

An Archaeological Resource Assessment of Medieval Northamptonshire

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Note: For copyright reasons the figures are currently omitted from the web version of this paper. It is hoped to include them in future versions.

1. INTRODUCTION

Given the wide range of specialist research areas, the enormous complexity of understanding enabled by the wide range of documentary evidence and what, compared to all earlier periods, can in this context be considered an embarrassment of data for the medieval period, it is impossible to review all aspects of the archaeology of the county in a single paper. It is therefore more important to identify where archaeology may be used, in collaboration as appropriate with documentary sources, to advance understanding in fundamental ways. It is particularly important, given the wide range of documentary evidence available that the potential of that evidence is comprehensively assessed before the gaps requiring archaeological investigation can be defined.

The archaeological evidence for this paper is largely drawn from a trawl of the Sites & Monuments Record (SMR) but the data currently available within the SMR is not adequate for the mapping and assessment of the medieval landscape. Despite the extensive data collection by the RCHM in the 1970s and 1980s there is still a lack of consistent information on the vast majority of monuments in most monument classes. The exceptions are such things as fishpond which have major earthwork remains. The SMR is very poor on monuments within existing settlements. For most medieval monument classes, such as mill, manor and grange there are few records on the SMR, because the vast majority which existed are known, if at all, from documentary not archaeological sources. Hence it is difficult in many cases to judge how representative are the ones known archaeologically. For particular classes of monument the continuity between medieval and post medieval means that many monuments cannot be distinguished from earthwork. Evidence as being medieval or not, while many monuments known from post medieval sources only may well prove to have medieval origins.

Only with a few monument classes has the archaeological data been reviewed and enhanced for this paper but wherever possible dubious sites have been omitted from statistics. In an effort to overcome some of these limitations certain high level evidence, based mainly on medieval and later documentary sources has been mapped from primary and secondary research. This historical data and certain monument and historic landscape maps have been compiled from a range of projects, most notably the Historic Landscape projects conducted by David Hall in association with Northamptonshire Heritage, from the Extensive Urban Survey and from other research conducted by the author.

1.1 Archaeological & Architectural work

There has been field survey of the majority of significant medieval earthwork sites by RCHM with additional surveys by Brown and others. Medieval field systems and wider historic land use of the whole county has been surveyed by David Hall. A range of other ground and aerial survey has taken place on earthwork and ploughed sites, including the pattern of manuring scatters at Raunds and the definition of the extent and character of the medieval iron and charcoal industries in Rockingham Forest. The Extensive and Intensive Urban Surveys are in progress reviewing all archaeological and considering documentary and topographical evidence for all medieval urban settlements and market villages. In addition a major research project is currently planned by the Medieval Settlement Research Group for part of Whittlewood forest in Northamptonshire and Buckinghamshire, to study the character and evolution of Saxon and medieval settlement and land use.

Archaeological survey by RCHM has covered the whole county, as has their survey of churches and country houses, however the survey of vernacular buildings was restricted to a small part of the north east of the county. In addition a detailed study of the historic buildings of Oundle by Heward et al has been completed but remains unpublished, while Woodfield has reviewed most of the larger medieval secular buildings surviving in the county.

OHP RCHM Inventory coverage

A range of major excavations have taken place in both the Raunds Area and in the medieval town of Northampton. There have been seven other major excavations of medieval monuments ranging from complete tenements to monastic sites, while a further 15 less extensive but still significant excavations have taken place on other monuments, including various excavation in the pottery production villages of Stanion, Potterspury and Yardley Gobion. There have been at least 72 other minor excavations.

A crude assessment of the archaeological potential of the medieval settlements of the county has been attempted, based on professional judgement, including consideration as to whether part or all of the settlement survives as an earthwork, ploughed, built over or totally destroyed. However the most visible archaeology is not always that with the highest research potential relevant to the major themes. Where large scale excavation has taken place this has been taken to enhance the score.

OHP major projects and excavations

OHP Archaeological potential of settlements

Intensive investigation of the agricultural and rural settlement, and recent work is beginning to raise the level of knowledge of small towns towards that already achieved for Northampton. There are several important themes where little has been done, most significant is medieval industry because, with the exception of pottery production, there has not been any coherent attempt to identify and characterise the industries of the county either in a rural or an urban context..

1.2 Chronology

The ceramics of the county are relatively well studied and a countywide ceramic type series has been compiled. The current state of knowledge and the priorities for future investigation and enhancement have recently been assessed by Blinkhorn.¹ C¹⁴ dating will be critical in certain issues, as for example in the identification of iron bloomeries of late Saxon and medieval date from earlier furnaces, as in most cases there is very little associated dating evidence where these remains lie outside medieval settlements. For historic buildings the use of dendro-chronology is likely to be of importance, but at present only a handful of dendro dates have been obtained for medieval buildings in the county.

1.3 Documentary

Documentary sources are sparse before the 13th century, though various key documents exist in addition to the Domesday Survey, particularly for certain monastic and royal estates. From the mid 13th century onwards the sources become increasingly common both at an estate and countywide level. Although the broad potential of documentary sources can be assessed by class, individual examples can vary greatly in actual content and so simple assessment of date range, numbers and classes of surviving document by township or manor can only provide a very crude guide to documentary potential. Such a countywide assessment was undertaken in 1980 for Northamptonshire, to provide an overall guide to documentary potential by township. This requires substantial enhancement as many important collections lack adequate catalogues and were therefore not incorporated, but provides some indication of potential. Final assessment must however include the examination of individual sources to determine actual potential

OHP – documentary potential

The high level of continuity, particularly in plan form of settlements, of tenorial structure and of many individual monuments through to the post medieval means that there is a high potential for the use of post medieval documentation, particularly maps and detailed surveys, to provide a topographical framework for both documentary as well as archaeological study of the medieval period. Such reconstruction has been completed for each of the small towns in the county and a few villages. Far more comprehensive coverage is required.

OHP of major secondary works: Bridges, Baker, VCH

1.4 Survival

¹ Blinkhorn, 1997?.....

Settlements and other major monument classes cannot be viewed in isolation, their hinterlands also need to be considered. For individual settlements there is the township which supported it; for the towns there are the territories they served while for manors and monastic houses there are the estates which they controlled. In addition for certain industries there are interrelated monuments which need to be taken into account, such as the relationship between charcoal production, iron bloomeries and iron forges. The recognition of such relationships will depend to a large extent on documentary evidence and thus without documentary analysis it is impossible to adequately assess the survival of the linked sites and hinterlands.

For some themes, such as agriculture, the general survival of the historic landscape will be of importance in archaeological studies, but in many cases it will be sufficient for the individual settlements or other monuments in a hinterland to be in good condition.

OHP : Quarried/Built up, High Arable, Permanent pasture R&F, Ancient Woodland and permanent pasture former Ancient Woodland/Alluvial

Whereas the survival of earthwork sites enables many monuments to be easily identified, there is a major problem with the recognition of the medieval historic building resource. For churches and manor houses the resource is fairly well assessed. For the lesser medieval buildings there is very little available evidence as to survival and this must be a major research objective, to determine the number of surviving medieval buildings. It is clear that for the 11th to 13th centuries almost no buildings other than churches survive. There are a number of manor houses from the 14th and 15th centuries, but only a handful of lower status buildings have been identified, though occasional discoveries are being made, as with a recent identification of a small medieval hall house at Gretton. On the basis of the 677 structures surveyed by RCHM in north east Northamptonshire guestimates of the number of medieval buildings can be made for the whole county. In the survey area there were 40 medieval structures (6% of the total recorded structure), of which 10 were houses although only 3 of these were of less than manorial status; 1 dovecote; 22 churches, 1 reused chapel, 3 crosses and 3 bridges. As 8% of the county's listed buildings lie within this same area so there may be expected to be countywide something of the order of 500 medieval structures, of which 275 would be churches and 125 houses but only about 40 of these being of below manorial status.

OHP : Medieval secular building survival

1.5 Published Overviews

Reviews of the archaeology and landscape of medieval Northamptonshire are provided by Steane, J, 1974, *The Northamptonshire Landscape*, and in the introductions to the five RCHM archaeological volumes for the county and in RCHM, 1980, *Northamptonshire : An Archaeological Atlas*. A more general overview of the character and development of settlement in the region is provided in Lewis, C, Mitchell-Fox, P, and Dyer, C, 1997, *Village, Hamlet and Field : Changing medieval settlements in central England*.

2. MAJOR LANDSCAPE PHASES

2.1 Physical Geography of Northamptonshire

The pre modern county was to a large degree a coherent unit in topographical terms, based on the catchment of the river Nene with extensive clayland plateau proving a significant economic boundary. The Soke of Peterborough was also clearly an integral part of this, until the draining of the fens in the post medieval period. However on the north west, west and south west the peripheral areas of the county looked and still look towards adjacent counties, with the towns of Stamford, Market Harborough, Rugby, Banbury and Stony Stratford being the dominant centres.

OHP : Relief & Drainage

OHP : Medieval hinterlands

2.2 The Great Re-planning (c.900-1000)

This period is characterised by re-planning of the field systems and rural settlements associated with a process of

East Midlands Archaeological Research Framework: Resource Assessment of Medieval Northamptonshire

manorialisation and accompanied by the development of Northampton as a major urban settlement. Because the origins of the medieval economy and society lay firmly in the major capital investment of the 10th century and many of the major trends which characterise the medieval, in demography, economy and society have their origins in the late Saxon, the period 900-1066 should be reviewed with the medieval. Thus many of the most important questions which only archaeology can answer, revolve around the origins of systems in the 10th century (or before) which were simply intensified in the 11th to 13th centuries. As such the extensive pattern which can be recognised in the medieval both from documentary as well as archaeological sources provides the essential framework for archaeological investigation of the late Saxon origins of rural settlement and the agricultural economy, and the first stages of urbanisation.

2.3 Intensification (1000-1300)

This period was characterised by agricultural intensification and expansion onto all but the most marginal land and even there, in the woodland, there was increasingly intensive exploitation. In addition the specialisation and intensification of all forms of activity is reflected in a progressive 'formalisation' of the landscape. Accompanying this there was major demographic and settlement growth and large scale town foundation. This reflects an intensification of the market economy and its penetration to the very heart of rural life. In this the towns were crucial, both as the conduit for much of the growth of local commerce and at the other extreme regional and international trade. Also of importance, but generally neglected in recent study, is the developments in communication & especially of industry in both a rural as well as an urban context, and on which a good deal of the urban expansion must have been based.

2.4 Recession & recovery (1300 – 1500)

By the early 14th century demographic growth and agricultural intensification had reached a limit and the famines of 1315-22, compounded by a climatic downturn, took a major toll on population and led to a brief but significant economic recession. However there was a partial recovery, both demographic and economic, by the 1340s. Then the arrival of the Black Death in 1348-9 and successive visitations of the plague in the following decades, particularly 1361 and 1368-9, caused a dramatic demographic collapse. There was shrinkage of villages and abandonment of marginal agricultural land, a massive economic recession with decay of most market villages and decline of the small towns and of Northampton itself, reflecting the major decline in commerce and industry.

The 15th century saw the first stages of a demographic and economic recovery and most distinctive a major agricultural restructuring. Although much land will have been temporarily abandoned through lack of tenants, especially with migration of tenants from marginal to wealthier villages, only limited areas reverted permanently to heath and furze. The major agricultural changes of the 15th century involved a reduction in the intensity of exploitation and in particular a conversion to pasture for sheep in selected townships, in response to changes in grain prices only indirectly linked to the demographic decline. The increasing specialisation in sheep, beginning in the 15th century and accompanied by enforced depopulation and enclosure of certain townships was paralleled by increases of pasture in unenclosed townships. There were a handful of attempts at founding new markets (3 in the later 14th and 4 in the 15th century) but of these probably only Brigstock and, perhaps for a few decades, Fotheringhay were successful. Commercial activity after the Black Death was to be far more tightly concentrated in the main towns and a very few villages without the wider network of market villages that characterised the 13th and earlier 14th century.

The massive recession of the 14th century and the early stages of recovery in the 15th century are a very discrete and separate area of study. The nature of this break and the restructuring that followed provided the basis for the growth in the distinctive post medieval economy & society which followed a very different direction from the medieval expansion, ultimately leading to the Agricultural and Industrial Revolutions. As a result there are many themes which follow directly through into the post medieval and in many respects the 15th century recovery needs to be studied together with the post medieval.

2.5 Research Properties

It will be important to compare and contrast the recession of the late medieval with the far more dramatic economic collapse of the 5th century, while the restructuring and recovery of the 15th century onwards needs to be compared and contrasted planning & expansion of the 10th to 13th century. The development of a clear methodology to guide such comparisons should be an essential part of the Research Frameworks process. It must in part involve the study

East Midlands Archaeological Research Framework: Resource Assessment of Medieval Northamptonshire

of these periods in the same landscapes to isolate the variability of local geology, soils, topography and land use capability from the equation. For the medieval period as a whole a clear methodology needs to be defined to collect some of the basic data to underpin the widest analysis, providing evidence where documentary sources are unable to help or where the documentary evidence needs effective calibration from archaeological study. Most important will be to quantify more exactly the demographic change. The appearance of fairly standardised tenements in the late Saxon period and the high level of continuity through the medieval offers the potential to collect archaeological evidence on demographic levels (households) from the 10th to the 15th century in sample settlements to complement and calibrate that from taxation, rental and other documentary sources. The proportion of tenements involved in commerce and industry as opposed to agriculture is also a major issue which needs to be addressed to assess the degree to which the market economy penetrated rural society.

OHP : Peterborough market income graph

3. LAND USE

3.1 Open Fields

Intensive mixed farming was established across the most of the county in the late Saxon period. This integrated a system of rotation of cropping with common pasture on the arable, supplemented in most areas with either hay and pasture on the floodplain meadows and or pasture (and pannage) in woodland and on heathland. There was very little pure pasture retained within the field systems themselves.

The exact chronology of the transition to common field systems remains unclear but it was in place countywide by 1086. This can be seen not only through the evidence of Domesday ploughs, ploughlands and tenants, but also through the evidence of the number and distribution of water mills which already shows the high intensity of grain processing which characterised the medieval period. The study of the establishment of water mills, because they leave such clear archaeological evidence, as seen at West Cotton, may be an important archaeological method of studying the chronology of large scale grain production or at least of the investment by the lord in such production of even greater value in charting the expansion of arable will be the study of the chronological scale of alluviation.

The 11th to 13th centuries saw significant assarting of the two main woodland areas for agricultural use, which at first involved integration into the open field systems but later resulted in the creation of separate hamlets and farms associated with land held in severalty. There was also probably increasingly intensive exploitation of the best agricultural land at the heart of the field systems, including through intensive manuring, as the virgate holdings were subdivided to support increasing population.

3.1.1 Previous Work & Potential

Almost the whole field system area of the county has now been mapped by David Hall from field survey, limited only by earlier quarried or built up areas. This data needs to be supplemented by comprehensive review of the aerial data and then fully mapped on GIS to enable integration of the evidence into wider landscape study. Intensive fieldwalking survey of the Raunds Area has provided detailed evidence of manuring patterns. Further study of that data in relation to the reconstruction of the tenure of the field system may be possible. While other studies are needed of manuring scatters where more comprehensive patterns close to the medieval settlement can be recovered from other landscapes zones.

OHP : Hardington field system reconstruction

Survival of earthwork evidence for the field systems has been mapped for the early 1990s and the 42 best preserved examples in the region, of which 9 lay in Northamptonshire, were re-flown in 1999 and survival re-mapped. The surviving areas are largely in the north west of the county, which together with adjacent areas in Leicestershire and Warwickshire, represent one of the best preserved areas of medieval field remains in England. For research purposes there is the need for the preservation of representative examples of all the ridge and furrow earthworks in the most complete townships. The remainder of the best preserved need detailed earthwork recording. The rest of each of these townships where the ridge and furrow has been already levelled need to be recorded to give complete field systems including extent of former meadow, pasture and woodland. Because surviving evidence of ploughed headlands and soilmark evidence is being rapidly destroyed there must be urgent detailed mapping from all past

aerial data and, where this does not provide a complete picture of the field system, then new fieldwork and aerial survey should be commissioned to record the remaining areas of the townships. Where any part of the selected sample is to be lost to land use change then fieldwalking survey of the manuring scatters need to be conducted to standard methodology and the identification and excavation of any underlying pattern of earlier field system and settlement to enable the relationship of the open field pattern to earlier patterns to be understood and the chronology of field planning elaborated.

Comprehensive reconstruction of tenorial patterns, combining the archaeological with the documentary evidence is the next major requirement, to identify important aspects such as consolidated demesnes, regular field cycles and other patterns which will provide the basis for archaeological research into these issues of field system origins, organisation and intensification. This documentary research needs to be targeted first on those field systems which are the best preserved (whether as earthworks or just as areas of ploughed historic landscape suitable for fieldwalking survey) and best documented, including those associated with high potential medieval settlements. This will enable the most effective targeting of field systems for long term study in addition to the sample chosen on the basis of earthwork survival.

In the Raunds area and more generally along the Nene there has been recording of alluviation where floodplain areas are lost to mineral extraction. This is indicating a sudden and rapid process of alluviation starting in the late Saxon period and continuing through the medieval. This would appear to show the scale of arable cultivation in the Nene catchment and offers the potential to study the chronology of the shift from pastoral, or in some cases woodland, land use to intensive arable. The studies need also to select tributary streams where the source of the deposits are more localised and so the local land use development as studied through reconstruction of historical topography through archaeological and documentary research can be closely tied to the alluviation sequence. These small catchments should in part relate to the selected townships for detailed preservation and recording of the field system evidence. However it will also be necessary for other areas (to be identified) for detailed field system study to ensure that, for example, the process of medieval woodland assarting is properly covered by the combined field system and catchment alluviation studies. There may be a high potential in the MSRG Whittlewood Project area for such study, but an assessment of the potential of the relevant stream courses for alluviation evidence needs to be assessed countywide.

Morphological study is needed to identify the precursor components which determined the layout of the field systems. There is also a high priority to look for stratigraphic relationships to settlement evidence to enable closer dating of the planning of the system and determine the period over which this took place countywide. Other important questions relate to the chronology and purpose of the transition from long furlong to short furlong; and the origin of consolidated demesnes, which may bear significantly upon the origin of the field systems themselves, and the location and chronology of woodland clearance for integration into the open fields as opposed to the apparently later clearance for use in severalty.

There is a special potential of smoke blackened thatch in historic buildings to contribute to the understanding of medieval agriculture, through the analysis of crop and weed species and types. There are several examples of such buildings known to survive in the county, best exemplified by the case surveyed at Great Doddington, but a countywide survey of the circa 500 straw thatched buildings is needed to identify this rare and threatened resource. Such a survey may yield buildings in different geological and agricultural zones of the county which might yield comparisons between the detail of the arable regimes in the different areas.

3.1.1 Meadow

Meadow was a discrete component of many open field systems and had exceptionally high land values. It was almost without exception located on the alluvial floodplains of the valleys of the main rivers and of lesser streams. It may have come into existence largely as a result of the large scale alluviation in the late Saxon period. Its origin and long term use should be studied through combining palaeochannel pollen evidence and alluviation studies. Its high values reflected its great significance in providing important grazing and hay for the support of stock in an otherwise intensively arable area, as well as the fact that continuing alluviation probably maintained a high level of soil fertility despite annual cropping for hay.

Within the major and minor valleys there will also have been small areas of marsh or 'mor'. A combination of

East Midlands Archaeological Research Framework: Resource Assessment of Medieval Northamptonshire
palaeoenvironmental and documentary research may be able to characterise and to define the extent and significance of this minor landscape component which appears in significant numbers of localised field names, such as Broadmoor in Naseby.

Hall, D, 1993, *The Open Fields of Northamptonshire : The Case for the Preservation of Ridge and Furrow*.

A major review of the origins and character of the open field systems of the county with an incomplete gazetteer of townships is provided in: Hall, D, 1995, *The Open Fields of Northamptonshire*.

A regional overview of survival of ridge and furrow is provided in :

Hall, D, 1999, *Open fields in the Central Province, The Headlands of Northamptonshire*, unpublished report for Northamptonshire County Council and English Heritage.

3.2 Heathland & furze

The main areas of heathland in the county in the medieval period have been reconstructed by Hall. Heath was never extensive and was concentrated in four main areas of the county: on Northamptonshire Sand and Ironstone immediately north of Northampton and around Guilsborough; on limestone south of Brackley, part of a wider heathland stretching into Oxfordshire; and in the north of the county at Easton on the Hill, part of a much more extensive heathland mainly within the Soke of Peterborough. There were also some additional small areas and other similar areas probably await identification. The origins of the heathland are not known but they have produced extensive evidence of prehistoric and Roman settlement and field systems and some early-middle Saxon settlement, for example on Brampton Heath. From a minimum in the early 13th century, the areas expanded as a result of desertion of the poorest ploughland from the 14th century onwards. For the small number of townships which had rights over the heathland it was probably an important source of pasture and fuel (turf & furze) in place of those provided elsewhere by woodland. A few rabbit warrens and deer parks, as at Long Buckby, were also laid out on the heathland in the medieval period

There is the need for documentary study of the significance of the heath in the agricultural economy, for grazing, turf and other uses. The main research question to be addressed archaeologically is regarding the chronology and reasons for the original development of the heathland.

In addition to the reversion of land to heathland in the late medieval period there was also a reversion of some tracts of boulder clay and other land to >furze=, areas of common pasture covered with varying density of >furze= or gorse. No attempt has yet been made to map the extent of furze, but it may have been a significant land use in limited areas of the county, as around Brayfield on the Green and Clipston. Its development was probably the result of low intensity grazing and parallels should perhaps be sought for both the development of furze and possibly of heathland from the mid 14th century onwards with the process of land abandonment and extensification in the 5th-6th century, though generally in the late medieval the reversion did not finally extend to the regeneration of woodland.

Hall, D, 199?, *The Heathlands of Northamptonshire*, unpublished report for Northamptonshire County Council and English Nature.

3.3 Woodland & Forest

Large tracts of woodland existed, largely on boulder clay, in Rockingham Forest between the Nene and the Welland, and in Whittlewood / Salcey Forests between the Nene and Ouse. Extensive clearance of woodland had probably begun in the late Saxon period and was to continue through to the early 14th century. However substantial tracts of woodland survived the impact of agriculture and had a major impact on the whole character and development of settlement and economy in those areas, creating a very distinctive landscape and economy.

The extent of woodland in the medieval period is difficult to reconstruct but can be estimated from the mapped distribution of post medieval woodland combined with Domesday evidence and evidence of medieval assarting. Detailed mapping of the woodland and the extent of open field and assart areas and settlement from post medieval maps, as completed for Whittlewood by David Hall for Northamptonshire Heritage and South Northamptonshire Council, provides an essential basis for more intensive reconstruction through earlier documentary sources and to target archaeological investigation. The intensive study of part of that forest in the Medieval Settlement Research Group's Whittlewood Project should further develop aspects of the methodology for the integrated archaeological and documentary study of such woodland landscapes and their interaction with settlement and agriculture. Mapping

East Midlands Archaeological Research Framework: Resource Assessment of Medieval Northamptonshire
of the forests of the county has been completed on a small scale by Pettit while subsequently more detailed reconstruction of historical topography has been conducted on smaller areas.² There is the need for comprehensive detailed mapping of Rockingham and Salcey Forests to match that for Whittlewood.

The nature of woodland management and exploitation is detailed for the later 16th & 17th centuries for Rockingham Forest by Pettit, but certain aspects of the discussion also has great relevance for the medieval period. The broader issues of the relative impact on woodland management of agriculture and industry is considered in (Foard, G, forthcoming, 'Settlement, Industry and Agriculture in Rockingham Forest, Northamptonshire', Medieval Archaeology

OHP Domesday Woodland

OHP 18th Century Woodland

3.3.1 Forests

There were three royal forests in the county: Whittlewood and Salcey, which were generally managed together, and Rockingham Forest, which is by far the most intensively studied of the three. The forests were created as areas of special royal jurisdiction, primarily for the management of deer, in the late 11th century, though they were also managed for other woodland resources and encompassed large areas of arable land and settlements. They were created by detaching large tracts of woodland from royal and other major manors and attaching them to key royal manors with later subdivision into bailiwicks managed from other royal manors. The forests were progressively expanded in the 12th and 13th centuries, although this period also saw specific land which was assarted or where deer parks were created being exempted from forest law. In 1299 the forest bounds were redrawn to encompass a much smaller area concentrating on the surviving woodland but still incorporating some open field areas.

With the increasing pressure on land in the medieval period the management of the woodlands also became more intensive with definition of coppices defined by banks and ditches as part of an intensive woodland management regime with periodic harvesting and then temporary enclosure to assist re-growth. There was also creation of deer parks for the better management of deer and involving the extinguishing of common rights in the woodland.

OHP : forest perambulations of 1286 & 1299

Bellamy, B, 1982, The Perambulation of Rockingham Forest of 1299, *Northamptonshire Past and Present*, 7, 303-308.

Steane, J M, 1973, The Forests of Northamptonshire in the Early Middle Ages, *Northamptonshire Past and Present*, 5, 7-17.

3.3.2 Deer Parks

In addition to royal hunting in the forest, which is documented as early as 1086 in Rockingham and Whittlewood, there were a number of private hunting preserves in the forests, most notably Geddington Chase and Yardley Chase, attached to major medieval manors. However much of the management and hunting of deer by the 13th century, by both crown and other lords, was in clearly defined deer parks mainly laid out within the woodland. A few parks were created in the 12th century but most were established in the 13th and some in the earlier 14th century, at the height of intensification of the exploitation of the medieval landscape, with a few in the later 15th century. Although some deer parks may have decayed in the late medieval period the major parks were not disparked until the post medieval period.

Hunting lodges were constructed in the parks while some manors, such as the royal manors at Geddington and Rockingham, were developed as major hunting lodges. There were also a number of small medieval parks adjoining manor houses or other residences, as at Fotheringhay Castle with its Little Park, which may have served functions similar to post medieval parks associated with country houses. However, most of the parks in the county were within the forest or in association with other areas of wood or heath. Many of the parks were created from woodland with

² Pettit, P, 1968, The Royal Forests of Northamptonshire 1558-1714; Bellamy, B, 1986, *Geddington Chase : The History of a Wood*.

areas being cleared for lawns, open areas for the grazing deer. A terminus post quem for such clearance could be provided in some cases by the charcoal hearths which were in use prior to clearance. A smaller number of parks were wholly or partly created by reversion of arable land, as with the Queen's Park at Brigstock. Where parks show evidence of ridge and furrow within them it may be either from such enclosure, as is assumed for Brigstock, though in some cases it might represent later arable use.

Many of the larger deer parks have been mapped by the RCHM but where more detailed research has been conducted the extent of the parks has been revised and considerable detail added, including the sites of lodges and other features. The continuing discovery of small numbers of parks would indicate that further parks await discovery while others require definition of their boundaries. Many more lodges also probably await discovery, although most will be simply plough levelled sites. The pales of the parks vary enormously in scale, from major pales as at Biggin to almost non-existent banks as at Grafton Park. Some parks had stone walls rather than earth & timber pales, as at Moulton Park, but the only surviving examples are probably of post-medieval date, as with the 2 metre high wall at Harringworth Park. There is the need for a review of the historic map data for each known park with investigation of the bounds to identify surviving pales and other features. Ground survey of even some of the well-known sites will yield important information on the nature and extent of survival of park pales and other associated features. A number of lodge sites are known within the parks, several surviving as earthworks, as at Brigstock Old Lodge, and at least 2 have surviving medieval lodge buildings, at Higham Park and Harringworth Park. Not all the sites are systematically mapped on the SMR. Several of the lodges, as at Brigstock Old Lodge and Higham Park are moated or have associated moated enclosures while others have fishponds associated with them, sometimes on a large scale, as at Harringworth. No lodge site has been excavated.

OHP Deer parks and lodges with forest bounds

Steane, J M, 1973, 'The Medieval Parks of Northamptonshire', *Northamptonshire Past and Present*, 5, 211-233.

3.3.3 Assarting

By far the greatest impact on the woodlands was clearance for agriculture. Almost without exception in the earliest medieval this appears to have continued by the incorporation of land into the common fields of existing nucleated settlements. However by the 12th or early 13th century this appears to have changed to creation of land held in severalty with new isolated farms being created, in some cases substantial manorial establishments of which Biggin Grange in Oundle was by far the largest.

The scale of assarting in the early and mid 13th century has been studied by Raftis³ and this data enables mapping of the extent of assarting by township within the royal forests at that time. However the very extensive 12th century assarting had not been so well documented or studied, though specific examples, such as Biggin in Oundle in the later 12th century, have been examined and broadly mapped. The exact extent of assart land needs to be mapped through furlong and field name study in combination with the mapping of the open field systems. This will provide an essential base from which an archaeological research strategy can be defined, to explore the detail of the process of clearance and examine when and why the first dispersed farms were created in the assarting process. Although in some cases some of the farms may survive today, combination of documentary and fieldwalking should enable the other isolated farms associated with this expansion to be identified, as has already been done in the exceptional Lyveden valley.⁴

Other areas of woodland may have been cleared through intensive grazing, for there are some areas where intercommoning is recorded in the post-medieval between townships where extensive distributions of charcoal hearths are known. These hearths could provide a terminus post quem for such clearance.

OHP Assarts

³ Raftis, J A, 1974, *Assart Data and Land Values : Two Studies in the East Midlands 1200 - 1350* (there are certain inaccuracies in the published statistics – C Dyer, pers com).

⁴ Steane, J M, and Bryant, G F, 'Excavations at the Deserted Medieval Settlement at Lyveden', *Journal of the Northampton Museum and Art Gallery*, 2, 1967; 5, 1969; 9, 1971; 12, 1975.).

3.4 Historic landscape study

Selecting areas of historic landscape for long term study requires representative areas to be identified. Comparison should be made between champion lands with and without large scale meadow ; and between townships with extensive permeable geology (hence high agricultural land use potential) and those with poorer clayland geology, and also contrasting these with woodland townships. In choosing examples account will also need to be taken of the character of the associated settlement and its archaeological and documentary potential.

4. RURAL SETTLEMENT

Northamptonshire lies within Roberts' 'Central Province' which is characterised by a highly nucleated settlement pattern.⁵ By far the most typical distribution is of single nucleated villages within a single township, though in some cases hamlets lie within their own land unit. There are however cases throughout the county where subsidiary hamlets or farms lie within the same township as a nucleated village. A dispersed settlement pattern does exist in Northamptonshire in three very small, discrete areas: the Lyveden valley in the south east part of Rockingham Forest, in Hartwell in Salcey forest and in the southern part of Whittlewood forest. There are also other components, normally found in nucleated villages, which are sometimes found in isolation including a number of castles, manors, churches and monastic sites, especially hospitals and hermitages. The only extensively distributed components of the settlement pattern which are not well mapped are the medieval water mills and the deer park lodges.

There were more than 500 settlements in the county in the medieval period with something of the order of 375 townships. For the purposes of this assessment the settlements have been crudely classified as farms (23), hamlets (113), villages (312) and towns (11) the rest being lodges and other features such as castles and hospitals. This can be further refined by the identification of market villages while the distinction between village and hamlet requires careful redefinition as part of a detailed countywide study of medieval settlement to complement that being completed for medieval urban settlements.

The size and wealth of settlements in the medieval period can be assessed from Domesday and the various 14th century national taxations with the 1524-5 Subsidy providing a final assessment for the period. The documentary and archaeological evidence has been examined on a broad, regional scale by Lewis et al (1997) but a more detailed countywide study is also required. The documentary data can provide both an overview of the prosperity of different parts of the county and enables the 'trajectory' of individual settlements to be traced relative to the wealth and population of the county as a whole. Such research needs to be integrated with the wider study of patterning in relation to land use capability as determined from geological evidence and other evidence of historic land use zones. There will also need to be consideration of the estate patterns based on Domesday and later evidence. The study will need to incorporate a basic mapping exercise to define the extent and morphology of all the medieval settlements integrating historic mapping with earthwork and other archaeological evidence. This should then enable a detailed re-assessment of the morphological classification to advance the high level analysis conducted by Lewis et al (1997). Such information is essential in order to identify variations in the character of settlement across the county. It will also provides an important context within which the hinterlands of medieval towns and market villages can be studied.

OHP : wealth in 1334

OHP : Settlement trajectories

The existence of many settlements with discrete ends may reveal an earlier phase of more dispersed settlement, as with Thorpe End in Raunds, while many components of complex settlements may have resulted from medieval expansion and be complementary to the dispersed pattern of settlement seen in some areas. These need to be analysed in relationship to issues of both landscape and tenurial context and the chronology of development.

The settlement pattern of the open field landscape is relatively well known, in part due to the high level of nucleation and also the ease with which old enclosed land can be identified from post medieval sources, hence few hamlets and farms are expected to remain unlocated and these probably mainly within anciently enclosed townships. However in

⁵ Roberts, B K & Wrathmell, S, 1998, 'Dispersed Settlement in England : a National View', in Everson, P & Williamson, T, (eds.), *The Archaeology of Landscape*

the woodland areas and especially in Whittlewood, due to the more complex pattern of settlement and the large areas of land which were never within open field, a significant number of isolated farms and probably a few small hamlets await identification. The dispersed pattern is likely to be very restricted even within area, though occasional farms may be found anywhere within the woodland zone.

This is not to deny the importance of wholly deserted sites, especially those surviving as earthworks, as providing the best opportunity for detailed excavation. However the more badly damaged sites, whether affected by later occupation or by cultivation still have a high potential.

They offer the potential for rapid and comprehensive data on settlement evolution based on surface scatters which could be supplemented by selective excavation to sample tenement row chronology in detail. There are a number of wholly or largely ploughed settlements which are available for study: Faxton, Barton Thorpe, Doddington Thorpe, Newbold, Downton.

If most of the dispersed settlements are the result of medieval assarting in woodland areas, then the time from which this began, as opposed to the integration of newly cleared land into common field systems, may shed important light on the process and chronology of village formation. The size of townships and settlements are likely to be closely interlinked and may hold important clues as to the nature of settlement development in the late Saxon and early medieval period. Where there was potential for expansion of agriculture at the expense of woodland then small hamlets may have grown into substantial village, most dramatically seen perhaps in the manor held by the king's forester at Benefield. Elsewhere hamlets without such opportunity never grew. For example Churchfield remained a hamlet having lost land to the royal forest in the late 11th century and never recovered it.

OHP : Settlement pattern

The majority of medieval settlement remains were surveyed by the RCHM but there is considerable detail that can be added to many of the sites by more intensive survey. A few sites also require substantial additional areas surveying, as recently completed at Blatherwycke following aerial survey results. In addition some major and many more lesser earthwork sites still await survey, as with the important Pilton settlement remains recently published by Brown. Systematic aerial reconnaissance at time of drought can also provide important new information on stone buildings within the earthworks, as for example recovered from Glassthorpe.

Apart from manorial and monastic sites, discussed below, only a handful of medieval settlements have received substantial excavation of peasant occupation and these have been largely in the champion landscape, particularly the Nene valley. The excavations within surviving villages have usually addressed restricted issues of village origins and industrial production. Even where major excavations have taken place within living villages, as at Raunds, the obtained evidence other than for the answering very restricted questions on topography and chronology, has generally been limited to deserted areas with surviving earthworks. The limitations of excavation within occupied areas must therefore be taken into account in selecting places for detailed study. The settlements which have seen major decline, such as Fotheringhay, will be the ones where significant results may be achievable for broad studies of the character of medieval tenements.

Given the number of settlements and the size and complexity of most of those settlements it is clear that any research agenda involving detailed study must be based on a sampling strategy, both in terms of the number of settlements and the extent of any one settlement studied. The classification of the settlements is thus essential for a coherent sample to be identified, but this cannot be based on the examination of just the best preserved settlements. It is essential therefore that all settlements are characterised so that the sample can be seen to be genuinely representative. This approach is also important as overall patterning will be revealed which may suggest other research themes

OHP of archaeological potential of settlements

Given the complexity of nucleated settlements with varying function and status of tenements, one aspect of research demands the investigation tenements whose type is known from documentary evidence. Only a handful of settlements will have documentation which allows the accurate mapping of virgate, cottage, soke, free and other tenements but where this is possible, even in the archaeology is poorly preserved, the excavation of sample tenements or groups of tenements may be of high importance. Detailed documentary assessment and where practicable reconstruction of the tenurial pattern is an important prerequisite for the targeting of archaeological investigation. The pattern should raise questions regarding the evolution of settlement from virgate or even carucate tenements, which are sometimes found

in distinctive groupings, through processes of subdivision particularly the creation of half and quarter virgates, and by accretion of new cottage and other tenements. It will also make possible the correlation of archaeological and documentary evidence as regards the status of tenements. If examples could be identified where the actual strip locations in the field system for the virgates could be identified then it may be possible to add another dimension to the analysis of evolution of the whole system.

There is the need to compare trajectories of settlements from different landscape contexts, in woodland, champion with meadow and marginal champion without meadow. There will also be the need to explore plan form variation analysis re origins and development - to what extent are 'ends' a result of expansion or polyfocal development. Explore the relationship between manors and plan components..... How and to what extent did settlements grow in the 11th - mid 14th centuries? To what extent was this growth encompassed, through infilling and subdivision, within a framework established in the Great Replanning and to what extent was it accommodated by accretion to the edge of settlements or in some cases between separate foci in cases of polyfocal villages? Did these patterns vary significantly between woodland zones where there was extensive assarting and champion lands where population growth could only be accommodated generally by increased intensification of land use with subdivision of tenements.

Northamptonshire has a large number of well preserved earthworks sites of deserted and shrunken villages which provide the opportunity for detailed study of the decline and depopulation which followed the plagues and in particular the shift from arable to sheep farming. The study of the chronology of desertion of tenements to determine what proportion were lost due to the impact of the famines and plagues as opposed to the major losses known from conversion of arable to sheep farming in the 15th century, will be an important research theme.

A more developed text on depopulation linked to the land use section needs to be inserted.

Groome, N, 1982, 'The Black Death in the Hundred of Higham Ferrers', *Northamptonshire Past and Present*, 7, 309-311.

Taylor, C C, 'Aspects of Village Mobility in Medieval and later times', in Limbury, S and Evans, J G, (eds.), *The Effects of Man on the Landscape : The Lowland Zone*, CBA Research report 21, 126-134.

Brown, A E, and Taylor, C C, 1975, 'Four Deserted Settlements in Northamptonshire' *Northamptonshire Past and Present*, 6, 178-198.

Steane, J M, and Bryant, G F, 1975, 'Excavations at the Deserted Medieval Settlement at Lyveden', *Journal of the Northampton Museum and Art Gallery*, 12, etc

Halpin, C, 1982, 'The Deserted medieval village of Thorpe, Earls Barton', *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 16, 197.

Bellamy, B, 1996, 'Little Newton, A Central Northamptonshire Deserted Village', *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 27, 200-210.

Buildings

Major variations are to be expected in building traditions. There will be very few if any surviving medieval peasant houses, though there may be late medieval examples of buildings of the wealthiest farmers. There has been no assessment of the existing resource and it is important that an assessment of potential is made to complement Woodfield's study of the larger medieval secular buildings of the county and to guide implementation of PPG15.

The post medieval standing building evidence provides a broad guide to the likely zones of different building traditions which will need to be complemented by documentary and archaeological investigation. There is recorded use of construction methods in stone, cob and timber frame and in roofing with thatch, stone slate and tile, while several examples of surviving medieval ridge tiles are known from the north east of the county. The limited number of excavations in the county can be related to this pattern though the evidence from some excavation is equivocal. At West Cotton complete construction in stone is indicated for peasant buildings in the 13th century. At Faxton cob building is attested from the 12th -13th century when a transition was noted from timber construction, while in the 14th century some stone buildings were identified. No significant excavation has taken place in the small areas of timber frame construction, although it is possible that, as in urban settlements, there was construction in timber on dwarf stone walls.

How does the chronology of conversion from timber and stone vary between region and between high and low status

East Midlands Archaeological Research Framework: Resource Assessment of Medieval Northamptonshire buildings?

See also smoke blackened thatch under agriculture.

OHP Cob & timber framing

5. MANORIAL

There were some ??? manors in the county in 1086 and this number increased substantially by subinfeudation during the medieval period. The vast majority of sites still remain occupied but only a small number have significant surviving fabric from either the manor itself or the ancillary buildings. There are nearly 200 manors recorded on the SMR of which many are medieval. However the vast majority of manor sites have not been located. The majority of earthwork manor sites have been identified and the best examples surveyed by RCHM but a considerable number are likely to remain unrecognised within earthwork sites.

Most of the substantial secular standing buildings known in the county are manor houses, most of which have been reviewed by Woodfield. Only one standing medieval manor house has been subject to major excavation, Nassington Prebendal Manor, but it is as yet unpublished. This has revealed the high potential which exists for the recovery of a detailed sequence of development of manor houses from the late Saxon to the post medieval and the need for systematic investigation of any threats to known medieval manor houses. All the standing manors should be subject to intensive investigation where under threat and, on the basis of the evidence from the Nassington excavation, should be considered for scheduling to protect the deposits both within and around the houses from destruction by activities not covered by the planning process.

OHP Medieval Major Secular Buildings

There are also a few medieval buildings demolished in the later 19th or 20th century which were recorded in some detail before demolition. These may offer significant potential for archaeological investigation in some cases, such as Bradden manor house.

Woodfield, C T P, 1981, >The Larger Medieval Houses of Northamptonshire, *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 16, 153-196.

RCHM, 1984, *An Inventory of Architectural Monuments in North Northamptonshire*.

There have also been complete manor excavations at Furnells and West Cotton in Raunds, while at Quinton a moated manor has been excavated. Unpublished earlier excavations have been conducted on the moated manor at Mill Cotton, Ringstead and the manor at Irchester. Poorly recorded excavation also took place on the manor and church in Irthlingborough All Saints.

There is the need to review the overall range of manors which existed in the county from documentary sources in order to determine the varying character of manors and their distribution countywide in order to see how representative the standing, excavated and earthwork sites are. Whereas the best preserved earthwork sites can be selected there is the need to consider their association with other surviving components of the medieval landscape. The other sites which remain built up or plough levelled will generally only be important where they are from an otherwise poorly represented sub class of manor or are exceptionally well documented.

One priority will be look for collections of monuments related to particular manors and also for estate groupings where interaction of the manors with the caput can be explored, though this will be most easily established with monastic and royal holdings. In this context a high importance will be placed on documentary survival in determining estate patterns. Another important theme will be manorial origins, including the process of devolution of manorial authority to create many local manors continuing a process of the late Saxon period. The capital messuage and demesne farm should not however be studied in isolation but where possible with dependent peasant tenements and open field. The best surviving evidence for such study will be the deserted villages, but these are generally poorly documented. Abandoned manor sites within surviving villages sometimes have better documentation but there may also be the need to identify well documented sites which are still in occupation. In particular the rarity of well documented minor manors will mean that a high priority should be given to the investigation of examples such as the Hotot manor at Clopton or the de Bray manor at Harlestone, where there is even a surviving medieval barn, even though they are still built up sites.

5.1 Manorial appurtenances

For many classes of monument like fishponds, mills and warrens major archaeological investigation can only attempt to recover examples of main types, looking at technological and other developments. The integration of such monuments within the medieval landscape can be pursued in broad distribution pattern studies with example study areas, but the choice of major detailed studies of integrated economic units, such as individual manors with their various demesne components, or of a deer park with its lodges, fishponds and woodland etc are going to be very difficult to identify. Where there are exceptionally well preserved appurtenances and where there are good documentary sources available then important information may be recovered about the nature of their contribution to the manorial economy. However the vast majority, apart from the provision of basic information on distribution, frequency and basic character, have little to contribute.

A substantial number of dovecotes survive in the county as standing structures but almost all are of post medieval date. There has been complete excavation of the dovecote at Furnells manor, Raunds and another is suspected as an earthwork at Mallows Cotton manor. They are a minor component of the manorial economy and are not a major research topic other than within a wider investigation of manorial sites.

The majority of the components of the demesne were located within the demesne farm or in close proximity to the manor including beast houses, sheepcote, barns, granary, malt house and horse driven malt mill. The exceptions might include the sheepcote and often the warren and fishponds. Such demesne farm complexes appear to survive in good condition on a number of earthwork sites, such as Mallows Cotton, but individual items such as dovecotes or sheepcotes are rarely identifiable. No major manorial complex has been excavated in the county and so no major demesne farm courtyard with a wide range of buildings has been examined, although a small number of ancillary buildings were examined in major excavations of both the small West Cotton and Raunds Furnells manors. Other appurtenances will include gardens, orchards and occasionally vineyards as a Higham Ferrers.

5.1.1 Warrens

Warrens were established in the medieval period for the breeding of rabbits on many Northamptonshire manors. There are a significant number of known sites but many more are likely to be identified from field and furlong name studies. Some have no clear evidence of the nature of their boundary but others such as Whiston warren had thick stone walls. None of these walls are known to survive. There are few cases of earthworks known in association with warrens, the best examples being the pillow mound in the warren laid over ridge and furrow at Fotheringhay and the major earthwork mound in the warren associated with Higham castle. Only a handful of medieval warreners' lodges are known. Some of the larger warrens also contained fishponds, at with the warren attached to Higham castle. There is a similar association of warrens to woodland and heathland as seen with deer parks but there are also significant numbers in association with settlements and on enclosed open field land.

There has been no systematic study of warrens in the county and there is very poor information available as to the extent and nature of the boundaries and other association of most warrens. Although a few of the best preserved should be identified and preserved there is probably not a high priority for the study of warrens compared to other more major components of the rural landscape.

Warrens and fishpond at Higham : Brown, A E, >Higham Ferrers Castle or Otherwise=, *Northamptonshire Past and Present*, 6, 79-84.

OHP : warrens

5.1.2 Fishponds

Fish were contributed to the medieval economy of the county from both the river fisheries and increasingly during the medieval period from specially constructed fishponds. Fisheries in the rivers may have had as great if not greater importance to the demesne economy in many manors but they have received little attention and, apart from eel traps associated with mills, may yield little archaeological evidence.

There are large numbers of fishponds distributed countywide although there is a major problem of classification with some probably of post medieval date. Most manors constructed fishponds but the scale of fishponds varied enormously from the major complexes such as Braybrooke and Harrington to the tiny moated ponds such as that belonging to Higham Ferrers College. The fishponds were often set within parks or warrens or in some cases are found in association with gardens, presumably in order to limit the threat of poaching. The function was also be served by moats and other man made bodies of water such as mill ponds.

The chronology of their development will contribute to the appreciation of the scale of intensification of the medieval rural economy. However, they generally comprised substantial earthworks and the relative survival of archaeological remains far outweigh their importance within the medieval economy. The majority of the best examples of fishponds have been surveyed by RCHM. The priority for action is probably to identify where the ponds lie in association (either spatial or tenurial) with other well preserved and well documented components of particular manors to enable study of the overall integration of the components of the demesne.

OHP : fishponds

Steane, J M, >The Medieval Fishponds of Northamptonshire', *Northamptonshire Past and Present*, 4, 299-310.

6. MONASTIC

There were 65 monastic houses in the county. Of these 16 were abbeys or priories (though two of these represent original sites from which other hospitals were transferred), 21 hospitals, 15 hermitages and 7 colleges. Anchorites are also recorded in a number of Northamptonshire parishes and although probably located in churches, no structures related to their occupation have been identified with certainty. The only monastic house in the original county of Northamptonshire in the 11th century was the great fenland monastery of Peterborough. Monasteries were first established in the area of the present county in the 12th century with lesser houses, hospitals and colleges mainly being established in the succeeding centuries. In the later medieval period foundations of grammar schools also occurred rather than monastic establishments. Though generally founded by important lords, the later and minor foundations were sometimes by wealthy townsmen, who also made significant endowments to some of the monastic houses.

The main concentration of monasteries was in Northampton, where there were 16 including those in the suburbs. The other main towns in the county generally included several monastic houses, mainly hospitals, except where the manor was owned by a major monastery, as at Kettering, Wellingborough and Oundle.

Whereas there is no effective way of comprehensively assessing the wealth of secular manors countywide in the medieval period after 1086, the monastic houses and their manors can be assessed in 1291 and 1535 to define their relative importance and influence. Because of the major land holdings in the county of several of the major fenland monasteries, particularly Peterborough, these too need to be considered because they were as great if not greater an influence on the county as those actually sited within the present county.

Extensive antiquarian excavations took place on Canons Ashby priory and Pipewell Abbey and lesser work on Fotheringhay College and Higham Ferrers College. Extensive modern excavation, unpublished, has been completed on Grafton Regis hermitage. Small scale modern excavations have taken place at Canons Ashby priory. There are surviving buildings at St John's Hospital Northampton; St John's Hospital Brackley; Higham Ferrers College while there are parish churches which were integral to several other monasteries, including Canons Ashby priory and several of the Colleges, as at Irthlingborough and Cotterstock. There are extensive surviving earthworks at Pipewell Abbey and Perio Hospital.

Taylor, S J, 1974 'Canons Ashby', *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, vol9, p.57-

Audouy, M, 1991, >The Priory Church of St Mary, Canons Ashby', *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 23, 70-78.

Parker, G, 1981, >The Hermitage of Grafton Regis', *Northamptonshire Past and Present*, 7, 247-252.

OHP : Monasteries

Dissolution

Text needs to be added on this.

6.1 Monastic Estates

Monasteries have a high potential in terms of the continuity of estate management and the quality of documentation. They are a unique component of the society and economy and deserve study in their own right. It is essential to reconstruct their estates from major sources (in 1291 & 1535). With the only major exception being royal estates, it is far easier to identify monastic estates than most secular estates, they tended to have a higher continuity and most importantly they are often far more extensively documented. This means that monastic manors offer a high potential to explore various aspects of medieval settlement and economy in more detail than elsewhere, especially through the integrated investigation of central house and dependent estates and also through integration of archaeological and documentary evidence. However the distinctive character of monastic estates and their management mean that this evidence must be balanced by studies of secular and especially of minor manors.

There is the need to identify where monastic manors or 'granges' are well documented, survive well archaeologically and where the mother house and rest of the estate have a high potential. This inevitably provides important links outside the county, where assessment of potential is even more problematic. The major monastic land holdings in the county at the conquest were of Peterborough Abbey, largely in the eastern third of the county. A large proportion of these holdings were subinfeudated soon after the conquest but still left the abbey with major estates in hand. Only one monastic manor has been extensively excavated, Badby Grange (unpublished). Other major earthwork sites survive including Cold Ashby.

OHP Monastic estates

Page, F M, 1936, *Wellingborough Manorial Accounts, 1258-1323*

The vast range of largely unpublished Peterborough Abbey sources are indexed and calendared in Martin, J, 1978, *Cartularies and Registers of Peterborough Abbey*, and 1980, *The Court and Account Rolls of Peterborough Abbey: A Handlist*

7. CHURCH

A partial baseline for the medieval churches in the county is provided by the Domesday survey which records 59 priests and one church. However a significant number of churches existing in 1086 are not recorded because churches with Saxon work, such as Greens Norton and Earls Barton, are in manors for which no priest was recorded. More than 380 churches and chapels are known from documentary, architectural and archaeological evidence to have existed in Northamptonshire by the end of the medieval period, in addition to the purely monastic churches. Of these only 4 lie isolated outside a medieval settlement : Great Oxendon, Harrington and Boughton Green, while that at Wadenhoe is in proximity to a probable manorial site. Excavations have taken place in at least 24 churches, but of these only four are major excavation and two of these were antiquarian (Canons Ashby and Irthlingborough) and only two modern excavations at Brixworth (unpublished) and Raunds Furnells (Boddington, A, 199?, *'Raunds Furnells.....'*). Only the Raunds excavation saw the complete excavation of the church and its graveyard. Architectural analysis has taken place at Brixworth, a major study, on Earls Barton tower, and more general analysis of all standing medieval churches in the county has been completed by RCHME but is still unpublished.

OHP Domesday churches

OHP Medieval churches & townships

Ecclesiastical and manorial hierarchies were closely interlinked and the devolution of manorial authority was frequently accompanied by devolution of ecclesiastical authority. In many cases the ecclesiastical arrangements by the 13th century were of single township with and villages with single parishes. However while manorial authority was frequently fragmented below this level this rarely occurred with parishes. Only 11 villages are known to have had two churches. Of these 7 had two separate parishes (Aldwinkle, Barnwell, Blatherwycke, Cranford, Irthlingborough, Maidwell, Rushton, and probably Raunds). The others had separate subsidiary chapels (Warmington, Weedon Bec and Harringworth), although it seems likely that some additional chapels will be identified in future in other villages. In addition there were some cases where fragmentation of the authority of old minster churches was never completed, as at Towcester where a large parish encompassed a number of separate settlements, some chapelries and some lesser settlements without any church or chapel. Some churches may have

East Midlands Archaeological Research Framework: Resource Assessment of Medieval Northamptonshire started out as manorial chapels but there is very little evidence at present as to the existence of such chapels.

Urban churches represent a distinctive group, mainly within Northampton, which will contribute significantly to the understanding of the development of the town while their cemeteries may offer important evidence as to the nature of health and diet in urban compared to rural situations. There are four towns with more than one church: Northampton had nine churches and at least two chapels, with multiple parishes; Brackley two churches and two parishes, Oundle two or possibly three chapels in addition to the parish church, all in one parish, and Higham Ferrers an additional chapel in one parish.

Within the context provided by documentary evidence for ecclesiastical organisation, a major research theme is the process and chronology of fragmentation of old minster parochiae and its correlation with the fragmentation of manorial authority from 'multiple estates'. The cases where this process progressed furthest, to create multiple churches in a village or where it progressed only a limited degree with the retention of various dependent chapelries, may shed important light on the process leading to the more typical outcome. There is the need for the mapping of the hierarchy of ecclesiastical provision from documentary sources such as the 1291 taxation and later sources to provide a framework within which a sample of churches can be chosen for detailed study. The churches themselves from their floor area and the chronology and quality of their construction will contribute to the characterisation of their associated community. An area which has not received any attention is the issue of associated rectories and vicarages.

The research potential of churches will also vary enormously according to the degree of survival of the archaeological deposits. Churches which were deserted in the medieval or even the post medieval period (eg: Catesby in the 16th century and Clopton in the late 19th century), particularly if they were also abandoned for burial purposes, and have not since been built over or ploughed may offer the highest potential for recovery of well preserved structural and burial sequences. In some cases, as at Catesby, Boughton Green and Brackley St James, the abandoned churches continued to have functioning churchyards into the 20th and so although the archaeology of the church itself may be well preserved they may have no better survival of burial evidence than surviving churches. There are at least 28 deserted churches, with a further 6 possible sites. It is also clear from the discovery in the 1970s of the Raunds Furnells church that other undocumented early medieval churches probably await discovery. A few isolated finds of burials within medieval settlements as at Titchmarsh may indicate sites of other chapels. It is also likely that other deserted chapels or churches will exist in some of the other deserted villages in the county. Where deserted churches lie within deserted or largely deserted settlements they may offer the greatest potential for the integrated study of a church and its community, as at Blatherwycke or Sulby. Due to rarity a high priority should also be given to other churches in villages with high potential second churches, as at Raunds and Blatherwycke. In addition there are a handful of the chapels known to have surviving buildings which went out of ecclesiastical use in the medieval or post medieval period, as at Charlton and Harringworth. Additional examples are likely to await discovery, but these are likely to random discoveries except where documentary or antiquarian records indicate the potential for a lost church.

The publication of the RCHM survey of the churches of the county should be a high priority as this will provide an essential framework on which to build a research agenda. However there will be aspects of evidence which will not be provided by that study. Most importantly it does not cover deserted churches, which may have an exceptional archaeological potential. It will also not deal with such matters as rectories and vicarages and glebe lands nor will it consider the overall archaeological potential of the churches, which will require attention before an overall agenda can be defined. The topic requires a major review once the volume is published by English Heritage.

RCHME survey - copy of original records in SMR.

Richmond, H, 1986, 'Outlines of church development in Northamptonshire', in Butler, L A S, and Morris, R K (eds.), *The Anglo-Saxon Church*, CBA Research Report 60.

8. TOWNS & COMMERCE

Fairs, representing periodic exchange, may have been the earliest commercial foci of money based exchange. The development of towns is linked to the development in the late Saxon period of regular weekly commerce in the market places and in the 12th and 13th century as the market economy expanded there was a dramatic increase in the number of market settlements. Fairs may have been located at moots or other traditional sites but some were possibly at major estate centres and it is there that the earliest markets are found. Only one possible early fair site, associated

East Midlands Archaeological Research Framework: Resource Assessment of Medieval Northamptonshire with the holy well and turf maze at Boughton Green, can be suggested at present. In the medieval period the fairs also became largely tied to the towns and market villages, many new fairs apparently being established in the 13th century as an adjunct to the markets. They did continue to serve an important commercial function but they are generally not well documented apart from the record of tolls or profit.

OHP : medieval fairs

8.1 Chronology of town formation

In 1086 one borough and three other market settlements were recorded in the county. By 1349 there had been attempts to found markets in a further 36 places. Though a few market grants were apparently never implemented and some failed very quickly, the majority did function. While most remained no more than market villages a small number of those founded before the mid 13th century developed as true towns.

The early markets tend to be in important late Saxon estate centres, but there is not necessarily a direct connection and such markets may in some cases, as with Fawsley and Finedon, have been established in the 12th century because of the power and influence of the manorial lord. There is the need to compare the central places of the Saxon period with the market towns of the medieval and in particular to look at the origins of the known early markets which were not established in late Saxon burhs, at Kings Sutton, Oundle and Higham Ferrers. It is also important to examine towns and market villages which have an 11th or early 12th century first record which does not represent its foundation as a market centre to determine if it was developed as a market settlement prior to or well after 1086. In particular the study of the planning of the market places and their adjacent tenement rows will be important approach.

OHP Domesday boroughs and markets & late Saxon burhs & communications

The documented chronology of market foundation by manorial lords might suggest that these undated markets had been established in the late 11th and 12th century and that the Domesday picture is fairly complete. The major growth in market foundations was in the 13th century but only a handful of these later foundations were successful in the long term, most notably Wellingborough and Kettering.

OHP : Market foundation and survival graph

The towns grew substantially in the 12th and 13th century with Northampton by the early 12th century, when its defences were constructed, having one of the largest defended areas in England. Development of medieval boroughs and of burgage tenure in the 12th and especially 13th century was an indication of the success of some towns but was not a prerequisite for urban status. At the lower end of the scale the foundation of many markets in villages, most of which functioned but did not grow into towns.

OHP : Peterborough Abbey towns and village growth graph

OHP : Hierarchy of towns – boroughs, towns with burgage tenure, other small towns, market villages

The urban topography is complex but can be reconstructed from documentary sources for some settlements revealing clear evidence of the nature and chronology of urban growth, as in Oundle where in one phase of growth rows of burgage tenements have clearly been added to an earlier agricultural settlement. With such information archaeological investigation can be effectively targeted

OHP : Oundle town tenure 1400

The communications network was crucial to the success of key to urban development and urban growth was promoted by various lords through the construction of bridges and diversion of major roads to pass through their town, as for example at Oundle.

OHP : Markets and roads

Goodfellow, P, 1987, >Medieval Markets in Northamptonshire, *Northamptonshire Past and Present*, 7, 305-323.

8.2 Urban Commerce & Industry

Commerce was fundamental to the wealth of towns. There was a clear distinction between the broad commercial activity serving a local hinterland and trade in key commodities leading to high wealth for a few in urban context. The wool trade was almost certainly by far the single most important commercial activity in Northamptonshire towns, with various towns and some market villages having merchants involved in the international wool trade. This brought high wealth for some merchants, particularly in Northampton and Brackley, which was invested in substantial town houses and at Northampton with the wealth being expressed in the construction of the town's defences, monastic houses and churches.

Other trades were important particularly cloth sales, reflecting what was probably the single most important industrial production in the towns. The other important trade was probably in leather but the range of trades was very wide, particularly in the largest towns with Northampton and Brackley in particular having a wide range from ironmongers to goldsmiths.

The market place was the focus of commercial activity and attracted to it the many of the major houses and in the late medieval period the inns. Commercial activity was typically segregated into sections of the market place with wool markets and drapery rows being represented in various towns as well as the ubiquitous butchers rows.

Market places probably started as large open areas but rapidly saw infilling with the construction of permanent shops and of rows of temporary stalls, with some being converted into tenements. Shops are typically concentrated largely in rows on the remaining market place together with rows of stalls which themselves appear to become permanent or semi-permanent structures. Similarly the market halls were set on the market place, but no medieval example survives in the county. All of the surviving markets saw clearance of the shop rows and market halls in the 19th or earlier 20th century and only in Higham Ferrers and Northampton do significant rows still survive but it is highly improbable that any medieval structures will survive. Because of extensive rebuilding in the post medieval period the highest potential for archaeological survival will be in the decayed medieval markets where the market place has not been built over. The growth, decline and absolute number of shops, and the size and architectural pretensions of the market halls should be a good indicator of the commercial success of towns and market villages and is an issue which could be investigated archaeologically.

OHP : Oundle market place in 1565

The early topography and extent of the market place is a major research question to be explored by the dating of infilling and the dating of the tenements bounding the market place. It has been argued that the creation of market places may in many cases have been a 12th or 13th century phenomenon. The small towns offer a good opportunity to explore this major issue of urban planning.

While the commerce was the initial and core function of all the towns it did not have major labour requirements. A significant industrial base was essential if a settlement was to grow into a substantial urban settlement and hence the relative success of a town as a commercial centre need not be directly related to its size. Several successful towns which represented infilling between pre-existing successful market towns remained small settlements with little or no industrial component, notably Thrapston which continuing to serve a local marketing function from the 12th century right through to the post medieval. Other towns grew substantially, the greatest success of the small towns being Brackley. There was probably a broad range of production in the towns but the cloth industry would appear to have been the most important, certainly in Northampton and probably a number of the other towns, especially Brackley. The leather industry also figures significantly in the towns but unlike the Roman period, there is no evidence to suggest that the forges or other reprocessing in the important iron industry was focussed in Northamptonshire towns, the forges being in forest villages like Weldon and Geddington, though the latter did gain a market in the 13th century. The investigation of the industrial base of urban settlements is a neglected area yet crucial to the understanding of urbanisation.

Urban settlement represented only a small percentage of the population of the county. All of the towns, even Northampton, retained an agricultural component, which for the smaller towns and market villages was a significant proportion of the population. The distinction of agricultural from non agricultural tenements is an essential requirement in the investigation of towns as it will enable the issues of the nature of the urbanisation process to be explored, the larger towns generally showing the addition of burgage or cottage rows to an existing agricultural

East Midlands Archaeological Research Framework: Resource Assessment of Medieval Northamptonshire settlement, as at Higham Ferrers, even Brackley was the only truly new town founded on a new site.

OHP scatter graph of 1377 taxation

8.3 Hinterlands

The hinterlands of the towns will have varied according to their size and importance. For local commercial activity the theoretical medieval construct of Bracton's $6\frac{2}{3}$ miles and the modern thiessen polygons. The hinterland which Northampton tried unsuccessfully to maintain in the 13th century and the distance from which shop or stall keepers came to Oundle market in the late 13th century are specific indicators.

OHP : Northampton & Oundle hinterlands

The hinterlands vary significantly in agricultural potential as judged by geology and wealth as seen from medieval taxations and this can be seen as a major determinant of urban success when taken together with chronology of market foundation. The archaeological and documentary potential of the hinterland of the towns can be crudely assessed. The towns of the county vary enormously in the overall potential of their hinterlands for archaeological and documentary study.

The study of the distribution of pottery around the markets may enable the extent of the hinterlands to be tested archaeologically in some cases. Particular research themes for hinterlands will include whether there was any significant variation in the nature of agricultural production in townships close to major towns. The major research theme will probably be the relationship of wool production with the importance of the wool trade and of cloth production in the various towns. The other major issue will be the interrelated study of the origin and growth of the town and of the rural settlements in its hinterland.

8.4 Decay and recovery

There was a substantial economic crisis in Northampton and other major towns in the region in the later 13th century with the flight of the cloth industry to the rural area. This was then compounded by the effects of the agricultural crisis of 1315-22 and finally the massive recession from 1349 with the impact of the plagues. There was loss of the majority of market villages and decline in all other towns clearly seen in the abandonment of tenements. The attempts at refounding some markets in the later 14th and 15th centuries may be some indication of revival but they were few in number and only two had even limited success. The major recovery probably did not come until the 16th century, and then concentrated in a small number of mainly the most successful 11th century market towns, although Wellingborough and Kettering appear to have already begun to take over from Higham Ferrers and Rothwell respectively.

OHP : Medieval markets map

8.5 Past work and potential

For most towns and market villages the historical topography can be determined from post medieval sources. For a small number the documentary sources have enabled the late medieval pattern to be reconstructed in detail with varying degrees of accuracy, at Oundle, Kettering, Brackley and Daventry. This may also be achievable in Northampton and Higham Ferrers. These are the best documented of the towns and offer a high potential for wider documentary study. However most of the remaining towns and market village are relatively poorly documented and many aspects of even the well documented places remain obscure, with little significant documentation before the later 13th century in most.

Only a handful of buildings from before 1350 are likely to survive in the towns and market villages. The best survival known is the medieval undercroft fronting the market place at Northampton, while other similar were reported in the town in the 19th century. From the 15th century more buildings may be expected to survive but only three towns, Oundle, Higham Ferrers and Brackley would appear to have the potential for significant numbers.

OHP : Oundle building survival

East Midlands Archaeological Research Framework: Resource Assessment of Medieval Northamptonshire
Archaeological work has been concentrated mainly in Northampton though substantial excavations have also taken place in Brackley and Daventry.

8.5.1 Northampton

A major enhancement exercise has been completed for the medieval town through the Urban Archaeological Database project but the Assessment stage has not been started. Excavation within the town has concentrated mainly on the area of the Saxon burh and especially its middle Saxon precursor, although during the 1990s in particular work has been extended to the rest of the medieval town have been examined. Apart from the castle and small scale investigation of several of the monastic houses, the major excavation on tenements in the medieval town was on St Peters Street in the core of the old town,⁶ but other lesser excavations have since taken place in Woolmonger and St Giles Street and other streets including in the suburb of St Edmunds End and one back street, Cow Lane. There is still however very poor understanding of the archaeology of the majority of the medieval town.

OHP : Northampton with suburbs and defences plus excavation areas

The first overview of the industrial and commercial base of the town is in 1524, which reveals the textile (broadcloth) and leather trades represented 17% and 25% of trades respectively. However the service, distributive and food trades comprised 40% of the occupations of Northampton in 1524, showing the importance of basic marketing for the county and particularly Northampton's immediate hinterland. Farming comprised just 6% of the occupations. There is however a poor understanding of the industrial base of the town in the medieval period. Attention should focus on the recovery of industrial evidence, particularly with regard to the cloth industry in the 11th to 13th centuries, both from the tenements themselves and for the dyeworks and then late in the 13th or 14th centuries possibly through the fulling mills. The significance of the leather industry and its growth also needs investigation, particularly as by the early 16th century it had overtaken textile production.

Major issues are the chronology of the development of the town from the origins of the burh, expansion of the new borough and its subsequent growth with the addition of suburban developments. The location and subsequent shift of the commercial centre of the town with the creation of the present market place, possibly as early as the late 11th century, needs to be examined. The industrial base of the town and the town's decline in the later 13th century as a result of the loss of a substantial proportion of its cloth production, in parallel with other towns in the region such as Stamford and Leicester, is also a major theme.

RCHM, 1985, *An Inventory of Archaeological Sites and Churches in Northampton*.

Dyer, A., 1978, Northampton in 1524, *Northamptonshire Past & Present*, 6, 73-80.

Foard, G, 1995, >The Early Topography of Northampton and its Suburbs', *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 26, 109-122.

Welsh, T A, 1996, >Northampton Alternatives, Conjecture and Counter-Conjecture', *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 27, 166-176.

Goodfellow, A V, 1980, >The Bridges of Northampton', *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 15, 138-155.

Williams, J, 1982, >Northampton's Medieval Parishes', *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 17, 74-84.

Williams, J H, 1986, >The Forty Men of Northampton's first Custumal and the development of the borough government in the late 12th century Northampton' *Northamptonshire Past and Present*, 7, 215-233.

Williams, J H, 1979, *St Peters Street, Northampton, Excavations 1973-1976*

Shaw, M, >Excavations on a Medieval site at Derngate, Northampton, *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 19, 63-82.

Shaw, M, & Steadman, S, 1993, >Life on a Medieval Backstreet: Archaeological Excavations at Swan Street, Northampton, 1989', *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 25, 127-158.

Shaw, M, 1996, >Recent Work in Medieval Northampton: Archaeological Excavations on St Giles Street, 1990, and at St Edmund's End, 1998=, *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 27, 101-142.

8.5.2 Small Towns

⁶ Williams, J H, 1979, *St Peters Street, Northampton, Excavations 1973-1976*.

East Midlands Archaeological Research Framework: Resource Assessment of Medieval Northamptonshire

Most of the small towns and market villages have seen very little archaeological investigation.

Minor excavations, mainly evaluations have taken place in Towcester, Oundle and Kettering. The most extensive tenement excavation outside Northampton have been in the second medieval town, Brackley, in Castle Lane (still unpublished). It apparently saw a decline in the late 13th century and may be related to the flight of the cloth industry from the town to the rural areas. The other substantial excavation has been in Daventry, on the north side of the market place.

Brown, A E, 1991, *Early Daventry*.

Soden, I, 1996, 'Saxon and Medieval Settlement Remains at St John's Square, Daventry, Northamptonshire, 1995=', *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 27, 51-100.

The survival of archaeology in the towns is very variable, dependent on the degree of post medieval and particularly 19th and 20th century redevelopment.

OHP : Kettering later development onto early map base.

Exploration of the early development of the small towns may be best achieved in Kings Sutton as it declined and has not seen extensive post medieval and modern development, but Oundle, Higham Ferrers may be expected to have a good to high archaeological potential though this may not extend in some cases to the earliest phases of development. Brackley, Daventry, Higham Ferrers and Towcester would appear to have the greatest potential for the study of the successful towns but further evaluation is needed to define the extent and quality of the survival there and in some of the other town, though Wellingborough and Kettering clearly have poor survival. The best examples for exploration of the 13th century phase of market growth are the failed towns which declined substantially in the late medieval or post medieval and hence avoided significant post medieval or modern development, notably Catesby and Rockingham where there are extensive earthworks. Similarly for the new or refounded post Black Death markets Fotheringhay may have the highest potential.

Brown, A E, & Taylor, C C, 1974, 'The Earthworks of Rockingham and its Neighbourhood', *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 9, 68-79.

9. COMMUNICATION

Water transport was important for the county in terms of the export trade, through road links to ports outside the present county. While in the 11th century London is likely to have dominated any international trade from the county, continuing the pre-eminence of London as the wic serving Mercia in the Saxon period, the development of trade during the medieval period will have been substantially influenced by the development of the ports on the Wash at Boston and Kings Lynn together with the fenland transshipment port of Holme. The hinterlands of the ports have been suggested through the definition of theissen polygons but this can only be a crude guide as the details of the road network will have distorted the pattern. Moreover the presence of the lesser port of Holme may also have distorted the pattern as it was by far the closest port to Northamptonshire and for heavy or bulky goods this may have been a significant factor.

OHP : International trade – Ports plus major roads from Gough Map

Though the possibility has been often suggested, no convincing evidence has been demonstrated from archaeological or documentary sources for substantial water borne trade along the Nene above Wansford, prior to canalisation in the 18th century. Had the Nene been navigable then it is improbable that the well recorded tolls in 13th and 14th century Northampton would not make significant reference to them. Similarly one might expect such tolls to be recorded at Oundle. In the 15th century, when a scheme was being considered to open navigation to Fotheringhay, it was specifically stated that the Nene was not navigable above Wansford bridge due to the presence of bridges, of which there were numerous examples between Wansford and Northampton. None of the other rivers in the county are of sufficient size to have supported river transport.

Road communications in the county have not been adequately studied to enable a good picture of the network to be presented. Specific evidence on bridges, fords and tolls has been collected but at present this can only be used effectively by reference to the medieval Gough map and to the later 17th century (pre-turnpike) mapping of major roads. Moreover there are so many examples that must relate to lesser routes that it is difficult to use the data to

define the more important routes, though several, notably the Northampton to Oxford road is clearly identified by the bridges as an important medieval route. This evidence can be further supplemented by the distribution of medieval hermitages, hospitals and chapels which were in many cases associated with major roads, often being involved in collection of alms for the maintenance of the bridges. Such evidence tends to confirm the pattern of major post medieval roads being the important routes of the medieval period.

OHP : roads and bridges, hospitals etc

The next major advance in the understanding of the major, and the minor, road pattern will be achieved through the systematic application of data from terriers, charters etc to David Hall's countywide mapping of the open field furlong pattern. The origins and development of these major roads will however need to be examined archaeologically, seeking points in particular where the road pattern interacts with settlements, particularly where the road has been deserted and hence may yield well preserved deposits and stratigraphic relationships, as for example with the Northampton to Coventry road where it passes Long Buckby castle as a deserted hollow way. Taking the evidence currently available it is possible to identify locations where small and major bridges should exist which should be the subject of detailed investigation when any river dredging or other works are proposed.

There is also the need for systematic examination of standing structures which are known to contain medieval fabric, are on the site of documented medieval bridges or lie on a major early road. This is a joint archaeology and buildings priority and needs to be integrated as such into the planning process as a constraint.

The communications pattern is extremely important to reconstruct as it will assist in the understanding of the nature of the towns' interaction with their hinterland, and especially the reasons for the promotion of many of the later markets. The construction of many castles is also clearly linked to the road network, either through control of major roads, as with Clifford Hill, which controlled the Cliff ford which must have been the early medieval precursor to Billing Bridge, or through association with major settlements which were served by the main road network. The origin and enhancement of the road network during the medieval period should also cast significant light on trade networks.

Goodfellow, P, 1985, >Medieval Bridges in Northamptonshire', *Northamptonshire Past & Present*, 7, 143-58.

Goodfellow, P., 1980, 'The Bridges of Northampton', *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 15, 138-155.

Woodfield, C & Conlon, R, 1982, >Late Medieval and Early Tudor Watling Street, Towcester', *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 17, 85-90.

McKeague, P, 1988, >Ditchford Bridge, Irchester, Northamptonshire', *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 22, 179-184.

Keevill, G D, & Williams, R J, 1995, >The Excavation of a Roman Road and a Medieval Causeway at Ditchford Pit, Wellingborough Northamptonshire', *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 26, 47-78.

10. INDUSTRY

Medieval industry in the county was briefly reviewed by the Victoria County History in the 1920s but otherwise it is largely a neglected subject both from a documentary as well as an archaeological perspective, with the exception pottery industry. The two major industries in the medieval period in the county were probably cloth manufacture and iron production, with the leather industry increasing in importance by the late medieval. However the scale, range and significance of industrial production is poorly understood. It is also unclear the degree to which the industries were urban as opposed to rurally based. The only countywide data is as late as 1777, which although prior to industrialisation may be massively different to medieval Northamptonshire. It does however show that of the four most common trades even the most urbanised, shoemaking, only 45% of production was in urban settlements, though several urban settlements could be dominant with for example Northampton and Wellingborough having 20% and 16% of all shoemaking respectively. For weaving & woolcombing, a textile industry which was by far the dominant single industry in the county in 1777, the figures were 28%, 22% respectively. The evidence of the trades recorded in the various towns from documentary sources would suggest a broadly similar pattern, though there may be major exceptions, such as Northampton prior to the late 13th century when it appears to have had a major broadcloth industry. The processing of agricultural produce will often be rurally based and has been examined archaeologically at Raunds, with good evidence of malting and of flax retting, but this is the exception.

There is a clear distinction between the >hard evidence' industries and the more ephemeral causing some to be

East Midlands Archaeological Research Framework: Resource Assessment of Medieval Northamptonshire relatively easy to locate archaeologically, as with the pottery, iron and the stone industries, but others are far more difficult to identify archaeologically. The most important of these is the cloth industry.

10.1 Iron & Charcoal

In 1086 Northamptonshire has the most substantial documentary record for an iron industry, centred on Whittlewood and Rockingham forests. This continued into the 12th century with various records in Rockingham forest for the forges which reprocessed the iron blooms. The large scale iron production required large quantities of fuel and hence the forests supported a major charcoal burning industry. The iron industry had decayed by the end of the medieval period by the chronology of and reasons for the decline is not understood. The charcoal industry has been extensively mapped through aerial survey and recent work has provided C¹⁴ dating to the late Saxon and early medieval period for major slag heaps in the woodland of Rockingham forest. Some of these sites, as at Fineshade and Oundle Wood, survive as earthworks. The best general landscape survival where various ironworks and charcoal burning are likely to survive in good condition is at Fineshade, in association with the 12th century castle, but this may be atypical as there is no medieval village. An ironworking tenement of the 12th century has been excavated at Lyveden and a furnace at Stanion while an unpublished amateur excavation of a probable forge site in Great Weldon village has taken place, but none of the major ironworking sites have been investigated. It is possible that ponds recorded both at Fineshade and Weldon in the post medieval period might have been hammer ponds for water driven forges but no powered forge has yet been identified either archaeologically or from documents.

OHP : Domesday ironworking

OHP : Medieval Ironworking and charcoal evidence

Foard, G, forthcoming, >Settlement, Land Use and Industry in Medieval Rockingham Forest, Northamptonshire', *Medieval Archaeology*

Hall, D, 1983, >The excavation of an Iron Smelting Site at Easton Maudit, Northamptonshire', *Bedfordshire Archaeological Journal*, 16, 91-2.

Other metalworking such as gold working is recorded from documents in several urban settlements but the only extensive archaeological evidence for other metalworking is copper and lead working at Southwick, a village in the forest where late Saxon and medieval ironworking has also been demonstrated.

10.2 Pottery

While early medieval pottery production was, at least in part, urban based and has been demonstrated in Northampton, from the 12th century onwards major pottery industries existed in Whittlewood and Rockingham forests. Another production site is expected in the south west of the county or in north Oxfordshire and an outlier at Yardley Hastings of the north Buckinghamshire industry. There is a single urban kiln of the late medieval known from Higham Ferrers. There have been various excavations of kilns but only at Lyveden as there been the extensive excavation of a complete potter's tenement. All the potting settlements are built up apart from the hamlets of the Lyveden valley which are all now ploughed. Extensive collections of medieval ceramics are available from a wide range of medieval settlements in the county but there has not been a systematic study of the distribution of that material to examine the issue of hinterlands of the kiln sites and related issues of market hinterlands that this might also reveal.

OHP : Pottery production & woodland

The industry and priorities for future research have been briefly reviewed by Blinkhorn.

Blinkhorn, P, , 1996, *Policy Report on Saxon and Medieval Ceramics in Northamptonshire*, unpublished report for Northamptonshire Heritage.

Foard, G, 1991, The Medieval Pottery Industry of Rockingham Forest, Northamptonshire, *Medieval Ceramics*, 15, 13-20

Steane, J M, and Bryant, G F, 1975, >Excavations at the Deserted Medieval Settlement at Lyveden', *Journal of the Northampton Museum and Art Gallery*, 12.

Bellamy, D, 1983, >Medieval Pottery Kilns at Stanion', *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 18, 153-162.

Brown, K, 1993, >A Medieval Pottery Kiln at Yardley Hastings, Northamptonshire, *Northamptonshire*

10.3 Woollen cloth

Broadcloth production was probably the major industry in medieval Northamptonshire. It may have provided the main industrial base for the growth of Northampton and some or most of the small towns, but it is unclear how significant it was on a national or regional scale. Broadcloth required fulling, tentering and dyeing. Until the mid to late 13th century fulling was manual and will have been within the settlements. It continued thus in some boroughs, possibly in Northampton after the introduction of the fulling mill. However the later 13th century saw the flight of the industry from Northampton and other major towns including Leicester, Stamford and Coventry. It is unclear whether this was simply a flight to the small towns and rural areas, but it continued in existence through to the first half of the 17th century.

Fulling mills, tentering places and dyeworks provide the documentary potential to locate the industry, though much of the evidence immediately available comes from the post medieval period. There is a high priority for a wide scale documentary study to identify the industrial base within rural settlements to enable the better targeting of archaeological work. Archaeologically fulling mills and dyeworks should be relatively easily identified, though their small numbers within the medieval landscape of the village may render them difficult to locate without documentary evidence. Scarlet Well Street, Northampton probably locates dyeworks in Northampton, perhaps significantly in the north west part of the town which showed the greatest degree of depopulation in 1610. Post medieval dyeworks are also known from documentary in Brigstock and Wellingborough with only the late 13th century dyeworks in Kettering known from the medieval documents outside Northampton. Similarly medieval fulling and tentering known from documentary evidence in Northampton but medieval fulling mills have been identified in documentary sources from only a handful of other places, including Wellingborough and Kettering. Before the later 13th century manual fulling will have taken place in tenements while other elements of the industry such as shearing should be identifiable from artefacts, as with the shears recovered from the Brackley Castle Lane excavation, again perhaps significantly an area of the greatest depopulation in that town.

OHP : Fulling mills and tentering sites

10.4 Other industries

Other textile production may be expected on a smaller scale, for there are records of flaxlands in places such as Higham Ferrers and Kettering., flax retting evidence has been excavated at West Cotton and linen shops are recorded from 14th century Higham Ferrers.

Leatherworking may have overtaken cloth production as the most important industry in the county by the 16th century as it certainly had in Northampton, but the scale of the industry in the medieval period is not well understood. Leather was tanned and otherwise processed not only for production of shoes but also for gloves and other goods.

In particular villages the production of building materials, notably high quality stone and stone slates were major components of the economy. Weldon was a major stone produce with important masons in the medieval period while Helmdon was another important production village. These both continued in production into the post medieval and most of the earthwork evidence may be post medieval. There may be other extensive stone quarries, as at Charlton but where the documentary evidence has never been explored.

Stone slate production was most intensively developed at Collyweston and Easton on the Hill, but other production centres are known including from the Northampton and Brackley areas.

In the post medieval both at Weldon and Collyweston the quarrying took place in the open field, with at Weldon even cottages apparently being constructed in association with the quarries. Whereas the landscape around Weldon has been largely destroyed by modern mineral extraction the medieval quarries may be extant amongst post medieval earthworks at Helmdon, Collyweston and Easton and in some other townships. There has been no archaeological investigation of these medieval industries, even the mapping of the earthworks, nor any significant documentary research.

Steane, J M, 1967, '>Building Materials used in Northamptonshire and the Area Around', *Northamptonshire Past and Present*, 4, 71-80.

Helmdon medieval stone working origins is briefly discussed in Parry, E G, '>Helmdon Stone', *Northamptonshire Past and Present*, 7, 258-269.

10.5 Corn Mills

Corn mills were an almost ubiquitous manorial appurtenance with 168 already recorded in 1086. The appearance of windmills to supplement the water mills is seen increasingly with the growth of population and arable agricultural production from the 12th century onwards. There are a number of mill mounds surviving as earthworks and a few levelled sites recognised from cropmarks but because windmill continued to be built through the post medieval distinguishing medieval from later mills can be very difficult. Most watermill sites probably continued in use into the post medieval and so medieval mills are difficult to identify. In addition some watermills existed for other industrial purposes, related to fulling and possibly also forges for the iron industry. Very few mills of any type are recorded on the SMR and most mill sites are known purely from documentary sources. The least well represented are the horse mills, though these are usually malt mills, one of which may have been excavated at Daventry.

With water mills especially the identification of sites, like that fully excavated at West Cotton, which were disused during the medieval period is crucial for the recovery of well preserved evidence. A windmill has been fully excavated at Lamport and another examined at Strixton.

OHP : Domesday watermills

????, 1956, 'Lamport', *Journal of the Northamptonshire Natural History Society & Field Club*, 33, 66-79.
Strixton mill - Hall, D, '>A 13th Century Windmill Site at Strixton', *Bedfordshire Archaeological Journal*, 8, 109-118.

11. ADMINISTRATION

The shire, administered from Northampton, was defined in the late Saxon period and remained largely unchanged in extent until the late 19th century. It was divided into 27 Hundreds in 1086, including the Soke of Peterborough, reorganised to 26 thereafter with only 20 surviving into the 19th century. While various of the major estate centres were hundredal manors the hundred moots were typically in isolated locations, with six possibly associated with burial mounds although only one is confirmed archaeologically, or other distinctive topographical features such as groves. The archaeology of these sites has not been examined but should be a research priority.

The smallest administrative unit was the township or vill, used for taxation purposes. Many aspects of administration and law were implemented at a manorial level but purpose built moot halls are only typically found in towns where separate market courts were held, and in the three self governing boroughs, Northampton, Brackley and Higham, where borough courts were held. There is no standing medieval example, but the sites of a number of moot halls are known in market places in the main towns. Lockups are occasionally found with the markets, but there is no surviving example of medieval date. The vast majority of manors had lesser punishment places including stocks, pillory, ducking stool and a number of examples, some probably of medieval origin survive. Some manors also had the right of a gallows but only a few gallows sites, typically on main roads away from the settlements and sometimes set on mounds, have been located from documentary sources and no systematic survey has been conducted.

OHP : hundred and moot

12. MILITARY

There is evidence for at least 36 castles and fortified manor houses in Northamptonshire. Most will have been constructed in the late 11th and 12th centuries with only a few continuing in military use through the medieval period. There are 5 ringworks and 16 mottes and bailey castles. 3 were stone castles probably from the outset while a number of the ringwork and motte castles also acquired stone defences wholly or in part. At least 7 sites of possible castles known from placenames or unconfirmed archaeological evidence. There may be a very small number of additional castles awaiting discovery but any such castles are likely to be minor defensive sites beneath existing settlements.

There are 7 well defined fortified manor houses, but a significantly larger number probably exist but are not identified or classified as such on the SMR.

Three of the most important castles, Northampton (king);, Rockingham (king and dukes of Cornwall) and Higham Ferrers (Duchy of Lancaster), are well documented, but most castles are poorly documented including several which are completely unrecorded, some of which may have been erected in the civil of 1139-1141. The undocumented sites however include several castles like Castle Dykes which had substantial stone structures and like Weedon Lois which was an important estate centre. It was only in the early 1970's that Thrapston Castle was identified and hence several other sites may still await identification, as for example at Irthlingborough where an 18th century document refers to the 'Castleyard' or Rothwell where there is a Castle Street. Some of the castles continued in use as manorial sites long after they ceased to function as defensive sites, for example at Towcester.

Reconstruction of both the road network and of estate patterns for the medieval period will be important in understanding the significance of the castles. More than most monuments castles will have a key relationship to the communications network, often taking important strategic locations, such as Lilbourne. The handful of castles built in isolated locations, like Castle Dykes and Fineshade also probably served such functions, though the latter also seems to have controlled an important ironworking area. Other castles were clearly built simply at estate centres, as with Higham Ferrers and Brackley. Indeed all the main towns in the county, except those held by monastic houses, have a substantial castle (Northampton, Brackley, Towcester, Thrapston, Higham Ferrers and possibly Rothwell) as do a significant number of the market villages (Rockingham, Fotheringhay, Long Buckby, Lilbourne, Culworth, Wollaston, Barnwell). This seems to be a clear reflection of the coincidence of castles with manorial centres of major lords who were the main driving force behind market and town foundation.

OHP : castles and roads

17 of the true castles survive wholly or as substantially intact earthworks. All surviving earthwork sites have been surveyed, mainly by the RCHM, but in some cases more detailed earthwork survey could yield further detail. Only two castles have surviving standing structures, at *Barnwell* where the whole circuit is almost completely intact and at *Rockingham* where the gatehouse and a few fragments of wall are all that now stand, in addition to certain interior buildings. At *Fotheringhay* ancillary buildings (the Old Inn and the New Inn) survive outside the defences. At *Thorpe Waterville* the great hall and possibly part of another structure still stand.

Major modern excavations have taken place at *Sulgrave* (still unpublished). Lesser investigations at *Northampton* with small scale work at *Long Buckby* and *Barnwell*. Large scale antiquarian salvage recording took place at *Northampton*. Fortified manors have not received significant attention, except for the extensive Titchmarsh excavation in the late 19th century.

A brief summary of the evidence for Northamptonshire castles is in Foard, G, 1987, *Northamptonshire Castles*, unpublished report for Northamptonshire Archaeology Unit.

Giggins, B, 1999, *Northampton Castle*, MA dissertation, University of Leicester.

Chapman, A, *Excavations at Northampton Castle*...., unpublished excavation report, copy in SMR.

Klingelhoffer, E, 1983, 'Rockingham Castle in 1250', *Northamptonshire Past and Present*, 7, 11-25.

Audouy, M, 1993, 'Excavations at Barnwell Castle, Northants, 1980', *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 25, 123-126.

Giggins, B, 1986, *Barnwell Castle Survey 1980-85*, *South Midlands Archaeology*, 16, 79-84.

Wadenhoe, possibly a fortified manor: Challands, A, 1996, 'The Geophysical Survey at Church Hill, Wadenhoe, Northamptonshire : A Medieval Manorial Site', *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 27, 177.

12.1 Urban defences

The burh defences of *Northampton* may have been retained until the early 12th century but the town had expanded extensively beyond these defences and may have removed part if not all of them by the time that the town defences were constructed, in the early 12th century. The circuit of the defences is defined on all but the west and a part of the south side in Speed's map of 1610. The detailed sequence of construction and refurbishment have been examined in two sections on the south west part of the town where burh, medieval and English Civil War defences coincide but

East Midlands Archaeological Research Framework: Resource Assessment of Medieval Northamptonshire elsewhere they are very poorly understood and imprecisely located.⁷ The potential for evidence associated with the 1267 siege of the town should be borne in mind.

There is no evidence to suggest that the burh defences of *Towcester* retained any defensive function in the medieval period but nowhere have they been adequately investigated archaeologically and so the possibility that they were briefly reused in the early medieval period, in association with the castle, cannot be dismissed at present.

The exact location, character and chronology of the medieval defences of Northampton are a major research theme within the town.

12.2 Battles & Sieges

OHP Battles & Sieges (/military/ medieval battles and sieges)

There were three major military engagements in Northamptonshire in the medieval period, the first the major siege of the town and castle of Northampton during the rebellion of Simon de Montfort in 1264, then two important battles in the 1460s during the Wars of the Roses. In addition Rockingham Castle was taken back by siege by the king in circa 1220 but the scale of the action is uncertain.⁸ Other lesser engagements may have occurred, particularly sieges connected with the various castles, but no significant actions have been identified in this assessment, although one potential interpretation for the second castle at Lilbourne is that it represents a siege castle.

12.2.1 Siege of Northampton, April 1264

The town and castle were besieged by the king's forces in 1264, in the first major action of the Barons' Revolt, when Northampton was held for Simon de Montfort. The town was stormed by a major royalist force in one of the most important actions of the war. A monument, supposedly related to the siege was found in the town in the 19th century but no other evidence related to the siege has been recovered. Apart from a small section of floodplain at the north west corner where the main attack was made, and in Becketts Park, the whole area around the circuit of defences has been built up and so other than evidence from the defences themselves it is unlikely that significant evidence of the siege will be recoverable.

Treharne, R F, 1955, 'The Battle of Northampton, 5th April, 1264', *Northamptonshire Past and Present*, 2, 73-90.

12.2.2 Battle of Northampton, 10 July 1460

The battle saw the king captured by the Yorkists. The engagement took place primarily in the area of Delapre Park on the south side of the town. Though there has been some landscaping associated with the park and more recently following its conversion to a golf course, there is a high potential for survival of archaeological evidence. The presence of an earthwork called the Battle Dyke, probably a park pale, used in the battle provides a potential for a substantial buried archaeological feature, recorded in later terriers of the field system, to be located to give a clear topographical framework for the battle. Extensive artefact distributions from the battle may survive across the park, but there has been no survey to determine potential. A reassessment has been conducted in connection with and following incorporation in the Battlefields Register, but further detailed documentary research for topographical reconstruction is required. No archaeological survey has ever been undertaken, but the potential appears high.

OHP : Battlefield plan

Smurthwaite, D, 199?, *Northampton 1460*, unpublished report for English Heritage. A supplementary assessment redefining the likely extent of the battlefield prior to designation: Foard, G, 199?, *The Battle of Northampton 1460*, unpublished report for Northamptonshire Heritage.

12.2.3 Battle of Edgcote, 26 July 1469

A major battle of the war, in which the king's forces were heavily defeated. The exact location of the battle is disputed but there is a high probability that the traditional site is correct. No comprehensive reconstruction of the medieval landscape has been conducted from archaeological and documentary evidence and this is urgently required if the documented events are to be located within the landscape. It may also be essential to conduct a systematic metal detecting survey to be able to accurately locate the events and define the area of archaeological significance. A mass grave was recorded in 19th century on edge of village might represent a battle related grave pit but far from

⁷ Chapman, A, forthcoming, 'Green Street Excavations', *Northamptonshire Archaeology*, 28.

⁸ Klingelhoff, E, 1984, Rockingham Castle in 1250, NP&P, 7, 16 n35.

East Midlands Archaeological Research Framework: Resource Assessment of Medieval Northhamptonshire
certain - description appears more like a regular cemetery but it some distance from church so can't be related to that.⁹

OHP : battlefield plan

Haigh, P A, 1997, *Where Both Hosts Fought : The Rebellions of 1469-1470 and the Battles of Edgcote and Lose-Cote-Field*, 32-57.

Smurthwaite, D, 199?, *Edgecote 1469*, unpublished report for English Heritage.

The existence of two battlefields where there is a high potential for survival of evidence both of the contemporary historic landscape and of archaeological evidence in the form of artefact scatters (which may yield important evidence as to the location, scale and character of the fighting) and of burials associated with the action, makes the definition of the extent of the battlefields a major research objective to enable the archaeological potential to be conserved for future. The archaeological potential of medieval battlefields and a methodology for their systematic archaeological investigation has not been adequately defined nationally. In the absence of this it is impossible to adequately define an archaeological research agenda for these battlefields and particularly the parameters for systematic metal detecting survey. However, detailed reconstruction of the historical topography from archaeological and documentary sources is an essential prerequisite for any further detailed study.

The potential for Northampton siege may be very low, but at Rockingham there is a high potential, if major action occurred as a wide area around the castle is not built up. There is also the need to consider the context of well preserved landscapes around other castle sites to determine if sieges have occurred, but first the nature of any archaeological evidence for sieges in the medieval must be established by surveys of known, well preserved siege sites elsewhere.

Glenn Foard Northamptonshire Heritage 7-12-99

⁹ Northamptonshire SMR, monument 21.