

The Earthworks of Rockingham and its Neighbourhood

By A. E. BROWN and C. C. TAYLOR

This paper is a record of earthwork surveys undertaken by extra mural students attending field archaeology courses organised by the Department of Adult Education of Leicester University at Easter 1972 and 1973. An attempt is made here to describe the earthworks surveyed and to interpret them in the light of maps and documents.

EARLY OCCUPATION OF THE AREA

While the work was in progress a few probably prehistoric worked flints were picked up in the general region of SP 858915 and SP 860907. Roman material including pottery and iron slag was noted in the area of Rockingham in the 19th century and in 1973 a site yielding these things was found in Gretton parish at SP 87639220 (FIG. 2). Roman material has also been found at Rockingham Castle and Rockingham therefore joins Gretton and Cottingham as a village with a Roman site either beneath or very close to it.¹

THE CASTLE (FIG. 1 (a))

Rockingham Castle is one of the castles known to have been built by William I but why it was built, and on such a large scale, is not so certain.² It is true that it commands the place at which the road joining Northampton and Stamford crosses the Welland, but a more important reason might be sought in the king's known interest in the royal forests and the chase. The later medieval history of the place shows how useful it was found to be as a royal hunting lodge and on one famous occasion in 1095 as a centre for a council of the barons and prelates of the realm; no doubt it was the possibility of building a castle which would enable him to combine business with pleasure as well as having some strategic usefulness which appealed to William I.

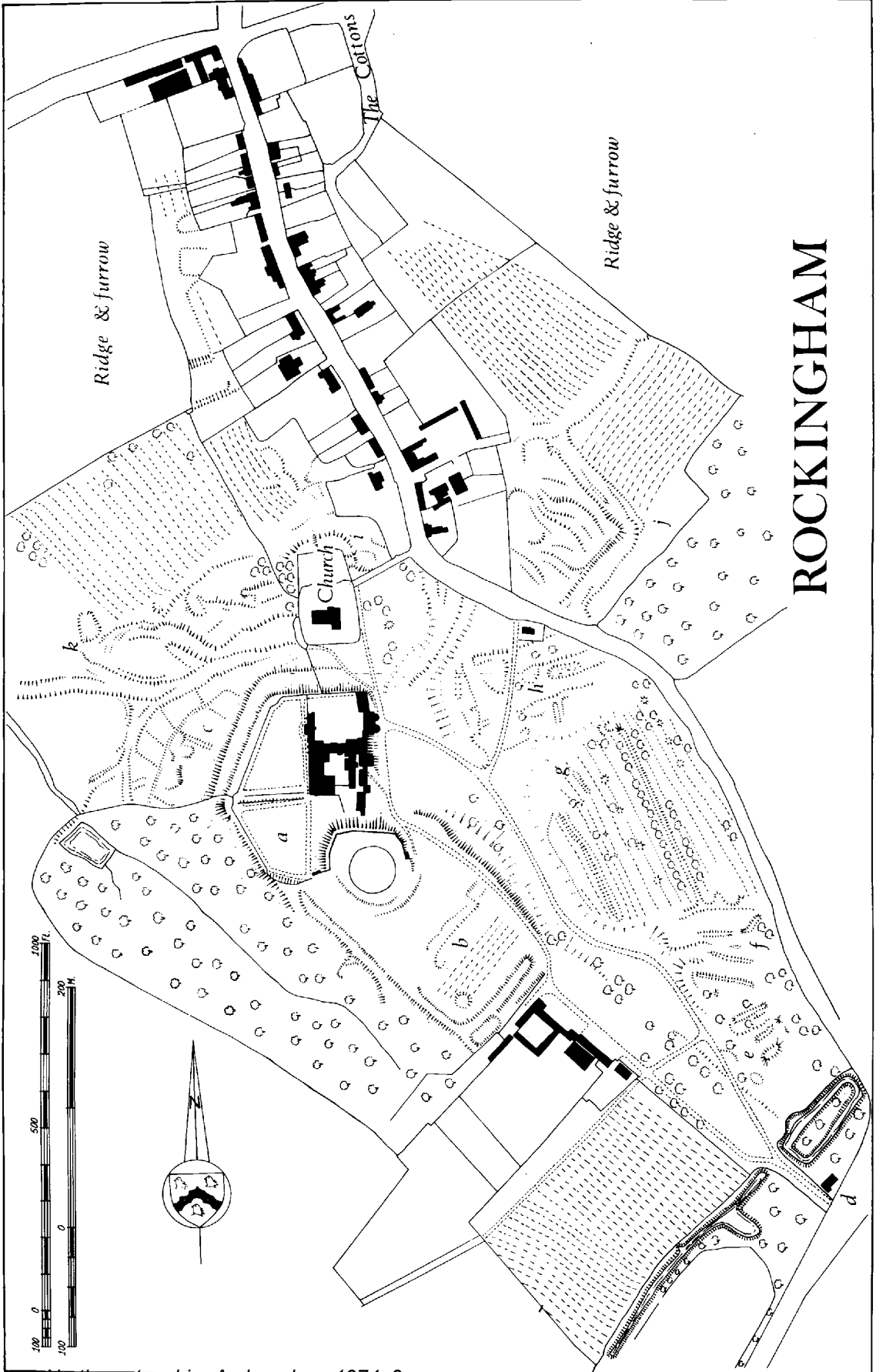
The castle sits on a promontory commanding extensive views over the Welland valley and was of the motte and bailey type, with a large motte some 75 m. across standing between a pair of baileys to the N and S of it. The northern enclosure, well protected by the fall of the ground on the N and by the motte on the S, was the principal bailey and contained the chapel, main gate and domestic buildings, parts of which remain incorporated in the gentleman's residence begun in the mid 16th century by Edward Watson; these call for architectural rather than specifically archaeological treatment.³ This bailey was defended by a curtain wall with angle towers since destroyed but whose sites are clearly visible,⁴

¹ For these finds see *B.N.F.A.S.* 4 (1970), 60-1.

² Northamptonshire Domesday, *VCH Northamptonshire* Vol. 1, 307; R. A. Brown et al. *The History of the King's Works* Vol. II (1963), 815.

³ C. H. Hartshorne, "Rockingham Castle" *Archaeol. J.* 1 (1845), 356-78; G. T. Clark, "Rockingham Castle" *ibid* 35 (1878), 209-41; idem, *Medieval Military Architecture* Vol. 2 (1884), 423-446; C. Wise, *Rockingham Castle and the Watsons* (1891), 27 et seqq.; N. Pevsner *Northamptonshire* (1961), 387-8; *The King's Works* op. cit., 815-818.

⁴ *The King's Works*, 817; they are shown on the map of Rockingham in 1615, PL. 1 (N.R.O. Map 2328).



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Fig. 1 Earthworks at Rockingham

which stood on a scarp over 2 m. high. Today this scarp has a terrace 10 m. wide running along the foot of it which is best regarded as marking the line of the ditch around the castle walls referred to in a survey of 1250 as then "almost obliterated".⁵

The motte has been largely removed and its ditch filled in by the making of gardens in the late 17th and 18th centuries and now survives only as a partially terraced bank on the N. To judge from numerous medieval references to a great tower this had been crowned by a stone keep⁶ but the precise arrangements are uncertain. Some light is thrown on the matter by a 19th century copy of a drawing made in 1644 of "the mount part of Rockingham Castle" showing it as refortified by the Parliamentary garrison.⁷ In addition to "pallizadoes" of pointed wooden stakes, the plan shows a "parapitt" encircling the motte, to which wooden flankers have been added externally on the S and which has storerooms attached to its inner circumference. This is separated by a "walk" from a circular building roofed to form a platform for artillery and containing rooms for soldiers. The suggestion is that Rockingham had a tower keep encircled by a shell keep, as at Launceston; this receives support from the survey of 1250, which after describing in detail various defects in the keep, speaks of a "mantellum extra turrim".⁸ This survey mentions six rooms in the keep, which presumably correspond to the six rooms with chimneys on the 17th century drawing. A map of Rockingham in 1615 (PL. 1) shows the motte as having seven conventionally drawn houses upon it but this may merely be an attempt by an impressionistic cartographer to portray the attached inner rooms of the tower with the chimneys known to have existed in 1644.⁹ No trace of these arrangements survive and the wall which now runs round the remains of the motte and the rectangular stone tower or summerhouse of coursed masonry which is integral with it represent later gardening.¹⁰

The S bailey is not shown on the 1615 map and seems not to have had the importance of the N one. It is defended on the E and W by steep scarps, largely natural, and on the vulnerable S side by a ditch 12 m. wide with an inner bank. There are plough ridges 7 m. wide inside the SE half of this enclosure (FIG. 1(b)) which show it to have been ploughed at some time; these ridges are cut in the S corner by a circular feature 15 m. in diameter. This may be the arable land referred to in a grant of 1331, when Simon de Drayton was granted the office of forester of Brigstock and Geddington for life "in recompense of his charges in repairing the houses and bringing into cultivation land within the castle and forest of Rockingham".¹¹ The ploughed area is separated from the rest of the castle by a scarp with a shallow ditch to the N.

On the steep ground facing NW at FIG. 1(c) are a series of small enclosures separated by low scarps some 20 cm. high, which towards the S have been cut into by quarries at some later date.

⁵ *Calendar of Inquisitions Miscellaneous* Vol. 1, 29-31.

⁶ As note 4.

⁷ Wise, *op. cit.*, 66; the original copy is preserved among the Watson papers kept in the muniment room at Rockingham Castle, A/5.

⁸ As note 5.

⁹ The map gives a feeble impression of the Watson mansion which existed at this time.

¹⁰ *Contra* Wise *op. cit.* 160 where the tower is regarded as a wall flanker.

¹¹ *Calendar Patent Rolls* 1330-34 p.53.

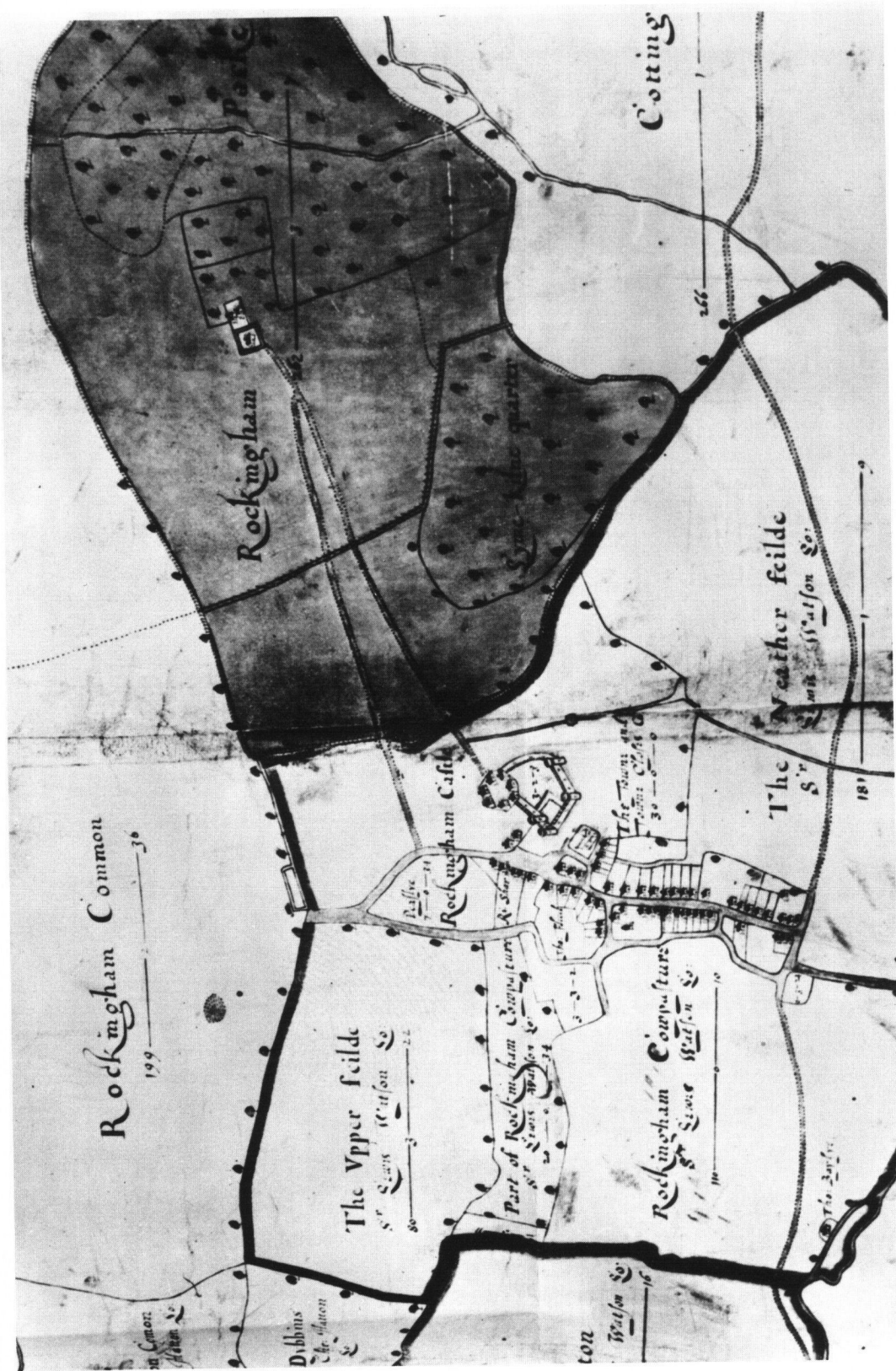


Plate 1 Map of Rockingham in 1615

THE TOP AND BOTTOM MOATS (FIG. 1(d))

These consist of a wet ditch 10 m. wide and 200 m. long (the bottom Moat) separated by the S entrance drive to the Castle from a rectangular water filled moat 85 m. by 35 m. (the Top Moat). Their purpose is obscure but it is perhaps worth pointing out that the ditch runs across the neck of the promontory on which the Castle stands and could have had some modest defensive function. Beyond the general probability of a medieval origin nothing can be said about their date, but they were in existence in 1615, when they were shown as joined together (PL. 1).

THE WARREN

On level ground to the N of the Top and Bottom Moats is a group of 3 rectangular mounds (FIG. 1(e)). These range in size from 30 m. by 5 m. to 24 m. by 9 m. There is also an oval mound 12 m. across at its maximum and a small circular mound 6 m. in diameter. All are about 70 cm. high and have gently rounded tops. These rectangular mounds resemble a pillow mound 24 m. by 6 m. and 70 cm. high which lies on the N facing slope of the steep sided bluff which lies to the E of the Castle (FIG. 1(g)); a more fragmentary pillow mound lies at the foot of the slope (FIG. 1(h)). Also on the top of the bluff are a pair of long mounds 100 m. and 105 m. long and 60 cm. high. They overlie ridge and furrow 8 m. wide with a headland on the S.

The earthworks at FIG. 1(e) and (g) have much in common and a common purpose is suggested, but the map of 1615 (PL. 1) shows that the piece of ground on which they stand was at that time cut in two by the S extension of the main street of the village, which ran through the defile to the E of the Castle to emerge outside the main gate. In 1618 this road was stopped up by Edward Watson in order to enhance the privacy of the Castle;¹² the tracks at FIG. 1(f) represent the place at which this road turned to join the existing road to Corby. After 1618 the area was thrown into one for the first time.

The earthworks themselves bear a great resemblance to the banks and pillow mounds elsewhere known to have formed rabbit warrens.¹³ The name of the N part of the area concerned at Rockingham — Peaseleys — is no help but 17th century documents do suggest that a warren existed near the castle. A particular of 1650 speaks of the warren "in and about" the park. A particular of Sir Lewis Watson's estate prepared for the Committee for Compounding gave the annual value of a "close about the castle and the warren" as £80. A document reciting the losses sustained by Watson at the hands of the Parliamentary garrison puts the cost of the destruction of the warren at £80.¹⁴ It is possible therefore that the earthworks represent a warren constructed after 1618 but destroyed during the Civil War.

Between and to the E of the long mounds on top of the bluff are 11 ditched circular mounds 9 m. in diameter and 50 cm. high; most of them carry a tree. These were in all probability thrown up for this purpose during landscaping at a relatively late date.

¹² Watson papers A2 3/16. Orders for a jury to turn the road at Rockingham.

¹³ R. G. Haynes "Vermin Traps and Rabbit Warrens on Dartmoor" *Post Medieval Archaeol.* 4 (1970) 147-64; *Medieval Archaeol.* 13 (1969) 285 (examples in Sussex).

¹⁴ Watson papers A1 21, 22, 14/1; also S. T. Winckley "Royalist Papers relating to the Sequestration of Estates of Sir Lewis Watson . . . during the Civil Wars in England" *Associated Architectural Societies Reports and Papers.* XXV (1899-1900), 375.

THE PARK (FIG. 2).

A park at Rockingham was in existence in 1256, when Hugh de Goldingham, seneschal of the king's forest, was ordered to provide William de Swinford with six oaks "in foresta regis Rokingham extra parcum".¹⁵ This early park (FIG. 2, Phase 1) probably corresponds to the 32 acre enclosure called "Lyme kiln quarter" on the map of 1615 (PL. 1). Its pale can be traced running up a steep slope from (a) to (b) as a well preserved bank 3 m. wide, 2 m. high with an internal ditch 2 m. wide. Thereafter the boundary probably followed a line corresponding to the crest of the steep northward facing slope here. From (c) to (d) the pale is represented by a bank 50 cm. high, and from (d) it continues northwards up a steep slope as a terrace 2 m. wide, which runs into an area disturbed by later quarrying. After this the boundary probably corresponded with the crest of the ridge at this point, which runs westward to (a). It is very evident that the park boundary has been chosen to take advantage of the lie of the land, enclosing a natural amphitheatre containing several springs. Only along the western side was a prominent bank required.

The early park was enlarged to 260 acres by Henry VII in 1485. On 21 September of that year Sir William Stokke was made "Keeper of the New Park at Rockingham for life".¹⁶ The reason for this dramatic increase can probably be related to a desire to protect the king's deer and hunting after a period of neglect.¹⁷ Both Park and Castle were leased by Edward Watson in 1554/5 but although Sir Lewis Watson was able to buy the Castle outright from the Crown in 1615 he had to wait until 1619 before the Park could be similarly purchased. The pale is shown on the 1615 map but is difficult to detect on the ground now, possibly because as a late creation the enlarged park was never given the massive earthwork boundaries sometimes given to earlier parks (FIG. 2, Phase 2)¹⁸. The stretch of earlier boundary from (a) to (b) continued in use. After (b) traces of the pale are intermittent, consisting of a length of ditch 2 m. wide running along the forward side of a north-facing slope at (e), a similarly placed ledge 1m. wide at (f) and a short length of path running through Lodge Coppice at (g). From (g) to (h) the boundary is now followed by a stone wall and along the level SE side of the park from (h) to (i) is a low bank 50 cm. high and 5m. wide with an outer ditch. NW from (i) the boundary follows the crest of the slope facing the castle, no bank being required.

Air photographs show that at some period a considerable portion of the area of the park in both Cottingham and Rockingham parishes had been ploughed in furlongs using the ridge and furrow technique.¹⁹ This might have happened in the 13th century as far as the Cottingham land is concerned; an entry in the rolls of the Hundred Court for 1274-5 states that the abbot of Peterborough, who held Cottingham manor, had enclosed as assart there worth 40sh. an acre, on which was common of pasture attached to the castle.²⁰ Estate maps show that most

¹⁵ *Calendar Close Rolls 1254-56* p.290.

¹⁶ *Wise op. cit.* 15.

¹⁷ Compare the creation by Henry VIII of a series of 7 parks in Whittlewood Forest; it was easier to create fresh parks than to effectively tighten up forest law; P. A. J. Pettit *The Royal Forests of Northamptonshire, a study in their economy 1558-1714* (1968), 14 and 44.

¹⁸ The pale is marked on the 1615 map, PL. 1. For later park boundaries see L. M. Cantor and J. D. Wilson "The Medieval Deer Parks of Dorset III" *Proc. Dorset Natur. Hist. Archaeol. Soc.* 85 (1963), 142.

¹⁹ Hunting Surveys Ltd. U.K. 69 926, 8 Aug. 1969, Runs 1 and 2, 0901-2 and 0891-3.

²⁰ G. T. Clark, *Medieval Military Architecture* Vol. II, 438.

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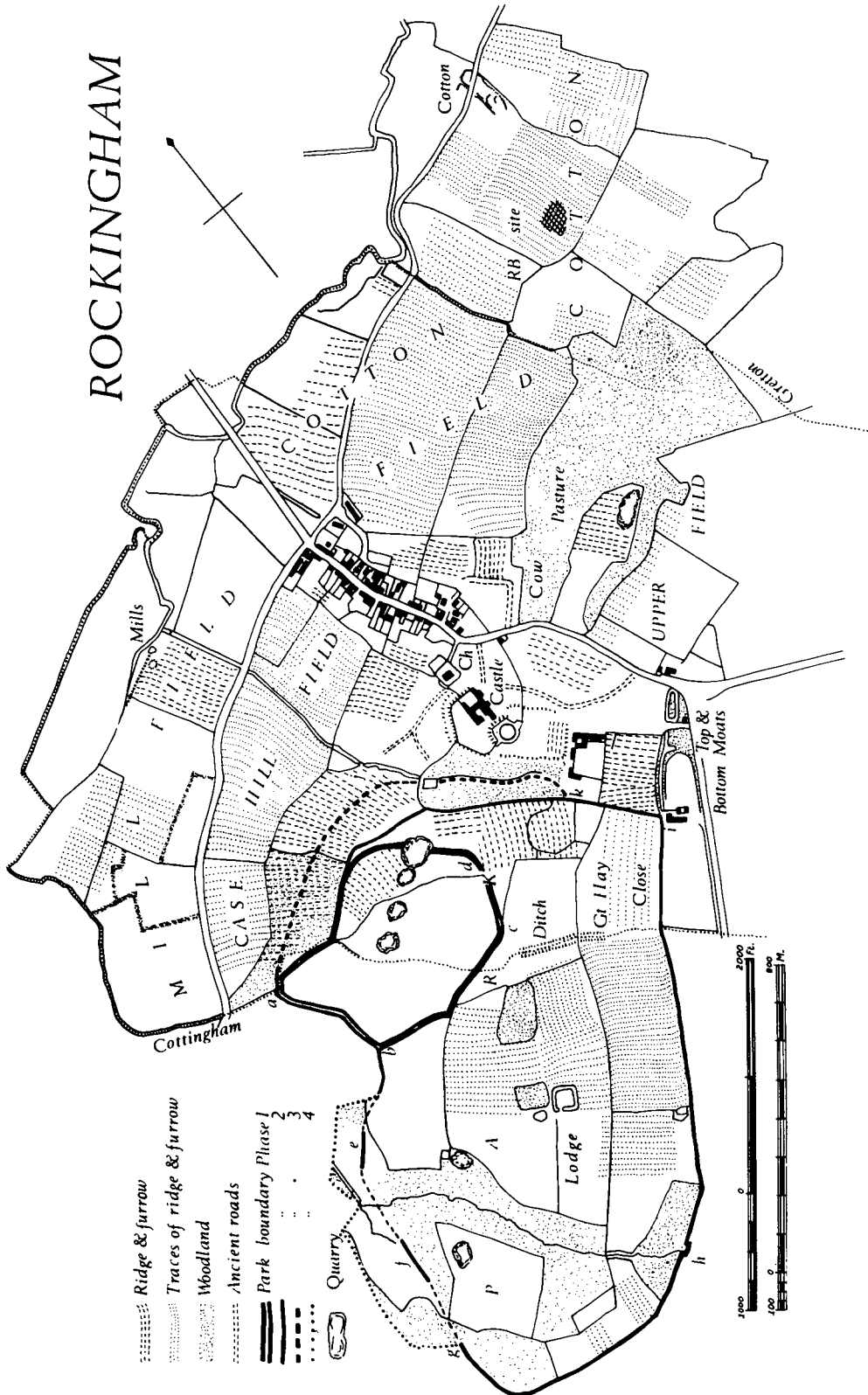


Fig. 2 Rockingham parish and park, and Cotton manor

of this former arable land remained relatively free of trees throughout the park's subsequent history.

Within the Phase 2 park was a lodge for the accommodation of hunting parties. Among the people known to have used it was James I. During the Civil War it was defaced and timber removed from it. It is shown on the map of 1615 as a moated building with a pair of additional buildings and an orchard occupying an enclosure to the SW of it and appears again as a moated building, approached by an avenue of trees on an estate map of 1806. The lodge was demolished by Lewis third Baron Sondes in c.1827.²¹ Its site is much overgrown but the rectangular moat 55 m. by 65 m. with a ditch 8 m. wide and 1 m. deep can still be made out (FIG. 3(a)).

In 1638 the Park was disforested and Lewis Watson was licensed to enlarge it with "ditches, walls, pales or any other fence".²² The estate map of 1806 shows that along the northern side the park boundary diverged from the 15th century line, running lower down the slope closer to the Castle. This change might have been the result of enlargement in the 17th century. The new boundary is shown as running from (a) to (k) on FIG. 2 (Phase 3). It starts at (a) as a ditch 2 m. wide and 50 cm. deep with an external bank 50 cm. high. This ends abruptly at (j) but estate maps show that the boundary ran on to and along the stream which runs through the narrow valley bounding the Castle on the SW.

Sometime in the 19th century the Park was further enlarged on the W (FIG. 2, Phase 4) to follow a much better natural line in that area, with a steep internal scarp in places.²³

The Watson papers give some idea of the internal management of the park. In 1578 Edward Watson was allowed to fence off a portion of the park in order to provide hay for the deer in winter; this probably is the origin of the field known as Great Hay Close on 19th century maps. A perambulation of 1603 states that the park contained 89 acres of pasture, 160 acres of wood and 1080 large trees but a late 17th century list shows that by then part of it had been divided into closes and ploughed. These closes are probably the small fields at the SW extremity of the park, shown as ploughed on a map of 1745 and by 19th century estate maps, but great attention was still paid to the deer. Several versions exist of the 18th century standing instructions to the park keeper, in which he is enjoined to preserve the venison and rabbits and to "take care of the pale rows". The 19th century estate maps show kennels and "sheds for the deer" within the park and the map of 1822 has on it pencil sketches of areas to be fully planted, presumably for coverts. Many bills for trees and payments to workmen for planting covers and ridings in the 1830's exist.²⁴

THE VINEYARD

A vineyard is referred to in 1130 and 1440 but its site is unknown.²⁵ A terrier of 1544/5²⁶ mentions a furlong called Wyngarde Hill in the West Field (i.e. the area immediately N of the Park) which may refer to it.

²¹ Wise *op. cit.*, 14-15, 54, 115; also note 14; N.R.O. map 2329.

²² Wise *op. cit.* 27, 53 and 56; Watson papers A5/8.

²³ This boundary first appears on the 1st edition 6 in. OS map of 1885 Northants. Sheet XI SW.

²⁴ Watson papers A6/12, A5 4/4, A6 6/2, A5 20/3, A6 6/17, A6 1 b-d, N.R.O. maps 2329, 2330, 2331.

²⁵ Hartshorne *op. cit.* 9 and Clark, *Medieval Military Architecture* Vol. II 442.

²⁶ Watson papers A5 4/10.

THE VILLAGE

The map of 1615 shows that houses stood in front of the Castle gate and around the church. The diversion of the road from Corby in 1618 and destruction during the Civil War²⁷ led to the removal of these houses. The field evidence for them is slight, consisting of at FIG. 1(h) several scarps representing property divisions and N of the church at FIG. 1(i) a scarp corresponding with the N boundary of the properties there. Pottery fragments picked up here range in date from 12th to 17th centuries. A series of steep parallel scarps W of the church suggest that houses stood here also in the medieval period.

The change in the road layout led also to the disuse of the S portion of the back lane running along the E side of the village. This is shown on the 1806 estate map as a narrow hedged close but by 1815 it had been thrown into the neighbouring fields.²⁸ It is represented today at FIG. 1(j) by a hollow way 18 m. across with subsidiary terraces to the W of it. However, the N part of the back lane (known as The Cottons, FIG. 1) is still in use and in other respects the village plan has changed remarkably little from that of the early 17th century.

The area to the N of the Castle has running through it a pair of hollow ways (FIG. 1(k)) which had fallen into disuse before the early 17th century. The northernmost of them evidently ran towards the headland separating two of the furlongs of the field known in the 19th century as Case Hill Field (FIG. 2).

In addition to its status as a centre of forest administration Rockingham stood on a route of some modest importance in the Middle Ages. This is suggested by its appearance on the 14th century Gough Map and by the construction of a bridge over the Welland in the 13th century.²⁹ Rockingham was granted a market and fair in 1272 which are mentioned frequently in medieval and later records, the fair (but not the market) surviving until the late 19th century.³⁰ It has recently been suggested that Rockingham might have been regarded as a borough in the early 14th century, having been taxed as such in 1307, but this may simply be an instance of its taxation at the higher subsidy rate of one tenth on movables as royal property rather than as a borough.³¹

THE OPEN FIELDS

Much of Rockingham parish is now under the plough and the ridge and furrow has suffered in consequence but an attempt has been made to plot what can still be seen on the ground and on air photographs (FIG. 2).³² The surviving ridges range in width from 5 m. to 10 m., with some occasional ridges 15 m. wide.

A terrier of 1544/5³³ shows that the arable land of Rockingham was arranged in four fields — Overfelde, Eastfylde, Westfylde and Mylfelde (these correspond

²⁷ As note 14: "Cottages with outhouses belonging to them eleaven".

²⁸ N.R.O. maps 2329 and 2330.

²⁹ For the significance of roadless places mentioned on the Gough map see F. M. Stenton, "The road system of medieval England" *Economic History Review* 7 (1936); for the bridge, *Wise op. cit.* 118.

³⁰ *Calendar Charter Roads* Vol. 2 p.183; Bridges, *History of Northamptonshire* Vol. 2, 334; Clark, *Medieval Military Architecture* Vol. II 437 and 441; *Wise op. cit.* 226.

³¹ The suggestion is in M. Beresford and H. P. R. Finberg *The English Medieval Borough, a Handlist* (1973), 142 quoting J. F. Willard, "Taxation Boroughs and Parliamentary Boroughs 1294-1336" in *Historical Essays in Honour of James Tait* ed. J. G. Edwards et al (1933), 433.

³² The air photographs used were Hunting Air Surveys Ltd., U.K. 69, 926, 8 Aug. 68, Run 1 (0901-4), Run 2 (0891-3); and F21 and 22, R.A.F. 1210, 11 Aug. 53, 0011-16. Furlong boundaries in the W of Mill Field have been inserted from the pre-enclosure map of 1806.

³³ Watson papers A5 4/10.

to the Upper Field, Cotton Field, Case Hill Field and Mill Field on FIG. 2, which represents the early 19th century arrangement). The 1615 map shows three fields, the West and Mill fields having been grouped together as Nether Field; the large area marked as Cowpasture is shown by the accompanying terrier³⁴ to be one of the common fields, perhaps having been common grazing fallow when the map was made. Sixteenth-century terriers show that among the arable selions was a certain amount of ley land. In 1544/5 there were 6¾ acres of ley "pasture" in the Westfield and in Millfield 3½ acres; in 1580 there were 17¾ acres of ley in addition to 229¾ acres of tillage in the Upper Field as well as 48½ acres of meadow, no doubt on the steep and awkward slopes here.³³

A comparison of terriers of the 16th century and the surviving ridge and furrow (FIG. 2) shows that a much greater area of land had earlier been under the plough. Substantial areas inside the park, within closes around the Castle and at the back of houses in the village had once been arable land but were now pasture. This is in all probability to be linked with a peak in the medieval population in the 13th century when we know that assarting was going on; there is a reference to this in 1215, when Roger de Nevil was given "the whole assart of Rockingham which Hugh de Nevil had cleared".³⁵

During the 17th century Sir Lewis Watson enclosed the entire Over (or Upper) Field and there was some small scale enclosure in the East (or Cotton) Field. The former took place before 1638 because the disafforestation grant speaks of the enclosed pasture called "Le Overfield". A survey of 1650 for the purposes of compounding mentions these pasture grounds (called the Upper Field) and also New Close. The latter must represent the small closes of that name shown on 19th century maps in Cotton Field and which together with Overfield are listed as pasture in a valuation of 1667.³⁶ These enclosures were originally for pasture but in the early 18th century parts of the enclosed Upper Field were ploughed again.³⁷

The series of 19th century estate maps show the enclosure of the rest of the parish took place between 1806 and 1815 without Act of Parliament, but a letter shows that this had been contemplated by Lord Rockingham as far back as 1763.³⁸ In general the new field boundaries correspond with the divisions between the furlongs of the open field system.

THE MILLS (FIG. 3(b))

The water mill at Rockingham consists of a leet 13 m. wide which leads to a mill channel of brick and stone. Attached to the S side of this are the grass covered walls of a mill 8 m. by 5 m. To the SW of the water mill is a flat topped windmill mound 20 m. in diameter and 1 m. high, which was evidently constructed on former arable land since a headland 8 m. wide extends behind it to the N.

The water mill at Rockingham is mentioned in Domesday Book and again in 1274-5 when Robert Oliver is said to have appropriated a piece of the King's meadow

³³ Watson papers A5 4/10.

³⁴ Watson papers A6 6/6.

³⁵ Clark *Medieval Military Architecture* Vol. II 434-5. It is also possible to see on the ground how the amount of land actually ploughed in the northernmost furlong of Cotton Field has been reduced, but when this happened is not known.

³⁶ Watson papers A5 8; A1 22; A5 20/5.

³⁷ Watson papers A5 20/7.

³⁸ N.R.O. maps 2329 and 2330; Watson papers A6 3.

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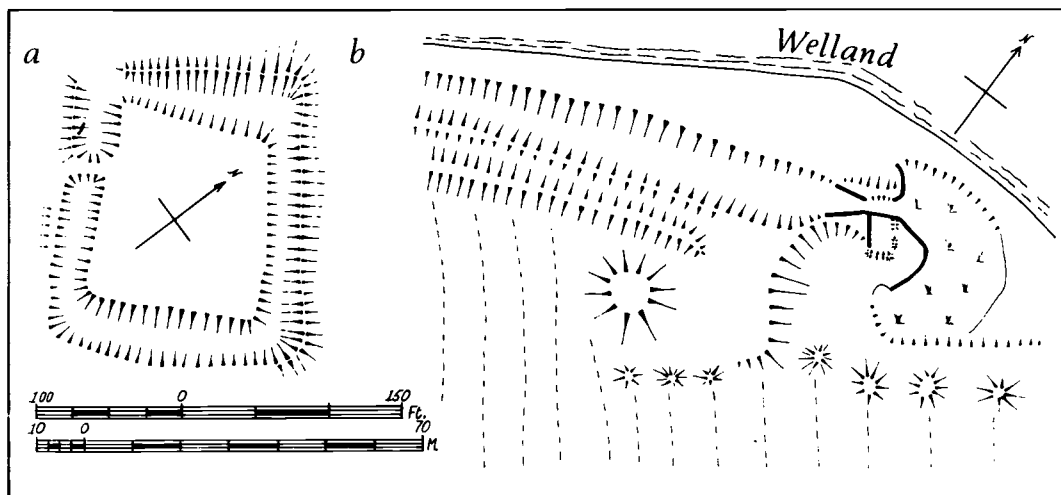


Fig. 3 (a) Park lodge moat, Rockingham, (b) the mills, Rockingham

20 rods by 2 feet to enlarge his mill race. Open field regulations of 1579-80 lay down that “when it is several fiele” access to the mill was to be maintained by a “footpath from the Common Balk . . . overthwarte the lands . . . as of ancient tyne used”.³⁹ The 1615 map shows the water mill alone, but by 1650 the windmill had been put up as well⁴⁰ and subsequent 17th century licences to millers mention both, which were shown together on 19th century estate maps and the Ordnance Survey 6 in. map of 1887.⁴¹ By 1901 the windmill had ceased to be shown on maps and only the “corn mill, disused” is shown with its leet.

In the 16th and 17th centuries there was a second water mill at Rockingham. The Elizabethan field regulations mention “Hugh Bayley’s Myll” as well as the main (or Over) mill and a document prepared for the Committee for Compounding during the Civil War mentions “two water milnes and a winde milne”.⁴² On the 1615 map its site is presumably the isolated house described as “Thomas Bayley’s” lying beside a leet off the Welland in the NE corner of the parish. The dried up leet survives and the site of the building is marked by a terrace with some tumbled heaps of stone and brick.

COTTON (FIGS. 2 and 4)

This deserted settlement in Gretton parish is unlocated in the list of deserted medieval villages in Northamptonshire published in 1966.⁴³ The name suggests a secondary settlement, presumably from Gretton. It is first mentioned in a forest inquisition of 1255 embracing the townships of Rockingham, Corby, Gretton and Cotton and figures again in a perambulation of the Forest of Rutland of 1269: “The

³⁹ Clark *Medieval Military Architecture* Vol. II 438; Watson papers A6 2.

⁴⁰ Watson papers A1 22, Particular of Lewis Watson’s estate 1650. See L. Syson *British Water Mills* (1965) 45-6 for other examples of water millers building a windmill nearby in order to have reserve power.

⁴¹ Watson papers A6 6/12 (1676), A6 6/16 (1670) (licences to millers); N.R.O. maps 2329, 2330, 2331; OS 6in. map Northants. Sheet XI SW.

⁴² As note 40.

⁴³ K. J. Allison et al. *The Deserted Villages of Northamptonshire* (1966), 37.

perambulation of the forest of Rutland begins from that place where the old course of the Little Eyre flows into the Welland opposite Cotton".⁴⁴ "John de Cotene" is mentioned in an Inquisition Post Mortem of 1274 and in 1278-9 Amicia de Gorham is stated to have held one messuage and a carucate there of Lawrence de Preston. It receives mention in the Nomina Villarum of 1316 but not in medieval tax lists, presumably being included with Gretton. A description of it is given in an agreement of 1362 between Sir John de Cobham and Sir William de la Pole⁴⁵

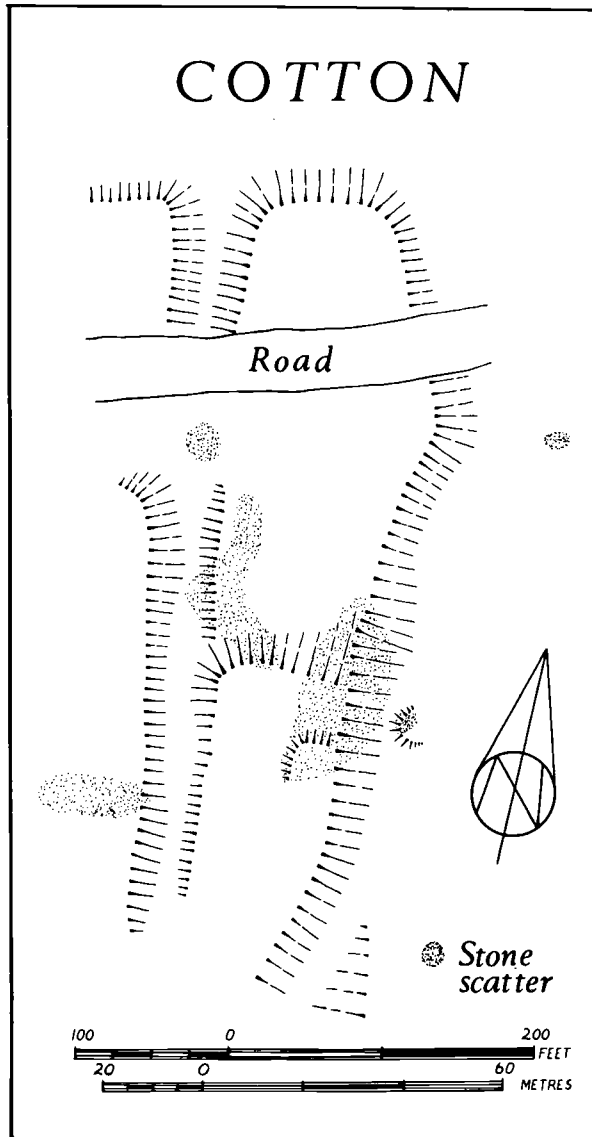


Fig. 4 Site of Cotton

⁴⁴ Select Pleas of the Forest (Selden Society) 35 and 53.

⁴⁵ *Calendar Inquisitions Post Mortem* Edward I II, p.48; Bridges, *op. cit.*, 314; *Feudal Aids* Vol. IV, pp. 17 and 26; *Calendar Charter Rolls* 1362 p. 426.

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where it appears as "a messuage, 60 acres of (arable) land, 20 acres of meadow and 20 acres of pasture in Coten by Rockingham", from which would appear the place was not much more than a substantial isolated farm, the boundaries of its territory on the South suggesting assarting out of Rockingham forest (FIG. 2) perhaps in the 13th century.

Nothing more is heard of it until 1567-9 when the Tanfield family sold Cotton to Edward Watson. Documents produced then describe it as an enclosed pasture ground which all subsequent documents continue to do. Evidently the large farm had gone and the 1615 map shows a single pasture field of 120 acres with some small closes on its N margin. No house or cottage is shown but one might have existed since one is referred to by Bridges and shown as standing within a little garden close N of the road to Gretton on the early 19th century estate maps and on the first edition of the 1in. Ordnance Survey map.⁴⁶

The site (FIG. 4) consists of two ploughed down terraces and a stone scatter adjoining a dried up stream bed at SP 876926; the terraces correspond in part to close boundaries on the 1615 map. It occupies some .4 ha. Surface examination has produced pottery of 12th to 14th centuries consisting mainly of Stamford and Lyveden shelly wares and decorated jugs together with Lyveden roof tiles and stone roof slates. N of the road were abundant sherds of the 18th and 19th centuries. A few Roman sherds might be strays from the site at SP 876922.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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⁴⁶ Watson papers B 8 12 and B 8 27/1; Bridges *op. cit.* p.312; N.R.O. maps 2329, 2330, 2331; first edition 1in. O.S. map. Sheet 44 (Oakham) published 1824 (reissued by David and Charles 1970).