

LANDSCAPE AND SETTLEMENTS IN SOUTH NORFOLK

by Silvia Addington

I. SUMMARY

This article describes an attempt to discover the former pattern of woodland, open fields, early enclosures and settlements in the ecclesiastical parishes of Fritton, Morning Thorpe, Stratton St. Michael, Tasburgh and the north-west of Hempnall. All the parishes have the R. Tas or a tributary of the river forming a parish boundary and all have heavy clay uplands. The parishes are, perhaps, typical of many places in that, for the most part, the manors and later estates have not belonged to anyone of more than local importance and the available documents are therefore fragmentary, leaving much of the area with no documentation until the nineteenth century. Consequently it has been necessary to try and establish the early landscape and settlement pattern by using several different techniques.

Hedgecounting and botanical evidence suggest that prehistoric farming and settlements were mainly confined to the valleys with woodland covering the higher ground. Field-walking shows that there is evidence of Romano-British incursions into the woodland, and field names suggest that the Anglo-Saxons farmed much of the uplands. Documentary evidence shows that between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries there was an impetus towards enclosure. In the south of the area, on the heaviest clays, much of the land remained as greens, woods and pastures until the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

II. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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III. INTRODUCTION

After studying the hedges in Tasburgh (Addington 1978, 70-83) by counting shrub species in each thirty yard stretch (the technique as outlined in Pollard, Hooper and Moore 1974, 79), the writer has counted the hedges in all the parishes in the area surveyed. Where possible field-walking has taken place near the villages and commons, and beside the Caistor-to-Colchester Roman road, to try and find and date the settlements and relate them to the landscape. Available maps and documentary sources have been used and the etymology of field and place names has been noted although these are tentative, especially when from late forms.

TOPOGRAPHY AND BOUNDARIES (Figs. 1, 2)

The area is in the Hundred of Depwade in a part of South Norfolk traditionally described as 'wood pasture' country (Hassall Smith and MacCulloch 1977, 331), the soil of which was described early in the seventeenth century 'as wonderful fat and comparable with goodness with the woodland in Suffolk . . . and well

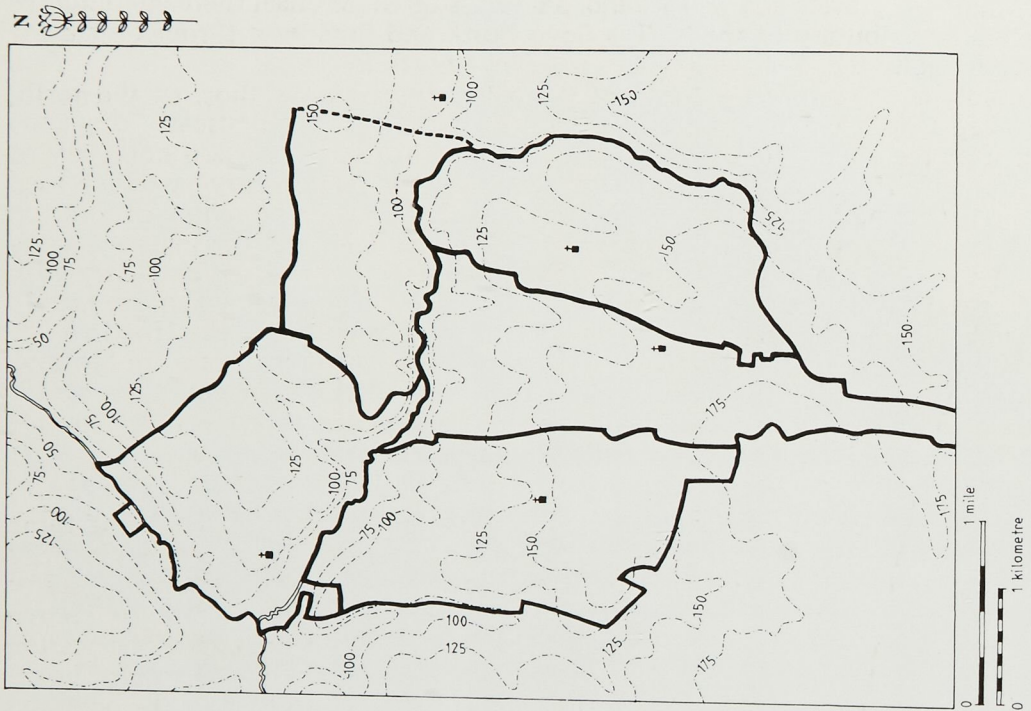


Fig. 2

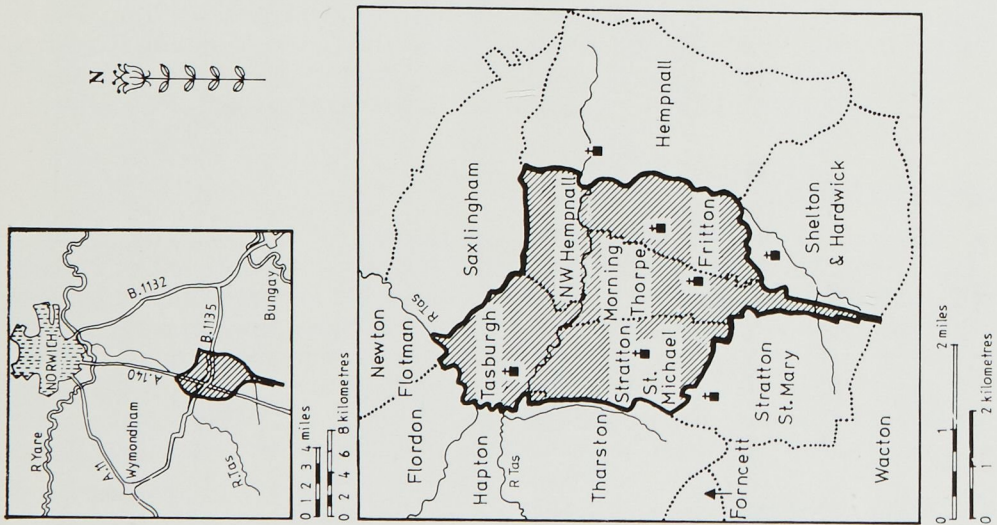


Fig. 1

stowed with wood and timber' (Hood ed. 1938, 2-3). In this part of Norfolk there were until recently many small mixed farms.

The glacial soils consist of boulder clays overlying chalk. In the river valleys are sands and gravels and in Tasburgh and Stratton St. Michael there are outcrops of chalk. A tributary of the R. Tas flows north and then west through a narrow valley to join the Tas, which in turn flows north-to-east to join the R. Yare near Norwich. Some of the banks of the tributary, especially those on the north, are steep (Fig. 2). There are also several small valleys where streams drain the land into the river. The tributary near its source forms the eastern boundary of Fritton with Hempnall. As Fig. 1 shows, the Tas and its tributary have been used for parish boundaries throughout their courses. The western boundary of Stratton St. Michael follows the division between the arable land and the marshes, along which a stream flows to join the R. Tas near the south-western boundary with Tasburgh. The northern boundaries of Tasburgh and Hempnall, which are mostly on high ground, separate them from Saxlingham and divide the Hundreds of Depwade and Henstead. The southern end of the long tail of land in Morning Thorpe is called *Hundred Mere* on the tithe map (O.E. (*ge*)*maere*, a boundary: Ekwall 1960, 311); this acted as a boundary dividing the Hundreds of Depwade and Earsham and the parishes of Morning Thorpe and Pulham Market.

GREENS AND COMMONS (Figs. 3, 4)

The greens and commons are divided between those on the uplands and those that lie in the river valleys. Fig. 3A shows the extent of the commons in 1797 (Faden's Map of Norfolk 1797). Fig. 3B shows those that have survived, all of which are on the heavy clay uplands. The small green south of Shelton church is still connected to Morning Thorpe Green. In 1616 it 'contained five acres', part of which was then enclosed (N.R.O. PD 56/45). Morning Thorpe Green is also connected to Fritton Common, which in 1827 was 'the common pasture of Fritton called *Fritton Green*' (N.R.O. Fritton Glebe Terrier 1827).

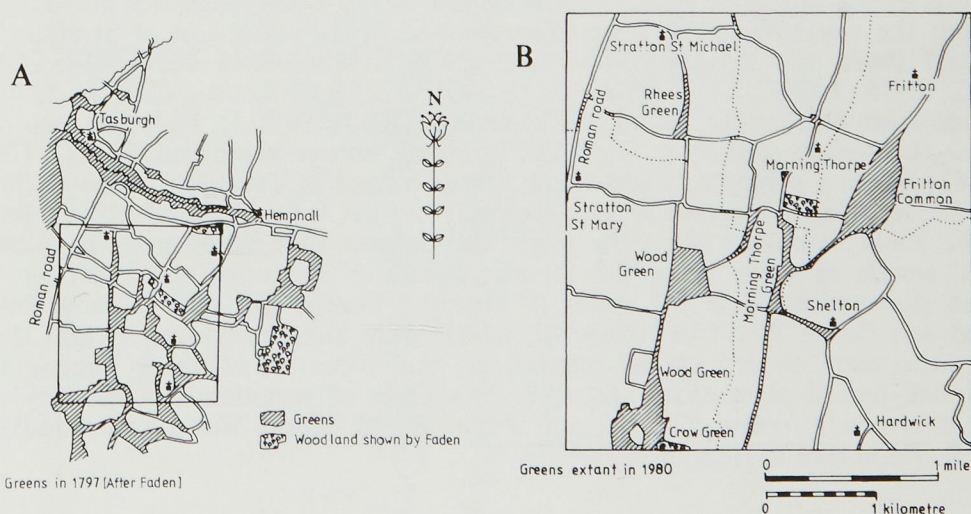


Fig. 3

Fig. 4 shows that much commonland lay in the river valleys; Tharston Low Common lay to the west of Stratton St. Michael. *Nether Green* in Tasburgh, which adjoined the river, was due north of the church (N.R.O. Tasburgh Court Book 1713) and in the fifteenth century, the marshes southwest of the church were known as *Briggategrene* (N.R.O. GUR 146X1, 41). In the extreme southwest of Hempnall was *Fairstead Green*, the name being retained by Fairstead Farm and the lane connecting Tasburgh and Hempnall.

South of the R. Tas, Rhees Green, Morning Thorpe Green and Fritton Common were all part of an area of greens on the heavy land, many of which were connected and extended south towards the R. Waveney. Rhees Green is shown extending further to the south; the western part of Morning Thorpe Green, known in 1477 as *Thramstonegrene* (N.R.O. MS 14298 36SB5) and *Franson Green* in 1743 (N.R.O. PD 56/45) is shown extending further to the north; this extension known as *Jamisgrene* in the sixteenth century (N.R.O. MS 14534 36C5) might have been joined to Rhees Green or *Leeches Green*, which in 1752 lay to the north-east of Rhees Green (N.R.O. NRS 10569 25B6). The whereabouts of *Thornysgrene Common* in Morning Thorpe, twenty-three acres of which were enclosed for pasture in 1517, is now unknown but might have been where it is shown on Fig. 4 where a small piece of waste ground survives near the village (Trans. Royal Hist. Soc. VII Leadam 1893, 195).

WOODLAND (Figs. 1, 4)

In the Domesday survey woodland was assessed by the amount of pannage available for swine. Only in Hempnall was a large wood, called *Schieteshaga*, recorded, which provided keep for 200 swine (V. C. H. 1901, 172). Small woods were noted in Stratton St. Michael and Boyland (V. C. H. 1901, 182, 172), the name of which is derived from *Boielund*, meaning Boia's grove (Ekwall 1960, 57) and a larger wood on the lost manor of *Hudeston*, which was described as being between Fritton and Hardwick, (Fig. 1) (V. C. H. 1901, 172).

There is a fifteenth century manorial record of woodland in the south of Morning Thorpe (N.R.O. NRS 10224 25A2) and of an area of woodland close to Morning Thorpe, across the parish boundaries in Stratton St. Mary and Pulham Market, in the sixteenth century (N.R.O. MS 14516 36C5). Records also suggest that to the south-east of Fritton Common and in the south-east of Stratton St. Michael there was formerly woodland (N.R.O. MS 14045 36B5, MS 14056 36A3, GUR 146X2 119, NRS 10571, 10580 25B6). Land called '*le Stubbs*' derived from O.E. *stubb*, *stobb* 'a tree-stump' (White 1970 II, 164) was recorded in the fourteenth century in Tasburgh implying former woodland (N.R.O. GUR 146X1, 4). In a survey of 1666 there was woodland in Tasburgh called *Oldlings* and fields called *Netherwood* and *Budds Grove* (N.R.O. Tasburgh Court Book 1713). Field names on the tithe maps also suggest that there might have been other woods at some time, the records of which have not survived (Fig. 4). Faden shows a wood in the south of Morning Thorpe but fails to show Popes Wood and Grove Wood in Hempnall, which were almost certainly extant then. The tithe maps record several plantations, and those for Morning Thorpe and Hempnall record plantations and sixty-four acres of woodland on the Boyland Hall estate in Morning Thorpe, and Popes Wood, Grove Wood and woodland near Boyland Hall in Hempnall.



Fig. 4

IV. EVIDENCE OF EARLY SETTLEMENT

The earliest evidence of settlement is along the valleys of the R. Tas and its tributary where Neolithic and early Bronze Age struck flints have been found on the valley slopes, including the undated hillfort site in Tasburgh on which a piece of Neolithic pottery has been found (Rollo-Smith forthcoming). The site covers six hectares (Fig. 4). East/north-east of Tasburgh church a Bronze Age beaker has been found (Lawson 1975, 183-4). Ordnance Survey photography has revealed a ring-ditch formerly in the extreme north of Morning Thorpe, now quarried for gravel. To the west of it are cropmarks which might be part of an early field system. On a hill between two streams, south of the ring-ditch, is part of a banked enclosure. In the north-west on Fig. 5 the site of a Roman villa is shown near Hall Farm in Newton Flotman and in the south-west of Stratton St. Michael urns presumed to be Roman were found in 1733 (Norwich Castle Museum records). In 1897 an excavation in Tharston near the confluence of the R. Tas with its tributaries in the southwest of Tasburgh, revealed pottery, thought at the time to be Roman, skeletons, skulls and a bronze fibular. Amphora thought to date from the first century, were found in 1923 (*Norf. Antiq. Misc.* 25, Part I 1906, 79-81; Records N.C.M.). Field walking has revealed Roman pottery along the Tas tributary and in the north of Stratton St. Michael, near Fritton church, in the north-west of Tasburgh and along the east side of Rhees Green (Fig. 4), where bricks, possibly Roman, and part of a Roman quern were found; similar bricks form a corner which is now part of the south wall of St. Michaels church.

To the south of the ring-ditch in Morning Thorpe was the site of a sixth-to-seventh-century Anglo-Saxon cemetery (Rogerson forthcoming). Both Morning Thorpe and Tasburgh churches have Saxon features (Taylor and Taylor 1965, I 448, II 605-6).

V. THE SETTLEMENTS AND MANORS

The Domesday survey of 1086 included the assets of every manor as a basis for taxation. In the area surveyed there was often more than one manor in each parish and the land of each extended into several parishes. A rough estimate of the male population can also be deduced from the survey. The earliest documents for the area are a collection of deeds between 1340 and 1676, mainly concerned with the purchase of land in the south-east of Tasburgh; documents also exist from the fourteenth century for Morning Thorpe and the fifteenth century for Fritton and Stratton St. Michael. There is an early sixteenth century survey for part of Hempnall and a few documents dating from the seventeenth century. A manorial survey of 1666 exists for Tasburgh but most of the documents concern Morning Thorpe, Fritton and the south-east of Stratton St. Michael.

Table I shows the amount of taxation due from the parishes in 1334 and 1449 (Hudson 1895, 270). The figure in brackets (1) representing the highest assessment in relation to the nineteen parishes in Depwade, including the lost village of Dishwell.

	1334	1449
Hempnall	£7- 2-0 (1)	£6-10-0 (1)
Stratton	£6-10-0 (3)	£5-16-8 (3) includes Sts. Mary, Michael and Peter
Fritton	£4- 0-0 (9)	£3-10-0 (7)
Tasburgh	£3- 5-0 (10)	£3- 0-0 (9)
Morning Thorpe	£2-13-0 (12)	£1-13-0 (14)

Table I

FRITTON (O.E. friþ(u)tun 'enclosed place'; Ekwall 1960, 188: Figs. 5, 6)

Fritton Church stands in the fields to the north-west of the present village. Fig. 5 shows that pottery in several different scatters has been found to the south of the church. Immediately south of the church, the pottery dates from the thirteenth to eighteenth centuries. It dates from the twelfth to eighteenth century beside the lane to the west, including two possible sherds of Late Saxon ware in the southernmost scatter and one Late Saxon piece in the south-east. Possible pieces of Middle Saxon, Late Saxon and medieval pottery have been found on a field to the south-east of the church which lies beside the Hempnall road, alongside which flows a stream, the road having been previously called *Watergate* or *Watermeereway* (N.R.O. MS 14062 36A3). Pottery from the Late Saxon period to the fourteenth century and a few pieces of Roman pottery, have been found on the east side of the Hempnall road as shown on Fig. 5.

There were two Domesday manors in Fritton. Land of the Exchange of Isaac held eighty acres and a church with forty acres. Robert, the son of Corbutio, held thirty acres. There were also twenty-one freemen and sokemen who held 205 acres, and twenty-five bordars and one villein (V.C.H. 1901, 80, 104-112, 134, 182). There are two probable manor sites, one near the late Saxon settlement which might be synonymous with the manor of *Bavents, Burtofts and Hemenhales* which was owned by Sir John Sturmyn in 1315. By 1400 the house had gone and only the land remained (Blomefield 1806 V, 310). A document of 1821, quoting from sixteenth century sources, refers to a messuage with orchards, crofts, gardens and yards containing fifteen acres called *Fullers, Burtofts and Sturmins*, which by 1822 was divided into three tenements and is now gone (N.R.O. Irby Collection R158, Box 4). There is a house platform on the site, which is now a garden most of which is grass, on which medieval sherds have been found. The other site might be Fritton Hall where pottery dating from the eleventh century has been found in the kitchen garden (Fig. 6).

Blomefield refers to a manor which was owned by Roger Ryvet in 1306 and sold to Boyland Hall in the fifteenth century (Blomefield 1806 V, 309-10). Land to the north-east of the green (Fig. 5) on which pottery dating from the twelfth-century has been found, was called *Rivetts* in the seventeenth century (N.R.O. MS 14038 36A3).

Pottery finds suggest that at some time during the twelfth-and thirteenth-centuries the settlement expanded towards the common. The present village is mainly concentrated around its northern end with scattered farms and cottages edging it. References to *Jordan Berretts*, one of the southernmost former farms, on the east side of the common, date from 1533 (N.R.O. MS 14065 36A3) and Island House, to the north of *Jordan Berretts*, has a complicated system of moats, around which transitional/post-medieval pottery and one medieval sherd have been found (Fig. 6). In 1328 Fritton was granted a weekly market and a yearly fair (*Charter Rolls* 1327-1341, 83). Table I suggests that the village was still increasing in size in 1449 but by the sixteenth century was sometimes referred to as *Fretton-juxta-Shelton*. In the 1851 population census there were 265 people (White 1854, 349).

HEMPNALL (*Hamehala* DB. 'Hemma's Halh'; Ekwall 1960, 233: Figs. 4, 5, 6)

Hempnall has been one of the larger settlements in Depwade Hundred and as Table I shows was possibly the largest during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In 1851 the population was the highest in Depwade with 1258 people (White 1854, 349). In the Domesday survey there was one manor, which at the

conquest was owned by Torn, a Dane, who also owned the nearby manors of *Hudeston* and *Boyland*. The manor had in demesne eight ploughlands and sixteen acres with thirty-eight villeins and seventy bordars. In 1086 there were four freemen with eighty-three acres, a priest and two churches with one ploughland (V.C.H. 1901, 105, 172).

The village of Hempnall lies outside the surveyed area. *Fairstead Green* (Fig. 4) was shown by Faden as square-shaped, with a scatter of houses of which two survive, one being Fairstead Farm on which the Ordnance Survey map shows the site of the *Chapel of St. Andrew* (O.S. Sheet TM 29). Blomefield believed it to have been parochial and it was still extant in the eighteenth century (Blomefield 1806 V, 184). Fig. 4 shows the site ascribed by local tradition to the second church. All the parishes surveyed have, at some stage, had glebeland close to the church (N.R.O. Glebe Terriers of Fritton, Hempnall, Morning Thorpe, Stratton St. Michael and St. Peter, Tasburgh). Ten pieces of glebeland were, until the nineteenth century, close to this site which is now grassland and on which no pottery earlier than the thirteenth century has been found. Field walking near *Fairstead Green* has been limited because much of the land is either pastures or farmyards, but some pottery, mainly of the thirteenth and fourteen centuries has been found. Eighteenth century pottery is scattered along the east side of Chestnut Loke (Fig. 6).

The manor house site is probably north of Hempnall church where Manor Farm lies beside land formerly called *Hallyards* (N.R.O. Hempnall Tithe Map 1842). In 1327 there was a park of 260 acres, 529 acres in demesne and ninety-six acres of underwood. A later manor was *Sir Ralf's or Curple's Manor* (Blomefield 1806 V, 183-5). A house known as Krons Manor is in Fairstead Lane and is, perhaps, a corruption of *Cannons*, a manor which owned land in Hempnall in the seventeenth century (N.R.O. MS 14268 36B4; Fig. 6). In the north-west of Hempnall are Wood Farm and Grove Farm; to the south of Grove Farm is a moated site on which thirteenth- and fourteenth-century pottery has been found (Fig. 5).

HUDESTON (*Hude* is possibly derived from a personal name: *Tun* O.N. 'an enclosure, a farmstead . . . the commonest el. in English p.names'; Smith 1970 II, 188).

This manor had four ploughlands and to it belonged eighteen freemen with one ploughland and twenty acres, one villein, twenty bordars and one serf (V.C.H. 1906, 172). The site is unknown and might not be in the area.

MORNING THORPE (DB. *Maringatorp* 'belonging to the Meringas' a lost place with the name identical with Mareham'; Ekwall 1960, 469; Figs. 5, 6)

There were two manors in Morning Thorpe in 1086, both of which survive as estates. In the first half of the eleventh century, Morning Thorpe Manor was left to the abbey of St. Edmund (Hart 1966, 81) but was released in the thirteenth century (Bryant 1906, 117-8). The manor-house is probably near its original site to the south of the church (Fig. 6). In the Domesday survey the abbot held one ploughland, seven villeins, three bordars, one serf and a church with twelve acres. There was also one freeman with a ploughland, twelve and a half freemen with seventy-five acres, two sokemen with thirty acres, one villein and eight bordars (V.C.H. 1906, 76, 134).

Boyland Hall had one plough on the demesne, two villeins and five bordars. There were one and a half sokemen with one and a half acres (V.C.H. 1906,

172). Fig. 5 shows the possible site of the medieval settlement where pottery from the eleventh to sixteenth centuries has been found by field walking. In 1352 there was a chapel, known as *Morningthorpe Chapel*, which belonged to Boyland Hall (Bryant 1906, 118-9). In 1430 an abuttal for land called *Boylonds* includes 'to the west land of the church of St. Peter and the common way to *Moryngthorpe*' (N.R.O. MS 14304 36B5). In 1515 the land opposite the site of Boyland Hall (Fig. 6) was the *Northfield* of Morning Thorpe, in which was land called *Boylond* (N.R.O. MS 14308 36B5). The northern part of *Northfield* was later called *Rookyards* (Morning Thorpe Tithe Map 1838), yard being derived from O.E. *geard*, 'an enclosure, a yard, a courtyard which is not frequent in early names' (Smith 1970 I, 198) and might have been emparked when Richard Garneys rebuilt Boyland Hall in 1571 (Blomefield 1906 V, 198). A later manor was *Hoo Hall, Blomefield and Seamans* which was joined to Boyland Hall in 1565. The unknown site lay between Morning Thorpe and Hempnall (Blomefield 1806 V, 290-1).

In 1086 Morning Thorpe seems to have had approximately the same number of men as Fritton, and almost twice as many as Tasburgh, but by 1334 it had one of the lowest assessments in the Hundred, which had further diminished by 1449. By 1851 it had the smallest population in Depwade with 140 people.

Documentary evidence suggests that many of the medieval messuages were on the same sites as the present houses. There are several references to the east side of the street, the earliest being in 1434 (N.R.O. MS 14291 36B5). All the messuages had pightles or orchards or both which lay either beside or behind the houses and were bounded on the east by *Mulgateway*, which followed the boundary between Morning Thorpe and Fritton. There were probably messuages on the west side of the street between the present houses, where there is now a meadow, which in 1838 was three small fields (N.R.O. Morning Thorpe Tithe Map 1838), the central one having been known as *Coltons Yards* in 1559 (N.R.O. MS 14017 36A3).

Half a mile to the south of the church is the green, at the north of which is Moor Farm and some cottages (Fig. 6). No pottery has been found on the east side of the green but on the west side, in 1489, a plot of land was enclosed by a ditch and contained an acre (N.R.O. NRS 10224 25A2). Fig. 5 shows that on this side, pottery from the fourteenth- to sixteenth centuries has been found.

RAINTHORPE (D.B. *Rainestorp*, possibly derived from O.N. *reinn* 'a boundary strip'; Smith II 1970, 82. Rainthorpe lies near the boundaries of Tasburgh, Flordon and Newton Flotman). After the Conquest Rainthorpe was held by Roger de Ranis (Blomefield V 65-6).

Rainthorpe Hall originally lay in the parish of Newton Flotman, possibly on a surviving house-platform near Hall Farm, where in an adjoining wood, one piece of Middle Saxon has been found with medieval pottery near the site of the Roman villa previously mentioned. In the Domesday Survey the manor of Rainthorpe owned ninety acres (V.C.H. 1906, 112, 185). In 1156 the manor was divided and the part that was in Tasburgh was separately owned (Blomefield 1806 V, 216); the present house in Tasburgh was built in 1579 (Pevsner 1962, 288).

STRATTON ST. MICHAEL (O.E. *Straet-tun*, tun on a Roman road; Ekwall 1960, 449; Figs. 4, 5, 6, 7).

The churches of St. Michael and St. Peter both lay half a mile to the east of the Roman road (Fig. 5). A manor in 1086 was owned by Robert, son of Corbutio, who also owned a manor in Fritton. The Stratton manor held two ploughlands



Fig. 5

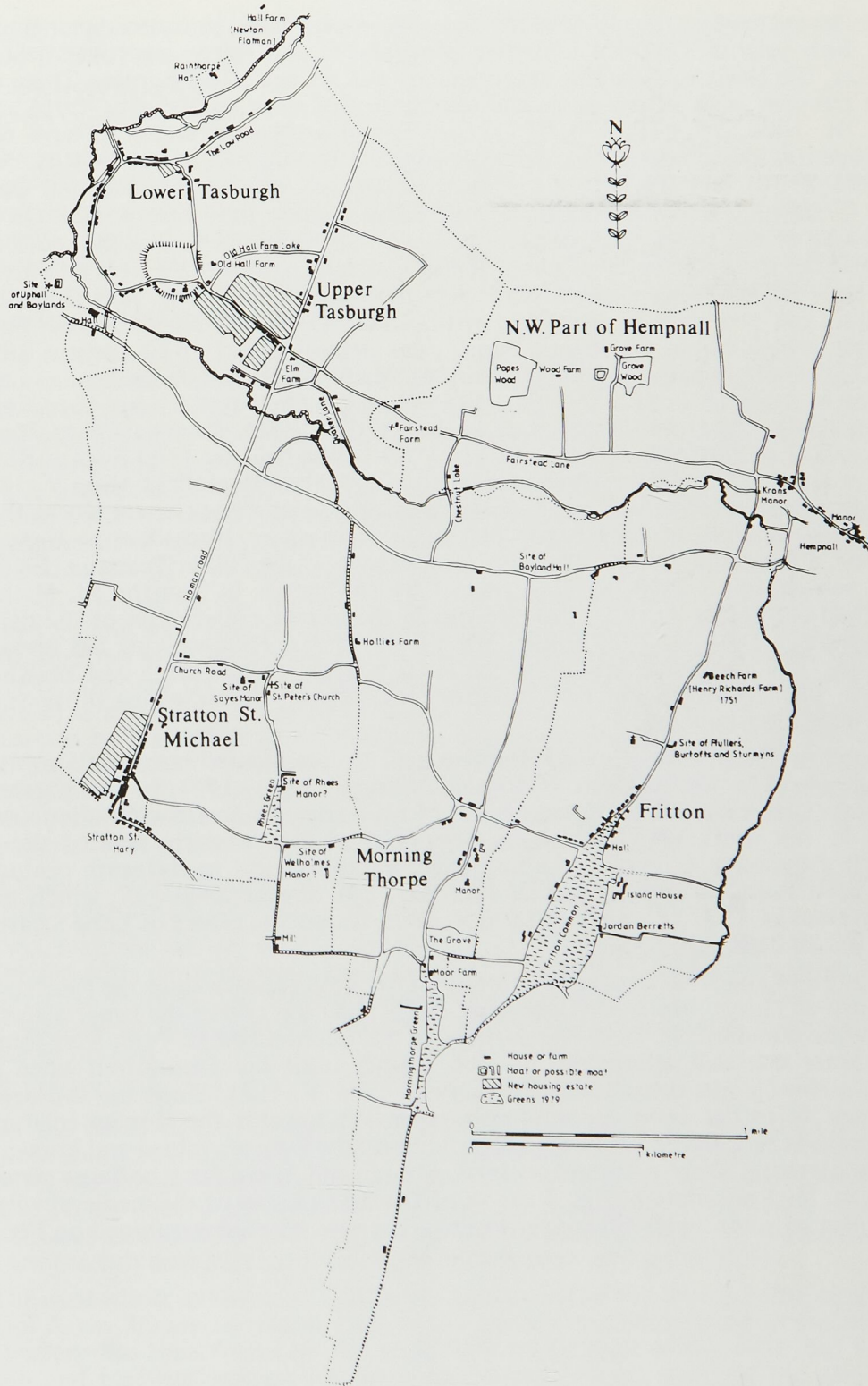


Fig. 6

with seven bordars. Seven freemen held seventeen acres. A manor belonging to the Bishopric of Thetford with two ploughlands and thirty acres was held by Walter, the Deacon, including seven villeins and six and a half bordars. There was one freeman with fifteen acres and twenty-six sokemen with eighty-three acres (V.C.H. 1906, 76, 116, 134, 182). Late Saxon settlement seems to have been centred on the churches, along both sides of *Grenegate* (Fig. 4. N.R.O. NRS 10571 25B6) and on both sides of the northern end of Rhees Green where Fig. 5 shows where Late Saxon and medieval pottery have been found. On the east side of the green it is mixed with Roman pottery. The land to the south and east of the site of St. Peter's Church is now grassland and to the west is a farmyard so that field-walking close to the church is incomplete. The two Domesday manors can probably be identified with *Sayes Manor* and *Rheez Manor*. *Sayes Manor*, which lay in St. Peter's parish, was demolished c. 1570 (Bryant 1906, 176). The site might be to the south of St. Michael's church on land called *Little Sayes* in 1678 (Fig. 5) where Late Saxon and medieval pottery has been found in molehills (Stratton St. Michael Glebe Terrier 1678). *Rees* or *Rheez Manor* was joined to Boyland Hall in 1270; in 1404 it was held by John Rees or Rheez and was joined to *Strattonhall* in Stratton St. Mary (Blomefield 1806 V, 187). The site is unknown but might be on the east side of Rhees Green where there are heavy scatters of Late Saxon and medieval pottery. *Welholmes* or *Welhams Manor*, a Domesday manor that was originally by *Holm Hill* in Tharston (Fig. 4), was rebuilt in c. 1400 on land owned by the manor in Stratton St. Michael (Blomefield 1806 V, 187). The site was in the extreme south-east of the parish (Blomefield 1806 V, 202; N.R.O. MS 14731 36D5). Field-walking has revealed nothing but one small scatter of medieval pottery to the south-east of Rhees Green, but the site might have been on pastureland, beside which thirty yards of a wide ditch survives.

Land in Stratton St. Michael was also held by the moated manor of *Sturmyns* which in 1345 was sold to *Strattonhall* (Bryant 1906, 175). In the sixteenth century land called '*Gret Sturmyns juxta Wodegrene in Stratton Sa. Marie*' was sold to the south of Wood Green, suggesting that a formerly moated site on which a quantity of pottery, dating from the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries has been found, might be the relevant one. The site of *Snapehall*, which held sixty acres in 1307 (Blomefield 1806 V, 187), is near the centre of Long Stratton and is now built upon (Fig. 6).

The 1334 and 1449 assessments show that Stratton (known since the fourteenth century as *Longe Stratton* (Davenport 1967, xliii) was one of the larger places in Depwade Hundred. In 1449 the parishes of St. Michael and St. Peter were joined and Mass was said alternately in each church until the Dissolution when St. Peter's church was demolished (Blomefield 1806 V, 198). Since the thirteenth century there has been a continuous expansion towards the Roman road and southwards towards Stratton St. Mary, so that now they are joined and known as Long Stratton. Only a former rectory, a farm and some farm cottages remain near St. Michael's church. Fig. 7 shows earthworks of part of the medieval village and part of some small ditched enclosures. The area covered is outlined on Fig. 5.

DESCRIPTION OF MEDIEVAL EARTHWORKS IN STRATTON ST. MICHAEL AND FINDS (Figs. 5, 7)

THE EARTHWORKS

By Brian Cushion

The earthworks of Stratton St. Michael consist of three separate areas surveyed under different conditions. The small field to the south-west of St. Michael's church is grassland, whilst the field to the west of the Roman road, the A140, formerly grassland, was surveyed soon after its first ploughing. The large field between these, also formerly grassland, was surveyed after ploughing and cultivating, thus features remaining in this latter field are almost certainly less well defined than formerly.

The earthworks in the field near the church consist of an L-shaped building platform, possibly approached by a short ramp-like causeway adjacent to the south-west corner of the churchyard. Further west is a shallow straight length of ditch, with a shorter length to the east of it at the southern end, possibly forming the western toft boundary and/or the flanking ditches of a roadway. A small pond is situated between the platform and these ditches, having now a dry ditch draining north-north-westwards into a wide roadside ditch. The differing form and alignment of this ditch and the other two suggest that it is unlikely that they were contemporary with one another.

The earthworks in the larger field to the north of the road consist of a well-defined hollow way, heading north-westwards to an existing road junction on the A140, forming what must have been a crossroads at this point. To the south-west of the hollow way are at least three tofts, with one bounding feature being either a lane or a wide ditch. A small length of ditch to the north of the hollow way appears to be the corner of an enclosure, but it has been truncated by the farm road. To the west of the A140 are a series of four tofts, with a substantial ditch forming their western boundary. Some of the outer enclosure ditches are truncated by the present field boundary to the west, with the southern one continuing as a crop mark in the adjoining land on O.S. Air Photo 73 359 215.

It is quite likely that the ponds on the earthwork plan are contemporary with the other features on the site.

Two features shown to the north-west of the church are unlikely to be associated with the settlement area. The dry depression is probably the line of a watercourse partially fed from the pond at its southern end. The other feature may well be an indication of a dividing line between meadow to the west and arable to the east.

THE FINDS (Figs. 4, 5, 6, 7)

On the fields to the north-west of St. Michael's church, on both sides of the north to south boundary is a scatter of predominantly thirteenth-century pottery, mixed with Roman and Late Saxon sherds to the west of the pond shown on Fig. 7. To the east of the track which forms the cross-roads in the south-east of Fig. 7, and bounded by the road to the south, pottery from the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries has been found with Roman pottery (Fig. 5).

The earthworks on the small field to the south-west of the church is the possible site of *Sayes Manor* on which Late Saxon pottery has been found in molehills; no pottery has been found on the small field to the west of this field, but Late Saxon and medieval pottery has been found immediately south of the possible flanking ditches of a roadway which was possibly Sayeswaye (N.R.O. GUR



Fig. 7

146X2, 119; Figs. 4, 7). Thirteenth and fourteenth century pottery has been found on the toft sites between the existing houses and the hollow way, and in the land or wide ditch dividing the tofts on the large field to the north of the road on Fig. 7. No pottery but part of a medieval quern has been found on the enclosure to the north of the lane or wide ditch and thirteenth and fourteenth century pottery was found on and around the remnant of a toft in the north. This is almost the only pottery that was found east of the hollow way in this field.

The field to the west of the Roman road has flints and plaster on the north side of the oval pond in the south-west and on the toft immediately to the north of the pond, thirteenth and fourteenth century pottery was found. In the enclosure, bounded by roads on the south and east, a ditch on the west and bank on the north, thirteen to seventeenth century pottery has been found, the scatter being especially heavy in the south-east.

Pottery from the thirteenth to eighteenth centuries has been found in two separate scatters on the south side of Church Road (Fig. 6) and along the west side of the Roman road to the south of the cottage shown on Fig. 7.

TASBURGH (DB. Taseburc, perhaps Taesa's burg. The river name Tas is a back formation; Ekwall 1960, 461: Figs. 4, 5, 6)

Until 1818 much of the land near the river was commonland and the roads divided the marshes from the arable (N.R.O. Tasburgh Enclosure Award 1818). In the south-east of the parish the medieval strips of the villagers were mixed with the strips of the manors of Uphall, Rainthorpe, Hempnall and Forncett (N.R.O. Gurney Collection, 146 x 1).

Middle and Late Saxon pottery has been found in the churchyard (Lawson and Rollo-Smith forthcoming) and Late Saxon pottery has been found on the east side of *Nether Green* (Fig. 4). Pottery dating from the eleventh century has been found within the hillfort near the church, and from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries to the north-east of Old Hall Farm and on the west side of *Nether Green* (Figs. 5, 6). There were two manors. *Uphall and Boylands* was a capital manor, the land of which extended southwards into Forncett. In 1284 it was owned by Sir Richard de Boyland who had a chapel dedicated to St. Michael (Blomefield 1806 V, 210-7). In 1086 the manor held thirty acres in Tasburgh (V.C.H. 1906, 124). The probable site is in the south-west near the sites which were excavated in 1897 and 1923 (Fig. 5), one of which is moated and on which a building, thought to have been a chapel, was found. Alongside the moated site, across the boundary in Tharston, is the hill excavated in 1897 (*Norf. Antiq. Misc.* 25, Part I 1906, 78-81; Records N.C.M.), which in 1500 was known as *Holm Hill* and on which stood a chapel (N.R.O., N.C.C. Wills, Craforde 82-3), which was probably the *Chapel of St. Giles* which belonged to *Welholmes or Welhams Manor* (which was later rebuilt in Stratton St. Michael) and was called *Holme Chapel* (Blomefield 1806 V, 306). One piece of either Early Saxon or Iron Age pottery with thirteenth and fourteenth century pottery have been found in the molehills around *Uphall and Boylands. Huntres Manor*, a small manor of thirty acres, might have been near Old Hall Farm (V.C.H. 1906, 149), north-west of the church, where sherds, possibly Late Saxon, have been found with medieval pottery (Fig. 5). In 1570 the manors were united (Blomefield 1806 V, 210-7). In the Domesday survey, Tasburgh had the smallest number of men in the villages surveyed, with fourteen freemen and six sokemen with 171 acres, and one bordar. The amount of land owned by freemen differed widely, six freemen holding only



Fig. 8

ten acres from Bishop Osbern whilst seven other freemen held 110 acres of land of the Exchange of Isaac (V.C.H. 1906, 124, 113). The 1334 assessment suggests that by the fourteenth century, the population was almost as large as that of Fritton, and was, perhaps, still growing in 1449. In 1851 Tasburgh was considerably larger than Fritton with 475 people (White 1854, 349).

In 1350 two messuages were on the site of Elm Farm in the garden of which, pottery dating from the thirteenth century has been found (N.R.O. GUR 146X1, 2, 13, 38; Fig. 6). In 1389 a cottage with a pigstye, orchard and a messuage on either side, was probably in Quaker Lane, where three sites and two houses survive (Fig. 5; N.R.O. GUR 146X1, 8). In 1406 three messuages were recorded below the south bank of the hillfort on the edge of *Briggategrene* (N.R.O. GUR 146X1, 41-4, 46-7, 50) and in 1481 two messuages lay to the east of the Roman road (N.R.O. GUR 146X1, 32). A manorial survey of 1666 records a husbandman's house in *Theragate* and another at the junction of *Millstymeere* and the Roman road (Fig. 4; N.R.O. Tasburgh Court Book 1713).

At some stage the settlements became concentrated along the edge of the common in the river valley, and around the cross-roads on the Roman road, and became divided into Lower and Upper Tasburgh, leaving the church isolated. Since the 1930s the village has expanded between the church and the Roman road, where field-walking before some of the houses were erected, suggests that there was no previous settlement.

VI HISTORICAL EVIDENCE OF ENCLOSURE

Fig. 4 shows a reconstruction of the whole area from the available documentary sources which are shown in Appendix I and also the relationship between the hedges with seven and more species. The roads include the present road pattern, footpaths and tracks shown on earlier maps and those enclosed by road orders in the early nineteenth century. The earliest recorded names have been used, although many roads which were recorded before the sixteenth century were unnamed. All the parishes have tithe maps which have been used where a group of adjoining fields share the same name such as *Westons* or *Broadens* in Hempnall. The commons are those as shown on Fig. 3A, including some known to have been extant before 1797; the northern extension of *Thramstonegrene* in Morning Thorpe, as shown by Faden, has not been included because documentary sources, which are discussed later, suggest that it might have included only the width of the track which connected it to *Jamisgrene*. Because of the local tendency of water-meadows to have been common-land, the Fritton marshes along the eastern boundary are shown, although there are sixteenth and seventeenth century records of closes beside *the Bekk* (N.R.O. MS 14016, 14055 36A3, DUN (A) 22). By 1818 when the commons of Tasburgh were enclosed, all of *Briggategrene* was privately owned although it was part of the common pasture in 1475 (N.R.O. GUR 146X1, 41).

FIELD NAME EVIDENCE (Fig. 4)

The earliest references to fields are fragmentary but in the area surveyed there seem to have been several open fields in each parish. The small area of Tasburgh covered by medieval documents refer to *Rowegatefeld*, *Thefgatefeld*, *the field of Tasburgh*, *Stowefeld*, *Netheranhagh* and *Burwodefyld* (N.R.O. GUR 146X1, 14, 58, 35, 45, 12, 42). In 1653 there was 'all that close . . . in *Morningthorpe* containing eighteen acres called *The Wonge* lying in several wents' (N.R.O. Irby

Coll. R 158A, Box 4), a w(h)ent being used in East Anglia to describe a unit of similar size to a furlong (Postgate 1973, 292).

The earliest evidence of enclosure must be deduced from field names. The names of *Netheranhagh* and *Rathagh* in Tasburgh and *Eastthaugh* in both Morning Thorpe and Stratton St. Michael (N.R.O. GUR 146X1, 112, 22, MS 15356 36C5, MS 14546 36C5) are probably derived from O.E. *hagi*, an enclosure (Ekwall 1960, 210). *The Wonge* in Morning Thorpe (N.R.O. Irby Coll. R 158A, Box 4), a pightle called *Rainswong* in Stratton St. Michael (N.R.O. Glebe Terrior 1678), *Palymerewong* in the land of *Sayes Manor* (N.R.O. MS 14302 36B5) and *Westmerwong* in Hempnall (N.R.O. GUR 146X1, 8) may be early enclosures, *Wong* probably being derived from O.S. *vangr*, an infield or garden (Cameron 1977, 206). The position and size of the enclosures suggest that they were fields rather than gardens. *Stercstell* recorded in Tasburgh in 1355 (N.R.O. GUR 146X1, 4) has the last element *stell* from O.E. *stell*, an enclosure (Smith 1970 II, 150). This element is also included in *Berstellway* in Morning Thorpe (N.R.O. NRS 10223 25A2) and perhaps in *the Lowestall* in Tasburgh (N.R.O. Irby Coll. R158A, Box 3). Many crofts are recorded in the area. Croft is defined as O.E. *croft*, 'a piece of enclosed land used for tillage or pasture or a small piece of arable land adjacent to a house' (Ekwall 1960, 131). Field-walking on many crofts has revealed no evidence of habitation, although a field called *Great Croft* in Stratton St. Michael has a heavy scatter of pottery in one area. Pightles were also often recorded. In 1355, *Duntynnges Pightel* in Tasburgh was in multiple occupation, and in 1483 was described as 'three acres of lond inclosyd lyn togedyr' (N.R.O. GUR 146X1, 4, 34).

During the last half of the fifteenth century there are frequent references to enclosures, often of pasture-land, so that in Morning Thorpe much of the land to the north of the green was enclosed; the following being an example of 1477 'an inclose which lies between the land of Peter Sewald on the south and the common way on the north and abuts on an inclose on the west and the common way called *Thramstonegrene* on the east' (N.R.O. MS 14298 35B5) and in Hempnall in 1481, 'a piece of land enclosed and called *Westingwong* . . . lying in the *Field of Heminhale* between *Popysclose* on the east' (N.R.O. GUR 146X1, 32). During the first half of the sixteenth century out of twenty-six pieces of land sold in Morning Thorpe and Fritton, fifteen are described as in closes and eleven are described as arable land with abuttals, but three of these are in *Esthaungefeld* which was probably enclosed. (N.R.O. MS 10078 22F3, MS 14016-7, MS 14307-8, 11, MS 15354, MS 15356 36A3). By 1614 a marriage settlement in Fritton includes two acres of meadow, two pightles, *Sporles Meadow*, a close of eleven acres, twenty-five acres of pasture called *Great Horsecroft* and 'all those separate closes called *Morningthorpe* containing fifty acres more or less' (N.R.O. MS 14037 36A3); by 1650 most of the land between *Berstellway* and *Sledway* was in closes, Fig. 4 (N.R.O. Irby Coll. R158A, Box 4). And in 1666 most of Tasburgh was enclosed (N.R.O. Tasburgh Court Book 1713).

DESCRIPTION OF LAND AND OWNERSHIP (Fig. 8)

The local evidence suggests that from 1475 the gentry and the more prosperous yeomen and husbandmen strove towards enclosure by buying land piecemeal or by exchanging land, whilst both they and the smaller owners continued to hold dispersed strips. In 1481 land called *Derebough* in Tasburgh (N.R.O. GUR 146X1, 32), cultivated by at least four people, was owned by one of them in 1500 and described as a five acre close called *Derbough* (N.R.O., N.C.C. Wills, 82-3 Craforde).



Fig. 9

Documentary evidence shows that most closes were in multiple occupation, there being references to both rented land and sales of small pieces of land in enclosures. Some closes such as *Nether and Upper Watts*, which were in both Morning Thorpe and Stratton St. Mary, were large (N.R.O. MS 14524 36C5), whilst others were very small such as 'a pightel containing one rod called *Harrys Pightel*' in Fritton (N.R.O. MS 14040 36A3). By the eighteenth century there appear to have been numerous small closes, many of which during the later half of the century were amalgamated. A field in Fritton described in 1708 as 'in divers angles and nooks' is shown on the tithe map as a square field (N.R.O. NRS 14077 36A4). By c. 1800 the field pattern as shown on the tithe maps of between 1838 and 1842 was probably established (Fig. 8).

VII THE HEDGES

THE FIELDS (Figs. 6, 7, 8, 9)

Fig. 8 shows the nineteenth century pattern of hedges taken from farm plans of c. 1800 where available, the enclosure map of Tasburgh 1818 and the tithe maps; this pattern remained virtually unaltered until about 1950. The strips of glebe-land and charity lands in Stratton St. Michael are shown on the tithe map. Those shown near the Stratton St. Michael and Morning Thorpe boundary are on an undated map of the Hollies Farm, Morning Thorpe (Fig. 6) which is probably of c. 1800 (N.R.O. DS 173 (167) Cabinet II). These strips are almost all glebeland, charity land or the copyhold land of the manors of Boyland and *Strattonhall*. A few strips are shown on the Fritton tithe map, some of which are glebe or charity land and some belong to the curate of St. Gregory in Norwich. Most of the fields were between five and fifteen acres but close to the villages were small pightles and orchards, which are particularly noticeable around Fritton Common and in the top left hand corner of Fig. 7 where former small enclosures are shown in Stratton St. Michael. In the south-east of Fritton the field sizes tend to be regular, most fields being approximately seven acres. It is tempting to ascribe them to sixteenth and seventeenth century enclosures, perhaps associated with the farmhouses on the east side of Fritton Common. Some of the former strips can be seen as small enclosures, especially to the north-west of Morning Thorpe church. Fig. 9 shows the existing field pattern.

HEDGE MANAGEMENT AND AGE OF HEDGES (Fig. 10)

The traditional way of managing hedges in the area was by coppicing. In the eighteenth century 'the hedgewood being felled to the stub' and laid hedges were unknown (Marshall 1795, 100-1). Today the management varies from farm to farm; some farmers remove most of the hedges, some still coppice them but more frequently than in the eighteenth century and others use a mechanical hedge-cutter more or less annually. Some of the boundary hedges and those beside commons and tracks are often unmanaged, the sides being slashed back at intervals.

Fig. 10 is a histogram comparing the percentage of hedges of different ages in the parishes in the survey compared with those of the counties of Devon, Kent, Lincolnshire and Huntingdonshire (Hooper 1971, 8). The result comes between the large number of high-count hedges in the hilly pastoral county of Devon and the predominantly three to five species hedges in Kent. Although there are a small number of eight species hedges in the area surveyed, the majority of hedges are shown to be of between four and six species, with a considerable number being of both three and seven.

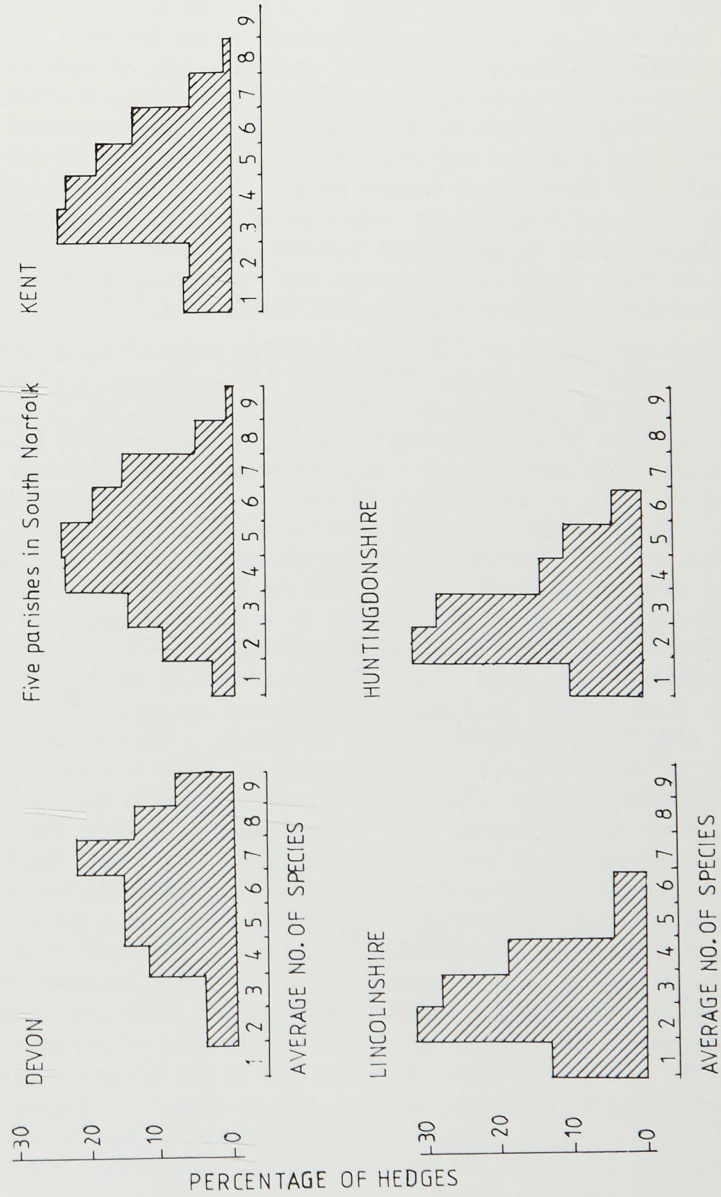


Fig. 10

HEDGE SPECIES (Figs. 4, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15)

(The English names used are those recommended by the Botanical Society of the British Isles.)

Fig. 11 shows the percentage of the number of thirty yard stretches in which some of the more common plants occur in hedges of between eight and two species; most one specie hedges being of either small-leaved elm (*Ulmus carpini-folia*) or hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*); there are not enough nine specie hedges to include. Twenty hedges for each number of species have been used, taken from all the surveyed parishes. The hedges chosen had an average length of 180 yards and were as uniform as possible. This does not show what proportion of the thirty yard contains any one species, so that 80% of thirty yard stretches in both eight and three specie hedges contain hawthorn, although the eight specie hedges are often represented by only one or two plants in a thirty yard stretch and the three specie hedges could contain as much as, or more than, 75% of hawthorn. In three hedges in Tasburgh with an average of 5.8 species the proportion of hawthorn was approximately 12% (Addington 1978, 80).

Dog rose (*Rosa canina* sp.) shows a declining ratio although it is one of the first plants to colonize a new hedge. Field rose (*Rosa arvensis*), which is found on the heavier soils (Petch and Swann 1968, 147), is in many hedges with over five species. Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), hazel (*Corylus avellana*), hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*), holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) and pedunculate oak (*Quercus robur*) also show a declining ratio. A small number of hedges have been planted with blackthorn and a few others which have had lengths straightened since c. 1800 have been infilled with it. The distribution of hornbeam is shown on Fig. 12, which also shows that hornbeam tends to be found on the high ground which is often flat and was formerly water-logged. There is a concentration on the west side of Morning Thorpe Green and between Morning Thorpe Green and Fritton Common and it is mainly absent west of the Roman road and on the light easily cultivated soils in the river valleys. In almost all instances, except within the square on Fig. 12 where dog's mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*) is mostly absent, they have an undercover of dog's mercury, an indicator of early woodland (Pollard, Hooper and Moore 1974, 100-2). The distribution of hazel is shown on Fig. 13. It is a native plant of woods, scrub and hedges and forms the most common shrub layer, often coppiced, in woodland (Clapham, Tutin and Warburg 1962, 273). Its presence in a hedge was used to determine woodland relic hedges in Huntingdonshire (Pollard, Hooper and Moore 1974, 90) because it was found to be uncommon in planted hawthorn hedges (Pollard, Hooper and Moore 1974, 94). As Fig. 13 shows it is present in many hedges above the 125ft. contour line but it is only occasionally found in hedges on the valley slopes, with the exception of those at the headwaters of the tributaries in the south-west of Stratton St. Michael and the south-east of Fritton. Also, there are few in the hedges around the settlement of Morning Thorpe. The area around Rhees Green in Stratton St. Michael is devoid of hedges which accounts for its absence in the south-east of Stratton St. Michael. Fig. 14 shows the distribution of pedunculate oak and ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), which also tend to be concentrated above the 125ft. contour line and which also shows that ash is more common than oak. Both spindle (*Euonymus europeaus*) and field maple (*Acer campestre*) are regarded by Hooper as marker species (Hooper 1971, 9); spindle, a native of woods and scrub (Clapham, Tutin and Warburg 1962, 324), colonizes a hedge which already contains six species and field maple when there are four. Both species show an increase between seven and six specie hedges and as the graph for spindle shows, it is present in

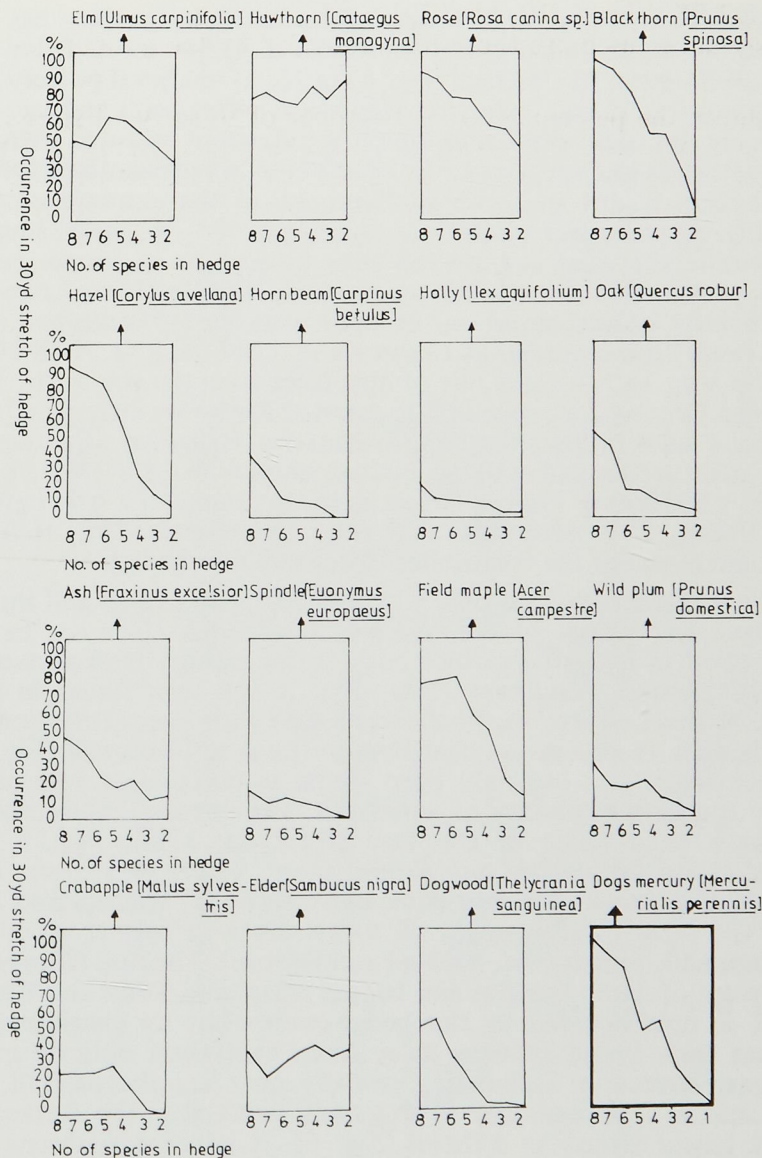


Fig. 11

hedges with less than six species. Field maple is invariably in hedges of between four and six species. Although hornbeam is most abundant in the older boundaries, it is seldom found in the same hedge as spindle. The elms, including wych elm (*Ulmus glabra*), show a marked increase between seven and six species. Both the wild plums, which include the wild domestic plum (*Prunus domestica*) and bullace (*Prunus institia*) and crabapples (*Malus sylvestris* ssp. *syvestris*, ssp. *mitis*) show increases between six and five species. Wild plums are particularly noticeable near former settlements, where they might be descended from early orchards which are frequently mentioned in deeds. Lengths survive beside the track to Fritton church where Late Saxon and medieval pottery have been found,

along Old Hall Farm Loke in Tasburgh, where medieval pottery has been found in the adjoining fields and a group survive in a hedge, away from the present settlement, in Stratton St. Michael near a scatter of medieval pottery. Crabapples include *Malus sylvestris ssp. sylvestris* which is a native plant and *ssp. mitis* which is derived from domestic stock and which is pubescent and not native. They are included together as one species in Fig. 10 although when examined for pubescence their distribution is not uniform. In Hempnall in the extreme north-east near *Broadens* (Fig. 4) seven out of thirteen trees were the *ssp. mitis*. Immediately to the south beside the road and on the edge of a piece of former commonland, seven of the eleven trees were the *ssp. mitis*. Along Old Hall Farm Loke in Tasburgh and in the nearby hedges, seven out of eight were the *ssp. mitis* and in Fritton in a group of fields first recorded as *Crabrows* in 1704 (N.R.O. NRS 10223 25A2; Fritton Tithe Map 1839), eight out of nine trees were the *ssp. mitis*. The increase in ash between five and four species is accounted for by an increase of four-species hedges by road sides rather than field boundaries. Pollarded ash trees were often mentioned in an account of walking Fritton bounds in 1836 (N.R.O. PD 56/73); some remain on Morning Thorpe Green as the remnants of a larger group of trees shown by Faden. It is noticeable that elder (*Sambucus nigra*) is found in old boundaries and is one of the commonest species in new hedges.

Goat willow (*Salix caprea*) is only found in 8% of all hedges and those in which it occurs have an average of 6.8 species. Sessile oak (*Quercus petraea*) is an uncommon plant in hedgerows which has a strong affinity with ancient woodland and is rarely planted (Rackham 1980, 55). It has been found in the west of Stratton St. Michael where Fig. 14 shows an area with a concentration of oak and ash in the hedges. It also grows near Pymore Lane in Hempnall (Fig. 4). Broom (*Sarothamnus scoparius*) has only been found in two hedges, one of which was recently the southern boundary of woodland. The dormant seeds germinate after the trees have been felled or coppiced (Rackham 1980, 79-81). Fields near Popes Wood called *Broomfield and Broom Close, Upper and Lower Broomlands* beside *Upper and Lower Williamswood* in Stratton St. Michael and *Broomlands* beside *Old Grove* in Fritton might all suggest areas of former woodland (Tithe maps of Hempnall, Stratton St. Michael and Fritton). The hop (*Humulus lupulus*) is a native plant of damp thickets and hedges (Clapham, Tutin and Warburg 1962, 562) which is not included in the hedge-counts but its distribution has been noted. It has been found growing away from habitation only on marshes. It is abundant near houses in Tasburgh, especially near Rainthorpe Hall. It grows in Fairstead Lane in Hempnall and is abundant, both near the former malthouse and around Island House in Fritton (Fig. 6). It is entirely absent in Morning Thorpe and Boyland and grows in Stratton St. Michael beside a cottage on the west side of the Roman road. Appendix II lists all the trees, shrubs and trailing plants found growing in the hedges surveyed.

Fig. 15 shows the distribution of dog's mercury. In some instances it survives on the sides of ditches after the removal of the hedgerows as can be seen near Rhees Green. As Fig. 15 shows it is less common on the west side of Stratton St. Michael and on the valley slopes. The graph for dog's mercury on Fig. 11 shows that it is in 100% of hedges with eight species and that its decline is dramatic in hedges of six and five species. The increase in four species hedges is entirely due to its presence in road-side hedges. In almost every instance in which a hedge has been straightened since *c.* 1840 dog's mercury is absent. It is present, though, in woodland planted during the nineteenth century which suggests that its intrusion from adjoining hedges can be rapid.

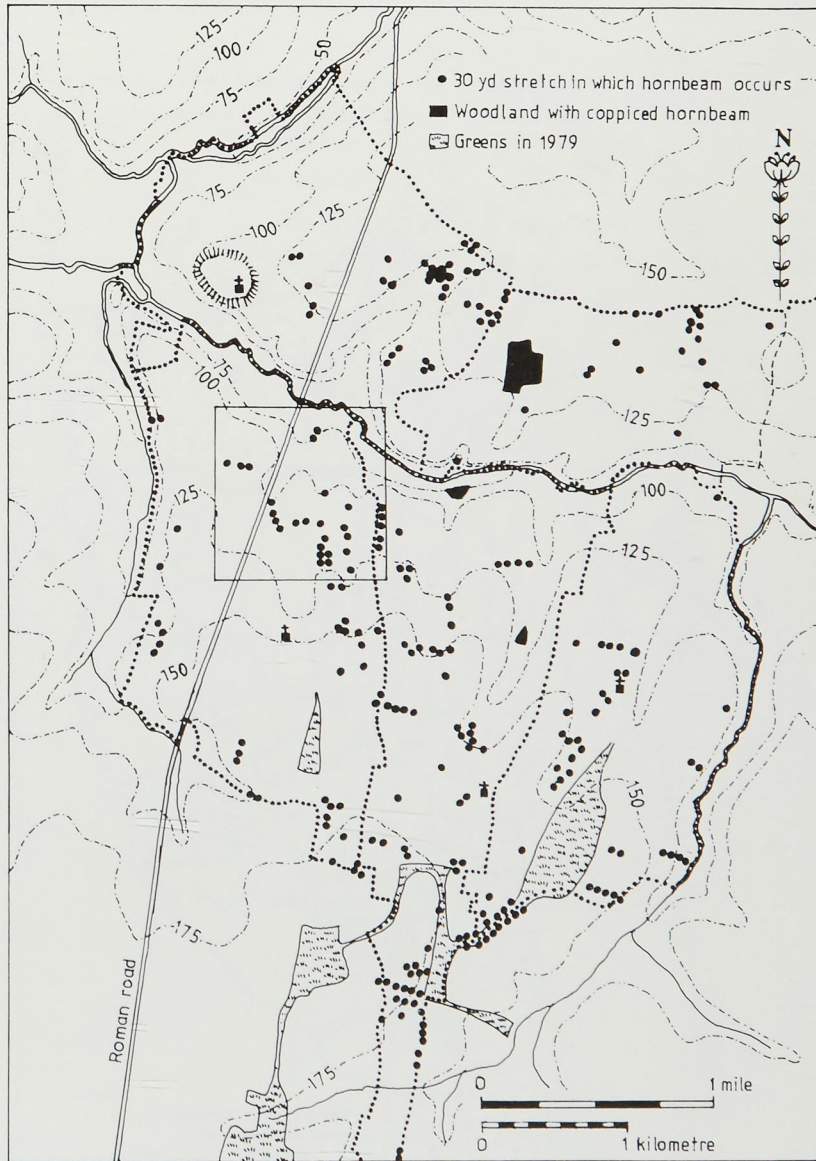


Fig. 12



Fig. 13

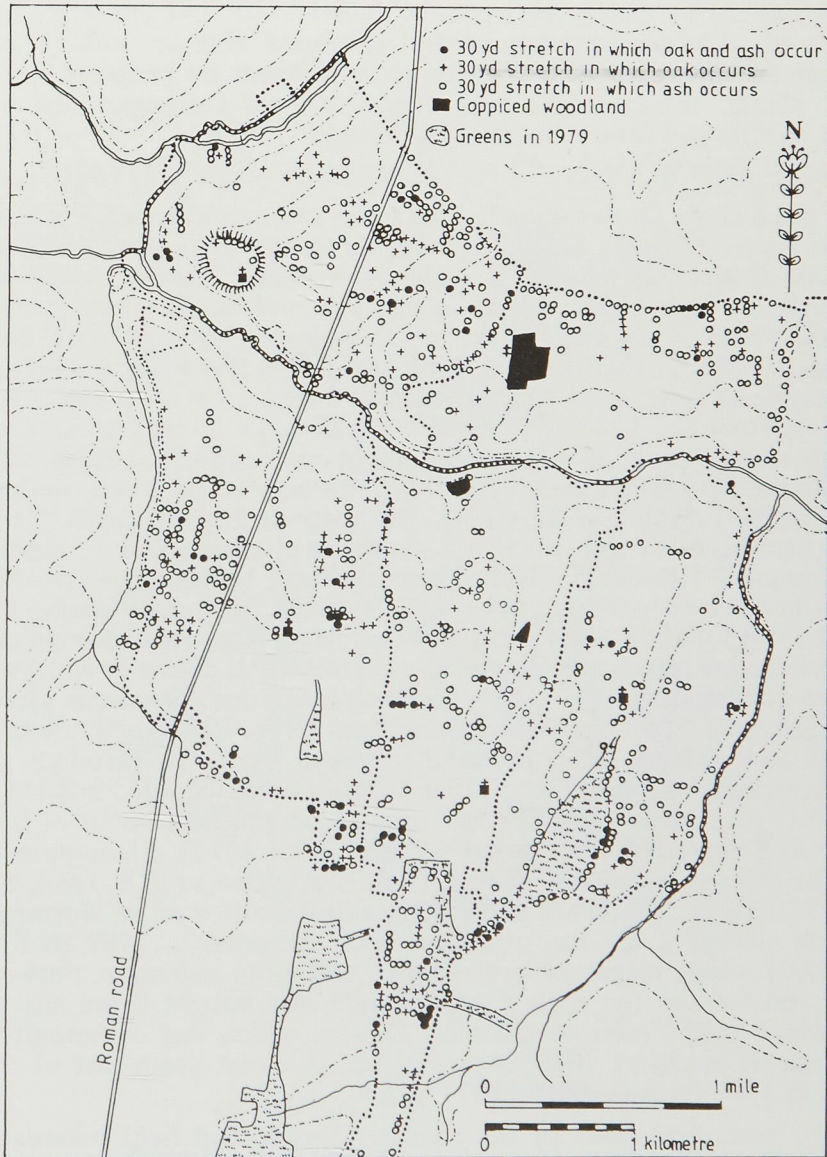


Fig. 14

HEDGE DIVISIONS

The hedges have been divided into those of seven and more species, those of between four and six and those of under four. These divisions are somewhat arbitrary but attempt to represent the boundaries with hedges that include a rich variety of species; the hedges of early enclosure shown by documentary sources to have been mainly between 1450 and 1750; and the later enclosures, the hedges of which are predominantly hawthorn, elm or both. There are a group which fall between the first two categories; these are hedges, often without woodland plants, which might have divided former furlongs, most of which average six species and follow the fall of the land.

HIGH SPECIE AND WOODLAND RELIC HEDGES (Figs. 4, 5, 16, 17)

Figs. 4 and 5 show the boundaries with seven and more species. Fig. 4 attempts to relate them to the early field patterns as far as they are known and Fig. 5 with the pre-1900 settlement pattern, including sites where pottery has been found by field-walking and where documentary evidence shows there were former settlements. There is an area in the north-west of Tasburgh with high-count hedges and an area in the south of Morning Thorpe and Fritton where most of the hedges average over seven species, both of which areas are possible woodland relics. Popes Wood and Grove Wood in Hempnall might be the surviving woods of a previously thickly wooded area, which might have contained *Schieteshaga*, the wood mentioned in the Domesday survey, although Little Wood, defined as an ancient wood by Goodfellow, survives in the north-east of the parish (Goodfellow 1977, 26) near Street Wood which was shown as a larger wood on the tithe map (N.R.O. Hempnall Tithe Map 1842). Formerly there were, also, extensive greens and woods in the south-east (County Hall, Norwich. Hempnall Enclosure Award 1817; N.R.O. MS 14268 36B4). Popes Wood has a large area of coppiced hornbeam, hazel and ash which are some of the characteristic plants of early woodland in the area (Goodfellow 1977, 59). Midland hawthorn (*Crataegus laevigata*), a plant characteristic of ancient woods (Rackham 1976, 123-8) and rare in Norfolk (Petch and Swann 1968, 152) is found in Popes Wood. In Tasburgh, probably near the Hempnall boundary, land called *le Stubbs* was recorded in 1355 (N.R.O. GUR. 146X1, 4). Nearby in 1666 was *Popes Close* and north/west of it lay land called *the Reddings* (N.R.O. Tasburgh Court Book 1713), a common name in the area for cleared woodland derived from O.E. *reden* or O.E. *reod*, a clearing (Smith 1970 II, 82). The fields called *Whitewood*, south-west of Morning Thorpe Green, were probably the site of *Whitewood* recorded in 1489 (N.R.O. NRS 10224, 25A2) which originally might have been more extensive. Between 1376 and 1378, timber for the manor of Forncett was bought 'from the wood of Thorpe', which might refer to Morning Thorpe, which was commonly referred to as *Thorpe*. (Davenport 1967, App; IX lv). A wood north-east of the green was extant in 1708 (N.R.O. NRS 14077 36A4).

It can be seen that some of the roadside hedges and field boundaries have high counts. Fig. 5 shows that the areas with the oldest boundaries which might be former woodland are away from settlements. The moated site between Popes Wood and Grove Wood has revealed thirteenth and fourteenth century pottery and to the east of the site, fragments of high-count hedges form part of a circle, perhaps showing the original clearing in the woodland. The surviving hedges within the ditched enclosure on the west side of the green, referred to in the description of Morning Thorpe, have high counts (N.R.O. NRS 10224 25A2). A similar partly ditched enclosure with similar hedges and within which pottery



Fig. 15



Fig. 16

dating from the twelfth century has been found, survives behind the inn at Fritton. One high-count hedge survives along Old Hall Farm Loke (Fig. 6) in Tasburgh beside former thirteenth and fourteenth century settlements and some survive in Fritton. Fig. 5 shows early hedges to the south of the church, one of which is beside a field called *Great Croft*, which is a pasture (N.R.O. Fritton Tithe Map 1839). Another can be seen to the west of the common dividing two houses.

Fig. 16 shows the boundaries with between four and seven species which include the greatest number of hedgerows. For the most part these do not include field boundaries on the easily cultivated land along the valleys of the R. Tas and its tributary. The small fields in the north-west of Tasburgh are perhaps sixteenth and seventeenth century encroachments on commonland which formerly might have stretched all along the river valley; the houses along the Low Road possibly might be contemporary with the enclosures (Fig. 6). Five specie boundaries are shown between Popes Wood and Grove Wood near Wood Farm and Grove Farm. Four to seven specie hedges are shown in Morning Thorpe and Fritton where documentary evidence suggests a transitional stage between land in multiple ownership, often in closes, and closes in single ownership. Many closes have names perpetuating people of this time. Land bought by Robert Ballys, a yeoman of Morning Thorpe of 1565, is still called *Balls* (N.R.O. MS 14021 36A3). A group of fields in Morning Thorpe called *Birds* were probably owned by Margaret Byrde who owned adjoining land in Stratton St. Michael before 1591 (N.R.O. Morning Thorpe Tithe Map 1838, MS 14722 36 D5). Land in Fritton called *Lulpirkes* in 1638 and a pigtle behind a cottage beside the common called *Lulpacks* in 1765 may have belonged to Nicholas Lulpack who was dead in 1560 (N.R.O. NRS 14073 36A4, MS 14018 36A3, MS 14055 36A3).

Fig. 17 shows the newest boundaries. Many are shown near the river valleys and on former commonland and on the site of medieval Stratton St. Michael. Most of these hedges are predominantly hawthorn but there are a few that are entirely elm in the south-west of Tasburgh which were all planted before 1818 (N.R.O. Tasburgh Enclosure Map 1818). Others are near Fritton Church and in Stratton St. Michael and many seem to have been planted by small land owners (N.R.O. Tithe Maps: Fritton, Stratton St. Michael and Tasburgh).

VIII DISCUSSION

WOODLAND CLEARANCE AND WOOD PASTURE (Figs. 11, 12, 13, 14)

In a survey of ancient woods in Norfolk, those to the south-east of Norwich were predominantly of pedunculate oak, hazel, hornbeam, field maple, ash and hawthorn (Peterken and Goodfellow 1977, 59). The presence in the high-count hedges of these species, together with dogwood (*Thelycrania sanguinea*), a plant of wood and scrub (Clapham, Tutin and Warburg 1962, 492), suggests that many are connected with medieval woodland clearance. The presence of dog's mercury in so many hedges, especially on the heavy land, also suggests that at some stage much of the area was woodland, but after clearance the need for ditches provided a pseudo-woodland habitat. It is noticeable where large fields have been divided into closes many of the hedges are without dog's mercury, although in some instances the number of old boundaries nearby have provided a reservoir. In a survey in Lincolnshire to determine the usefulness of dog's mercury as an indicator of former woodland, Peterken demonstrated that it was not entirely reliable.¹ Fig. 11 shows that the distribution of dog's mercury is similar to that of hazel



Fig. 17

(Fig. 13), which Peterken considered a more reliable indicator of early woodland. Fig. 14 showing the distribution of pedunculate oak and ash also confirms that much of the higher ground might have been previously wooded. Fig. 12 shows that there is a residual scatter of hornbeam in the higher areas; but when the number of forest trees, surviving in the hedges of possible Saxon woodland clearances, are compared with those of later clearances, the ratio declines in proportion to the length of time the land has been in cultivation. There are though, some areas, especially on the lighter soils of the valley slopes, where there is no dog's mercury, but where Figs. 12, 13 and 14 imply that there was woodland at some stage. A thin scatter of Roman pottery has been found on the fields in the area shown within a square on Fig. 12, although Figs. 13 and 14 also suggest that this area was once wooded. The woodland species survive beside former tracks, a stream and a wide ditch, known as *Ashendike* in the early seventeenth century (N.R.O. MS 10571 25B6).

Fig. 12 shows that the distribution of hornbeam is mainly confined to the higher ground. Hornbeam was late in being established in the British Isles, and was not present until the Neolithic Period. Its spread into oak forests was slow, but rapid after early clearances. It is not able to regenerate easily on cultivated land, but spreads when agriculture has been interrupted (Godwin 1975, 265-9) and is thought by Rackham to be a survivor of early woodland.² The absence for the most part of hornbeam and dog's mercury along the valleys of the Tas and the lower reaches of its tributary and the presence in these areas of worked flints dating from the Neolithic Period suggest that this land has been cultivated since then and may never have been extensively colonized by hornbeam.

Fig. 14 shows that ash occurs more often in the area than pedunculate oak, a tree of heavy soils (Clapham, Tutin and Warburg 1962, 577). Ash is a light-demanding species which first appeared as a persistent forest tree during the Bronze and Early Iron Ages (Evans 1975, 123). Fig. 14 shows that there are areas on the edge of possible former woodland dominated by ash; one such area in the north-west of Tasburgh, near the Saxlingham boundary, has an abundance of spurge-laurel (*Daphne laureola*) in the hedges, which has been found to be a plant of secondary woodland in Cambridgeshire (Rackham 1976, 135).

WOODLAND CLEARANCE AND WOOD PASTURE (Figs. 3, 4, 5, 8, 14)

The area within the square on Fig. 3A shows a pattern of cultivated islands within a framework of greens suggesting that the reclamation of land from woodland has been continuous until relatively recently. Fig. 3A shows that Rhees Green was larger in 1797, and in 1752 to the east of *Leeches Green* (Fig. 4) lay *Clistonwood* and a fifteen acre pasture called *Coldsteadwood* (N.R.O. NRS 10569 215B6). In 1621 on the south-west, Rhees Green abutted onto a close called *Old Studewood*, which was beside a wood called *Old Stude* (N.R.O. NRS 10571 25B6); nearby on the tithe map were fields called *Williamswood* which were probably on land called *Wynnyswood* in the sixteenth century (N.R.O. GUR 146X2, 119). Although most of the hedges in the area have been removed, the few that remain are high-count woodland relic hedges. Roman pottery finds beside the road to Rhees Green imply early incursions into the woodland in the area (Fig. 5). The fields which lie between Morning Thorpe Green and Fritton Common have names which might suggest Saxon origins: - *Horncroft* being derived from O.N. *horna* or O.E. *horn* 'shaped like a horn' (Smith 1970 I, 261) evolving into 'a tongue of land' (Ekwall 1960, 250), *Bencroft* from O.E. *bean* (Smith 1970 I, 21) and *Horsecroft* from O.E. *hors*, a horse (Smith 1970 I, 262). Nearby

land in Stratton St. Michael called *Easthauge* (N.R.O. Morning Thorpe Tithe Map 1838, MS 14037 36B5, MS 14724 36D5) suggesting the east enclosure would be irrelevant for a group of adjoining fields in Morning Thorpe called *Esthauhfælde* (N.R.O. MS 10543 25B6) which could be derived from O.E. *estre*, a sheepfold (Smith 1970 I, 260). The species in the hedges of the connecting commonland between the greens of Morning Thorpe and Fritton might retain some of the species of the original woodland, and because they are scarcely managed, they include many sapling hornbeams which are seldom found out of woods. The hedges have averages of over eight species and are very uniform. The following species grow in these hedges:- hornbeam, small-leaved elm, hazel, blackthorn, field maple, ash, elder, hawthorn, dog rose sp., field rose, pedunculate oak, dogwood, holly, wild plum, spindle, goat willow, and silver birch (*Betula pendula*). This is only one of two hedges in which silver birch has been found and the numbers of hornbeam, holly and oak are unusually high. The woodland relic hedges to the west of Morning Thorpe Green suggest that the extent of *Whaite-wood* might have been larger than the area shown on Fig. 4. That it was early woodland is inferred by the presence of yellow archangel (*Galeobdolon luteum*) in the hedge-bottoms, a plant which has a strong affinity with ancient woodland in East Anglia (Rackham 1980, 54).

Fig. 4 shows that in the sixteenth century the land to the south of Morning Thorpe Green was divided into large pastures which extended into Stratton St. Mary. *Over* and *Nether Watts* lay to the north of a stream called *Burbecke* and to the south lay *Alsons Cloos* (N.R.O. MS 14524, 14533, 14516 36C5). *Watts* might be derived from O.E. *wet* or *waet* (Smith 1970 II, 257) describing the heavy, boggy nature of the land when undrained. To the west of *Alsons cloos* lay *Southawode* and *Gryssawode* and to the south was *Northwoodgrene* in Pulham. By 1588 *Alsons Cloos* contained 'closes, pycells, groves and grounds . . . by the name *Areskere*, two acres of land, forty acres of pasture and three acres of wood' (N.R.O. MS 14533 36C5).

The name *Brocholesweye*, first recorded in Fritton in 1421 (N.R.O. NRS 10077 22F3) *Bosdike*, which may be derived from *boscus* 'a wood' and *Boyseyls* perhaps derived from O.F. *bois* (Smith 1970 I, 40, N.R.O. NRS 10078 22F3) suggest that the south-east of Fritton might have been wooded, as does the alternative name *Brockwood* for *Brockhold Close* in 1684, one element of which might be a corruption of *holt*, O.E. 'a wood, a thicket' (Smith 1970 I, 259). The present name of Steppings Lane which joins Fritton Common and Lundy Green (Fig. 4) might have evolved from *Stubbings*, O.E. *stubbing* 'a place where trees have been stubbed, a clearing' (Smith 1970 II, 164), suggesting a large area of former woodland which stretched into Hempnall. The settlement of Fritton seems to have been towards the common which might have been formed by medieval encroachment into woodland. 250 years ago 'great beasts' grazed the green in summer and from All Saints Day until Candlemas, sheep were grazed on it (N.R.O. MS 14084 36A4). Such continuous stocking would ensure that re-forestation could not occur if this had been the grazing pattern in medieval times.

The whereabouts of *Thornysgreve Common* in Morning Thorpe is lost, but the hedge pattern and hedge counts, the field pattern and the tendency in the area for land beside streams to be common pasture suggest that it could have been in the valley of the stream which joins the Tas tributary at Boyland. The name of the common might be derived from Torn, the Danish owner of Boyland in 1066 (Trans. R.H.S. Vol. I VII 1893, 195) and *greve* might be derived from

O.E. *graeft*, a grove, copse or thicket 'which usually takes the modern form graeve' (Smith 1970 I, 207). A copse still survives in this small valley containing hornbeam which has been coppiced, hazel, elder, small-leaved elm, field maple, ash, hawthorn, blackthorn, pedunculate oak, wych elm, crabapple (*Malus sylvestris* ssp. *sylvestris*) and aspen (*Populus tremula*). The amount and distribution of early woodland can only, in many instances, be deduced from field and personal names, hedgerows and surviving woods and copses. There are references to *John of Wode* in 1315 and *Patric de Burwode* in 1444 in Tasburgh (N.R.S. VOL. XLIV 1976, No. 735. N.R.O. GUR 146X1, 7). In 1086 no woodland for swine was taxed in Tasburgh which infers that there were no oakwoods, but it is possible that there was in the area, woodland that was predominantly hornbeam, ash, field maple and hazel which are the basic species in contemporary woods and copses, and in which there might have been little keep for swine and consequently untaxed. Although pigs were more numerous in early husbandry than sheep (Finberg 1977, 75), the Domesday survey suggests that sheep were more prevalent in the area than swine (V.C.H. 1906, 134, 172, 182). In 1666 part of the Tasburgh marshes were called *Bayes or Boyes Marsh* (N.R.O. Tasburgh Court Book 1713) and in 1839 three fields in the west of Stratton St. Michael were called *Hall Bayes* (Stratton St. Michael Tithe Map) where Figs. 11, 12, 13 and 14 and the presence of sessile oak in the hedges, suggest early woodland. *Bayes* and *Boyes* are possibly derived from the O.F. *bois*, a wood (Smith I 1970, 40). Woodland on the steep riverside bank at Boyland contains predominantly coppiced hornbeam, ash and hazel, also hawthorn, elder, field maple, pedunculate oak, silver birch, spindle, dogwood, broom, sweet chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) which is thought to have been introduced by the Romans (Seebom 1976, 87-8), alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) and on the outer edge, small-leaved elm.

INTERPRETATION OF HEDGE COUNTS (Fig. 4)

The hedgerow counts depend on the time of enclosure of different fields, so that the count along a road can vary considerably. The hedge along the north side of Fairstead Lane in Hempnall varies to include early enclosures. The count, after part of the hedge is missing, is: - 7, 5, 2, 2, 6, 2, 2, 3. All the hedge includes small-leaved elm and hawthorn but the higher counts also include: - field maple, dog rose, crabapple, wild plums, spindle, blackthorn and pedunculate oak. In the Hempnall glebe terriers of 1636 much of the glebeland lay in *Westfield* (Fig. 4) which was crossed by Fairstead Lane and included amongst unenclosed pieces 'a pictell containing by estimation two acres' and 'a pictell containing an acre', both with the common way towards the south; this implies that when the count varies noticeably, to get a true pattern of the enclosure of the area it would seem necessary to notice the change in specie types and count numbers, rather than include the whole hedge in the count average.

EXTENT OF FORMER COMMONS AS SUGGESTED BY HEDGEROWS (Figs. 3, 18)

Where the boundaries of, for instance, commons are lost, the hedge-counts might help determine the original area. Faden shows *Fairstead Green* as square-shaped with houses on the north and west sides. Fig. 18 shows the area around the green, the relationships of the area to Popes Wood, the hedge counts and where pottery, mainly fourteenth century, has been found. The broken line shows where there were hedges in 1844 and 1818 (OS Map 1884; Map of Lakes Farm 1818. N.R.O. Irby Coll. R 158A). The hedges which average between one and two species are almost entirely of hawthorn. The four specie hedges are pre-

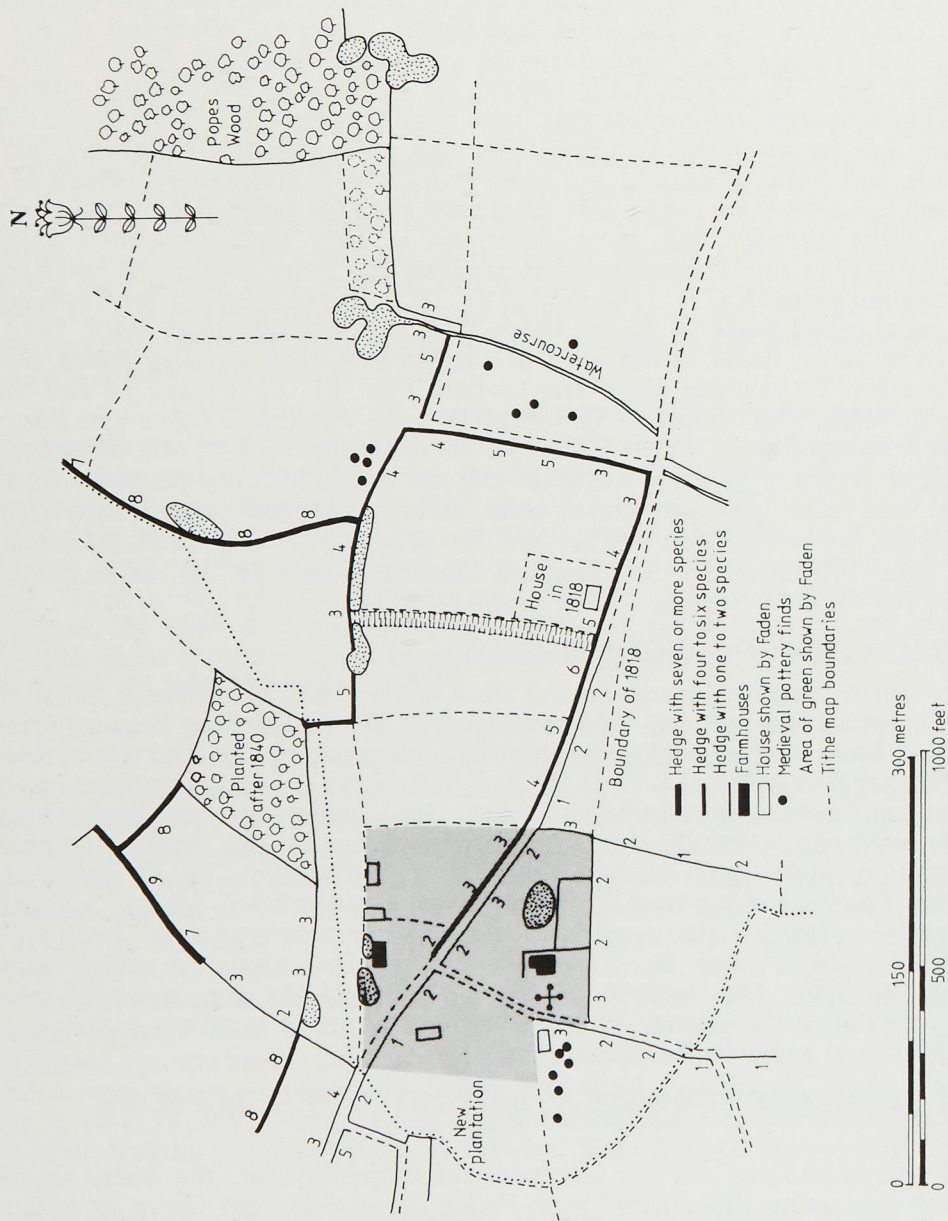


Fig. 18

dominantly small-leaved elm and hawthorn, and usually include blackthorn, field maple, dog rose and occasionally hazel.

Alongside the house shown in 1818, the hedge is mainly wild plum and lilac (*Syringa vulgaris*) which is reputed to have been introduced into Norfolk by Flemish weavers in the reign of Edward III (Petch and Swann 1968, 182). In 1797 the size of the green was probably as shown by the shaded area on Fig. 18, but the hedge counts suggest that there was an earlier enclosure to the east of the area shown by Faden, although the original extent of the green might have been still larger.

The southern extension of Rhees Green in Stratton St. Michael can be seen, enclosed by hawthorn hedges, to the south of the present green. The area of green shown by Faden (Fig. 3A) to the north of *Thranstonegrene* in Morning Thorpe is more difficult to define. There is a trackway where Faden shows the extension, the western hedge of which averages 6.8 species, including hornbeam, dogwood and other species usually found in old hedges. The eastern hedge is missing but some hornbeams survive, suggesting an early hedge. Until 1866 the charity lands of Morning Thorpe and Fritton, which were in the same place in 1743, lay against the western hedge, implying that perhaps only the track was commonland in 1797 (N.R.O. PD56/45).

ANALYSIS OF THE ACCURACY OF HEDGEROW DATING (Figs. 4, 6, 7, 12, 13, 14, 15, 19)

A plan of Henry Richard's farm in Fritton of 1751 and a sketch map of 1752 showing the land between *Easthauge* and *Leeches Green* in Stratton St. Michael are the earliest maps available (N.R.O. NRS 10569 25B6).³ The latter map shows encroachments being made into *Leeches Green* and the contemporary field pattern to the south of the green, which is basically the same as that of 1839 (N.R.O. Tithe Map of Stratton St. Michael 1839). Many of these hedges have been removed but the extant hedges have count averages of over five species. A hedge on the Fritton farm is shown which has an average of 4.5 species which include:- hawthorn, wild plum, ash, small-leaved elm, spindle and dog rose. A later map of the same farm of c.1800 shows an extension of this hedge which averages 2.5 species which is predominantly hawthorn and also includes dog rose, blackthorn, small-leaved elm and sycamore. Although there are many references to enclosure from the second half of the fifteenth century, it is difficult to use the hedges of known enclosures to check the accuracy of hedge dating because either the surviving hedges appear to be earlier boundaries or are now missing; an example is *Upper Churchfield* in Fritton, which was part of the open *Churchfield* and was described as 'lately enclosed' in 1677 (N.R.O. MS 14038 36A3). Two hedges of this enclosure remain, one of which is a long mixed hedge which probably divided *Churchfield* from the next field; the other divided it from a field already enclosed. The missing hedges which divided *Upper Churchfield* from the rest of the field may have been the 1677 hedges, the one on the south side dividing it from 'the land of divers men'. Although the enclosure date of the field described as enclosed in 1477 on the west side of *Thranstonegrene* is unknown, the eastern hedge of this field survives as a uniform hedge averaging six species which include:- hawthorn, dog rose sp., field rose, small-leaved elm, field maple, ash, hazel, hornbeam, holly, elder and pedunculate oak; the species suggesting a woodland relic hedge. The small Romano-British settlement site beside *Thefgateway* in Tasburgh (Fig. 4) on the southern edge of the area presumed to have been formerly woodland (Figs. 12, 13, 14 and 15), is divided by a hedge. Such woodland species as oak, ash, hornbeam, hazel, dogwood, dog's mercury and primrose (*Primula vulgaris*)

are found in most of the seven-specie hedge. The forty yards which divided the settlement contains lilac, gooseberry, field maple, hawthorn, blackthorn, dogwood and dog rose sp. No Roman pottery finds have been found on the field immediately north of the site.

The boundaries near Popes Wood as shown on Fig. 19 have predominantly four and five species in contrast to the hedges across the parish boundary in Tasburgh which are mainly high count woodland relic hedges. The western fields alongside the Tasburgh boundary were possibly connected to the settlement of *Fairstead Green* (Fig. 4), those in the south-west being in cultivation in 1389 (N.R.O. GUR 146X1, 8). The reversed 'S' shown as the western boundary of *Wood Pightle* and *Popes Wood Meadow* might then have been the western edge of the wood. This hedge no longer survives but the northern hedge of *Middle*

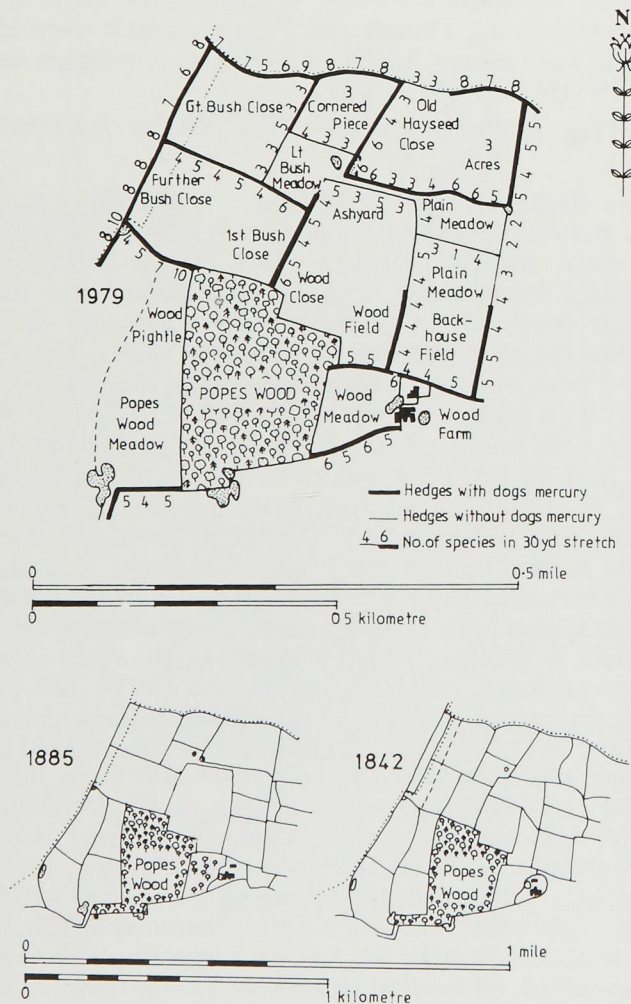


Fig. 19

Meadow and *Wood Pightle* does, the part that formerly might have been woodland having an average of 8.5 species and the rest an average of 4.5 species.

Fig. 19 shows the field pattern near Popes Wood from 1842 to 1979. The hedges shown by a heavy line have dog's mercury in the undergrowth. As Fig. 19 shows, except for the removal of some hedges, most were present in 1842 except for the southern boundary of the track to the north of the field called *Ashyard* and the middle part of the eastern hedge. The predominant plants in most of the hedges are hawthorn and small-leaved elm. Other species found are:- crabapple, blackthorn, wild plums and infrequently hazel, dogwood and ash. In the south-west corner of *Backhouse Field* near Wood Farm, midland hawthorn survives, showing that at some time this area was woodland. The O.S. map of 1885 shows trees in *Wood Meadow* to the west of Wood Farm; some of these survive as very old pollard oaks. Popes Wood contain species, such as hornbeam, willows and wild cherry (*Prunus avium*) that are not found in the adjoining hedgerows. Blackthorn is less common in these hedges than in hedges that average five and six species and which in Tasburgh was found in only one post-1818 hedge (Addington 1975, 79). The southern boundary of the track has been planted with blackthorn and averages four species but should have no more than two or three species. The others include:- small-leaved elm, hawthorn, crabapple, field maple and holly. The piece of hedge in the extreme east of Fig. 19, straightened between 1842 and 1885 has the number of species that might be expected and contains hawthorn and wild roses all along the replanted hedge; other species being small-leaved elm in two thirty yard stretches and field maple in one stretch. In 1720 John Cranwell, a grazier from Huntingdonshire, was a part owner of two farms, now part of the Boyland Hall estate, and it is possible that some of the field pattern was created at this time, which is also suggested by the mainly elm and hawthorn hedges (N.R.O. Irby Coll. R158A, Box 5).

In 1819 part of Morning Thorpe Green was enclosed (N.R.O. MS 14432 36C3). A hawthorn hedge was planted round this enclosure, which now also includes dog rose, field maple, elder and ash, the average being 2.5 species. Hawthorn hedges were planted in Tasburgh when the commons were enclosed in 1818 and for the most part have the number of species that would be expected. Old boundaries that have been straightened in the nineteenth century sometimes have more than the expected number of species, perhaps because of the proximity of older hedges, so that a hedge straightened in Fritton after 1839 and planted with blackthorn, has an average of 6.5 species in the replanted stretch.

IX CONCLUSIONS

Because of the lack of early documents, the principle means of information about the early landscape have been of necessity botanical, a network of hedges surviving over much of the area. The accuracy of hedge-counting as a reliable source of information, is still open to doubt. In the area counted, where documentary evidence is available, the results substantially confirm the botanical information. It has therefore been possible to reconstruct the landscape to a certain extent by using the hedge-counts, special type and the proportion of each species in the hedgerow, together with the surviving documents.

The presence of worked flints on the valley slopes, of Middle-Neolithic flint working in Tasburgh (Rollo-Smith forthcoming), and possibly the scarcity of hornbeam on the lower ground, suggest continuous cultivation since the Neolithic age on the light soils. Middle and Late Saxon pottery finds near the churches of

Fritton and Tasburgh, and Late Saxon pottery near Stratton St. Michael church infer that the Saxon settlements were near the churches. This confirms the findings of Wade-Martins who proved that isolated churches in the Mid-Norfolk Hundred of Launditch were originally within the Saxon settlements (Wade-Martins 1971 I, 141-9). In both Stratton St. Michael and Tasburgh there were Late Saxon movements onto commonland; that in Tasburgh being nearer to the river and that in Stratton St. Michael towards the edge of woodland. Substantial settlements towards commonland and woodland do not seem to have started until the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in Fritton, the thirteenth century in the north-west of Hempnall and the fourteenth century in Morning Thorpe.

The ages of the hedges in the area counted appear to be in an inverse proportion to the length of time that the land has been in cultivation. Perhaps because of a more complicated pattern of ownership and tenure the newest boundaries are, for the most part, on sloping land near the river valleys and high-count woodland relic hedges are concentrated on the edges of the parishes where former woodland has been the last land to be cultivated. Although the counts in the woodland relic hedges are often high, they are discerned more by the specie types than by specie numbers. Some high-count hedges remain in the large area that is mostly above the 100ft. contour line, but the majority of these hedges are of between four and six species, the documentary evidence confirming that the enclosure of this land was principally between 1450 and 1750, enclosing land that was already in large fields held in severalty. Farmers have altered the boundaries according to changes in ownership, changes of use or farming practice so that only a fragmented pattern remains. There seems little common relationship between the existing boundaries and the settlements, so that Fritton, where there are several small closes divided either by hedges or ditches behind the houses, may be more typical of a medieval village than other villages where few old boundaries remain, although the documentary evidence suggests that the messuages of both Morning Thorpe and Tasburgh had orchards and crofts in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

Some species, such as hornbeam, ash, oaks and hazel infer former areas of woodland; hornbeam probably being a survivor of early woodland and hazel a common plant of the woodland shrub layer. Dog's mercury, a plant of the woodland undergrowth, is also thought to denote former woodland. The distribution of these species together suggest that at some stage much of the land above 125ft. was wooded, the hedges and ditches providing a reservoir for these species. Pottery finds suggest that during the Roman period incursions were made towards the woodland in Stratton St. Michael Tasburgh and Fritton but because field-walking has been incomplete away from the settlements and greens the extent of Roman penetration is inconclusive. Much of the higher land may not have been brought into cultivation until after the Anglo-Saxon settlements. Documentary evidence confirms a wood-pasture origin for the area of greens to the south of Stratton St. Michael, Morning Thorpe and Fritton. Field names suggest that some of the land to the south of Fritton Common and Morning Thorpe was probably already cleared by the pre-Conquest period, but much of the south of Stratton St. Michael and Morning Thorpe survived as greens, woodland or pastures into the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The survey suggests that much of the area was woodland on the heavy clays and probably only the lighter land on the valley slopes of the R. Tas and its tributary have been in continuous cultivation since pre-historic times; this land

possibly becoming the earliest open fields, with clearances in the woodland becoming pastures, which were later cultivated in enclosures. Some land, such as *the Reddings* in Tasburgh, was cleared possibly for arable land. From the fifteenth century onwards fields were subdivided until the eighteenth century, when Blomefield described the area as 'rich and well enclosed and hath much wood and timber in it' (Blomefield 1806 V, 124). During the latter part of the century many of the field sizes were regularized and from c. 1800 until recently the landscape was scarcely altered until changes were made to adapt to contemporary farming conditions. The villages of Fritton and Morning Thorpe and the surroundings of Stratton St. Michael church have scarcely altered since the nineteenth century but there has been recent development in Hempnall Village, the south of Stratton St. Michael and in Upper Tasburgh.

November 1980

¹From a paper read by Dr. G. Peterken, Conference on the Use of Botany in Landscape History, Oxford University Extra-mural Board, May 24th 1980.

²The author is grateful to Dr. O. Rackham for information on the status of hornbeam in the area.

³The author is grateful to T. Read, Hales Hall, Loddon, for allowing her to use maps in his possession of Richard's Farm, Fritton.

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APPENDIX I RECORD SOURCES AND MAPS USED IN THIS SURVEY

NORFOLK RECORD OFFICE, RECORDS

- Minor Collections, Gurney Boxes 146X1, 146X2
- Irby Collection R 158A, Boxes 1-6
- Tasburgh Court Books 1625-1800, Back 4/12/69, Nos. 96-99, Q176D
- MSS in Box nos. 36B5, 36C5, 25B6, 25A2, 36B4, 36A3, 36D5, 35B5, 22F3, 36A4, 36C3, 37A2, 39B1, Z38, 3F2; 2B1, 9B6, DUN (A) 22
- Norwich Consistory Court Wills 82-3 Craforde, 32 Veysye, 638 Jarnigo, 242 Eade, 223 Ponder, 220A Caston, 28 Johnson, 186 Ryxe
- Parish papers of Fritton and Morning Thorpe PD 56
- Parish papers of Stratton St. Michael PD 99
- Parish papers of Tasburgh PD 298
- Glebe terriers of Fritton, Hempnall, Morning Thorpe, Stratton St. Michael and Tasburgh
- Norfolk County Council Road Orders
- Fritton, Box 18, no. 9. Box 19, no. 8, Road book no. 1, p. 447-8
- Hempnall and Morning Thorpe, Box 3, no. 2, Road book No. 9, p. 88
- Morning Thorpe, Box 3, no. 2, Box 3, no. 24, Box 20, nos. 1 and 2, Road book no. 11, p. 480-3, 489, Road book no. 9, p. 181-3, Road book no. 10, p. 74-5
- Stratton St. Michael, Box 10, no. 10. Box 6, no. 3 and 6
- Tasburgh, Box 5, no. 6, Box 21, no. 6

NORFOLK COUNTY HALL

Enclosure Award for Hempnall 1817

NORFOLK RECORD OFFICE, MAPS

- Tithe maps of Fritton 1839, Hempnall 1842, Morning Thorpe 1838, Stratton St. Michael 1839, Tasburgh 1840
- Enclosure award with map for Tasburgh 1818
- Map of the Hollies Farm, Morning Thorpe (undated) DS 73 (167) Cab. II
- Map of Lakes Farm 1818, Irby Collection R 158A
- Map of Bob Richards Farm, Fritton (undated) MS 14432 36C3
- Map of a farm now demolished at Stratton St. Michael 1752, MS 10569 25B6

COLMAN AND RYE LIBRARY, NORWICH CENTRAL LIBRARY

- Faden's maps of Norfolk 1797
- O.S. Map 6 inches to 1 mile. Map LXXXVII SW, 1885
- O.S. Map 25 inches to 1 mile. Maps LXXXVII 10, 14, Second ed. 1906.

PRIVATELY OWNED

- Maps of Richards Farm, Fritton 1751 and c. 1800 in the possession of T. Read, Hales Hall, Loddon, Norfolk
- O.S. Map Sheets 6 inches to 1 mile:- TM 19 NE, SE. TM 28 NW. TM 29 NW, SW
- O.S. Map Sheets 1.2500 TM 19, TM 28, TM29

APPENDIX II

Species found growing in the hedgerows

- The most common species
- Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), Crabapple (*Malus sylvestris* ssp. *mitis*, ssp. *sylvestris*), Dogwood (*Thelycrania sanguinea*), Elder (*Sambucus nigra*), Field maple (*Acer campestre*), Goat willow

(*Salix caprea*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Hazel (*Corylus avellana*), Pedunculate oak (*Quercus robur*), Small-leaved elm (*Ulmus carpinifolia*), Wild plum (*Prunus Domestica*, *Prunus insititia*), Wild rose (*Rosa canina* sp. *Rosa arvensis*), Wych elm:

Less common species

Almond leaved willow (*Salix triandra*), Common osier (*Salix viminalis*), Common sallow (*Salix cinerea*), Eared willow (*Salix aurita*), Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*), Spindle (*Euonymus europeus*), Spurge laurel (*Daphne laureola*), Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatinus*), Wych elm (*Ulmus glabra*).

Uncommon species

Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), Aspen (*Populus tremula*), Barberry (*Berberis vulgare*), Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), Box (*Buxus sempervirens*), Broom (*Sarothamnus scoparius*), Buckthorn (*Rhamnus catharticus*), Cherry (*Prunus avium*), Cherry plum (*Prunus cerasifera*), Common privet (*Ligustrum vulgare*), Crack willow (*Salix fragilis*), Garden privet (*Ligustrum ovalifolium*), Gooseberry (*Ribes uva-crispa*), Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*), Grey Willow (*Salix calodendron*), Guelder rose (*Viburnum opulus*), Horse-chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*), Laurel (*Prunus lauro-cerasus*), Lilac (*Syringa vulgaris*), Oregon grape (*Mahonia aquifolium*), Sessile oak (*Quercus petraea*), Silver birch (*Betula pendula*), Snowberry (*Symphoricarpos rivularis*), Sweet chestnut (*Castanea sativa*), Wild pear (*Pyrus communis*), Yew (*Taxus baccata*).

Trailing plants

Bellbine (*Calystegia sepium*), Blackberry (*Rubus fruticosus* sp.), Black bryony (*Tamus communis*), Dewberry (*Rubus caesius*), Duke of Argyll's Tea Plant (*Lycium barbarum*), Honeysuckle (*Lonicera periclymen*), Hop (*Humulus lupulus*), Ivy (*Hedera helix*), Raspberry (*Rubus idaeus*), Traveller's joy (*Clematis vitalba*), White bryony (*Bryonia dioica*), Woody nightshade (*Solanum dulcamara*).