

## SAXON SETTLEMENT AND LAND DIVISION IN THE WESTERN WEALD

by Mark Gardiner

*The settlement history of two contrasting areas of West Sussex is considered. The first area is Kirdford parish and the immediately surrounding district, and the second consists of the hundreds of Dumpford and Easebourne. The positions of detached parts of manors are identified. Documentary evidence, place names and the morphology of parishes are used to interpret the positions of these outliers within a general framework of Saxon settlement and land division.*

A recent study of the division of land and the development of settlement in the Kentish Weald during the Saxon and medieval periods is of considerable importance for the examination of similar processes in Sussex. K. P. Witney's study of the Weald of Kent<sup>1</sup> builds on the framework established by Jolliffe in his study of the 'Jutish South-East'.<sup>2</sup> Although the ethnic explanation for the similarities of Sussex and Kent cannot be sustained in the light of archaeological evidence, there nevertheless appear to be many parallels between the organization of land in the two counties.

Jolliffe argued that the subdivisions of the county of Kent, the lathes, have their equivalents in the rapes of Sussex.<sup>3</sup> Each lathe consisted of an area of older settlement and arable agriculture in the north and north-east of Kent, and an area of common land within the Weald. The common land was used for the pannage of pigs and the pasturing of cattle by the inhabitants of the settlements in the arable part of the county. It is surmised that the continued use of the same places within the Weald by drovers from the older settlements led to the establishment by squatters' rights of individual swine pastures or 'dens'. In this way the common land came to be partitioned between the settlements in the north and north-east of Kent. One of these settlements may have come to have a dozen or more outlying

'dens' within the Weald. The pattern of land division thus formed was such that parent manors which were close to one another usually had detached members which were similarly clustered within the Weald.<sup>4</sup> The function of outliers was thus to provide an area of land of the type not available around the home settlement, typically land for pannage and grazing. It is increasingly apparent that Anglo-Saxon estates were constituted so as to include a range of resources and hence to be largely self-sufficient.<sup>5</sup>

This sequence of development is used below to interpret the formation of Saxon settlement and land division in one part of Sussex. The region examined consists of two areas. The first is the land to the east of Petworth, particularly the parish of Kirdford. The second is the whole of the Wealden part of the rape of Chichester, that is, the hundreds of Dumpford and Easebourne, an area which is sometimes referred to as the Vale of the Rother (Fig. 1). These two areas are used to demonstrate the differences in the development of settlement. The Weald is defined here as meaning the entire area between the chalk escarpments of the North and South Downs.

The pre-Conquest documentation for Sussex is much less complete than that of Kent, and so it is necessary to use some less direct

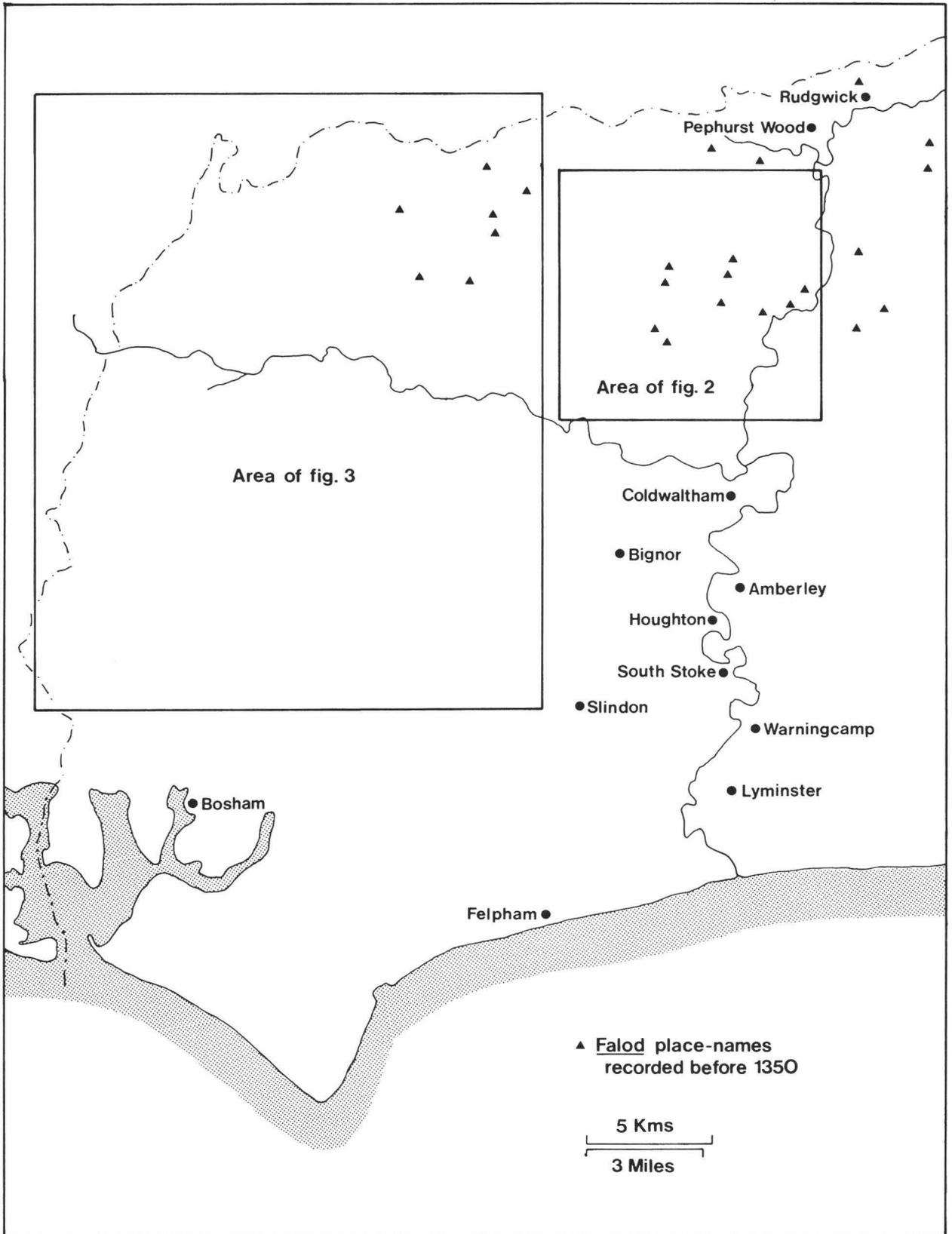


Fig. 1. Part of West Sussex showing the positions of some parent manors and the distribution of the place-name element *falod*.

methods to identify the outlying members of manors. W. J. Ford in his study of Warwickshire has suggested that this may be done by three different and complementary approaches:

- (i) Domesday Book and later manorial documents may indicate such links;
- (ii) ecclesiastical organization may reflect in the parochial structure and the relation of mother churches and chapelries the temporal divisions of land on which they were formerly based;
- (iii) place names may also link a parent manor and its outlier.<sup>6</sup>

The use of medieval and post-medieval documentation, in some cases as late as the 19th century, in a study of Saxon land division requires some justification. The longevity of parish boundaries is now well established. Work in Dorset has demonstrated that the boundaries there delimit Saxon estates.<sup>7</sup> In some instances the boundaries may have been altered or modified in the medieval period, but such changes can usually be detected. The antiquity of common land is less well established. On general grounds it can be argued that the later boundaries of common land represent the minimum area existing in the late Saxon period. The trend during the medieval and post-medieval periods was towards the enclosure of common land and thus such land surviving in the later period is likely to be the remains of former common. Late records of manorial bounds cannot generally be extrapolated into the Saxon period with any confidence. In special cases, however, where detached members of a distant manor are recorded it is legitimate to consider that these might have had an origin in the partitioning of land during the Saxon period, because such arrangements were not usually made in the medieval period. On the contrary the Sussex folios of Domesday Book record the separation of some outliers from their parent manors to form new manors in their own right.<sup>8</sup> Thus where such features in the landscape do persist it is possible to make inferences about the Saxon period by using later documents.

The first area to be considered is the land to the east of Petworth, particularly the parish of Kirdford (Fig. 2). This parish was divided between a number of manors and many outliers. Within the parish were parts of the manors of Pallingham, Bedham and Petworth, and outlying members of the manors of Slindon, Bassett's Fee, Byworth-cum-Warningcamp, Bosham, Bignor and Lyminster.<sup>9</sup> These outliers were used for the pasture and pannage of animals from the manors further south in the county where the woodland was more restricted. In a grant of land to Battle Abbey, for example, the right was given for the monks to have a fourth pig in pannage in the woods of Buckfold and *Betlesparrioc* when the king had three pigs there.<sup>10</sup> Both these places are near Kirdford.<sup>11</sup> (The context of this grant is explained by W. D. Peckham in a letter to G. H. Kenyon where he dates it to 1123.<sup>12</sup>) Similarly, pannage in the woods of Sparrwood in Kirdford and Medhone Wood in Petworth is mentioned in a description of the lands of Bignor manor.<sup>13</sup>

Strudgwick Wood in Kirdford is described as being used by the manor of Bassett's Fee for pannage and herbage, and the manor of Byworth-cum-Warningcamp also had rights there.<sup>14</sup> The main part of Byworth-cum-Warningcamp manor was near Arundel, but it had outlying parts near Petworth as well as the piece of land mentioned in Kirdford. A 19th-century perambulation lists outlying members in the Weald belonging to the manors of Slindon, Bignor and South Stoke. Slindon had five separate pieces of land within Kirdford parish. South Stoke, although not holding land in Kirdford, had a number of detached parts in the nearby parishes of Wisborough Green and Rudgwick.<sup>15</sup> These, perhaps, are the places described in a charter of 975 when three outliers of Stoke are mentioned.<sup>16</sup>

Another Saxon charter, also of the 10th century, mentions swine pastures in this area.<sup>17</sup> These are described as at a place called *Boganora* at *Hidhirst* and at the common woodland pasture of *Palinga Schittas* and were the outliers of

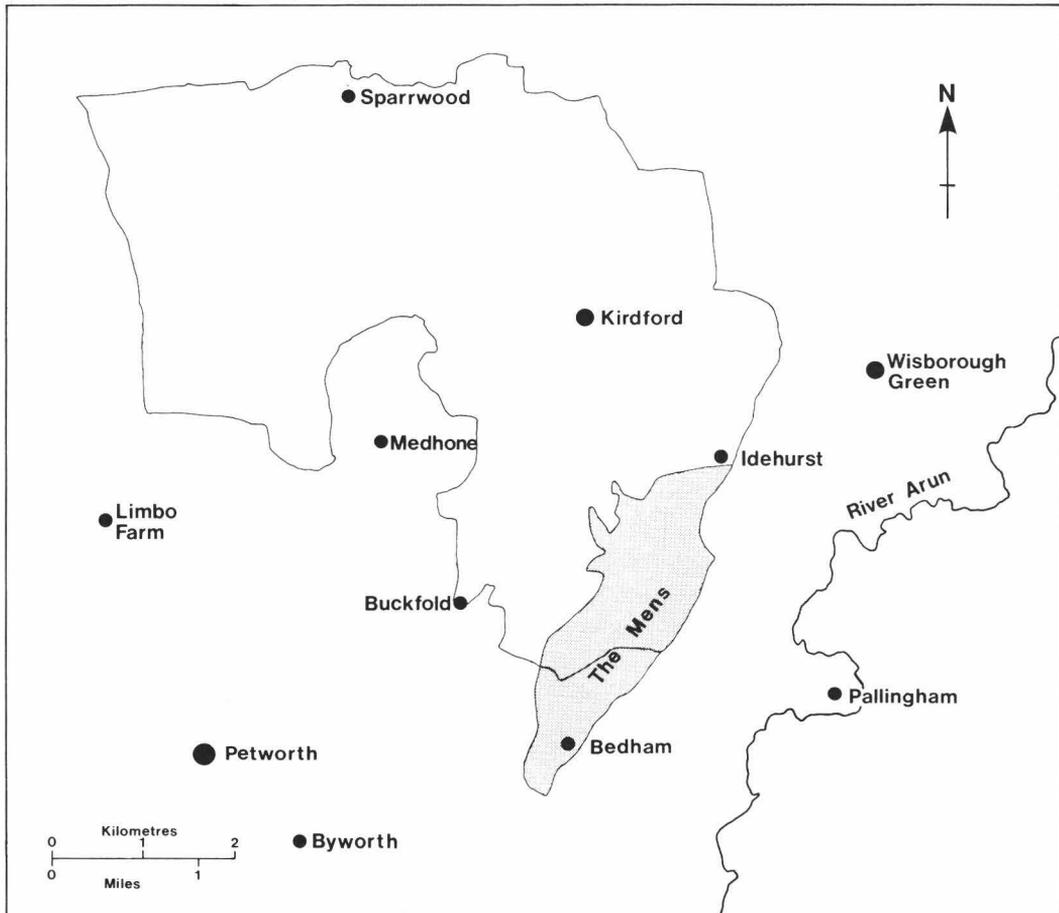


Fig. 2. The later parish of Kirdford, showing places mentioned in the text. Extent of The Mens after Tittensor.

Felpham, an estate on the south coast. *Hidhirst* has been identified as Idehurst in Kirdford, but two possible places have been suggested for the position of *Palinga Schittas*. Mawer and Stenton argue that it is Limbo Farm in Petworth,<sup>18</sup> but Tittensor, on the grounds that the place is a common woodland pasture, seeks to equate it with The Mens in Kirdford.<sup>19</sup>

The name 'The Mens' is of some interest, being derived from the Old English *gemaennes* meaning common property.<sup>20</sup> This word occurs in a number of place names in Sussex and in Kent. The manors of Amberley, Houghton and Coldwaltham had the right to have pannage for

their pigs in *le Menesse*.<sup>21</sup> This is described as a 60-acre wood in Rudgwick parish<sup>22</sup> and must be the place referred to in a quitclaim by Ralph Paynel of trees and pasture on the highway from *Pibehurst* (Pephurst) Wood to Rudgwick 'as far as the gate called "between Menesse and Pibehurst"'.<sup>23</sup>

The Mens in Kirdford may therefore be seen in its context, not as a unique area of common woodland, but as a residual area that survived the division of this part of Sussex into individual outliers and continued to be used as common land into the medieval period and beyond. For this reason it acquired its name, at

a stage when areas of common land were contrasted with the individual outliers into which the land had been elsewhere divided.<sup>24</sup>

The process of settlement which took place by the formation of outliers has been described for Kirdford, and a similar pattern could be demonstrated for the surrounding parishes. The settlement pattern produced in this area is a series of dispersed farms. There is little nucleation of settlement. The division of land appears to be irregular, having arisen through the partition of woodland between the outliers of distant parent manors. The parishes are large in area and, reflecting the land division, amorphous in shape.

By contrast the second area to be examined, the Vale of the Rother, has a generally regular pattern of parish boundaries and nucleated villages, a feature which has attracted previous attention.<sup>25</sup> The parishes here have a strip-like form running approximately north-south, while the villages are situated in two rows so that they lie upon the fertile soils of either the Lower Chalk and Upper Greensand or the Sandgate Beds (Fig. 3). The parishes extend to include areas of poorer soils so that they contain both woodland for pasture and pannage, and arable land. Many of the villages have place names including the *-ingas* element and the *hām* element is used in at least one place name (Graffham) and possibly two others (Selham and Kingsham in Chithurst) suggesting early settlement.<sup>26</sup> Indeed the density of Old English names here is such that it has been argued that there was little room for later settlement expansion.<sup>27</sup>

The outliers in the Vale of the Rother tend to cluster in discrete groups. One such group is apparent from the parish boundaries and lies in the common land of Milland Marsh (Fig. 3). Near to the marsh must have been the lost place name *Buttesworth* which has been identified as being close to Can House Farm in Trotton.<sup>28</sup> Milland Marsh can therefore be identified as the place described as the common marsh of *Buttesworth*, which was used by the manors of Trotton, Chithurst, Treyford and Elsted.<sup>29</sup> The 19th-

century parish map shows detached parts of Trotton, Chithurst, Terwick and Stedham here and since Terwick was formerly part of Treyford manor<sup>30</sup> the post-medieval evidence is largely confirmed by the medieval record.

A further group of outliers occurs in the northern part of the parish of Rogate. The large common of Harting Combe and Fyning Wood formerly occupied a major part of the parish.<sup>31</sup> As the name suggests, this common was formerly for the use of the inhabitants of Harting, but subsequently the people of Rogate, Terwick and Trotton were permitted to pasture their animals there.<sup>32</sup> To the north of this, Bramshott, a Hampshire parish, had two outlying members which gave access to the woodland in Rogate.

The largest group of outliers occupied the contiguous parishes of Easebourne, Fernhurst and Linchmere. This area may be treated as a single unit, for Fernhurst was originally a chapelry of Easebourne, only later becoming a separate parish.<sup>33</sup> Linchmere was also a late formation and probably before the 13th century constituted part of Cocking. The church at Linchmere was required to pay a pension to the church at Cocking which was the usual compensation when one church had lost revenue because of the formation of a new parish.<sup>34</sup> The association of Linchmere with Cocking is also demonstrated in the subsidy roll of 1296 when Johannes de Wlenchmere and Nicolaus de Poppehole were among the taxpayers in Cocking vill.<sup>35</sup> Nicolaus took his surname from a now lost place name in the extreme north of Linchmere.<sup>36</sup> It may therefore be concluded that Cocking had an outlier in the area which later formed the parish of Linchmere.

Heyshott, a manor adjacent to Cocking, also had land in this area. This is mentioned in the chartulary of Reading Abbey in the mid 12th century when all the land in Fernhurst which belonged to Heyshott was given to that religious house.<sup>37</sup> As Tudor<sup>38</sup> has noted, this must be the land referred to in the 16th century as lying in the parishes of Heyshott and Fernhurst. These lands were at that period part of the manor of Verdley

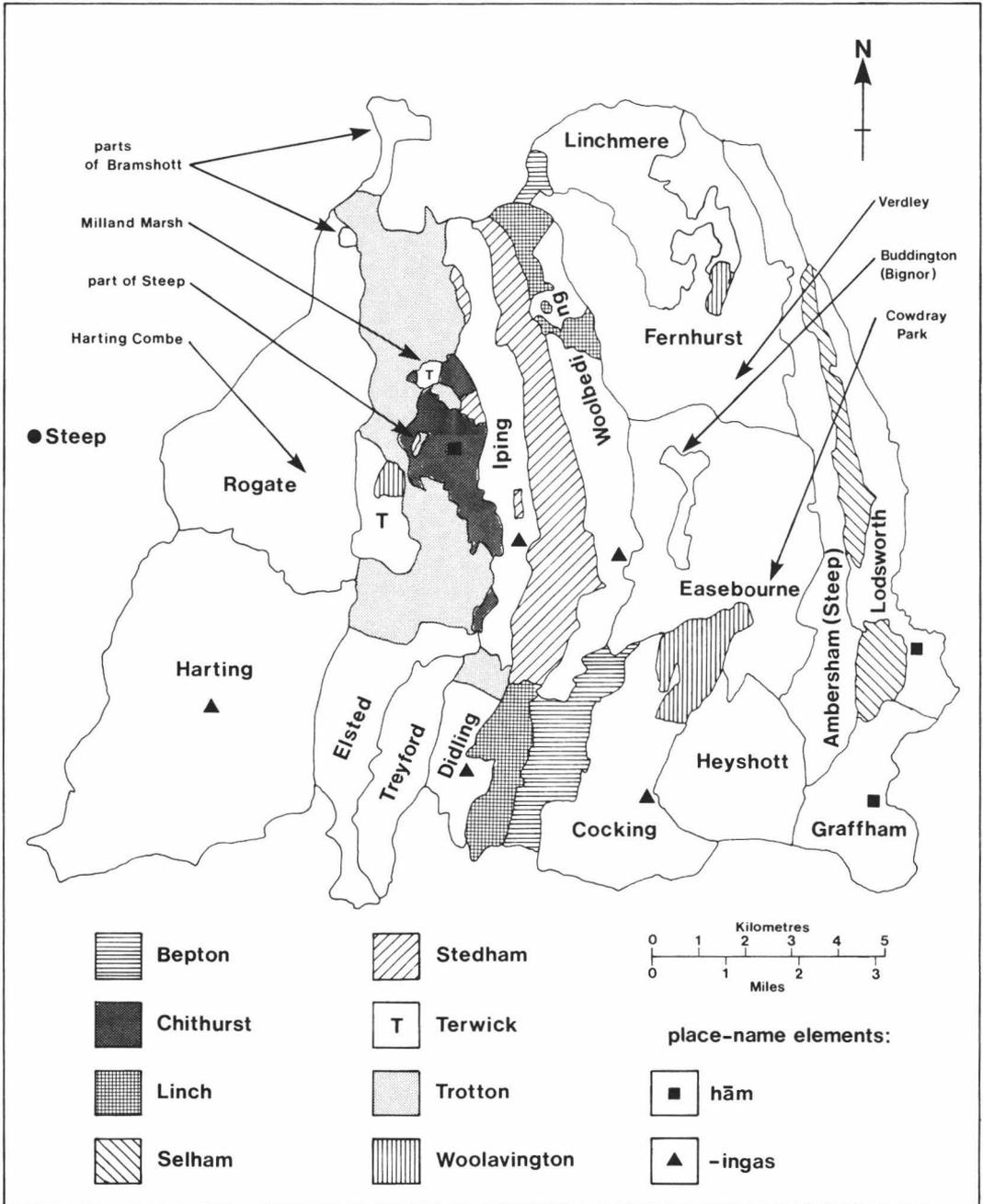


Fig. 3. The hundreds of Dumpford and Easebourne showing the parish boundaries in the early 19th century. The extra-parochial liberty of St. John is omitted.

and the place names show that this former outlier of Heyshott lay near Henley and Verdley.<sup>39</sup>

Nearby was an outlying part of Woolavington parish which lay immediately to the west of Fernhurst village. There was another detached part of Woolavington to the south of Midhurst which came to form the parish of West Lavington. The manor of Didling Dumpford is recorded as having land in the north of Fernhurst in a rent roll of 1773.<sup>40</sup> To the west of Linchmere at Brookham is a detached portion of Bepton parish. In Easebourne an isolated part of Bignor parish is marked by the tithing of Buddington.

The impression given is that this area later occupied by the parishes of Easebourne, Fernhurst and Linchmere largely consisted of the outliers of other manors. The use of this area for pasture and pannage during the Saxon period is recorded in a charter of 775 when East Dean, a settlement on the South Downs, is described as having a 'den' at *saengel picos*.<sup>41</sup> This has been identified as the northern part of Cowdray Park in Easebourne, which was called in the medieval period *La Sengle*.<sup>42</sup> The interpretation that this group of parishes were mainly a series of swine pastures is supported by documents in the Reading Abbey chartulary. Reference is there made to a gift of a piggery of ten pigs and one boar, and the right of pannage for a further 40 pigs in Fernhurst.<sup>43</sup>

Using this information it is possible to reconsider the pattern of the parishes and the evolution of early estates. Behind the superficial regularity of the strip parishes is a pattern of greater complexity. The sequence of long, narrow parishes is interrupted by the parishes of Harting and Rogate, and by the Easebourne-Fernhurst-Linchmere group. It is probable that the parishes of Harting and Rogate formed a single estate before the Norman Conquest. There is only a single entry in Domesday Book for the two places, namely that for Harting.<sup>44</sup> The figures given for Harting are so large relatively that the land referred to must have covered an extensive area. It is likely that Harting Combe was therefore originally not a detached piece of

Harting, but a common within the estate which covered most of Harting and Rogate parishes. Only when Rogate became a separate manor was Harting Combe established as an outlying member of Harting rather than just part of the large estate.

The other irregular area of Fernhurst and the two adjoining parishes has been shown to have had a different origin from that of the other settlements in the locality. The differences between the strip parishes and these other parishes can be used to explain the pattern of settlement in the area. The strip parishes usually have place names including the elements *hām*, *hamm* or *-ingas* and appear early in the documentary record. Their villages are nucleated, clustering around churches some of which include Saxon fabric (for example, Chithurst, Elsted, Selham and Woolbeding),<sup>45</sup> and are situated on the Upper Greensand or Sandgate Beds. The manor and parish are approximately coincidental. By contrast Rogate consists of the four manors of Rogate Bohunt, Rogate College, Wenham and Fyning. Similarly, Easebourne consists of Todham and Cowdray manors, and Fernhurst of the manors of Fernhurst and Verdley quite apart from the outlying members of other manors.<sup>46</sup>

To summarize, two types of parish can be distinguished, those with a single manor in a strip-shaped parish and with a nucleated village, and those where the settlement was more piecemeal and the resulting pattern less regular.

The strip form of Ambersham parish suggests that it resembles the other parishes of this first type. It was not, however, an autonomous parish, but formed a detached part of Steep, a Hampshire parish. In 963 Ambersham was granted to the church at Meon; Steep was part of the episcopal manor of East Meon and originally a chapelry in East Meon parish.<sup>47</sup> It can therefore be inferred that Ambersham had initially developed in the same way as neighbouring parishes, with a strip shape to give access to land suitable for both pasture and arable, but was subsequently joined to East Meon.

It is likely that Ambersham after 963 came to function as an outlier of East Meon and Steep providing the use of an area of woodland in the Weald. An examination of the first-edition 1-in. Ordnance Survey map shows that communication between Ambersham and Steep was probably by means of a road running along the ridge of the Hythe Beds. This is likely to be the road mentioned in the chartulary of Durford Abbey and called the *Rigweye*.<sup>48</sup> Approximately halfway between the two parts of the estate and about 300 metres from the *Rigweye* is a detached part of Steep parish. It is situated in an area of common land appertaining to Chithurst<sup>49</sup> and although small in area it would have provided a staging point when stock was moved between the Hampshire portion of the estate and Ambersham. Such a system has been recognized in Kent where small 'drove dens' were situated at intervals along the droving routes.<sup>50</sup> Thus the apparent anomaly of Ambersham can be explained within the framework of settlement suggested.

Attention has been drawn above to the contrast between the mainly regular pattern of parish boundaries and nucleated settlement in the Vale of the Rother, and the large irregular parishes and dispersed settlement in the Kirdford area. In the Vale of the Rother the area of outliers is limited and the outliers were pertinent to manors usually situated within the Weald. In the Kirdford area the division of land appears to be irregular, having arisen through the creation of many outliers by parent manors which were generally beyond the Weald. The disparity between the two areas is reflected in the distribution of place names with the element *falod* meaning an enclosure for animals<sup>51</sup> (Fig. 1). Their sparsity in the western part of the region contrasts with their more frequent occurrence in the Kirdford area.

The pattern of parent manor and outlier in Sussex is generally such that the detached portion

in the Weald is directly north of the parent manor.<sup>52</sup> In the part of the county considered here this layout is not completely adhered to. It would be expected that the manors of Slindon and Bosham would have outliers to their north in the Vale of the Rother, not in Kirdford. The land division of Dumpford and Easebourne hundreds allows little room for the detached parts of manors which lay outside the Weald. In the Vale of the Rother the land must have been partitioned before the outliers of the more distant manors could be established, a conclusion supported by the early place names there. To gain access to woodland, manors such as Bosham and Slindon formed outliers in the more distant Kirdford area where land was still available.

The development of settlement in the Kirdford district has been shown largely to resemble the pattern described by Witney for Kent. The Vale of the Rother just to the west of this had a different settlement history which gave rise to a distinct system of land division. It suggests that the ideas of Witney may be applicable to some parts of the Sussex Weald and future work should draw further on the Kentish evidence to explain parallel developments in Sussex.

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup>K. P. Witney, *The Jutish Forest: a Study of the Weald of Kent from 450 to 1350 A.D.* (1976).
- <sup>2</sup>J. E. A. Jolliffe, *Pre-Feudal England: the Jutes* (1933).
- <sup>3</sup>Jolliffe, 89.
- <sup>4</sup>Witney, 31–7, 73.
- <sup>5</sup>W. J. Ford, 'Some Settlement Patterns in the Central Region of the Warwickshire Avon', in *Medieval Settlement: Continuity and Change*, ed. P. H. Sawyer (1976), 287; G. R. J. Jones, 'Multiple Estates and Early Settlement', in *Medieval Settlement: Continuity and Change*, ed. P. H. Sawyer (1976), 15–40.
- <sup>6</sup>Ford, 283.
- <sup>7</sup>C. C. Taylor, *Dorset* (1976).
- <sup>8</sup>e.g. J. Morris, *Domesday Book: Sussex* (1976), section 10, no. 99.
- <sup>9</sup>G. H. Kenyon, 'Kirdford Inventories, 1611 to 1776', *Suss. Arch. Coll.* 93, 88.
- <sup>10</sup>W. Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum* (1821 edn.), 3, 247.
- <sup>11</sup>A. Mawer & F. M. Stenton, *The Place-Names of Sussex*, 1 (1929), 103, 115.
- <sup>12</sup>W(est) S(ussex) R(ecord) O(ffice), Add. MS. 2277.
- <sup>13</sup>P(ublic) R(ecord) O(ffice), C 134/37.
- <sup>14</sup>P.R.O., SC 6/HEN VIII/ 3481.
- <sup>15</sup>W.S.R.O., Acc. 1083, no. 17.
- <sup>16</sup>W. de G. Birch, *Cartularium Saxonicum* (1885–93), no. 1314; P. H. Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters: an Annotated List and Bibliography* (1968), no. 803.
- <sup>17</sup>Birch, *Cartularium Saxonicum*, no. 898; Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters*, no. 562.
- <sup>18</sup>Mawer & Stenton, *Place-Names*, 1, 118.
- <sup>19</sup>R. M. Tittensor, 'A History of The Mens: a Sussex Woodland Common', *Suss. Arch. Coll.* 116, 347–74.
- <sup>20</sup>A. H. Smith, *English Place-Name Elements* (1956), 2, 33.
- <sup>21</sup>*Thirteen Customals of the Sussex Manors of the Bishop of Chichester*, ed. W. D. Peckham (*Suss. Rec. Soc.* 31), 44.
- <sup>22</sup>*Ibid.* 130.
- <sup>23</sup>*The Chartulary of the High Church of Chichester*, ed. W. D. Peckham (*Suss. Rec. Soc.* 46), 235.
- <sup>24</sup>G. R. Stewart, 'Leah, Woods and Deforestation as an Influence on Place-Names', *Names*, 10, 7; cf. *Suss. Arch. Coll.* 116, 352.
- <sup>25</sup>e.g. T. Rowley, *Villages in the Landscape* (1978), 28.
- <sup>26</sup>J. McN. Dodgson, 'Place-Names from *hām* distinguished from *hamm* Names, in Relation to the Settlement of Kent, Surrey and Sussex', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 2, 33.
- <sup>27</sup>T. H. Ashton, 'The Origins of the Manor in England', *Transactions of Royal Hist. Soc.* 5th ser., 8, 75.
- <sup>28</sup>E. M. Yates, 'Buttleswell and Buttesworth, Lost Names in Rogate', *Suss. N. & Q.* 15, 170–1.
- <sup>29</sup>British Library, Cotton MS. Vesp. E xxiii, f. 40.
- <sup>30</sup>*Victoria County History, Sussex*, 4, 28.
- <sup>31</sup>W.S.R.O., Add. MSS. 5183–4.
- <sup>32</sup>B.L., Add. MS. 28529, f. 174.
- <sup>33</sup>*Suss. Rec. Soc.* 46, 314.
- <sup>34</sup>*Victoria County History, Sussex*, 4, 70; F. M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England* (1971 edn.), 148.
- <sup>35</sup>*Suss. Rec. Soc.* 10, 99–100.
- <sup>36</sup>A. Ponsonby, *The Priory and Manor of Lynchmere and Shulbrede* (1920), 182.
- <sup>37</sup>B.L., Harl. MS. 1708, ff. 108–9.
- <sup>38</sup>A. M. Tudor, *Fernhurst: a Story of a Sussex Village* (1969 edn.), 6.
- <sup>39</sup>P.R.O., SC 6/HEN VIII/3481.
- <sup>40</sup>W.S.R.O., Add. MS. 241.
- <sup>41</sup>Birch, *Cartularium Saxonicum*, no. 144; Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters*, no. 43.
- <sup>42</sup>Inf. from Mr. Peter Kitson, University of Birmingham; M. Roper, *Anglo-Saxon Charters: Selsey* (forthcoming); Mawer & Stenton, *Place-Names*, 1, 17.
- <sup>43</sup>B.L., Harl. MS. 1708, ff. 108–9.
- <sup>44</sup>Morris, *Domesday Book: Sussex*, section 11, no. 6.
- <sup>45</sup>H. M. & J. Taylor, *Anglo-Saxon Architecture* (1965), 157, 234, 536, 684.
- <sup>46</sup>*Victoria County History, Sussex*, 4, 23–4, 50–1, 56.
- <sup>47</sup>*Victoria County History, Hampshire*, 3, 78; Birch, *Cartularium Saxonicum*, no. 1114; Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters*, no. 718.
- <sup>48</sup>B.L., Cotton MS. Vesp. E xxiii, f. 38.
- <sup>49</sup>W.S.R.O., QDD/6/W33.
- <sup>50</sup>Witney, *Jutish Forest*, 89–90.
- <sup>51</sup>Smith, *Place-Name Elements*, 1, 164.
- <sup>52</sup>P. F. Brandon, *The Sussex Landscape* (1974), 74.