their early character and terminate below the set-off to the belfry story. The tower is of large size, measuring externally 27 feet square exclusive of the buttresses. Its height from the ground to the top of the battlements is 75 feet. The foundations of the tower were of the worst possible character, and amply account for the very fractured state of the walls. The belfry of the tower is of decorated date, and has a plain two-light window on each face without tracery.

The church of the fourteenth century was an enlargement of the former church. The whole of the nave arches, as also probably the wide arch raised upon the thirteenth-century piers, and the chancel arches on the north side, are all of decorated character, although of two different dates. The north chancel arches, with the two easternmost arches and piers of the nave, are of an earlier and better character, with clustered shafts, than the three western arches on each side of the nave, which have octagonal piers and plain double splays to the arches; the arches to the clustered piers having wave mouldings. The easternmost arch of the chancel is narrower than the others, and has a segmental arch only, the apex of which is much lower than the other arches. The first detached pier is set awry with the chancel and the arch above. The moulded bases of the clustered shafts were all surrounded with a broad space in stonework, octagonal in plan, which appears to have been originally meant for seats.

At a depth of 2 feet below the foundations of the two westernmost piers on the north side of the nave, were found human remains, and portions of wooden coffins, which must have been there when the piers were first erected. There were also human remains found under some of the foundations of the wall of the north aisle,- showing, I think, that the north aisle was at one time a portion of the church-yard, and that the piers and the walling were built over the old graves, when the church was enlarged.

The south window, coming nearly in the centre of the wide arch, is the only perfect decorated window remaining. It is of two lights, of the usual net tracery and of two orders of mouldings. The west doorway had been decorated, but it had been taken down and re-erected, and other later parts inserted that it was impossible to say precisely what its original character had been. The buttresses of the north aisle, from their bold proportions, had probably been decorated, but all the mouldings and the character of the set-offs had been so obliterated that it was impossible to decide with any certainty[1]. The north door which had been built up was probably decorated, but very plain, consisting only of a hollow moulding of a quarter round form and a label which had been cut away.

The chancel arch, probably, is decorated, or at least of the same date as the square piers, and the fifteenth-century caps are evidently a copy of decorated work. The abacus especially is of the same form of moulding, although its radius is not the same as the portion left on the piers. The bases are clearly fifteenth-century work, no attempt having been made to make them in any way accord with the decorated bases of the other piers, as was done with the caps. The continuous upright joints between the square piers and the shafting look very extraordinary and insecure, although the shafts are probably fastened to the piers by plugs or dowels; yet it is peculiar to see stonework stuck up against a flat surface, like carpenter's work, in this manner. Now, if we consider the square piers and the chancel arch to be decorated, they could not have been erected at a very long period after the north arches of the nave and chancel were finished, and yet when they were erected no provision whatever was made for a chancel arch, as they are continuous from the nave into the chancel. There are no divisions either separating the nave aisles from the chancel aisles. (The walls shown dividing the aisles in the plan, are late erections and only about 10 feet high.) It would therefore appear, in the fourteenth-century church as if the intention at first was not to have any separation between the nave and chancel; and yet, before many years had elapsed they must have altered their minds, and have erected the present arch.

The arches at the responds at the west end, and the one abutting the wide arch, are carried upon plain moulded corbels. The one at the north-west finishing in a nicely carved knot. The west end of the church is not at right angles with the nave, which throws the position of all the piers out so that no two come opposite each other. In fact the church is so remarkably irregular throughout, that it would be impossible to mention every instance of the kind. Straight joints existed between the responds and the western wall, the northern respond being as much as three inches away from and clear of the wall. Transverse straight joints were again observable in the west wall near the responds. In the restoration I added external buttresses in a line with the responds, also angle buttresses to the south-west angle, the early English portion, as this angle was very much fractured, necessitating a large portion of it to be taken down.

The whole of the windows of the church, with the exception of those already mentioned (as well as the whole of the clerestory), were perpendicular, some of them being very late in date and extremely poor and common-place in character. The windows of the north aisle of the nave and chancel, were no doubt late insertions, as the fourteenth-century arcade of the nave and chancel shows that the aisle must have been completed in that style also. The late windows, therefore, of the nave aisle have been done away with and two-light decorated windows inserted in lieu of them, corresponding in character with the decorated window on the south side. On the south side of the church the chancel aisle is clearly a perpendicular addition and late in the fifteenth century. The arch communicating with the chancel corresponds with it in date. At the back of the chancel wall against the chancel arch, there at one time existed a rood staircase and the door is still in existence on the chancel side; it has a Tudor arch, and probably is of the same date as this chancel aisle.

On the south side of the chancel beyond the arch to the chapel were found the remains of some sedilia. Above the seats was a recess, arched over with a four-centred arch. The lower portion of the recess was painted in imitation of a curtain in red and black, diapered with flowers.

During the progress of the restorations a very interesting series of coped tombstones or coffin covers were discovered in various positions. Some in the church-yard, others under the foundations, or buried up in the walls, but all more or less close to the tower, and I imagine them to be of the twelfth century; but it is difficult to assign to them anything like an exact date.

Few churches, perhaps, have ever seen more changes and alterations than Holkham Church-from the time when a church was first erected upon the spot up to the present, a succession of alterations or additions appear, from time to time to have been going on in some form or other. After the decline of Gothic architecture the church appears to have been allowed to fall into considerable decay, for in 1767 it is recorded that the Countess Dowager of Leicester repaired the church at a cost of £1000.

In 1785 the church was again repaired as recorded on a stone inserted in the western wall over the west entrance. It runs thus- 'This church and steeple were new roofed, slated, stuccoed and glazed at the sole expense of Thomas William Coke, Esq., Anno domini, 1785.'

A description of the church immediately before the commencement of the present works will show to what a state the church had been brought by the stuccoing and other work. The walls, which consist of the usual Norfolk rubble work with dressed stone quoins, had not only been covered up externally by plaster or stuccoing; but all projections, such as string courses, many of the label mouldings to the windows, and the nosings to the water tables of the buttresses, had been cut off and plastered over.

Internally, besides the coved plaster ceilings, the walls and arches were covered up with plastering and whitewash, with a great deal of lath and plaster to carry out the ideas of the architect- for there was an architect for these alterations, no less a person that the celebrated James Wyatt, architect of Fonthill Abbey, and who also did so much to beautify Salisbury Cathedral. On the walls were several imitations of blank windows with Gothic tracery in the head, all carefully wrought in plaster and evidently copies in a very indifferent manner, from the two-light decorated window in the south aisle. One of these panels was placed between the present window and the south door, another nearly over the blocked-up north door-part of the stone door head having been cut away to make room for the plaster panel. Two others were at the east end of the north and south aisles, which were completely cut off from

Plate XIII Aerial photograph of St Withburga's church, Holkham, from the south-west. 4 April 1984

the eastern portions or chancel aisles by lath and plaster deal stud partitions, and ornamented with repetitions of the Gothic plaster panels or blank windows.

The present restorations, which have been carried out at a cost of about £9,000, at the sole expense of the Right Honourable the Earl of Leicester, consist necessarily of a partial rebuilding as well as restoration, and the necessity of supplying many features that have been lost or obliterated, but which no doubt the church originally possessed. The whole of the east end, a large portion of the tower as well as the double door, besides many other minor parts, had to be supplied and rebuilt. The additions to the tower have been made in the same style as the tower, the thirteenth century, and consist of the double doorway, a new doorway entering the church from the tower, a new ringing floor, and an arcaded stone staircase leading up to it. In the church the architecture of the fourteenth century (with the exception of the early English portion of the south aisle) has been adopted, as the church was principally of that date. The late windows, therefore, being evidently insertions, were done away with and decorated ones substituted, with the exception of those in the north and south chancel aisles, which have been retained as later additions to the church, the south chancel aisle being clearly entirely a late addition.

The one decorated south window was therefore carefully preserved and taken as the type to be followed for the whole of the others. The east window is made of five lights and the west of three lights, with a new decorated west door below. The whole of the plaster, both inside and out, has been removed and the stonework renewed or restored as was found necessary, but retaining the old wherever it was possible to do so. The rubble walling and flint work have been restored and pointed with grey mortar. The whole of the clerestory windows are new two-light decorated windows with the nave cornice in stone in lieu of brick battlements. The aisles also have been restored with stone parapets containing flint panelling. The roofs of the nave and chancel are of pitch pine, with curved braces, and carved bosses at their intersections with the purlins and ridge. They are covered with grey Staffordshire tiles. The aisle roofs are of a flat pitch, with half trusses having curved braces and open tracery in the spandrils. They are covered with lead. The chancel aisles are separated from the nave aisles as well as from the chancel by oak carved and pierced screens, the organ being combined with that in the south chancel arch. Many of the full-size details of these screens are upon the walls. The seating, which is all open, is of oak with carved backs and bench ends, with arm rests. The plain surface of the seat ends being panelled and enriched with carved foliage,

arranged from nature, but treated conventionally, every panel throughout the seating being different. The reading desk is of a similar character to the seating, with wheat and tares on one side and barley and vetches on the other, with also an admixture of flowers, such as the poppy and corn cockle, with harvest mice. The pulpit is of Caen stone, with carved panels, containing the oak, ivy, maple and hawthorn, the upper part having polished red granite shafts at the angles, and is supported on a cluster of granite shafts with boldly-sculptured capitals. The font, which is placed in the centre of the nave at the west end, is also of Caen stone, with the emblems of the four Evangelists alternating with foliated panels upon the sides of the basin, supported on nine red polished granite shafts. The reredos consists of an arcade with red granite shafts and carved capitals and foliated spandrils. The flooring is laid with Maw's tiles. The altar space is of richer character, and has an admixture of black and white marble. This portion was arranged and executed by Messrs. Simpson and Son, of West Strand. The east and west windows are filled with decorated Grisaille glass, in geometrical pattern, by Messrs. Lavers, Barraud and Westlake. The remainder of the glass arranged with simple stamped quarries or borders, with early Grisaille glass in the early English windows has been executed by Messrs. Powell and Son. The general builder for the whole, who has done also the stone and wood carving, is Mr Robinson Cornish of North Walsham, and I have great pleasure in expressing my warmest thanks to that gentleman for the excellent manner in which he has carried out the work. A peal of six bells, with provision for eight, has been cast and put up in the tower by Messrs. Warner and Sons, the tenor of which weighs about 20 cwt.

It is clear that the complicated and unsymmetrical plan of Holkham church is largely due to its position on a sandhill, which resulted in many collapses and piecemeal rebuildings, especially at the west end.

Colling's very detailed account of what he found there 120 years ago is typical of its period. His approach to dating the building is art historical, *i.e.*, the different periods on the plan tend to reflect the style of the windows in the walls, not the fabric itself. As a result, although quantities of worked Norman stone were present, the absence of actual Norman windows leads him to the conclusion that the Norman church was 'destroyed to make way for an Early English one.'

Other interpretations of the building sequence are possible however, which of course could only be proved by excavation. The Norman building may have been cruciform, with a central tower, which subsequently collapsed. By coincidence, this is what happened at Withburga's other church at East Dereham.

Colling produces no evidence for the Saxon date of Tower A and it is possible therefore that it was twelfth or thirteenth century in date, and was another collapsed tower or the foundations of an abandoned project.

The tower which was finally built, on flimsy foundations, on the south side where the slope is more gradual, might originally have been freestanding, and subsequently joined to the nave by an aisle. The pressures and tensions at the interface of tower and aisle and the west end obviously led to the collapse and rebuilding of the western piers of the arcades.

# 7. Houghton

[*Domesday Book: Houtuna*; 1254 *Houton*; 1291 *Houtone*: OE *hoh-tun*, suggesting a settlement on a spur of a hill (Ekwall 1960, 253).]

## I. Summary

The parish of Houghton St Martin, or Houghton-in-the-Brake, lies on the chalky, sandy downland of north-west Norfolk just to the north of the present main Fakenham-King's Lynn road, and east of the Peddars Way. It contains 1495 acres of land, the average parish size for the area. The old village of Houghton lies beneath the eighteenth-century park surrounding the great neo-palladian mansion of Houghton Hall. The village was demolished in the 1720s, and all that remains is the church, a short length of low earthwork north-west of the church marking the course of the village street, a medieval cross, and a few field boundaries on the periphery of the parish. An earthwork with the appearance of a grassed-over road running parallel to the park road going north from Hall Farm corresponds with nothing on any of the earliest maps of Houghton, and it may have been part of a track from the original entrance to the new park of the 1720s to the service buildings lying south-west of the Hall. On the north-east edge of the park, the early park boundary appears as a bank lying parallel to the modern road. East of the Hall, the icehouse mound and five more raised areas were created in the middle of the eighteenth century as part of the landscaping. There is, therefore, very little sign of the medieval village, but fortunately the earliest surviving maps, made in 1719-20, show the village in a great deal of detail, and subsequent maps show how the site was developed by Sir Robert Walpole during the period 1720-45.

The maps are all redrawn, to a common scale apart from Figure 27, from the originals at Houghton. To avoid repetition of references the maps will all be referred to by the figure numbers.

The references are:

Fig. 25 Houghton muniments, Map 2 'Foul draught' 1719-20
Fig. 26 Houghton muniments, Map 1 'Fair copy' 1720
Fig. 27 Houghton muniments, Map 1 (extract) 1720
Fig. 28 Houghton muniments, Map 23 c.1723-9
Fig. 29 Houghton muniments, Maps 25, 26 1730s
Fig. 30 Isaac Ware, *The Plans, Elevations, and Sections...of Houghton in Norfolk*, 1735
Fig. 31 Houghton muniments, Survey of Estates in the County of Norfolk Belonging to the Right Honourable George James Earl Cholmondeley, by Joseph Hill, 1800, Map 1.
    For this survey see D.C. Yaxley 1984

## II. Documentary Evidence
(Figs 25-9; Pl. XIII)
by David Yaxley

In 1086, Houghton was an outlying estate of William Warenne's manor of Rudham, with a total of fourteen sokemen, three villeins, and three bordars; another twenty-five sokemen in Rudham belonged to Houghton, and there was a church without land. The mesne tenant was Ralf, according to Blomefield the ancestor of the Cheyney family (Blomefield VII, 105). The Walpole family originated at the marshland village of that name in West Norfolk, where they were lords of one of the manors and where they continued to live until at least the fourteenth century. Few details are known for certain about the early members of the family, and until the latter part of the thirteenth century the family tree is largely conjectural. Their early connexions with Houghton are not altogether clear. The story that Richard de Walpole married Emma, daughter of Walter de Havelton, early in the twelfth century and thereby obtained Houghton, should be treated with some caution. A Sir Henry de Walpole is said to have held a knight's fee at Houghton in the time of Henry II (Broome 1865, 5; Dashwood 1878-95, i, 363; Rye 1877, 268), but it was William Rufus of Northampton, possibly a tenant or connexion of the Belet family, then tenants-in-chief of Houghton, who in about 1203 gave the church of Houghton to Coxford priory (Saunders 1910, 299). It must be uncertain whether the Walpoles were actually occupying land at Houghton by the early thirteenth century, but Sir Henry de Walpole (fl. 1266-1301) certainly held land there (Rye 1877, 273-4). His son, also Sir Henry, was found to be lord of the manor of Houghton in 1307, and the *Nomina Villarum* of 1316 gives Henry de Walpol and the prior of Castle Acre as lords (Rye 1877, 275; Blake 1952, 273). In the subsidy assessment of 1334 Houghton was assessed at £6, ranking sixth in the hundred of Brothercross, and the revision of c. 1449 left Houghton at £5.6s.08d., a decrease of only two-thirds of the average decrease in assessment of the twenty-two parishes in the hundred. The Walpoles may have lived at Houghton from the late thirteenth century, and this undoubtedly helped to maintain the prosperity and status of the village when many nearby settlements were declining. The continuous use of the family christian name of Henry through five or six generations rather blurs the individuals of the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, but in 1442 the will of Henry Walpole, grandson or great-grandson of the Henry of 1316, mentions the manor of Houghton with its appurtenances in Harpley and West Rudham, together with the manors of Walpole in Norfolk and Istead, in Weybread, Suffolk (NRO, Cons. Court, 180-2 Doke; misdated 1462 in *Visitation 1563*, 374). The Houghton Walpoles may still have been maintaining a house at Walpole at this time. They were a reasonably prosperous family of gentry in the fifteenth century, marrying in successive generations a le Grosse of Crostwight, a Harsick of South Acre, a Shaw of Derby, and a Cobb of Sandringham, but in the long run the most profitable marriage was that between Edward Walpole (c. 1483-1559) and Lucy Robsart, daughter of Sir Tirry Robsart of Syderstone and Stanfield. Lucy's niece Amy Robsart, the heir to the Syderstone estate through her father Sir John Robsart, married Robert Dudley, later Earl of Leicester. After Amy's death in 1560 Leicester held Syderstone for life, but after his death on 4th September 1588, Amy's part

of the Robsart estate, including Syderstone, the manor of Bircham Newton, and lands in Great Bircham, passed to Calybut Walpole, (1561-1646), grandson of Edward and Lucy.

The earliest document describing the house of the Walpoles at Houghton is an inventory, probably dating from May 1512 when Thomas Walpole, Edward's father, made his will and put Houghton into the hands of trustees for its performance (C.U.L., Cholm. MSS., Account Book 3; Broome 1865, 32; NRO, Cons. Court Wills 240, 241 Johnson). On Thomas's death in January 1513/4 some, at least, of the Harpley part of the estate went to his second son, Henry, and was only reunited with the Houghton property in 1668. The inventory lists goods in hall, parlour, 'drawt' or withdrawing chamber, buttery, kitchen, dairy, bakehouse, chamber over the parlour, white chamber, red chamber, and four other chambers. All were well, if not lavishly, furnished. The hall would appear to be open, with parlour and 'le drawt' at the upper end and the service rooms, with the chambers over them, at the lower end. The whole house could have been at least a hundred feet long, and would fit the heavy flint and brick foundations of a wall, variously described as 96 or 142 feet long, discovered in the middle of the nineteenth century by the Rev. J.H. Broome (Broome 1865, 5-6; Jones 1879, 235-6). From the description these foundations seem to have been a short distance north-west of the present hall. A 'broken stone sill of a window', drains, and iron and brass articles were found. However, the foundations may have been those of a barn or other non-domestic building, and it is possible that the 'old' house of 1720, which stood immediately west of the present mansion, incorporated parts of the medieval and sixteenth-century house. The probate inventory of John Walpole (1588) mentions parlour, house behind the parlour, study, hall, buttery, cellar, kitchen, larder, dairy, bakehouse, and storehouse, with five chambers (NRO, Cons. Court Prob. Inv. INV/4.10). The hall appears to be open, and the general shape of the house is compatible with that of the house of 1512. Only eight beds are mentioned, although the napery comprises sixty pair of sheets. A tithe list of 1578-9 (NRO, Townshend 180, MS. 1599) shows that John Walpole paid tithe on himself, his wife, three daughters, 'Mr Russell' (John's aunt Agnes had married William Russell of West Rudham, and Philip Russell, son of either William or Edward Russell of Burnham Thorpe, would marry John's daughter Katherine in 1581) three serving men, three ploughmen, four serving women, and one female and two male servants of Mr Russell. Neither Edward nor Calybut, John's sons, is mentioned, but both were probably at Cambridge. Not counting the ploughmen, who could have slept in an outbuilding or indeed in cottages, there were thus sixteen people in the house. Tirry Walpole, John's youngest brother, paid tithe on himself, his wife, and three servants, and it is possible that his widow and at least some of his five children were occupying part of the house in 1588.

The tithe list of 1578-9 gives some idea of the size of the township in the late sixteenth century. The two Walpole families totalled twenty-four persons, and for the rest, fifteen male and five female heads of families paid tithe on a total of twelve wives, two sisters, four sons, seven daughters, four male servants, four female servants, and two servants of unstated sex. On the basis of the customary 2d. per person we can add two more people to one of the entries, giving, together with the vicar, a minimum population of eighty-two persons. This may exclude small children. Comparison with the communicants' return of 1603, which survives for other parishes but not for Houghton, shows that it is likely that Houghton was larger than Bircham Newton (thirty-five communicants, i.e. males and females over the age of 13-14), Bagthorpe (twenty-seven), and Sandringham (twenty-six), and on a par with Bircham Tofts, Syderstone, Anmer, and Flitcham. Little Massingham (seventy-six communicants), Harpley (100), Hillington (100), West Rudham (180), and Great Bircham (190) were larger than Houghton. Of the twenty heads of families apart from John Walpole, seven were very small doers, paying tithe on only one or two animals; the remaining thirteen all paid tithe on a conventional nine cheeses and on between two and nine neat. All grew hemp, twelve kept pigs, eight kept geese, six kept ducks, and all kept fowls. Two paid on lambs or wool, three on foals, and three on honey or wax. John Walpole paid tithe on cheese and neat, hemp, pigs, fowls, including a turkey, eight stone of wool, and sixty-five lambs. His probate inventory gives a much more accurate idea of his farm. His 'barnes and chambers' contained ninety coomb of wheat, 100 coomb of rye, forty coomb of barley, forty coomb of malt, and peas and oats worth 40s. In addition there were 38 acres of wheat and rye on the ground; presumably the barley had not yet been sown, although the inventory is dated 12th April.

At John Walpole's death the Houghton estate passed to his second son, Calybut. The eldest son, Edward, had been turned out of the house in 1585 because of his papistry; he is not mentioned in John's will, and he later surrendered all his inheritance to Calybut and became a Jesuit. With the Robsart as well as the Walpole estates Calybut must have been comfortably off, and one wonders if he rebuilt or added to the old house during his long life (he died in 1646). He was succeeded by his eldest son, Robert (1593-1663), who in turn was succeeded by his only son Sir Edward (1621-68). Horace Walpole, writing in 1747, was probably repeating a family tradition in stating that the ceiling of the yellow drawing-room of the present house 'is exactly taken, except with the Alteration of the Paternal Coat for the Star and Garter, from one that was in the Dining-room of the old House, built by Sir Edward Walpole, Grandfather to Sir Robert' (Walpole 1747, 48). The ceiling is certainly comparable to other ceilings of the mid-seventeenth century, notably at Coleshill. Horace must have got the story from his father, Sir Robert, the builder of the new house, for he himself could not have known the old house at first hand, as he spent all his early life away from Houghton and did not visit Norfolk until 1736, some fifteen years after the demolition of the old house. Although Sir Edward was head of the family for only five years, he may well have been in charge of Houghton and the estate for some time before his father's death. He was receiving rents for his father as early as 1653, and an inventory of Robert's possessions at his death in 1663 suggests that he was living in one room and may well have handed over the house and estate to Edward (C.U.L., Cholm. MSS., Account book 7; Houghton muniments, Red Box 1). Accounts for 1647-9 mention the sweeping of twelve chimneys at one time (C.U.L., Cholm. MSS., Account book 9), but hearth tax payments during the 1670s and 1680s are for twenty or twenty-one hearths, and in 1688, just before the tax was repealed, at least twenty-six hearths were paid for, suggesting that the house was rather larger than the accounts of 1647-9 imply (C.U.L., Cholm.

MSS., 15./1). In 1647-8 small quantities of brick, pintile, and pavement were bought, together with at least six dozen couple of fourteen-foot and twenty-foot spars, but most of these materials were used for a new dairy and a new malthouse, and there is nothing in these accounts to suggest more than running repairs to an old house. In 1647, ten servants were paid an annual wage, but in addition no less than seventy individuals were paid for goods or services in the period April 1647-April 1648 as well as 'townsfolk', 'woollers', 'shearers' and the like. Some, no doubt, of the monthly average brew of 720 gallons of beer, which one would normally expect to serve a household of at least twenty-four persons, would have been expended on these outside workers. The estate did not suffer during the Civil War; although the 1647-9 account book has the occasional entry, 'otes to the Troopers', and 'news books' are bought regularly from Lynn and Fakenham, both Robert and Edward Walpole seem to have kept clear of involvement until the very end of the Interregnum, when Edward helped Townshend to seize Lynn for the returning Charles II in 1660. An account book of a carpenter who worked for Walpole in the 1660s and 1670s (Houghton, small wooden box) includes, besides a number of odd jobs in 1666 and 1667, between four and five months' work for himself and his team of four or five men in each of the years 1671, 1672 and 1673; among the few details given is the sawing of a small quantity of timber 'to mend the rufe of the hall' in 1673. Colonel Robert Walpole's account-book covering the years 1671-89 records only minor repairs to the house, the most substantial being nine days spent 'mending the wings of the gables in the Garden & making the stable windows &c' in 1679. This and other entries suggest that the house was not entirely new: 'paid Mr Guess for 3 pictures in the new chamber' (1676); 'for 20 Battlements from Burneham 10s.', 'To the free stone mason for ye Parlor Hearth' (1686); 'paid Sr W: Barkeham for my Balcony £15 17s.' (1687). It is certainly possible that Edward's reputed 'new' house was a range added to the old building, which remained as the garden or west side of the complete house. This account book also records the rethatching of part of the roof of the great barn in 1679 and 1680, and in 1683 new stables were built at a cost of well over £200. The 6000 'Holland Tyle' or pantile used would give a roof length of about 100 feet. Both great barn and stable could be two of the buildings shown near the old house on the maps of 1719-20 (Figs 25-7). Both the 1647-9 and 1671-89 account books show that the Houghton flock of sheep was large. In 1647 some 942 sheep were clipped, perhaps a little over the average size of a flock in this part of Norfolk, but there were also 200-250 acres of arable land in Walpole's hands; barley formed 36 per cent of the grain threshed, rye 34 per cent, and oats 22 per cent. In the 1670s turnips were being grown as a field crop, and the purchase of many thousands of 'lair' or quicksets from the late 1670s suggests the hedging of enclosures, while in 1676 the number of sheep shorn had dropped to 600. By 1719 (Fig. 25) most of the parish was enclosed.

Colonel Robert Walpole, Edward's son, died in 1700, and was succeeded by his son Robert, later Sir Robert, prime minister and builder of the present Hall. Soon after 1700 he began to modernise the old house, ordering new sash windows, fireplaces, doors, and panelling, and a new barn was also to be built (Plumb 1956, 93). Further alterations and improvements were carried out in 1716 and 1719. However, Jonas Rolfe's letter to Walpole of 19th June 1721 gives one reason why a new house was considered necessary:

'I am writing this in yor Honours Study where I have a thousand ungratefull Companions the Mice; who doe dayly dispoyle to yo$^{re}$ papers parchments & Bookes-especially those bound in vellum, which I could wish were putt up in Boxes or remov'd till some Fitter place might be fixed up for them, the Vermin having nibled holes & made Free passages in to the drawers, they run in such numbers 'tis impossible to think of destroying them unless the whole be removed in the meantime what are yett untouched by them are very unsecure' (C.U.L., Cholm. MSS., 898).

The decision to demolish the old house and to build a new mansion must have been taken no earlier than the late summer of 1720. In the previous year Thomas Badeslade was commissioned to survey Walpole's estates. He was paid two instalments of his fee in September 1719 and February 1719/20, and presented his final bill in April 1720 (C.U.L., Cholm. MSS. 23/1; Houghton, Red Box 1). The final bill covers surveys and maps, both 'foul draught' and fair copy, of Houghton, Bircham Tofts, Bircham Newton, Syderstone, Chiplow Closes in Bagthorpe, and Dersingham, together with a 'map of Houghton Garden and Park made and finished over and above the other maps, and a perspective Draught of the House'. The 'foul draught' map of Houghton (Fig. 25) shows the park but not the house, but a second, 'fair copy', map shows not only the old house but also the old village (Figs 26 and 27). Whether this is the 'fair copy' map or the extra map of the garden and park to which Badeslade refers in his bill is a moot point. The house consists of two long, parallel ranges running north-south and connected near their ends to leave a long narrow courtyard in the middle. Each range is some 20-25 ft in breadth; the west front is some 130 ft long, the east front about 150 ft. One long detached and one semi-detached range flank the eastern courtyard, and four other buildings, probably barns, stables, and animal houses, stand to the north of the house. The whole plan and disposition of the buildings suggest a conglomeration of different periods rather than a new layout of c. 1660. Unfortunately, Badeslade's 'perspective draught of the House' does not seem to have survived; it was probably a bird's eye view like those drawn by Badeslade for John Harris' *History of Kent* (1719), and could only refer in 1720 to the old house. No picture of the old house has, in fact, been identified.

Preparations for building the new house began in the summer of 1721 (C.U.L., Cholm. MSS., 898, 914) and the foundations were laid in May 1722. The original design was by Colen Campbell, but this was much modified by Thomas Ripley, Walpole's supervisor of building, by Walpole himself, and possibly by James Gibbs. A detailed comparison of the maps at Houghton shows that the new house stands immediately to the east of the site of the old house, and on the same axes. A drawing by Edmund Prideaux (Harris 1964, 72) made between 1725 and 1727 shows the house and south court surrounded by scaffolding; the south-west tower bears a dome, cupola, and vane (dated 1725), while the north-west tower still has the pyramid roof that replaced Campbell's original pedimented design and was itself to be replaced by a dome. Against the main west front Prideaux has a long building with a strange
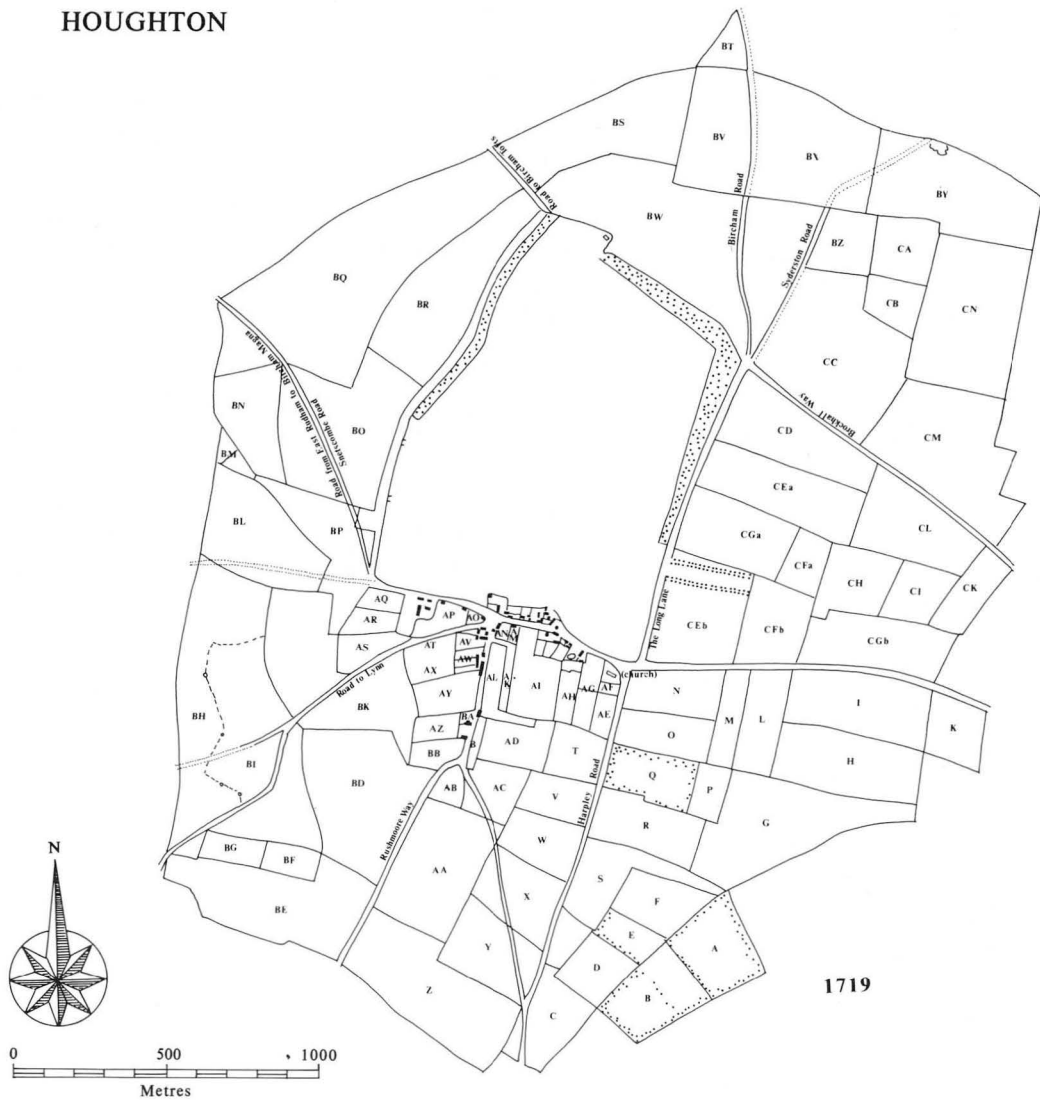
Figure 25 Houghton: Thomas Badeslade's 'foul draft' map of 1719-20. The park is in its earliest form of *c.* 1700-09. Lettering in the fields refers to Badeslade's field book (Houghton, M.6.1) dated 1720. Scale 1:25,000 (*copyright D. Yaxley*).

assortment of nine tall and two short windows on the ground floor, a steep pitched roof with eight dormers, and at least four chimneystacks. The gable end and stack of another building is shown against the west side of the north-west tower. Both buildings appear to stand on the site of the old house, and although they are likely to be purpose-built hovels for workmen it is also possible that they are the last, converted, remains of the old house. By 1726 William Kent had been commissioned to design the interior decorations, but the new house was still not finished when the Duke of Lorraine and Sir Thomas Robinson paid separate visits in 1731. A fire in the cellar of the west front late in 1732 held up operations, and the masons were busy on details and internal alterations up to 1735 (Ketton-Cremer 1957, 178-81; *H.M.C. 15th Rep.* Appx. part VI, 85-6; Houghton, M.24.b; Cornforth 1987a, 104). During this period the water-system was completed; it comprised the water house and the remarkable well, 117 ft deep, at the northern side of the park, and the neo-Palladian water-tower, said to have been designed by Lord Pembroke, on the high ground to the north-west of the house (Houghton muniments, A/50, 51, 52; Bowden-Smith 1987).

The transformation of the landscape on aesthetic grounds began after 1700. Colonel Robert Walpole, Sir Robert's father, was a progressive farmer, one of the first in north-west Norfolk to plant turnips as a field crop, and his account book includes a number of payments for dykeing and hedging from 1675 (C.U.L., Cholm. MSS., 15/1). It does not, however, make any mention of a deer park, and the frequent entries of payment for venison suggest that there was no park at Houghton at that time. However, there were probably deer at Houghton by 1701, and in 1709 Henry Bland, then rector of Great Bircham, wrote to Walpole 'Your Fawns drop very indifferently this year, almost all females' (Plumb 1956, 107; Houghton, Red Box 1), it is likely that the park was established about 1700. The plantations on either side of the west view from the house were planted in 1717 and 1718 (Broome 1865, 21-2) and Badeslade's 'foul draught' map of 1719-20 shows the park as an existing feature of about 225 acres, with a pale fence at least on the west side (Fig. 25). Badeslade's field-book of 1720 that accompanied his maps describes field BO as 'The Breck by the Park Pale' (Houghton, M.6.1.). Belts of trees define the east, north, and north-west sides of the park, and the double avenue running east from the main gate into the

Figure 26 Houghton: Thomas Badeslade's 'fair copy' map of 1720. The park is extended westwards, and the Washmeres and the Great Bircham plantations are shown. The house is the old Hall. Fields with hedges are shown with heavier lines; the remainder were open fields, brakes, and heath. Scale 1:25,000 (*copyright D. Yaxley*).

fields shows that landscaping had already begun by 1719. The 'fair copy' map (Fig. 26) shows the park extended by 62 acres on the west, with a triangular plantation of another 20 acres. This map, which surely must have been completed by April 1720, is basically a survey, but it is possible that some of the trees and plantations shown are slightly anticipatory. Certainly much work took place in 1720 and 1721. In August 1720, for instance, Kingsmill Eyre wrote to Walpole from Chelsea asking 'What forest trees you shall want from thise parts, because they are much sought for'. On 5th June 1721 Edmund Cobb reported that the western part of the park was being paled; the 'Peice of New Parke', probably the extension in the west, was preparing for turnips; he had taken care to keep animals out of the Plattoones (the four westernmost rectangular plantations on Fig. 29) and 'all the Groves'; and the gardener 'Wathers the young Plantations Constantly'. Pales were still arriving at Houghton a fortnight later. Walpole was concerned at the expenditure on labourers and weeders. The gardener, Fulke Harold, explained that during the last week in June 1721 fifty female weeders were employed in the new plantations 'or else they would have been nothing but weeds', while twenty-nine men dug

gravel, prepared ground for planting 'by the wall where the new pales are seting down', hoed in the platoons where the women were weeding, and worked in the garden. He concluded 'the reson of such extroderny expence in weeding to the best of my knolege is the ground not being sofesintly plowed nor haveing time enough to kill the weeds' (C.U.L., Cholm. MSS., 804, 892, 898, 907, 904).

In 1721 the aim of all this frenzied activity was to create a fit setting for the new mansion, but there can be no doubt that the development of the park had originally been planned to enhance the old house. Figures 26 and 27 show that the gardens and avenues were all strictly related to the old house, and if much of this development had already taken place by the time the decision to demolish and rebuild had been made in the summer of 1720 it may well have persuaded Walpole to build on the old site rather than on the more elevated site to the north-west that Ripley is said to have advocated. The main approach to the house was obviously intended to be from the formal embayed gateway on the park boundary, directly aligned on the double courtyard of the old house. To the north of the house were gardens of about 2 3/4 acres; two of the rectangles, the larger of them crossed by diagonal walks,
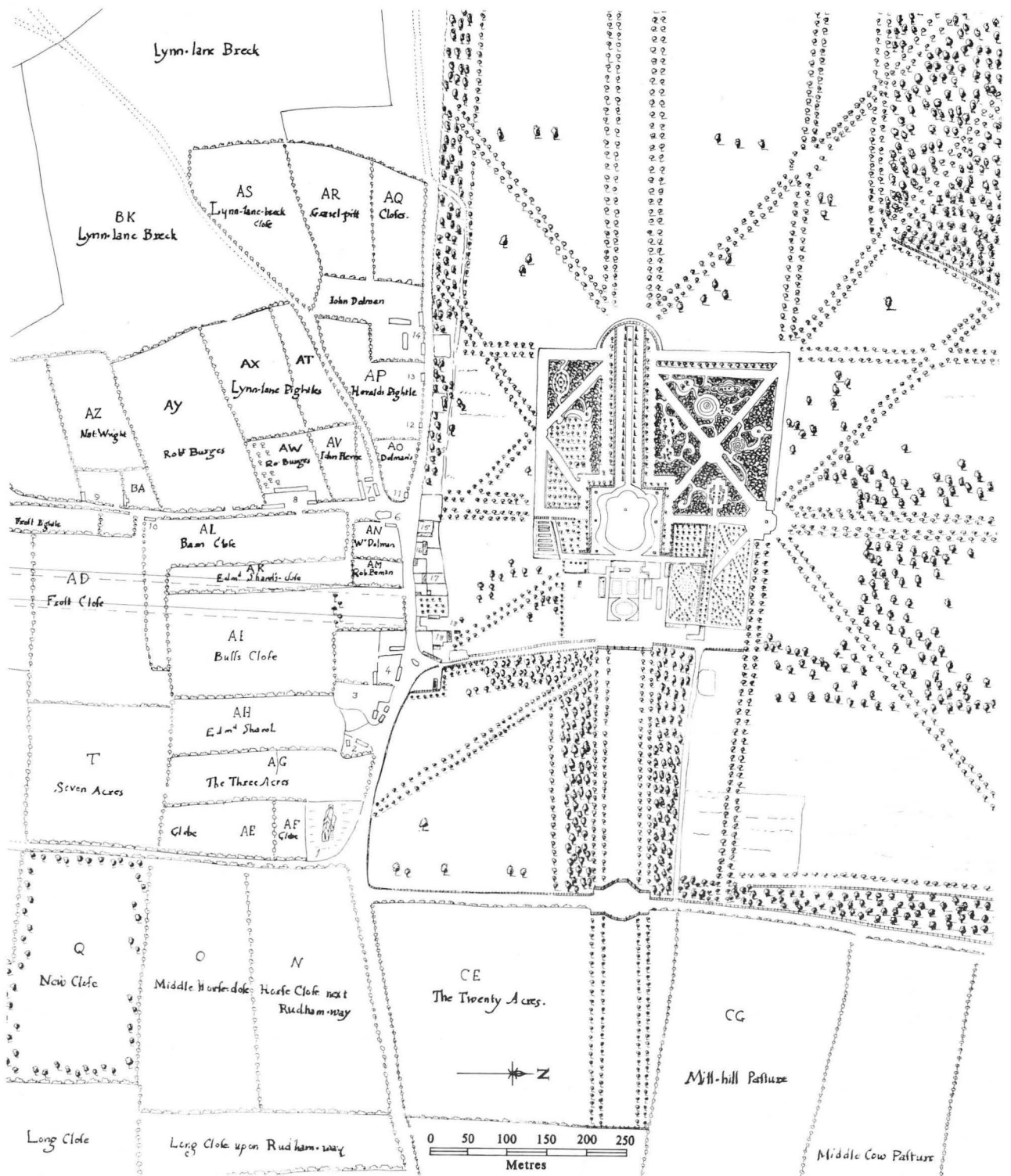
Figure 27 Houghton: Detail of Figure 26, 1720, showing the old village and old Hall; north to the right. Scale 1:7500 (*copyright D. Yaxley*).

contained fruit trees, and the third, also with diagonal paths, was apparently bedded, and may even have been a kitchen garden. The main garden, of about 16 acres, lay west of the house. A broad axial walk, formally defined by slim bushes, reached out to a large semicircular bastion projecting into the park. The north part of the garden was quartered by diagonal walks; each quarter was a dense grove cut by serpentine paths that led to openings in which were buildings, statues, and a mount. The garden south of the axial walk was part grove and part formal plantation. The whole garden was outlined by a wall, ditch, or ha-ha that included the western bastion and a smaller but more elaborate bastion on the north side. In 1731 Robinson stated that the garden was separated from the park by a *fossé*, which at that time usually meant a ha-ha (*H.M.C. 15th Rep.* Appx., part VI, 85). The outline of the present garden area is more or less the same as on Figure 27, but the only solid boundary is the sunken north wall, of early-

HOUGHTON

N

0          500        1000

Metres
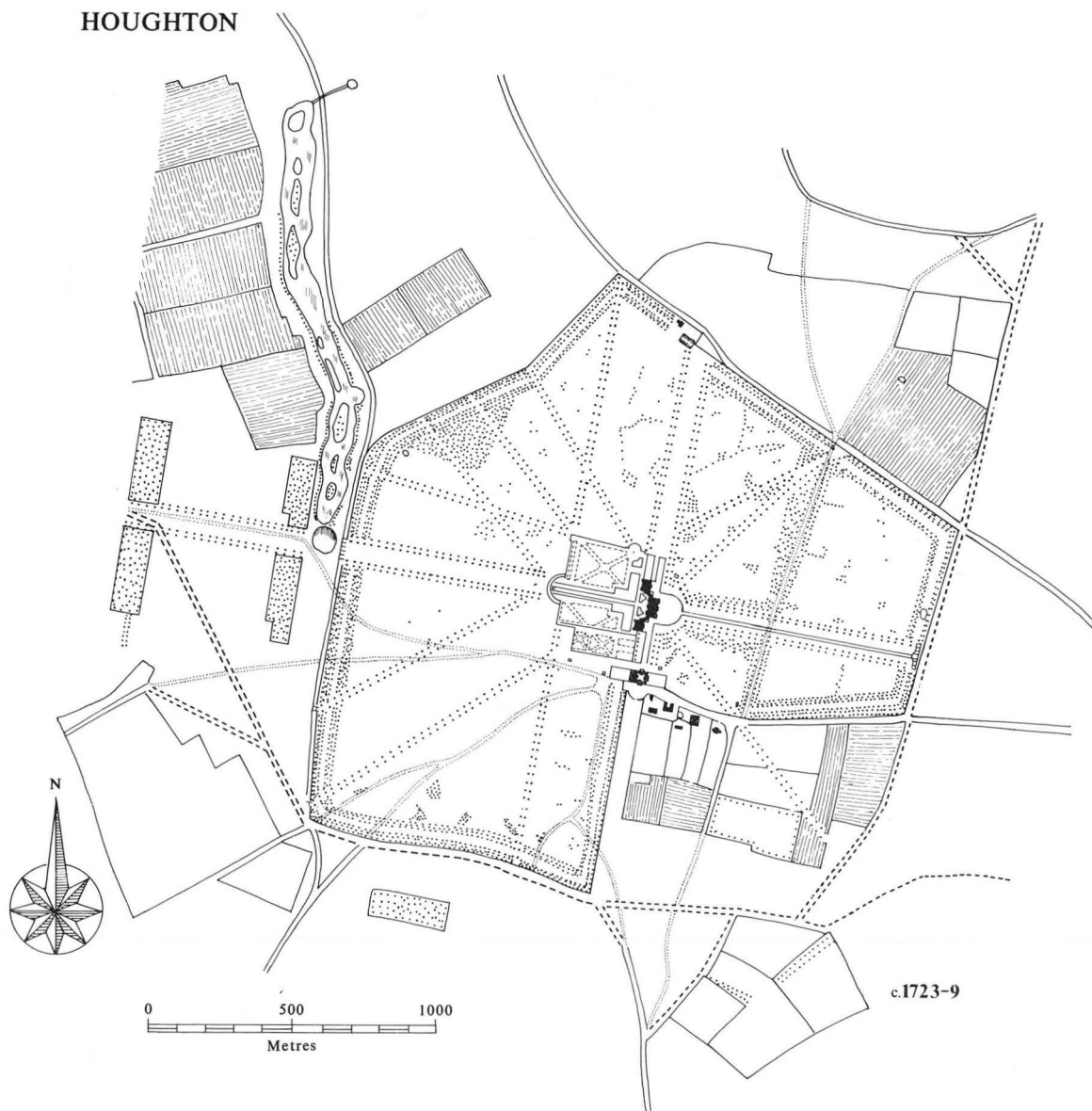
c.1723-9

Figure 28  Houghton: Map of *c.* 1723-9. The park is further extended to the south-west and east. Apart from the church and the inn the old village has gone and has been replaced by buildings related to the Hall, and the old roads that were to be closed are differentiated from new roads and those that remained open. The stable is the building of *c.* 1721, demolished *c.* 1736. The new village is not yet shown. Scale 1:25,000 (*copyright D. Yaxley*).

eighteenth-century brick with a scar in the position of the bastion. The bank, marked on Figure 27 with hatching, on either side of the axial walk is also still visible.

Figure 26 shows the whole three-mile perimeter of the park, apart from the area of the old village, defined by a deer-fence, although, as we have seen, some part of this was still being installed in 1721. The exact date of the great formal avenues is similarly uncertain. Some, at least, may have been planted by 1720, and it might be argued that, as the fashion for such regular and geometrical avenues was by then coming to an end, the general scheme may well date from early in the century when the deer park was first enclosed. The date of the garden layout is also not easy to establish, and again it is quite possible that some parts, notably the fruit gardens and the area south-west of the house, may have been laid out at an earlier period, say the 1680s. There can be little doubt that the new house made use of the existing gardens, for in its various changing

forms it is shown imposed on the gardens of Figure 27 in no less than three other maps. First, an unsigned and undated plan in the Bodleian Library, doubtfully attributed to Charles Bridgeman (Willis 1977, 86, 180, pl. 81b) and datable, perhaps, to 1721 or 1722, shows a wingless house and a garden similar to that of Figure 27 in general plan but differing from it in many details, some of them major. Secondly, Campbell's plan, which the text of *Vitruvius Britannicus* assigns to 1722, shows the north wing and court covering most of the fruit gardens but leaving the west ends of the rectangles exactly as on Figure 27. Thirdly, another undated map at Houghton (Fig. 28) shows the main west garden very much as in Figure 27, but the fruit garden has been almost obliterated by a plain parterre running the whole length of the west front of the house, and another square-and-a-half of parterre garden has been added to the south. As it shows the new house after the alterations to Campbell's original design but omits the

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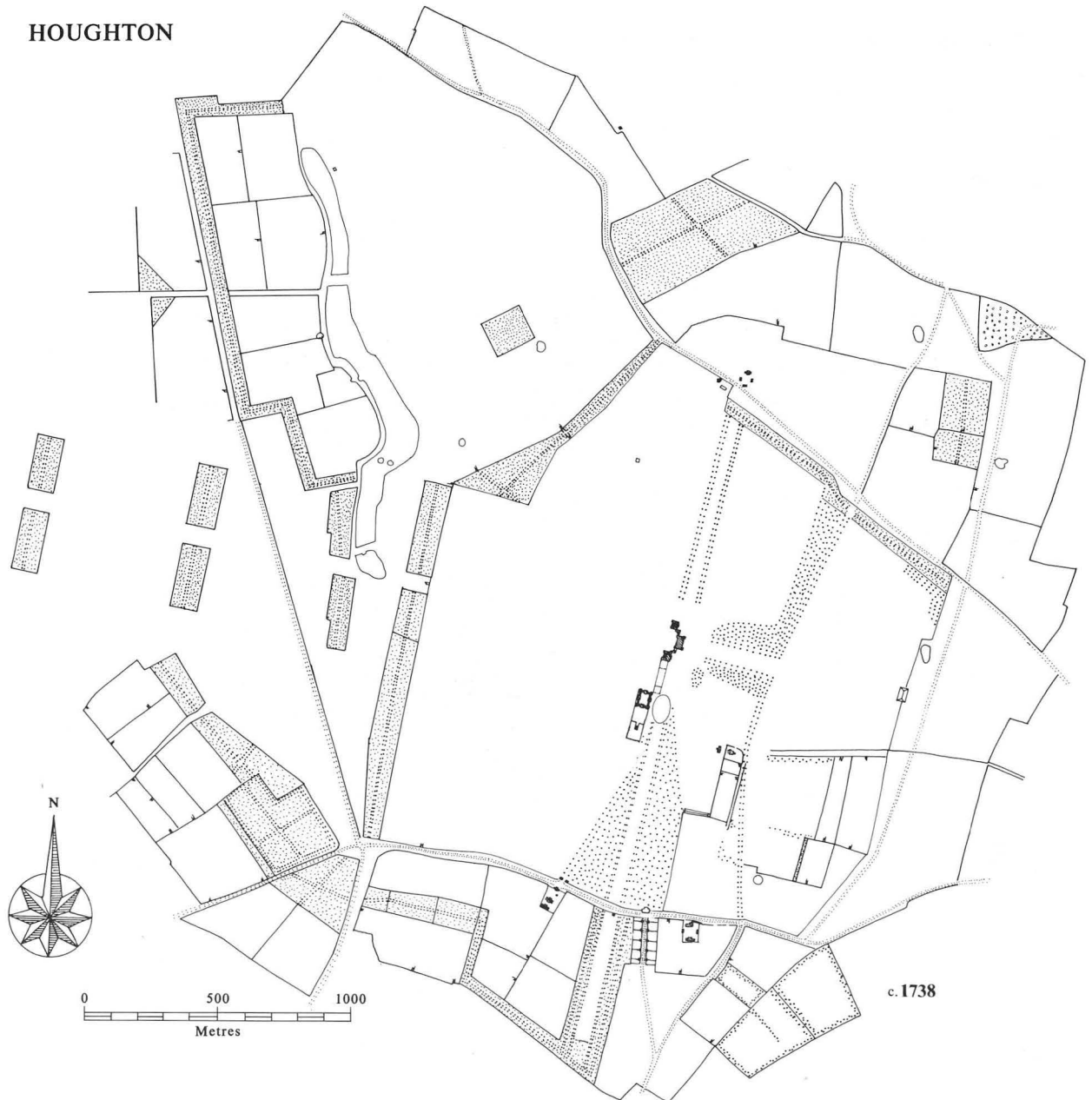
HOUGHTON

Figure 29  Houghton: One of two similar maps of the late 1730s. No trace of the old village, apart from the church, remains. Few of the avenues of Figure 28 are shown, but comparison with Figure 31 shows that most of them existed. Scale 1:25,000 (*copyright D. Yaxley*).

new village it can be dated after *c*. 1723 and before the early summer of 1729. To the park of Figure 26 it adds 190 acres in the south-west and 90 acres in the east, giving a total of just under 600 acres. The old village street is still clearly marked, but all that remains of the village itself is the church, the vicarage (No. 15), and the unnumbered house next to No. 4, possibly the Dun Cow inn. The closes south and south-east of the village remain as in Figure 26, but the avenue extending diagonally across M, O, and P demonstrates the intention to include the area in the park. The old roads running across the new south-west portion of the park are differentiated from the roads that were to remain in use. Outside the park, the Washmeres, a marshy area in Great Bircham that appears on Figure 26 as a series of sub-rectangular ponds, is shown as a long serpentine lake with islands.

The development of the park at Houghton has been associated with the name of Charles Bridgeman (d.1738), one of the great garden architects of the eighteenth century. It has been asserted, without qualification, that Bridgeman was the designer of Houghton (*e.g.* Plumb 1956, 359), and it is true that all four of the plans discussed above have features in common with some of the contemporary gardens and landscapes in which Bridgeman is thought to have been the guiding spirit, *e.g.* Rousham (Oxfordshire), Stowe (Bucks), Scampston (Yorkshire), and Chiswick (Willis 1977, 61, 66-8, 108). However, it could be argued that other gardens that cannot, even doubtfully, be attributed to Bridgeman, bear just as close a resemblance to Houghton. For instance, Chevening (Kent) was laid out about 1717 for Lord Stanhope, and drawn in a bird's-eye view by Thomas Badeslade in 1719 (Avray Tipping 1921,

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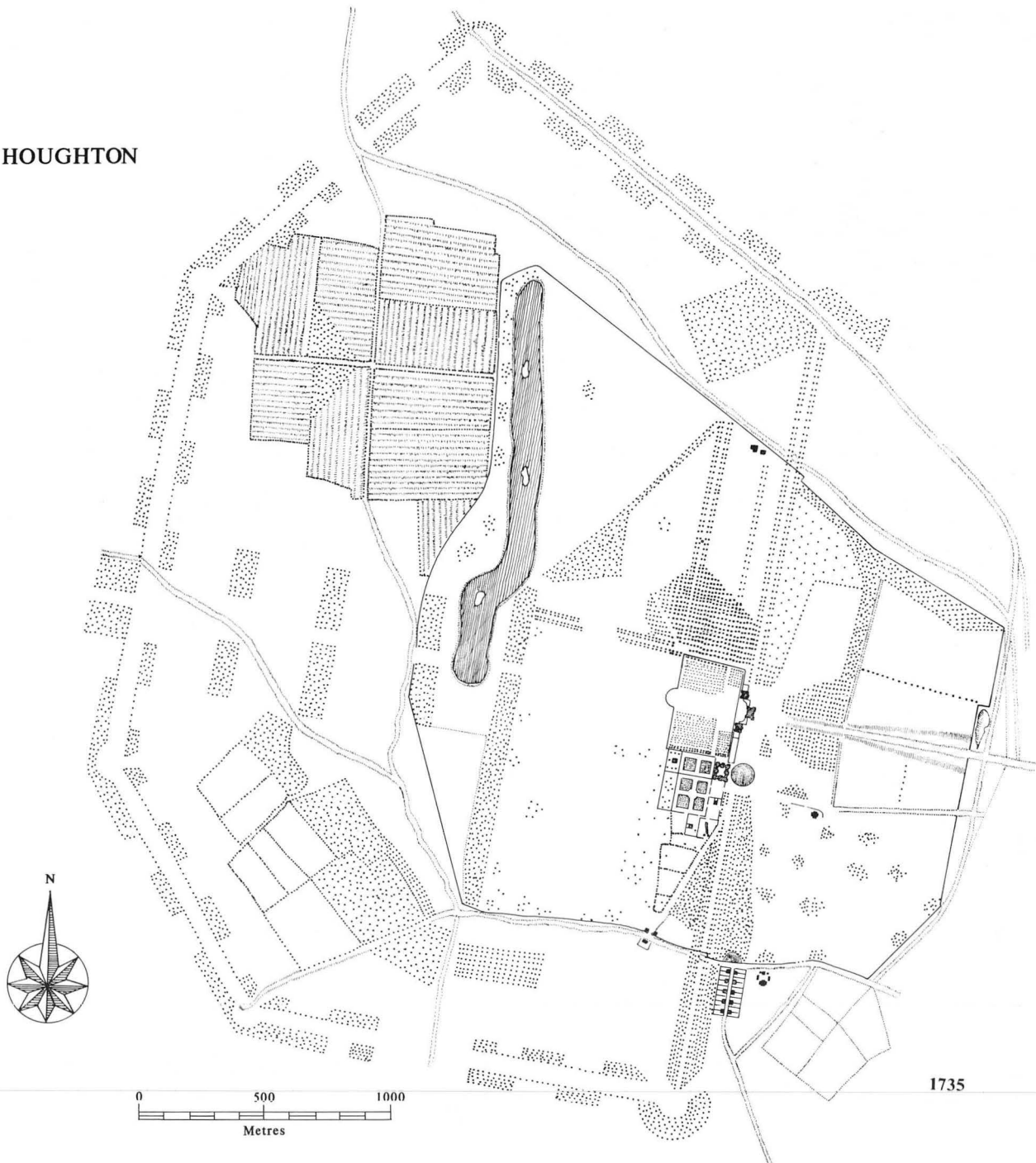
Figure 30 Houghton: Isaac Ware's map of 1735, reprinted unaltered in 1760 and 1784. This must be the printed version of the map shown to Sir Thomas Robinson. Most of the outer belt was never planted, and the Washmeres never attained this shape. Scale 1:25,000 (*copyright D. Yaxley*).

13). Walpole had quarrelled bitterly with Stanhope in 1717, but there was an armed truce in force by 1720, and in any case aesthetic, or even competitive, considerations could have transcended political disagreement. The fact that Badeslade was drawing both houses at approximately the same time is interesting, although he seems to have been a surveyor and draughtsman rather than a garden designer. Apart from the doubtful attribution of the Bodleian plan, nothing had been found to connect Bridgeman with Houghton at this time; and indeed Horace Walpole, after describing the invention of the ha-ha, wrote 'One of the first gardens planted in this simple though still

formal style, was my father's at Houghton. It was laid out by Mr Eyre an imitator of Bridgman' (Walpole 1784, 53-5). This must have been a reference to Kingsmill Eyre, who wrote to Robert Walpole from Chelsea in August 1720: he sends lists of apples, asks for Walpole's requirements for forest trees, and continues 'be pleased to order the Gardiner to draw on paper the dimensions of $y^r$ ground laid out for ye Orchard', and adds in a postscript 'Standard Cherryes you shall want they are scarce of the best kinds' (C.U.L., Cholm. MSS., 804). No other evidence of his involvement with the garden has come to light. The man in charge of the garden in 1718, and probably earlier, was Fulke

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Harold, Herold, or Hurrel, who was held in such esteem by Sir Robert that his portrait hung in the breakfast room at Houghton with those of Sir Edward Walpole, Colonel Robert Walpole, and Horatio Lord Townshend (NRO, Ms. DS 489 351×3; Walpole 1747, 38-9). Until the demolition his house stood in the old village street (No. 17 on Fig. 27). A new house must have been built for him as it is referred to in 1734 (C.U.L., Cholm. MSS. 23/3) but its location is uncertain. An account covering the period 1718-21 shows Harold receiving a total payment of £810 (C.U.L., Cholm. MSS. 23/1); no details are given, but the size of the sum, together with the letters of 1721 quoted above, suggests that considerable work was being done in the garden at that time. Edmund Prideaux's drawing of 1725-7 shows the axial walk on the west side of the house much as it appears on all four plans of the 1720s; the slender columnar bushes on either side of the path are about nine feet high, small bushes alternate with round-topped trees some 18 or 20 ft high on the banks, and on the north side of the garden the trees of the groves are even taller (Harris 1964, 72; Cornforth 1962, 526-8). Neither bushes nor trees are likely to be less than ten years old, which would put the creation of the garden well before 1720. Kathleen Mahaffey's theory that Pope had Houghton in mind when he described Timon's villa in the *Epistle to Burlington* is plausible, but even if correct it does not help to unravel the history of the garden. As far as is known Pope never visited Houghton, and even if he had seen the plan in *Vitruvius Britannicus* his description of Timon's garden bears little resemblance to the layout depicted there (Mahaffey 1980, 315-51). The garden must have been virtually complete by *c*. 1730, although masons were still at work coping the 'Garden Wall Joyning ye old Kitchen Garden South' in March 1732/3 (Houghton muniments, M.24.b).

The development of the park to the south of the new house was obstructed by the old village. Campbell's map of *c*. 1723 shows almost all the old tenements on the south side of the street still in the state of Figure 27, and presumably the original plan involved only the destruction of those on the north side (Nos 15-18) to provide a site for a new stable block, which was to form the termination of the south view from the house. Sir Thomas Robinson commented on the 'new' stables in 1731: 'The stables (which are very large and [have] been finished about 13 years ago) are to be pulled down next summer, not only as they are very ill built, but stand in the way of one of the most agreeable prospects you have from the house' (*H.M.C. 15th Rep.* Appx. part VI, 85-6). This would have made the date of the 'new' stables 1718, but Badeslade's maps of 1719-20 show only the six small and uncoordinated buildings described as 'the stable for the hunters' in the survey (No. 18 on Fig. 27), and in any case a letter from Edmund Cobb to Walpole on 5th June 1721 reported that 'Cornish' was being made for the stables, the roof was being framed, and the carpenter 'will put the Est End up Very Soone' (C.U.L., Cholm. MSS, 892). Both Campbell's map and the map of *c*. 1723-9 (Fig. 28) have a quadrangular stable due south of the new house, about on the site of No. 17 on Figure 27, and this is undoubtedly the stable that Robinson saw. Another map at Houghton, undated but of the period 1732-6, shows the 'old stables' as on Campbell's map and Figure 28, while the 'new stables' appears as a plain rectangle on the present site (Houghton muniments, Map 4). Work on the present stables was under way by May 1733, but the old stables were still being repaired in November 1735, although the new stables must have been very near completion by then (C.U.L., Cholm. MSS, 23/2; Houghton muniments, M.24.b). The Houghton muniments contain three different designs for stables, and each design has variations *e.g.* cupolas instead of pyramid roofs on the corner turrets (Houghton muniments, A/36 to A/47). All designs are for a U-shaped building with one long and two short sides. Straight joints near each end of the west front of the present stable block suggest that it was built with the west side largely open, although it was probably filled in to match the east front not long after, as it is shown as a quadrangle on the map at Figure 29, which is undated but must have been made in the late 1730s or early 1740s. Even more problematical are the scars of pitched roofs at each end of the west and south fronts which, together with the absence of the normal carstone facing on the lower parts of these walls, indicate the presence at some time of additional buildings. While these could have been the 'New Leantoe Stables' mentioned in an account of late 1734 (C.U.L., Cholm. MSS, 23/2) it is far more likely that the latter were the long building south of the church on Figure 29. Although the old stables may have been an unsatisfactory building, the main reason for their removal, as Robinson suggests, was that they stood in the way of a much grander conception of the park than had been envisaged in the original plan, and their demolition and the building of the new stables must have been part of the new plan which involved the razing of old Houghton and the building of the new village.

The decision to create a new village was made late in the 1720s, possibly in 1728 or even early 1729. The foundations for the first of the new houses, according to the parish register, were dug in July 1729, and the painters were priming doors and windows from 12th January 1729/30 (C.U.L., Cholm. MSS, 23/3). The site chosen was furlong X (Fig. 25), by the old road from Houghton to Harpley. There were ten paired cottages, disposed symmetrically on either side of a broad new street. A plan of the houses, undated but certainly contemporary, shows that each dwelling in the pair had a square front living room with a large hearth on the dividing wall and an oven at the inner corner of the stack, a small square back room with no hearth, and a staircase at the outside back corner (Houghton muniments, E/1). The houses are brick, with hipped pantiled roofs. At some time before 1800 all but two of the pairs had leanto two-storey blocks added to the gable ends, and the survey of 1800 also shows a high wall connecting each block with its neighbour. Since 1800 many alterations and modifications have been made. Village Farm, to the east of the new village, was also part of the same building programme. Contemporary plans at Houghton show that the main rooms were parlour and kitchen, on either side of the central door; a yard connected the house with a large backhouse and dairy, and behind was a ten-bay barn, 129 feet long. A five-bay cartshed, with an attic and two dormers, stood on one side of the farmyard, and a two-room building with an attic stood on the other (Houghton muniments, F/1-3). The main buildings are still substantially the same. The New Inn, to the west of the new village, was completed and glazed in January 1736/7 (C.U.L., Cholm. MSS, 23/3). The Earl of Oxford put up there in 1737 (H.M.C. Portland MSS., VI, 66) and indeed it was an important building, for as Figure 29 shows the main entrance to the park was opposite it, between two small square lodges. By 1800 it had become the King's Head, and shortly before 1845 it lost its function as an inn

and became Hall Farm. It is an imposing double-pile house of five bays with a pediment over the central bay. Figure 29, a map dating probably from the late 1730s, shows two buildings behind the house that look like barns, and the house may always have had a secondary agricultural function. The lodges opposite the New Inn stood on either side of the main approach to the Hall until late in the eighteenth century, but in 1798, on the change of ownership, Lord Cholmondeley caused new lodges to be built in the present position at the north end of the new village street. On 28th November 1798 Joseph Hill wrote to John Stephens, Cholmondeley's Cheshire agent: 'Lord Cholmondeley is greatly disappointed in the Workmanship of his new Lodges, which are I must say the meanest looking Hovels of the kind I ever saw, but expect when he comes to fit the Gates he will be more and more out of Humour with them and do expect to see them pulled down and rebuilt' (Cheshire RO, DCH/AA, Bundle 12). The gates Hill refers to were from the courtyard of Cholmondeley Hall, Cheshire, which was on the eve of demolition. It is not entirely clear whether they were part of Jean Tijou's work of 1695 or that supplied by Robert Bakewell in 1722 (*Country Life* CLIV, 19 July 1973, 155-6). Stephens describes them as 'what crossed the Court before the Hall Door' (Cheshire RO, DCH.X Bundle 6). They were transported, mainly by canal and waterway, to Houghton and installed at the new lodges in 1799.

It would seem logical that Ripley, as the architect in charge at Houghton, should be seen as the designer of the new village and the associated buildings. However, it should be noted that William Kent was at Houghton from *c.* 1726 working on the furnishings and interior of the Hall, and it is certainly possible that he was consulted on the estate buildings. The tower of the parish church, with its odd but attractive 'medieval' fenestration, looks distinctly Kentian in the vein of the gothick eyecatcher and the temple of the mill at Rousham (Oxfordshire). Tom Martin, visiting Houghton on 21st August 1727, noted 'steple down' (NRO, Rye MSS, 17) and it must have been shortly after this that the tower was rebuilt. There are several designs for the church at Houghton, but none is signed or dated (Houghton, B/1-14; that built is B/10). Similarly, none of the designs for the Village Farm is signed or dated, and the only certainty is that one draughtsman was not responsible for both the farm and church designs. Robinson (1976, 27) attributes both Hall Farm and Village Farm to Kent, but unfortunately cites no evidence.

The involvement of Charles Bridgeman in the planning of the surrounds of the new Hall is scarcely less obscure than that of Kent. As we have seen, there seems to be no firm evidence that he was concerned in the original design. He was certainly at Houghton late in 1731, however, for he is mentioned by Sir Thomas Robinson:

> The enclosure of the Park contains seven hundred acres, very finely planted, and the ground laid out to the greatest advantage. The gardens are about 40 acres, which are only fenced from the Park by a *fossé*, and I think very prettily disposed. Sir Robert and Bridgeman showed me the large design for the plantations in the country, which is the present undertaking; they are to be plumps and avenues to go quite round the Park pale, and to make straight and oblique lines of a mile or two in length, as the situation of the country admits of. This design will be about 12 miles in circumference, and nature has disposed of the country so as these plantations will have a very noble and fine effect; and at every angle there are to be obelisks, or some other building...he has very little full-grown timber, and not a drop of water for ornament (*H.M.C. 15th Rep*. Appx., part VI, 85).

Robinson's letter is often quoted as a reliable description of Houghton at this time, but investigation shows that in fact it contains several misstatements. The garden area, even including buildings, forecourts, and kitchen garden, could not have amounted to more than 30 acres, and Horace Walpole, who came to know Houghton well in the years 1736-45, wrote 'It contains three-and-twenty acres, then reckoned a considerable portion' (Walpole 1784, 55). The lack of full-grown timber was commented on by other visitors, but Sir Robert had already planted on a generous scale. In 1728 he took Sir Matthew Decker through an oak and beech wood that he said he had planted 'twenty-one years ago', that is about 1707, and other new plantations comprised at least 23 acres in Houghton and 40 acres in Great Bircham (1717-21), 132 acres, mainly on the west of the park (1724-7), and over 43 acres, mostly in the south of the park but including 13 acres in Bircham Tofts, between 1729 and 1731 (Cornforth 1987(b), 164; C.U.L. Cholm. MSS., 23/2; Broome 1865, 21-2). The 'large design' shown to Robinson has not been found at Houghton, but was probably the same as that published by Isaac Ware in 1735 (Ware 1735). This has features in common with other work attributed to Bridgeman, and displays the 'plumps and avenues' mentioned by Robinson, although the total circumference is eight rather than twelve miles. It is not possible to fit Ware's outer belt (Fig. 30) to the actual landscape with any accuracy, and although his plan was republished without alteration in 1760 and 1784 only a few parts of it were carried out, as a comparison with Figures 28, 29 and 31 will show.

Robinson's comment about the lack of water at Houghton is also not entirely accurate. It is true that the pond by the stables, shown on Figures 29-31, was not there in 1731, as it was formed after the demolition of the stables of *c.* 1721, Robinson's 'old' stables. It must have been made in the years around 1740. A plan made in April 1749 (Houghton muniments, A/57) gives the dimensions as 250 by 350 ft, and locates eleven sink-holes broken within the pond and three sink-holes and 'a great Crack in the ground' in the South Avenue near the pond. Lady Beauchamp Proctor, visiting Houghton in 1764, commented, 'Here is no water, except a small bason near the stables, which has swallowed up an immense sum and after all looks like a watering pond, and I believe is used as such' (Ketton-Cremer 1957, 193). The pond lasted well into the nineteenth century, and the depression is still visible. There was plenty of water at the Washmeres, just over the parish boundary in Great Bircham, where much of the brickmaking for the new house took place (C.U.L., Cholm. MSS, 23/2). It is very doubtful if it was ever the serpentine lake shown on Figures 28 and 29, and it certainly never attained the shape shown on Ware's map at Figure 30. Bricks were still being made there in 1744, Washmere Plantation was established in 1756, and it seems that only James' Pond, the southern tip of the Washmeres, was ever integrated into the park landscape. The pit by the church appears on Badeslade's maps of 1719-20 (Figs 25-7) and was part of the old village.

Plate XIV   Aerial photograph of Houghton Park from the south-east. 17 April 1984

Ware's plan and Figure 29 show an intention to landscape the east view from the house by creating a splayed vista. A plan (Houghton muniments, A/53, A/54) dated 24th March 1737/8 shows this vista with four steps or ha-has facing east. Some earth has certainly been removed in this area, but it is doubtful if the vista was completed. The icehouse mound and five smaller mounds, appearing on Figure 31, were thrown up between 1742 and 1745, but none of them appears on Figures 29 and 30 (Broome 1865, 11).

There are no detailed plans of the garden layout in the 1730s. Ware's map shows the west garden as two solid groves divided by a broad walk, but this cannot have been its actual state at the time. Apart from Horace Walpole's comment on the garden, quoted above, a visitor about 1745 reported

> We saw the Gardens which are not new, but neat and on the fore side of the house, the Park in which the first thing that presents itself to view is a fine Lawn, with a small Piece of Water in its centre & 4 or 500 Head of Bucks upon its Banks. Beyond this Lawn are Woods pierc'd thro' with wide but short Cutts which make a delightfull views from the house, all the Turff being exceedingly fine Green like a Garden.
>
> (Houghton muniments, M.24).

After the death of Sir Robert, who had been created the Earl of Orford, in 1745, little seems to have been done to the park, for his son, the second earl, found the estate burdened with large debts and was unable, or unwilling, to maintain his father's momentum. He died in 1751, and under the ramshackle rule of his son, the attractive but feckless third earl, the garden and the park deteriorated. Horace Walpole, visiting Houghton in 1761, wrote:

> When I had drunk tea, I strolled into the garden-they told me it was now called 'The pleasure-ground'- what a dissonant idea of pleasure-Those groves, those *allées*, where I have passed so many charming moments, are now stripped up, or overgrown; many fond paths I could not unravel, though with a very exact clue in my memory -I met two gamekeepers and a thousand hares!.

Horace is here recalling the years 1742-5, when he spent much time at Houghton as his father's companion. By 1773 things had got worse:

> Judge then what I felt at finding it half a ruin, though the pictures, the glorious pictures, and furniture are in general admirably well preserved. All the rest is destruction and desolation! The two great staircases exposed to all weathers; every room in the wings

rotting with wet; the ceiling of the gallery in danger; the chancel of the church unroofed; the water-house built by Lord Pembroke tumbling down; the garden a common; the park half covered with nettles and weeds; the walls and pales in ruin...A crew of banditti are harboured in the house, stables, town and every adjacent tenement.

(Lewis 1941, 349; Lewis 1965, 140).

Horace tried to reform the running of the estate while he was in charge at Houghton during his nephew's period of temporary insanity, but as soon as Lord Orford recovered he returned to his old spendthrift ways, culminating in 1779 in the sale of the best of Sir Robert's magnificent collection of pictures to Catherine the Great of Russia (Ketton-Cremer 1948, 176-7, 183-5).

In 1791 the third Earl of Orford died, and was succeeded by Horace, his uncle, who declared himself 'the poorest earl in England'. He was then 74 years old, and apart from procuring some pictures to fill the vacant spaces on the walls could do little to restore Houghton. On his death in 1797 the direct male line of the Walpoles ended. The third Earl, in a codicil of 1776 to a will of 1752, directed that in the event of the failure of the male line the descendants of Sir Robert's daughter Mary should take precedence over the Walpoles of Wolterton, who sprang from Sir Robert's brother Horatio. Mary had married Viscount Malpas, heir of the Earl of Cholmondeley, and it was their grandson, the fourth Earl, who succeeded to Houghton estate in 1797 (Cheshire R.O., DCH.X Bundle 6). He commissioned Joseph Hill, a Cheshire surveyor, to survey and map all the Houghton estates, and by 1800 Hill's magnificent survey was completed (see note on maps, p. 83). Hill's map of Houghton is at Figure 31. Some of the avenues appearing on the earlier maps can be traced, but the church and village pond are all that remain of old Houghton.

After the completion of Cholmondeley Castle in 1805 the family was only intermittently resident at Houghton. The Duke of Wellington visited Houghton, and was offered it by the nation, but preferred Stratfieldsaye. Much oak for shipbuilding and walnut for musket stocks was felled during the Napoleonic Wars, and in 1835 part of the park was ploughed up. James Grigor, visiting Houghton about 1840, wrote:

The entire building is yet standing; but it has assumed the sullen lifeless-like aspect of the cloister...there is not even a regular gardener kept...The gardens are gone, the lawn is obliterated,- that very spot where those great statesmen, according to their own account, passed so many charming moments, is now handed over to some petty farmer to feed his cows on! The entrance-lodges, offices, and stabling, with their stalls for a hundred horses, are still here, but empty,-conspiring with other things to form a picture only of magnificent desolation. The very roads which conduct us to the hall...are glutted with mud and almost impassable.

He quotes a letter from Horace in 1773, which refers to horses in the garden and 'banditti lodged in every cottage', and continues:

Whether the offspring of the banditti aforesaid inhabit the cottages, we did not stop to inquire; if so, they are in perfect keeping with the buildings, for we know not of any thing that so detracts from the general grandeur of this princely abode, as the paltriness of several of the lodges, and the shabby meagre apperance of the houses surrounding the entrance of the park.

(Grigor 1847, 192-7).

In the middle of the century, however, Houghton began to revive; it was visited on several occasions by the Prince and Princess of Wales, who even considered buying it (fortunately they chose Sandringham instead). The plantations were extended by both the first and second Marquesses of Cholmondeley, but the cedar and pine grove, planted in the south-east corner of the park in 1746 by the second Lord Orford, was almost entirely destroyed in a gale in 1860 (Broome 1865, 12). The Revd J.H. Broome occupied part of the Hall in the 1870s and 1880s, and observed that the foundations of the houses of the old village were traceable 'when hot weather has parched the grass' (Broome 1865, 11). The estate was offered for sale in 1886 but remained unsold. The Cholmondeleys continued to occupy Houghton intermittently (there was a tenant, Lt-col Vivian, in 1908) but in 1913 it was handed over to the 4th Marquess' elder son on the occasion of his marriage to Miss Sybil Sassoon. He became the 5th Marquess in 1923, and he and his wife, the present Dowager Lady Cholmondeley, restored the house to its former splendour.

## III. The Church
by George and Alayne Fenner

The church of St Martin now stands isolated in the park within its graveyard and consists of an unbuttressed nave with north and south aisles, chancel and a west tower-porch. The former north porch is now a vestry. The building is completely faced with knapped and squared silver-grey flints, regularly coursed and galletted, with limestone dressings. The windows have been replaced or heavily restored. Although Pevsner dismisses the church as 'mostly Victorian' and Cautley ignores it altogether, its rather rigid external appearance is deceptive, for under the flint skin the church is medieval, its chancel skewing noticeably to the south.

### Description
(Fig. 32; Pl. XIV)
The east end of the chancel contains a large Victorian three-light window in the Decorated style. Above the window the fabric of the gable differs from the rest, the facing flints being less regular, indicating a rebuilding. The north and south chancel windows are of a similar, plain, Tudor type, that on the north being of three lights, that on the south of two. They are set high in the wall, and have flattened heads under hoodmoulds with eighteenth-century stops. There were two other, larger, chancel windows to the west of the present pair, now only visible on the inside walls as cracks in the plaster.

The windows of the north aisle are all of the same design, with three plain lights, except the west window which has two lights. The model seems to be the aisle east

**N**

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Metres
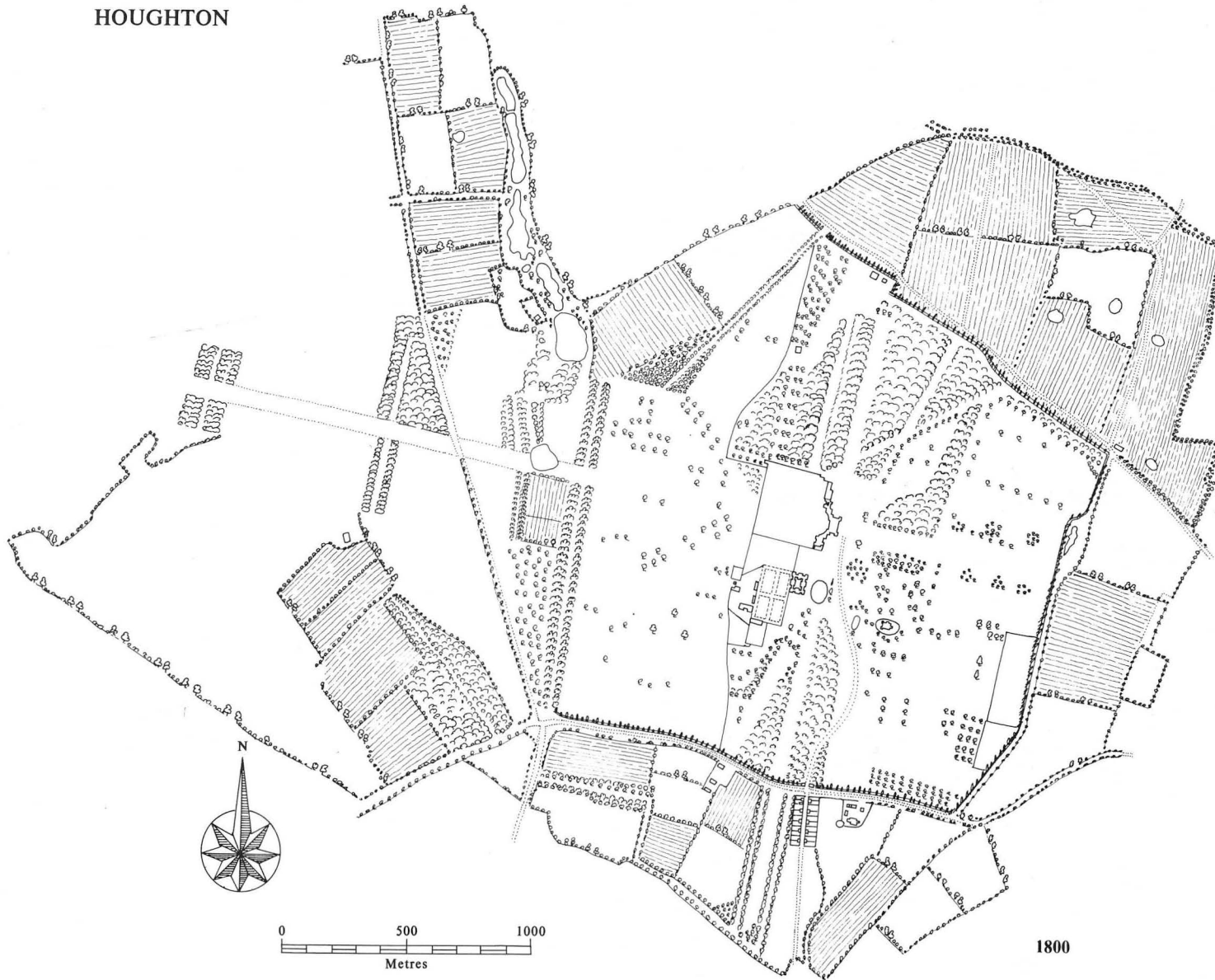
1800

Figure 31  Houghton: Joseph Hill's survey map of 1800. Remnants of both the pre-1720 layout around the park and some of the layout of the park itself are discernible. Scale 1:25,000 (*copyright D. Yaxley*).

Plate XV  Aerial photograph of St Martin's church, Houghton, from the north-east. 17 April 1984

window where although the mullions are obviously restored, the jambs and flattened four-centred hoodmould with corbelled heads are of fifteenth-century date.

In the south aisle, the east and west windows match those of the north aisle. The three south windows are of three cusped lights in the Perpendicular style in square frames. The limestone dressings are mostly renewed, but the easternmost window has its original jambs. The west walls of both aisles have limestone plinths.

The fourteenth-century north door has an outer moulding of a continuous hollow chamfer under a beaked hoodmould. It is contained in a buttressed fifteenth-century porch, its four-centred outer arch now blocked. The north clerestory has four two-light windows of fourteenth-century style under deep hoodmoulds, the south side has five. The fifth, most westerly window, lights the landing between the tower and the west gallery.

The eighteenth-century square tower-porch intrudes into the nave. It is of three stages, with a limestone plinth and diagonal buttresses, and is crowned with battlements and pinnacles. There are ornamental blank windows on the north and south sides, two-light first-floor windows under hoodmoulds on the north, west and south (similar to those of the clerestory), with quatrefoils above, and four two-light belfry windows with fat central pillars and quatrefoils under hoodmoulds. The pillared and vaulted entrance has limestone benches and a vestibule beyond, containing stairs

leading to the west gallery and belfry. Under the flint skin the tower is built of red brick.

The fourteenth-century north and south arcades are of four bays with alternate short octagonal and quatrefoil columns standing on square plinths. The arches have two hollow chamfers on the north side and one chamfer and a hollow chamfer on the south side. The chancel arch is restored and the responds are Victorian in Early English style. The easternmost bay of the nave is raised up by two steps over the Walpole vault. The nave roof is of rough deal, totally out of keeping with the rest of the church, and may have served as the support for a plaster ceiling.

**Dating and interpretation**

The complete external re-facing, internal plastering, and restoration and renewal of the windows makes any dating necessarily tentative.

The church is mentioned in *Domesday Book*, and *c.* 1203 it was given to Coxford Priory by William (Rufus) Sentcler de Northampton (Saunders 1910, 357). The appropriation was confirmed by 1227 by Bishop Thomas Blundeville and by Pope Gregory IX *c.* 1255 (Saunders 1910, 360). There is nothing in the proportions of the present church, or any other feature, to indicate an underlying pre-Conquest or Norman building. The mis-alignment of the chancel and nave perhaps indicates different building dates, and the chancel may well have

97

HOUGHTON
ST MARTIN

13th Century
14th Century
15th Century
16th Century
18th Century
20th Century

N

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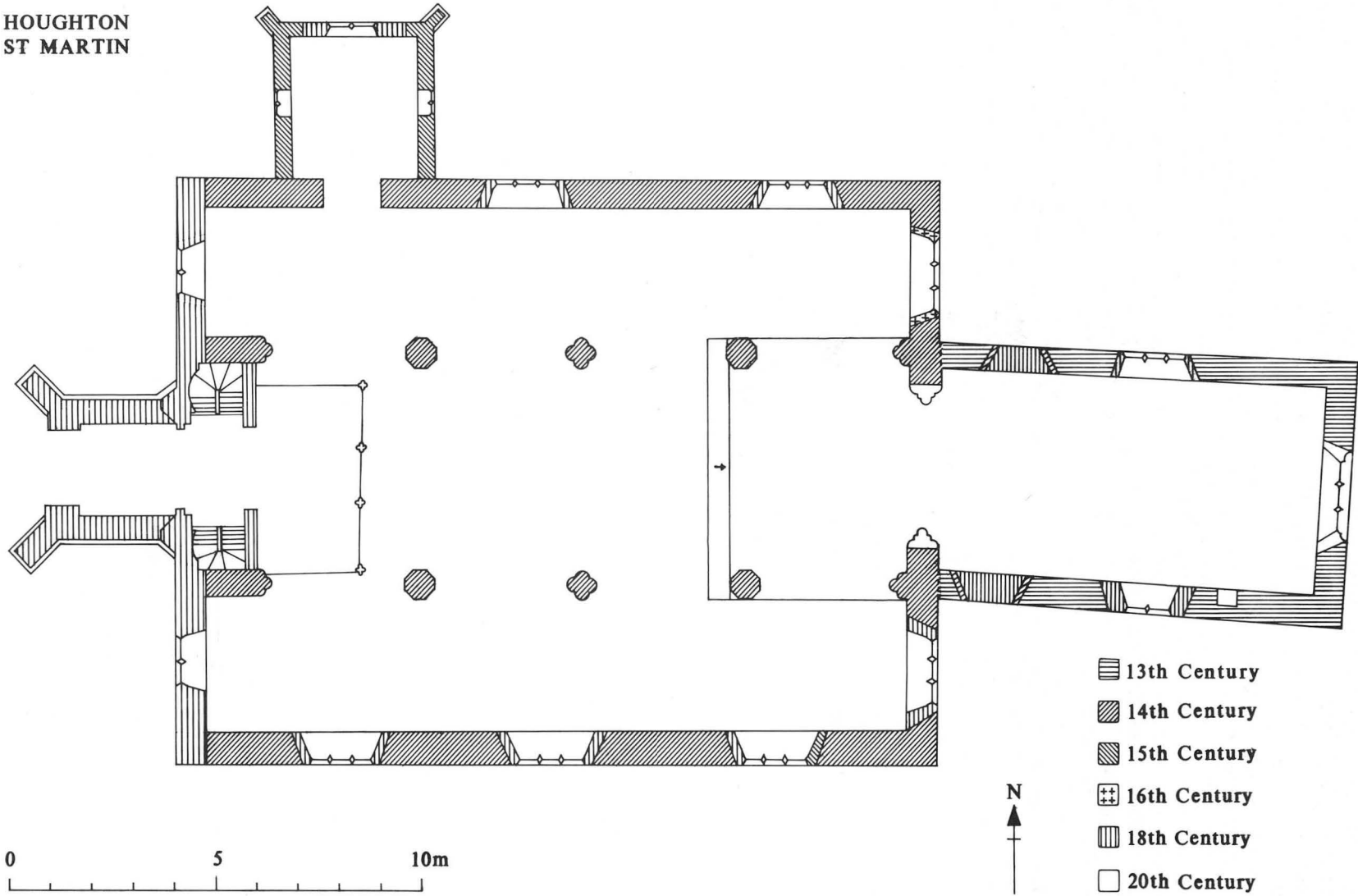
Figure 32 Houghton church. Scale 1:150.

been aligned with an original nave; its proportions suggest a thirteenth-century rebuilding or enlargement. Ralph de Walpole, a younger son (d. 1302) may have been responsible for this. He was vicar of Houghton, becoming Archdeacon of Ely in 1271, Bishop of Norwich in 1289 and Bishop of Ely in 1299 (Broome 1865, 28).

The nave was rebuilt in the fourteenth century with two aisles and a clerestory, and laid out four-square, possibly aligned with an existing tower. By the sixteenth century the aisles needed repair: £5 was left in 1502 for reparation of the south aisle (NRO, NCC Popy 135) and a bequest in 1512 'for making the North Ylde' of the church doubtless meant re-roofing and renewing the windows rather than a total rebuild. Another bequest in 1511 towards 'making the steeple' was possibly part of the same campaign (NRO, NAW Sparhawk 167).

The visitation of 1581 reported that the chancel wanted whiting (NRO ANW 3/1) but by 1602 'the Rooffe of the Chancell & the Pavem't thereof is much decayed' (Bryant 1900, 61) due to controversy between patron and parishioners as to who should repair it.

Tom Martin visited Houghton in August 1727 and reported 'Chancell tiled-church &2 Isles and porch leaded-Steple down-an old stone with a flourish + west end (*sic*)...A Good Cross Standing neer ye alehouse ye upright Stone about 10 foot high' (NRO Rye MSS 17). Sir Robert Walpole seems to have turned his attention to the church about 1729, but documentary evidence for this is scanty. A new west tower was built which also served as a porch, and it seems likely that the west wall was rebuilt to make provision for the stairs to the gallery and ringing chamber on the first floor. The south door was blocked and the opening filled with a window. The outer arch of the north porch was also blocked, a new window installed, and the porch turned into a vestry. The westernmost chancel windows were probably also blocked at this time. All the windows were restored or renewed; all the hoodmoulds are finished with the same elegant stops. Finally the whole building was encased in a new flint facing. By 1773 however the chancel roof needed attention (Lewis 1941, 349). There were further restorations in 1867 to the chancel, when the east window was inserted (Bryant 1900, 66).

# 8. Pudding Norton: A Correction

In the study of Pudding Norton in the preceding set of deserted villages (*East Anglian Archaeology* No. 14) it was stated:-

> 'In 1401 there is reference to 'the fewness and the poverty of the Parishioners' (Cal. Pap. Letters, 1396-1404, V, 474-5)' (Cushion *et al.*, 1982, 47).

Previous comments of a like nature had also been made quoting the same source (Beresford 1965, 535; Beresford in Beresford and Hurst 1971, 7).

It is clear from an examination of the entry in the Calendar of Papal Letters, that the reference is not to Pudding Norton. The letter concerns the church of St Margaret, Norton, in the diocese of Norwich and the deanery of Rockland. It states that the church, by reason of pestilences and mortalities, barrenness of lands, ruin of buildings, the malice of the times, and especially the fewness and poverty of the parishioners, was too poor to maintain a priest of its own. The church was so ruined in roof and wall that it was in almost daily danger of falling and that its repair was beyond the means of the parishioners. In the cemetery of St Margaret's was the church of St Andrew, almost contiguous and easy of access. The unification of the two parishes, requested in 1394, was granted and confirmed in 1401.

Pudding Norton was in the deanery of Tofts, it is Blo Norton which is in the deanery of Rockland. Pudding Norton had only one church: St Margaret; Blo Norton had two churches: St Margaret and St Andrew, in the same churchyard, of which only St Andrew remains. The entry must concern the village of Blo Norton and not Pudding Norton. A church in Pudding Norton which survived for some considerable time after *c.* 1400 fits the documentary evidence of money left, in 1557, for its repair (Cushion *et al.* 1982, 47).

# 9. Progress in Norfolk Rural Settlement Studies, 1955-1985

It is now some thirty-three years since Keith Allison published, in 1955, 'Lost Villages of Norfolk' in *Norfolk Archaeology*. This study had its origin as a thesis for the degree of Bachelor of Arts at the University of Leeds but had been enlarged by the addition of material gathered incidentally during further, post-graduate, work there. It was the first attempt to look at the problem of village desertion within the county, although, in 1941, John Saltmarsh had noted the evidence of ruined medieval churches in the Norfolk Breckland in his paper on *Plague and Economic Decline in England*. In 1954 Maurice Beresford's book *Lost Villages of England* appeared; in this he drew attention, through his own work and that of others, to the phenomenon in the country as a whole. Allison's paper was a valuable and detailed supplement to this.

Allison plotted the distribution of desertions he had identified against a background of accepted land-use regions and, by using sources in the Public Record Office, attempted to examine the chronology and causes of abandonment. He rejected the Black Death as a major cause of desertion, though he acknowledged that it could have been one of a number of contributing factors. He considered that the Enclosure movement between 1450 and 1550, so effective in Midland England, was of little significance in Norfolk, landlord oppression taking a different form in this county. Overstocking of commons and foldcourses by landlords, denying peasants their own rights of pasturage, were forms of landlord aggression which were just as effective as the more obtrusive Midland Enclosure. Landlords consolidated the holdings of peasants into their own estates. Allison thought that this was the major cause of depopulation and considered that it was a sixteenth-century feature.

Allison recognised that some villages had been deserted before the late fifteenth century for various unknown reasons, perhaps part of a gradual adjustment to the realities of soil quality after earlier, too intensive, colonisation. Desertion after the sixteenth century was not treated as a main topic though emparking was recognised as a cause of movement from original sites; shrunken villages, though their existence was mentioned, were excluded from the study. A gazetteer of known sites with individual factual summaries followed the main text.

The paper was not offered as an ultimate answer to the problem. Allison stated that much work on local, more detailed sources was necessary to provide support for the theories of forcible depopulation in the sixteenth century or the earlier recession. He also felt that such research would reveal the existence of many deserted hamlets whose identities would have been masked within major settlements in the records he had consulted for his study.

Research among local documentary records has, indeed, been one of the ways in which settlement study has gone forward since 1955. Purely documentary work has proved less effective with the passage of time but some useful studies of individual settlements have been completed: Hargham and Snetterton (Davison 1972) and Little Barwick (Beckett 1984) serve as examples of this method.

One important change that has come about is in the general approach to the subject of desertion. It is now appreciated that desertion in its simplest form, intriguing as it may be, is merely the most obtrusive evidence of a fluctuation of rural settlement that has gone on for centuries. There have been periods, as Allison discerned, when decline has been widespread, but disappearance has been a continuous process. Some of the causes which Allison isolated in the sixteenth century actually continued to operate effectively in the seventeenth century and perhaps beyond 1700 in some instances. This is apparent in Hargham, in West Harling (Davison 1980) and in Roudham (Cushion *et al.* 1982). Decline in one settlement may have been a gradual process by which the village dwindled almost imperceptibly to a church and one house, or to just one house as in Little Hockham (Davison 1987). In other instances there may have been shrinkage followed by a period of standstill and then further, possibly final, decline (Roudham). The slow migration of a village is another feature unrecognised in the pioneer studies. The late medieval or early post-medieval village may bear a name recognisable as that recorded in 1086 but it may not have occupied the same site (Wade-Martins 1980a, 33-9, 66-70).

There was, surprisingly, no conscious decision to include fieldwalking, though it grew into some of the studies in a natural way. It provided much useful information at Egmere, Roudham, Kilverstone, Beachamwell and, especially, Rougham.

At about the same time, several other studies were completed quite independently of the NARG programme. These were at Little Hockham (Davison 1987) and at West and Middle Harling (Davison 1980, 1983). At the Harlings, aerial photography showed very limited earthworks but documentary evidence was relatively good and fieldwalking gave excellent results in the small areas of arable available for examination and also, somewhat unusually, on grassland. Coincidentally, at one of these sites, Middle Harling, metal detecting led to the discovery of Middle Saxon coins and other important metalwork and excavation gave further significant information (Rogerson, in prep.). At Little Hockham, fieldwalking, combined with some early nineteenth-century maps, allowed establishment of the position and extent of the vanished village despite the virtual absence of documents.

Although the studies considered so far have a broad similarity their aims were somewhat different. Nevertheless they may be assessed collectively to some advantage. Their contribution to the body of knowledge about settlement in Norfolk is respectable. Accurate plans of ten earthwork complexes are now in existence. A good deal has been discovered about the history of some of the sites, affording a store of information for future reference, and the studies of twelve churches are of comparable worth. Fieldwalking was employed to fill gaps in the surface record made by the plough; at Rougham it was combined with documentary evidence to locate an early medieval greenside settlement where no surface signs remain; at Roudham it was used to show that the area of occupation was even bigger than the surviving earthworks suggested.

A number of justifiable criticisms can be made. Fieldwalking was under-used, especially at some of the earlier NARG sites. The suspicion that the earthworks at Bixley may represent a form acquired only in a later stage of development has been voiced in the text. Something might have been learned about the earlier shape of the village had a campaign of fieldwalking been conducted. Little Bittering is another ill-documented site where fieldwalking might well have been used on the surrounding fields. Of course, earthworks are sealed beneath grass and the surrounding areas may be under short-term grass mixes or even plantations of trees, so making fieldwalking virtually impossible; nevertheless the criticism must remain.

The nature of the fieldwalking actually completed is also open to question. Not only on the sites chosen by NARG, but also in much of the other work, it appears to have been selective, being carried out in the vicinity of known or suspected areas of interest. In no case was a whole parish examined in this way. The only possible exception appears to be at Rougham where the work of Mr Albert Hooks, undertaken quite independently a few years before the NARG survey, may have gone some way towards this. In addition, until some of the later studies, little effort was made to examine the medieval or early post-medieval archaeology of the landscape which supported the village; its field system, its windmills, its marlpits and other minor features. Indeed, there was, as yet, only slight recognition of the need for a total approach using all available techniques.

The other major comment which can be made about the NARG DMV project and also about most of the other work which has been completed is that it is, unfortunately, largely confined to certain areas of the county (Fig. 1). The Launditch Hundred is in central Norfolk, Caldecote (Wade-Martins 1980a, 78-81) is in Breckland, as are the Harlings, the Hockhams, Hargham and Snetterton and almost all the NARG sites are in the same areas or in north-central Norfolk. Bixley is the sole published site from the very considerable areas of south-east and south Norfolk, apart from Langhale, where a Saxo-Norman kiln was excavated and published with some discussion of the dispersed settlement pattern in that deserted medieval village (Wade 1976, 101-29). A plan of some earthworks surviving at Stratton St Michael has also been published with an accompanying description (Cushion, in Addington 1982, 109-11). There has been no study as yet of settlements in north-western Norfolk where there may be a relict Romano-British landscape. Little has been done in the 'Greensand Belt' where there is some rather obtrusive surface evidence of the retreat of settlement at Bawsey, Mintlyn, Leziate and other places; some work begun at Shouldham has yet to be completed. Babingley is an interesting site, some aspects of which have been published (Allison 1955, 119-20, 142-3; Hurst 1961, 332-42). Although Allison drew attention to some of the documentary sources available for these villages a deeper investigation would be profitable. Babingley was formerly near to tidal water and bears some comparison with sites on the Fen-edge where Oxborough, Foulden and Methwold show indications of an apparent orientation to water-borne traffic. It may well be that the Fenland Project survey currently progressing will contribute to a greater understanding of these sites. The recent publication of a study of West Walton (Silvester 1985), based on multi-period fieldwalking with some documentary support, is an instance of what can be achieved in settlement studies in the Fenland itself. Few would have considered it likely that activity of the Middle Saxon period would have been so intense, even in the Silt Fen. At Hay Green, Terrington St Clement, even more substantial Middle Saxon finds have been made (Rogerson and Silvester 1986).

For the remainder of Norfolk, Witton is the only settlement studied in depth in the north-east (Lawson 1983), while Broadland, with the Island of Flegg which has several deserted sites in a district long considered to be one of Danish colonisation, awaits attention. Even the central areas of Breckland have not been investigated in any detail; there are superficial signs that contraction of settlement there may have been earlier and more drastic than that experienced by the more peripheral settlements which have been studied. However, military activity in this zone has erected a barrier which makes study in the near future unlikely.

If studies can be extended to cover all regions of the county an important test will have been applied to the generalised model based on work completed so far. The model suggests a high level of population developing in Roman times with a marked decline to follow. The population then increased from the mid-ninth century onwards, reaching its highest level by the thirteenth century and collapsing to some extent amid the misfortunes of the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. Maps showing the distributions of wealth and population based on *Domesday* statistics and medieval subsidy returns illustrate the process in its later stages. All this would be reflected in advances into, and retreats from, 'marginal' land and would be accompanied by changes in the farming economy and associated activities. How far this may be true for every area of Norfolk remains to be seen. Very little of substance is known about the immediate post-Roman period; much of what we assume is based on discoveries of pagan cemeteries and surface scatters of pottery. Much more systematic search might reveal that activity in Early Saxon times was greater than previously imagined. In Witton, the discovery of a settlement of that time in an area where (so far) few cemeteries are known to exist is, perhaps, a sign that more could be found by diligent search. Similarly some attention should be given to defining what is meant by 'marginal land'; sweeping classification of this kind may well result in dangerous over-simplification. Not every deserted settlement is on 'poor' land, not every well-established village is on the best soil. The meaning of 'marginal land' must vary with environmental changes and with changes in agricultural techniques. It is likely that our present understanding of the economics of agriculture in medieval and late medieval/early post-medieval times may be too generalised. Much more detailed study of bailiffs' accounts and other surviving documents is necessary. The work of Bruce Campbell in north-east Norfolk (1981, 16-28) has given detailed information of a kind which, if extended elsewhere in Norfolk, would provide much-needed factual evidence to support, modify or dispose of oft-quoted theory.

Any interpretation of settlement patterns must take account of the development of field systems in the varied regions of the county. There are few deserted village earthworks in the south-east, probably the result of intensive agriculture of the kind described by Marshall (1787, I, 8-10) in East Norfolk. A fuller grasp of agricultural practices in earlier times may afford explanations of some questions of this kind. Fieldwalking

reveals the existence of scatters of pottery of varying intensity; quite apart from obvious concentrations which mark settlement sites. Interpreting these scatters presents problems. Intense agricultural practice should increase the presence of pottery through increased manuring, while less intensive farming would mean fewer sherds; scarcity of finds may not reflect a virtual absence of exploitation but simply reveal varied agricultural activity in different regions.

It might be possible to develop studies in other ways than mere extension of cover to all regions of the county. Beachamwell and Barton Bendish are both settlements which had three churches; Barton Bendish was, initially, a compact village (Rogerson *et al.* 1987, 1-66), while Beachamwell straggled in an irregular crescent. Pottery evidence from fieldwalking, though incomplete, suggests that Beachamwell may well have been a polynuclear or polyfocal settlement. Study of other multiple-church villages, or clusters, would be an interesting theme to pursue; the Shoteshams, having four churches between two closely situated clusters, one of them deserted, would be a rewarding topic as would, perhaps, the Rocklands near Attleborough. There may be other settlement 'types' which could be investigated; attention has been drawn from time to time to Whinburgh with its 'moat', its rectangular layout and the *burh* element in its name, other places such as Smallburgh, Aldborough and Southburgh could form a suitable group for consideration. A similar case might be made for selecting villages which have a church near a green; Old Buckenham, Aldborough and Mulbarton are examples which are obvious. A group of villages which once had charters for markets might be another subject. The possibility that some Norfolk villages may have undergone a planned reorganisation at some time in the more remote past has been little explored. The result of landscaping of the eighteenth century is well-known in Holkham and Houghton, as is the planned medieval foundation of New Buckenham, which failed to expand significantly beyond its original bounds. There are, however, hints of earlier planning in the form of the contracted village of Beachamwell and some elements of the early seventeenth-century landscape of Barton Bendish are strikingly regular. The question of regulation in early village planning (sun-division or *solskifte*) has been discussed by G.C. Homans (1960, 83-106). There is evidence that, in Northern England, village redesign was by no means uncommon between the years 1100 and 1300; the detailed examination of Wharram Percy in North Yorkshire has revealed a planned reorganisation during this period (Hurst 1979, 138-9). Whether re-modelling occurred at this time in Norfolk is something which should be investigated. The general distribution pattern of settlement which included moated platforms with its concentration on heavier lands, has been noticed for some time (Åberg 1978, 2). However, detailed examinations of sites and their locations within the settlements to which they belonged has begun only relatively recently. The work of B. and B.W. Dollin in the hundred of South Erpingham (Dollin 1986) and elsewhere has begun to give valuable information about several aspects of moats: their form; their situation, particularly in relation to water supply and soil variation; their distribution in relation to medieval wealth and the manorial structure.

There is plenty of scope for further work in many directions provided that the methods used are consistent so that comparisons and conclusions made are valid. The basic requirement is that the approach to settlement study should be one of total examination of the landscape. Experience has shown that it is quite wrong to assume that everything relevant can be learned by an investigation of the immediate vicinity of a known site. Fieldwalking in the parishes of Hales and Loddon in south-east Norfolk by the writer and G. Fenner (in prep.) has revealed the existence of isolated settlement points (presumably single farmsteads or small groups of dwellings) contemporary with the main settlement, but in places quite remote from it, selected for reasons which are not obvious now. This may be a feature of that region or, perhaps, merely of the parishes in question since in the neighbouring parish of Heckingham settlement has been far less scattered. One of the most encouraging signs of recent years is that there is not only interest in this previously neglected area of south-east Norfolk but also that the work being attempted is on a much broader canvas than has been the custom. The Norfolk Research Committee is slowly compiling a body of information about the parish of Wacton, and individual members of NARG are actively working in the Saxlinghams (Mary Muir) and Hempnall (Maureen Cubitt). In all of these fieldwalking has been combined with other techniques. One of the most enterprising efforts in this area has been that of the late Sylvia Addington who combined hedge-row dating with fieldwalking, documentary and place-name studies in a number of south-Norfolk parishes (Addington 1982). A cautionary note on the use of hedge-row dating (Johnson 1982) in this area has also been sounded, based on analysis of results from eleven parishes. Lastly, David Dymond (1985) and Tom Williamson (1986), working independently, have both suggested that certain elements still extant in the landscape of South Norfolk may be very ancient and this should serve as a further spur to study of the region. As work continues on a parish scale in Barton Bendish and Fransham in Breckland and Central Norfolk (Rogerson, in prep.) it may soon be possible to begin comparison on similar terms between villages in distinct regions of the county.

Fieldwalking a complete parish diverts attention from the purely medieval and post-medieval settlement patterns which have rather monopolised the study so far and, in the narrower field, makes desertion something which applies to hamlets and single farms or tofts as well as whole villages. It is truly multi-period study, bringing to light evidence of patterns in Saxon, Romano-British, Iron Age and prehistoric times and the distributions can be plotted and compared for signs of continued occupation and for marked dateable shifts. Areas which have been largely avoided by settlers may be equally significant, suggesting something repellent in the environment, perhaps, or the persistence of woodland, grassland or even a forgotten medieval park. Surveys of any earthworks, the church and other standing buildings of importance and of hedge-rows give accompanying information for the later patterns of finds, though hedge-row dating may be less significant in areas of Norfolk such as Breckland, where the field landscape is relatively modern. Documents sometimes help to identify distinct greenside clusters, as at Rougham or Cotes, (Davison 1982) but are less likely to give details which can be safely equated with smaller sites.

In this way it is possible to establish the sequence of settlement patterns in a parish or other selected area and furnish a simple narrative of the changes which have taken place. What is more of a challenge is the search for explanations of the changes noted. Even on a well-

documented site changes are not directly referred to in the records, except on very rare occasions, but have to be inferred; and mis-interpretation is possible.

Most explanation offered for desertion of major sites or for shifts of focus within a parish has relied on economic considerations, the desire for profit from sheep and cattle tempting landlords to revise the economic organisation of the community to the point of dispensing with much of the labour force. Other suggestions have been made to explain movement to greens: for example, an expansion of population leading to greater dependence on common grazing for the animals belonging to the peasant farmers. Occasionally some reference has been made to soil values and climate but with some reservation. Strictures against physical determinism have recently been made (Taylor 1982, 2; 1983, 12) but it is unwise to ignore the environmental background simply to avoid this accusation. What must be remembered is that within an area generally attractive to settlers there may be any number of sites which will do and that this allows individuals to exercise their own judgement, good or indifferent, and even to indulge whims or foibles. The influence of climatic change is also something which has received only slight attention in the literature of this subject in the county.

A brief examination of some of the regions of Norfolk is sufficient to show that some influence on settlement patterns must be environmental. South and south-east Norfolk have varied but generally moisture-retaining boulder clay soils intersected by alluvial valley floors. Breckland is a sandy plateau with poor soils which are even subject to serious wind-blowing; narrow river valleys cut across the region. In the first region, settlement is widespread and, though some heavier clays appear to be avoided, broad dispersal is general. In Breckland, small villages cling to the valley terraces and avoid the upland areas where the sandy and stony soils have low water-holding capacity (Murphy 1983). If expansion occurred in Breckland it was in linear fashion along the terraces as suggested at West and Middle Harling. Something of this contrast in Norfolk landscapes was noted by Blomefield in his remarks about the Hundred of Guiltcross.

Relief is not obtrusive in Norfolk yet a glance at the places in the list of deserted sites as shown on 1:50,000 or 1:25,000 maps reveals an appreciable range of heights above OD. Some are scarcely 10m OD, while a few (Summerfield, the two Palgraves and Quarles) are close to 70 m. There is obviously nothing here to bear comparison with the environment of upland Britain; it has been shown that there cultivation limits have risen and fallen and settlements have been established and abandoned in response to fluctuations of potential for plant growth brought about by cyclic climatic changes (Parry 1975; 1981). Even so, the higher parts of Norfolk would have been quite exposed to persistent winds from the north and, according to Professor Lamb (1987, 139-40), northerly and easterly winds may well have been more frequent in the later medieval centuries.

At the other extreme, certain lowly-situated settlements may have been vulnerable to negative changes in land/sea levels; again a feature of the later medieval period (Funnell 1979, 35-43) culminating at about AD 1300. These may not have brought about total desertion but could have resulted in an abandonment of lower portions of a village in favour of some position further up-slope. There are signs of this in some parishes fringing the Chet valley in south-east Norfolk where concentrations of early medieval/medieval potsherds are to be found on ground that is now ill-drained (Davison and Fenner, in preparation; Williams 1984, 11-12). Although some of these might be attributable to deposition of rubbish in order to build up marshy ground, there are sound reasons for thinking otherwise. Some work elsewhere in eastern Norfolk has drawn attention to similar physical conditions in Flegg (Cornford 1982) and in the Yare valley (Harvey 1985).

When climatic fluctuations are considered as well the last observations appear, perhaps, over-simplified. That the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were characterised by frequent cool and moist summers has been recognised for some time. The coincidence of climatic change bringing wetter conditions with the change in the relative levels of land and sea makes their contributions difficult to distinguish.

The effects of an increase in moisture and cloudiness are not confined to upland or to very low areas. The results of such changes on clay soils in lowland regions have been reviewed (Beresford, G. 1981). Clay lands require seasonal drying and shrinkage to recondition their structures. Under the agricultural techniques available in medieval times this was not possible and even under drier conditions there would have been deterioration. Under a wetter regime, the position would have been much worse. Working of clay soils under wet conditions would result in puddling and bad surface drainage. Clay-land farming would require dry autumns to permit ploughing so that winter frosts could act upon the broken surface and improve the soil structure for spring cultivation. A wet autumn would not permit this and fields would have to remain unploughed until the drought of March (if it came) would allow it.

That the increasingly wet conditions of medieval times may have had some effect in parts of Norfolk is supported by certain pieces of evidence, admittedly rather slender. At Roudham one or two of the portions clearly inhabited in medieval times seem to be badly-drained even today. At Rougham, in modern times, surface conditions in the deserted area can be poor in a wet winter. Presentments in manorial courts for failure to clear out ditches and for causing floods by neglect are noticeable in the late medieval period and there were similar incidences in the Hockhams and in Kempstone. These seem to coincide with a period of wet climatic conditions in the early fifteenth century (Prof. Lamb pers. comm., 1986). This would accord with the comments of Hurst (Beresford and Hurst 1971, 121) who noted constant re-cutting of ditches accompanying the raising of toft levels.

In parts of South-East Norfolk medieval (and earlier) settlement seems to have been chary of soils developed on the sticky, chalky boulder clay deposited in the later phase of the Anglian advance of the ice sheets. Here, in winter, the surface becomes wet and perched water tables may develop; when transpiration is low, the water is able to accumulate even more rapidly. Even in summer months water in the clay is held in capillaries while the sandy cover may bake hard in dry weather. These factors can influence the time available for spring cultivation and must have made medieval agriculture quite difficult. It is notable that fieldwalking on portions of this soil area has revealed, not only a scarcity of settlement, but also a peculiar sparsity of 'manure scatter' finds of potsherds, suggesting pasture or woodland rather than significant cultivation.

'Boulder clay' is a term which must be used carefully. A glance at a moderately-detailed soil map shows that

boulder clay in the higher parts of central Norfolk can exhibit marked variations and that strong surviving settlements may share the same soil-type as others which have declined. Even a close examination of soils commonly considered more attractive such as the sandier boulder clay of the earlier Anglian advance in south-east Norfolk reveals quite startling variations in their nature and quality. The observation of the fieldwalker who notices the changes in soil consistency within one large field; cold, adhesive clay to sandy loam to harsh sand and gravel, merely confirms what has long been recognised by the men who worked the soil. They not only quarried the clay for marl or for building material and the gravel for road-making but knew that cereals would germinate slowly on the cold damp clay and that drought would damage crops more speedily on the gravels. There may be other hidden variations in otherwise similar soils. Dury (1981, 44) has drawn attention to certain possible deficiencies in trace elements in soils developed on the Lower Lias outcrops on which a group of deserted settlements on the Warwickshire/Northamptonshire border lies. In times when local self-sufficiency was relatively unavoidable, poverty and low resistance to disease in animals and human populations on soils such as these were possible and could enhance the likelihood of eventual abandonment. When the diversity of soils and the micro-climatic differences within even a small area are considered, it appears likely that some of the anomalies in settlement survival might be open to explanation. Unsatisfactory sites colonised, perhaps, at some time of population pressure on available resources would be tempting targets for abandonment in a withdrawal; ailing settlements would offer less resistance to removal or drastic modification by enterprising landlords or even, in rarer cases, succumb more easily to pestilence or famine.

One of the lessons learned from the work accomplished so far is that explanations of changes in settlement patterns are often uncertain and that the problems are complex. Something of this complexity is evident in the histories of Kilverstone and of Rougham considered in this volume. We may reflect with some satisfaction on what has been achieved: ten sets of earthworks safely recorded, much useful information gathered and a growing appreciation of the relative value of a variety of research techniques. There remain many aspects of study to explore before reasonably sound conclusions about the development of rural settlement in Norfolk can be drawn. Such investigation should be based on a consistent multi-period approach to each study undertaken coupled with a genuine inter-disciplinary investigation of the possible causes of the changes observed.

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Compiled by J. Everett

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