A man in a blue t-shirt and brown shorts is operating a ground-penetrating radar (GPR) device in a field. The device is mounted on a wooden frame with two handles. A white cable runs from the device across the field. In the background, there is a large stone castle ruin on a hillside. The sky is overcast.

# CASTLES, SIEGEWORKS AND SETTLEMENTS

## SURVEYING THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE TWELFTH CENTURY

Edited by  
**Duncan W. Wright**  
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Cover: Geophysical survey being undertaken at the Rings, Corfe Castle, Dorset. Photo: Oliver Creighton



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# Contents

<b>List of Figures</b> .....	v
<b>List of Tables</b> .....	ix
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	xi
<b>Chapter 1 Introduction: Surveying the Archaeology of Twelfth-Century England</b> .....	1
Civil War in King Stephen’s Reign.....	1
Approaches, Methodologies and Challenges.....	2
The Structure of this Volume.....	4
<b>Chapter 2 Burwell Castle, Cambridgeshire</b> .....	6
Duncan Wright, Oliver Creighton, Steven Trick and Michael Fradley	
Abstract.....	6
Introduction.....	6
Historical and Archaeological Background.....	7
Prehistoric and Roman .....	7
Early Medieval.....	7
The Castle.....	8
Later Medieval and Post-Medieval.....	11
Map Analysis.....	11
Earthwork Description and Interpretation .....	13
Geophysical Survey Results and Interpretation .....	17
Magnetometry .....	17
Earth Resistance .....	17
Discussion .....	23
<b>Chapter 3 Castle Carlton, East Lindsey, Lincolnshire</b> .....	26
Duncan Wright, Steven Trick, Oliver Creighton, and Michael Fradley	
Abstract.....	26
Introduction .....	26
The Physical Setting .....	27
Archaeological and Historical Background.....	28
Map Analysis.....	30
Earthwork Description and Interpretation .....	30
Area A.....	31
Area B.....	32
Area C.....	34
Magnetometry Results and Interpretation .....	34
Discussion .....	35
Conclusion .....	39
<b>Chapter 4 Corfe, ‘The Rings’, Dorset</b> .....	40
Duncan Wright, Michael Fradley and Oliver Creighton	
Abstract.....	40
Introduction .....	40
Historical and Archaeological Background.....	40
Map Analysis.....	42
Earthwork Description and Interpretation .....	44
Geophysical Survey Results and Interpretation .....	44
Magnetometer .....	45
Earth Resistance Survey .....	45
LiDAR Analysis .....	47
Discussion .....	47
Summary.....	49

<b>Chapter 5 Crowmarsh Recreation Ground, South Oxfordshire</b> .....	49
Michael Fradley, Duncan Wright and Oliver Creighton	
Introduction .....	49
Historical and Archaeological Background.....	50
Map Analysis.....	51
Geophysical Survey Results and Interpretation .....	53
Earthwork Description and Interpretation .....	54
Discussion .....	55
<b>Chapter 6 Folly Hill, Faringdon, Oxfordshire</b> .....	57
Duncan Wright, Steven Trick and Oliver Creighton	
Summary.....	57
Introduction .....	57
Historical and Archaeological Background.....	58
Map Analysis.....	60
Geophysical Survey Results and Interpretation .....	61
Area A.....	64
Area B.....	64
Area C.....	65
Summary .....	65
Earthwork Description and Interpretation .....	65
Discussion .....	69
<b>Chapter 7 Hailes Camp, Gloucestershire</b> .....	71
Michael Fradley, Duncan Wright and Oliver Creighton	
Abstract.....	71
Introduction .....	72
Historical and Archaeological Background.....	72
Map Analysis.....	74
Archaeo-Topographical Survey at Hailes Camp .....	74
LiDAR Analysis.....	77
Discussion .....	79
Conclusion .....	79
<b>Chapter 8 Hamstead Marshall, Castle I, Berkshire</b> .....	82
Duncan Wright, Michael Fradley and Oliver Creighton	
Abstract.....	82
Introduction .....	82
Historical and Archaeological Background.....	82
Map Analysis.....	87
Earthwork Description and Interpretation .....	88
Geophysical Survey Results and Interpretation .....	92
Magnetometry .....	92
Earth Resistance .....	92
Discussion / Conclusion .....	94
<b>Chapter 9 Malmebury, ‘Cams’s Hill’, Wiltshire</b> .....	96
Duncan Wright, Michael Fradley and Oliver Creighton	
Summary.....	96
Introduction .....	96
Historical and Archaeological Background.....	96
Map Analysis.....	99
Geophysical Survey Results and Interpretation .....	100

Magnetometry .....	100
Earth Resistance .....	100
Earthwork Description and Interpretation .....	100
Discussion .....	102
Conclusion .....	104
<b>Chapter 10 Mountsorrel, Leicestershire .....</b>	<b>105</b>
Steven Trick, Duncan Wright and Oliver Creighton	
Abstract.....	105
Introduction .....	105
Archaeological and Historical Background.....	107
Mountsorrel Castle.....	107
Mountsorrel Town.....	108
Earthwork Description and Interpretation .....	109
Upper Plateau .....	110
Lower Plateau .....	111
Earth Resistance Results and Interpretation.....	112
Discussion .....	113
Conclusion .....	116
Acknowledgements .....	116
<b>Chapter 11 Rampton, ‘Giant’s Hill’, Cambridgeshire .....</b>	<b>118</b>
Duncan Wright, Steven Trick and Oliver Creighton	
Abstract.....	118
Introduction .....	118
Historical and Archaeological Background.....	118
Map Analysis.....	120
Earthwork Description and Interpretation .....	121
Geophysical Survey: Methodology, Results and Interpretation.....	122
Area A.....	122
Area B.....	122
Area C.....	122
Summary.....	122
Discussion / Conclusion .....	123
<b>Chapter 12 Wellow, Nottinghamshire .....</b>	<b>130</b>
Steven Trick, Duncan Wright and Oliver Creighton	
Abstract.....	130
Introduction .....	130
Historical and Archaeological Background.....	131
Map Analysis.....	132
Earth Resistance Survey: Results and Interpretation .....	133
Stonebank .....	133
Unnamed field, south of St Swithin’s church .....	133
Summary .....	134
Earthwork Description and Interpretation .....	134
Gorge Dyke.....	134
Nine Lanes.....	140
Woodside Farm .....	140
Northern Hollow Way .....	141
Jordan’s Castle.....	141
Moat Farm.....	142
Other earthworks.....	142
Discussion .....	143
Conclusion .....	145

<b>Chapter 13 Woodwalton, ‘Church End’, Cambridgeshire.....</b>	<b>146</b>
Duncan Wright, Michael Fradley and Oliver Creighton	
Abstract.....	146
Introduction.....	146
The Castle .....	148
Historical and Archaeological Context .....	148
Map Analysis.....	149
Earthwork Description and Interpretation.....	150
Magnetometry Results and Interpretation.....	152
Discussion .....	153
<b>Chapter 14 Conclusion .....</b>	<b>156</b>
Surveying the Civil War: Results and Implications .....	156
The Future of the Anarchy: Further Research Avenues .....	158
<b>References .....</b>	<b>160</b>
Abbreviations.....	160
Primary Sources.....	160
Secondary Sources.....	161

# List of Figures

Figure 1.1: Magnetometry survey underway at Folly Hill, Faringdon, Oxfordshire, during the War and Status project. ....	3
Figure 1.2: Resistivity survey being carried out for the War and Status project at the Rings, Corfe Castle, Dorset. ....	3
Figure 1.3: Topographical survey using differential GPS at Burwell castle, Cambridgeshire, for the War and Status project. ....	4
Figure 2.1: The location of Burwell in southern Britain and the survey area in its local landscape. ....	6
Figure 2.2: Lethbridge leading excavations in the castle ditch at Burwell, 1935. ....	10
Figure 2.3: Stone building foundations, apparently of medieval date, excavated by Lethbridge in the 1930s. ....	10
Figure 2.4: Photograph of Burwell castle during the 1930s, looking south east. ....	12
Figure 2.5: Burwell castle today, looking west across the moat towards the parish church. ....	12
Figure 2.6: Enclosure map of Burwell castle and the surrounding landscape (dated 1817). ....	13
Figure 2.7: Tithe Map of Burwell (dated 1842) showing the site of the castle as a rectilinear enclosure covered in vegetation. ...	14
Figure 2.8: OS First Edition 25" of Burwell castle, dated to 1890. ....	14
Figure 2.9: Hachured earthwork plan of Burwell castle. ....	15
Figure 2.10: Annotated hachured plan of Burwell castle. ....	15
Figure 2.11: Results of magnetometry survey overlaid on earthwork survey at Burwell castle. ....	18
Figure 2.12: Interpretive plan of anomalies identified by magnetometry survey at Burwell castle. ....	19
Figure 2.13: Results of the earth resistance survey overlaid on earthwork survey at Burwell castle. ....	20
Figure 2.14: Interpretive plan of anomalies identified by resistance survey at Burwell castle. ....	21
Figure 3.1: Castle Carlton in the local landscape and its position within central England. ....	26
Figure 3.2: View across the deserted site of Castle Carlton 'new town', looking west, with the tree-covered earthworks of the castle. ..	27
Figure 3.3: OS First Edition 25" of Castle Carlton. ....	30
Figure 3.4: The three topographic survey areas at Castle Carlton. ....	31
Figure 3.5: Earthwork plan of Castle Carlton. ....	32
Figure 3.6: Annotated earthwork plan of Survey Area A at Castle Carlton. ....	32
Figure 3.7: Annotated earthwork plan of Survey Area B at Castle Carlton. ....	33
Figure 3.8: Annotated earthwork plan of Survey Area C at Castle Carlton. ....	35
Figure 3.9: Magnetometry survey plot of Castle Carlton. ....	36
Figure 3.10: Interpretation of anomalies identified by magnetometry survey at Castle Carlton. ....	36
Figure 3.11: Viewshed map from a 2m elevation from the top of the motte at Castle Carlton. ....	37
Figure 4.1: The situation of the Rings in relation to Corfe Castle, and the location of Corfe Castle in southern Britain. ....	41
Figure 4.2: The Rings, looking south. ....	41
Figure 4.3: Detail from 1775 Estate Map of the Corfe Castle area. ....	43
Figure 4.4: Ordnance Survey First Edition map of the Rings, published in 1889. ....	43
Figure 4.5: Hachured earthworks plan of the Rings. ....	44
Figure 4.6: Magnetometry survey being carried out at the Rings. ....	45
Figure 4.7: Magnetometry survey plot of the Rings overlaid on hachured earthwork plan. ....	46
Figure 4.8: Interpretation of magnetometry survey at the Rings overlaid on hachured earthwork plan. ....	46
Figure 4.9: Earth resistance survey plot of the Rings overlaid on hachured earthwork plan. ....	46
Figure 4.10: Interpretation of earth resistance survey at the Rings overlaid on hachured earthwork plan. ....	46
Figure 4.11: LiDAR hillshade model of the Rings and surrounding landscape. ....	48

Figure 5.1: The location of Crowmarsh within southern Britain and in the local landscape .....	49
Figure 5.2: The survey area in relation to the excavated ditch of ‘Crowmarsh Castle’ identified on the Lister Wilder site to the south-west .....	51
Figure 5.3: OS First Edition 25” (dated 1878) of the western part of Crowmarsh .....	52
Figure 5.4: OS First Edition Second Revision 25” of Crowmarsh, dated 1912 .....	52
Figure 5.5: Magnetometer survey plot of Crowmarsh Recreation Ground .....	53
Figure 5.6: Interpretation of anomalies identified by magnetometry survey at Crowmarsh Recreation Ground.....	53
Figure 5.7: Results of the Crowmarsh Recreation Club magnetometer survey with the ditch of the twelfth-century siegework excavated at the Lister-Wilder site .....	54
Figure 5.8: Archaeology of the Wallingford bridgehead area, showing earthworks, key sites and geophysical anomalies .....	55
Figure 6.1: Location of Folly Hill, Faringdon, in the local landscape and in southern Britain .....	57
Figure 6.2: OS First Edition 25” map showing Folly Hill, Faringdon, published in 1876–7.....	60
Figure 6.3: OS First Edition Revision 25” map showing Folly Hill, Faringdon, published in 1899 .....	61
Figure 6.4: ‘Faringdon Folly’. Major G.W.G Allen Collection .....	62
Figure 6.5: Geophysical survey areas and the location of surveyed grids at Folly Hill, Faringdon.....	62
Figure 6.6: Composite magnetometry results at Folly Hill, Faringdon, with PHF Archaeology Ltd survey overlaid .....	63
Figure 6.7: Magnetometry results from Area A at Folly Hill, Faringdon. ....	63
Figure 6.8: Interpretive plot of anomalies recognised in Area A at Folly Hill, Faringdon.....	66
Figure 6.9: Magnetometry results from Area B at Folly Hill, Faringdon. ....	66
Figure 6.10: Interpretive plot of anomalies recognised in Area B at Folly Hill, Faringdon.....	67
Figure 6.11: Magnetometry results from Area C at Folly Hill, Faringdon .....	67
Figure 6.12: Interpretive plot of anomalies recognised in Survey Area C. ....	68
Figure 6.13: Hachured topographic plan of the earthworks on the summit of Folly Hill. ....	68
Figure 6.14: Plan of excavations at Folly Hill, Faringdon, carried out by Leeds in 1936 overlaid on earthwork plan. ....	69
Figure 7.1: Location of Hailes Camp in southern Britain (inset) and in the local landscape.....	71
Figure 7.2: Hailes as depicted on the OS 25”First Edition map, published in 1884. ....	73
Figure 7.3: Hailes as depicted in the OS 25” First Edition, First Revision, published in 1902. ....	73
Figure 7.4: ‘Hayles Camp’ as surveyed in 1840 by Sir Henry Dryden in 1840, from a copy made in 1888.....	75
Figure 7.5: Hailes as depicted on the OS 1:2500 map, published in 1975.....	75
Figure 7.6: Archaeo-topographical plan of Hailes Camp. ....	76
Figure 7.7: Annotated survey of Hailes Camp. ....	76
Figure 7.8: LiDAR hillshade plot of Hailes Camp.....	77
Figure 7.9: LiDAR hillshade of the Hailes landscape.....	78
Figure 7.10: LiDAR hillshade of the Hailes landscape with interpretation. ....	78
Figure 7.11: Viewshed analysis of Hailes Camp.....	80
Figure 7.12: View from the west of the parish church of Hailes, originally constructed by Ralph of Worcester during the twelfth century. ....	80
Figure 8.1: The location of the surveyed site, Hamstead Marshall Castle, I in southern Britain and in Hamstead Marshall Park. ....	83
Figure 8.2: The site of Castle I, Hamstead Marshall, in the local landscape .....	83
Figure 8.3: View of the surveyed site of Hamstead Marshall Castle I, looking north. ....	84
Figure 8.4: Castles II and III and the parish church of Hamstead Marshall, St Mary’s.....	85
Figure 8.5: Hamstead Marshall Castle II, looking north.....	85
Figure 8.6: Matthias Baker’s 1775 map of Hamstead Marshall.....	87

Figure 8.7: 1840 Tithe Map showing the Hamstead Marshall Estate. ....	88
Figure 8.8: OS First Edition 25", published in 1880. ....	89
Figure 8.9: OS 25" map from 1969 showing the site, now labelled as 'Mound'. ....	89
Figure 8.10: Early photograph of Castle I, Hamstead Marshall, looking east. ....	90
Figure 8.11: Annotated earthwork plan of Castle I, Hamstead Marshall. ....	91
Figure 8.12: Results of the magnetometry survey at Castle I, Hamstead Marshall, plotted against the hachured earthwork plan. ....	92
Figure 8.13: Interpretive plot of magnetometry survey of Castle I, Hamstead Marshall. ....	92
Figure 8.14: Results of the earth resistance survey at Castle I, Hamstead Marshall, overlaid on hachured earthwork plan. ....	93
Figure 8.15: Interpretation of anomalies identified by earth resistance survey at Castle I, Hamstead Marshall. ....	93
Figure 8.16: Viewshed analysis for Castle I, Hamstead Marshall. ....	95
Figure 9.1: The location of Cam's Hill in southern Britain and in relation to Malmesbury. ....	97
Figure 9.2: The Cam's Hill ringwork looking south-east. ....	98
Figure 9.3: Aerial view of Cam's Hill, looking north-west. ....	98
Figure 9.4: 1886 OS First Edition of Cam's Hill. ....	99
Figure 9.5: Earth resistance plot of Cam's Hill. ....	101
Figure 9.6: Interpretation of earth resistance survey at Cam's Hill. ....	101
Figure 9.7: Annotated hachured earthwork plan of Cam's Hill. ....	102
Figure 9.8: LiDAR hillshade image of the Cam's Hill landscape. ....	103
Figure 9.9: Viewshed diagrams of Cam's Hill at 0m elevation, 2m elevation, 5m elevation, and 7m elevation. ....	104
Figure 10.1: Location of Mountsorrel in the local landscape and in Britain. ....	105
Figure 10.2: OS First Edition 25" map of 1884 showing Mountsorrel. ....	106
Figure 10.3: Map of George Watkinson Estates (1816), including Mountsorrel Castle. ....	109
Figure 10.4: Annotated plan of earthworks at Castle Hill, Mountsorrel. ....	110
Figure 10.5: View across upper plateau of Mountsorrel castle from south to north, showing the prominent mound. ....	111
Figure 10.6: LiDAR Digital Terrain Model of Castle Hill revealing the extension of bank and ditch through Watling Street. ....	112
Figure 10.7: Location of the earth resistance survey grids on the upper and lower plateaux of Mountsorrel castle. ....	113
Figure 10.8: Results of the earth resistance survey in the upper plateau of Mountsorrel castle. ....	115
Figure 10.9: Anomalies within the resistance survey of the upper plateau of Mountsorrel castle. ....	115
Figure 10.10: Results of earth resistance survey of the lower plateau of Mountsorrel castle. ....	116
Figure 10.11: Anomalies in the resistance survey of the lower plateau of Mountsorrel castle. ....	116
Figure 10.12: Viewshed analysis from a theoretical tower 8m high on Castle Hill located where the war memorial currently stands. ....	117
Figure 11.1: Location of the survey area in the local landscape and Rampton in southern Britain. ....	119
Figure 11.2: OS First Edition 25" map of Rampton. ....	121
Figure 11.3: Annotated earthwork plan of Giant's Hill, Rampton. ....	122
Figure 11.4: Areas of geophysical survey at Giant's Hill, Rampton. ....	124
Figure 11.5: Results of the earth resistance survey at Giant's Hill, Rampton. ....	124
Figure 11.6: Area A earth resistance results at Giant's Hill, Rampton. ....	125
Figure 11.7: Interpretation of anomalies in Area A at Giant's Hill, Rampton. ....	125
Figure 11.8: Earth resistance results in Area B at Giant's Hill, Rampton. ....	126
Figure 11.9: Interpretation of anomalies in Area B at Giant's Hill, Rampton. ....	126
Figure 11.10: Anomalies identified in Area C at Giant's Hill, Rampton. ....	127
Figure 11.11: Viewshed of Giant's Hill, Rampton. The dot represents the observer, located at an elevation of 2m. ....	128

Figure 12.1: The location of Wellow within southern Britain (inset), and in the local landscape .....	130
Figure 12.2: Rufford parish showing the disappeared villages of Grimston, Cratley and Old Rufford, and the old line of the Great North Road .....	131
Figure 12.3: Plan elements of Wellow based on OS 25" First Edition mapping .....	133
Figure 12.4: View of Stonebank field.....	134
Figure 12.5: The location of the geophysical survey areas within Wellow village.....	136
Figure 12.6: The earth resistance survey results from Stonebank field, overlaid on hachured earthwork plan.....	137
Figure 12.7: Interpretation of the earth-resistance survey results at Stonebank field overlaid on hachured earthwork plan. ....	137
Figure 12.8: Earth resistance survey results of field south of St Swithin's churchyard. ....	138
Figure 12.9: Interpretation of the earth resistance survey results south of St Swithin's church overlaid on hachured earthwork plan. ....	138
Figure 12.10: The profile of Gorge Dyke as recorded by topographic survey.....	139
Figure 12.11: Earthwork survey being undertaken in the back garden adjacent to Stonebank field, looking north-east. ....	139
Figure 12.12: Surface model of the southeast section of the Gorge Dyke earthwork .....	140
Figure 12.13: Ridge and furrow earthworks in Nine Lanes field.....	141
Figure 12.14: Earthworks recorded at Woodside Farm, and the hollow way on Wellow Green .....	142
Figure 12.15: Surface model of earthworks at Moat Farm. Inset: model in 3D .....	143
Figure 13.1: Location of Church End, Woodwalton, in southern Britain, and within the local landscape.....	147
Figure 13.2: View over the Church End earthworks, looking north and showing the site traditionally identified as the vestiges of a motte and bailey castle on a low hilltop. ....	147
Figure 13.3: 1840 Tithe Map of Church End and surrounding landscape .....	149
Figure 13.4: OS First Edition 25" map (1888) of the Church End earthworks and the surrounding landscape .....	150
Figure 13.5: OS Second Revision 25" map (1926) of the Church End earthworks and the surrounding landscape .....	151
Figure 13.6: Earthwork plan of Church End.....	151
Figure 13.7: Annotated earthwork plan of Church End.....	152
Figure 13.8: Plot of magnetometry results at Church End, overlaid on hachured earthwork plan. ....	153
Figure 13.9: Interpretation of magnetometry survey at Church End. ....	154
Figure 13.10: Interpretive plan of earthworks at Church End. ....	155

## List of Tables

Table 2.1: Description and interpretation of magnetometry anomalies at Burwell castle.....	17
Table 2.2: Description and interpretation of earth resistance anomalies at Burwell castle.....	22
Table 3.1: Description and interpretation of magnetometry anomalies at Castle Carlton.....	35
Table 4.1: Description and interpretation of anomalies identified by earth resistance survey at the Rings.....	47
Table 6.1: Description and interpretation of anomalies identified during magnetometer survey at Folly Hill. (1).....	64
Table 6.1: Description and interpretation of anomalies identified during magnetometer survey at Folly Hill. (2).....	65
Table 10.1: Description and interpretation of earth resistance survey anomalies identified at Castle Hill, Mountsorrel.....	114
Table 11.1: Description and interpretation of geophysical anomalies at Giant’s Hill, Rampton.....	123
Table 12.1: Description and interpretation of earth resistance anomalies identified at Wellow.....	135



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This volume is dedicated to Elizabeth, and in memory of Daniel.



# Chapter 1

## Introduction: Surveying the Archaeology of Twelfth-Century England

This volume comprises twelve reports detailing fieldwork undertaken by a research project which sought to assess the archaeological evidence of the period of conflict that took place in mid-twelfth-century England popularly known as ‘the Anarchy’. The reign of King Stephen (AD 1135–54) was characterised by a protracted struggle for power between forces loyal to the crown and those who supported the Angevin claim of his cousin and rival, the Empress Matilda. Alongside a succession of bitter rebellions the war also saw large-scale Scottish invasions into, and occupation of, large parts of northern England as well as border warfare on the marches between England and Wales and a struggle for control of Normandy. While the period is infamous for the proliferation of conflict, castle-building and siege warfare, and for a breakdown of royal government, its characterisation as ‘the Anarchy’ is now challenged by historians (see Crouch 2000).

As previous understanding of this tumultuous period had rested almost entirely upon interpretation of written sources, *Anarchy? War and Status in Twelfth-Century Landscapes of Conflict* was a programme of research which systematically studied the archaeology of mid-twelfth century England for the first time. Carried out by a team from the University of Exeter and funded by the Leverhulme Trust, *War and Status* placed material culture at the vanguard of research, with the aim of not merely enhancing historical narratives but also seeking to challenge views derived from the written record. Assessment of the material culture relating to the period was undertaken via a series of different avenues and at a variety of scales, the results from which form the basis of the Liverpool University Press volume *The Anarchy: War and Status in 12th-century Landscapes of Conflict* (Creighton and Wright 2016). The reader is referred to this separate, thematically structured, volume for detailed discussion and synthesis of the total material evidence for the period, viewed within its historical context; it extends to cover the conflict’s historical geography, landscapes, military and everyday material culture (including coins), castles, churches, monasteries and settlements. A major component of the project was the targeted archaeological investigation of selected case study locations across England. Geophysical and topographic surveys were supplemented with archival, documentary and cartographic analyses in order to reveal the character and chronological development of a sample of potential Anarchy-period sites and landscapes. The current volume represents the product of these endeavours. It does not duplicate the content of the Liverpool University Press volume *The Anarchy: War and Status*, but rather presents self-contained reports of the sites where these investigations took place, arranged alphabetically.

### Civil War in King Stephen’s Reign

The infamously turbulent reign of King Stephen is exceptionally well covered by historians, so only a brief outline of events is necessary here. Scholars of the period have produced biographies of the king (Davis 1967; Cronne 1970; Crouch 2000; Mathew 2002; King 2010; Watkins 2015), and of the Empress Matilda (Chibnall 1991); collections of essays and thematic studies of the period (Stringer 1993; Dalton and White 2008); compilations of charters (Cronne and Davis 1968); and military studies of events (Bradbury 1998). The disorder and rebellion which arose during Stephen’s reign ultimately derived from a disputed succession to the English throne, triggered in 1135 by the death of Henry I. Fifteen years before his death, Henry’s only legitimate male heir, William Adelin, had drowned in The White Ship Disaster. Having failed to produce further male issue, Henry attempted to secure the succession for his only surviving legitimate child, the Empress Matilda. Encouraging leading nobles to swear support for Matilda’s assumption to the throne, Henry hoped to ensure a smooth transition for his daughter, who had married Geoffrey of Anjou following the death of her first husband, the Holy Roman Emperor Henry V. When Henry I died, however, his nephew Stephen of Blois sailed to England and was quickly crowned, on 22 December 1135. Rescinding their earlier pledges, many of the nobles who had previously sworn support to Matilda instead backed Stephen’s new claim, at least initially.

In spite of the general support of many leading magnates, Stephen’s assumption to the throne was far from straightforward. From the outset of his reign Stephen had to repel attacks in the north from King David I of Scots, who was both Matilda’s uncle and an ardent support of her cause. In addition to the incursions of the Scottish forces, which clashed with an English army in the largest pitched battle of Stephen’s reign near Northallerton, North Yorkshire, in 1138, Stephen struggled to secure southern England and Normandy as nobles began to take advantage of a perceived vacuum of power. A more comprehensive state of political unrest came in September 1139, however, when Matilda landed at Arundel with her step brother Robert of Gloucester with the hope of raising support for her cause. Stephen struggled for power with the Angevins in several complex phases of conflict over the next fourteen years until the summer of 1153, when the Treaty of Winchester recognised the king’s supremacy while acknowledging

the Empress' son Henry of Anjou as Stephen's heir to the throne. While the peace agreement appears to have been precarious, a more comprehensive resolution to the war came following the death of Stephen a little over a year after the treaty, leaving Henry of Anjou to be crowned as Henry II at Westminster in December 1154.

A somewhat surprising feature of the conflict is that despite its long duration it witnessed only two significant pitched battles, at Lincoln (1141) and Northallerton (also known as the Battle of the Standard, 1138). The documentary evidence instead highlights how the warfare of the period was characterised by sieges, raids and landscape devastation, while the overall strategic landscape was dominated by defended towns and, especially, castles, many of them newly built or strengthened by lords anxious to promote and protect their own interests in an uncertain political climate (for the military history of Stephen's reign, see Bradbury 1998). Episodes of siege and counter-siege were a regular occurrence as forces from both sides attacked and blockaded rival castles and settlements, frequently for protracted periods of time. The prominence of castles and siege warfare in the conflict renders it a period of significant archaeological potential. The *War and Status* research programme was developed in order to tap into this potential, with an approach that placed investigative fieldwork at the centre of our understanding.

### Approaches, Methodologies and Challenges

Attempting to investigate sites and landscapes of a period which by its very nature is defined by written texts presents a number of challenges, not least the difficulty of dating material to a discrete twenty-year window of time. While the written record often provides us with the specific date at which key events took place as well furnishing us with details of the personalities and locations involved, it is frequently problematic to attribute archaeological evidence specifically to Stephen's reign — indeed it might be seen as misguided or naïve to attempt to do so. Even when such sites are subject to comprehensive open area excavation, archaeologists are reliant upon a small corpus of diagnostic artefacts, most notably coins, to date the phases of activity which they have revealed. As the fieldwork of the *War and Status* project comprised no excavation, even these few key material sources of phasing were not available to the investigators. The research team instead utilised documentary evidence and published sources to initially locate sites which were likely to have been a focus of significant activity during the Anarchy. Especially important in this respect were castles built or strengthened in the period, documented episodes of siege warfare that saw the construction of siege castles, and settlements known to have been established in the middle years of the twelfth century. Following initial desk-based assessments to assess preservation, accessibility and other logistical concerns, comprehensive archaeological investigations

were undertaken on a sample of locations selected to cover a range of site types and geographical areas. Even when documentary evidence indicates a likely Anarchy-period site, however, a frequently complicating factor is that these locations have usually witnessed later phases of use and remodelling. This proved to be the case even with those sites thought to have been rapidly abandoned after short periods of military activity in the mid-twelfth century. In addition to the deliberate slighting of many castles after the civil war by Henry II and his successors, many twelfth-century foci were subject to later developments which may have destroyed or altered Anarchy phases beyond recognition.

Research therefore has to consider that Anarchy-period activity often represents a brief phase within sites that commonly possess complex chronological sequences. The use of documentary evidence by medieval archaeologists has been widely critiqued since the early 1990s, with some scholars suggesting that archaeologists should eschew the written record almost entirely in order to develop an independent discipline (e.g. Austin 1990). Yet, even though archaeology must not play the role as the 'handmaiden of history' as it often has done in the past, an interdisciplinary methodology which places archaeology at the centre of our understanding represents the most productive means to best understand the lived experience of the civil war. Such an approach to research requires a critical attitude to the available evidence, and a willingness to accept the sometimes conflicting or contradictory picture derived from different sources.

With these conditions in mind, the *War and Status* project conducted a detailed investigation of twelve sites and landscapes across England, combining topographic and geophysical survey with a range of other studies. Geophysical survey comprised earth resistance and magnetometry investigation, with the application of techniques determined by factors such as geology and the size of the area to be investigated. Generally speaking, the rapid coverage available through magnetometry was used as an initial method of investigation, with earth resistance employed to target areas which were identified as of interest either by magnetometry assessment or topographic survey. As all but one of the sites included at least some areas that are Scheduled Monuments, archaeological assessment was undertaken as outlined in project designs submitted to Historic England (formerly English Heritage). The standards used to complete the geophysical survey were informed by those defined by English Heritage (2008) and the Institute for Archaeologists (2013) codes of approved practice. Geophysical surveys were usually conducted using 30m by 30m grids set out using a differential Global Positioning System (GPS). The collected geophysical data were processed using TerraSurveyor software, and exported to ESRI ArcGIS 10.2, where they were geo-referenced and interpolated.



FIGURE 1.1: MAGNETOMETRY SURVEY UNDERWAY AT FOLLY HILL, FARINGDON, OXFORDSHIRE, DURING THE WAR AND STATUS PROJECT. DOCUMENTARY SOURCES INDICATE THAT A NEWLY BUILT ANGEVIN CASTLE AT FARINGDON WAS THE FOCUS OF A MAJOR SIEGE BY KING STEPHEN THAT INVOLVED THE CONSTRUCTION OF SIEGEWORKS (THIS VOLUME, CHAPTER 6 FOR DISCUSSION).



FIGURE 1.2: RESISTIVITY SURVEY BEING CARRIED OUT FOR THE WAR AND STATUS PROJECT AT THE RINGS, CORFE CASTLE, DORSET. THE SITE IS LIKELY TO BE A SIEGE CASTLE BUILT BY KING STEPHEN AGAINST THE MAJOR CASTLE IN THE BACKGROUND, WHICH WAS HELD AGAINST THE KING (THIS VOLUME, CHAPTER 4 FOR DISCUSSION).



FIGURE 1.3: TOPOGRAPHICAL SURVEY USING DIFFERENTIAL GPS AT BURWELL CASTLE, CAMBRIDGESHIRE, FOR THE WAR AND STATUS PROJECT. THE EARTHWORKS IN THE BACKGROUND ARE HEAPS OF SPOIL CREATED DURING THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE MOAT OF AN UNFINISHED ROYAL CAMPAIGN CASTLE BUILT FOR KING STEPHEN ON THE FEN EDGE (THIS VOLUME, CHAPTER 2 FOR DISCUSSION).

The magnetometer surveys were completed using a Bartington Grad 601–2 (dual sensor) fluxgate gradiometer and automatic data logger (Figure 1.1). The survey methodology comprised a sampling interval of 0.25m of traverses 1.0m apart walked in zigzag fashion. The data were downloaded from the instrument using the Grad601 application and typically cleaned and clipped to give better contrast to the data. The earth resistance surveys were undertaken using a Geoscan RM15–D Resistance Meter in a twin-probe configuration, with the mobile probes set at a fixed distance of 0.5m apart (Figure 1.2). The sample interval was 0.5m and the traverse interval was 1m. The geophysical plots for each site are displayed in raw form, but interpretations of the anomalies identified by the survey team are also offered where appropriate. Topographic survey was undertaken using differential GPS (Figure 1.3), with point data downloaded into either Adobe Illustrator or ESRI ArcGIS 10.2 from which hachured plans, and sometimes digital terrain models, were created. Where available, this survey information was supplemented by Historic Environment Agency Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) data. These field surveys were complemented by consultation of relevant Historic Environment Records (HERs), local records offices and other archives in order to produce a comprehensive assessment of each site and landscape. Where utilised, HER and other

archive entries are referenced using an abbreviation (e.g. Cambs. HER) followed by a catalogue number accurate at the time of publication. The first fieldwork by the *War and Status* project was undertaken at Cam's Hill, Wiltshire, in early October 2013, with the final phase of investigation conducted at Castle Carlton, Lincolnshire, during October 2014.

### The Structure of this Volume

As research was undertaken by different combinations of the *War and Status* project team, this volume is presented as a series of self-contained reports. The first site presented is Burwell castle in Cambridgeshire, built by King Stephen on the edge of the Cambridgeshire fens in a campaign during which he may also have constructed the castle at Rampton (Chapter 11). Also on the fenland fringe, the castle at Church End, in the historic Huntingdonshire parish of Woodwalton is most likely to have been constructed by the rebellious Earl of Essex, Geoffrey de Mandeville, or his immediate heir Ernulf (Chapter 14). A further Anarchy-period castle was that built at Hailes, Gloucestershire, apparently in a distinct location away from a nearby settlement and contemporary church by Ralph of Worcester (Chapter 7). Castles were also a stimulus for rural and urban settlement growth, as can be seen at the sites of Castle

Carlton, Lincolnshire (Chapter 3) and Mountsorrel, Leicestershire (Chapter 10). Standing distinct from such locations is Wellow, Nottinghamshire, which was probably developed in the mid-twelfth century by the clerics of nearby Rufford Abbey and represents the only defended village in the country not accompanied by a castle (Chapter 12).

The challenges of investigating Anarchy-period sites are perhaps best encapsulated by the survey of Sudeley Castle in Gloucestershire. Given the known Anarchy-period military activity at the site this was one of the locations selected for survey, although the investigations provided little or no evidence for twelfth-century phases (while casting important new light on the later elite landscape) and will be published separately and elsewhere (Fradley *et al.* forthcoming). Rather more amenable to archaeological investigation are twelfth-century siegeworks that have not been

subject to significant later change. Likely Anarchy-period siegeworks are presented at Cam's Hill, near Malmesbury, Wiltshire (Chapter 9), Corfe Castle, Dorset (Chapter 4), Crowmarsh, Oxfordshire (Chapter 5), and at Hamstead Marshall in Berkshire (Chapter 8). A further potential Anarchy-period landscape was investigated at Faringdon, Oxfordshire (Chapter 6), although the traditional interpretation that the summit of Folly Hill was a twelfth-century Angevin castle is questioned. These chapters are summarised by a short concluding chapter which also suggests possible avenues for future study. Together this volume hopes to reveal both the challenges but also the significant potential of investigating the civil war of Stephen's reign through archaeology, recognising that many of the key developments of the period were not played out on the field of battle, but instead took place amongst a complex landscape of *Castles, Siegeworks and Settlements*.

## Chapter 2 Burwell Castle, Cambridgeshire

Duncan Wright, Oliver Creighton, Steven Trick and Michael Fradley

### Abstract

The earthwork remains of Burwell castle, Cambridgeshire, represent one of the better-known 'new' castles of the Anarchy-period built in England. Written records suggest that it was during military action at Burwell that Geoffrey de Mandeville, who had led a rebellious fenland campaign against King Stephen, was mortally wounded in 1144. Geophysical survey results suggest that Burwell castle was developed on the site of a previously unrecognised Romano-British temple complex. Topographic and documentary evidence also indicate that the castle was probably inserted into a pre-existing thegnly enclosure which had developed on the same site from at least the tenth century. The present survey has built upon existing interpretations of Burwell castle, which have generally interpreted it as an unfinished Stephanic campaign fortification of the mid-twelfth century. Survey has suggested the existence of a curtain wall extending around the sides

of the raised castle mound, the eastern projection of which had previously been excavated. The premise that the castle was constructed upon earlier tenement plots is questioned, however, and a number of alternative scenarios for the origin and function of the surrounding earthworks are offered. It is shown that the current form of Burwell castle is largely a result of the later use of the site as a manor of Ramsey Abbey, when the central mound was furnished with buildings and the castle ditch was used for water management.

### Introduction

The earthworks of Burwell castle are located in the south-western part of Burwell village, Cambridgeshire (centred TL 58756605) (Figure 2.1). Approximately 120m west of the parish church of St Mary's, the monument and the majority of the village are located between 5m and 10m above OD in a paddock known as Spring Close. The monument and surrounding landscape were subject to a

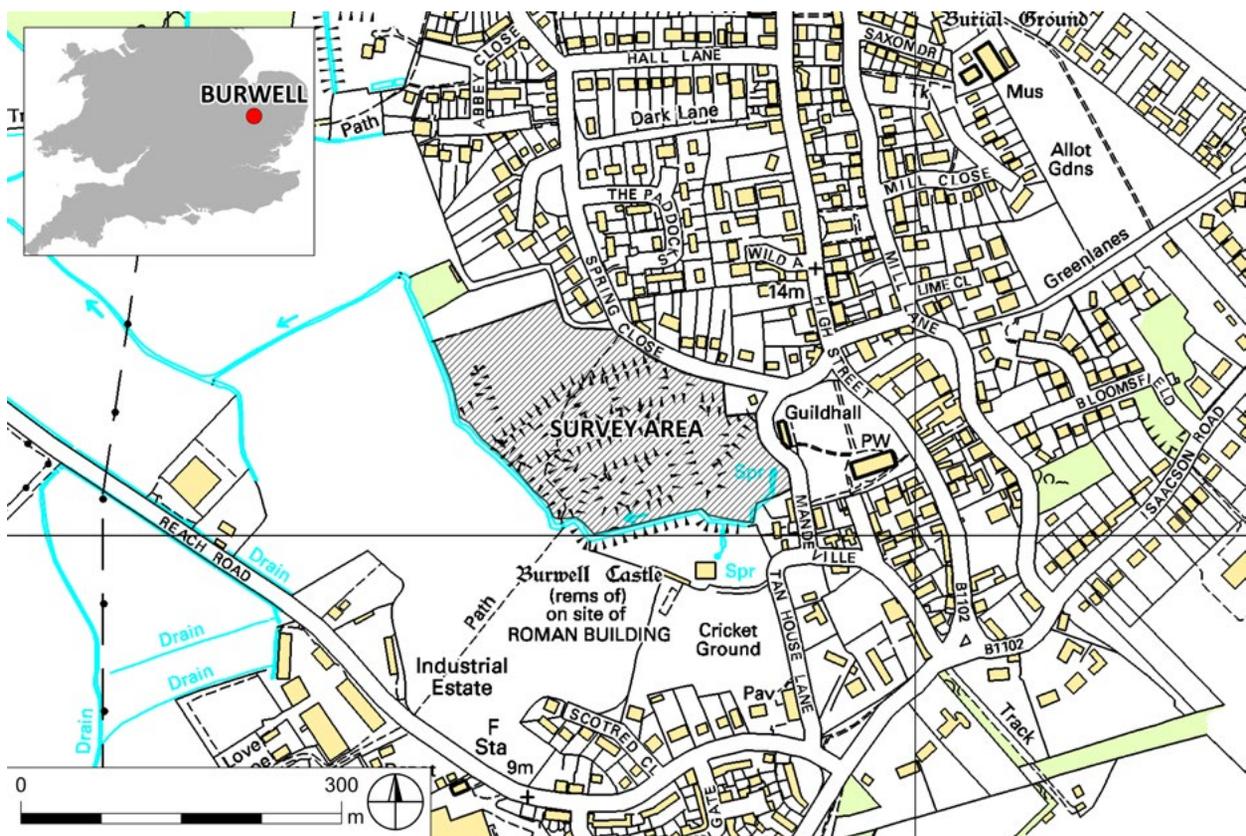


FIGURE 2.1: THE LOCATION OF BURWELL IN SOUTHERN BRITAIN (INSET) AND THE SURVEY AREA (RED OUTLINE) IN ITS LOCAL LANDSCAPE.  
© CROWN COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHT 2015. ORDNANCE SURVEY (DIGIMAP LICENCE).

topographic and geophysical survey undertaken in three stages during 2014; between 18 and 22 January, between 2 and 5 June, and finally between 29 and 30 October (for a further, supplementary discussion of the fieldwork and its results, see Wright *et al.* 2016). The earthworks of the castle and associated features are classified as a Scheduled Monument (National Monument No: 29382). Situated on the south-eastern edge of the Cambridgeshire fens, Burwell and its surrounding landscape constitute a zone of excellent archaeological potential. Located approximately 1.5km south-west of the site are the remains of an Iron-Age settlement and Roman corridor villa (National Monument No: 374665). In the southern part of the village of Reach, 1.8km west of Burwell castle, the linear bank and ditch monument known as the Devil's Dyke or Devil's Ditch extends in a south-easterly direction for around 12km (National Monument No: 1003262). The Devil's Dyke probably dates to the early medieval period, one of several such earthworks which were constructed in the Cambridgeshire region apparently in order to control movement along the pre-existing road network (Taylor 1978, 33).

Burwell castle is located on the Lower Chalk of the West Melbury formation, but is immediately bordered to the east by the Upper Chalk of the Totternhoe Stone formation. Both chalk groups date to the Cretaceous and Mesozoic eras. Three kilometres south-east of the site the chalk rises to almost 50m above OD where it is occasionally capped by sandy deposits. This relative upland is contrasted 2.5km to the north-west of the site where the mudstones of the Gault formation are overlain by low-lying peat fen, deposited after the retreat of Quaternary glaciations. Burwell castle therefore lies at a geological interface which dramatically shapes the local and regional landscape.

## Historical and Archaeological Background

### *Prehistoric and Roman*

A number of prehistoric stone tools have been recovered from in and around Burwell, including a Palaeolithic hand axe which was found within the area of the Scheduled Monument (Cambs. HER: 01775B). It is probable that the spring which rises immediately east of the castle earthworks formed an early focus of activity, although more impressive early prehistoric flint assemblages have been found to the west of the site, where from the Neolithic period the development of the fens attracted increased human activity (Wymer and Bonsall 1977). In the Bronze Age the chalk slopes of the southern fen edge became a focus for funerary monuments, attested by numerous ring-ditches identified on aerial photographs (RCHME 1972, 40). From at least the Romano-British period it seems that the site later occupied by Burwell castle acted as a ritual focus; excavations by T.C. Lethbridge in 1935 identified a Romano-British structure,

which the results of this research suggest may be part of a temple complex (see below). The Spring Close site was possibly one of several contemporary Romano-British foci in the area. For example, Romano-British pottery and roof tiles have regularly been recovered close to Ness Road, approximately 2.5km north-east of Burwell castle (RCHME 1972, 41). The Romano-British site to the south-west of Burwell castle has been investigated more comprehensively; excavation in the early 1890s demonstrating that the corridor villa was built over an earlier Iron-Age settlement (Atkinson 1894).

### *Early Medieval*

Contrary to the Romano-British archaeology from in and around Burwell, which predominantly consists of evidence for domestic activity, the most significant material from the earliest medieval centuries derives from funerary contexts. Anglo-Saxon human remains were first discovered in the Victorian period during digging for lime pits in the eastern part of the village, around 500m north-east of the site. The full extent of the cemetery was not fully realised until 1925, however, when excavation by the Cambridge Antiquarian Society identified 127 skeletons in 123 graves. Some of the burials were furnished, although not richly, and over 50 graves contained no grave goods. The majority of the datable material apparently belonged to the seventh and eighth centuries, and nearly all of the burials were orientated in an east-west direction (Lethbridge 1926). This collection of attributes is typical of what have become known as 'Final Phase' cemeteries, dating to the Middle Saxon period (e.g. Welch 2011). Accompanying Middle Saxon settlement has not been found in Burwell itself, but it is likely to exist under and around the present village. In addition to the evidence from the cemetery, the probability that Middle Saxon settlement is present at Burwell is supported by evidence from excavations in other villages along the southern fen edge which demonstrate an intensively settled landscape from the seventh century onward (Mortimer 2000; Wright 2010; 2015; Patrick and Rátkai 2011).

Written sources also suggest that by at least the tenth century Burwell formed the site of a thegnly residence, or private *burh*. Distinct from the network of defensible places built by the Kings of Wessex, the term *burh* could also refer to an enclosed private residence, as alluded to by texts relating specifically to Burwell. The Chronicle of Ramsey Abbey records how in the 990s the thegn Aelfgar donated to the minster his estate at Burwell comprising his house and court, along with three hides, 40 acres and a virgate of land as well as the church (*The Chronicle of Ramsey Abbey*, ed. Macray 1886, 51; Hart 1966, 238). The precise meaning of the 'court' is difficult to determine, but it is likely that the residence stood within a private enclosure or curia. Ann Williams (1992, 224) has noted how this grant comes close to the idealised thegnly

residence detailed in the eleventh-century text known as *Geþyncðo* or the ‘promotion law’, which describes how a ceorl may aspire to thegnhood (Whitelock 1955, 431–2). Exactly where the thegnly residence and enclosure are located at Burwell is difficult to determine but place-name and other evidence suggest Spring Close as the most likely candidate. Burwell appears in various forms in early documents but all versions are generally interpretable as ‘*burh* by the spring or well’ (Reaney 1943, 188). The water source which gives Spring Close its name rises adjacent to the parish church, and the data derived from this investigation suggest that the area now occupied by the church and castle may previously have been delineated by a large enclosing bank (see below). Circumstantial evidence also suggests that the church of St Mary’s includes within its fabric part of an early tower-nave related to the former thegnly residence, as the tower is clearly out of alignment with the rest of the church which lies within the putative early manorial complex (Shapland 2008 and pers. comm.).

It is likely that ownership of Burwell by a wealthy minster helped sustain its development as an important central place, and place-name evidence indicates that the parish was also the site of the hundred assembly from at least the eleventh century. Burwell lies within the hundred of Staploe, an administrative entity first recorded in Domesday Book, when the manor was a possession of Ramsey Abbey, worth £16 in 1086 and £20 before 1066 (*Domesday Book, Cambridgeshire*, ed. Rumble 1981, 7,9). In addition to their administrative role, hundred meeting places performed various other social and political purposes, such as acting as muster points for the mobilisation of armies (Baker and Brookes 2013, 201). The name Staploe is derived from Old English (OE) ‘*stapol hoh*’, probably referring to a spur of land with a pillar or post located on it (Reaney 1943, 187). Audrey Meaney (1997, 35–6) has shown how *stapol* place names were utilised to indicate focal or landmark posts at early medieval meeting places. In Staploe Hundred the spur alluded to was almost certainly located in the parish of Burwell; from 1198 ‘the way of *Stapelhoo*’ was used to describe a route which is also recorded numerous times in terriers dated to the late sixteenth century held by the Queen’s College Archive, Cambridge. While it has been suggested that ‘the way of *Stapelhoo*’ led somewhere to the east of the High Street (VCH Cambs. X 2002, 332), both the terriers and later estate maps of the area indicate that the course was instead located immediately north of the present day Gravel Pit Farm in the south-east of Burwell parish. The historic maps record the route as approximately one kilometre in length, extending in a south-west to north-east orientation from Devil’s Ditch to Exning, and terminating on a noticeable rise at a distinctive kink in the line of the historic parish boundary. This point has previously been identified as the likely location of the hundred meeting place, forming a small but noticeable bump along a natural ridge in the landscape

(Meaney 1997, 36; Brookes pers. comm.). Intriguingly, it is possible that before its use as an assembly place the pillar or post at *Stapolhoo* may have functioned as a centre for pre-Christian cult activity (see below).

The naming of a hundred after a meeting place, usually isolated from populated centres of royal and seigneurial authority, was common in East Anglia and at Burwell it seems that the assembly point was quite deliberately situated on a prominent spur of land overlooking the Devil’s Dyke and the largely flat landscape to the north and west. The existence of the hundred assembly place in Burwell parish suggests that the area remained an important focal point during the Late Saxon period, and indeed the listing in Domesday of an especially wealthy manor indicates that the estate continued to flourish (Darby and Terrett 1971, 287). Previous scholars have suggested that Late Saxon settlement in the village is also identifiable archaeologically. At Spring Close a series of low banks previously claimed to extend beneath the earthworks of the castle have been identified by some researchers as housing plots (e.g. RCHME 1972, 42), although this survey suggests a number of alternative interpretations (see below). Even if the archaeological data are not taken into account, the written sources alone demonstrate that Burwell was a sizeable and important central place in the fen-edge landscape by the end of the early medieval period, a status which was probably significant for the post-Conquest development of the site.

### **The Castle**

The context for the construction of Burwell castle is King Stephen’s fenland campaign of 1143–44 against Geoffrey de Mandeville, the rebellious earl of Essex immortalised in J. H. Round’s *Geoffrey de Mandeville: A Study of the Anarchy* (1892; for Burwell, see 220–1). The castle seems to have been built as one of a chain of royal campaign fortifications constructed to contain de Mandeville’s devastating raids from his bases on and around the Isle of Ely. This group of royal castles, which were unusually built as elements within a co-ordinated strategy, also probably included works at Rampton (this volume, Chapter 11) and Swavesey in Cambridgeshire, while de Mandeville had fortified Ramsey Abbey and also held fortifications or garrisoned positions at Benwick, Fordham and Woodwalton (this volume, Chapter 13) (Renn 1968, 50; Creighton 2005, 59; Purton 2009, 272; for an overview of the campaign, see Davis 1967, 84–85). Contemporary conditions in the Cambridgeshire region are described somewhat obliquely by the most comprehensive source for King Stephen’s reign, the *Gesta Stephani* in the entry for 1143:

... the king, in a judicious attempt to hinder his [Geoffrey de Mandeville’s] wonted raids in the same region, built castles in suitable places and, after

*garrisoning them adequately for resistance to the devastators of the country, turned in another direction to deal with other affairs of the realm. (Gesta Stephani, ed. and trans. Potter and Davis 1976, 165–7).*

The castle at Burwell is also recorded in more detail by other primary sources, most notably by *Gervase of Canterbury* (ed. Stubbs 1867–69) and more fleetingly in *The Chronicle of Ramsey Abbey* (ed. Macray 1886), *The Waltham Chronicle* (ed. Watkiss and Chibnall 1994), and *The Book of the Foundation of Walden Monastery* (ed. and trans. Greenway and Watkiss 1999). Chroniclers were primarily concerned with highlighting Burwell as the place where Geoffrey de Mandeville received a mortal wound before dying a few days later, in Mildenhall, Suffolk, as an excommunicate, rather than showing any interest in the appearance of the castle *per se*. Nevertheless, the references are worth examining in detail for the light they shed on the fortification and on the skirmish or siege that took place there.

Gervase of Canterbury describes how the king moved on de Mandeville late in the summer of 1144 after the earl had occupied the monastery at Ramsey and made it into a ‘den of thieves’ (*speluncam fecit latronum*); Geoffrey’s death occurred after he had hurried to the siege (*obsidionum*) of the castle of Burwell (*castelli de Burwelle*), which had been built by the king (*quod rex construxerat*) (*Gervase of Canterbury*, ed. Stubbs, Vol 1, 1867, 128). Gervase recounts how before reaching Burwell, Geoffrey rested due to the heat and the green grass (*herba viridissima*) wilted beneath him and did not recover for another year. This detail perhaps alludes to the earl’s armies devastating the region’s crops, the language derived from Mark 4:6 ‘... when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root’. Such terminology serves to emphasise the illegal nature of de Mandeville’s rebellion and underlines his status as both outlaw and excommunicate. The events which led directly to Geoffrey’s death as described by Gervase are clear:

*Hic cum multas pro rege et contra regem Stephanum exercuisset militias, tandemque in obsidione supradicti castelli de Burwelle in scuto et lancea contra adversaries viriliter decertasset, obnium calorem cassidem deposuit, et loricae ventilabrum solvit, sicque nudato capite militavit. Aestus quipped erat. Quem cum vidisset quispiam de castello et adversarium agnosceret, telo gracili quod ganea dicitur eum jam cominus positum petiit, quo testam capitis ipsius male nudati perforavit. (Gervase of Canterbury, ed. Stubbs, Vol 1, 1867, 128)*

‘In this place, when he [Geoffrey de Mandeville] had exercised many troops for and against King Stephen, and, at length, in the siege of the aforementioned castle of Burwell he had fought manfully to the

end with shield and spear against his enemies, in an act of impetuosity loosened his helmet, so that he fought with an uncovered head. There was now, to be sure, a great ferment. When he had been seen by someone from the castle and recognised as an enemy, a slender missile was discharged called an arrow by which he [the assailant] badly pierced the skull of his uncovered head’.

*The Chronicle of Ramsey Abbey* provides little additional detail but confirms that the castle of Burwell was newly built (*de nova fuerat constructum*) and that the archer (*sagittarius*) who fired the fatal arrow at Geoffrey de Mandeville was one of those ‘inside the castle’ (*ex his qui intra castellum*) and presumably therefore part of a garrison (*The Chronicle of Ramsey Abbey*, ed. W.D. Macray, 1886, 331–2). *The Book of the Foundation of Walden Monastery* describes Geoffrey’s death in almost identical terms but styles the place he received his fatal wound as *oppidulum in Burwella*, translated as the ‘small castle of Burwell’ (*The Book of the Foundation of Walden Monastery*, ed. and trans. Greenway and Watkiss 1999, 16–17). *The Waltham Chronicle* has it that Geoffrey de Mandeville ‘received a mortal wound outside the castle of Burwell which he had been assiduously attacking’ (*The Waltham Chronicle*, ed. and trans. Watkiss and Chibnall 1994, 81). It is also important to note that while *The Chronicle of Ramsey Abbey* specifies that the castle at Burwell was a new construction, no chronicler makes any reference to the fortification being unfinished or that it was attacked while still being built, as is sometimes asserted (see, for example, Cathcart King 1983, 39). This interpretation has instead been based on the archaeological evidence, which is discussed below.

The choice of Burwell as a site for one of King Stephen’s campaign castles is likely to have been partly influenced by its status as a significant pre-existing power centre, but the village is also located in a strategically important place on the fen edge. Burwell is positioned astride the main approach from the south toward the Stuntney Causeway — a fenland routeway connecting the villages of Stuntney and Soham and one of only three overland routes onto the Isle of Ely before the draining of the fens (Smail 1972). *The Liber Eliensis* suggests that nearby Fordham may have been garrisoned by de Mandeville, and it must be considered that Burwell castle was constructed as a direct response to this activity as well as forming part of a more general strategy to contain the rebellious earl (*Liber Eliensis*, ed. Fairweather 2005, 403–4).

Apparently built for a specific military need, Burwell castle does not appear to have been abandoned after the 1140s but instead underwent a change from its military function, perhaps after a hiatus in activity. Burwell castle next appears in the written record a century later, when the Abbot of Ramsey is licenced by the Bishop of Ely to erect an oratory on the site (*The Chronicle of*



FIGURE 2.2: LETHBRIDGE LEADING EXCAVATIONS IN THE CASTLE DITCH AT BURWELL, 1935. REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION OF THE CAMBRIDGESHIRE COLLECTION, REF: CAS BURWELL I.16



FIGURE 2.3: STONE BUILDING FOUNDATIONS, APPARENTLY OF MEDIEVAL DATE, EXCAVATED BY LETHBRIDGE IN THE 1930S. REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION OF THE CAMBRIDGESHIRE COLLECTION, REF: CAS BURWELL I.15

*Ramsey Abbey*, ed. Macray, 1886, 193). During his 1935 excavation, Lethbridge identified structural remains which may be related either to castle buildings or the abbot's development, or indeed maybe both. Foundations of a narrow range were found running the length of the eastern side of the castle's central mound (or 'island', as Lethbridge referred to it) (Figures 2.2 and 2.3). Incorporated into the eastern range, the excavator also located a rectangular building which projected slightly over the line of the moat, possibly serving as a bridge-head, and supported by diagonal buttresses. Lethbridge interpreted this building as a small castle keep or gatehouse, and the eastern range as a curtain wall built during the Anarchy (Lethbridge 1936, 128–133). Given the slight size of the rectangular building it is unlikely to be the remains of a keep/donjon but may instead

represent the foundations of a tower (a premise supported by the later name of the site, as recorded on an eighteenth-century enclosure map: see below). Part of the clunch (an East Anglian building fabric composed of mixed limestone) walling of the medieval complex survived long enough to be recorded on early photographs, but was apparently destroyed when testing the village fire hose in the 1920s.

While Lethbridge's twelfth-century attribution for the initial construction of the range is entirely possible, caution is required when the later use of the site by Ramsey Abbey is considered. It is significant that in the same area of the mound Lethbridge also found painted glass, parts of a lead window frame and dressed stone — including one inscribed with the name 'MARIA' suggesting this was also the location of the later chapel. The most convincing evidence that the eastern range was developed as part of the Abbot of Ramsey's residence, however, is the identification along the wall of the northern range of two garderobe chutes (Lethbridge 1936, 129). Such features were presumably not part of the original campaign castle but instead represent domestic facilities, perhaps serving the Abbot's *camera* on the first floor. It therefore appears that following the construction during the 1140s of a curtain wall which perhaps incorporated an interval tower within its length, the extant structures in the eastern part of the castle mound were used as the focus for the Abbot of Ramsey's chapel complex. Indeed, earthworks in the castle ditch previously identified as fishponds may also be contemporary with occupation of this later residence (see below) (RCHME 1972, 40–2). Excavation at Burwell therefore illustrates some of the complexities of attempting to identify Anarchy-period archaeology, especially the lack of diagnostic dating material, which makes phasing of sites and sequences difficult.

### **Later Medieval and Post-Medieval**

Throughout the medieval and post-medieval periods occupation in Burwell was restricted to the elongated High Street although some separate settlement elements were connected by causeways. The area around the castle was known as 'High Town', and from the twelfth century featured two churches. In addition to the presumably earlier foundation adjacent to the castle, which by the thirteenth century was known as St Mary's, a second church dedicated to St Andrew was situated on a slight rise in a rectangular churchyard east of the High Street and opposite the north end of the enlarged St Mary's churchyard. Around 170m north-east of Burwell castle, the location of the church, which later became the site of a school, continued to be marked on maps well into the twentieth century despite it having fallen out of use by this point. Burwell St Mary and Burwell St Andrew were distinctive parishes, and on some early maps of Cambridgeshire the village is marked as 'The Burwells'.

Written sources indicate the existence of St Andrew's as early as 1170, but by the time the church was visited by the Reverend William Cole in the 1740s it had fallen into disrepair. Cole made a sketch of the church which is extremely informative of its architectural features, and apparently shows St Andrew's as featuring a round tower. Generally dated to the eleventh and twelfth centuries in England, round towers were part of a broader North Sea tradition (Fernie 1988; Heywood 1988) and are particularly common across East Anglia, although only two are known from Cambridgeshire, at Bartlow and Snailwell. Located only 5km to the east of Burwell, it is interesting to note that the parish church of Snailwell now dedicated to St Peter was before the thirteenth century also a church of St Andrew (VCH Cambs. X 2002, 475–9). The presence of one or more churches located in close proximity as at Burwell was not unusual in medieval East Anglia, with multiple proprietorship reflecting a burgeoning lordly class wishing to express their newly found power (Blair 2005, 425). The ruins of St Andrew's, Burwell, were pulled down in 1772 but St Mary's continued as a demesne holding of Ramsey Abbey until the Dissolution when the right of advowson passed to Cambridge University (VCH Cambs. II 1948, 2). The church was heavily rebuilt between 1450 and 1470, although surviving twelfth-century fabric is still present in the lower stages (Pevsner 1970, 310–12).

The post-medieval development of Burwell castle is more difficult to characterise, but once the manorial site had fallen into disrepair the monument and surrounding landscape appear to have been used as common land for animal grazing. The land known as 'Spring Copse' or 'Spring Close' was acquired by Burwell parish council in 1983 for the recreation of the villagers — the castle had been used for motorcycle scrambling until 1976 when it was ceased in order to preserve the archaeology. Beyond the erosion and wanton destruction of building remains the castle seems to have changed little in the past century or so with the exception of increased vegetation, especially on the central island, and the area is currently used by local people for recreational purposes (Figure 2.4 and 2.5).

### **Map Analysis**

Dated to 1817, the enclosure map of Burwell depicts the castle as a rectilinear earthwork labelled 'Scite of Towers' (Figure 2.6). Such a description is probably a result of the upstanding masonry visible on the site, with material surviving to at least first-floor height into the twentieth century (see above). The enclosure map also provides evidence of the historic street and tenement plan of Burwell village, and shows the High Street as forming a distinctive curve enclosing the parish church of St Mary's. The site of the castle is similarly illustrated as an enclosure on the Tithe Map of 1842, although the area is not labelled and is shown covered in vegetation



FIGURE 2.4: PHOTOGRAPH OF BURWELL CASTLE DURING THE 1930S, LOOKING SOUTH EAST. THE FIGURE IN THE FOREGROUND IS PRESUMABLY LETHBRIDGE. REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION OF THE CAMBRIDGESHIRE COLLECTION, REF: CAS BURWELL I.8C



FIGURE 2.5: BURWELL CASTLE TODAY, LOOKING WEST ACROSS THE MOAT TOWARDS THE PARISH CHURCH, WITH THE CASTLE PLATFORM ON THE RIGHT-HAND SIDE OF THE PHOTOGRAPH.

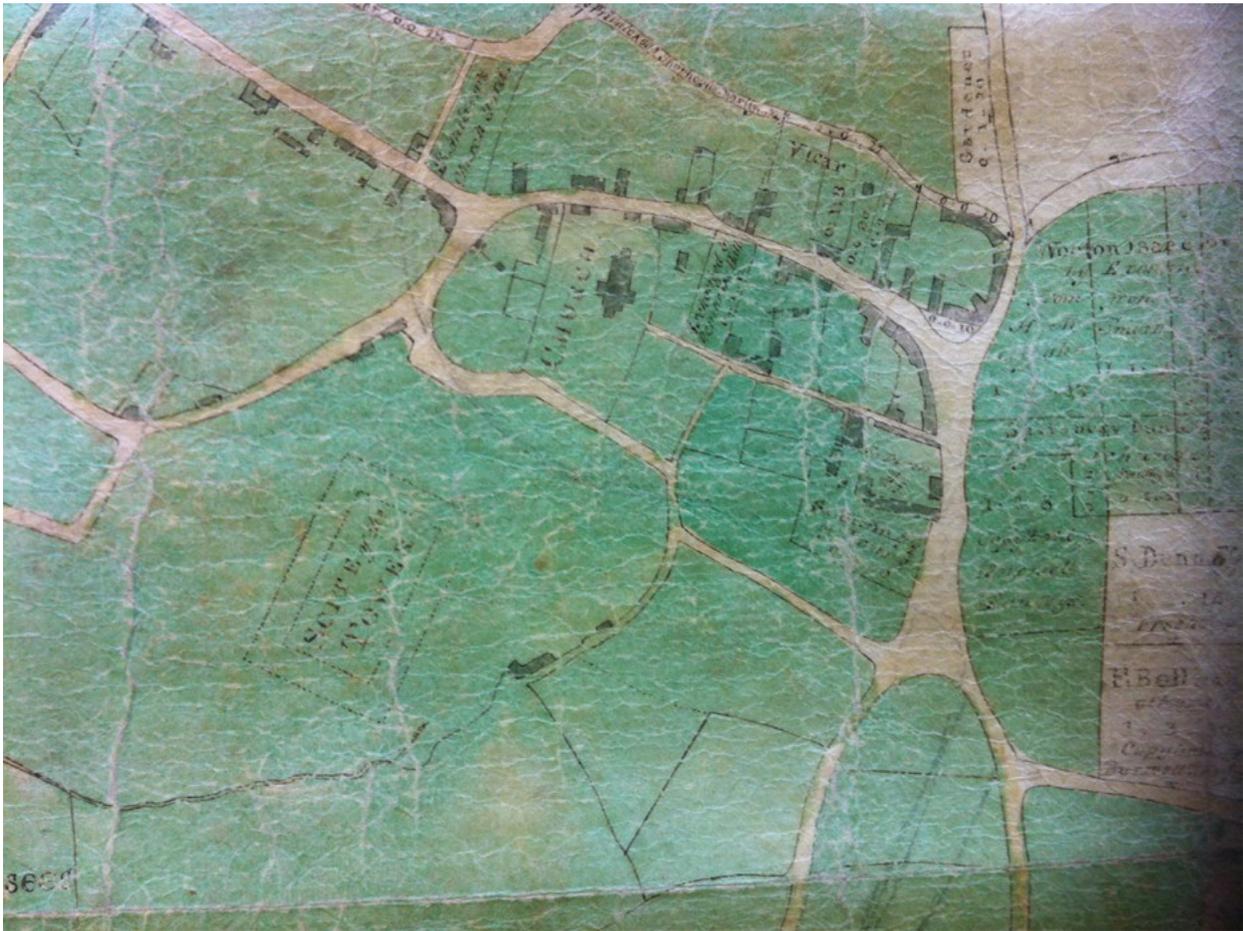


FIGURE 2.6: ENCLOSURE MAP OF BURWELL CASTLE AND THE SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE (DATED 1817). THE CASTLE IS LABELLED 'SCITE OF TOWERS', PROBABLY DUE TO THE PRESENCE OF UPSTANDING MASONRY REMAINS. REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION OF THE CAMBRIDGESHIRE ARCHIVE, REF: Q/RDC29

(Figure 2.7). The tithe assessment also confirms the former location of St Andrew's church to the north-east of the site, as plot 440 is recorded as 'Old Church Yard' on the apportionment. The OS First Edition 25" Revision depicts Burwell castle as a rectilinear mound surrounded by a wide ditch on all sides (Figure 2.8). The ditch is shown as extending in the south-western part of the mound, bounded by the stream immediately to the south. A small break in the middle of the southern part of the mound is also illustrated, as is a raised terrace immediately west of the castle ditch. Immediately to the north of the ditch a bank is depicted, and so is terracing to the east of the castle. The OS First Edition also records 'Remains of the Priory of St John' at Parsonage Farm, located around 600m to the north of Burwell castle. The existence of a priory in the village was also hinted at by Pevsner (1970, 243) although he suggested that it was most likely sited in the area of the vicarage 100m south-east of St Mary's church. No reference is provided for this assertion, however, and it appears that both the OS and subsequently Pevsner have erroneously associated the Benedictine priory at Burwell in Lincolnshire with its village namesake in Cambridgeshire. Whereas there is apparently no written reference to a medieval priory at Burwell in

Cambridgeshire, in the Lincolnshire village a house was founded in 1100 as an alien priory of La Grande-Sauve, Gironde (Knowles and Hadcock 1953, 83).

On the Second Revision of the OS First Edition in the 1920s two further earthwork banks are depicted extending from the north-western part of the castle. By the 1970s the castle earthworks are illustrated by the OS in much greater detail, particularly the raised mound in the centre of the complex. Modern OS mapping provides an even more accurate plan of the earthworks, and includes the series of banks which apparently form a network of enclosures to the north of the castle ditch.

### Earthwork Description and Interpretation

The enclosure of Burwell castle consists of a raised sub-rectangular platform measuring around 30m by 60m and is orientated east-north-east by west-south-west on its long axis. It is surrounded by a large rectangular ditch up to 30m in width, with the platform standing 4–6m above the base of the ditch. The platform itself is marked by its irregular surface with raised areas at both its east and west ends, although there is no clear evidence of the layout of structures in the earthworks.

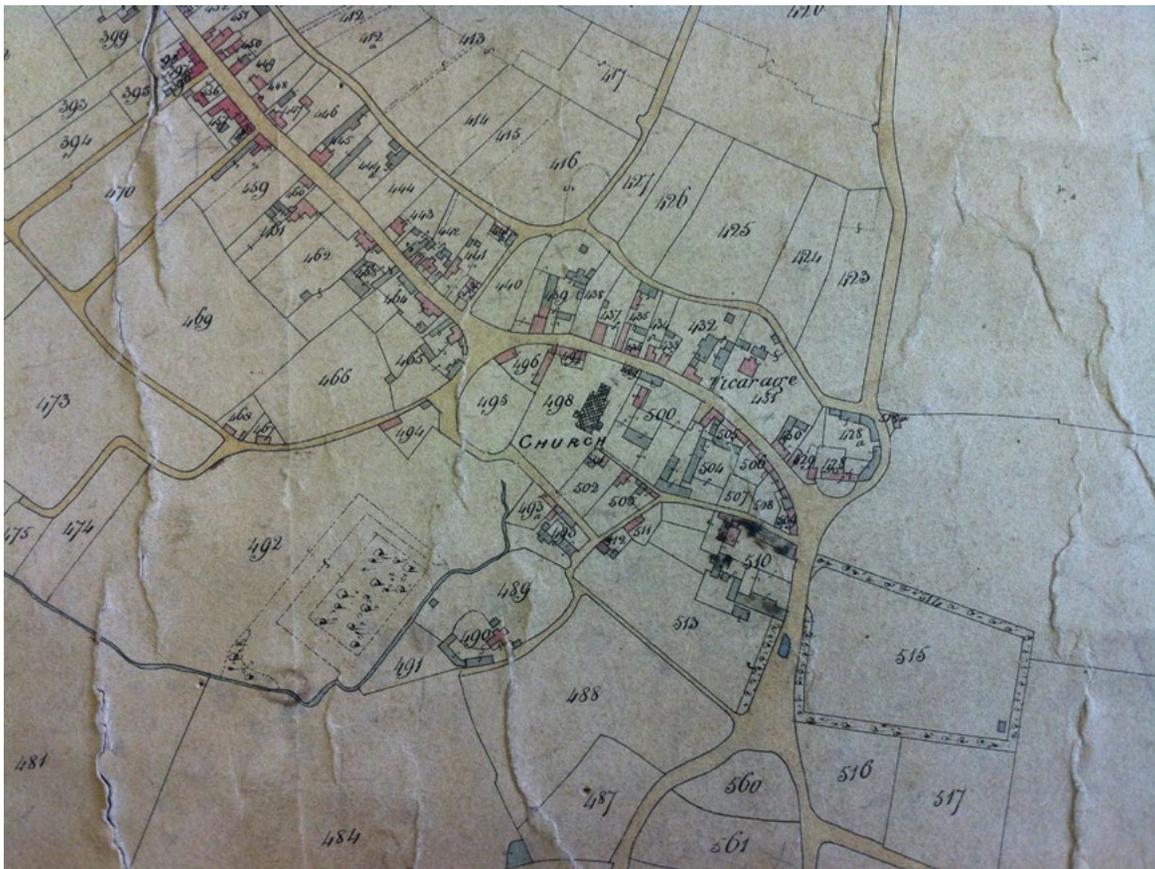


FIGURE 2.7: TITHE MAP OF BURWELL (DATED 1842) SHOWING THE SITE OF THE CASTLE AS A RECTILINEAR ENCLOSURE COVERED IN VEGETATION. TO THE NORTH-WEST OF THE SITE TENEMENT PLOT 440 RECORDED AS 'OLD CHURCH YARD' DENOTES THE LOCATION OF THE FORMER ST ANDREW'S CHURCH. REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION OF THE CAMBRIDGESHIRE ARCHIVE, REF: P18/27/2

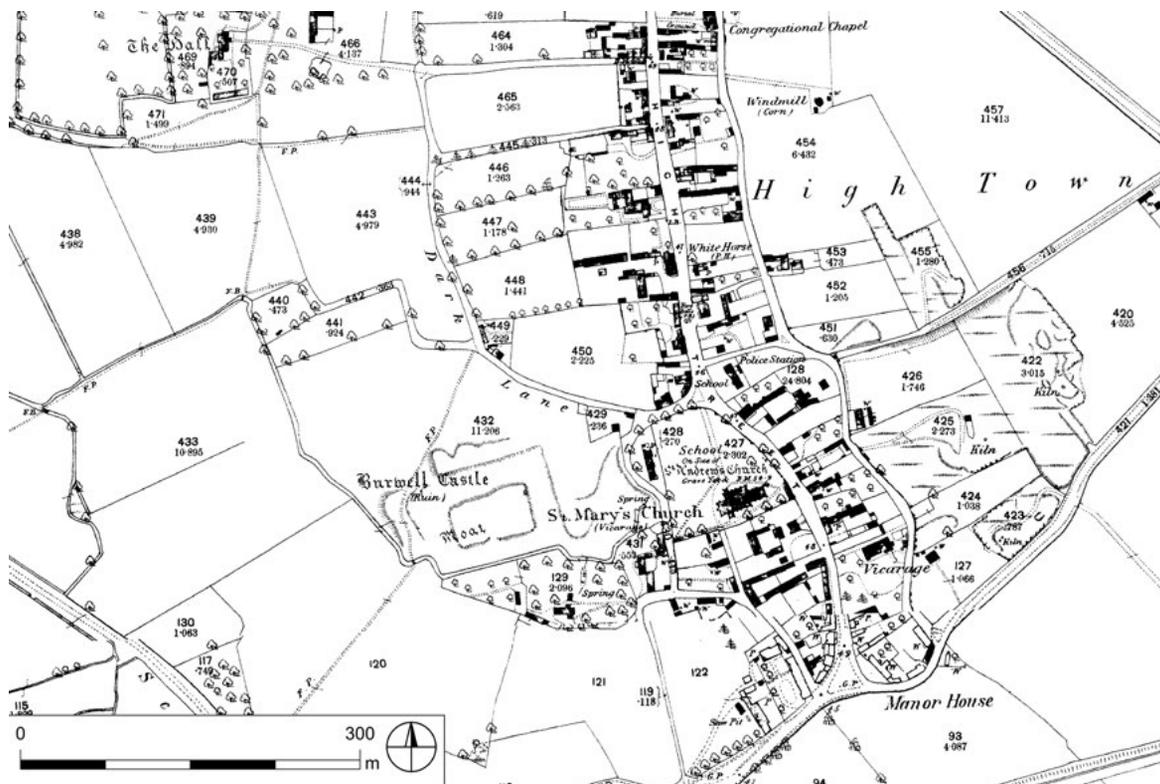


FIGURE 2.8: OS FIRST EDITION 25" OF BURWELL CASTLE, DATED TO 1890. © CROWN COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHT 2015. ORDNANCE SURVEY (DIGIMAP LICENCE).

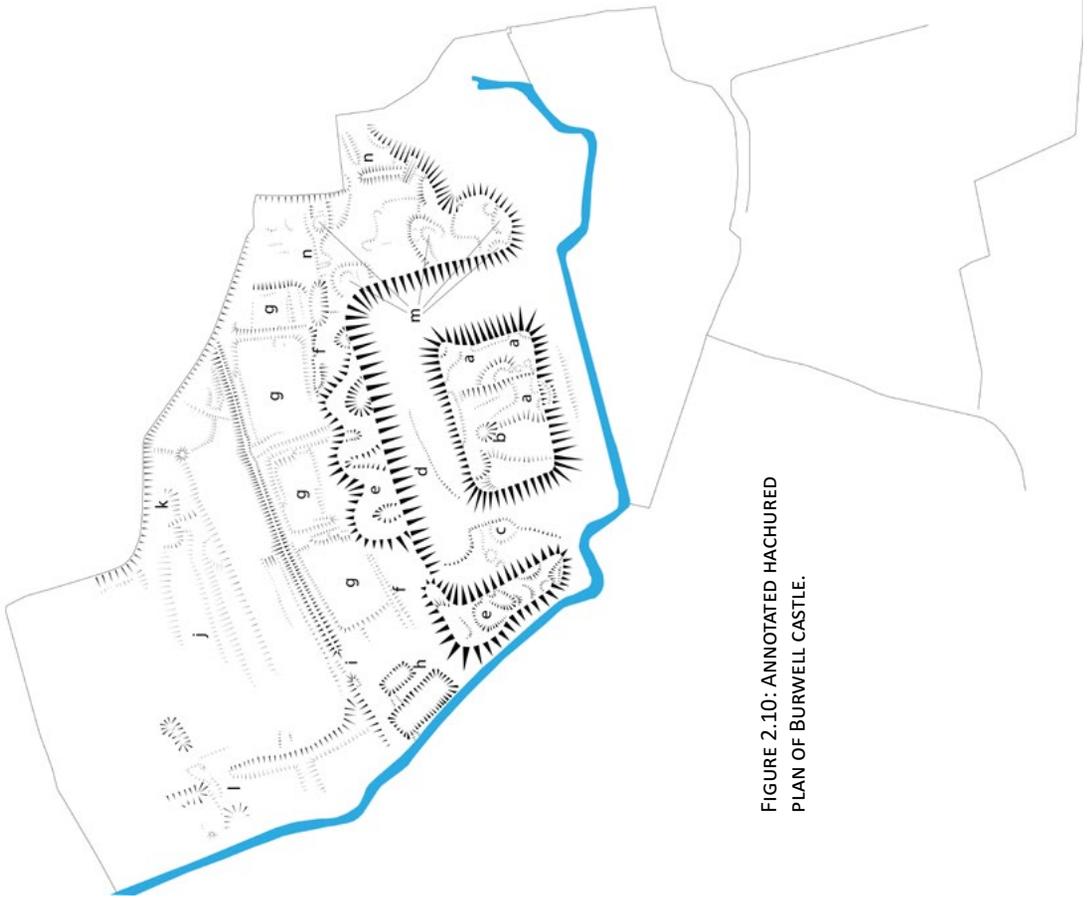


FIGURE 2.10: ANNOTATED HACHURED PLAN OF BURWELL CASTLE.

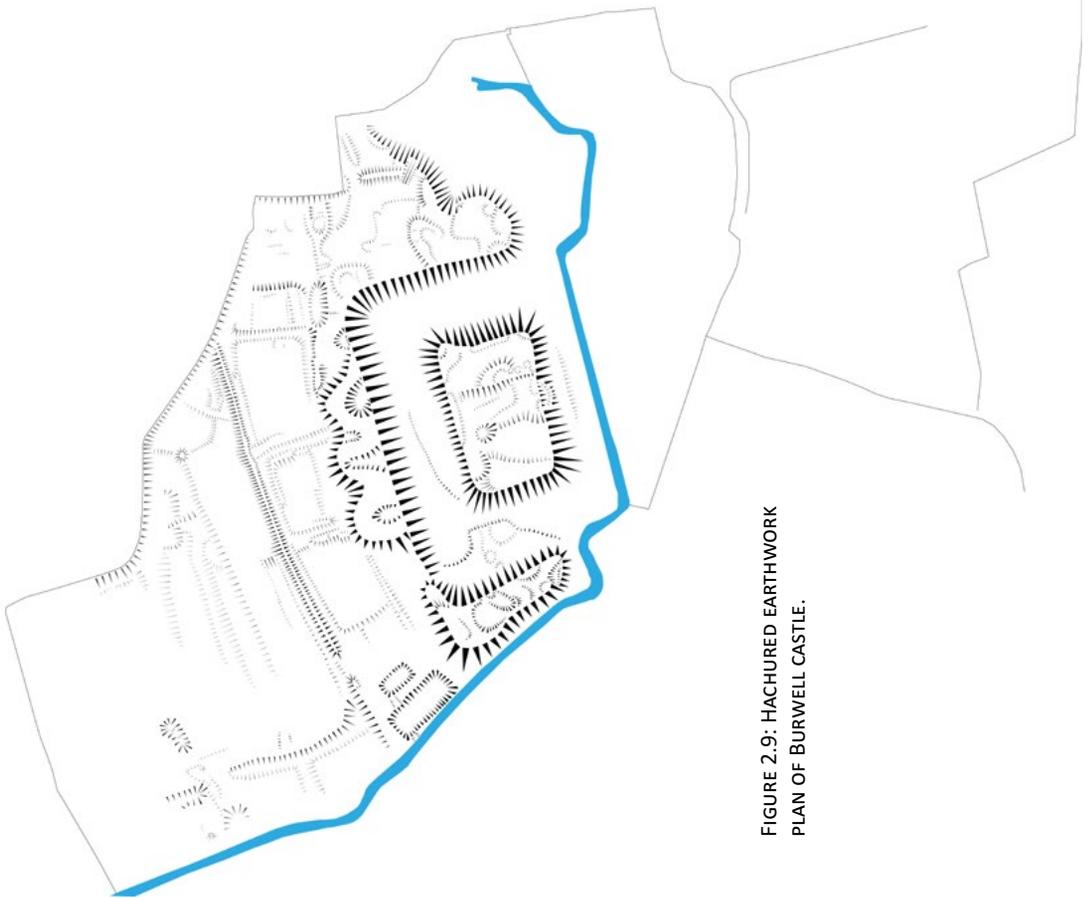


FIGURE 2.9: HACHURED EARTHWORK PLAN OF BURWELL CASTLE.

Short sections of low earthwork banks survive along the north, south, and eastern edges of the platform which may be the remnants of a former perimeter or curtain wall. A break in the southern section of the perimeter bank (Figure 2.10: 'a') may denote a former entrance on to the platform, as could two comparable breaks along the eastern face. The raised area at the eastern end of the platform exhibits the most rectangular traces of earthwork layout, and the bulging projection at the north-eastern corner of the platform, which has been omitted from earlier surveys of the castle, may be part of this built form. A large pit (Figure 2.10: 'b') in the western section of the platform may be part of a well, or alternatively the result of the excavations undertaken in the 1930s.

In the western section of the ditch is a low, raised area (Figure 2.10: 'c') with internal evidence of platforms and a small pit. A narrow channel survives between this platform and the central castle platform, and within the wider ditch on the north side of the castle are slight remains of a section of channel (Figure 2.10: 'd') which appears to lead to this platform area. This complex seems unusual, set low in the deep castle ditch, but appears to form part of a water management system of indeterminate function. Large irregular mounds (Figure 2.10: 'e') were recorded on the outer side of the ditch on its western and northern sides, which give the impression of a greater depth to the ditch. These earth mounds have previously been interpreted as spoil heaps derived from material excavated from the castle ditches, and the present survey offers no evidence to the contrary. The notion that the original intention was to remove this spoil in a later phase of the castle's construction seems plausible as parts of the mounds overlook the central platform in some places. The irregular surface of these mounds may be the result of piecemeal quarrying in the medieval and post-medieval periods. One additional piece of evidence is that the northern mound seems to have been largely limited to the southern side of an extensive, curving bank (Figure 2.10: 'f') that runs roughly east to west, suggesting that the spoil was heaped within the limits of an existing boundary or plot.

The boundary that marks the northern extent of the castle complex also functions as the southern boundary of at least four adjacent enclosures (Figure 2.10: 'g') defined by small banks or scarps separated by shallow ditches. The rectangular enclosures measure from between 40m by 20m and 10m by 20m and have previously been interpreted as former medieval tofts and crofts that were partially destroyed by the castle's construction. The earthwork forms are not typical of such medieval settlement arrangements, however, and the lack of topographical evidence for internal occupation is paralleled by the data from geophysical survey — as a result, this research has forwarded three alternative

interpretations of the earthworks (see below). Located to the west of the enclosures are two large rectangular pits (Figure 2.10: 'h') measuring around 1–1.5m deep, probably the result of quarrying rather than fishponds. Small channels running between the two pits and on to the west are probably drainage channels to prevent the pits overflowing.

On the northern side of the pits and enclosures is a large, curving bank measuring up to 1m in height and 3m in width. At its western end is a 6m wide break (Figure 2.10: 'i') which is the probable remains of an entranceway through this boundary. At this end there is evidence of a shallow ditch running parallel to the bank's northern side and also in the area between the boundary and the enclosures to the south. To the north are a number of low, wide scarps (Figure 2.10: 'j') running north-east to south-west which are the denuded remains of medieval ridge and furrow ploughing. At the north-eastern end of this complex is a series of ill-defined scarps on differing orientations (Figure 2.10: 'k'), some of which may pre-date the ploughing earthworks. At the western end of the ridge and furrow are denuded remains of drainage ditches and quarry pits (Figure 2.10: 'l'). The origin of the large, curving bank is uncertain but it may represent the boundary to the putative pre-Conquest thegnly precinct, used to define areas of activity in later periods. Overall it was notable that the earthwork evidence north of the large boundary bank survived poorly, suggesting that this area has suffered in the post-medieval period from ploughing and a greater level of agricultural activity than south of the boundary. Additionally, the adjacent lane (Spring Close) to the north-east appears to be a later addition cutting at an angle through the earthworks.

The earthwork evidence east of the castle platform in the small subtriangular area defined by the natural scarp to the south, the castle to the west, and the modern house plot to the north, appears to relate to settlement activity. This includes a number of house platforms or hollows (Figure 2.10 'm'), and several linear banks that may define the settlement area (Figure 2.10: 'n'). It is not out of the question that this zone of settlement, lacking the traditionally defined enclosures of medieval peasant settlement, may be part of an outer court to the castle complex or to the site associated with Ramsey Abbey that succeeded it. This interpretation would suggest that the primary access to the castle platforms was from the east side, which seems plausible as there is no earth mound on that side of the castle, and would likely link it directly to the settled area around St Mary's church. Such an assessment complements the conclusions reached by Lethbridge who suggested that the excavated eastern range included a bridge-head over the castle ditch (Lethbridge 1936, 129).

## Geophysical Survey Results and Interpretation

A magnetometer survey of 2.1 ha of land to the north and east of the castle earthworks and an earth resistance survey of 1.2 ha were undertaken as outlined in the project design submitted to Historic England.

### Magnetometry

Due to restrictions of local topography and vegetation, magnetometer survey was not possible in the area of the castle mound and surrounding ditch, but was instead focussed in the more open land to the north of the monument. Figure 2.11 shows the results of the magnetometry survey. Figure 2.12 illustrates the anomalies identified and Table 2.1 presents their description and interpretation.

The results of the magnetometer survey indicate the presence of several features of likely archaeological origin. Most obvious in the plot are a number of linear anomalies extending across the survey area in a broadly east–west orientation. Anomaly m1 corresponds with the bank identified during earthwork survey and apparently delineates the extent of enclosures to the south (Figure 2.10: ‘g’). Linear anomalies m3, m4, and m8 detected by magnetometry were not visible as

earthworks. These may be features of similar function to m1, but their lack of preservation may hint at an earlier provenance. The east–west alignment of anomalies m3 and m4 may indicate that they are related in some way to the probable structural remains of anomaly m6, characterised more comprehensively by the earth resistance survey (see below). The curving anomaly m7 appears to abut m6, and hints at a later origin for this feature.

### Earth Resistance

Earth resistance survey targeted three discrete areas. Area A comprises land to the north of the castle ditch, Area B is a section of the castle mound, and Area C is land to the east of the castle ditch. The results of the resistance survey can be seen in Figure 2.13. The anomalies identified in the plot are highlighted in Figure 2.14, and are described and interpreted in Table 2.1.

The earth resistance survey at Burwell was successful in detecting a number of anomalies of likely archaeological origin. As a caveat it should be noted that survey in Area A was carried out in very wet conditions and as a result readings were characterised by very low resistance. These circumstances leave little margin for subtle low-resistance anomalies to be identified, and thus the earth

Anomaly	Description	Interpretation
m1	Curvilinear anomaly 144m long and c. 5m wide.	Bank also identified during earthwork survey.
m2	Negative north–south anomaly 30m long and c. 5m wide. Corresponds with ditch identified as a boundary, although the geophysical response is unique. Also detected by resistivity.	Substantial ditch, possibly associated with pre-castle occupation.
m3	East–west linear anomaly 82m long and c. 4m wide.	Enclosure bank.
m4	East–west linear anomaly c. 65m long and c. 5m wide.	Enclosure bank, possibly continuation of m3.
m5	North–south linear anomaly c. 16m long and c. 5m wide.	Possible corner of bank.
m6	Faint block of positive magnetism, c. 24m across. Also detected by resistivity.	Structural remains (see below).
m7	Curvilinear positive anomaly 40m long and c. 3m wide. Appears to terminate at linear anomaly m3.	Ditch using pre-existing m3 as a boundary.
m8	Linear anomaly 47m long and c. 3.5m wide.	Uncertain. Possibly similar to m7 in being later activity within pre-existing enclosure.
m9,m10,m11	Strongly positive curving anomalies c. 13m long.	Uncertain. Response suggests walls or ditches.
m12	Curvilinear positive anomaly c. 20m long and c. 2m wide.	Uncertain. Response suggests wall or ditch.
m13	Linear anomaly. Similar to m9–m11.	Uncertain. Lethbridge’s plan depicts an apparent building platform in this area.
m14	Curvilinear weakly positive anomaly, 20m long and c. 2m wide. Appears to terminate with m7.	Ditch associated with m7.
m15	m15 is a visible curving ‘edge’ in the geophysical response.	A former enclosure of uncertain date or use.
m16–m18	Linear edges visible in the geophysical plot, spatially matching the ridge and furrow identified by the topographic survey.	Ridge and furrow.

TABLE 2.1: DESCRIPTION AND INTERPRETATION OF MAGNETOMETRY ANOMALIES AT BURWELL CASTLE.



FIGURE 2.11: RESULTS OF MAGNETOMETRY SURVEY OVERLAID ON EARTHWORK SURVEY AT BURWELL CASTLE.



FIGURE 2.12: INTERPRETIVE PLAN OF ANOMALIES IDENTIFIED BY MAGNETOMETRY SURVEY AT BURWELL CASTLE.

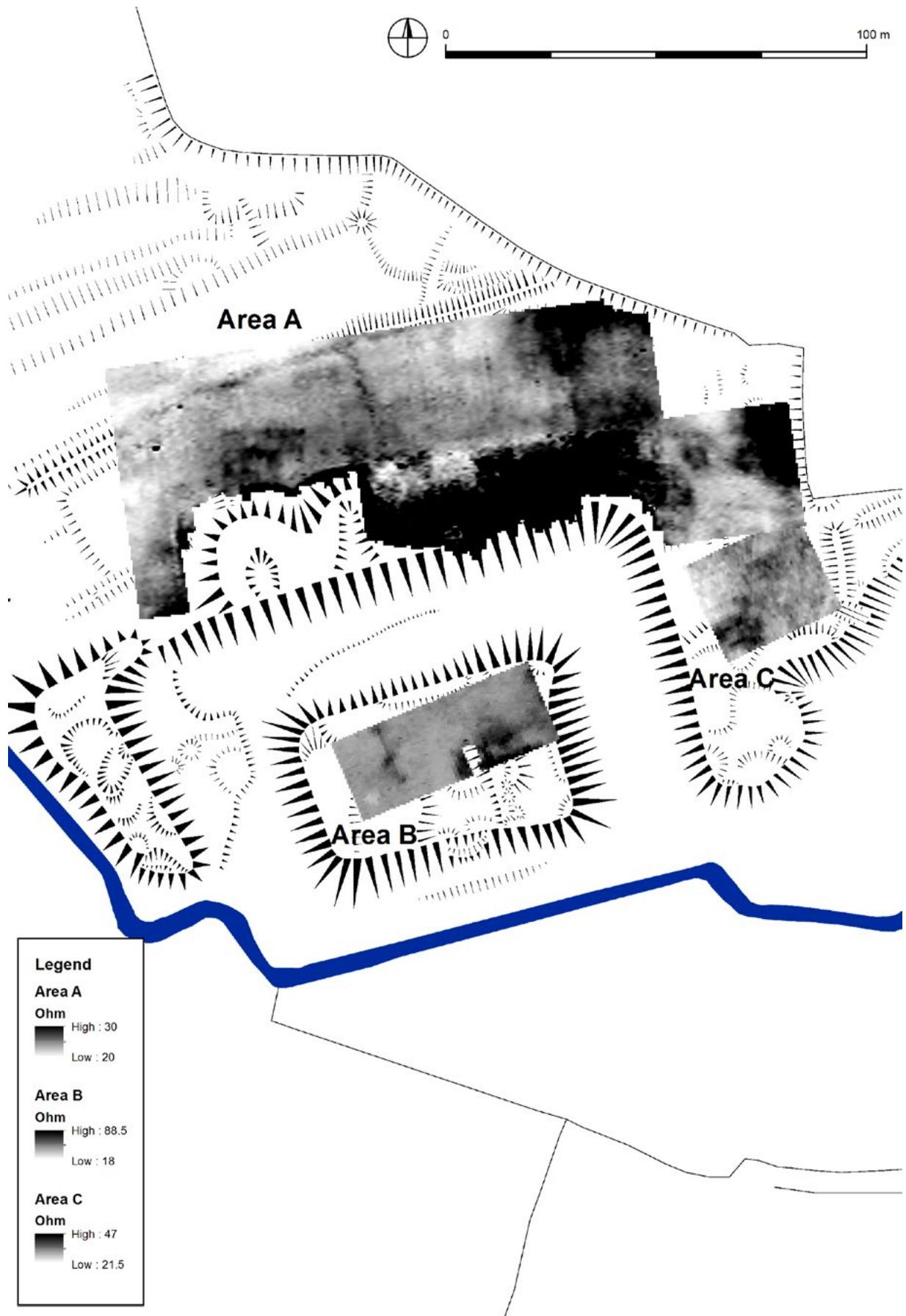


FIGURE 2.13: RESULTS OF THE EARTH RESISTANCE SURVEY OVERLAID ON EARTHWORK SURVEY AT BURWELL CASTLE.

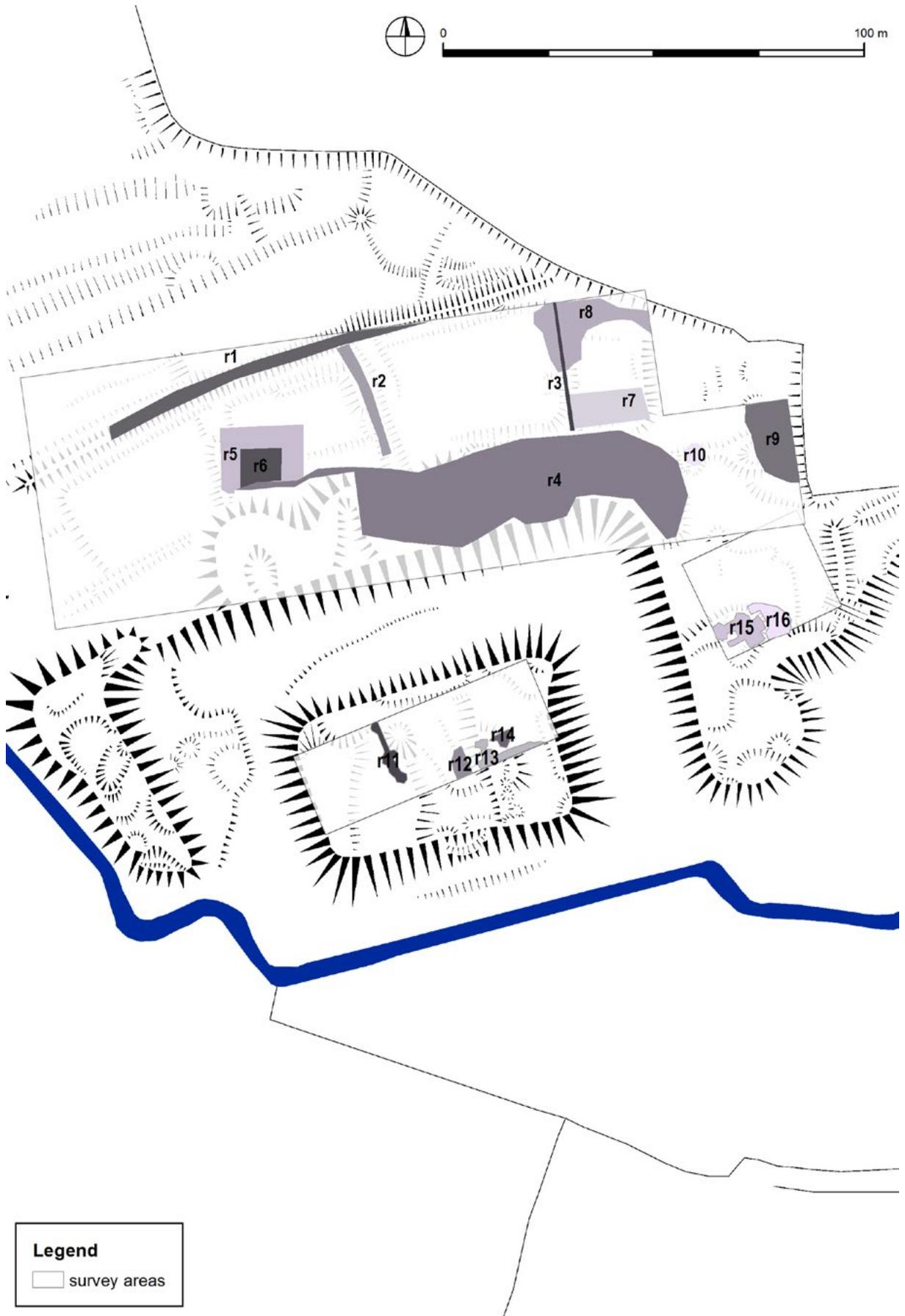


FIGURE 2.14: INTERPRETIVE PLAN OF ANOMALIES IDENTIFIED BY RESISTANCE SURVEY AT BURWELL CASTLE.

Anomaly	Description	Interpretation
r1	High-resistance anomaly 73m long and c. 4m wide. Corresponds with bank depicted in topographic plan.	Bank. Possibly the only precinct used in later periods.
r2	Curvilinear high-resistance anomaly c. 27m long and c. 1.5m wide. Corresponds with ditch surrounding earthwork as identified in topographic plan.	Ditch.
r3	Straight low-resistance anomaly 30m long, 1m wide. Corresponds with magnetic anomaly m2 and ditch drawn on topographic plan.	Substantial ditch.
r4	High-resistance area spatially corresponding with mounds interpreted as spoil heaps of the castle construction.	Spoil heaps.
r5	High-resistance rectangular response, c. 20m across, aligned on cardinal points.	Wall footing of building, possibly Romano-British.
r6	High-resistance rectangular response, c. 10m across, aligned on cardinal points.	Internal wall of building, probably Romano-British.
r7	Sub-rectangular high-resistance area, c. 19m across, similar in shape and alignment to r5/r6.	Possible Romano-British building.
r8	Amorphous higher-resistance zone. Appears natural in lower contrast shade plot.	Natural geology.
r9	Amorphous higher-resistance zone. Appears natural in lower contrast shade plot.	Natural geology.
r10	Circular high-resistance anomaly 5m across, identified as a hollow by this topographic survey, and appearing just west of a building platform identified by Lethbridge.	Footing of circular structure.
r11	Bulbous linear anomaly 15m long and c. 1.5m wide, shares alignment with castle mound.	Wall, perhaps western curtain wall.
r12–r14	High-resistance area comprising spatially connected linears on a similar alignment.	Buried masonry, possibly walls denoting cells in a structure.
r15	High-resistance area comprising a rectangular area with distinct linears. Similar alignment to r12–r14. Lethbridge identified a building platform in this area.	Buried masonry of same phase as structures on the castle mound.
r16	Low-resistance halo around r15.	Enclosure around structure suggested by r15.

TABLE 2.2: DESCRIPTION AND INTERPRETATION OF EARTH RESISTANCE ANOMALIES AT BURWELL CASTLE.

resistance survey may not have detected features in an area considered of significant archaeological potential. As a result the higher, drier areas of land in Area A appear dark in the survey plot. Areas B and C were surveyed in drier conditions.

The geophysical survey identified a number of features also visible as earthworks and identified by the topographic survey. North of the castle ditch, anomalies r2 and r3 probably represent interleaved ditches, perhaps used for drainage. Anomaly r1 corresponds with the east–west bank defining the southerly enclosures, identified by magnetometer survey (m1) and topographic survey (Figure 2.10 north of ‘g’). In the southern part of the survey area a high-resistance anomaly was identified, characterised by three very straight sides; two project north–south and one orientated east–west (r5). Within the interior of r5 a slighter anomaly of similar orientation but characterised by higher resistance was located (r6). The responses of r5 and r6 suggest the presence of structural features, perhaps three sides of a rectilinear building the plan of which appears consistent with Romano-British forms. The distinctive layout of these anomalies, suggesting a rectilinear structure with an internal subdivision, bears close resemblance to

Romano-British temples recognised through excavation; an interior structural *cella* surrounded by a walkway known as an ambulatory or veranda. Numerous examples of temples with such layouts have been excavated in Britain, such as Lamyatt Beacon, Somerset and Caerwent, Monmouthshire (Leech 1986; Brewer 1993). During excavation of the castle mound at Burwell, Lethbridge identified the likely remains of a Romano-British building, and this probably either relates to the southerly extension of the same ‘temple’ structure or perhaps more viably another building in part of a more extensive complex. An alternative interpretation is that the building identified by this survey is the northern extension of a corridor villa, although contextual evidence compellingly supports its interpretation as a temple (see below).

Survey Area B located on the castle mound identified four anomalies of possible archaeological significance. These consisted of high-resistance linear anomalies of comparable alignment. They may denote buried masonry and perhaps elements of the curtain wall and other structures identified by Lethbridge during excavation in the 1930s (Lethbridge 1936). In Area C there were again high-resistance linears in an area previously

identified as a building platform by Lethbridge (1936, 129). These were in a similar alignment to structures on the castle mound and the possibility that they represent part of the same complex or phase of building cannot be disregarded.

### Discussion

The combination of geophysical and earthwork survey, in addition to documentary and historic map analysis undertaken by this research, provides new insights into the historic development of Burwell castle and its environs. While the primary motivation of the work was to investigate the archaeology of the twelfth century, research has also recognised important elements of the pre-castle history of Burwell. Spring Close was already recognised as the site of a Romano-British building following excavations by Lethbridge on the western side of the castle mound, which recovered the line of a wall, along with considerable quantities of Romano-British pottery, roof tiles, wall plaster and animal bone. The excavator surmised that ‘we were clearly on the site of an extensive Romano-British building’ (Lethbridge 1936, 128) and researchers have generally interpreted the structure as a wealthy farmstead or villa (e.g. Malim 2001, 7). Geophysical survey undertaken by this investigation, however, has located a building form more closely identifiable as a temple.

The likelihood that the building is a temple is supported by the wider landscape context of Spring Close and other evidence. Watery locations with intermediate topographic identities such as marshes, tidal islands and fens subject to seasonal inundation were of special significance in the late prehistoric and Romano-British periods and were regularly associated with ritual activity (e.g. Rodwell 1980; Scarre 2002). At Burwell, the likely religious significance assumed by the fen-edge location of Spring Close was heightened by the presence of a spring. Springs have long been recognised as draws for human activity over many millennia, but they are also known to have played a central role as foci for Roman temple construction, as at *Aquae Sulis* (Bath) and *Aquae Arnemetiae* (Buxton), where the waters were deemed both therapeutic and worthy of votive offerings (Green, 1986; Davies and Robb 2002, 181). In addition to the landscape setting of Spring Close, the interpretation of the Romano-British structure at Burwell as a temple is supported by the recovery through metal detecting of a Roman lead tank in the field immediately adjacent to the castle (Guy 1978). The object is datable both by the Romano-British pottery found in the same context, and its close resemblance to similar tanks from Late Roman sites (Cambs. HER: 06787). The purpose of such tanks has been a point of some discussion, with Dorothy Watts (1988) suggesting that they may have been used during baptismal ceremonies for the foot-washing rite. A hoard of bronze bowls also dating to the Romano-British

period was found 1.2km north of the castle, which may further support the premise that the Burwell landscape in general was a ritual zone worthy of special offerings and votive deposits (Gregory 1976).

The precise interpretation of the object aside, the recovery of the tank further supports the hypothesis that Spring Close acted as a ritual focus, and indeed was the site of a temple during the Romano British period. Located approximately 60m north of the wall excavated by Lethbridge, it is difficult to tell whether the structure was part of the same large building or was just one part of a more extensive complex, although the presence of cropmarks in the field to the south-west where the tank was found may support the latter view (Cambs. HER: 06787). It is not possible to determine how long the temple continued to be utilised, but if it did continue in use into the early medieval period it may not have been the sole centre for early ritual activity in Burwell parish. The OE *stapol* place name found in documents from the early post-Conquest period and apparently denoting an assembly site in the south-east of Burwell parish alludes to a spur of land that may have been furnished with a tree or post. Collating the evidence for standing posts being used in such a way, John Blair (2005, 185; 2013) has also highlighted a passage of the scholar Aldhelm who, writing in the 680s, rejoiced in witnessing churches being constructed where previously the ‘crude pillars (*ermula cruda*) of the ... foul snake and stag were worshipped with coarse stupidity in profane shrines’ (*Sancti Aldelmi Opera*, ed. Ehwald 1919, 489, cited by Blair 2005, 185).

An increasing body of data from both Scandinavia and England is illustrating how public meetings were often held at such pre-Christian cult centres and the way in which these locations themselves were gradually assimilated into the administration of royal government (Sawyer and Sawyer 1993, 80–1; Hedeager 2001, 478–81; Blair 2005, 57). Contrastingly liminal yet accessible locations such as the edges of parishes have been shown as especially favoured for public rituals and assemblies, as seen by the inaugural ritual for King Edgar which in 973 was held on the River Dee (Barrow 2003, 81–93; Pantos 2003). At Burwell, it is possible that together with the earlier temple, the *stapol* meeting place may have formed a pre-Christian focal point, and in a pattern recognised elsewhere in East Anglia, subsequently lent the later hundred of Staploe its name (Meaney 1997, 35–6). Without further archaeological investigations the idea that the Romano-British temple site continued in use into the early medieval period must remain speculative, and by the time Burwell first appears in the written record it is in the form of a private estate granted to Ramsey Abbey. Elements of this thegnly residence may have been detected by this survey, as it has been suggested that the substantial sinuous boundary to the north of the castle visible in topography and geophysics may delimit the extent of the thegnly precinct, and the earthworks forming the enclosure

network to the south may also date from this phase. Stratigraphic relationships certainly support the premise that the east-west boundary is either contemporary with or earlier than the enclosures to the south, as the larger feature appears to define the limit of the other earthworks. Thus, by the time the castle at Burwell is next brought into focus by documents of the twelfth century Spring Close and the immediate vicinity was already a long-lived power centre of some significance.

The broad historic narrative of the castle's origins is provided by the documentary evidence, which suggests that Burwell was initially constructed as one of a number of Stephanic fortifications around the fenland in order to restrict the activities of Geoffrey de Mandeville. The written sources also inform us that de Mandeville was killed while attacking the castle, a premise complemented by the apparently unfinished state of the fortification. Losing its *raison d'être* following the death of de Mandeville, the archaeology suggests that construction ceased — for example, the earthwork survey indicates that the castle ditch may not have been completely cleared and that spoil remained heaped in areas adjacent to where it was excavated. Located to the north and west of the castle, these spoil heaps are something of an enigma. Although there is no compelling alternative for their development, there is no obvious rationale for why they were formed in this way during castle construction rather than the material being carted away directly (or indeed piled onto the castle mound rather than on the outside edge of its ditch). Their formation would have only made removal of further spoil from the ditch more difficult, and given that Burwell was subsequently the site of a manorial complex belonging to Ramsey Abbey, the lack of removal is yet more perplexing.

Our earthwork and geophysical surveys together with the excavations by Lethbridge demonstrate, nevertheless, that the campaign castle was probably furnished with a stone curtain wall and possibly a tower when construction ceased. This was clearly not a hastily built and expedient earth and timber siegework, but something grander and more defensible. While siegeworks of the mid-twelfth century were mainly built as ringworks (this volume, Chapters 4, 5, 8 and 9), it seems that Burwell castle was designed as a small rectangular enclosure castle (a likely parallel is Giant's Hill, Rampton: this volume, Chapter 11). Earthwork survey by this research has identified low banks which probably relate to other elements of masonry, demonstrating that the curtain wall likely extended around all sides of the castle mound. Earth resistance survey undertaken by this research has identified anomalies which may also represent elements of this curtain defence — anomaly r11 mirrors the orientation of structures excavated by Lethbridge, and anomalies r12–14 may represent the southern projection of the same complex. Similarly orientated anomalies were identified in earth resistance survey area C, suggesting that here

too may have been structures related to a similar phase of development, if indeed the anomalies represent masonry. Lethbridge (1936, 129) had previously argued that the rectangular structure excavated along the eastern range formed part of such a bridge-head, and identification of settlement to the east of the castle adds weight to such an interpretation.

Although the date of the earthwork enclosures to the north of the castle is difficult to determine, this survey has shown that they are defined by a boundary to the south and do not extend beneath the fortification as previously believed. The castle-builders therefore seem to have respected the extent of the enclosures and while this survey has dismissed their interpretation as a 'classic' toft and croft arrangement, three alternative explanations are forwarded here. The first possible scenario is that the enclosures represent the remains of early medieval settlement elements similar to those recognised through excavation in other fenland sites in Cambridgeshire. The investigations at West Fen Road, Ely, for example, identified a morphologically very similar network of enclosures arranged around a central trackway, some but not all of which possessed structures (Mortimer *et al.* 2005; Mudd and Webster 2011). It is thought that the paddocks were used for a combination of domestic and agricultural purposes within a settlement which acted as a surplus-producing farm for the minster community at Ely (Mortimer *et al.* 2005, 144–8; Wright 2015, 35–39). It is therefore possible that the enclosures at Burwell derive from a similar origin, related perhaps either to the then-gly residence or other pre-castle occupation of the site. Another alternative is that the enclosures in some way derive from development of the castle itself, perhaps structures for construction workers that were not levelled. A final interpretation is that the earthworks are the result of Spring Close's later use as a manorial centre by the Abbot of Ramsey.

On balance, perhaps the most likely scenario is the first — that the enclosures are paddocks originating in the early medieval period. This view is supported by the lack of apparent contemporary structures within the earthworks, implying the units were more likely used as pens rather than tenements. It is impossible to be sure that these adjacent features were abandoned upon construction of the castle but the probability that similar features exist beneath the monument cannot be disregarded. Any settlement in such close proximity to the castle would almost certainly have been deserted on commencement of the fortification. There can be little doubt that the sudden burst of military activity caused significant disruption to the daily life of local people, and the presence of the king's army would have created pressure on local food supply and other resources. Tractable land for growing crops is restricted around the fen edge, but the likelihood that arable farming was being utilised is demonstrated by the presence of medieval ridge and furrow immediately

north of the settlement focus. These two zones of activity were apparently delineated by the east–west bank which may have earlier acted as a boundary to the suggested thegnly precinct.

Assigning absolute dates to any of the features and anomalies recognised by this research is challenging, and is a situation complicated at Burwell by the later use of the castle as the site of the Abbot of Ramsey’s chapel and associated buildings. The excavations by Lethbridge hint that from the thirteenth century the pre-existing structure of the castle was developed for residential purposes — the construction of latrine chutes in particular demonstrates that the complex was being adapted for high-status use. The earthwork complex in the castle ditch is also unusual in this regard and warrants further consideration. It seems likely to have had a water management role, although it is not possible to be certain of its function. The most obvious interpretation would be that it functioned as a watermill complex, and although there is no evidence of dams or sluices, the survival of a narrow ditch within the base of the castle ditch indicates that water was intended to be channelled around the north side of the castle platform. This may even be one reason for the unusual depth and width of the castle ditch relative to the size of its central platform, in order to allow the flow of water around to this complex, and would also suggest that it was never intended to fill the castle ditch with water. This assessment is supported by the evidence from excavations undertaken in the ditch, which located no freshwater deposit showing that it had not held water for any length of time (Lethbridge 1936, 126).

More broadly speaking, Burwell castle’s earthworks most closely resemble a later medieval moated residence. On morphological grounds alone it is not entirely certain whether it would be identified as a castle at all. The rectangular-moated form of the monument in particular bears a striking comparison to another manorial site in Cambridgeshire at Caxton Moats. Situated around 700m west of the village of Caxton in South Cambridgeshire, the site comprises three contiguous moated enclosures arranged in an inverted L-shaped plan. It has been proposed that this complex may have been developed as another Stephanic campaign castle (e.g. Renn 1968, 50), yet the first clear documentary evidence for the site dates

only to 1312. By this time Caxton Moats was the site of a dower house, apparently furnished with fishponds and a rabbit warren (VCH Cambs. II 1948, 21–2; RCHME 1968, 41). Despite featuring three moats, the dimensions and rectangular form of the primary moat at Caxton (and the raised rectangular areas at each or its ends) are almost identical to Burwell castle and it is notable that both sites share a common later medieval history. With little documentary evidence supporting a twelfth-century origin for Caxton Moats, it is possible that the complex dates predominantly from the thirteenth century onward.

While the documentary and archaeological evidence from Burwell strongly support the idea that the castle was initially developed as an Anarchy-period campaign fortification, the comparative site at Caxton Moats raises reasons for caution. It demonstrates in particular that we should not interpret the present form of Burwell castle as purely the result of a twelfth-century military campaign; instead the site should be viewed as a product of protracted phases of activity which varied in character over time. The evidence from Burwell castle thus equally illustrates the complexities of assessing the period through archaeology — the lack of diagnostic material culture together with the reuse of sites and landscapes in later periods requires the critical approach adopted by this research, incorporating all available sources of data.

In addition to Burwell castle’s later medieval use, this investigation has also demonstrated some significant developments at Spring Close before construction of the fortification and it is interesting to speculate which elements of this inheritance were recognised by the twelfth-century castle builders. Stephen and his commanders would almost certainly have been aware of Burwell’s administrative importance, being the site of the meeting-place for the large hundred of Staploe. They may have even recognised the earlier status of Spring Close as an important ritual and political power centre and, in addition to the clear strategic value of Burwell, these symbolic implications may well have played a part when selecting the site of the castle. Further work will undoubtedly supplement this picture, and can only add to our understanding of an Anarchy-period castle with an illustrious and important earlier history.

# Chapter 3

## Castle Carlton, East Lindsey, Lincolnshire

Duncan Wright, Steven Trick, Oliver Creighton, and Michael Fradley

### Abstract

The hamlet of Castle Carlton, Lincolnshire, possesses the impressive remains of a motte and bailey castle and documentary sources demonstrate that it was also the site of an attempted medieval new town plantation. This survey reveals that castle and town were located at separate sites and were not developed contemporaneously during the Anarchy as has previously been assumed. The motte and bailey was apparently the first element to be created, probably at some point in the late eleventh or early twelfth century. The castle, which stimulated significant settlement especially to the west, features an unusually circular bailey suggesting that the motte was inserted into a prehistoric enclosure. The town at Castle Carlton, however, was established some time later, perhaps during the 1220s, on virgin land under the influence of Robert Bardolf. Located at some distance from the castle on either side of an east-west thoroughfare

leading towards the mixed resource base of the reclaimed marshland, the new town at Castle Carlton was particularly reliant on the nearby industry of salt extraction. It is impossible to determine for how long Bardolf's settlement flourished or indeed whether it grew into a fully fledged town at all. An area of large post-medieval building platforms suggests that settlement subsequently shrank or shifted, until these features were in turn also abandoned, leaving a largely rural landscape on the site of the intended town.

### Introduction

The hamlet of Castle Carlton is situated within the parish of Reston, in the East Lindsey district of Lincolnshire (centred TF 3981683681) (Figure 3.1). Approximately 8km south of the market town of Louth, the present-day settlement of Castle Carlton is comprised of a handful of buildings situated at an elevation of approximately

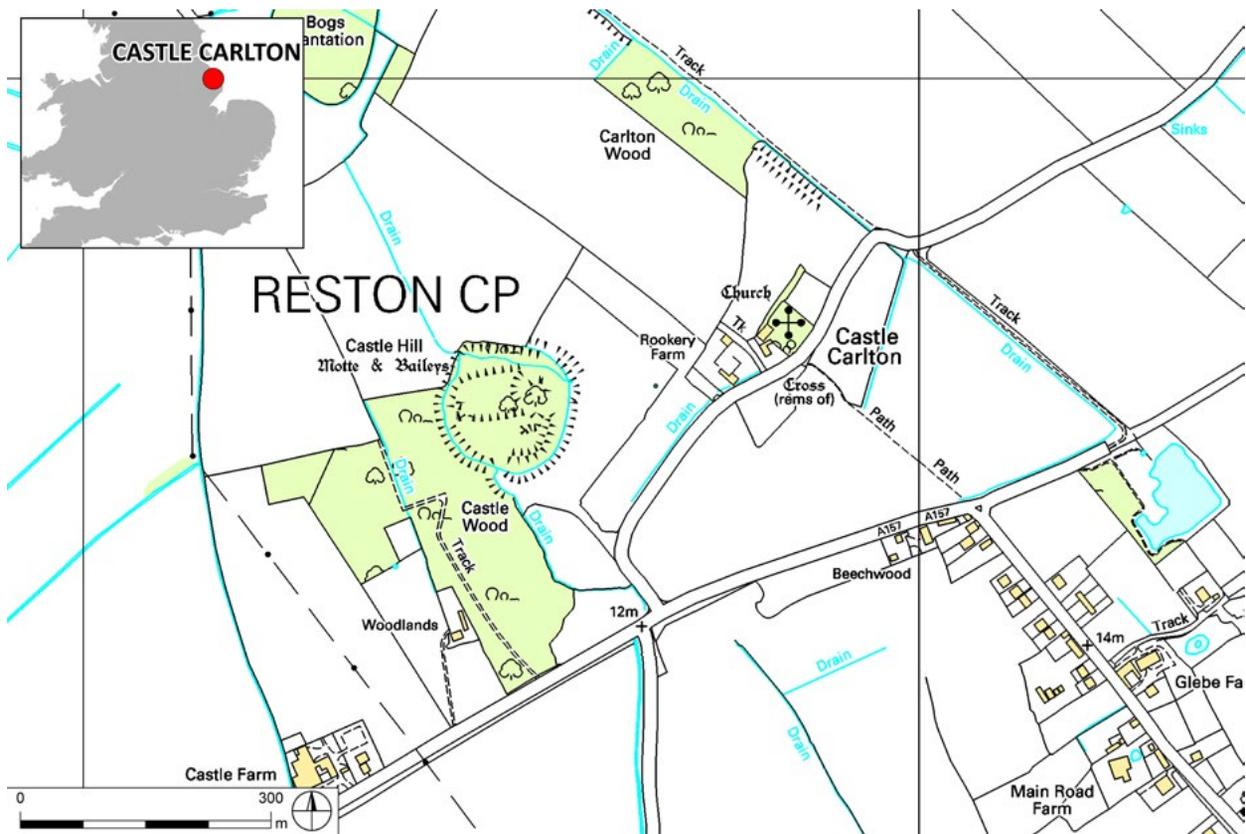


FIGURE 3.1: CASTLE CARLTON IN THE LOCAL LANDSCAPE AND ITS POSITION WITHIN CENTRAL ENGLAND (INSET). © CROWN COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHT 2015. ORDNANCE SURVEY (DIGIMAP LICENCE).



FIGURE 3.2: VIEW ACROSS THE DESERTED SITE OF CASTLE CARLTON ‘NEW TOWN’, LOOKING WEST, WITH THE TREE-COVERED EARTHWORKS OF THE CASTLE ON THE RIGHT. THE LINEAR EARTHWORK ON THE LEFT MIGHT REPRESENT THE ‘WODE DYKE’ RECORDED IN DOCUMENTARY SOURCES AND SEEMS TO HAVE FORMED PART OF THE BOUNDARY AROUND THE SETTLEMENT.

12m above OD, in countryside characterised by mixed farmland and woodland. Documentary sources suggest that Castle Carlton was a thriving centre during the medieval period, and was the location of a new town (Figure 3.2). The historian A.E.B. Owen suggested that the castle-dependent settlement had been established during the mid-twelfth century (Owen 1992, see also Letters 2016), and thus Castle Carlton was chosen for assessment by the project. Writing in the eighteenth century the antiquarian Richard Gough mentioned that it had ‘once been a thriving market town’ and, hinting at the archaeological potential of the place, added that ‘...in every part of it stone causeways and the foundations of buildings are frequently discovered’ (Gough 1789, 274). Given the clear potential of Castle Carlton, the settlement and its environs were the subject of an earthwork and magnetometry survey (for a further, supplementary discussion of the fieldwork and its results, see Wright *et al.* 2015a). The investigation sought to characterise the archaeological and historical evidence relating to the area, with the aim of reconstructing the chronological development of the settlement and castle. The survey was undertaken in two separate one-week stages, in March 2013 and October 2014. The earthworks of a motte and bailey castle, located approximately 200m west of the present focus of settlement, are classified as a Scheduled Monument (National Monument No: 31629).

### The Physical Setting

Castle Carlton and the entirety of Reston parish lie in an area known locally as the ‘Middlemarsh’ — a landscape of muted topography between the foothills of the Lincolnshire Wolds and the reclaimed wetlands of the ‘Outmarsh’. Castle Carlton is situated centrally within the Middlemarsh landscape, bordered by the more durable chalks of the Lincolnshire Wolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty 3km to the west, and the Holocene silt and clay deposits of the tidal flats which also overlie chalk 4km to the east. The Middlemarsh is considered to be the ‘upland’ of the grazing marshes area, and is not subject to coastal inundation. The Middlemarsh forms a roughly north to south orientated belt of land which derives much of its topographic character from underlying geology, which comprises Late Cretaceous chalk of the Ferriby Formation, resulting in fertile but permeable soils. These soils have been used historically for a combination of pastoral and arable farming, forms of agricultural activity which continue to the present day and have resulted in a varied pattern of archaeological survival. Geological conditions are also responsible for the proliferation of rivers and streams in the Castle Carlton landscape, many of which have been canalised. A series of field drains in the area flow gradually northward to the Old Eau, a humanly created canal which extends from around 500m south-west of the castle for one kilometre northwards,

before turning in an easterly direction towards the North Sea. A canalised stream, which also flows from the south to meet the Old Eau further north, extends around both sides of the castle. It is likely that in its original form this watercourse enhanced the defences of the castle site, before undergoing modification in the modern period.

### Archaeological and Historical Background

The earliest evidence for human activity in the Castle Carlton landscape comprises flint tool finds, the majority of which have been identified by local enthusiast Peter Gosse and are displayed in the parish church at nearby Great Carlton. The earliest artefacts date to the Neolithic period, and include blades, scrapers and a well-preserved polished axe head. Further prehistoric flints were also found during fieldwalking undertaken by volunteers led by Paul Everson during the 1980s (Everson 1986). In the wider landscape, the Historic England National Mapping Programme (NMP) has identified a cropmark of probable prehistoric origin at nearby North Reston (Lincs. HER: 46482). Reasonable quantities of Romano-British pottery have also been found through fieldwalking in and around Castle Carlton, suggesting the landscape was relatively well-settled during the early historic period (Everson 1986; Lincs. HER: MLI42501).

During the early medieval period the salt marshes to the east of Castle Carlton began to be settled, initially seasonally, but more comprehensively from the Middle Saxon period onwards. Recent excavations have begun to reveal a high-status settlement, possibly belonging to a church community, situated on a low promontory projecting into wetland approximately 1.5km north of Castle Carlton. Initially identified through metal-detecting, the site, which is located on the fringes of present-day Little Carlton, appears to have been established at a centre of earlier significance, but akin to comparable places was abandoned by the latter part of the ninth century (Townend *et al.* 2016). More lasting early medieval settlement was established in the Castle Carlton landscape following the accumulation of a natural storm beach from the eleventh century which provided protection from marine flooding. An arc of probable Late Saxon settlements, developed after the accumulation of the storm beach, is recognisable in the Outmarsh, extending between Saltfleetby and Theddlethorpe All Saints (Owen 1984, 46). In addition to providing suitable pasture for sheep grazing, it is probable that this ‘Outmarsh’ landscape was utilised for salt extraction and processing. Evidence for early medieval salt industry is rare nationally, but in Lincolnshire an eighth-century saltern has been excavated at Fishtoft, near Boston, and a probable Late Saxon salt-working site has also been identified at Marshchapel (Ellis *et al.* 2001, 153; Cope-Faulkner 2012). It has been suggested that in the Outmarsh some medieval churches occupy low topographical rises formed by saltern waste, at Skidbrooke, Saltfleetby

St Peter and Theddlethorpe All Saints (Sawyer 1998, 15). While the origins of the churches are difficult to determine, the identification of tenth- to eleventh-century stonework at Theddlethorpe St Helens suggests that at least some are Late Saxon foundations (Everson and Stocker 1999, 264). The agricultural resources of the saltmarsh led to the development of various droveways as livestock were moved seasonally from the uplands of the nearby Wolds. Situated in the Middlemarsh between these two landscapes, the parish of Reston was located on one of the major thoroughfares leading from the Outmarsh, and indeed this position was probably of central significance for the siting of both castle and town at Castle Carlton (see below).

Until the present survey, our understanding of medieval Castle Carlton has largely been based upon written sources, although the location is not listed in Beresford’s (1967) *New Towns of the Middle Ages*. The medieval documents relating to the early settlement history of Castle Carlton have been assessed by A.E.B. Owen (1992; 1996a; see also Letters 2016), and while it is not necessary to repeat the full details of these studies, they provide vital context for this research. Charting Castle Carlton’s earliest development is fraught with difficulty due to the fragmentary character of the surviving written documents, and scholars have been largely reliant on the back-projection of later sources. The validity of such an approach is debatable, and is compounded in the case of Castle Carlton by the heavy reliance upon a document known as the Wyggeston Manuscript (*Wyg. Hosp. Rec.* xviii-xxi). The text is a sixteenth-century assessment of Castle Carlton’s tenurial history, compiled when Wyggeston’s Hospital in Leicester acquired a one-third interest in the manor. All elements of the manuscript relating to medieval Castle Carlton were compiled on the basis of copied charters whose reliability is not possible to demonstrate. This difficulty is further compounded by the work of the sixteenth-century scribe, whose attempt to translate the medieval Latin of the original sources leads to obscurities in language and lack of clarity in many passages (Owen 1992, 19).

These characteristics have caused much confusion regarding the extent to which the Wyggeston Manuscript can be trusted, and how reliable a source it is for charting the early history of Castle Carlton. Particular uncertainty has surrounded a series of privileges scattered through the earliest pages of the manuscript apparently based on two charters, which Owen initially suggested could be dated to the mid-twelfth century (Owen 1992, 18–19). The basis of this assertion is the mention in both charters of a certain ‘Sir Hugh’, who was apparently being granted privileges to establish a new town at Castle Carlton by an unspecified ‘King Henry’ (*Wyg. Hosp. Rec.* xviii). Owen at first assumed that ‘Sir Hugh’ referred to the elder Hugh Bardolf, and that ‘King Henry’ was Henry II who was known to have visited Lincoln in 1157 where

he conceivably could have issued the grant (Owen 1992, 19). Such an interpretation is problematic for several reasons, not least in that it suggests that the elder Hugh Bardolf had significant interests in Lincolnshire far earlier than recognised by previous research (Clay 1966). Perhaps most significant, however, are the observations made by Sir James Holt, who demonstrated that the privileges bestowed on Castle Carlton in the Wyggeston Manuscript are in fact typical of thirteenth-century borough confirmations. Holt also demonstrated that as Castle Carlton was not royal demesne, the privileges are likely to have been bestowed by the lord of the new borough and that the royal charter simply represents a confirmation of existing rights (Holt pers. comm. cited in Owen 1996a, 27).

The 'King Henry' referred to in the text therefore seems instead to refer to Henry III, and the two charters appear to have been issued in his fourth and eighth regnal years, i.e. 1219–20 and 1223–24 respectively. The reference in the charters to 'Sir Hugh' has yet to be explained fully but perhaps reflects confusion on the part of the sixteenth-century scribe, with the privileges relating to a new town at Castle Carlton instead probably being bestowed upon Robert Bardolf. Significantly, the first recorded presentation to 'the chapel of Karleton' in 1222–23 was also made to Robert Bardolf, who it emerges was promoting the simultaneous foundation of borough and church at Castle Carlton (*Wyg. Hosp. Rec.* xviii; Owen 1996a, 26–7). Robert Barfolf was a powerful and influential landowner in the Castle Carlton region, and was given the title *advocatus* of nearby Barlings Abbey following his grant to support the addition of thirteen canons to the monastic community (Everson and Stocker 2011, 373). In order to attract population to his nascent town, Robert apparently introduced a series of incentives, including tax-free land for six years on condition of building a dwelling. Particularly informative for archaeological research, the text also gives details of the intended physical arrangement of tenements in the settlement, noting that it was to be laid out in fifty or fifty-two tofts including ten held by the lord and three by the Church (VCH Leics. IV 1958, 398–405; Clay 1966, 10–18; Owen 1992, 18–19). Further details apparently dating to the thirteenth century contained within the Wyggeston Manuscript also refer to residents of Castle Carlton as 'burgesses', as well as mentioning the rights and obligations of the town mayor. The role of Castle Carlton's hayward is also informative, and reveals the central importance of the coast to the medieval economy of the area, with the production of salt particularly prominent. An officer answerable to the lord with burghal as well as manorial responsibility, amongst the privileges of the hayward at Castle Carlton was an allowance of a 'horn full of salt' from each cart carrying such produce through the lordship (*Wyg. Hosp. Rec.* xviii–xx; VCH Leics. IV 1958, 400–5; Owen 1992, 19). Located on the fringes of the extensive salt marshes which in the

medieval period characterised much of the East Lindsey coast, the Wyggeston text suggests that Castle Carlton was deliberately located on one of the various droveways used to access the reclaimed landscape (Rudkin and Owen 1960; Grady 1998).

While the evidence from the Wyggeston Manuscript therefore implies that Robert Bardolf probably established a church and town at Castle Carlton in the 1220s, other texts demonstrate that the manor already possessed a community. A charter of King John dated to 1201 granting the younger Hugh Bardolf the right to hold yearly fairs at 'Karleton' (*Rotuli Chartarum*, trans. Hardy 1837, 91) suggests that Castle Carlton acted as a seasonal centre at the very least, and is significantly followed only four years later by the first reference to a castle in a fine roll which describes 'Carlton on sea with its castle and appurtenances' [*Karleton super mare cum castro et cum pertinenciis suis*] (*Rotuli de Oblatis*, trans. Hardy 1835, 296). The castle is not the only defensive earthwork in the region, and any assessment of Castle Carlton must also consider the closely comparable motte and bailey site located only 3.5km to the south-east at Toot Hill. That the Middlemarsh was a landscape deemed worthy of elite investment and/or colonisation is also demonstrated by the establishment of numerous religious houses in the region. At Legbourne, a little over 3km west of Castle Carlton, a Cistercian nunnery was founded by Robert FitzGilbert around 1150 (VCH Lincs. II 1906, 153–5). A house of Cistercian monks was also established in 1139 by Alexander, Bishop of Lincoln, within the bounds of his park near Louth, 6.5km north-west of the site (VCH Lincs. II 1906, 138).

The written sources therefore suggest that Robert Bardolf's new town was established within a family holding which had already been the site of a castle and fair for at least two decades, and within a marshland landscape which had been the focus of significant elite investment throughout the twelfth century. The clear chronological distinction between the development of the castle and the subsequent foundation of the town is of central significance for understanding medieval Castle Carlton, especially as previous interpretations have tended to view their origins as simultaneous (e.g. Owen 1996a; Creighton and Higham 2005, 80), and favoured the mid-twelfth century as the likely context for the planning of the settlement (see also Everson *et al.* 1991, 16, 157). The archaeological evidence is consistent with this revised interpretation of the documentary sources in demonstrating that castle and new town were not only established separately, but also in geographically distinct locations (see below). With regard to the later medieval history of Castle Carlton, a fair was seemingly still being held on All Saints Day in 1371, although the success of the market is less certain. Despite common reference to 'Market Carlton' as an alternative name for Castle Carlton, the market is not mentioned in extents dated to

the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and it seems that it failed to permanently establish itself following its first valuation in 1247 (Owen 1996a, 28).

The failure of the market hints at the economic struggles faced by the town, factors that were probably central to why it did not flourish into the later medieval and post-medieval periods. Another important contributor to the decline of Castle Carlton may have been the three-way partition of the manor in 1427 (Owen 1996b, 20). By the time of the Lay Subsidy in 1334, Castle Carlton was assessed with Great Carlton at £55 (Glasscock 1975, 183; Everson *et al.* 1991, 16). Tracing the exact trajectory of decline at Castle Carlton is difficult, but there was clearly no longer a substantial settlement when visited by Gough, who noted the presence of ‘only nine wretched houses of mud and straw’ (Gough 1789, 274). The church of the Holy Cross was demolished in 1902 after falling into a state of disrepair.

**Map Analysis**

The Lincolnshire Record Office does not possess a Tithe Map relating to Castle Carlton and therefore the earliest available mapping to illustrate the area in detail is the OS First Edition dated to 1889 (Figure 3.3). The map shows the church and graveyard still in use, in

addition to a number of buildings belonging to the White House and Rookery Farm on the north side of the road. Three further small structures, no longer standing, are illustrated in a paddock opposite Rookery Farm. In the north-westernmost paddock of Castle Carlton, a pump is illustrated at the south-eastern terminus of the prominent linear earthwork known as Bull Bank (see below). The north-eastern area of Castle Carlton features a paddock fronting onto the road and illustrated as tree-covered in addition to a polygonal feature, possibly representing a pond. The remainder of Castle Carlton is illustrated in much the same way by OS maps throughout the twentieth century although the castle is depicted in much greater detail from the 1970s onward, likely due to the survey of the earthworks undertaken by the Ministry of Works.

**Earthwork Description and Interpretation**

For the purposes of presenting the results of the earthwork survey, areas of earthworks have been subdivided into three distinct zones (Figure 3.4). In the north-eastern part of Castle Carlton, Area A comprises fields and paddocks on either side of the main thoroughfare which leads from the A157 towards Great Carlton. Area B consists of the motte and bailey, a further curvilinear earthwork which mirrors the alignment of the bailey to the west, and an L-shaped field which extends around the south-

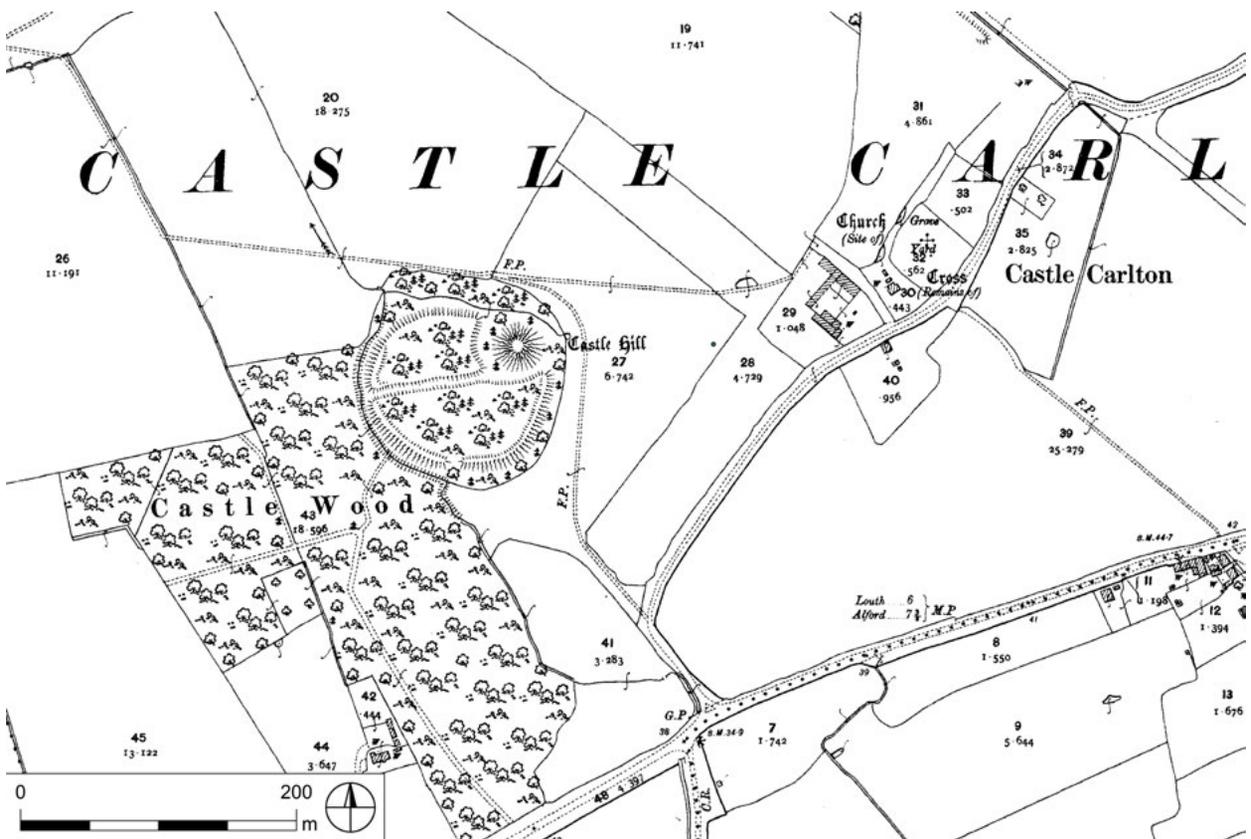


FIGURE 3.3: OS FIRST EDITION 25" OF CASTLE CARLTON. THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY CROSS WAS DEMOLISHED IN 1902, AND THE BUILDINGS OPPOSITE THE CHURCH ARE ALSO NO LONGER EXTANT. © CROWN COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHT 2015. ORDNANCE SURVEY (DIGIMAP LICENCE).



FIGURE 3.4: THE THREE TOPOGRAPHIC SURVEY AREAS AT CASTLE CARLTON. © CROWN COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHT 2015. ORDNANCE SURVEY (DIGIMAP LICENCE).

east and north-east portions of the monument. The motte and bailey and its associated earthworks are located in dense woodland used primarily as pheasant habitat, and the L-shaped field is open grassland where livestock are grazed. Immediately west of Castle Farm, Area C is an area of earthworks located within a paddock presently used for pastoral farming.

#### Area A

The largest surveyed part of Area A consists of an L-shaped shaped field currently under pasture. The most prominent earthwork is a linear bank which extends for approximately 75m in a north-west to south-east orientation (Figure 3.6: 'a'). The bank varies from 0.5m and 1m in height from the topography of the surrounding field, but to the north-west drops off sharply to a field drain 3m below which shares the same alignment. The earthwork is known locally as the 'Bull Bank', perhaps referencing the historic use of the field for penning livestock. Located to the south-west of the Bull Bank is a series of amorphous platforms (Figure 3.6: 'b') measuring 0.1m to 0.3m in height, surrounded by a series of sinuous platforms of varying width. The complex shares a general alignment with the Bull Bank and it is possible that it represents former building platforms and associated pathways which have become weathered through stock movement and localised flooding. A series

of more regular ditches is located to the south-west, forming a series of platforms measuring between 0.1m and 0.4m high (Figure 3.6: 'c'). Approximately 20m wide and 25m long, the platforms again share the same alignment of both the denuded earthwork complex and the Bull Bank. The platforms appear to front on to a hollow way which extends from the lane between Rookery Farm and the White House in a north-east alignment where it joins the denuded earthwork complex (Figure 3.6: 'b'). The size and form of the platforms suggest they may be of post-medieval or early modern date (or were else modified substantially in the post-medieval period) and local residents remember building remains of Victorian houses being visible in the field until the second half of the twentieth century.

In a small paddock fronting on to the main thoroughfare, immediately adjacent to the disused churchyard, a ditch approximately 5m wide may represent the remains of a hollow way which extends for around 10m in a south-east to north-west orientation (Figure 3.6: 'd'). A paddock on the south-eastern side of the road was also surveyed as part of Area A, and while no upstanding earthworks were identified, a pattern of possibly significant vegetation change was noted: buried ditches typically retain more water which can help to stimulate plant growth, and can lead to detectable differences in surface vegetation. Two linear, inter-connected alignments forming a T-shape of

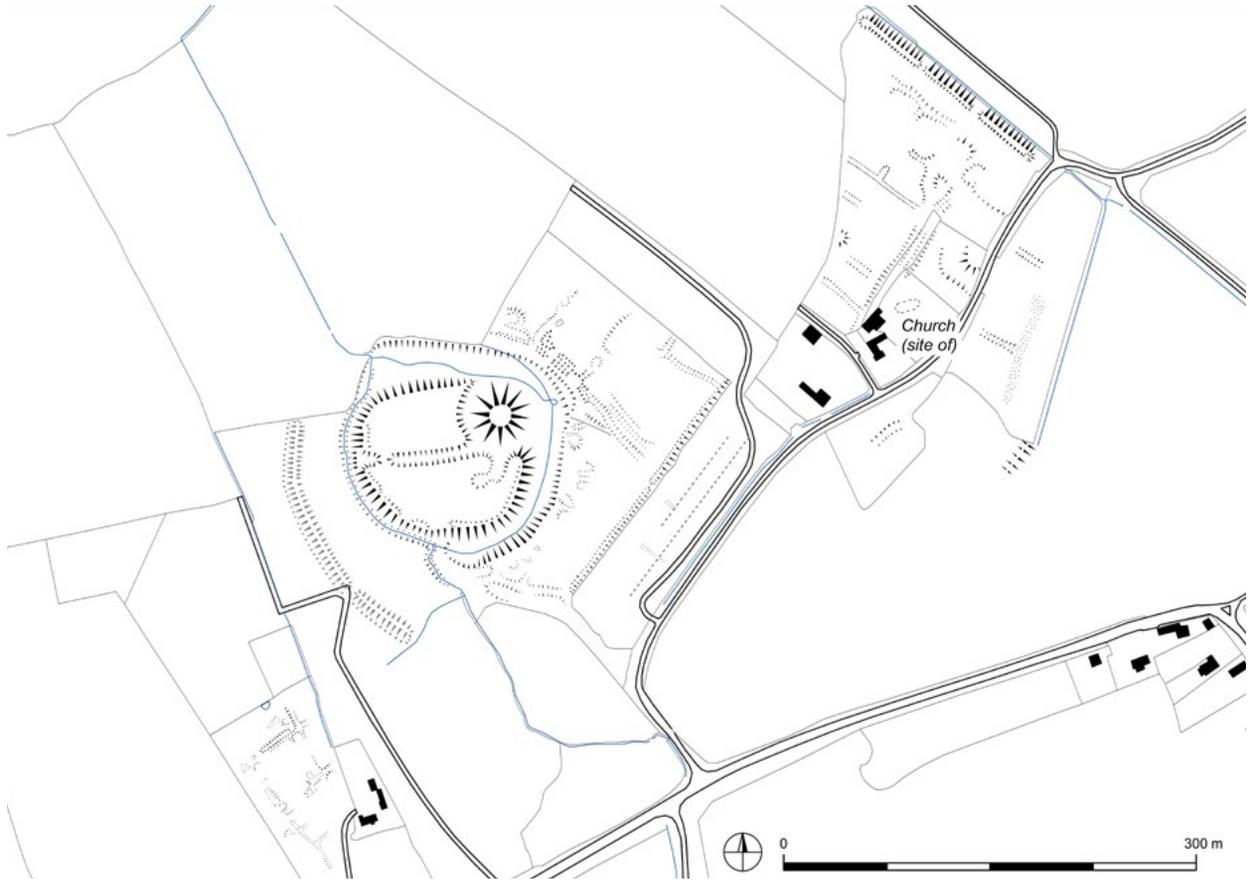


FIGURE 3.5: EARTHWORK PLAN OF CASTLE CARLTON.

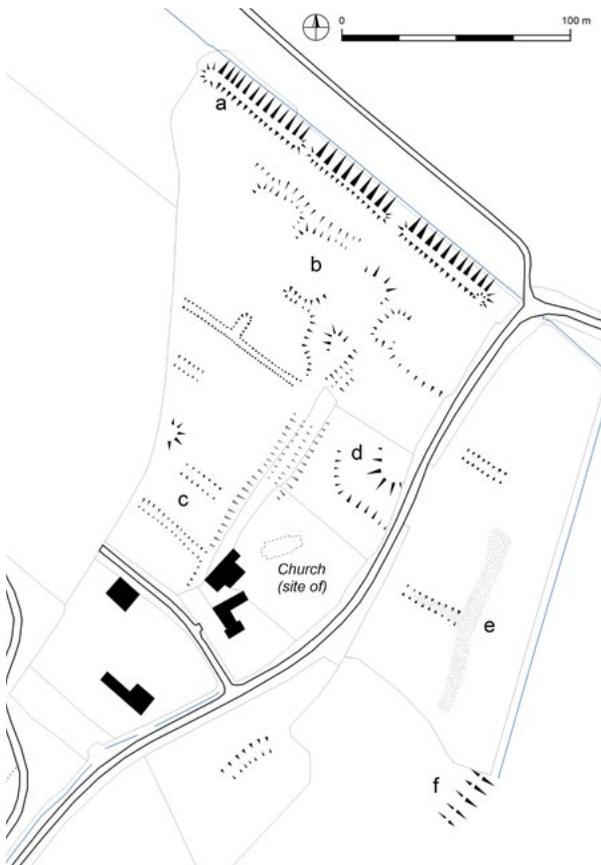


FIGURE 3.6: ANNOTATED EARTHWORK PLAN OF SURVEY AREA A AT CASTLE CARLTON.

lusher, greener vegetation were recorded, both measuring approximately 5m and 7m in width. The wider, more extensive linear was recorded as running parallel to the road for around 80m, from which a second feature was identified, measuring 21m in length (Figure 3.6: 'e'). It is cautiously suggested that these features may indicate the existence of a ditched enclosure network of uncertain provenance which previously fronted onto the road. Indeed, the OS First Edition illustrates a single tree-covered plot on such an orientation, perhaps representing the last element of a more comprehensive arrangement of property boundaries (Figure 3.3). In the south-east part of Area A, a break in slope may be the remains of a heavily denuded bank (Figure 3.6: 'f'). This feature shares the alignment of the bank noted by Everson (1986), which may once have defined the extent of medieval settlement parallel to the main route through Castle Carlton.

#### **Area B**

The motte and bailey earthwork castle at Castle Carlton is located on a rise in the local topography, the ground level falling away gradually to the north and west of the monument. The complex comprises a distinctive circular bailey, the diameter of which measures approximately 127m east to west, and 111m north to south (Figure 3.7: 'g'). The bailey is lined by internal banks along the southern and western sides, and the western part of the enclosure is surrounded by a steep-sided ditch.



southern terminus it joins a broad ditch, apparently representing a watercourse which before canalisation probably connected to the stream which fills the bailey ditch. The feature ceases abruptly at its northern terminus, where it meets an east-west field boundary. Such a sharp cessation suggests that the feature may have continued further north, but has probably been destroyed through ploughing. The identity of this consecutive linear ditch feature is difficult to discern, and has not been recorded by any previous investigations of Castle Carlton. Given the remarkably similar alignment to the western course of the main castle enclosure, it is possible that it represents the remnants of a second, outer bailey which has previously not been noted by observers. The angular plan of the feature suggests it may later have been used for some sort of water management function.

The open L-shaped field which extends around the eastern and northern east sides of the motte and bailey complex also possesses a number of earthworks of probable archaeological origin. Running parallel to the south-west/north-east orientated field boundary for approximately 190m is a 1.5m wide bank which rises up to 1m above the field to the west, and 1.5m above the field-edge which borders it to the east (Figure 3.7: 'o') (Figure 3.2). Around half-way along its length is a gap which may be the result of erosion. It is possible that this feature is either the remains of a former field boundary, or alternatively defined the extent of roadside settlement to the east. It is possible that this feature represents the 'wode dike' recorded in documentary records relating to the town (see below). To the north of the castle ditch a series of sinuous earthworks may be of archaeological origin, but are heavily eroded. This indistinct complex is cut by two spread linear ditches which emanate from the castle ditch, probably denuded tracks formed by stock movement. Further east, a series of parallel and slight linear ditches may represent eroded remains of post-medieval narrow rig ploughing (Figure 3.7: 'p'). The counterscarp of the moat possesses several interruptions in its course, which again are likely the result of livestock activity (e.g. Figure 3.6: 'q'). In the southern part of the L-shaped field, a broad raised bank is bordered to its south by a broad shallow ditch. Although truncated and eroded, it is possible that these features represent the remains of a routeway which connected between the southern entrance to the castle and the main thoroughfare through Castle Carlton. In the field adjacent to the road itself, two faint banks running perpendicular to the routeway may define former roadside property plots (Figure 3.7: 'r'). In the same field, visible on LiDAR data, are a series of low linear banks, probably relict ridge-and-furrow (Figure 3.7: 'v').

### Area C

In Area C a series of raised platforms are defined by two broad shallow linear intersecting ditches forming an L-shape (Figure 3.8: 's'). The first ditch, orientated

south-east to north-west, measures 4.5m across and 0.5m deep and extends for around 10m. The second ditch, aligned south-west to north-east, is of similar form but extends for 25m and is bordered on its northern side by a spread bank measuring 5.5m across. South-east of these intersecting ditches, another junction of intersecting ditches of closely comparable form was also identified (Figure 3.8: 't'). A further group of intersecting ditches, again of very similar character, was surveyed to the south-west (Figure 3.8: 'u'). Together, these three ditch configurations create a central earthwork platform, measuring around 20m square, with further raised platforms on their periphery. The character of the platforms is comparable to those typically found on deserted medieval settlements, and the broad ditches probably represent the lines of hollow ways connecting the tenement plots. The relationship of these apparent medieval settlement remains to the rest of the Castle Carlton landscape is uncertain, but LiDAR data suggest that the area lies within an enclosure partially preserved in the line of remaining field boundaries. It is possible that the earthworks represent part of a westerly extension of settlement from the castle (see below), or alternatively they may be an area of outlying tofts that was originally distinct from the main focus of activity.

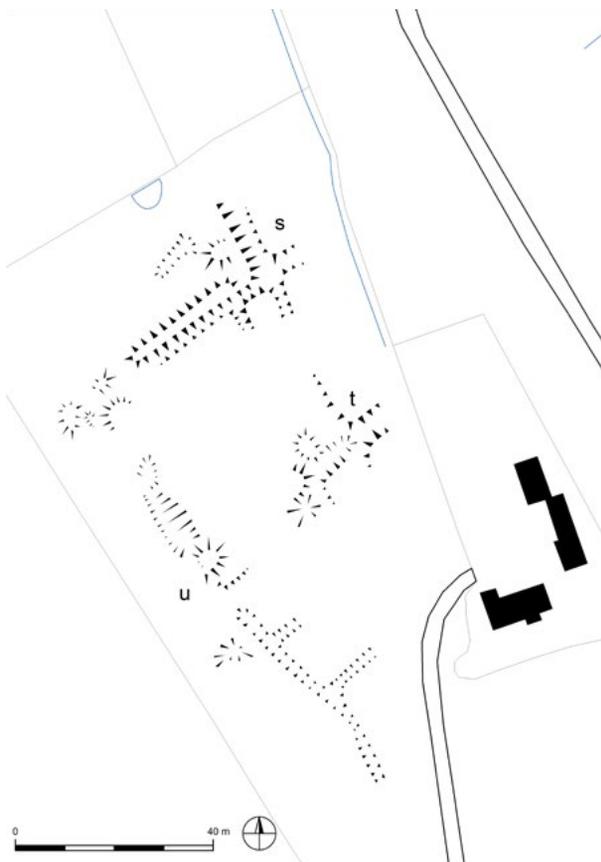
### Magnetometry Results and Interpretation

A magnetometer survey of approximately 4.5ha of the Castle Carlton landscape was undertaken as outlined in the project design submitted to Historic England. The motte and bailey earthworks of the castle itself could not be surveyed due to dense woodland cover. Figure 3.9 shows the results of the magnetometry survey and Figure 3.10 shows the anomalies identified in the plot. Table 3.1 below offers a description and interpretation of identified anomalies.

In summary, the magnetometer survey at Castle Carlton identified a number of anomalies, some of which may be archaeological in origin. Some of the anomalies to the north and east of the castle may be related to post-medieval agricultural activity (anomalies m20 and m21), but no features that could be confidently associated with medieval settlement were identified. A number of linear anomalies in the fields adjacent to the castle also identified by the earthwork survey were also located by magnetometry, probably related to several phases of organised drainage. In the field immediately south-west of the Bull Bank, the right-angled anomalies of m4 to m10 are also visible as earthworks in an area of probable post-medieval building platforms. The linear anomalies in this area again may represent part of a drainage regime, or alternatively may be related to buried masonry. On the opposite side of the thoroughfare, anomaly m16 is more likely related to a medieval tenement apparently fronting onto the street. Further south, m35 and m35 may represent similar street-fronting plots of possible medieval date.

Anomaly	Description	Interpretation
m1,m2	Two tapering, sinuous, mirrored anomalies aligned with local drainage pattern.	Identified in topographic survey. Weathered drainage ditch or lane.
m3	Area of dipolar responses. Remembered locally as location of Victorian housing. Near water pump.	Pre-modern and modern disturbance.
m4–m10	Positive, linear anomalies depicting a rectangular enclosure.	Possible walled area, but more likely to be cut drainage ditches.
m12–m13	Areas of positive magnetic response.	Possible buried walls or pits.
m15	Broad ring of increased magnetic response, 40m in diameter, not visible on aerial photographs.	Uncertain, possibly modern agricultural debris.
m16	Wide positive linear, coincides with crop mark.	Substantial ditch.
m17	Strong dipolar response, location coinciding with crop mark.	Modern disturbance or buried deposit in ditch, possibly archaeological.
m18, m19	Discernible positive linears in magnetic noisy area.	Possible ditches.
m20	Dipolar response.	Modern disturbance.
m21	Cruciform negative anomaly, coinciding with channels identified in topographic survey.	Uncertain. Response conforms to that of bedding trench or road surface.
m22	L-shaped positive anomaly. Corresponds to platform corner identified on topographic survey.	Drainage ditch external to platform, or wall on platform edge.
m23–m25	Curvilinear anomalies, m24 and m25 mutually concentric, and encircling castle moat. Corresponds to segmented banks recorded by topographic survey.	Built banks of uncertain function. There appear to be some pits adjacent to these banks.
m26–m28	Sinuous linears of mixed magnetic response, identified on topographic survey.	Possible ridge and furrow.
m29	Discernible crescent of negative magnetic response.	Uncertain. Response suggests bedding trench.
m30–m31	Sub-circular areas of positive magnetic character.	Large pits.
m32–m34	Sub-circular areas of positive magnetic character.	Large pits, m33 and m34 possibly associated with modern track.
m35, m36	Discernible linear anomalies on alignment of local drainage pattern.	Possible drainage ditches of uncertain antiquity.

TABLE 3.1: DESCRIPTION AND INTERPRETATION OF MAGNETOMETRY ANOMALIES AT CASTLE CARLTON.



### Discussion

The archaeological investigations conducted by this study provide valuable information regarding the character of medieval Castle Carlton, which can complement and enhance the evidence from the available but problematic written sources. Documents first mention a castle at *Karleton* in 1205, but archaeological assessment suggests that the motte and bailey was probably established at an earlier date. The character of the bailey at Castle Carlton is somewhat unusual, both due to its relatively large size but also due to its remarkably circular form. It is impossible to be sure how such a regular circular bailey was created, but two scenarios are forwarded here for consideration. One possibility is that castle construction consisted of two distinct stages, with a motte erected, albeit rather awkwardly, within the north-eastern corner of a previously carefully surveyed bailey. This sequence of development appears unlikely, however, as one would expect the elements of motte and bailey to be integrated more cohesively if they originated as two stages of a single construction phase. Perhaps a more likely scenario is that the motte was established within a pre-existing earthwork enclosure, possibly of prehistoric origin,

FIGURE 3.8: ANNOTATED EARTHWORK PLAN OF SURVEY AREA C AT CASTLE CARLTON.

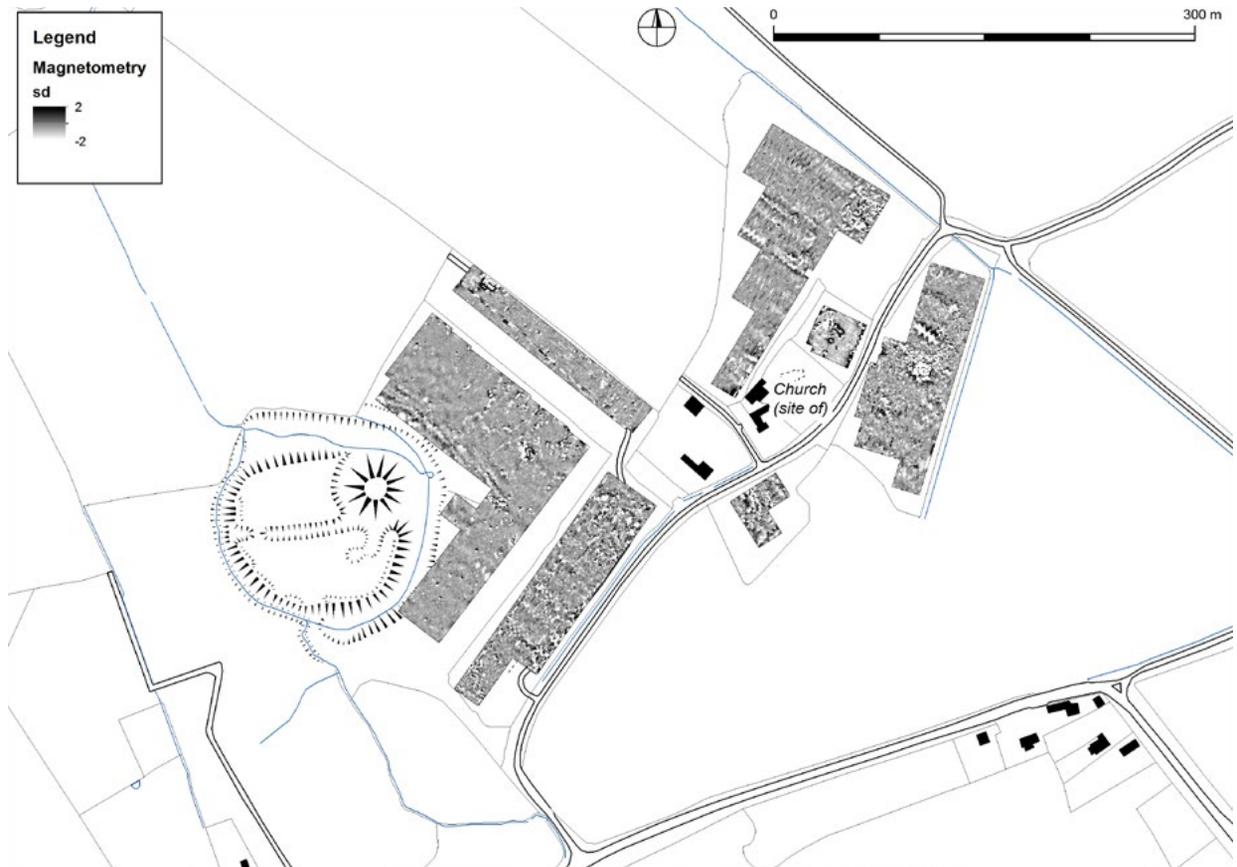


FIGURE 3.9: MAGNETOMETRY SURVEY PLOT OF CASTLE CARLTON.

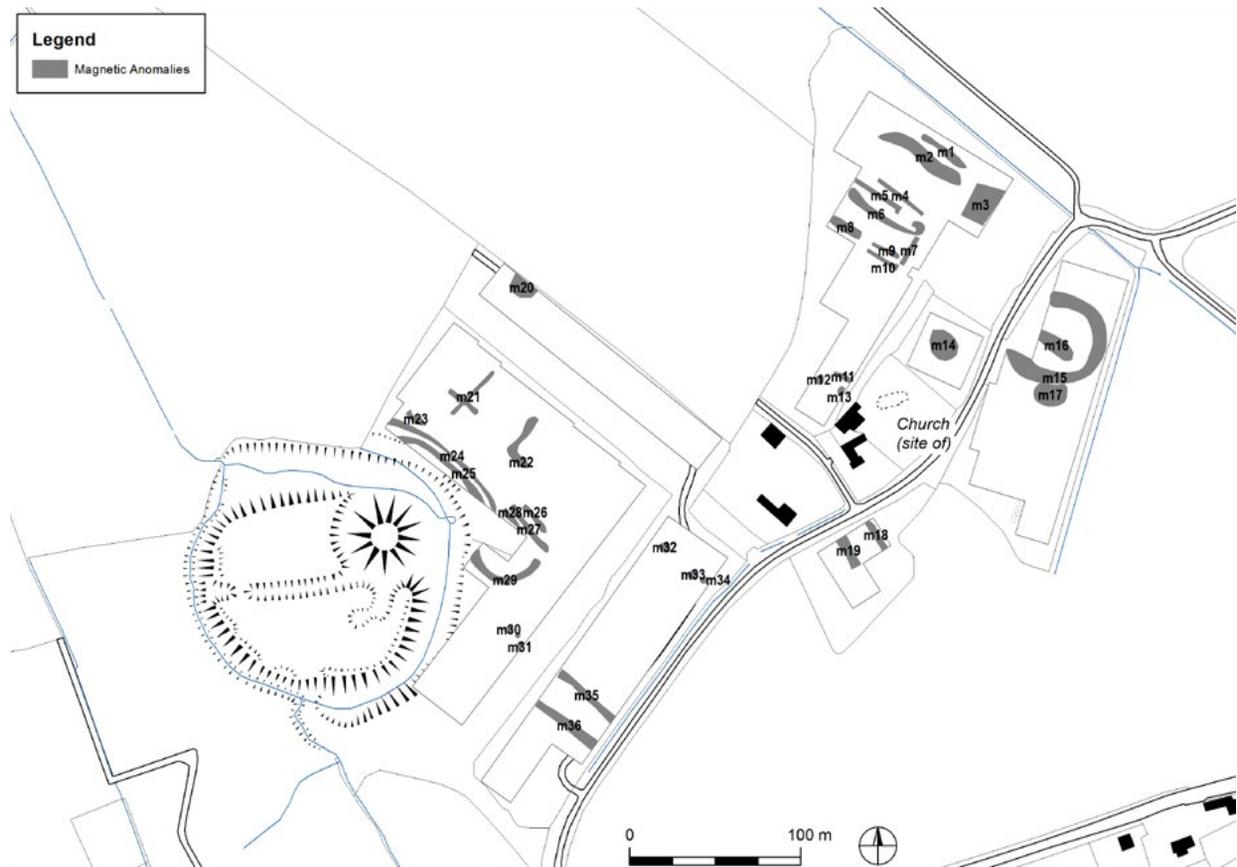


FIGURE 3.10: INTERPRETATION OF ANOMALIES IDENTIFIED BY MAGNETOMETRY SURVEY AT CASTLE CARLTON.

which was enhanced and adapted to function as the castle bailey. The reuse of prehistoric, particularly Iron-Age, monuments for castle construction is certainly attested elsewhere (see Higham and Barker 1992, 200; 239); illustrative examples include Ludgershall, Wiltshire (Ellis 2000) and British Camp, Herefordshire (Remfry 1996). Although Iron-Age antecedents will probably only be detected if the castle earthworks are subject to excavation, fieldwalking from the Castle Carlton area suggests the presence of a densely settled late prehistoric landscape.

Attempting to assign a close date of construction for the motte is more difficult and while there are a number of possibilities, the monument form is most informative. Motte and baileys can generally be dated to a broad phase from the Norman Conquest up to around 1150, but at Castle Carlton the size of the motte may provide a more specific provenance. At 8m in height and 40m in diameter, the motte is substantial and comparable to early Norman urban examples at locations such as Norwich, Oxford, Thetford and York, or more locally, the enormous and demonstrably early motte and bailey at Castle Bytham, Lincolnshire (Creighton 2005, 106).

All of these examples date to the late eleventh century and were built for the early consolidation of nascent Norman power. Although located within a rural context it is possible that the motte of Castle Carlton is of comparable date, and through reuse of a pre-existing enclosure the castle builders would have been able to quickly raise a symbol of new Norman authority within the politically contested landscape of the Danelaw. The situation of Castle Carlton near to the Lincolnshire coast could also be seen to support this premise, given the continued threat posed from North Sea invasion throughout the early post-Conquest period. Another important early Lincolnshire castle interpreted as a strategic foundation of the immediate post-1066 period is the ringwork and bailey at Castle Hills, Thonock, which overlooks a strategic crossing point of the River Trent (Everson *et al.* 1991, 193–4). The argument that the motte at Castle Carlton was built for coastal defence is not supported by viewshed analysis for the site, however, which demonstrates that the motte affords the best vistas towards the landward areas north and west (Figure 3.11). Located less than 4km from the site the motte and bailey of Toot Hill bears a strikingly close resemblance to that at Castle Carlton. While Toot Hill does not share a circular

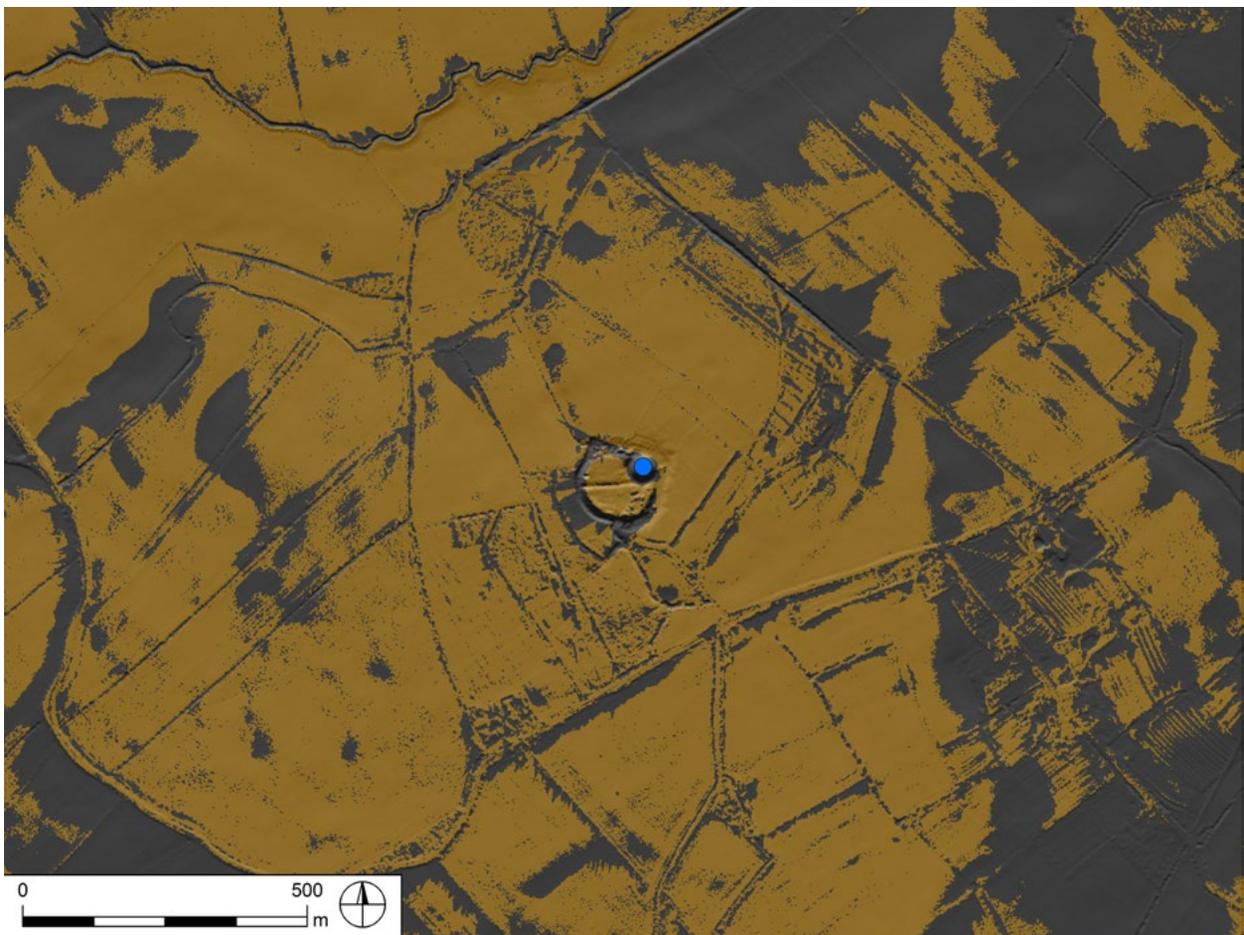


FIGURE 3.11: VIEWSHED MAP FROM A 2M ELEVATION FROM THE TOP OF THE MOTTE AT CASTLE CARLTON. THE DOT REPRESENTS THE MOTTE LOCATION AND LIGHT SHADING REPRESENTS VISIBLE AREAS. THE MOTTE AFFORDS THE BEST VIEWS TO THE WEST AND NORTH — THE VISTA TO THE EAST TOWARDS THE SEA IS NOT AS EXTENSIVE. © CROWN COPYRIGHT. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. ENVIRONMENT AGENCY.

bailey, and indeed the relationship of the motte within the bailey suggests that unlike Castle Carlton the monument was developed during a single phase, at 8m in height the motte at Toot Hill is of almost identical scale (National Monument No: 355689). If constructed at a similar date, it is conceivable that the monuments at Castle Carlton and Toot Hill may have formed two elements of a coordinated castle building strategy, or alternatively may have been created at a similar time by rival lords seeking to exert power over the local landscape.

The castle at Castle Carlton was certainly built to be strategically valuable, and is located at an important position within the landscape, especially in relation to the local transport network. As the valuable mixed salt and pasture resources of the partially reclaimed Outmarsh continued to be utilised, a more formalised network of routes in the Middlemarsh appears to have been established. One of the primary routes from the coast led in a westerly direction from Theddlethorpe All Saints along a causeway known as Two Mile Bank, and its continuation Long Hedge. The routeway delineated the limit of medieval parishes along the entirety of its course, and entered the Castle Carlton area from the east where it defined the boundary between Great Carlton and Reston. At this point the course seems to have deviated from the line of parish boundaries and turned northward along a pathway to the north-east of Castle Carlton and on to a track called Craker Lane which eventually connected to Louth (Owen 1984, 46–9). At Castle Carlton, the broad earthwork known as the Bull Bank is located on the northward projection of the route, and probably represents part of what was in places an artificially raised routeway. In addition to constituting the extent of historic parishes along its Two Mile Bank/Long Hedge section, the path also formed the boundary between the two wapentakes of Loutheske and Calceworth. It is therefore probable that the line of the routeway was defined during the early medieval period, and it is a distinct possibility that the motte and bailey at Castle Carlton was sited with at least a partial intention to control movement along its course.

Without further archaeological intervention it is not possible to assign a close date for castle development at Castle Carlton but the motte and bailey was almost certainly established by 1150, and probably earlier. Given the broad period of potential castle construction it is not possible to definitively identify its builder, and the tenorial history of Castle Carlton presents a number of possibilities. Shortly after the Conquest, the area came under the possession of Ansgot, who is most noted for founding the Benedictine priory at nearby Burwell around 1110 (Round 1899, 448). Situated on the periphery of Ansgot's territory, both Castle Carlton and Toot Hill may be the result of this phase of early Norman power consolidation. Ansgot's successor to the manor was Ralph de Haya who in addition to confirming the endowment at Burwell, also established the Premonstratensian abbey of St Mary at Barlings on the island of Oxney in 1154

(Round 1899, 448; Everson and Stocker 2011, 136). Ralph de Haya and his brother Robert were supporters of the Empress Matilda during the Anarchy, and their father had been constable of Lincoln Castle until he was deposed during Stephen's reign. Indeed, the establishment of a Premonstratensian abbey was most likely a political expression of Angevin support, as the order had been strongly promoted by the Empress who had personally known the spiritual founder St Norbert when regent in Germany (Everson and Stocker 2011, 361). It is therefore not inconceivable that the powerful de Haya family may have been responsible for the undocumented motte and bailey at Castle Carlton, built either during the turbulent political climate of the Anarchy or during its immediate aftermath. By 1157 Hugh Bardolf the elder had acquired Carlton from Ralph de Haya, who represents the third possible agent behind the castle's construction. The de Haya and Bardolf families were closely connected in both England and Normandy, and another scenario sees Hugh seeking to confirm his new acquisition through castle building. Indeed, this effort may have been an attempt to emulate the de Hayas, who with their holdings at Barlings and elsewhere were prolific peers who also possessed hereditary ties to Lincoln castle (see Clay 1966, 5–7; Everson and Stocker 2011, 361–75).

Irrespective of exactly when and by whom the fortification at Castle Carlton was built, it is the archaeological evidence alone which proves informative regarding the character of activity within and around the castle. Settlement does not appear to have been limited to the motte and bailey following its establishment, however, and the archaeological evidence suggests expansion, particularly to the west. It is possible that settlement was initially enclosed within a second bailey, but that further westerly expansion occurred is hinted at by the identification of medieval settlement remains in Area C. Together with the large break in the western side of the bailey, which presumably represents the primary entrance into the enclosure, the earthwork evidence gives the overall impression that the castle 'faces' in a westerly direction. This observation is further supported by the viewshed analysis for the site (Figure 3.11). By the time Robert Bardolf came to establish a new town in the 1220s, it is therefore likely that Castle Carlton already possessed a relatively sizeable population which had held the right to hold an annual fair for over two decades. The town was not appended to this pre-existing focus, however, but instead the fifty or so tenements were developed on a virgin site straddling a thoroughfare connecting Castle Carlton with the mixed resource base of the Outmarsh. The importance of salt for the local economy is discernible throughout the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century texts relating to Castle Carlton, and it is probable that the town was specifically located astride a previously established routeway in order to take advantage of these resources. Indeed, this premise is supported by the allowance granted to the hayward that he was allowed to levy a horn full of salt from every cart

passing through the lordship, suggesting that the route running through Castle Carlton represented an important element of the local transport network connecting local industry (*Wyg. Hosp. Rec.* xviii-xx).

The results from topographic and geophysical survey also allow a provisional reconstruction of Robert's new town foundation to be forwarded. The fifty or so tenements alluded to in the documents appear to have fronted on to the north and south sides of the road, although it is impossible to know whether Bardolf attracted the level of permanent settlement his incentives sought to bring. The extent of roadside properties appears to have been defined by banks at least in some places, such as the almost 200m-long feature in area B which may represent the 'wode dike' referenced in late medieval documents (Owen 1996a, 29). The name suggests that the dike delineated the boundary between occupation and woodland, a premise supported by this survey which detected little evidence which could be equated with medieval settlement in the areas to the north and east of the castle. Settlement on the south-eastern side of the road may also have been defined, as a largely ploughed-out feature no longer visible on the ground is detectable on LiDAR data for the area. Perpendicular to the road, the 'Bull Bank' may not have originally been built to mark the limits of medieval settlement or as a genuinely defensive earthwork, but may instead represent the line of the route connecting Craker Lane with Two Mile Bank and Hedge End. It is therefore possible that the 'Bull Bank' represents elements of a raised causeway that was only later used to define the extents of apparently post-medieval building platforms.

The medieval market place at Castle Carlton was probably located in close proximity to the church, perhaps in the area opposite or even somewhere to the north-east where a hollow way extends to the area subsequently used for post-medieval structures. By the nineteenth century the church was dedicated to the Holy Cross but it may earlier have possessed an alternative dedication. Documentary sources refer to both a church and a chapel dedicated to St John, and it is uncertain whether the term is used interchangeably to refer to a single foundation or if Castle Carlton was at one time furnished with two religious buildings. It is entirely feasible that the earlier castle was serviced by a chapel perhaps located within its bailey, and that the building later dedicated to the Holy Cross was erected to specifically serve tenants of the new town. It is difficult to assess the extent to which these elements were utilised during the medieval period, and it is uncertain whether the intention of Robert Bardolf to establish a new town ever resulted in truly urban activity at Castle Carlton. The apparent failure of the market to establish itself beyond the thirteenth century may be indicative of a more comprehensive inability to attract inhabitants and economic prosperity to the area. Decline may have been accelerated by the division of the manor

in the fifteenth century, a process which may have also resulted in the rather unusual subdivision of the castle bailey. The large ditch which runs through the centre of the enclosure would certainly have proved a hindrance to practical use, and correlates with the written evidence in suggesting an acrimonious division between heirs — the manor house was subdivided in a way that would have prevented any of the three parties from using it effectively (Owen 1996b, 20). Castle Carlton was clearly not wholly abandoned, however, and the presence of a handful of building platforms in the north-west of the surveyed area suggests a shift in focus during the post-medieval period. Settlement during this time was clearly not urban, and rather the size of the platforms suggests the presence of large agricultural buildings. By the eighteenth century apparently only nine houses were still standing, and today only Rookery Farm and the White House are permanently occupied.

### Conclusion

The documentary and archaeological assessments undertaken by this research provide a considerable insight into the development of Castle Carlton, allowing the relationship between medieval town and castle to be understood with greater clarity than has hitherto been possible. The archaeological evidence is particularly clear in showing that the castle and town were located at distinct and separate sites, and it is almost certain that the two centres did not emerge contemporaneously as has previously been suggested. Rather, it appears that the motte and bailey was constructed in the twelfth or more likely the late eleventh century as part of the early Norman settlement of Lincolnshire. The evidence from the written sources suggests that the new town at Castle Carlton was established significantly later, probably by Robert Bardolf in the 1220s. Bardolf's nascent community was not centred upon the pre-existing castle, however, but was instead located on the major thoroughfare leading eastwards towards Great Carlton and the coast. It is possible that the route itself was already in existence when the town was founded, and may have represented one of the informal ways of reaching the areas of salt extraction which characterised the Outmarsh. The new town at Castle Carlton does not appear to have flourished for long, if indeed at all, and the market is not mentioned following its first valuation in 1247. The division of the manor may have precipitated the process of decline, but Castle Carlton was not abandoned entirely and some parts of the former town were still being used into the post-medieval period. The church too survived into the twentieth century, but by then the parochial and population focus had shifted to other local centres such as Great Carlton. Indeed, today only the most fragmentary standing remains such as the market cross and the headstones in the old graveyard of All Saints church hint at the brief urban life once intended for medieval Castle Carlton.

## Chapter 4

### Corfe, ‘The Rings’, Dorset

Duncan Wright, Michael Fradley and Oliver Creighton

#### Abstract

*The ringwork and bailey monument known as the Rings, Corfe Castle, Dorset, and usually interpreted as a mid-twelfth-century siegework, was the subject of magnetometry, earth resistance and topographic survey. Magnetometry survey identified two curving features which may represent an outwork of the Rings, and the remains of agricultural activity or else a ploughed-out barrow. More likely related to military activity is a platform to the east of the monument identified by both earthwork survey and through analysis of LiDAR data. This platform likely relates to a secondary phase of construction at the Rings, probably during the English Civil War of the mid-seventeenth century. A further development to the original form of the monument was the creation of an internal terrace of the ringwork which formed an apparent walkway on all but the northern portion of the enclosure. The bailey also appears to have been altered from its original form, with the north-western and eastern sides of the monument raised to a greater height than the surrounding earthwork complex. Again, these are interpreted as mid-seventeenth-century alterations to the original form of a medieval earthwork. Earth resistance survey identified a number of anomalies which may relate to structures, particularly within the bailey of the Rings. The fieldwork evidence from the survey supports the premise that the Rings represents a siegework first constructed during a documented royal siege of Corfe Castle in 1139, which underwent modification and extension during the post-medieval period.*

#### Introduction

The ringwork and bailey monument known as the Rings is situated on the eastern end of a low chalk ridge, around 300m south-west of the imposing remains of Corfe Castle, Dorset (centred SY 95628197) (Figure 4.1). The Rings is located between 25m and 35m above OD, overlooking the Corfe River in the western part of Corfe Castle parish and is currently under pasture (Figure 4.2). The low ridge on which the monument is situated runs parallel to the more prominent West Hill, to the north of the site, the crest of which rises to heights exceeding 120m above OD. The earthwork remains of the Rings and land to the north-east of the monument were subject to topographical and geophysical survey undertaken in two stages between 11 and 14 November 2013 and 1 and 3 September 2014. The Rings is classified as

a Scheduled Monument (National Monument No: 21968). Located 350m to the north of the Rings, three bowl barrows on West Hill are also scheduled (National Monument No: 21969), as is the castle of Corfe Castle (National Monument No: 21960). The Rings is situated on a geological interface — the northern third of the monument lies on cretaceous sandstone of the Lower Greensand Group but to the south the geology comprises cretaceous mudstone belonging to the Wealden Group. The sandstone is the most southerly band within east-west trending rocks which form the Purbeck Hills. Corfe Castle is located at a strategic point in a narrow gap in the hills created by the erosion of two streams and indeed derives its name from Old English *ceorfan*, denoting a gap or cut. The Rings is in a less nodal position, but does lie on the end of a small ridge which mirrors the orientation of the higher Purbeck Hills to the north (Arkell 1947).

#### Historical and Archaeological Background

Corfe was an important centre from at least the tenth century, when the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records *Corfe-geat* as the place where Edward the Martyr was murdered in 978 (ASC 978, ed. Whitelock 1961). The location of pre-Conquest settlement at Corfe may have been identified by excavation around the west bailey of the castle during the early 1950s, which recorded foundations thought to represent part of a high-status residence (RCHME 1960, 54; Morley 1983). The early provenance attributed to the remains is questionable, however, as research is increasingly demonstrating that Anglo-Saxon secular buildings were built almost exclusively out of timber, with stone being reserved for churches (e.g. Bintley and Shapland 2013).

Corfe Castle is most probably represented in Domesday Book by the manor of Kingston which includes a castle called ‘Wareham’ built by William I (*Domesday Book, Dorset*, ed. Thorn and Thorn 1983, 19, 10). The castles at Wareham and Corfe Castle appear to have been confused by early post-Conquest documentary sources but, as Corfe Castle lies in close proximity to the estate centre at Kingston, it has been argued by Cathcart King that the reference denotes the inland fortification rather than that of the port-town (Cathcart King 1983, 126–7). The earliest standing fabric in the castle includes a curtain wall defining the inner ward, a hall within the western bailey, and an ashlar keep dated to the first decade of the twelfth century (Newman and Pevsner 1972, 161–6;

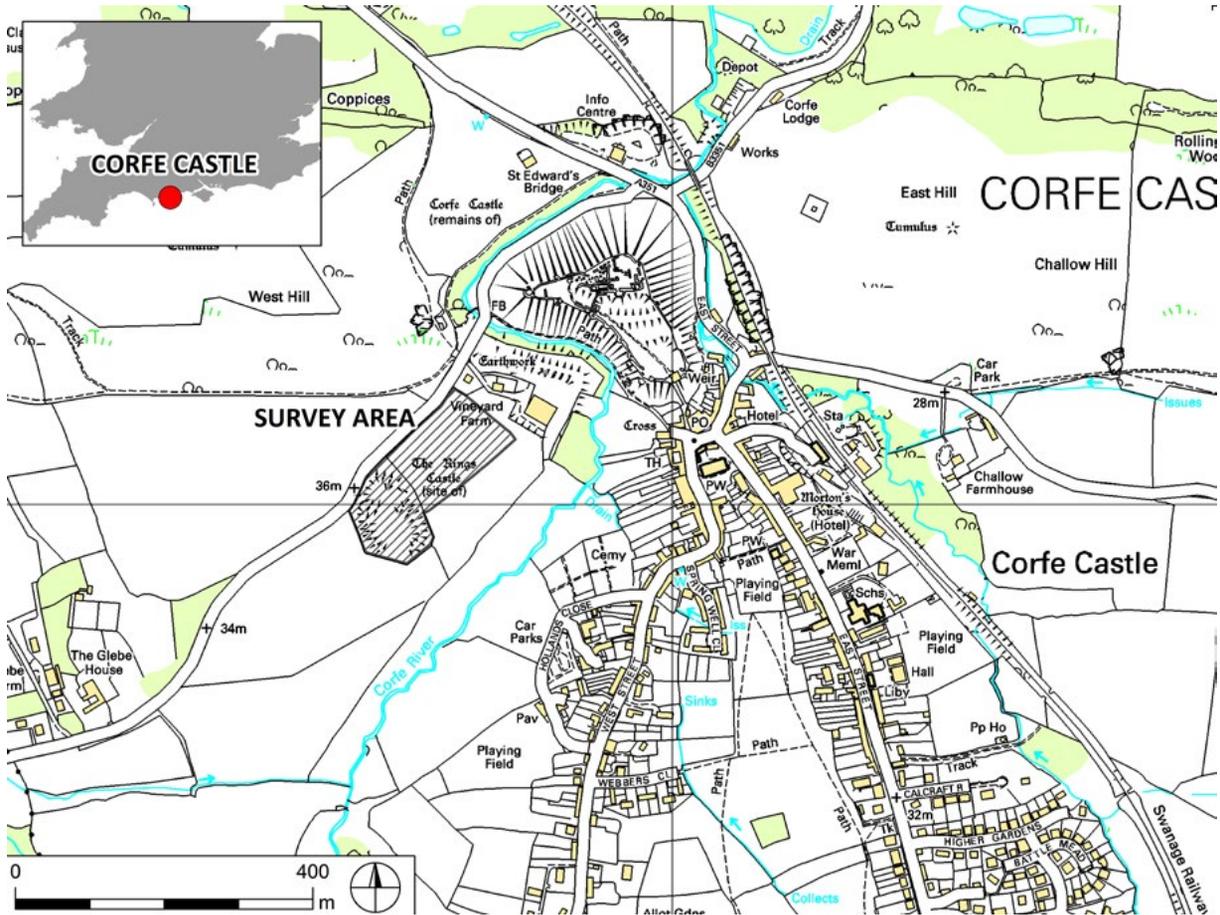


FIGURE 4.1: THE SITUATION OF THE RINGS IN RELATION TO CORFE CASTLE, AND THE LOCATION OF CORFE CASTLE IN SOUTHERN BRITAIN (INSET).  
 © CROWN COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHT 2015. ORDNANCE SURVEY (DIGIMAP LICENCE).



FIGURE 4.2: THE RINGS, LOOKING SOUTH. THE GAP IN THE RINGWORK CIRCUIT CAN BE SEEN IN THE CENTRE OF THE PHOTOGRAPH.

Yarrow 2005). From its re-foundation by William I there is every indication that Corfe rapidly developed into an important royal castle, and in 1106–07 the site was used to imprison Robert Duke of Normandy. It is therefore likely that by the first decade of the twelfth century the residence at Corfe was both stately and secure, given the status of Robert as a prisoner and the location of the site near a coastline opposite Normandy (VCH Dorset II 1908, 64).

Written sources also attest to the prominent role played by Corfe Castle during the Anarchy. The *Gesta Stephani* describes how Corfe Castle was besieged by the king in 1139:

*Baldwin de Redvers, a man of high birth, as has been said, and an exile from England on the insistence of the king, landed at the town of Wareham with a fine body of troops and on being admitted to Corfe, the most secure of all the English castles, boldly prepared himself and his men to resist the king, of whose imminent approach he had learnt by report. The king, when warned of his arrival by his own supporters, allowed no time for delay, but urgently summoning those who belonged to his party appeared suddenly right before the castle to besiege Baldwin. There he lingered for a very long time, thinking to reduce the enemy by siege-engines [machinis affligere] or starve them out... (Gesta Stephani, ed. and trans. Potter and Davis 1976, 85).*

Several commentators have suggested that it was during this siege that the Rings was constructed, a premise supported by its strategic location on the main western approach route and its prominent position in relation to both town and castle (VCH Dorset II 1908, 64–5). Stephen's efforts were unsuccessful, however, and the king broke the siege:

*...but at length, on the advice of counsellors, he raised the siege and let the man go away unharmed, because he had heard that Robert Earl of Gloucester and his sister, those persistent adversaries of his rule, had united forces and would shortly enter England. (Gesta Stephani, ed. and trans. Potter and Davis 1976, 85).*

Matilda and her brother Robert of Gloucester ultimately landed at Arundel, and having moved to Bristol the earl began to raise support against the king as the civil war grew in intensity (Purton 2009, 269–70). The siege of King Stephen's reign is not the only conflict which has been associated with the Rings at Corfe though. Traditionally the earthwork is also linked with military activity during the English Civil War of the mid-seventeenth century, when Corfe Castle was subjected to two further episodes of siege. The castle had remained a royal holding until the reign of Elizabeth

I when it was sold to the queen's Lord Chancellor, Sir Christopher Hatton and by the outbreak of the Civil War the castle was under the ownership of Sir John Bankes, Attorney General to Charles I. Parliamentary forces unsuccessfully besieged the castle for six weeks in 1643 and it eventually fell during a second siege of 1645 after a royalist commander betrayed the garrison. The subsequent slighting of Corfe Castle, together with later stone robbing and general decay, are the reasons for its current ruinous state (Yarrow 2005, 24–8).

The Rings was first described in detail by Ella Armitage who believed it to be a 'ring and bailey' class of monument (Armitage 1912, 138). Renn subsequently classified the earthworks as a 'ringbank with oval bailey' and noted its proximity just out of bow shot — a distance of c. 200m — from the castle at Corfe (Renn 1959, 110–12). The archaeological significance of the Rings is reflected in the early date for its scheduling in 1928, but the monument has been subject to very little concerted fieldwork. In 1964 or 1965 it was reported that blocks of Purbeck stone had been exposed by rooting pigs on the part of the rampart adjoining the road (i.e. the northern bank of the ringwork) (Farrar 1965, 111). In 2004 a small-scale watching brief was carried out by Terrain Archaeology in the same area due to the replacement of a telecommunications cable. The trench cut through the backfill of the original cable trench, which had disturbed part of the northern defences of the ringwork; no finds were recovered and no other features recorded (Bellamy 2004, 194). The only other archaeological investigation so far conducted on the Rings was a magnetometer survey undertaken by a student from the University of Bournemouth (Stock 2005). In addition to recognising some features also visible as earthworks, the survey claimed to have detected ridge and furrow that underlay the fortification, a supposition challenged by the findings of the present survey (see below).

### Map Analysis

Confirming the local association with the seventeenth-century Civil War, the Rings is named 'Cromwell's Battery' and illustrated as a uniformly circular earthwork on an estate map dating to 1775 (W Woodward). It is also depicted *alongside* the 'Road to Knowle', increasing the likelihood that the damage to the northern side of the monument was caused by more recent road widening (see below) (Figure 4.3). A century later, however, the earthworks are illustrated as 'The Rings' on the OS First Edition map of the 1880s. The earliest OS mapping also presents a far more detailed illustration of the ringwork and bailey. The eastern interior of the ringwork is depicted with an additional bank and a small break is also shown along the southern bank, representing the entranceway to the bailey which itself is illustrated with a denuded southern circuit. The map of 1880 also clearly depicts how the widening of the road has by this time



FIGURE 4.3: DEPICTION OF THE RINGS IN 1775, ON AN ESTATE MAP OF CASTLE LEAZE FARM AND CORFE CASTLE COMMONS BY W WOODWARD HELD IN THE DORSET HISTORY CENTRE. COURTESY OF DORSET HISTORY CENTRE/THE NATIONAL TRUST (D-BKL/E/A/1/13).

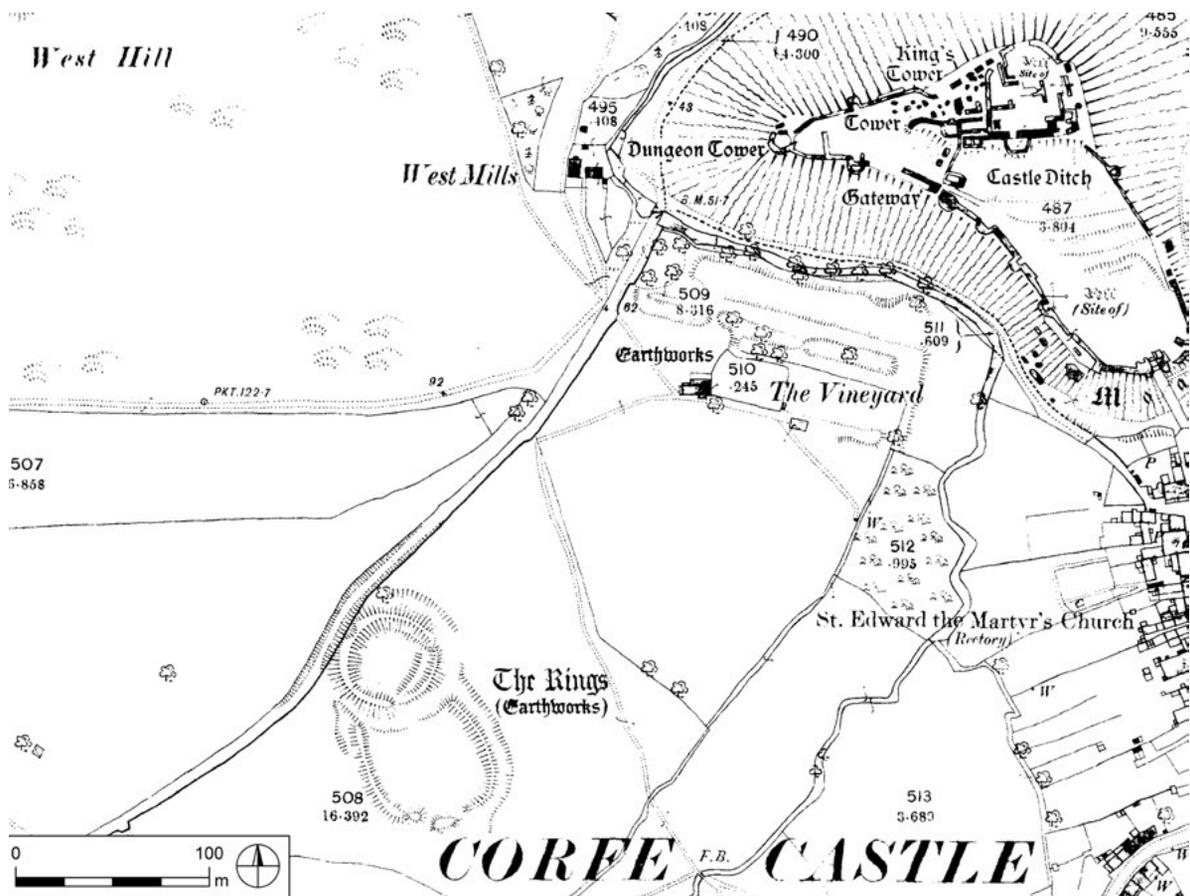


FIGURE 4.4: ORDNANCE SURVEY FIRST EDITION MAP OF THE RINGS, PUBLISHED IN 1889. © CROWN COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHT 2015. ORDNANCE SURVEY (DIGIMAP LICENCE).

truncated the line of the bank and ditch on the north-west side of the ringwork (Figure 4.4). By 1920s OS mapping 'The Rings' is suffixed with 'site of castle', although the depiction remains much the same. Indeed, the illustration of the monument on OS mapping has altered little since its earliest appearance, with the one exception being the southern gap of the ringwork, which from the 1950s is shown as also possessing a small raised bank which extends into the bailey.

### Earthwork Description and Interpretation

The earthworks at 'the Rings' represent at a basic level a ringwork-and-bailey monument, both elements of which are typical of castle forms dating to the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries (Figure 4.5). At the northern end of the site is the ringwork, defined by a roughly circular bank and ditch, with the embanked feature measuring *c.* 50m in diameter, enclosing an internal area of *c.* 28m in diameter. A notable internal feature of this circular embankment is that an internal terrace survives part way down the internal scarp, presumably some form of walkway. The northern section of the enclosure has been heavily distorted by animal burrowing, which has exposed some possible masonry fragments. An opening on the southern side of the ringwork measuring 3.75m wide may be an original entrance, while the smaller 2.5m wide entrance-way on the east side could be secondary. The remains of an outer ditch survive on the south and

north-eastern sides of the ringwork measuring 5–9m in width and up to 1m in depth. The ditch presumably continued all the way around the ringwork but has been in-filled, and cut away completely by the rock-cut road on the northern side of the enclosure.

To the south of the ringwork is an oval-shaped bailey enclosure constructed on ground sloping significantly southwards. The eastern side of the enclosure is defined by a massive bank and associated outer ditch, the bank measuring up to 12m in width and up to 3m in height, and a ditch *c.* 8m wide and up to 1.8m deep. In the ditch itself are the remains of a possible stone-lined drain at its base, as well as large stone fragments. A simple outer scarp poorly defines the remainder of the bailey, with some short lengths of a low, intermittent surviving bank, although on the north-western corner there is a large embankment comparable in scale to that on the eastern side of the bailey. These enlarged areas of bank are likely to be a secondary addition to the earthwork complex, as suggested by the counterscarp bank to the east of the ditch on the eastern side of the bailey. The scarp of this bank turns eastwards at its northern end to form a large square platform measuring 50m by 50m. The rectilinear morphology of this feature would suggest it was constructed at a later date to the principally circular form of the ringwork-and-bailey. At the junction of the counterscarp bank and this square platform feature is a low mound capped with a metal service hatch, which may indicate a well or springhead in this area.

In the field immediately east of the Rings site a number of slight parallel linear scarps were observed running across the site on a north-west–south-east alignment. These were not recorded as part of the earthwork survey due to constraints on time. These would appear to relate to some form of agricultural division, but due to the slight nature of these features and the large square platform on the east side of the ringwork it is not possible to ascertain any stratigraphical relationship between the two. Further to the east is Vineyard Farm, beyond which are a number of terraces and other earthwork features which, based upon the farm name which suggests viticulture, may be garden or horticultural features that form part of a designed landscape associated with Corfe Castle.

### Geophysical Survey Results and Interpretation

A magnetometer survey of the interior of the bailey and 0.7ha of land in the field to the east of the monument was undertaken (Figure 4.6). It was hoped that more extensive magnetometer survey of the monument could also have been carried out, but vegetation growth and poor conditions underfoot across much of the site made it impractical for such work. Earth resistance survey did manage to complete a more comprehensive coverage of the monument complex, however (Figure 4.7).

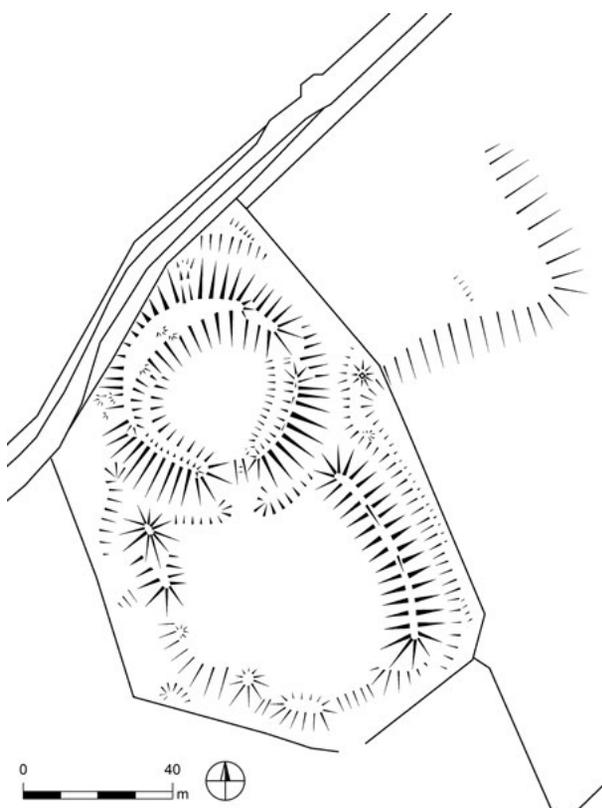


FIGURE 4.5: HACHURED EARTHWORKS PLAN OF THE RINGS.



FIGURE 4.6: MAGNETOMETRY SURVEY BEING CARRIED OUT AT THE RINGS.

### ***Magnetometer***

Survey of the interior of the bailey identified three anomalies which are not likely to be archaeological features but instead are probably of geological origin (Figures 4.7 and 4.8) (anomalies a–c). Dorset is not a region where ridge and furrow survives well, and the east-west orientation of the anomalies compares closely with the known local geology of the area. The lack of such ridge and furrow surviving as earthworks in the surrounding pastoral landscape — a type of countryside where such features are likely to be preserved — further lessens the probability that the east-west anomalies located by geophysical survey are evidence of relict ploughing. This conclusion, which contradicts that forwarded by the earlier magnetometer survey (Stock 2005), is also supported by anomaly III, a feature which displayed high magnetic response mirroring the orientation of the local geology in the field east of the bailey. Two further high magnetic response features were recorded in the eastern field (anomalies I and II), which most likely represent service trenches. These correspond to the location of a telecommunications trench cut in 2004, following the line of an earlier cable duct laid in 1942, which cut across the northernmost extremity of the ringwork defences (Bellamy 2004, 194). These high response variations make anomalies of archaeological significance difficult to identify within the dataset. Anomalies IV–VI likely represent further geological features but two anomalies which are of potential archaeological significance were

located in the north-eastern part of the survey and comprise a curved ditch with a diameter of roughly 20m, with a possible further ditch within its interior measuring around 10m in diameter (anomalies VII and VIII). These features are somewhat enigmatic, but could relate to an outwork of the Rings or even a ploughed-out barrow. They may, however, have a more prosaic origin such as the remnants of agricultural activity.

### ***Earth Resistance Survey***

The results of the earth resistance survey are shown in Figure 4.9. The anomalies identified are illustrated in Figure 4.10, and described and interpreted in Table 4.1 (below).

Interpretation of the resistance survey was made more challenging by the relatively small area of the survey, in an archaeological and geologically busy location. This has resulted in a survey of dynamic values, without a clear background level with which to recognise anomalies. Given the organic shape of many of the anomalies and their reach across changes in earthwork morphology, it is likely they are geological in origin. Despite this it is likely that the survey has detected the western ditch of the bailey (r1), and the eastern bank (r8), and the ditch around the ringwork (r2). It is possible that anomalies r6 and r7 hint at structures within the bailey, possibly representing the footings of buildings. Anomaly r3 may also represent a feature within the ringwork enclosure.

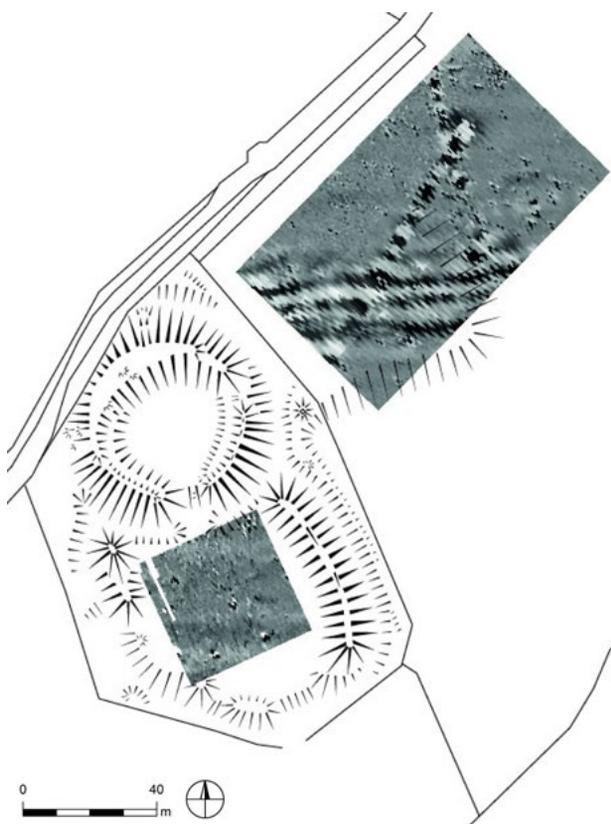


FIGURE 4.7: MAGNETOMETRY SURVEY PLOT OF THE RINGS OVERLAID ON HACHURED EARTHWORK PLAN.

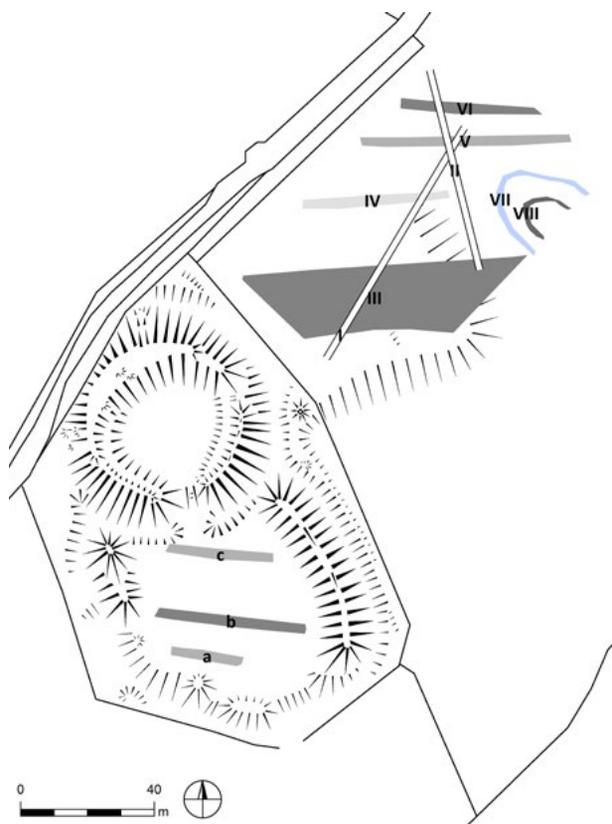


FIGURE 4.8: INTERPRETATION OF MAGNETOMETRY SURVEY AT THE RINGS OVERLAID ON HACHURED EARTHWORK PLAN.

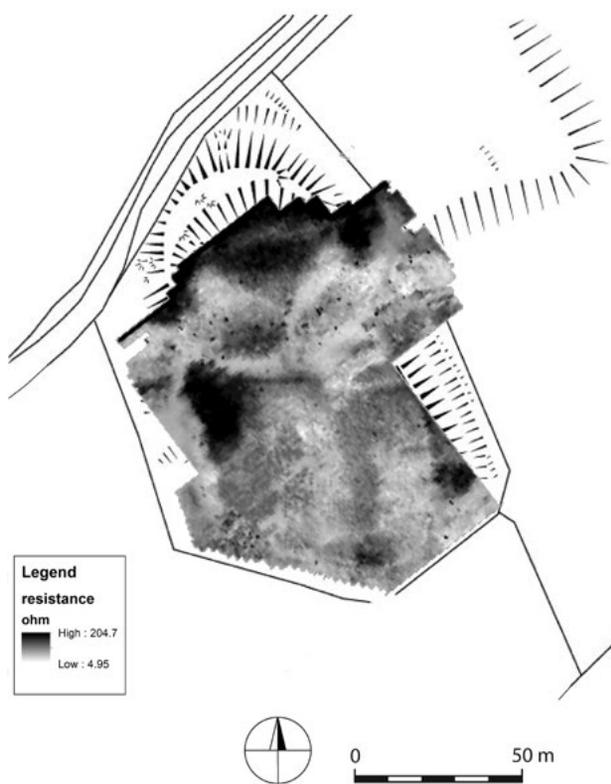


FIGURE 4.9: EARTH RESISTANCE SURVEY PLOT OF THE RINGS OVERLAID ON HACHURED EARTHWORK PLAN.

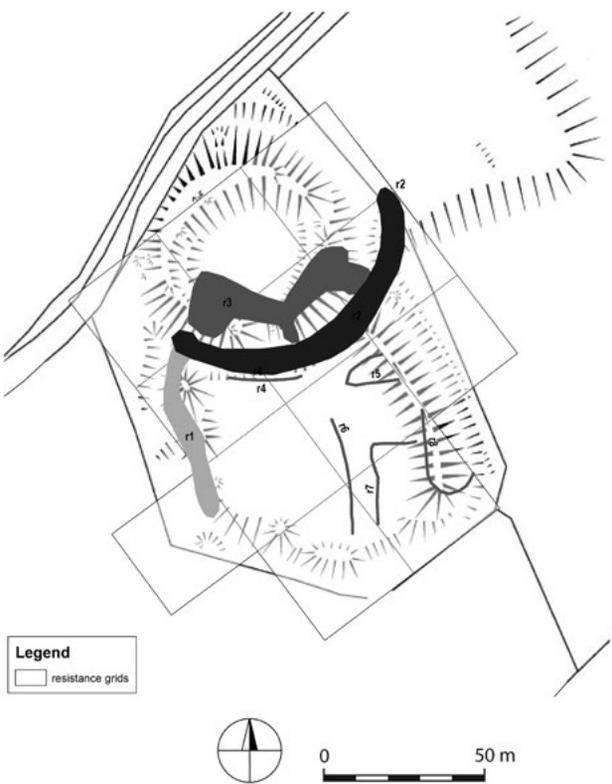


FIGURE 4.10: INTERPRETATION OF EARTH RESISTANCE SURVEY AT THE RINGS OVERLAID ON HACHURED EARTHWORK PLAN.

Anomaly	Description	Interpretation
r1	Contiguous area of low resistance between 15 and 20 ohms, c. 60m long and c. 6m wide.	Possible ditch similar to opposite edge of monument.
r2	Contiguous semi-circular band of low-resistance values 9–14 ohms, c. 80m long and c. 8m wide.	Possibly the outer ditch of the ringwork.
r3	Irregularly shaped, low-resistance area, 9–13 ohms.	Possibly negative features associated with structures inside the ringwork. Possibly the effects of geological banding.
r4	Clear, higher-resistance linear, concentric to r2, 1m wide and 20m long.	Possible wall footing or outer lip of ditch r2. Perhaps geological banding.
r5	Bow-shaped, low-resistance edge.	Uncertain. Possibly a tree-throw.
r6	Border between lower-resistance and higher-resistance blocks.	Uncertain. Possibly the border of features internal to the 'bailey' element of the siegework. Possibly geological.
r7	Border between lower-resistance and higher-resistance blocks.	Uncertain. Possibly the border of features internal to the 'bailey' element of the siegework. Possibly geological.
r8	A block of higher-resistance values apparently corresponding spatially with the eastern bank of the bailey.	The eastern bank of the 'bailey', possibly comprising a hard-core.

TABLE 4.1: DESCRIPTION AND INTERPRETATION OF ANOMALIES IDENTIFIED BY EARTH RESISTANCE SURVEY AT THE RINGS.

### LiDAR Analysis

A 1m resolution hillshade model for the Rings derived from LiDAR provides a clear image of the monument's earthworks, with the internal terrace of the ringwork particularly apparent (Figure 4.11). The LiDAR image also reveals the square platform in the field east of the Rings which was located during earthwork survey, and in addition also shows the presence of a low bank, 15m to the east, that runs parallel to the north-south orientated prominence of the platform. It is difficult to define whether this feature is contemporary with the platform, or whether the embankment is alternatively the result of vehicle erosion which has created a hollow way. In the field to the north of the Rings a linear bank running roughly north-south for around 100m extends from the base of the West Hill scarp. This feature turns eastward and continues for another 100m or so where it apparently projects under the banked prominence on which the Rings is located. The origins of this feature are again unclear. The north-west to south-east parallel linear scarps noted during the earthwork survey but not recorded are also observable on the LiDAR hillshade.

### Discussion

The combination of geophysical and earthwork survey undertaken at the Rings has revealed several features of archaeological interest, and enhances our understanding of the monument and its environs. Earth resistance survey indicates that the Rings may have been enhanced with structures, especially within the bailey where several anomalies hint at the presence of buildings. Magnetometry survey both within the bailey of the Rings and in the field to the east largely detected features of geological origin (anomalies A–C and IV–VI) but also identified anomalies of potential archaeological significance. The origin of the

curving features of anomalies VII and VIII is difficult to ascertain and while may be the result of agricultural activity or a ploughed-out barrow, could also conceivably represent an outwork of the Rings. The platform located by the earthwork survey and visible on LiDAR data is more likely related to military activity, however, and its rectilinear morphology suggests it was constructed after development of the ringwork and bailey, and could plausibly relate to the Rings' reputed use during the English Civil War of the mid-seventeenth century. Such a premise is supported by the angular shape of the earthwork, a typical feature of seventeenth-century-defensive bastions (Foard 2012). A further addition to the Rings that may have occurred during the Civil War is the internal terrace of the ringwork, which forms an apparent walkway on all but the northern side of the enclosure. The bailey also appears to have been altered from its original form, with the north-western and eastern sides of the monument raised to a greater height than the surrounding earthwork complex.

In summary, the fieldwork evidence supports the premise that the Rings represents a siegework first constructed during the mid-twelfth century which underwent modification and extension during the post-medieval period. As such, the Rings can be regarded as an exceptionally well preserved siege castle of the mid-twelfth-century, even given this likely phase of re-use a little over 500 years after its construction. Siege castles in general, and siege castles of the Anarchy period in particular, are a notoriously ephemeral type of field monument, due in particular to their short periods of occupation and systematic slighting after disuse (see Creighton 2005, 54–6). That the earthworks of the Rings remained remarkably intact, immediately below and in full view of Corfe castle, is something of an anomaly, and might even point to the conscious desire to preserve or even curate the site in the later medieval period.

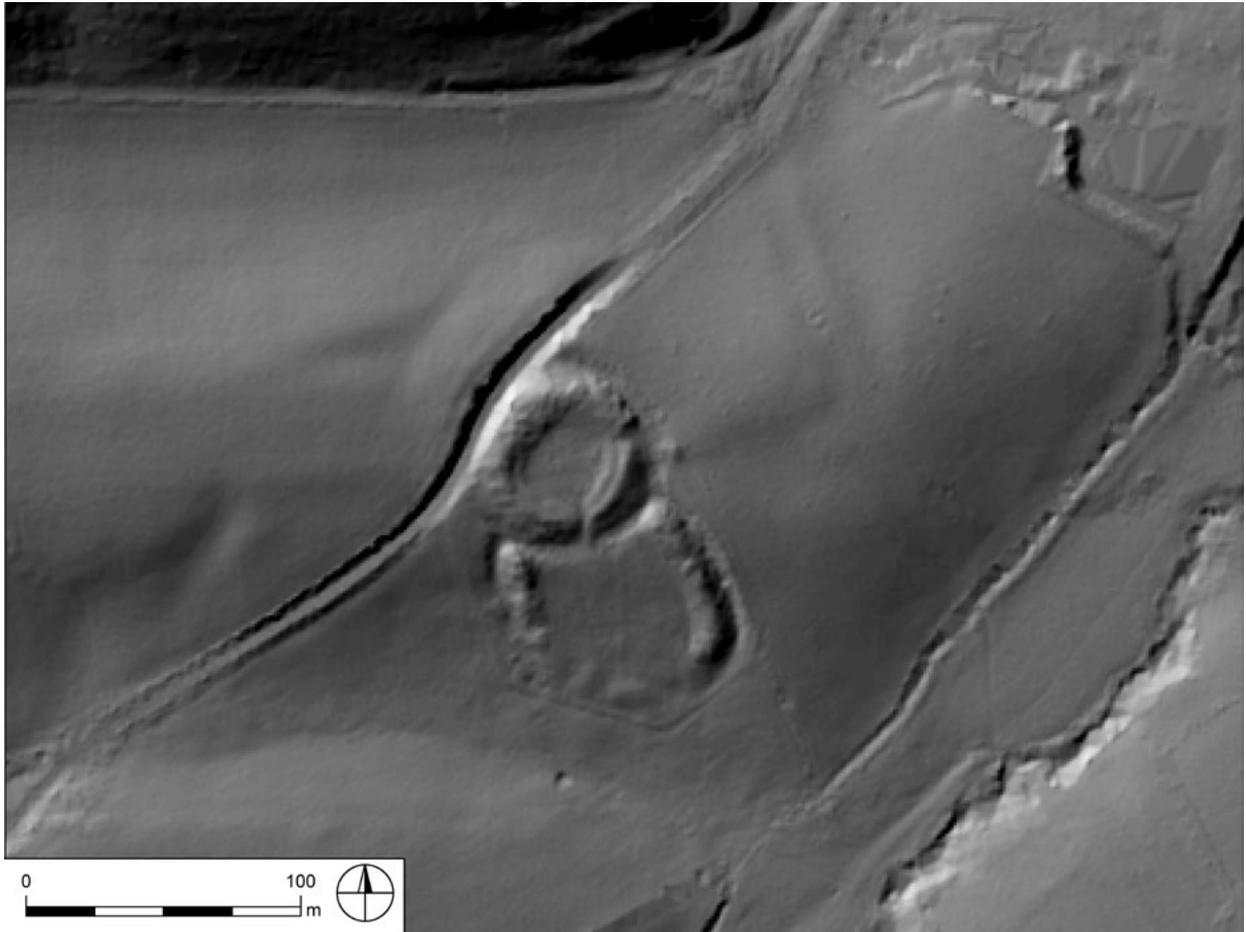


FIGURE 4.11: LIDAR HILLSHADE MODEL OF THE RINGS AND SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE. THE RINGWORK AND BAILEY IS CLEARLY VISIBLE IN THE CENTRE OF THE IMAGE. © CROWN COPYRIGHT. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. ENVIRONMENT AGENCY. LIDAR VIEWS GENERATED BY DUNCAN WRIGHT.

# Chapter 5

## Crowmarsh Recreation Ground, South Oxfordshire

Michael Fradley, Duncan Wright and Oliver Creighton

### Summary

Crowmarsh Gifford is located on the east bank of the River Thames, opposite the medieval town of Wallingford, South Oxfordshire. During the civil war of King Stephen's reign Wallingford was a bedrock of Angevin support and both castle and town were the subject of three siege episodes, in 1139–40, 1146 and 1152–53. Crowmarsh played a key role in these events, and archaeological evaluation in 2011 identified remains of a Stephanic siegework of the period ('Crowmarsh Castle'), located in the area between Wallingford Bridge and the church of St Mary Magdalene. Documentary references also highlight that Crowmarsh Castle was itself besieged through the construction of counter-fortifications in 1153. Given the high archaeological potential of the area, the Recreation Ground to the north of the site of Crowmarsh Castle

was subject to an earth resistance and magnetometry survey. The survey sought to locate features relating to Crowmarsh Castle, or indeed the documented counter siegeworks, and to provide an improved archaeological context for the twelfth-century sieges of Wallingford. While earth resistance identified no archaeological features, magnetometer survey identified a range of anomalies, one of which may be part of a bailey of Crowmarsh Castle.

### Introduction

Crowmarsh Recreation Ground (centred SU 61388950) is located on the east side of the River Thames on the opposite bank to the town and former Anglo-Saxon burh of Wallingford. The town was the focus of a major programme of archaeological investigation, the *Burh to Borough Research Project*, between 2001–11 (Christie

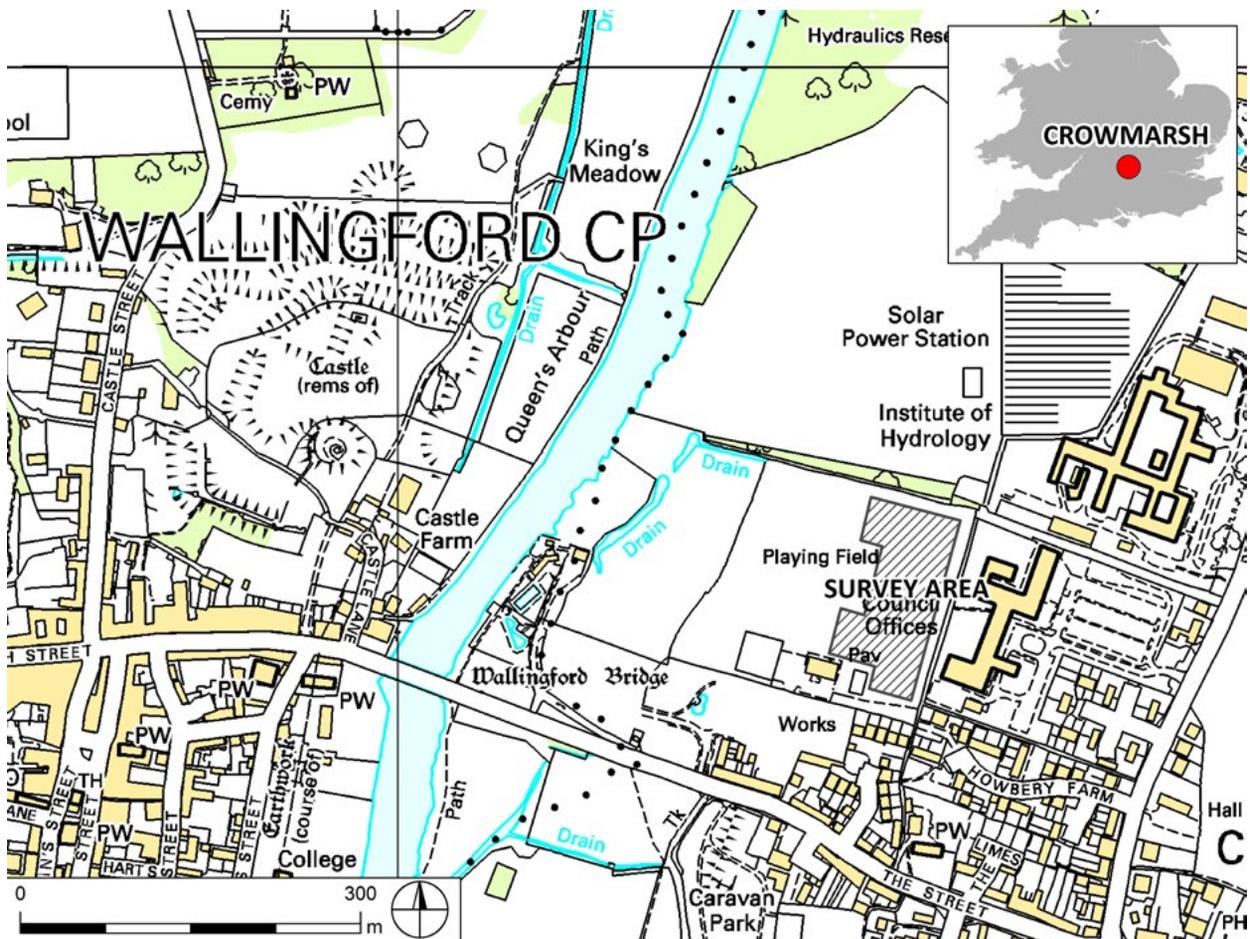


FIGURE 5.1: THE LOCATION OF CROWMARSH WITHIN SOUTHERN BRITAIN (INSET) AND IN THE LOCAL LANDSCAPE. © CROWN COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHT 2015. ORDNANCE SURVEY (DIGIMAP LICENCE).

and Creighton 2013). While the Wallingford *Burh to Borough Project* focused primarily on the urban area it also included fieldwork and survey on the east bank of the Thames, including within the ‘bridgehead’ area at the eastern terminus of Wallingford Bridge, which this current investigation builds upon. The area surveyed for this investigation covered the eastern portion of Crowmarsh Recreation Ground, amounting to 1.35 ha in total (Figure 5.1). The field is level and has no discernible archaeo-topographical features. The recreation ground is located 100m north of Crowmarsh parish church of St Mary Magdalene, the earliest built fabric of which dates to the early twelfth century. There are several Scheduled Monuments in close proximity to the site, including Wallingford Bridge, 150m to the south-east, which contains sections of construction dating back to the thirteenth century, as well as possible earlier material (National Monument No: 241829). On the opposing bank of the Thames, 400m to the west of the survey area, the complex of Wallingford Castle is also scheduled (National Monument No: 241718), as are two extensive open areas within the historic town, the Bullcroft and the Kincroft (National Monument: 241741). The survey area lies just over 45m above OD and immediately east of the principal river terrace of the Thames. The drift geology of the site comprises sand and gravel of the Quaternary Northmoor Group, overlying bedrock of Late Cretaceous sandstones of the Glauconitic Marl Members. Immediately to the west of the survey area Holocene alluviums which fringe the River Thames overlie Cretaceous siltstones and sandstones.

### Historical and Archaeological Background

Crowmarsh grew up not as a suburb of Wallingford but as a settlement in its own right. The name first appears in the written record in Domesday Book, when Crowmarsh was a modest manor held by Hugh de Bolbec from Walter Giffard; it was probably created from the more extensive earlier estate of Benson (*Domesday Book, Oxfordshire*, ed. Morris 1978, 20,3; see also Pedgley and Pedgley 1990, 88). The historic settlement of Crowmarsh Giffard took an elongated, straggling form typical of others in the region; it grew up along a single east–west street (‘The Street’) leading to and from Wallingford Bridge and expanded in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (Christie and Creighton 2013, 242, 384). Crowmarsh had a market from at least 1155, which in the thirteenth century was said to damage Wallingford’s, but the place was never recorded as a borough (Letters 2016). The parish church of St Mary Magdalene, which contains twelfth-century fabric, lies near the western end of the historic village plan, set to the north of The Street, while a hospital, also dedicated to St Mary Magdalene, was reputedly founded in 1142 before being dissolved in 1547. The hospital is thought to have been located south of the main street (approximately SU 61308928), although the site of this foundation has never been positively identified (Pedgley and Pedgley

1990, 104–5; Christie and Creighton 2013, 290–1). To the west of the site and across the river is located the town of Wallingford, originally an Anglo-Saxon *burh*, which was the primary settlement in eleventh- and twelfth-century Berkshire and the seat of a powerful castle established shortly after the Norman Conquest. During the late medieval period Wallingford and its surrounding landscape did not experience the levels of growth seen in many towns across England, and was soon eclipsed by nearby urban settlements such as Reading, meaning that large open spaces remain in the medieval street plan.

During the civil war of Stephen’s reign, the castle and town were together the focus of three sieges; in 1139–40 (first siege by King Stephen); 1146 (second siege by Stephen and Ranulf, Earl of Chester); and 1152–53 (third siege by Stephen and counter-siege by Henry of Anjou). The prominence of Wallingford in the conflict was the result of Wallingford Castle’s role as the ‘flagship castle’ for the Angevins, under the command of its Breton constable and favourite of Henry I, Brian fitz Count (Bradbury 1998, 161). The written accounts detailing these sieges, especially the *Gesta Stephani*, provide several references to the construction, capture and demolition of siegeworks at Wallingford and on the opposing bank of the River Thames — i.e. in the vicinity of Crowmarsh (Christie and Creighton 2013, 202–8; see also Purton 2009, 270–5). Attempts to identify these Anarchy-period siege fortifications have been for the most part unsuccessful with one notable exception — the excavations undertaken to the south-west of the survey area at the ‘Lister Wilder’ site (Laban 2011; 2013). In the spring of 2011 an archaeological investigation by Museum of London Archaeology recovered the footprint of a siege castle in the area between Wallingford Bridge and the church of St Mary Magdalene (Figure 5.2). A series of evaluation trenches and strip-map recording identified a ditch approximately 25m wide and 2–3m deep which formed an ovoid enclosure. The assemblage of over eight-hundred pottery sherds recovered from the site was consistent with a mid-twelfth-century use for the feature. Ceramics and other finds indicated high-status consumption, and together the evidence from the Lister Wilder site provides an insight into a notoriously enigmatic class of medieval monument — the siege castle (Laban 2011; 2013; Christie and Creighton 2013, 236).

The historical reality of the action around Wallingford during this period is opaque, but involved a number of sieges and counter-sieges occurring at different times and resulting in the construction, rebuilding and slighting of numerous siegeworks. The archaeological evidence for these events has recently been assessed by Oliver Creighton, who considers that the siege castle excavated at the Lister Wilder site may be a construction of the first siege of Wallingford (1139) which was subsequently reused and refortified in 1146 and 1152–53 (Christie and Creighton 2013, 206–7; 234–6). The documentary sources

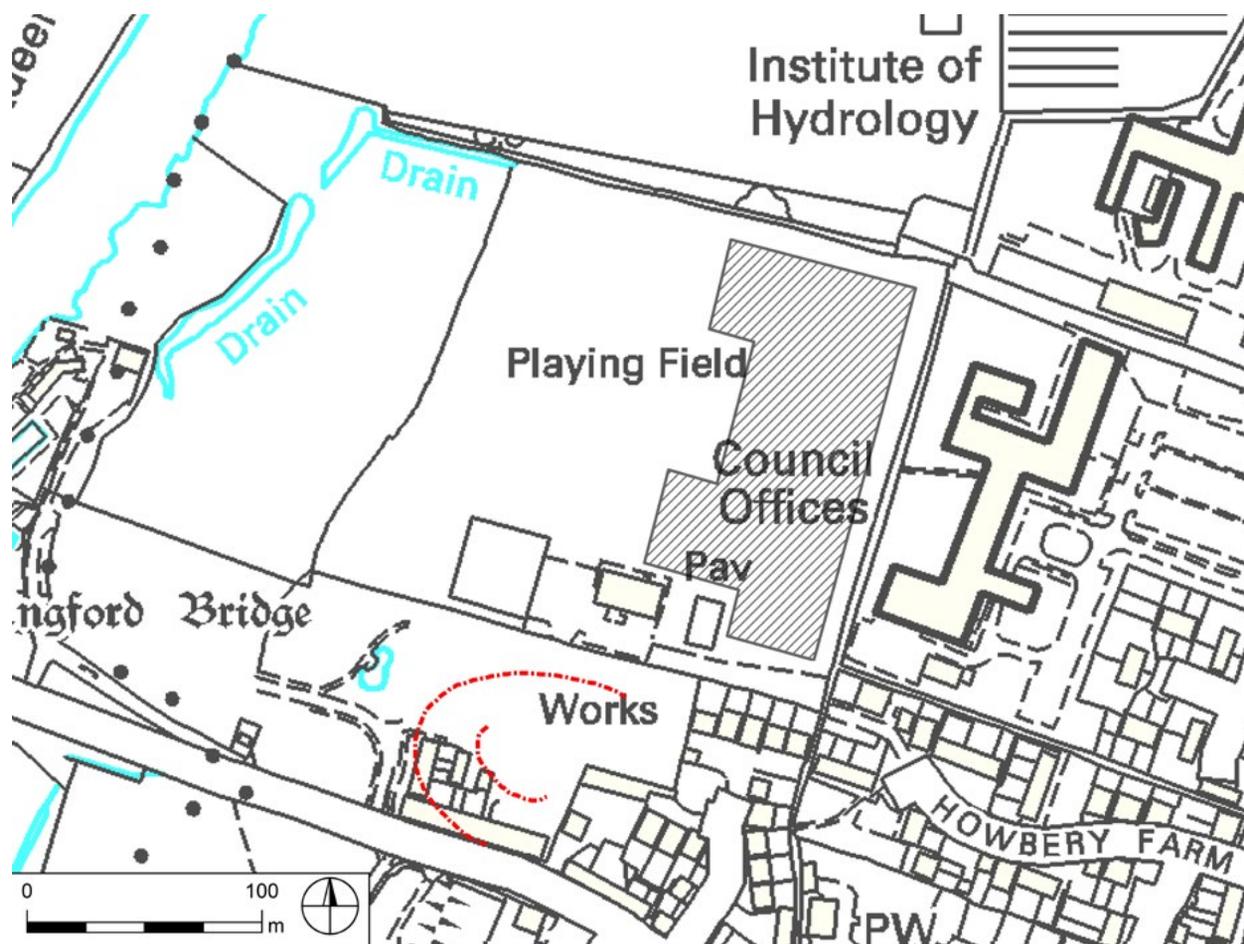


FIGURE 5.2: THE SURVEY AREA IN RELATION TO THE EXCAVATED DITCH OF ‘CROWMARSH CASTLE’ (DASHED LINE) IDENTIFIED ON THE LISTER WILDER SITE TO THE SOUTH-WEST. THE CLOSE PROXIMITY WITH THE FORTIFICATION MAKES THE SURVEY AREA A PLACE OF HIGH ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL. © CROWN COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHT 2015. ORDNANCE SURVEY (DIGIMAP LICENCE).

also suggest that ‘Crowmarsh Castle’ was itself the focus of an assault by the forces of Henry of Anjou in 1153, which involved the construction of siegeworks against it:

*he [Henry] surrounded the king’s castle and his own army with a great rampart [uallo maximo], so that his own forces had egress only by way of the castle of Wallingford, while the besieged had no way of escape at all. (Historia Anglorum, ed. Greenway 1996, 91)*

The close proximity of ‘Crowmarsh Castle’ to the area surveyed raises the possibility that the site possesses further archaeological evidence either relating to the excavated siegework, or indeed to the counter-siegeworks hitherto known only through documentary references. It appears that until recently the surveyed area was used for agricultural purposes — the location is depicted as open farmland on mapping throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and the pavilion to the south of the playing fields was only established in the 1990s, together with tennis courts and a children’s play area. No archaeological work was undertaken prior to construction of any of these facilities. To the south-west of the survey area, the Lister Wilder excavations identified a similar

post-medieval landscape, although a foundry was built on the site of Crowmarsh Castle during the twentieth century (Laban 2011; 2013).

### Map Analysis

Map evidence shows that the historic borough boundary of Wallingford extended to embrace a triangular wedge-shaped area of ground on the opposite (east) bank of the River Thames around the terminus of the medieval bridge; this ‘bridgehead’ area, of around three hectares, played a critical role in the *burh*’s (and later the town’s) defensibility (Christie and Creighton 2013, 230–1). The surveyed area stands on historically open ground immediately north-east of this bridgehead area, within Crowmarsh parish. The survey area is depicted as part of a large rectangular field from the earliest OS First Edition 25” map, published in 1878 (Figure 5.3). This field included the area to the east of the site which is now occupied by the South Oxfordshire District Council offices. A fence line now separates these two areas, built on a footpath which mapping shows ran roughly north-south. The boundary was established by the time of the OS Second Revision 25” map of 1912, a survey which also illustrates a ditch running along the

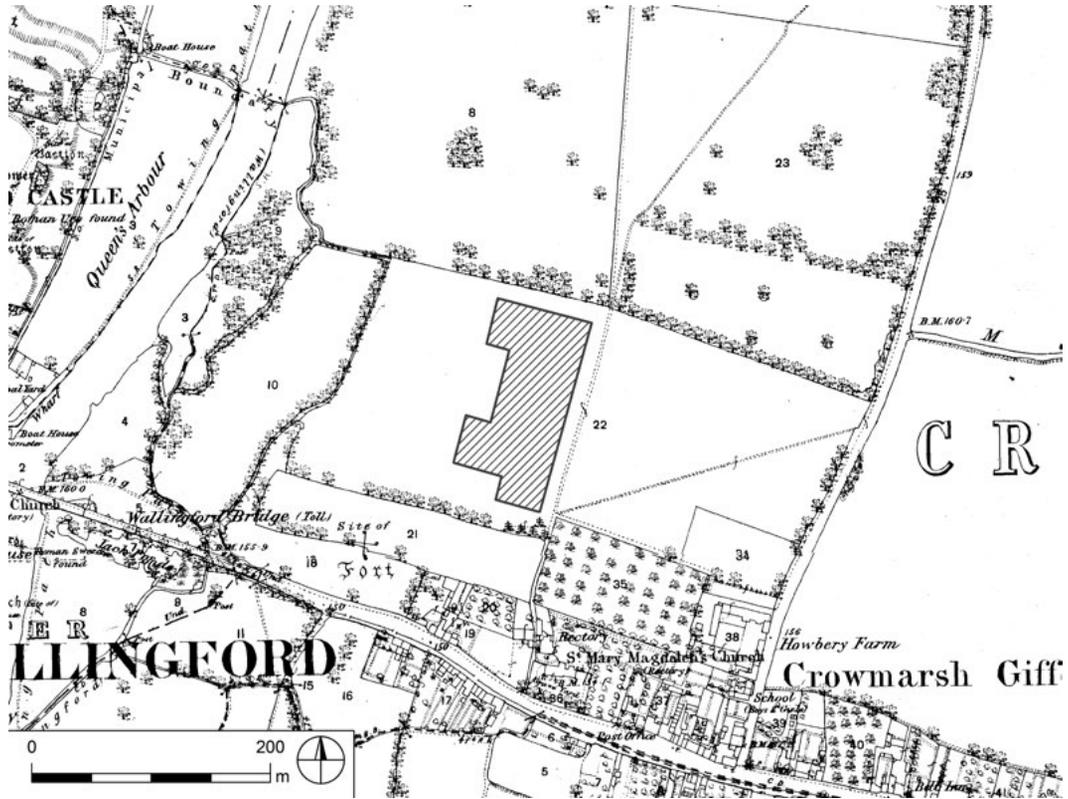


FIGURE 5.3: OS FIRST EDITION 25" (DATED 1878) OF THE WESTERN PART OF CROWMARSH. NOTE THE 'SITE OF FORT' LOCATED ROUGHLY 50M TO THE SOUTH-WEST OF THE SURVEY AREA. © CROWN COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHT 2015. ORDNANCE SURVEY (DIGIMAP LICENCE)

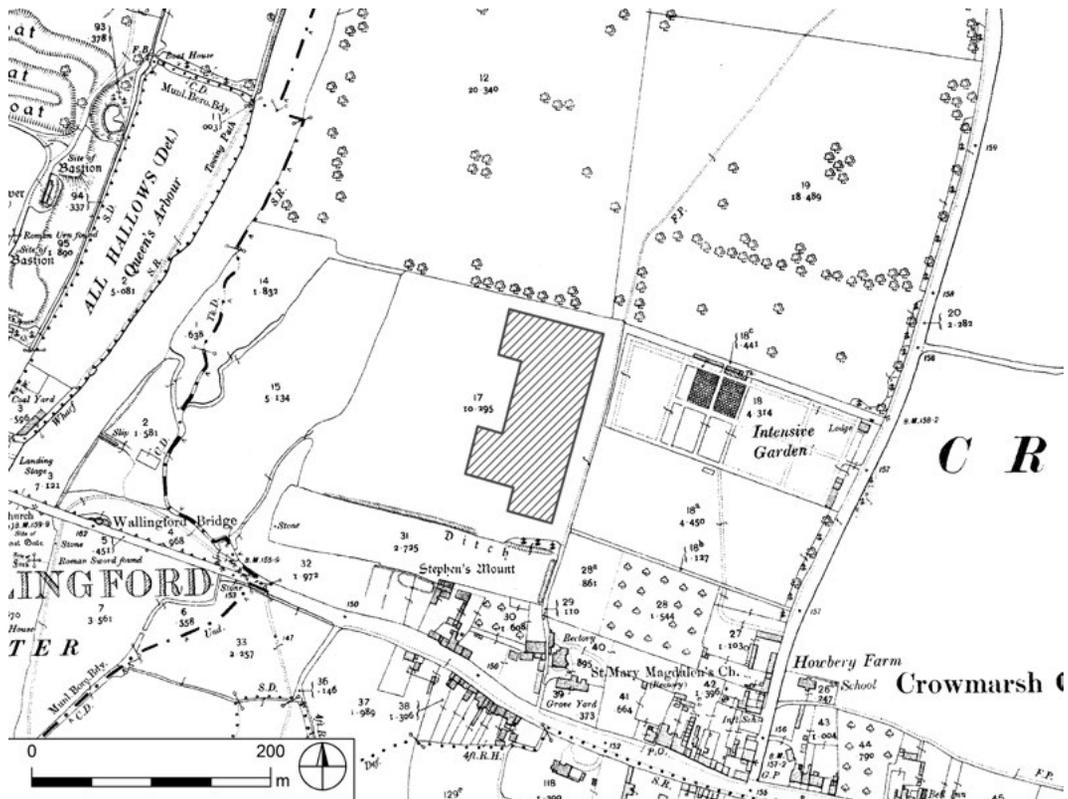


FIGURE 5.4: OS FIRST EDITION SECOND REVISION 25" OF CROWMARSH, DATED 1912. DITCHES ARE ILLUSTRATED TO THE SOUTH OF THE SURVEY AREA AND FURTHER SOUTH AND WEST THE LOCATION PREVIOUSLY LABELLED 'SITE OF FORT' IS NOW 'STEPHEN'S MOUNT'. BY THE MIDDLE OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY THE SITE OF 'STEPHEN'S MOUNT' HAD BEEN DEVELOPED UPON, BUT THE PRESENCE OF AN ANARCHY-PERIOD SIEGEWORK WAS CONFIRMED BY ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION IN 2011. © CROWN COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHT 2015. ORDNANCE SURVEY (DIGIMAP LICENCE).

southern edge of the recreation ground, with a further ditch extending southwards at the western end of the field (Figure 5.4). Also illustrated on the 1912 Second Revision 50m to the south-west of the survey area is a raised bank measuring roughly 30m east-west by 10m north-south and labelled as ‘Stephen’s Mount’—this area had been marked as ‘Site of Fort’ on earlier OS map but no features were illustrated. This feature marks the site of the mid-twelfth-century siegework excavated in 2011 (see above). Extending from the north-western part of the bank a linear earthwork is shown continuing for 25m before heading in a sharp southerly direction, together with a similarly orientated feature which is depicted emanating from the middle of the bank. This enclosure network most likely represents the remains of abandoned property plots, and indeed the arrangement conforms to tenements still utilised in Crowmarsh Gifford, with holdings fronting on to The Street. It is also possible that the ditches recorded at the south-western end of the survey area are linked to the siegework illustrated on historic mapping and positively identified by excavation of the Lister Wilder site. Despite the features not appearing on the OS First Edition, the ‘archaic’ style of the script depicted on the 1912 revision suggests that the surveyors identified the ditches as of some antiquity. By the time of the OS 1:2500 map produced in 1968 only the western portion of the ditch network is illustrated, and it continues to be shown through to the OS 1:2500 map published in 1991.

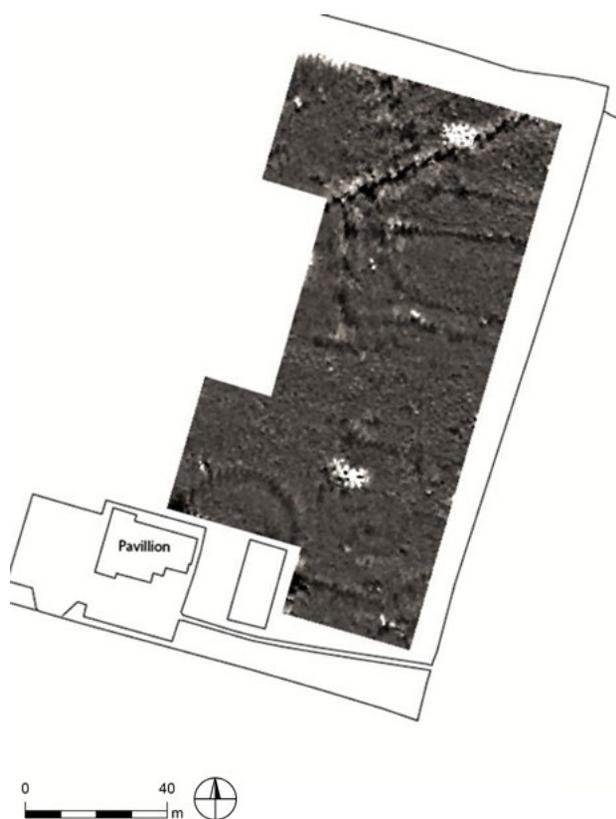


FIGURE 5.5: MAGNETOMETER SURVEY PLOT OF CROWMARSH RECREATION GROUND.

### Geophysical Survey Results and Interpretation

A magnetometer survey of 1.35ha and an earth resistance survey of 0.3ha were undertaken in the eastern part of the Crowmarsh Recreation Ground (Figure 5.1). The earth resistance survey identified consistently low levels of resistance across the surveyed area and detected no clear anomalies of archaeological value. The results of the magnetometer survey, however, indicate the presence of several phases of archaeological activity (Figures 5.5 and 5.6). These anomalies consist primarily of linear features visible across much of the survey area (A1–4). They are arranged in a principally rectilinear arrangement, with a potentially regular set of east-west linears spaced *c.* 40–45m apart, entering the surveyed area from the east and terminating after a distance of *c.* 50m. In addition there are curvilinear elements and a number of smaller linear arrangements. One linear anomaly running north-east to south-west from the north-eastern part of the site had a notably higher magnetic response (B1), which suggests that it represents a modern service. A number of other linear features also seem to interconnect with it, however, and so it may be a more archaeologically significant feature. Two strong magnetic responses correspond with the fixed metallic bases of goal posts linked to the sports field layout across the site (C1–2). Contrasting with these linear features, a distinct semi-circular anomaly was also recorded in the south-western end of the site (A5), apparently continuing southwards

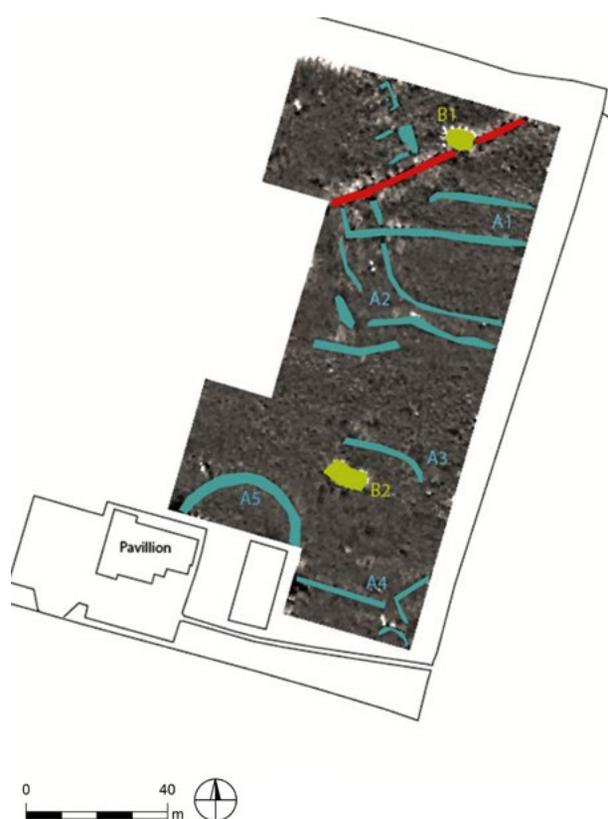


FIGURE 5.6: INTERPRETATION OF ANOMALIES IDENTIFIED BY MAGNETOMETRY SURVEY AT CROWMARSH RECREATION GROUND.

beyond the survey area. It is possible that this feature is in some way associated with Crowmarsh Castle, the core of which lay *c.* 40m south of the survey area. It is possible that the feature may be part of a previously unrecognised bailey, originally attached to Crowmarsh Castle. Siege castles of the period were sometimes built with baileys, as the site of the Rings, Corfe, Dorset (this volume, Chapter 4) testifies. Given the length of time over which the Crowmarsh castle siegework could have been used, albeit sporadically, between 1139 and 1153, the idea that the site could have been expanded at some point has some merit, although it could equally have been an original feature of the siegework.

**Earthwork Description and Interpretation**

The Crowmarsh Recreation Ground is relatively level, apart from some partially terraced falls of ground at its western end, toward the River Thames. It is largely devoid of archaeological earthworks, partly due to levelling related to the development of the sports pitches on the site. The area was therefore not subject to a detailed topographic survey. In low light, traces of narrow ridge and furrow earthworks are observable, orientated north-south in line with the overall field layout, suggesting that the area was under arable cultivation at some point.

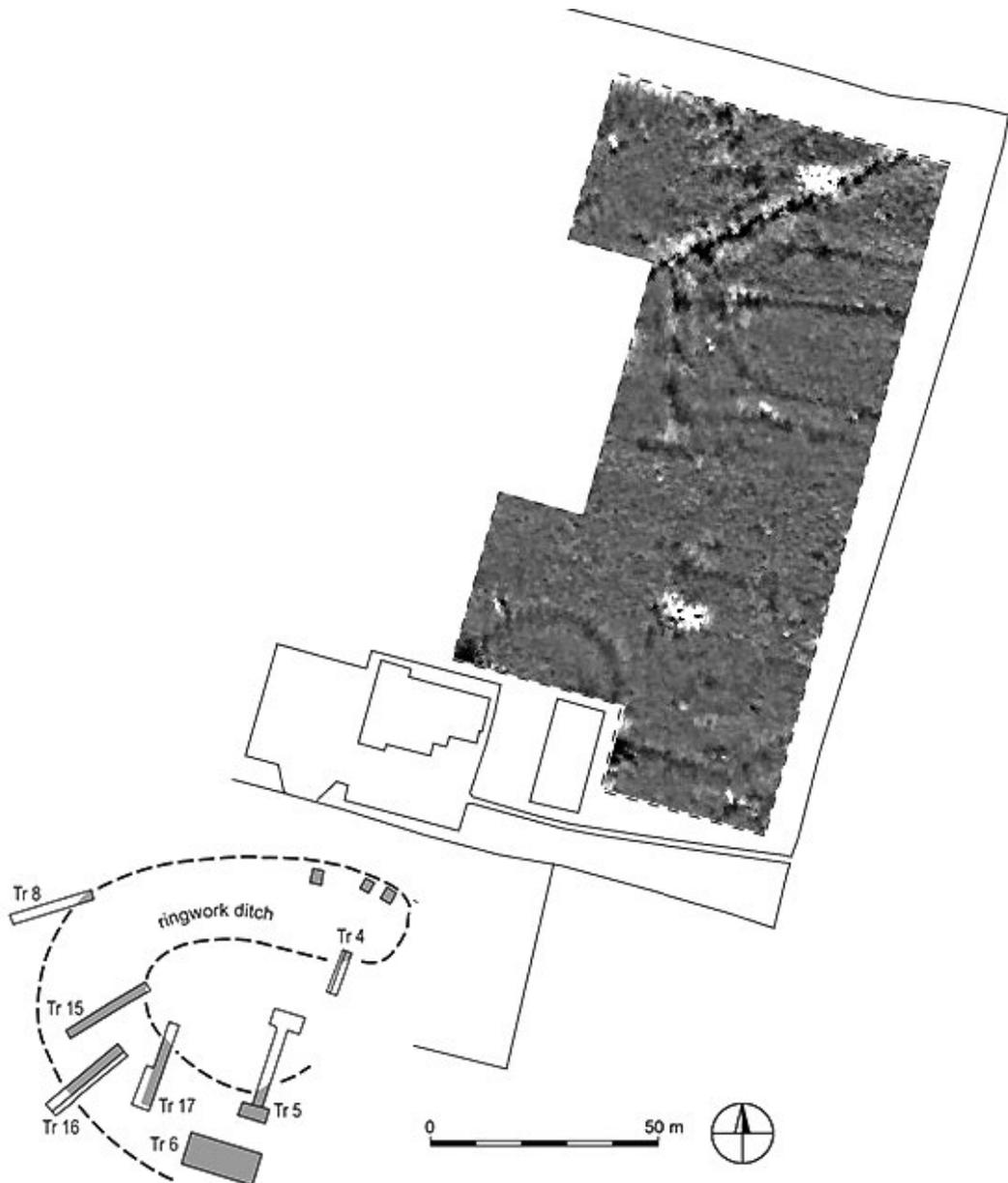


FIGURE 5.7: RESULTS OF THE CROWMARSH RECREATION CLUB MAGNETOMETER SURVEY WITH THE DITCH OF THE TWELFTH-CENTURY SIEGEWORK EXCAVATED AT THE LISTER-WILDER SITE ILLUSTRATED BY STIPPLES. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE CURVILINEAR FEATURE IDENTIFIED IN THE SOUTH-WESTERNMOST PART OF THE SURVEY (A5) RELATES TO AN OUTWORK OF THE EXCAVATED SIEGEWORK.

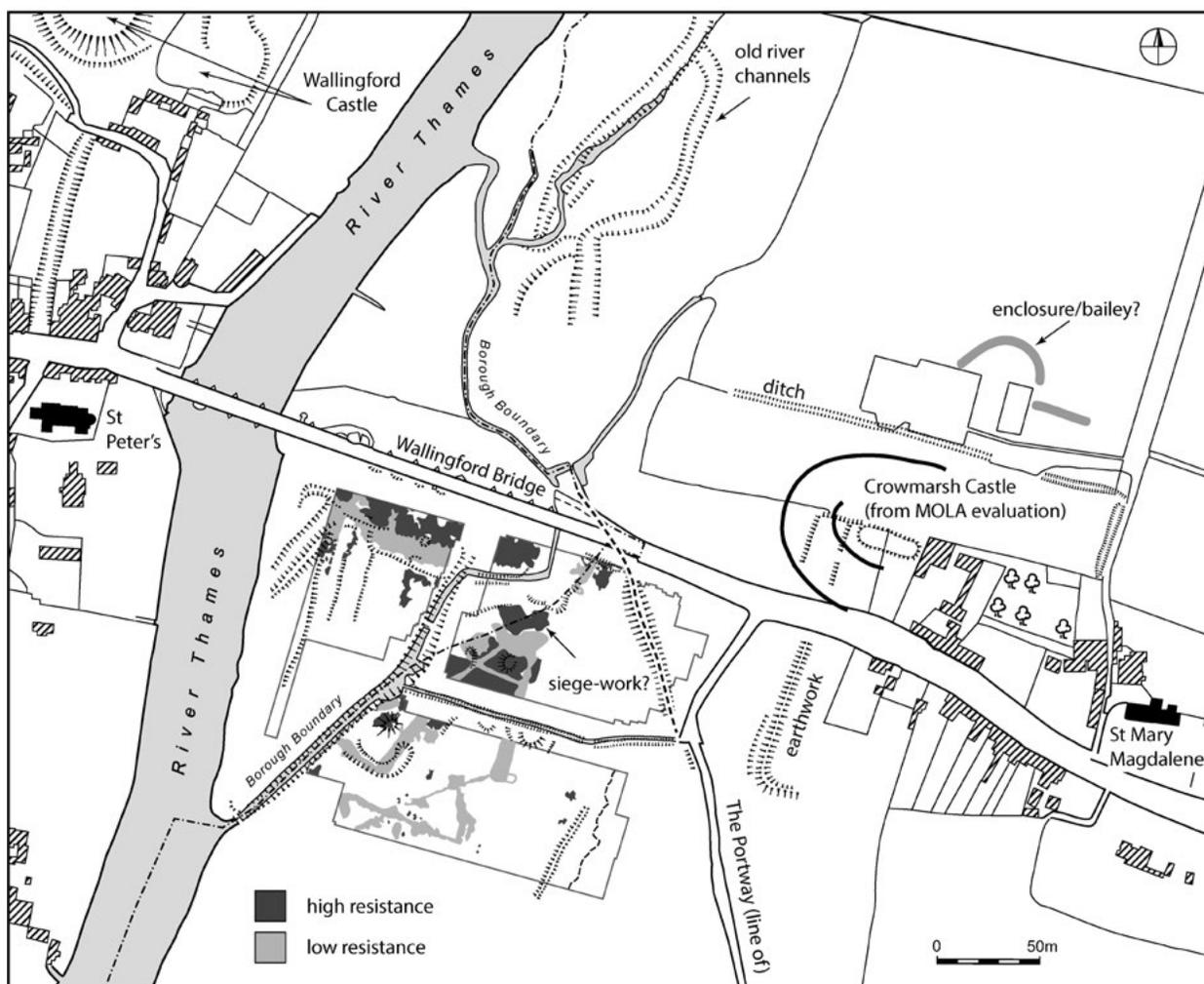


FIGURE 5.8: ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE WALLINGFORD BRIDGEHEAD AREA, SHOWING HISTORIC EARTHWORKS, KEY SITES AND GEOPHYSICAL ANOMALIES. DRAWING BY MIKE ROUILLARD, DEPICTING RESULTS OF THE WALLINGFORD BURH TO BOROUGH RESEARCH PROJECT, AS WELL AS THE RESULTS OF THE SURVEY IN THIS REPORT.

## Discussion

The survey of the eastern side of the Crowmarsh Recreation Ground has produced a range of archaeologically significant data which complements and expands the picture provided by the *Burh to Borough Project* surveys (see Christie and Creighton 2013, 230–6). Almost all of the evidence is derived from the magnetometry survey, which has highlighted a range of anomalies of likely archaeological origin. The linear features identified by the survey can be provisionally interpreted as field boundaries of two or more phases, and seem most likely to be of Iron-Age or Romano-British date, although a medieval origin cannot be ruled out entirely. This seems to compare well with agricultural activity linked to rural settlement in these periods elsewhere in the Upper Thames Valley, including the zone immediately north of Wallingford town, where LiDAR data reveal the vestiges of an extensive relict field system (see Christie and Creighton 2013, 245–9). There is no clear evidence of actual settlement activity within the surveyed area, nor can the agricultural features identified be traced

further eastwards via geophysical survey, due to the extensive footprint of the South Oxfordshire District Council offices, although further survey northwards into the pasture fields of Howberry Park may provide further evidence of field systems.

The curving feature in the south-western part of the survey area may conceivably relate to Crowmarsh Castle, the mid-twelfth-century siegework whose plan has been identified through excavation approximately 40m to the south (Figure 5.7). Given the form of the surveyed feature, comprising a semi-circular anomaly, enclosing an area measuring *c.* 35m in width, it is possible that it represents a previously unrecognised bailey appended to the ringwork of Crowmarsh Castle or else part of its original design. If this identification is correct it would indicate that the siege castle was significantly larger in extent than previously believed. Unfortunately it is likely that this enclosure may have been significantly disturbed by the development of the cricket pavilion without any form of archaeological monitoring, although the shallower footprint of the children's play area is likely to

have caused less damage to any archaeological remains. This survey has not, however, identified any clear evidence of the documented counter siegeworks erected by Henry of Anjou in 1153 to besiege Crowmarsh Castle. This is not entirely surprising, however, given the close proximity of the survey area to Crowmarsh Castle. Twelfth-century siegeworks were invariably situated at least out of the range of enemy bowshot, estimated at anywhere between two hundred and three hundred yards, and were often positioned at far greater distances from the castle they were besieging (Renn 1959, 110–12). Twelfth-century siegeworks of this type — extensive ramparts built to surround and defend besieging forces, as opposed to compact siege castles — have proven especially difficult to identify archaeologically, as the example of Faringdon, Oxfordshire (see this volume, Chapter 6) also shows.

A plot of the known archaeology of the wider area, depicting the results of this survey alongside the other known archaeology is offered in Figure 5.8. Alongside the site of Crowmarsh Castle, with its potential bailey to the north, is indicated another possible siegework site, immediately south of the terminus of Wallingford Bridge, which might correspond to the second siegework recorded in this area in the siege of 1152–53 (Christie and Creighton 2013, 234–6). However one interprets the archaeology alongside the documentary references, which are admittedly fleeting and inconsistent, it is clear that the meadows on the east bank of the Thames represent a complex conflict landscape of the foremost importance

for our understanding of Anglo-Norman siege warfare. In the wider landscape around Crowmarsh there may be alternative sites that may potentially be related to the documented periods of medieval fortification-building in the vicinity of Wallingford. They include a field named ‘Castles Close’ to the north of Crowmarsh in Benson at SU 64059006, which sits in the angle of a road junction and adjacent to a ‘Gallows Hill’ field (Benson Tithe Map and Apportionment). The place name ‘Howberry’, also to the north and recorded from the sixteenth century, is also interesting as it contains a ‘bury’ element which could denote an enclosure or fortification re-used during the Anarchy (Pedgley and Pedgley 1990, 30).

In summary, the survey of Crowmarsh Recreation Ground has demonstrated the good preservation of a wide range of archaeological features, including some which may relate to the documented sieges of Wallingford which took place during the mid-twelfth century. Overall, the quantity of historical and archaeological evidence from Wallingford, including the excavated evidence from the Lister Wilder site, the documented hospital thought to have been built during this period and the repeated references to the construction of siegeworks in the vicinity of Wallingford make it a central case study for the research of this period. At a wider level this survey has demonstrated extensive and varied archaeological survival on the eastern side of the Crowmarsh Recreation Ground which will prove essential in the future management of the local historic environment.

# Chapter 6

## Folly Hill, Faringdon, Oxfordshire

Duncan Wright, Steven Trick and Oliver Creighton

### Summary

*The summit of Folly Hill, Faringdon, Oxfordshire, was the subject of a topographic analysis, and the surrounding hillside was investigated through a magnetometer survey. Little archaeological evidence was found to support the association of the area with the Angevin castle and Stephanic siegework that written sources suggest were built in the Faringdon area in a documented military action during 1145. The identification of Folly Hill as the site of an Iron-Age hillfort and English Civil War gun emplacement are shown to be equally speculative. A series of explanations for the dearth of archaeological evidence on Folly Hill are forwarded, with the weight of evidence indicating that the twelfth-century Angevin castle may be located elsewhere. If Folly Hill is indeed the site of a medieval castle, then this seems most likely to have been King Stephen's siegework.*

### Introduction

The site known as Faringdon Hill or Folly Hill is a circular tree-topped hill located approximately 750m east of the town of Faringdon, Oxfordshire (Figure 6.1) (centred SU 29739565). The parish of Great Faringdon was historically part of Berkshire but was subsumed into the modern unitary authority of Oxfordshire in 1974. Rising to a height of around 150m above OD at its summit, Folly Hill is most well-known as the site of an eponymous monument built for Lord Berners in 1935. Several previous investigators have claimed that Folly Hill is an area of significant archaeological potential, and associated the rise with numerous periods of activity. Documents detailing the events of the Anarchy suggest that Faringdon was the site of a castle which was subject to a major siege, and Folly Hill has frequently been proposed as the most likely location for these events. As

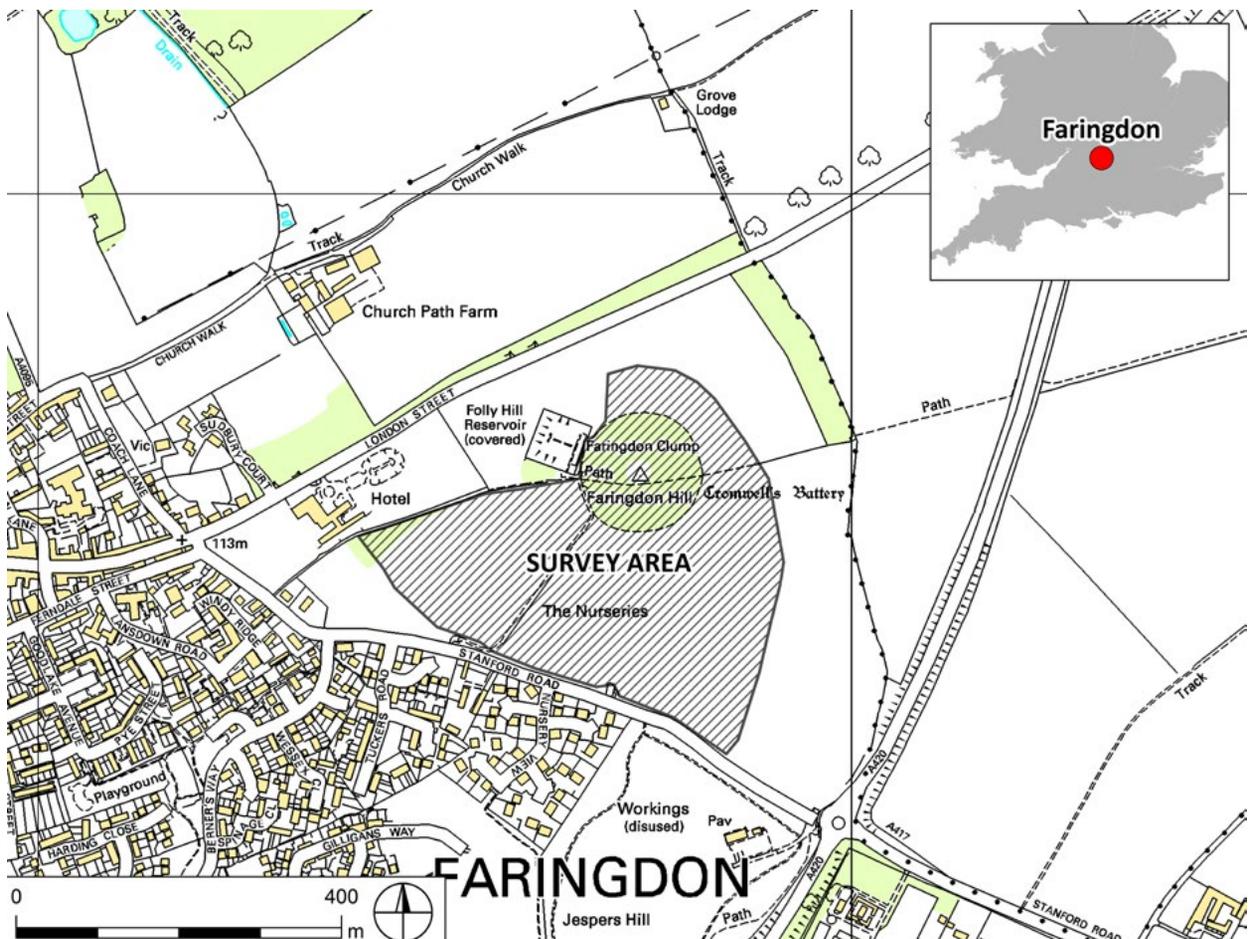


FIGURE 6.1: LOCATION OF FOLLY HILL, FARINGDON, IN THE LOCAL LANDSCAPE AND IN SOUTHERN BRITAIN (INSET). © CROWN COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHT 2015. ORDNANCE SURVEY (DIGIMAP LICENCE).

a result, Folly Hill and its surrounding landscape were the subject of an archaeological survey undertaken between 8 and 12 October 2014. The methodology consisted of a measured topographic survey of earthworks at the summit of Folly Hill, and magnetometer survey of 7ha of land in the surrounding landscape.

The geology of Folly Hill comprises sandstone of the Lower Greensand Group originating during the Cretaceous period, underlain by ferruginous sandstone of the Lower Greensand Group of similar date. These strata are underlain by a further deposit of mudstone of the Kimmeridge Clay Formation, dating to the Jurassic period. The area surrounding Folly Hill is largely characterised by Jurassic limestones of the Stanford Formation. In terms of the potential for geophysical survey, Gaffney and Gater note that sandstone parent geology yields at best variable results for magnetometer surveys, with the results on Greensands often poor (Gaffney and Gater 2003, 79).

### Historical and Archaeological Background

Based primarily on its landscape setting, Folly Hill has been identified by several previous researchers as the possible site of an Iron-Age hillfort (e.g. PHF Archaeology 2014). No archaeological evidence has been found to support this suggestion, however, and during his excavation on the summit of the hill, E.T. Leeds did not identify any evidence of significant prehistoric activity (see below) (Leeds 1936; 1937). Faringdon has been erroneously identified by many as the place where Edward the Elder died in 924 (e.g. VCH Berks. IV 1924, 489), but the king in fact died on campaign against a combined Welsh and Mercian alliance at Farndon-Upon-Dee in Cheshire (Keynes 2001). Other documentary sources do support the premise that Faringdon was part of a royal estate by at least the Late Saxon period, however, as land at Faringdon is mentioned in the will of Ælfheah (AD 968 x 971), a sub-royal ealdorman possibly related to the house of Wessex (S1485; Tollerton 2011, 108). Domesday Book also records Faringdon as a large and wealthy pre-Conquest estate, in the hands of Harold Godwinson before the Conquest; it was worth £16 in 1066, later £12 and in 1086 £21 6s 8d (*Domesday Book, Berkshire*, ed. Morgan 1979, 1,34).

It is uncertain whether Faringdon continued as an elite centre into the post-Conquest period, but the presence of a high-status and indeed royal power base must be considered the most likely motivation for the actions of Robert Earl of Gloucester, whom sources suggest constructed a castle in the area in 1145 as a counterpart to the nearby royalist stronghold of Oxford. The half-brother and supporter of the Angevin Empress Matilda, Gloucester might have positioned his fortification at a royal estate centre as a deliberate and conspicuous

affront to the authority of King Stephen. Gloucester was apparently sparked into action at the request of his son Philip who as Lord of Cricklade had been subject to royalist attacks and requested another Angevin power base in the Thames Valley. The activities of Gloucester, and Stephen's subsequent reaction are recorded in a number of sources, including the *Gesta Stephani*:

*The earl, on hearing this advice, was quite willing to follow it and called together all the forces at his command, and coming to a hamlet called Faringdon in the English language, a delightful spot abounding in all sorts of supplies, he built in it a castle strongly fortified by a rampart and stockade, and putting in a garrison that was the flower of his whole army he valorously restrained the wonted attacks of the king's soldiers, who had been coming out from Oxford and other castles round about to harass his own side. (Gesta Stephani, ed. and trans. Potter and Davis 1976, 181).*

Reacting to the news that Gloucester had fortified Faringdon, King Stephen marched with an army to besiege the rebels:

*... and when at last he had assembled an army of vast strength he encamped around the castle of Faringdon in the expectation of a prolonged siege. Then he instructed his men to busy themselves with a wonderful task and not without profit, namely surrounding themselves with a rampart and stockade, that a sudden attack of the enemy might not break in to their confusion but, ensconced in a sure refuge of their own, they might both provide more securely for themselves and go to meet the enemy more safely and more boldly when occasion required. And without delay, setting up engines most skilfully contrived around the castle and posting an encircling ring of archers in very dense formation, he began to harass the besieged most grievously. (Gesta Stephani ed. and trans. Potter and Davis 1976, 183).*

The text seems to indicate that the royal forces constructed a siegework and posted archers in an encircling formation around the Angevin stronghold, while the account of the siege also shows that stone-throwing engines were used (see also Purton 2009, 273). Immediately following this description, however, the *Gesta Stephani* reveals that Angevin commanders had made a secret deal with the king to surrender the castle. Henry of Huntington provides more detail of the origin of Stephen's army, which contained a sizable contingent of Londoners:

*... in the summer earl Robert and the whole confederacy of the royal enemies had built a castle at Faringdon. The king was quick to assemble*

*forces, and sped there at the head of a formidable and numerous army of Londoners. They made daily attacks on the castle while Earl Robert and his supporters waited for more troops not far away from the king's army, and by their herculean efforts they took it with considerable bloodshed. (Historia Anglorum, ed. Greenway 1996, 746–77).*

In the same passage, Henry of Huntingdon goes on to claim that the successful siege was a turning-point of the war, which had shifted in favour of the king. The precise location of the sequence of events is not known but popular belief is that Gloucester's castle was constructed at the summit of Folly Hill, with the royal counter-castle and encircling forces located in the surrounding landscape. Excavating the summit of Folly Hill between 1935 and 1936, E.T. Leeds claimed to have identified archaeological evidence to support the association of the place with the Angevin castle (Leeds 1936; 1937). Investigating after human remains were found at the top of the hill when digging the foundations for Lord Berners' tower, Leeds' work was unfortunately constrained by limited access and lack of time (see Leeds 1937, 294). The excavator was therefore unable to produce his usual standard of investigation and the results of the work are not entirely clear. After limited excavation in 1935, the following year Leeds called upon the workforce of the University Camp for the Unemployed at Eynsham and extended his investigations in a radial pattern around the circular hill (Leeds 1937, 294).

Excavating by this method, Leeds did manage to identify a possible course of a single rampart surrounded by two ditches extending around the circumference of the hilltop. Within the interior of this enclosure Leeds interpreted a number of amorphous features interpreted somewhat optimistically as evidence of a castle keep. In addition to the human remains, the excavator recovered a significant quantity of ceramics which Leeds viewed as twelfth-century in origin, despite admitting that the same pottery found at other sites in the Oxfordshire region was found to be of thirteenth- or fourteenth-century date (Leeds 1936, 175–7; 1937, 295–8). Leeds suggested that this material and the excavated line of an apparent defensive circuit could most confidently be associated with the Angevin castle recorded in written sources such as the *Gesta Stephani* (Leeds 1937, 298).

Subsequent scholars have since questioned Leeds' interpretations, however, and especially pointed to the ceramic evidence which suggests a far later chronology for the excavated features. Presenting a comprehensive appraisal of the kind of pottery found at Faringdon, Rupert Bruce-Mitford demonstrated that the entire corpus of material across Oxfordshire favours a thirteenth- or fourteenth-century date and that 'Faringdon in fact stands alone in opposition to the general trend of evidence' (Bruce-Mitford 1939, 143). While Bruce-Mitford does

not question the integrity of Leeds' excavations, he argues that on balance of evidence the site of the Angevin castle, and also King Stephen's besieging works, were likely located elsewhere. He suggests instead that a short-lived possible military enclosure of this period could more appropriately be associated with activity leading up to the Battle of Evesham in 1265, although he admitted that no documentary sources support any connection between Faringdon and this campaign (Bruce-Mitford 1939, 144). In his later assessment of pottery from the historic county of Berkshire, Jope stated that Leeds' view on the ceramics from Folly Hill 'would induce chaos into the study of early medieval pottery', and also concluded that the site must date from a later, unrecorded thirteenth-century phase of occupation (Jope 1947, 70; see also Hurst 1962–3, 141–2).

The excavations by Leeds remain the most extensive archaeological investigation at Folly Hill, but interpretation of his findings is far from straightforward. The weight of evidence certainly seems to suggest that the datable material, most significantly the medieval pottery, derives from at least a century after the events of the Anarchy recorded in documentary sources. Given the piecemeal and hurried character of the investigations undertaken by Leeds it is of course possible that further archaeological deposits related to twelfth-century use of the site have yet to be identified. It must also be borne in mind that the written evidence refers to a short-lived period of activity during the twelfth century, and thus the archaeological evidence is bound to be ephemeral. The excavator seems to have identified a series of features reminiscent of a ringwork (see below), but this form alone is not diagnostic of a twelfth-century site.

In an attempt to clarify further the archaeological sequence at the summit of Folly Hill a recent magnetometry survey was undertaken by PHF Archaeology (2014). Given the heavily wooded conditions and the clear evidence of recent disturbance on the hilltop, the choice of magnetometry is somewhat curious and, unsurprisingly, the results of the survey lack clarity. From the indistinct plot the investigators somewhat optimistically identify archaeological features from every period with which Folly Hill has been associated — Iron Age, Anarchy-period, and the English Civil War. Such an uncritical approach to the archaeological evidence and the endurance of local tradition is typical of previous studies of Folly Hill and its surrounding landscape, with apparently unfounded associations perpetuated by subsequent generations of investigators. For example, while some of his views are open to debate, Leeds successfully demonstrated that the association of Folly Hill as the site of an English Civil War gun battery is a tradition unsupported by archaeological evidence. With these observations in mind, the current survey was undertaken acknowledging that no archaeological evidence had hitherto been found to suggest either that

Folly Hill was the site of the Angevin castle recorded in historical texts, or that the landscape surrounding the hill was the area chosen by Stephen for his associated siege. Nevertheless, the denuded although undated earthwork at the top of Folly Hill, and its strategic setting suggested to the current surveyors that it was still a potential site of the twelfth-century siege and it was thus selected for investigation.

In the wider landscape beyond Faringdon, far more compelling evidence related to conflict in the twelfth century has been recovered at Radcot, around 4km north of the site. Located at an important crossing of the River Thames, the television programme *Time Team* revealed elements of an Angevin castle with a protracted later history of use (see below; Blair 2010). Such evidence, combined with the written sources, clearly illustrates the significant role played by Faringdon and the upper Thames Valley landscape during the events of the Anarchy. Later in the medieval period this same landscape became the focus of several rich ecclesiastical establishments, and Faringdon itself was the site of a short-lived monastic community. Founded as a Cistercian house by King John in 1202, building was apparently never finished and the monastery was instead

established at Beaulieu in Hampshire. The reasons for this move are unclear but a restricted water supply or too close a proximity to the Benedictine Abbey at Abingdon are both possibilities. The location of the incomplete Cistercian foundation at Faringdon is not known, but the order continued to manage five granges in the area from their base at Beaulieu (Hockey 1976, 15). The largest of these monastic farms, at Wyke, 1km north-west of the site, was first identified in 1990 on aerial photographs and is a Scheduled Monument (National Monument No: 30838).

**Map Analysis**

The OS First Edition 25” map for Folly Hill published in 1876–77 depicts the hilltop as a circular tree-covered clump, within which is located a small circular earthwork also covered in vegetation (Figure 6.2). Presumably this is the feature which Leeds would later excavate, as the folly tower is situated in the centre of the earthwork. The hilltop is labelled variously as ‘The Folly’, ‘Faringdon Hill’ and ‘Faringdon Clump’, and the local tradition that the site was the location of a Civil War gun battery is reflected in the label ‘Cromwell’s Battery’, written in archaic script. A pathway projecting in a general east-

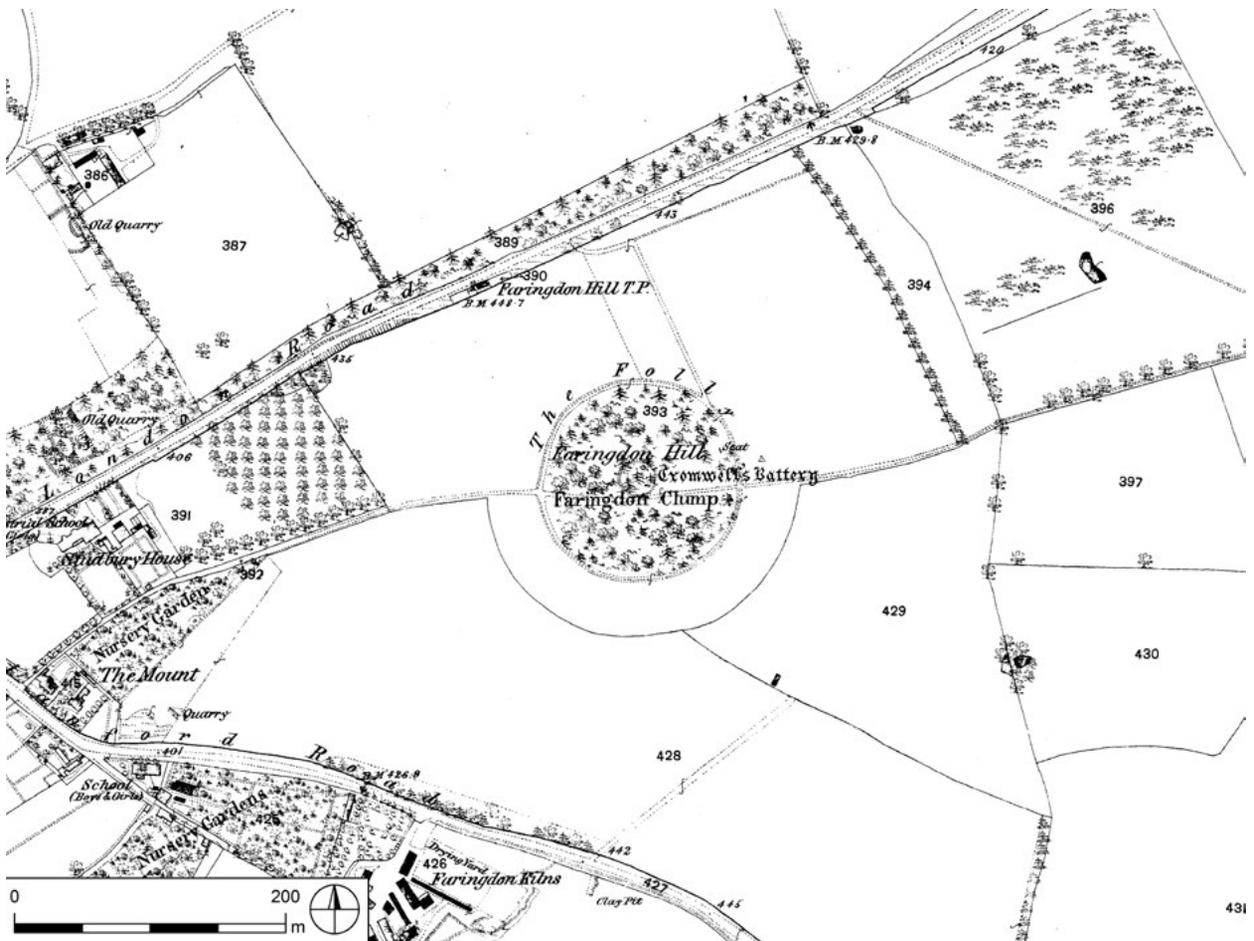


FIGURE 6.2: OS FIRST EDITION 25” MAP SHOWING FOLLY HILL, FARINGDON, PUBLISHED IN 1876–7. © CROWN COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHT 2015. ORDNANCE SURVEY (DIGIMAP LICENCE).

west direction is illustrated, and its alignment appears to define the extent of a semi-circular field boundary which encloses the southern half of the tree-covered hilltop. A further field boundary is shown projecting from this enclosure in a south-easterly direction and around 120m west of Folly Hill is the garden of Sudbury House. Approximately 220m south-west of the hilltop, a 'Nursery Garden' is illustrated. By the time of the OS First Edition Revision 25" map, dated to 1899, the area of the 'Nursery' had been extended up to the semi-circular field boundary on the hilltop and around 180m east along the hillside (Figure 6.3). The area otherwise appears largely unchanged, and seems similarly so until the construction of Lord Berners' Folly in the 1930s. Faringdon reservoir was built on the west side of the hill in the second half of the twentieth century, and a network of more substantial footpaths and farm tracks has been constructed to provide access to the site from Stanford Road. Soilmarks of possible archaeological origin are visible on an aerial photograph of the Allen Collection of the Ashmolean Museum, dated to 1935 (Figure 6.4). Located on the northern side of the pathway to the west of Folly Hill, two linear marks running parallel to each other in a

north-easterly direction are visible. Another linear feature running parallel to Stanford Road in the area of the Nursery Gardens is also noticeable. The identity of these soilmarks is unknown but they may be archaeological features.

### Geophysical Survey Results and Interpretation

Given the large size of the potential survey area (approx. 0.25km<sup>2</sup>) a responsive sampling strategy was adopted, with areas revealed as of significant potential, recognised as work progressed, subjected to further investigation. In addition to the hilltop, considered the possible site of the Angevin fortification, survey was undertaken on transects radiating down the hillside in the hope of recognising the encircling siegeworks alluded to in the documents. The survey area was divided into three zones corresponding to three fields surrounding the hilltop; the field to the north (Area A), the field to the south (Area B) and the field to the west (Area C) (Figure 6.5). All geophysical survey areas were ploughed and very recently seeded when the investigation was undertaken. The results of the current magnetometer survey are displayed in Figure 6.6.

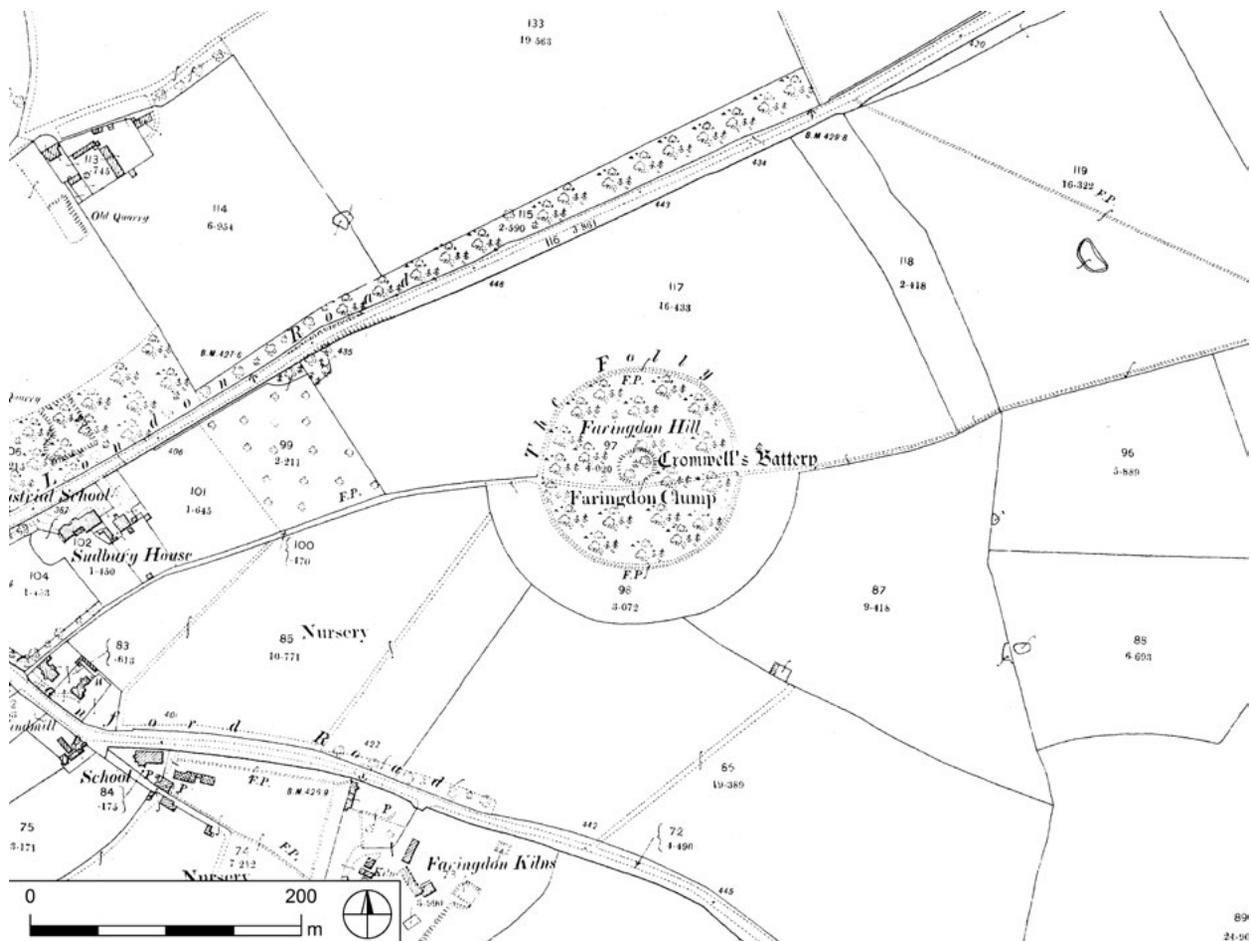


FIGURE 6.3: OS FIRST EDITION REVISION 25" MAP SHOWING FOLLY HILL, FARINGDON, PUBLISHED IN 1899. © CROWN COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHT 2015. ORDNANCE SURVEY (DIGIMAP LICENCE).

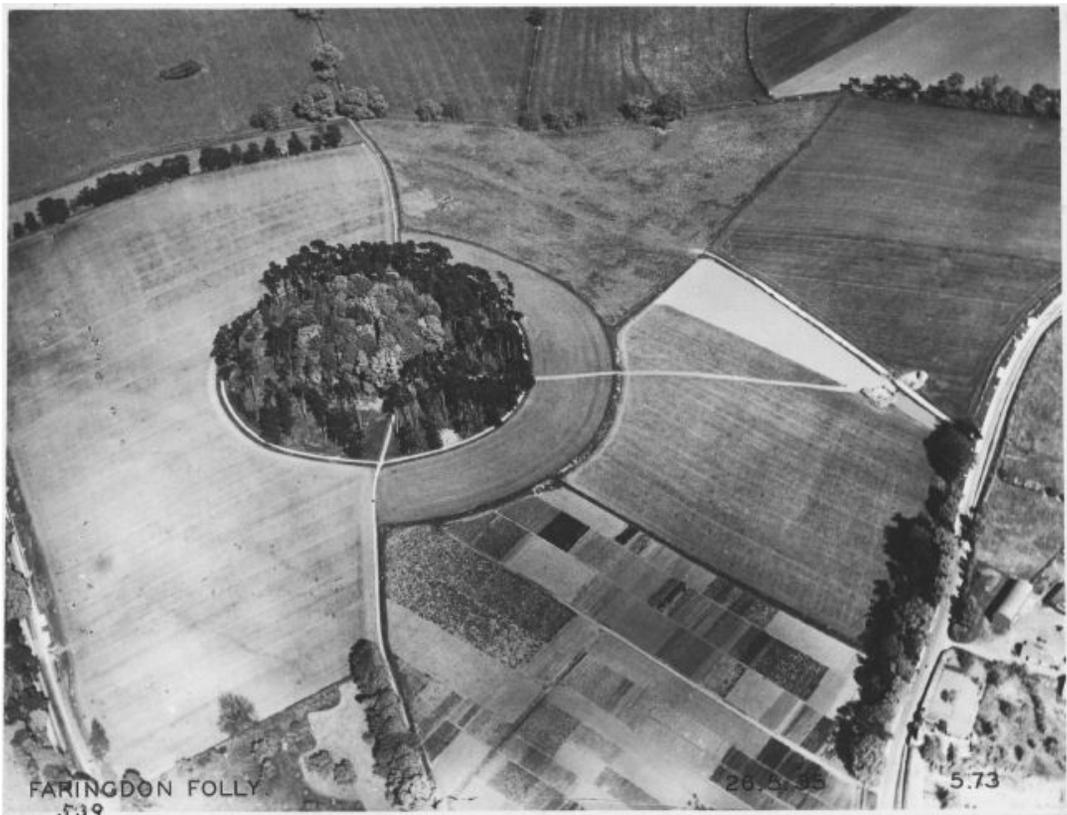


FIGURE 6.4: 'FARINGDON FOLLY'. MAJOR G.W.G ALLEN COLLECTION. 26/05/1935. IMAGE NO. AA0813. ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM.



FIGURE 6.5: GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY AREAS AND THE LOCATION OF SURVEYED GRIDS AT FOLLY HILL, FARINGDON. ALSO SHOWING LOCATION OF PHF ARCHAEOLOGY SURVEY AREA. © CROWN COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHT 2015. ORDNANCE SURVEY (DIGIMAP LICENCE).

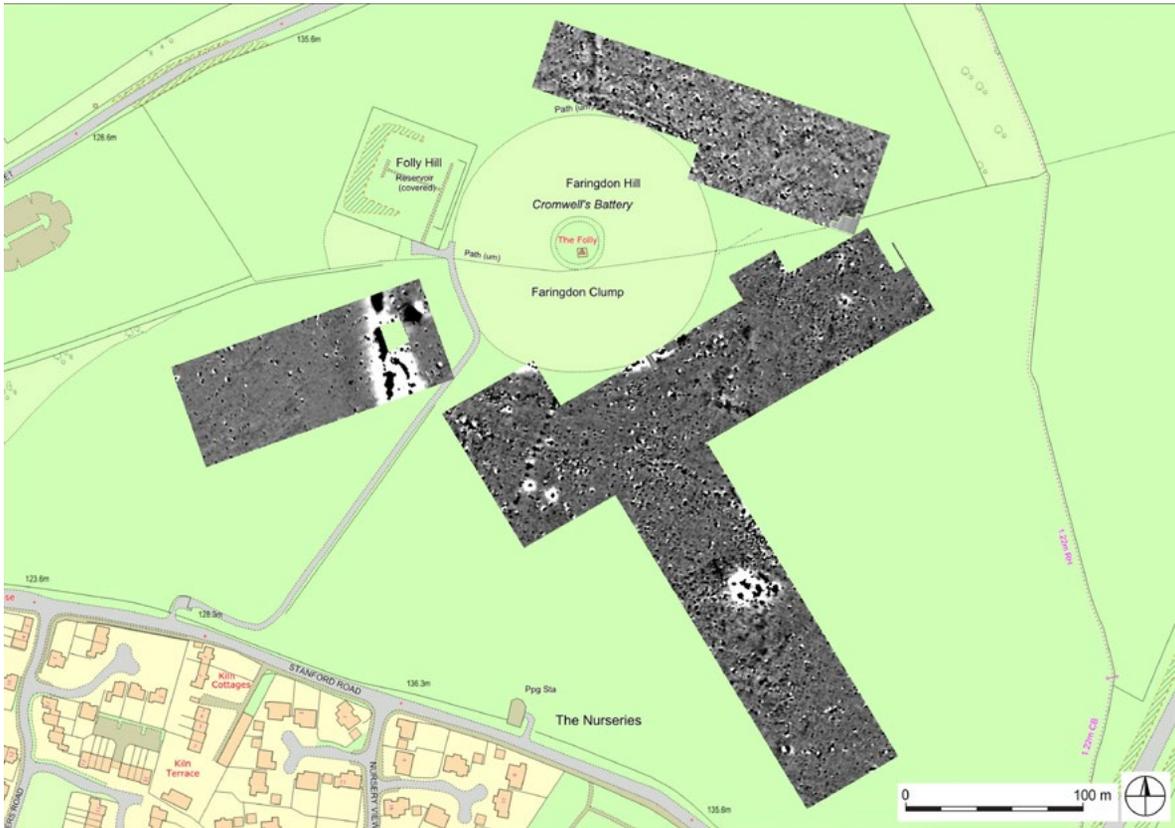


FIGURE 6.6: COMPOSITE MAGNETOMETRY RESULTS AT FOLLY HILL, FARINGTON © CROWN COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHT 2015. ORDNANCE SURVEY (DIGIMAP LICENCE).

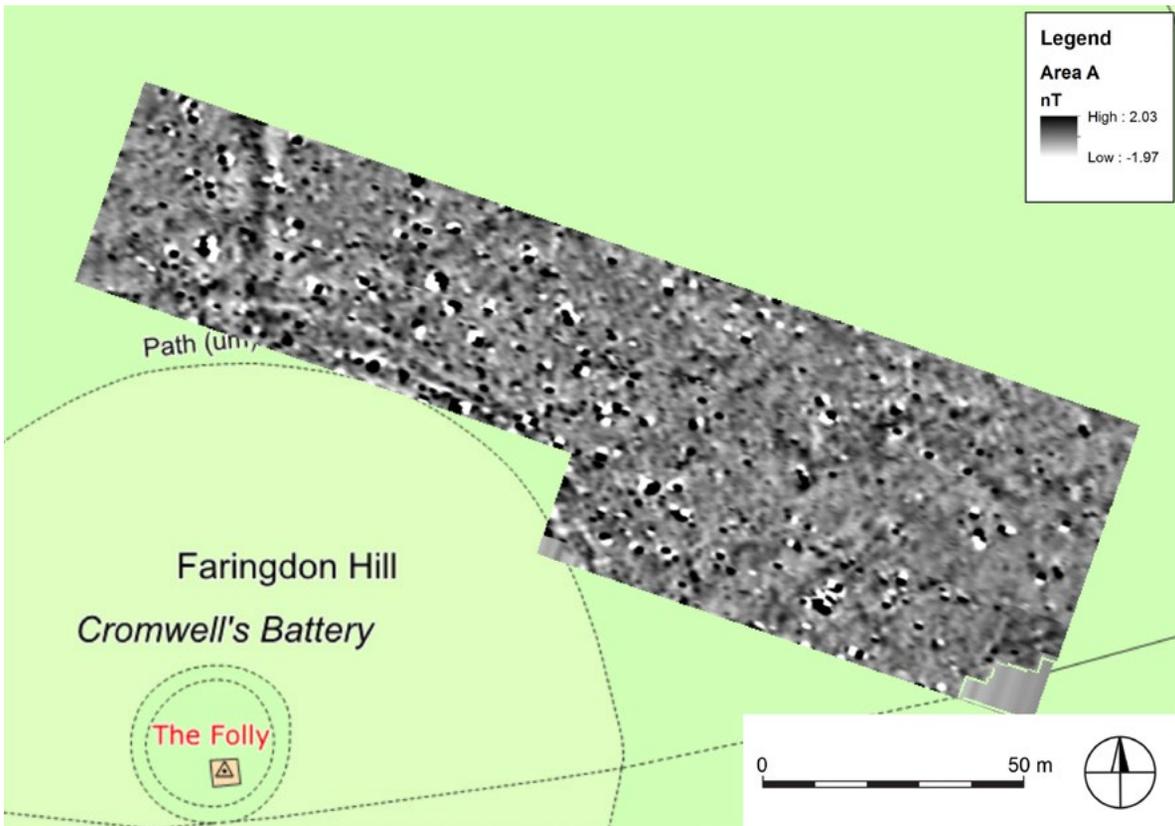


FIGURE 6.7: MAGNETOMETRY RESULTS FROM AREA A AT FOLLY HILL, FARINGTON. © CROWN COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHT 2015. ORDNANCE SURVEY (DIGIMAP LICENCE).

### Area A

Area A comprises the northernmost field of the survey area, characterised by steep inclines on its eastern and northern sides (Figure 6.5). An enclosed reservoir occupies the western side of the hillside. During survey a number of pot sherds believed to be of post-medieval date were identified, and local people also report finding musket balls in the northern part of Area A. Figure 6.7 shows the results of the magnetometry survey, and Figure 6.8 offers an interpretation of the anomalies identified. These anomalies, and the anomalies identified in Areas B and C are described and interpreted in Table 6.1.

### Area B

Area B comprises a large field that slopes down markedly on its eastern side (Figure 6.5). There is a ridge of higher ground orientated in a north-south direction heading up through the centre of the field towards the folly. In addition to surveying the hilltop, investigation was undertaken in a traverse down the hillside in the hope of recognising either outworks of hilltop defences or siegeworks surrounding the hilltop. The north-south transect of grids crested the natural ridge in the field. Again, post-medieval sherds were seen in the ploughsoil, as well as some agricultural and other rubbish. As in

Name	Description	Interpretation
m1	Shadowy linear 35m long and 7m wide.	Uncertain. Possible field boundary.
m2	Irregular linear c. 7.5m wide and 22m long. Strip of positive values bordered by negative values. Heads directly for hilltop.	Uncertain. Possible former track to hilltop. Possibly related to the orchards / nursery areas shown here on OS First Edition.
m3,m4	Curvilinear negative anomaly, c. 2m across, 100m long. Apparently mirroring edge of modern walkway pavement.	Possibly archaeological, but more likely to be related to modern pathways around the folly.
m5, m6	Curvilinear negative anomaly with ferric spikes at irregular intervals.	Outside kerb of modern path around folly.
m7	Oval area c. 45m across exhibiting more homogenous, lower and less ferrous responses.	Uncertain. Possible circular enclosure.
m8	Tongue of negative responses outlined by positive responses. Bisecting anomaly m7.	Uncertain. Possible track.
m9	Long narrow positive anomaly, c. 1m across, and c. 25m long.	Uncertain. Possible fence.
m10	Shadowy linear of above average response with accumulated ferrous material. On same alignment as m2.	Possible boundary mirroring anomaly m2.
m11,m12,m16, m56,m55,m31,m36	Alignments of positive sub-circular anomalies, each sub-circle usually around 2m across, response of up to +10 nT.	Post-holes or tree holes.
m13	Curving positive anomaly, 13m long.	Uncertain, possible ditch.
m14	Curving string of positive spots and dipolar peaks.	Fence or hedge demarcating the fringe of cultivated ground around the folly shown on OS First Edition.
m15	Aggregation of positive cub-circular anomalies.	Uncertain. Possibly related to former cultivation of the fringe area around the folly.
m17	Aggregation of positive anomalies.	Uncertain. Possibly related to former cultivation of the fringe area around the folly.
m18,m19	Curving band of dipolar responses skirting Folly Hill amenity zone.	Modern kerbstones/brickwork.
m20	Strongly positive linear 30m long, 3m wide that stops at the nineteenth-century cultivated fringe of Folly Hill. Similar alignment to m23.	Former field boundary.
m21	Cluster of positive and dipolar spots.	Uncertain. Possibly related to former cultivation of the fringe area around the folly.
m22	Strongly positive sub-anomalies in a line. Shares alignment with current public footpath 70m to west.	Post-holes or tree-line.
m23	Linear of positive and dipolar anomalies. There was a field boundary here on OS First Edition.	Former field boundary.
m24	Area of disturbance. OS First Edition. Shows this area as the meeting of a trackway with a field boundary. Also a small building is drawn here.	Disturbance associated with modern agriculture.

TABLE 6.1: DESCRIPTION AND INTERPRETATION OF ANOMALIES IDENTIFIED DURING MAGNETOMETER SURVEY AT FOLLY HILL. (1)

m25	A band 20m wide of many small positive anomalies. OS First Edition shows former track passing through here.	Disturbance associated with former trackway.
m26,m27	Curvilinear strongly positive anomalies. Adjacent to trackway shown on OS First Edition.	Ditch or wall footing. Possibly archaeological but probably related to the recent trackway.
m28	Strong linear anomaly. 2.5m across and c. 10m long.	Ditch or wall footing.
m29	Irregular cluster of dipolar peaks of +100nT and above.	Buried metallic objects, most likely modern agricultural dumping.
30,m32,m33,m34,m35,m37,m38-54	Sub-circular positive anomalies between 1m and 5m in width.	Pits of uncertain interpretation.
m56	Broad linear dipolar anomaly.	Modern pipeline from reservoir to pumping station on Stanford Road.
m57	Dipolar anomaly 10m across.	Buried metal object perhaps related to adjacent pipeline.
m58	Narrow linear of lower magnetism than surrounding soil. Same alignment as plough marks identified during field during survey.	Modern plough channels.

TABLE 6.1: DESCRIPTION AND INTERPRETATION OF ANOMALIES IDENTIFIED DURING MAGNETOMETER SURVEY AT FOLLY HILL. (2)

Area A, the responses were quiet with the anomalies only appearing in the range of -1 to +3nT. Figure 6.9 shows the results of magnetometry survey, and Figure 6.10 offers an interpretation of the anomalies identified.

### Area C

Area C is defined by a field on the west side of the survey area, which slopes down south-westwards towards Faringdon town centre. This area is now an open agricultural field with a narrow strip of woodland on its western border. Local people informed the surveyors that when the Nursery was removed the soils in this area became unstable and were frequently eroded into the town with the rain. The results from Area C are shown in Figure 6.11, and an interpretation of anomalies identified are illustrated in Figure 6.12.

### Summary

The magnetometer survey identified a small number of anomalies which may be of archaeological origin, but little convincing evidence for features of possible medieval provenance. A number of pits, perhaps representative of wooden structures was located, such as anomaly m16 where the alignment of features forms a clear right-angle. Anomaly m2 may be part of a former trackway to the summit of the hill from the current London Road. There is a very slight possibility that anomaly m3 is the line of an outwork of the enclosure at the top of the hill, which perhaps originally had a defensive function. There is some evidence of zones of differential background magnetism which may be evidence of earth-moving activity, such as anomaly m7, but these are not associated with accompanying ditches. A number of ferrous spikes probably the result of modern agricultural dumping were also recognised, but ultimately very little of archaeological significance was located in any of the survey areas.

### Earthwork Description and Interpretation

In addition to the magnetometer survey, a topographic survey using a hand tape and baseline methodology was undertaken focussing on tree-covered earthworks at the summit of Folly Hill (Figure 6.13). The circular summit of the hill itself is defined by a break in slope/terrace c. 1–2m high, defining an internal area approximately 145m in diameter. The break in slope/terrace has various interruptions, most notably where the footpath enters the hilltop on its eastern and western sides, and is more pronounced on the north side of the summit. A further break of slope orientated east-west was identified alongside the route of a pathway that divides the enclosed summit into two portions. A further terrace, which seems agricultural in origin, strikes east from the eastern extremity of the enclosed area, and a similar feature is identified on the west side of the enclosure, following the pathway that provides access to Folly Hill.

The area within the terrace surrounding the hilltop is wooded and heavily disturbed. The only earthwork of potential archaeological significance is a circular feature, approximately 25m in diameter, near the centre of the area, with Lord Berners' folly inserted just to the south of its centre. This low platform is defined by a break of slope/terrace, most prominent on the west side, which merges into a barely discernible bank on the north side. This platform, heavily disturbed by the construction of the folly, formed the focus of E.T. Leeds' excavations in the 1930s, and it is clear that the excavated banks and ditches mirror the orientation of the visible earthwork (Figure 6.14). Although Leeds found nothing which could be confidently assigned a twelfth-century date, it is notable that the size and form of the earthwork platform is comparable with other likely twelfth-century siege castles. The probable siege castle of the Rings at Corfe Castle in Dorset (this volume, Chapter 4), for instance, features a ringwork enclosing an area of around 25m in diameter, although this example also possesses a bailey.

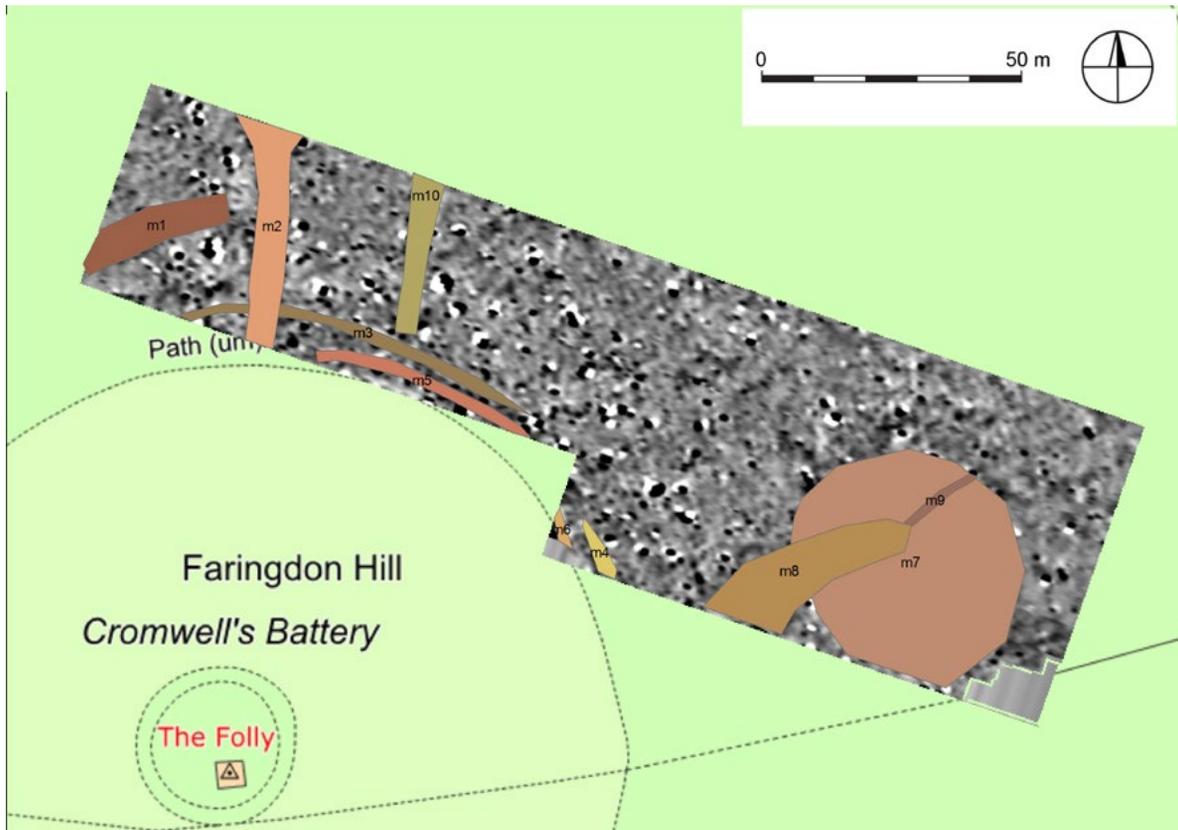


FIGURE 6.8: INTERPRETIVE PLOT OF ANOMALIES RECOGNISED IN AREA A AT FOLLY HILL, FARINGDON. © CROWN COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHT 2015. ORDNANCE SURVEY (DIGIMAP LICENCE).



FIGURE 6.9: MAGNETOMETRY RESULTS FROM AREA B AT FOLLY HILL, FARINGDON. © CROWN COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHT 2015. ORDNANCE SURVEY (DIGIMAP LICENCE).



FIGURE 6.10: INTERPRETIVE PLOT OF ANOMALIES RECOGNISED IN AREA B AT FOLLY HILL, FARINGTON. © CROWN COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHT 2015. ORDNANCE SURVEY (DIGIMAP LICENCE).

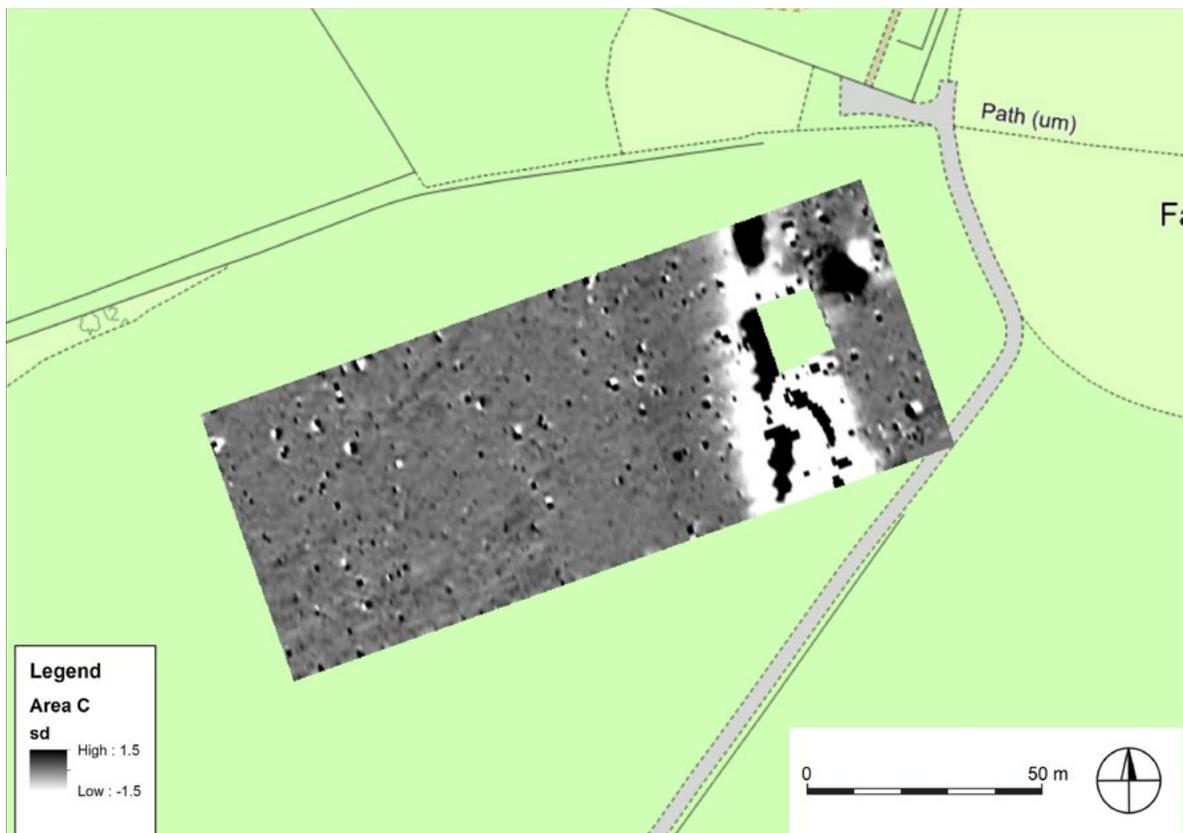


FIGURE 6.11: MAGNETOMETRY RESULTS FROM AREA C AT FOLLY HILL, FARINGTON. © CROWN COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHT 2015. ORDNANCE SURVEY (DIGIMAP LICENCE).

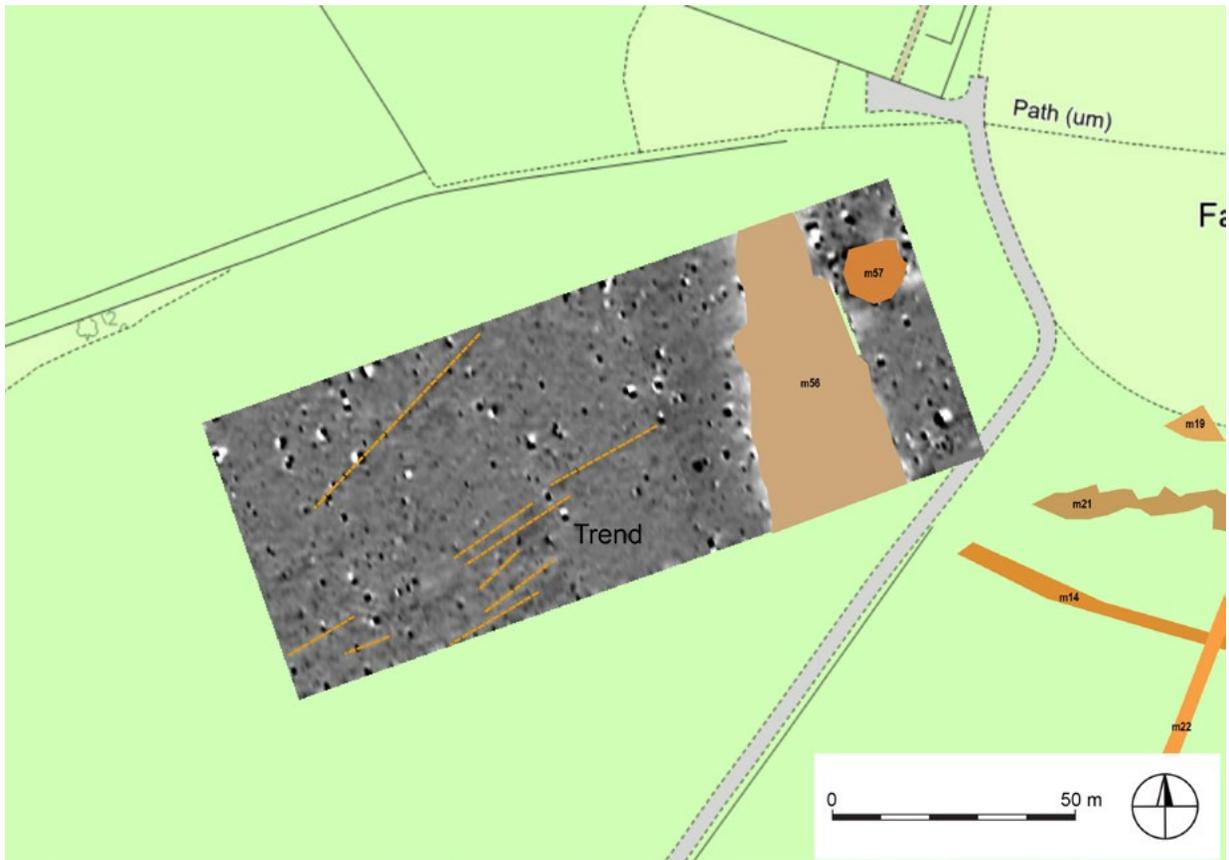


FIGURE 6.12: INTERPRETIVE PLOT OF ANOMALIES RECOGNISED IN SURVEY AREA C. © CROWN COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHT 2015. ORDNANCE SURVEY (DIGIMAP LICENCE).

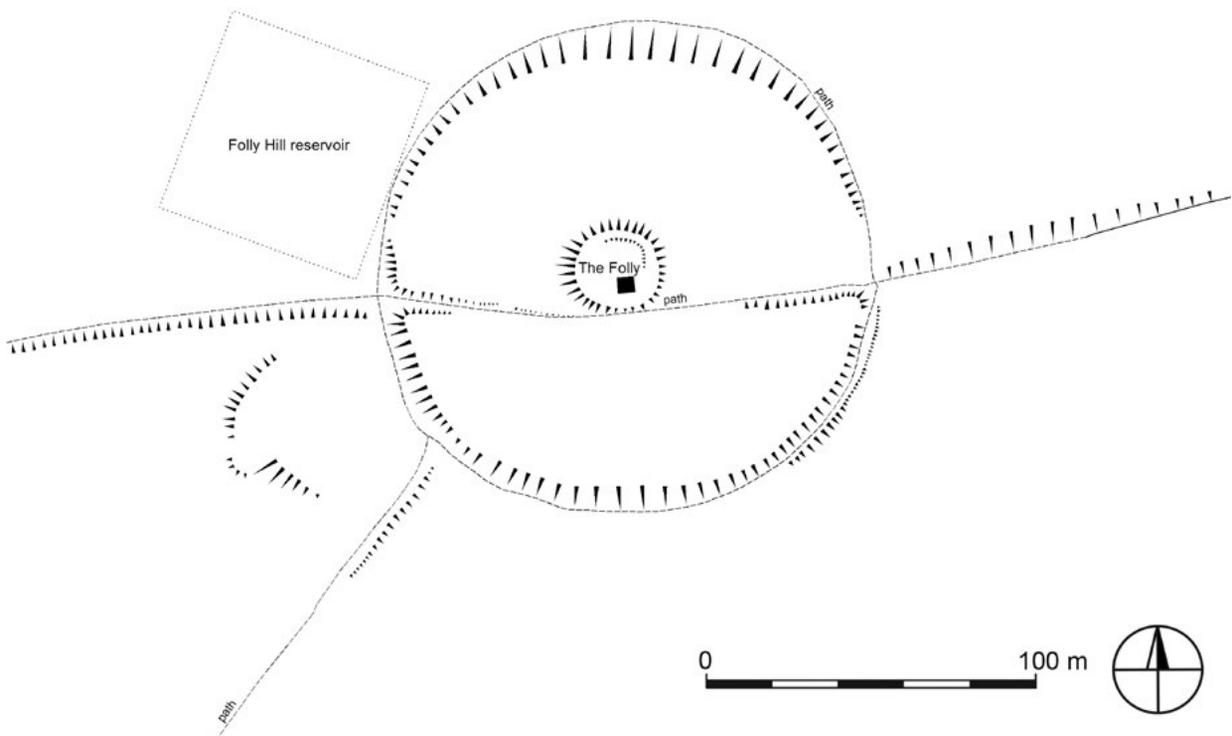


FIGURE 6.13: HACHURED TOPOGRAPHIC PLAN OF THE EARTHWORKS ON THE SUMMIT OF FOLLY HILL.

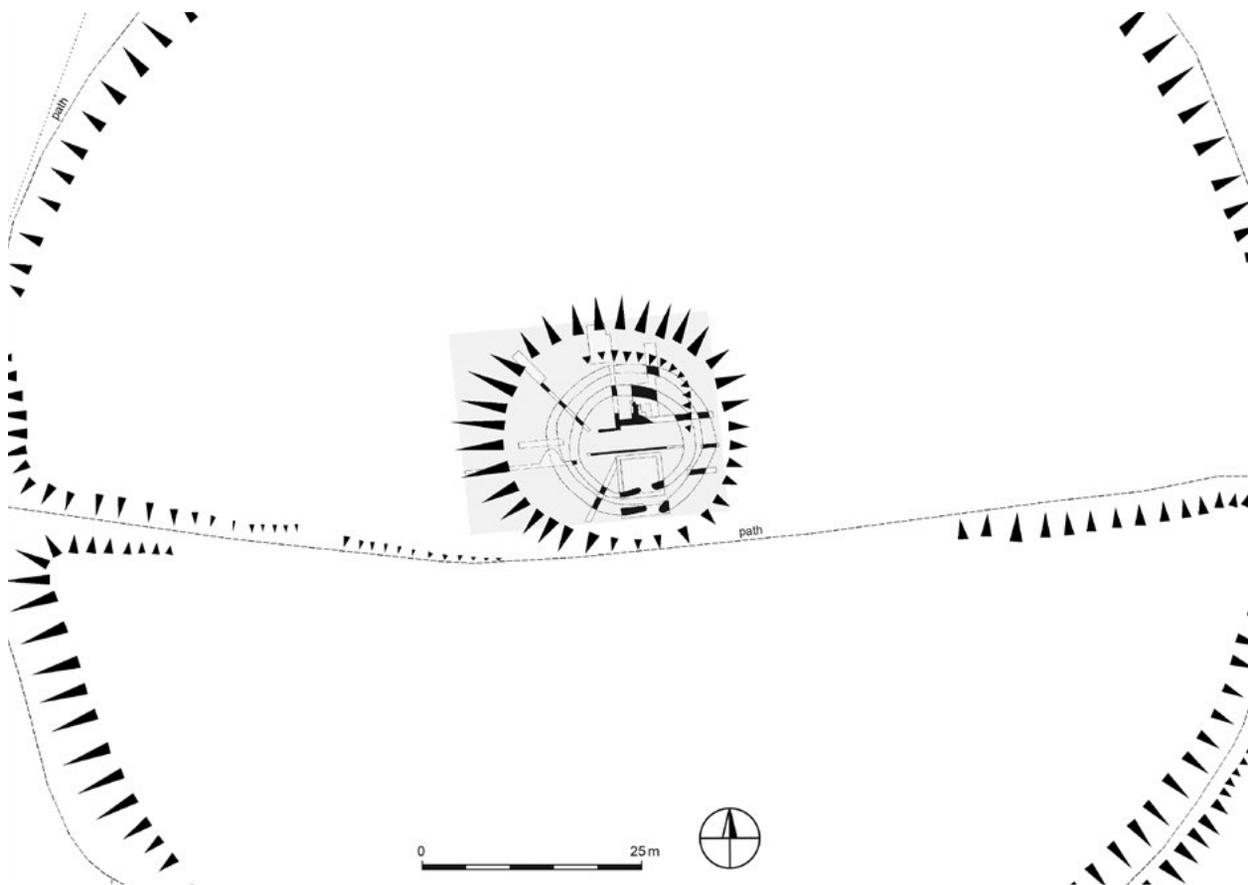


FIGURE 6.14: PLAN OF EXCAVATIONS AT FOLLY HILL, FARINGDON, CARRIED OUT BY LEEDS IN 1936 (AFTER LEEDS 1936) OVERLAID ON EARTHWORK PLAN.

### Discussion

The archaeological investigations undertaken as part of this research have revealed only the slightest evidence for activity on Folly Hill and in its immediate environs. Magnetometry survey in the landscape surrounding the summit of the hill identified almost no features of archaeological significance, and certainly nothing which can be reliably assigned a medieval origin. Topographic survey proved slightly more fruitful, and the earthwork platform excavated by E.T. Leeds is of a similar scale to some known ringwork castles. The excavated dataset from the hilltop is, however, of overwhelmingly later date and the association of Folly Hill as the site of the Angevin castle constructed in the 1140s has no firm basis in the archaeological evidence produced by this research or any earlier intervention.

The dearth of archaeological evidence which can be related to the events at Faringdon recorded in the written sources requires some consideration, and a number of alternatives are forwarded here. First, it is possible that Folly Hill was indeed the site of the Angevin castle which was besieged by royal forces but that the brief and ephemeral character of this activity has yet to be demonstrated archaeologically. An alternative possibility is that the association of Folly Hill with Robert of

Gloucester's castle is in fact erroneous, and in this regard it is worth looking more closely at the language used in the written sources. None of the documents for the period indicate that Gloucester constructed a castle on top of a hill, rather the language of the *Gesta Stephani* hints that it was instead constructed *within* the settlement '...coming to a hamlet called Faringdon...he built *in it* a castle strongly fortified' (author's emphasis) (*Gesta Stephani*, ed. and trans. Potter and Davis 1976, 181). Sources such as the *Gesta* rarely provide a detailed geographic context for the events they record, but the possibility arises from this passage that the castle built by the Angevin army actually lies under the modern town of Faringdon itself. Indeed, interventions on the northern side of Gloucester Road (Oxon. HER: 27452) and at Swan Lane (Oxon. HER: 16692) have both identified eleventh- and twelfth-century deposits. Perhaps more intriguingly, John Stone, the antiquarian-organist of Faringdon writing in the late eighteenth century, mentions that 'the base of one of the buttresses of the Castle is still to be seen in a part of the Town called Back Street' (Stone 1798). This road has since been renamed Ferndale Street, and runs from Stanford Road in a south-westerly direction paralleling the major thoroughfare of London Road (Figure 6.1). If it were the case that Faringdon town was the location of Gloucester's castle, it is conceivable that Folly Hill was instead the site of the royal siegework mentioned in

the written sources. Located slightly south of the London Road, the site would be in an appropriate location given that Stephen advanced on Faringdon from the east. A problem with this interpretation is, however, that the earthworks resemble a compact ringwork rather than the entrenchments encircling the Angevin castle that the documentary sources apparently allude to.

The reliability of Stone's account is hard to evaluate, but the possibility that the twelfth-century castle of Faringdon was built in the area of the modern town, and that Folly Hill instead may be a siegework, must be contemplated. Stephen will have advanced on Faringdon from this easterly direction, and Folly Hill provides impressive views across the surrounding road network and the Thames Valley — routes of great importance to both sides during the conflict. Such strategic advantages may have been offset by other characteristics, however, and strengthen the idea that Folly Hill was not the site of the original Angevin castle. Perhaps most importantly the lack of access to drinking water on the sand-capped summit would quickly have proved disastrous for any garrison on Folly Hill. The hill would thus represent a bizarre choice of site by Gloucester, who would have known almost for certain that Stephen would react by besieging his original castle in a pattern of siege warfare frequently adopted by both sides during the Anarchy. Perhaps a more remote possibility is that Folly Hill earlier acted as a makeshift viewpoint for Gloucester's army garrisoned either in or close to Faringdon, or somewhere else on its extensive estate. The importance of control over nodal points in the transport network in the area is illustrated by the nearby

site of Radcot, where a programme of geophysics and limited excavation identified a moated castle complex at a place where the Faringdon to Bampton road crosses the headwater of the navigable Thames. The site almost certainly represents the castle recorded in the *Gesta* as having been constructed by Angevin forces in 1141 (see *Gesta Stephani*, ed. and trans. Potter and Davis 1976, 139). The complex apparently included a central square donjon, gatehouse and chapel on a location which was later developed as a medieval manor house and then a seventeenth-century fortification (Blair 2010).

Situated in close proximity to Faringdon, Radcot serves to emphasise how significant control of the Thames Valley was to Angevin and Royalist commanders alike in the middle of the twelfth century, but also demonstrates the vastly increased archaeological potential of a site occupied for a greater duration than a location such as Faringdon which was apparently only utilised during a single short campaign. Seen in this light, the unremarkable archaeological profile of Folly Hill is perhaps unsurprising and this research suggests that future avenues may profit from a more critical approach to the speculative associations of the site with numerous phases of past human activity. Ultimately, this research has demonstrated little to no compelling evidence for a twelfth-century phase at Folly Hill, and neither have any earlier assessments. Given that Folly Hill is situated within the Thames Valley — one of the richest areas for archaeology in England — any subsequent research would best be advised to focus on the river terraces below which possess far greater archaeological potential.

# Chapter 7

## Hailes Camp, Gloucestershire

Michael Fradley, Duncan Wright and Oliver Creighton

### Abstract

A topographical survey was undertaken at Hailes Camp in the civil parish of Hailes, Gloucestershire. The earthwork survey demonstrates that this promontory fort was subject to several phases of development, and was probably first constructed during the Iron Age. It is likely that Hailes Camp was later remodelled into a castle during the middle of the twelfth century by Ralph of Worcester, who also built a church in the valley bottom. Together, the castle at Hailes Camp and the church formed part of a short-lived seigneurial power base for Worcester, who took advantage of the uncertain political and tenurial conditions of the Anarchy in order to seize land from nearby Winchcombe Abbey. The focus of secular and

religious power at Hailes was transformed in the middle of the thirteenth century when a Cistercian abbey was established by Richard, Earl of Cornwall. Hailes Abbey acted as a significant economic stimulus, and probably led to settlement expansion outside the monastic precinct. The monks of Hailes also converted Worcester's earlier church into a chapel gatehouse and constructed a large monastic vallum around their precinct that has since been erroneously identified as the site of Hailes castle. There is little evidence for long-lived occupation of the medieval castle at Hailes Camp, but it is possible it later acted as a prospect mound overlooking the abbey. Following the Dissolution, settlement at Hailes likely contracted and the abbey buildings were used first as a private residence and subsequently as farm structures.

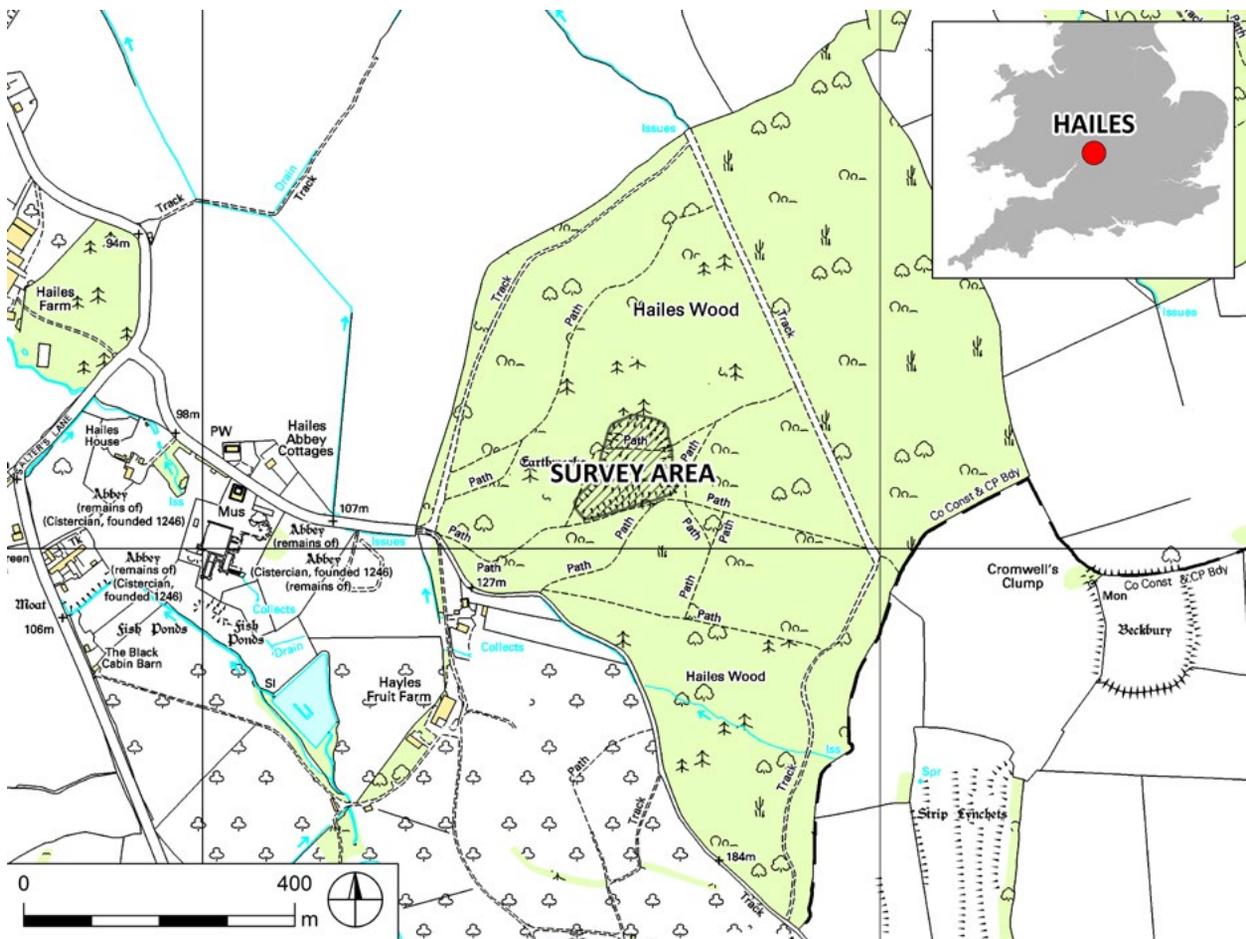


FIGURE 7.1: LOCATION OF HAILES CAMP IN SOUTHERN BRITAIN (INSET) AND IN THE LOCAL LANDSCAPE. © CROWN COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHT 2015. ORDNANCE SURVEY (DIGIMAP LICENCE).

## Introduction

Hailes Camp (SP 05643012) is situated on the east side of the River Isbourne, a north-flowing tributary of the Warwickshire River Avon in the civil parish of Hailes, Gloucestershire (Figure 7.1). Located on the western slopes of the limestone Cotswold escarpment, the only documentary reference to a castle at Hailes occurs during the Anarchy. The site at Hailes was investigated in parallel with work at Sudeley Castle a little over 3km to the south-west, which is also mentioned in written sources detailing events during the Anarchy (for a further, supplementary discussion of the fieldwork and its results, see Wright and Fradley 2013; Fradley *et al.* forthcoming). Hailes Camp is today covered by managed heavy woodland, which prohibited geophysical survey. Tree cover also prevented the use of a Geographical Positioning System and the site was instead subjected to an analytical earthwork survey undertaken using a hand tape methodology. Hailes Camp sits on the upper edge of the Cotswold Plateau, principally comprised of early Jurassic Whitby Mudstones, but which is also partially composed of the limestone of the Marlstone Rock Formation and the siltstone and mudstone of the Dyrham Formation.

## Historical and Archaeological Background

Hailes Camp stands on the upper slopes of the edge of the Cotswold limestone plateau within the midst of a rich archaeological landscape. A large number of Neolithic long barrows are known from the surrounding region, including the well-excavated example of Belas Knap 5.5km to the south-south-west of the site. Iron-Age forts are known at Nottingham Hill to the south-west and Beckbury to the east. Residual Romano-British material from a number of sites in the Winchcombe area indicates a wide spread of settlement during the period (Cox 2014). The manor of Hailes is recorded in Domesday Book as having nine villagers and eleven smallholders, land for eleven ploughs, half a league of woodland and one mill, with its value having fallen from £12 to £8 between 1066 and 1086, although its taxable value of eleven gelds was very high (*Domesday Book, Gloucestershire*, ed. Moore 1982, 38,2).

Existing interpretations of the development of Hailes in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries have done little to illuminate the settlement sequence, with questionable assumptions perpetuated by subsequent research. Adopting a more critical approach to the pre-existing archaeological and documentary sources and the new evidence produced by this survey, however, it becomes clear that Hailes was an important focus of ecclesiastical and secular power during the period. Following its recording in Domesday Book, Hailes next appears in the written sources within an account of the *Landboc* of Winchcombe Abbey. The text relates that during the

unstable political climate of King Stephen's reign, Ralph of Worcester seized land at Hailes and built a castle and a church (*Landboc*, ed. Royce 1892, 65). These activities are dated by the entry to between 1139 and 1148, although the church was not consecrated or given parochial rights until 1175 due to the Abbot of Winchcombe's continued objection to what was viewed as an illegal appropriation of land (Alston 1900, 9–10). It has been suggested that Worcester could have used his stronghold at Hailes in order to blockade Winchcombe during his dispute with the abbey (Donaldson 2001, 30–1), although there is little convincing evidence to support such a premise.

The church built by Ralph of Worcester still stands today, situated immediately north of the most prominent ruins of a Cistercian abbey which was founded in 1246, and indeed the church was possibly incorporated by the brethren and used as the *Capella ante Portas* or gatehouse chapel. The simple plan comprises a nave, chancel and south porch. It is possible that the clerics also had the twelfth-century church refurbished shortly after their arrival, as the impressive interior wall paintings most likely date to the late thirteenth or early fourteenth centuries (Edwards 1981). The location of the castle at Hailes mentioned in the *Landboc*, however, is far less clear and has been confused and conflated with the development of the abbey. Although not shown on the OS First Edition of 1884 (Figure 7.2), on the First Edition, First Revision of 1902 a series of ditches, the largest of which extends from approximately 130m north of the parish church, is depicted forming a curving arc until it meets a fence-line around 145m south-east-east (Figure 7.3). In this corner a linear ditch is illustrated projecting in a north-westerly direction for 140m, with a small break in the bank three quarters of the way along its length. At the northern extent of the large ditch a further ditch is recorded projecting southward for 50m before turning south-eastwards for 12m and matching the alignment of the opposite corner of the circuit. Together these ditches form a D-shaped enclosure, although the feature is recorded as only partially preserved on its western side.

This D-shaped enclosure has previously been identified as the castle built by Ralph of Worcester in the twelfth century (e.g. Renn 1968, 199). In addition to the OS First Edition Revision labelling of the ditch as 'Moat' and the interior of the enclosure as 'Site of Castle' (Figure 7.3), in an assessment of Hailes church W.T. Alston (1900, 9–10) states that 'the meadow adjoining the church contains the earthworks of Ralph's castle'. The enclosure is not depicted or identified as a castle on the OS First Edition dating to 1884 and it seems that the tradition emerged in the last decade of the nineteenth century (Figure 7.2). The results of the current survey, however, strongly suggest that the twelfth-century castle was in fact constructed at Hailes Camp and that the traditional identification of Hailes Abbey as the castle site is erroneous. Rather, it



FIGURE 7.2: HAILES AS DEPICTED ON THE OS 25" FIRST EDITION MAP, PUBLISHED IN 1884. © CROWN COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHT 2015. ORDNANCE SURVEY (DIGIMAP LICENCE).

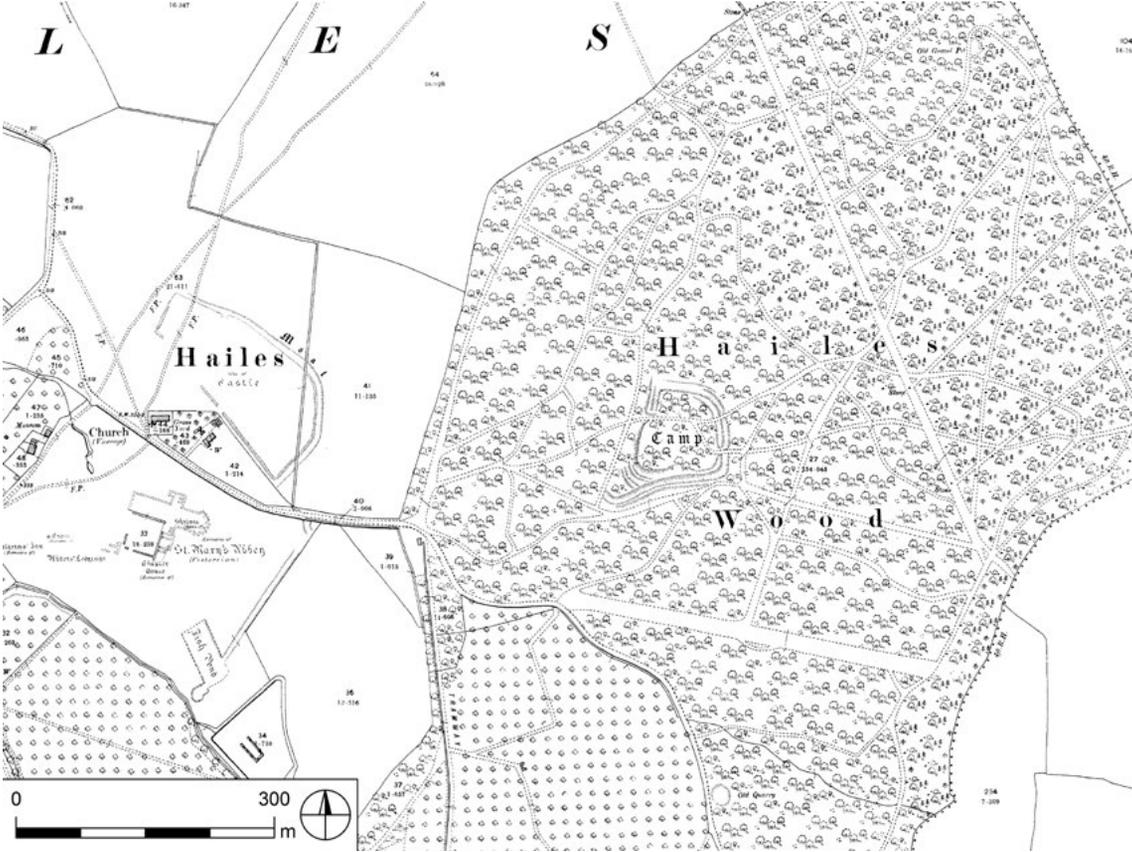


FIGURE 7.3: HAILES AS DEPICTED IN THE OS 25" FIRST EDITION, FIRST REVISION, PUBLISHED IN 1902. © CROWN COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHT 2015. ORDNANCE SURVEY (DIGIMAP LICENCE).

seems most likely that the D-shaped feature depicted to the north of the parish church at Hailes represents the remains of the monastic precinct boundary, a premise supported by the identification on aerial photographs of an abbey barn within the enclosure (HEA No: 328158). Sadly the mistaken premise that the castle and later abbey occupied the same site has been perpetuated throughout the twentieth century, and is even detailed in the Historic England scheduling for Hailes Abbey. Compounding the already confused picture, the scheduling also identifies the castle as a 'ringwork' despite the form and scale of the abbey enclosure bearing no resemblance to this monument type (HEA No: 328158). It is hoped that the evidence from the current survey will therefore clarify the sequence at Hailes, showing conclusively that Ralph of Worcester constructed his church and castle at distinct locations — his castle on the hill within the pre-existing enclosure of Hailes Camp, and his church in the valley where it was later incorporated into the complex of Hailes Abbey.

The abbey was constructed under the patronage of Richard, Earl of Cornwall, who had vowed to build a church after narrowly escaping shipwreck on his way home from Gascony in 1243; he had been granted the site by the king in 1245, monks entered the church in 1246 and it was dedicated in 1251 (Denholm-Young 1947, 50; Burton 1994, 150; Creighton 2015, 319). It is probable that Hailes was built specifically to act as a family mausoleum, as Richard, his second wife Sanchia of Provence and several other family members were all eventually buried at the site (Denholm-Young 1947, 112–13, 151–2). Hailes Abbey also grew to become a significant centre of pilgrimage throughout the medieval period, profiting especially from a supposed relic of Christ's blood donated by one of Richard's sons, Edmund, in 1270. Following the Dissolution of the monasteries the abbey and its precinct were used for a short period of time as a mansion for the Tracy family and then subsequently as the site of two farmsteads (Brown 2006). The monastic precinct has provided the focus for numerous programmes of archaeological research, including two series of excavations, as well as geophysical and topographic surveys (e.g. Bazeley 1899; Webster and Cherry 1974; 1976; Brown 2006; Lowerre 2012). These efforts undoubtedly provide a significant insight into the development and suppression of the abbey, but the focus of research on the thirteenth-century and later monastery has been at the expense of other elements of Hailes' historic landscape.

### Map Analysis

The earliest map evidence for Hailes Camp purports to come from a copy of a plan made in 1840 by Sir Henry Dryden (Figure 7.4) (Gloucestershire Archives: D9125/2/5420). Dryden's measured plan depicts an enclosure with a single rampart and ditch, and

also includes profiles of four sections of a rampart. Compared to the modern earthworks of Hailes Camp, it is immediately apparent that Dryden's plan bears at best only a very rough comparison and that the orientation of the sketch is incorrect. Although these errors may stem from oversights on the part of the surveyor, it is almost certain that Dryden has mistakenly surveyed the earthworks of the univallate hillfort known as Beckbury Camp, a monument located approximately 670m south-east of Hailes Camp, and similar in form. It is possible that Beckbury Camp was known during the nineteenth century as Hailes Camp, or alternatively Dryden may not have been aware of the monument in Hailes Wood, and instead surveyed the more visible and easily accessible hillfort.

Hailes Camp is next depicted on the OS First Edition 25" map, published in 1884. This shows a promontory enclosure with a single rampart and two entrances across its eastern edge. A double rampart is recorded along the southern side of the enclosure, and a second, smaller enclosure is recorded in the south-western corner. The site is recorded as being situated under woodland, with no evidence of the wall or rampart depicted on Dryden's plan of 1840. Hailes Camp is depicted in a similar form in the First Revision of the 20" map published in 1902. The principal difference is in the wider landscape, with the footprint of St Mary's Abbey recorded to the west, as well as a large sub-rectangular moated enclosure to the north of the abbey site and the parish church (see above). In the 1:2500 OS map published in 1975 a sub-dividing ditch has been added to the promontory enclosure (Figure 7.5). There is no record of the large D-shaped enclosure to the north of the abbey site recorded in this edition so it is probable that the feature had been mostly ploughed out by this time, although LiDAR analysis undertaken in support of this survey demonstrates that it has not been entirely destroyed (see below).

### Archaeo-Topographical Survey at Hailes Camp

Topographic survey identified numerous earthworks at Hailes Camp, representing several probable stages of construction (Figures 7.6 and 7.7). The promontory enclosure is defined by an outer ditch running from its north-western side, eastwards around the upslope side and around to the south-western corner (Figure 7.7: 'a'). This varies in depth from being no more than a terrace on its north-western side, to *c.* 0.8m in depth around parts of its northern and eastern sides. A small counterscarp bank was created on the outer side of the ditch along its northern edge, and a double ditch was constructed at some stage along the southern edge of the enclosure. A section of low internal bank was created along the eastern side of the enclosure, measuring up to 0.4m in height, with two small entrances present (Figure 7.7: 'b'). The overall enclosure is sub-divided by an internal ditch (Figure 7.7: 'c') measuring *c.* 7m wide and *c.* 0.6m

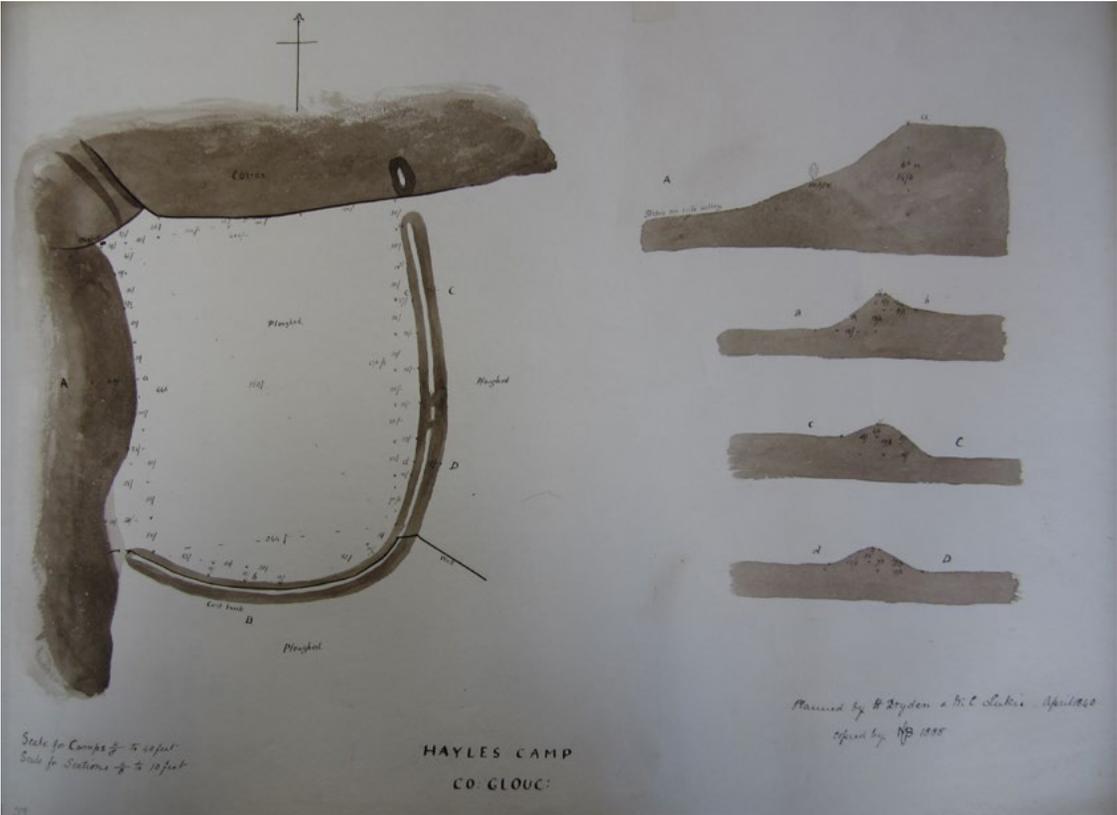


FIGURE 7.4: 'HAYLES CAMP' AS SURVEYED BY SIR HENRY DRYDEN IN 1840, FROM A COPY MADE IN 1888. THIS IS ALMOST CERTAINLY A PLAN OF BECKBURY CAMP, WHICH DRYDEN MISTOOK FOR HAILES CAMP. REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION OF THE GLOUCESTERSHIRE ARCHIVES, REF: D9125/2/5420



FIGURE 7.5: HAILES AS DEPICTED ON THE OS 1:2500 MAP, PUBLISHED IN 1975. © CROWN COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHT 2015. ORDNANCE SURVEY (DIGIMAP LICENCE).

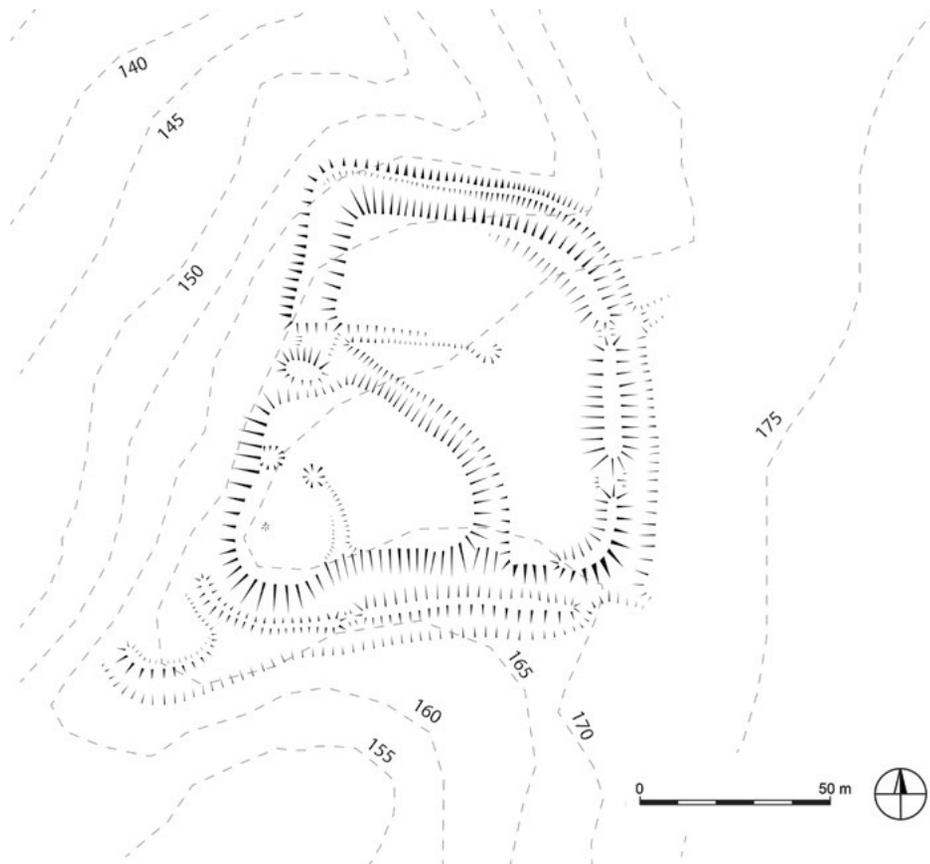


FIGURE 7.6: ARCHAEO-TOPOGRAPHICAL PLAN OF HAILES CAMP.

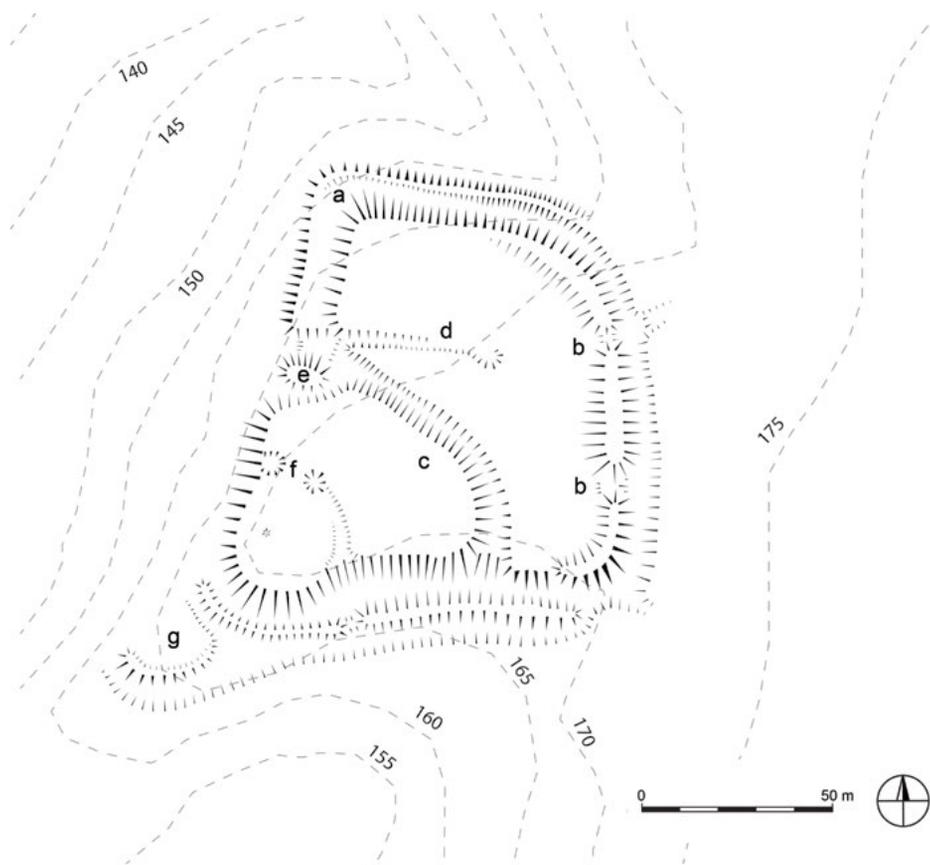


FIGURE 7.7: ANNOTATED SURVEY OF HAILES CAMP.

in depth with no evidence of a distinct crossing point. The outer section had no evidence of internal activity with the exception of a shallow ditch leading out of the western side of the enclosure, with a small, bulbous terminus at its eastern end (Figure 7.7: 'd'). This ditch leads out at a point where a small section of the inner sub-division of the enclosure has also been separated by a ditch, creating a small 'island' (Figure 7.7: 'e'). There was little evidence of internal activity in this inner section of the enclosure, apart from a further sub-division in its south-western corner formed by a shallow ditch, with two circular divisions at its northern end (Figure 7.7: 'f'). LiDAR Analysis (see below) highlights how this curving ditch defines a circular area c. 25m across. Inside this area was a small circular pit. To the south-west, along the increasingly steep downslope was a further small enclosed area (Figure 7.7: 'g') with a small internal bank. Its outer ditch adds to the overall complex to create a short triple-ditched section across this area of the enclosure.

#### LiDAR Analysis

The 1m resolution LiDAR hillshade model for Hailes provides a clear image of the earthworks at Hailes Camp, and highlights further features in the wider landscape.

The LiDAR plot for Hailes Camp corroborates the findings of the measured archeo-topographic survey, with a large sub-triangular enclosure within which a series of internal subdivisions are defined by banks and ditches, and with a circular platform towards the south-west corner of the complex (Figure 7.8).

In the wider landscape, LiDAR data are extremely informative and identify a number of subtle earthworks that are not visible in the field to the naked eye (Figures 7.9 and 7.10). Perhaps most importantly LiDAR demonstrates that in the valley floor, the ditch-formed D-shaped enclosure noted on the OS First Edition Revision of 1902 has not been entirely destroyed but survives as an extremely slight earthwork (Figure 7.10). LiDAR also shows an additional enclosure to the south-west of this feature, projecting further south-west than recorded on the OS First Revision and then turning a right angle to project south-east towards the parish church. The orientation of this feature and one extension of the D-shaped enclosure are mirrored by two further ditches located approximately 40m to the north-west. Together these features possibly represent the original routeway to the abbey, passing by the church, which may have acted as the chapel gatehouse. While this interpretation deviates from the plan of the precinct at Hailes produced

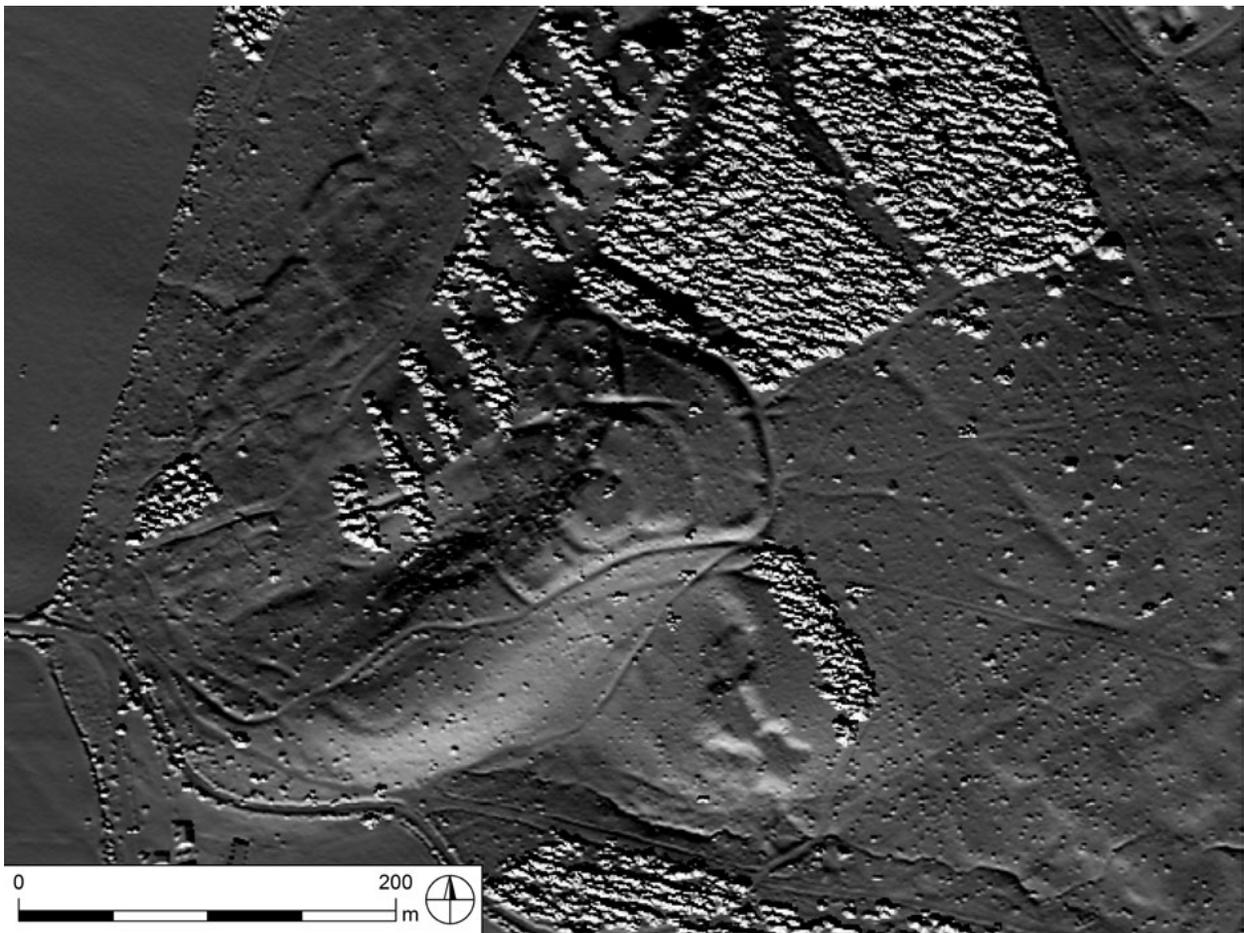


FIGURE 7.8: LiDAR HILLSHADE PLOT OF HAILES CAMP.

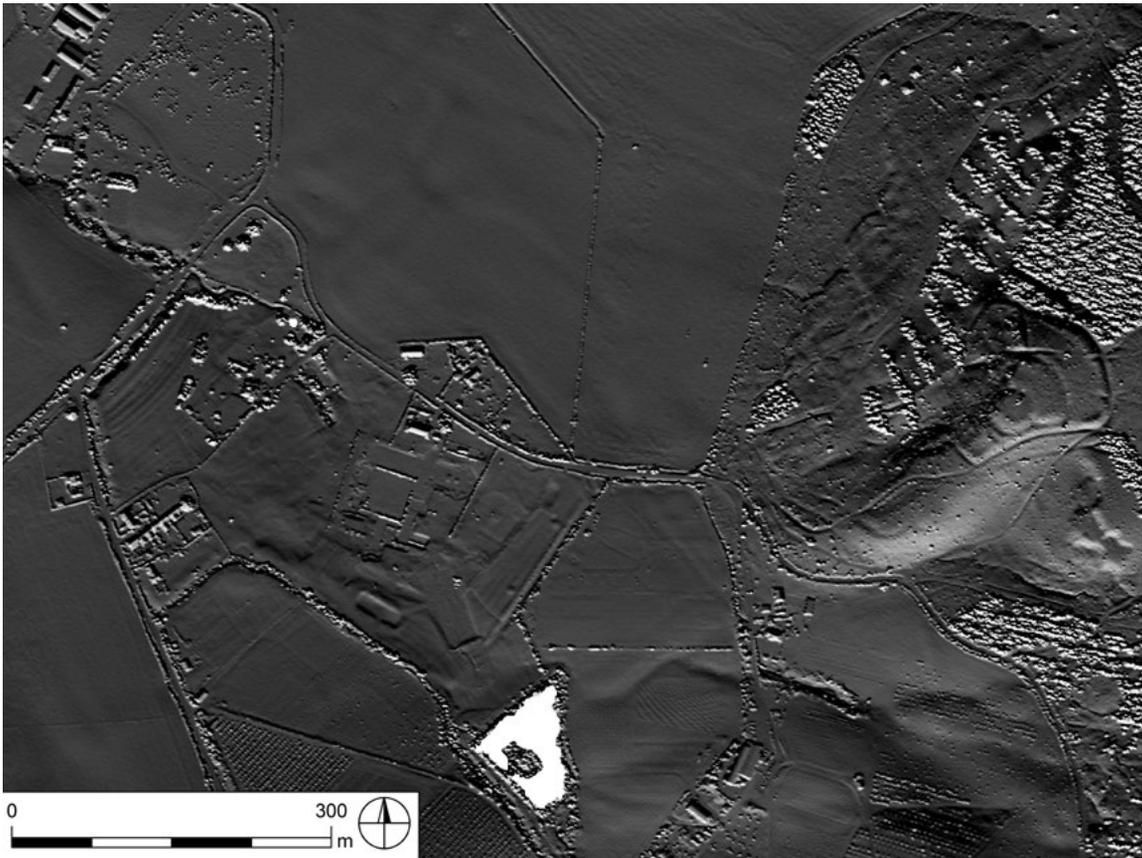


FIGURE 7.9: LIDAR HILLSHADE OF THE HAILES LANDSCAPE. HAILES ABBEY IS LOCATED IN THE CENTRE OF THE IMAGE, AND HAILES CAMP ON THE CENTRE RIGHT.

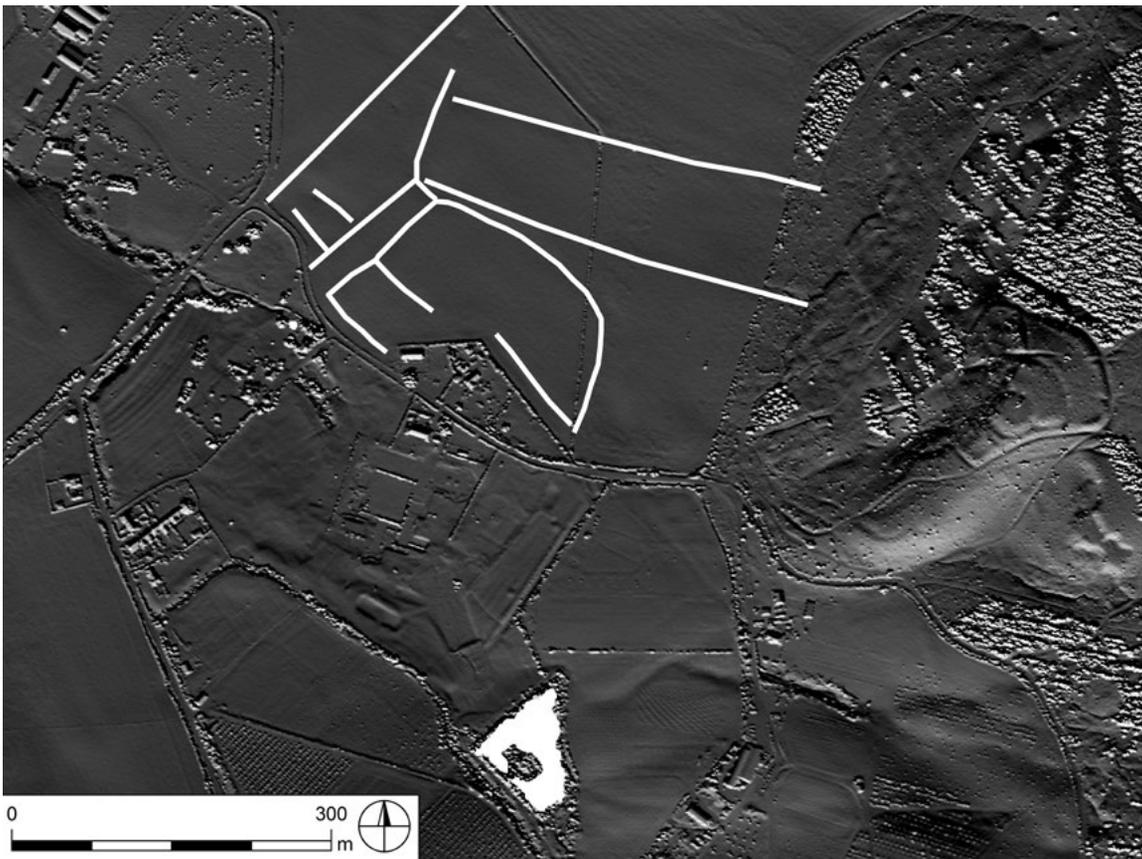


FIGURE 7.10: LIDAR HILLSHADE OF THE HAILES LANDSCAPE WITH INTERPRETATION.

by Brown (2006, figure 15) on the basis of early maps and earthwork survey, it is supported by the identification on aerial photographs of an abbey barn within the enclosure (HEA No: 328158). It is thus possible that in addition to the home grange identified to the north-west of the main abbey buildings in the area of the sheep house, the institution possessed further agricultural buildings located north of the twelfth-century church. The routeway to the church is interrupted by a south-west to north-east orientated anomaly which may represent another former trackway. To the north of the D-shaped enclosure two straight linear features orientated broadly east to west are probably the remains of former field boundaries, as is a south-west to north-east projecting feature in the north-west part of the field.

### Discussion

The evidence at Hailes Camp indicates several probable stages of construction, although few stratigraphical relationships can be assigned absolute dates. It is conjectured that the outer enclosure ditch is among the earliest stages of activity, although the partial bank constructed along its eastern side is probably a later addition. The whole enclosure was then subdivided, and then two elements of the inner circuit were subject to a further sub-division. It is not possible to associate any of these developments conclusively with a time phase, although it seems probable that they occurred at some stage between the Iron Age and the late medieval period. The innermost enclosures (Figure 7.7: 'f' and 'g') are arguably the most likely to have been constructed in the medieval period, but while 'f' superficially resembles a platform, it does not differ in ground level from its potential attached enclosure (Figure 7.7: 'c'). The type of fortification at Hailes is therefore hard to categorise, but it could conceivably be interpreted as a ringwork although it is not a well-defined or well-defended example. The two circular pits on the north side of 'f' may relate to the two sides of an entrance structure; feature 'e' is unusual and difficult to explain although it could conceivably represent a tower. Morphologically the site has some commonalities with the medieval castle at Richmond, at East Harptree, on the Mendip plateau in Somerset (Brown 2008). Written sources attest that at Richmond the castle was also the focus of conflict during the Anarchy, when it was held by William de Harptree in 1138 and taken by King Stephen, and like Hailes Camp it may also have been remodelled out of an existing triangular Iron-Age promontory fort. There is far less evidence of continued elite occupation during the medieval period at Hailes Camp, however, and a lack of earthworks relating to internal occupation. This dearth is in contrast to places such as Richmond, where there is evidence of possible mill complexes around the base of the promontory, although the interior has been heavily disturbed by later mining activity (Brown 2008).

Although the castle at Hailes is not mentioned in documentary sources after the twelfth century, it is possible that it was retained as an elite residence. Together with the church at Hailes, of unknown dedication, the castle appears to have formed a bipartite power base for Ralph of Worcester. Indeed, viewshed analysis shows that the church was clearly visible from the castle, and it may be significant given the nature of Worcester's seizure of land that on a clear day Winchcombe would also have been visible from the fortification (Figure 7.11). The view afforded from the castle may have also led it to be used as a point from which the Cistercian abbey of Hailes could be observed, as has been suggested at Newhall Tower in Cheshire, from which the Cistercian abbey of Combermere can clearly be seen (Fradley 2009). Based on the evidence available from the topographic analyses of Hailes Camp, however, there is little to indicate that it was ever occupied by substantial buildings or for any extended period of time. Rather from the thirteenth century the main settlement focus was that of Hailes Abbey, developed near the twelfth-century church of Ralph of Worcester and possibly incorporating it as a *Capella ante Portas*. The Cistercian house acted as a significant economic stimulus, and features visible on LiDAR data demonstrate that there was once more extensive settlement at Hailes which has since shifted or more likely contracted following the Dissolution. The substantial monastic *vallum* that was constructed by the monks in order to delineate their precinct acted as a red herring for Victorian antiquarians who believed that it was the remains of the Anarchy-period castle mentioned in the *Landboc* of Winchcombe Abbey. The enclosure has since been heavily denuded by ploughing, leaving the church on the northern fringes of the fragmentary ruins of the abbey (Figure 7.12).

### Conclusion

The earthwork analysis of Hailes Camp indicates that the monument was subject to several phases of development, although a lack of firmly datable archaeological evidence makes drawing firm conclusions problematic. It would appear, however, that the site was first constructed as a promontory fort probably during the Iron Age. Hailes Camp was then subject to further changes which may have occurred at any point between the late prehistoric and the post-medieval period. It seems probable, though, that at least one redevelopment of the site can be associated with the construction of a fortification by Ralph of Worcester in the middle of the twelfth century, and it is suggested that this may include the innermost enclosure recorded in this survey. The form of these features at Hailes Camp is closely comparable with contemporary fortifications such as the castle at East Harptree, Somerset, which further supports a twelfth-century origin for at least some elements of the existing monument. There is little evidence of sustained occupation at Hailes Camp; rather, together with the contemporary church constructed

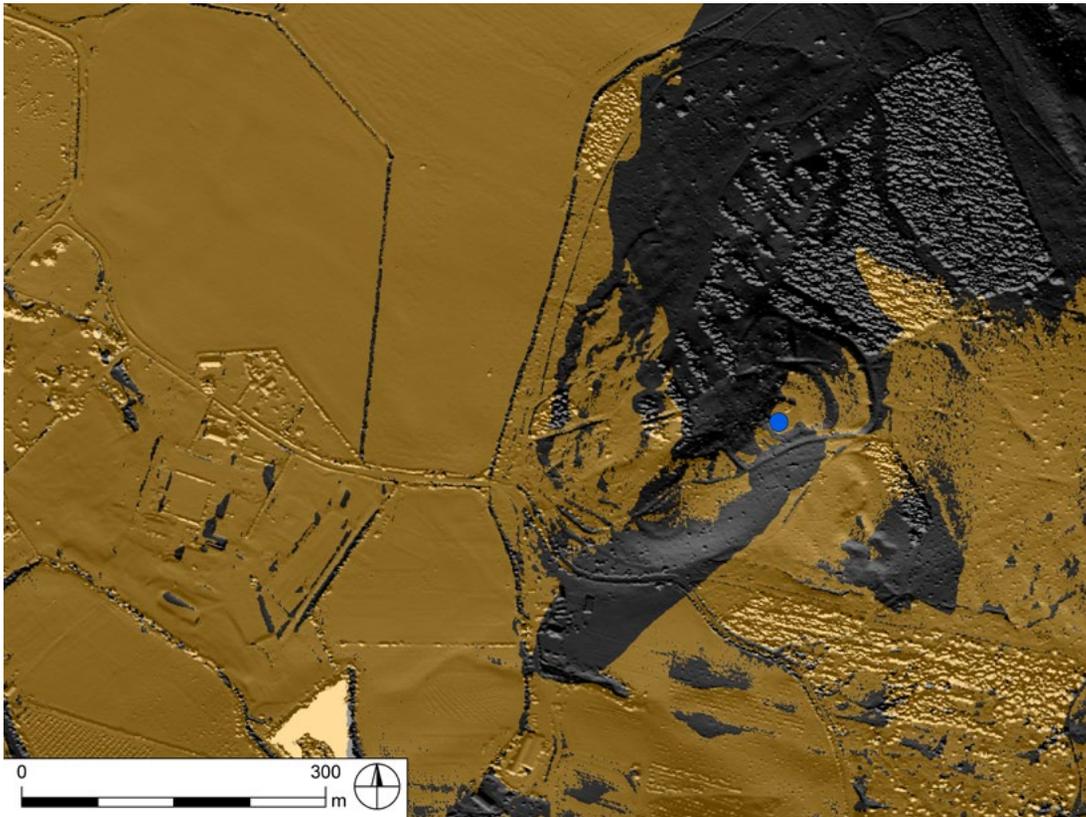


FIGURE 7.11: VIEWSHED ANALYSIS OF HAILES CAMP. LIGHT SHADING ILLUSTRATES THE AREA VISIBLE FROM HAILES CAMP (DOT) FROM AN ELEVATION OF 2M (JUST ABOVE STANDING HEIGHT). IT IS PERHAPS SIGNIFICANT THAT THE VIEWS ARE MOST EXTENSIVE TO THE SOUTH AND WEST, TOWARDS WINCHCOMBE.



FIGURE 7.12: VIEW FROM THE WEST OF THE PARISH CHURCH OF HAILES, ORIGINALLY CONSTRUCTED BY RALPH OF WORCESTER DURING THE TWELFTH CENTURY. THE FIELD TO THE LEFT OF THE PICTURE IS WHERE THE D-SHAPED ENCLOSURE, MOST LIKELY THE REMAINS OF THE MONASTIC VALLUM OF HAILES ABBEY, IS DEPICTED ON THE OS MAP OF 1902.

in the valley bottom it most likely formed a short-lived seigneurial power base for Ralph of Worcester. Taking advantage of the uncertain political and tenorial conditions which characterised the Anarchy, Worcester may have illegally seized land from Winchcombe Abbey in order to establish his bipartite power centre. The focus of secular and religious power at Hailes was transformed in the middle of the thirteenth century, however, when

Richard, Earl of Cornwall established a Cistercian abbey. The abbey acted as a considerable economic stimulus for Hailes, and its role as an important site of pilgrimage led to an expansion of settlement beyond the monastery walls. Following the Dissolution the settlement at Hailes appears to have contracted, and the abbey remains were used for a short time as a private house and later as farm buildings.

## Chapter 8

# Hamstead Marshall, Castle I, Berkshire

Duncan Wright, Michael Fradley and Oliver Creighton

### Abstract

*Earthworks located in the eastern part of Hamstead Marshall Park, West Berkshire, were the subject of a geophysical and topographic archaeological investigation. The survey area included the monument known as Castle I (two further castles are located in the parish) and parkland to the south. The methodology comprised an analytical survey of the archaeological earthwork remains, in addition to magnetometer and resistivity investigation. Geophysical survey identified several features visible as earthworks, in addition to possible pre-castle features. The earthwork survey revealed that the character of the large sub-circular earthwork is consistent with the existing interpretation of the monument as the remains of a siege castle. It may represent an unfinished work, as previously believed, but this survey raises a second possibility that it was built as a hybrid motte and bailey/ringwork form. The earthwork may have been associated with buildings or structures but it seems to have been occupied only briefly, supporting the idea that it originated as a siegework, perhaps dating to 1152–53, when King Stephen campaigned in the area. It is most likely that the castle was raised in order to besiege the medieval manorial centre located in the west of Hamstead Marshall Park (Castles II and III), the earthworks of which may represent the 'lost' castle of Newbury recorded by written sources. A post-medieval sham castle was later raised to the south-east of the site.*

### Introduction

In the eastern part of Hamstead Marshall Park, West Berkshire, approximately 340m north of the property known as Dower House, castle earthworks are located on the northern end of a prominent gravel-capped spur in parkland overlooking the valley of the River Kennet (centred SU 42986661) (Figures 8.1 and 8.2). The monument and surrounding landscape were subject to an archaeological survey undertaken in two phases, between 24 and 26 November 2013, and between 10 and 12 October 2014 (Figure 8.3). The earthworks are classified as a Scheduled Monument (National Monument No: 19011) but should not be confused with the two motte and bailey castles and associated features also located within the grounds of Hamstead Marshall Park, approximately 800m to the west (centred SU 42136686 and SU 42006695) (National Monument No: 19010) (Figure 8.1). In 1932 Nowell Myres developed

a numbering system in order to distinguish between the three monuments, labelling the site currently under investigation as Castle I, and the two adjacent motte and baileys near the parish church as Castle II and Castle III (Myres 1932). Also located in close proximity to the site, various sections of the park pale are scheduled (National Monument No: 19012). Immediately west of the park and approximately 1.3km south-west of the site, Roman pottery kilns have been subject to excavation but are not scheduled (Connah 1964).

Castle I lies between 100m and 105m above OD and possesses extensive views to the north, west and east. To the south, the gravel spur on which the site is located gradually rises to just about 110m above OD where a linear feature follows the crest of the hill. This linear bank has traditionally been interpreted as a park pale, although earthwork evidence presented by the current survey challenges this assumption (see below). The upland spur is formed by the Paleocene clays, silts and sands of the Lambeth Group with occasional caps of flint. Immediately north of the site the landscape drops sharply down to Quaternary peat deposits surrounding the River Kennet. The rest of Hamstead Marshall Park is largely characterised by a combination of Paleocene Clays and London Clay of the Eocene epoch.

### Historical and Archaeological Background

Domesday Book records that before the Conquest the manor of Hamstead was a possession of Edward the Confessor; in 1086 it was held by Hugo the Steersman from the king and was valued at £4 (*Domesday Book, Berkshire*, ed. Morgan 1979, 58,1). As such, it probably formed part of a pre-Conquest royal estate — an administrative area with a centre likely located on Kintbury, 4km to the west of the site. Kintbury is likely to have been an important regional centre from at least the early tenth century when land was granted to the church by Wulfhere (*Cartularium Saxonicum II*, de Gray Birch 1885, 366; VCH Berks. IV 1924, 183). The settlement focus in the parish of Hamstead Marshall during the medieval period appears to have been around 900m west of the site, to the north-east of St Mary's church (Listed Building No: 1117223), the built fabric of which is largely of fourteenth-century date, although earlier origins are attested by a twelfth-century doorway (Clarke and Colvin 1952–3, 88). Sandwiched between the church and the two motte and baileys of Castles II and III lie the earthwork remains of fishponds and the scarps

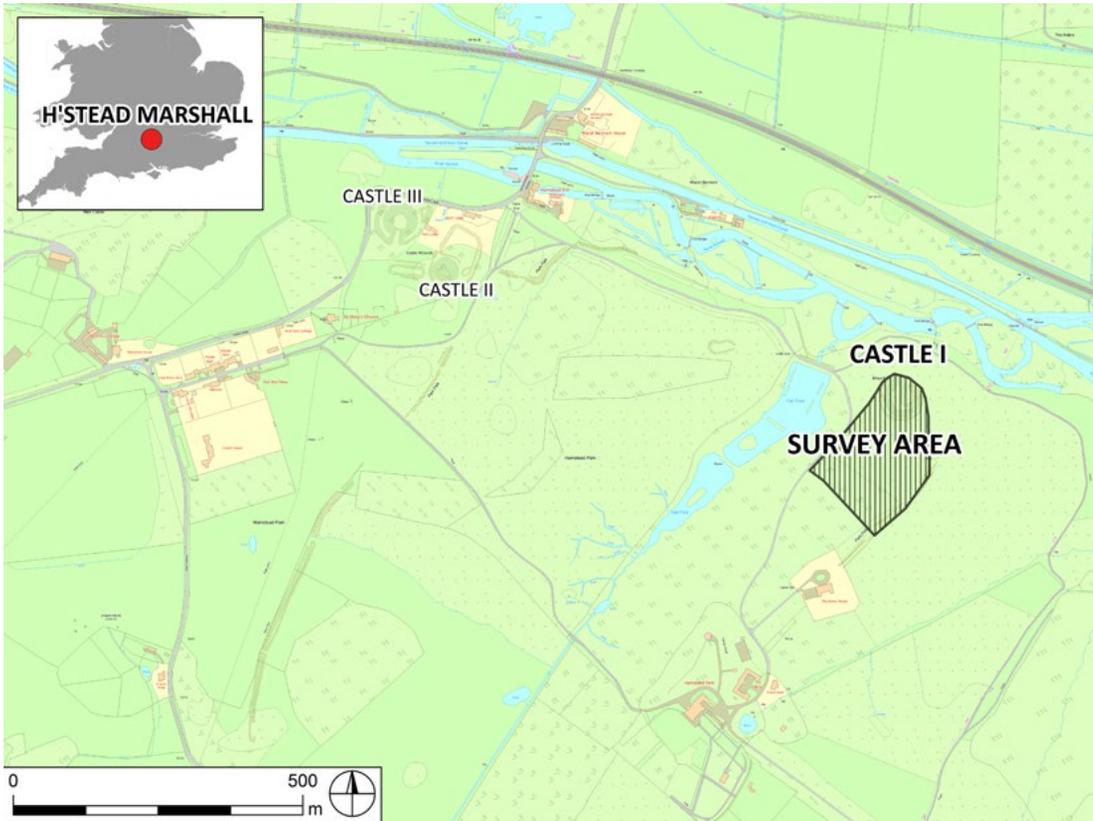


FIGURE 8.1: THE LOCATION OF THE SURVEYED SITE, HAMSTEAD MARSHALL CASTLE, I IN SOUTHERN BRITAIN (INSET) AND IN HAMSTEAD MARSHALL PARK. NOTE THE LOCATION OF CASTLE II AND III APPROXIMATELY 800M TO THE WEST. © CROWN COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHT 2015. ORDNANCE SURVEY (DIGIMAP LICENCE).

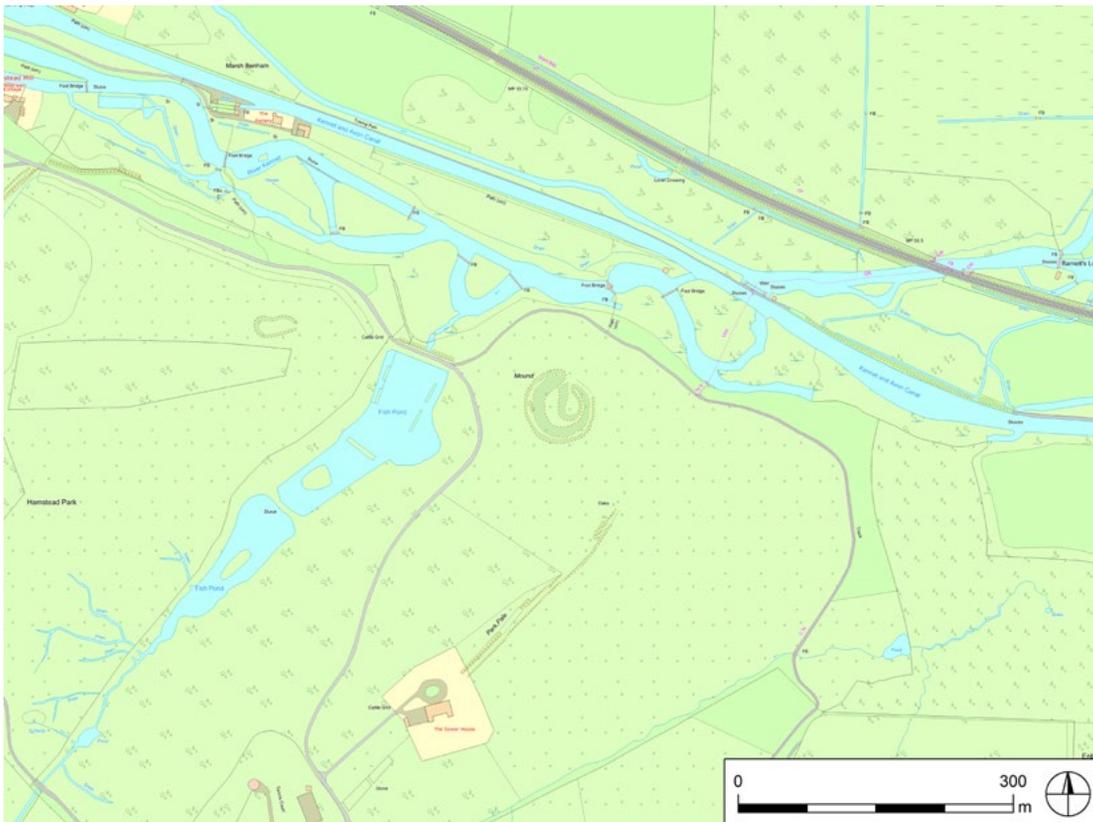


FIGURE 8.2: THE SITE OF CASTLE I, HAMSTEAD MARSHALL, IN THE LOCAL LANDSCAPE. THE DOWER HOUSE IS LOCATED APPROXIMATELY 340M TO THE SOUTH. © CROWN COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHT 2015. ORDNANCE SURVEY (DIGIMAP LICENCE).



FIGURE 8.3: VIEW OF THE SURVEYED SITE OF HAMSTEAD MARSHALL CASTLE I, LOOKING NORTH.

and platforms of a deserted medieval settlement. The entire complex was the subject of a detailed topographic survey by the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England (RCHME) in 1986 (Bonney and Dunn 1989). Targeting areas of high archaeological potential identified by topographic survey, English Heritage subsequently carried out earth resistance survey over parts of the complex in 1996 (English Heritage 1996).

The RCHME earthwork survey demonstrated that the more south-easterly motte (Castle II) has a diameter of around 50m and stands at a height of 4.7m (Figures 8.4 and 8.5). It is surrounded by a 2m deep ditch and has a roughly square bailey which adjoins the ditch to the north-east. The bailey is orientated north-east to south-west, has internal dimensions of 48m by 52m, and is defined by a bank with a prominent outer scarp. A linear bank and ditch, immediately to the east of the bailey, appears unrelated to either the monument or to the park pale which runs to the east, and is instead likely associated with a formal approach to the late seventeenth-century mansion house, since destroyed, which lay on the plateau to the south-west (Bonney and Dunn 1989, 176). Located 115m to the north-west and on an adjacent low spur which overlooks the valley of the Kennet the second motte (Castle III) is formed by a steep-sided circular earthwork 62m in diameter, rising to a flat summit 6.8m in height. The southern half of the mound is encompassed by a substantial ditch 10m wide and around 2.8m deep, crossed at the most southerly point by a causewayed ramp

which appears to have been inserted into the pre-existing motte and ditch. A small bailey partly obscured by the modern road projects to the north of the monument. To the west of the motte a second, larger and better-preserved bailey earthwork can be traced, surviving between 1.5m and 2m in height and enclosing an area of some 0.65ha (Bonney and Dunn 1989, 177–8). Platforms and hollows within the bailey denote the site of former buildings, features which were also detected by the earth resistance survey (English Heritage 1996).

In the narrow valley between the two spurs upon which Castles II and III are situated a spring-fed, rectangular pond measuring 70m by 20m and roughly 1.5m deep was also identified by the topographic survey. Immediately to the north a similar hollow, measuring 32m by 14m and 0.5m deep, may also represent another pond. It is likely that these fishponds were associated with the high-status residence represented by the castles. Bordering the fishponds to the south is a series of low banks and scarps believed to be the remains of a small deserted settlement (Bonney and Dunn 1989). In addition to delineating the hollow way and building platforms which are also visible as earthworks, the English Heritage earth resistance survey located a series of discrete pit-type anomalies which probably represent the remains of later tree planting. As part of the same survey, garden features in the area of the seventeenth-century mansion house were also identified (English Heritage 1996).

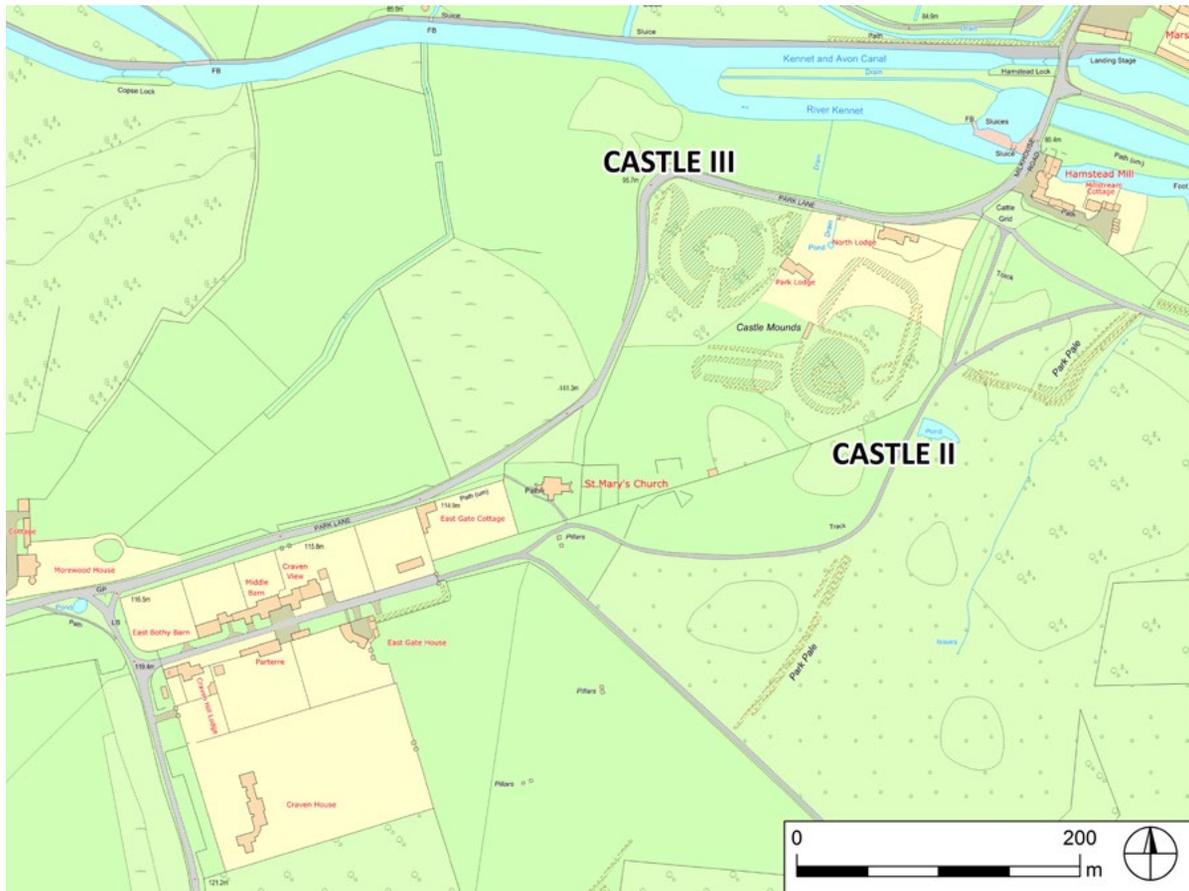


FIGURE 8.4: CASTLES II AND III AND THE PARISH CHURCH OF HAMSTEAD MARSHALL, ST MARY'S. BETWEEN THE CHURCH AND MOTTE-AND-BAILEY MONUMENTS ARE EARTHWORKS THOUGHT TO REPRESENT THE MEDIEVAL SETTLEMENT FOCUS OF THE AREA. © CROWN COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHT 2015. ORDNANCE SURVEY (DIGIMAP LICENCE).



FIGURE 8.5: HAMSTEAD MARSHALL CASTLE II, LOOKING NORTH. THE SMALLER OF THE TWO MOTTE AND BAILEYS OF THE COMPLEX, IT IS LIKELY THAT THE MONUMENT WAS SUPERSEDED BY THE MORE EXTENSIVE CASTLE III.

The impressive earthworks to the north-east of St Mary's church almost certainly represent the medieval settlement focus of Hamstead Marshall, although with regard to the motte and bailey sites, there are no known documentary references to either foundation. Following its listing in Domesday Book, Hamstead next appears in written sources during 1218 when William Marshal is recorded as witnessing Letters Patent under Henry III (VCH Berks. IV 1924, 179). While this reference is the first association of the Marshal family with *Hamstead* it is likely that the family held the manor for some time before the early thirteenth century, as its possession appears to have been linked with the royal office of marshal (VCH Berks. IV 1924, 179). Following the recorded levelling of houses and gardens at Hamstead Marshall in 1232 as punishment for Richard Marshal's rebellion, Gilbert Marshal is accredited with a major rebuilding programme between 1235 and 1241 (VCH Berks. IV 1924, 180). Led by the documentary evidence, Myres (1932, 124) associated the relocation of manorial focus from Castle II to Castle III with this phase of Gilbert Marshal's lordship, despite the sources making no mention of either fortification. This interpretation is problematic, however, most notably as Myres was not aware of the bailey of Castle III, and believed it to comprise only a simple motte. As motte and bailey castles are largely a product of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Myres' assertion that Castle III was constructed during the thirteenth century is probably erroneous (Bonney and Dunn 1989, 180–1).

An alternative context for the origin of either or both Castles II and III is the reign of King Stephen. During the twelfth century Hamstead Marshall was located within a politically disputed territory which extended through much of Wiltshire, Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire. Located above the Kennet valley and close to the medieval routeway linking London and the west of England (the modern A4), the strategic position of Castles II and III would have been particularly well suited for monitoring east-west movement via both road and river. Despite there being no reference to a castle at Hamstead Marshall during the twelfth century, Tony Higgot (1998) has suggested that Newbury Castle may reasonably be associated with the remains at Hamstead Marshall. Citing the absence of evidence associating 'Newbury Castle' to a supposed wharf-side location in the town (see below), Higgot has instead argued that the siege of 1152–53 'at Newbury' found in the epic poem of '*L'Histoire de Guillaume le Marechal*' (the History of William Marshal) in fact describes the juxtaposition of castles at Hamstead Marshall — with the smaller of the motte and bailey castles close to St Mary's church (Castle II) likely besieged by the earthworks of Castle I (Higgot 1998, 28–9).

The poem tells of how 'the King besieged Newbury at the head of a mighty force of men' after the constable refused to deliver it over to him; after an attempted assault on the castle Stephen agreed to a truce in order to communicate with the garrison's lord, John Marshal. The truce was

subsequently extended to allow the pro-Angevin forces to seek Matilda's counsel but only after Stephen received Marshal's second son William, and the hero around which the poem revolves, as a hostage. The story goes on to detail how, when the castle was re-supplied in contravention of the truce, Stephen's attempts to execute the boy were thwarted by William's childish exploits. When the king accompanies the young Marshal to the place of execution, for example, the boy seeing the Earl of Arundel's javelin asks if he can play with it. The innocent behaviour of the boy compels Stephen to spare William, a pattern which is repeated when the king also attempts to execute him by hurling him from a stone-throwing siege engine (*History of William Marshal*, ed. Holden *et al.* 2002, Vol I 23–35; see also Crouch 1990, 16–18).

*L'Histoire de Guillaume le Marechal* is not a contemporary account, however, only being commissioned on the death of William Marshal in 1219, and likely completed shortly after 1226. The central aim of the poem is to celebrate the life and achievements of William Marshal, and the repeated sparing of William at the Newbury siege is at least to some extent a literary device. While details provided of specific events cannot therefore be accepted uncritically, the text is based on the recollections of John of Earley, Marshal's squire from 1188 and other primary accounts, and represents an invaluable source for the period (*History of William Marshal*, ed. Holden *et al.* 2002, Vol I, v). Despite the clearly partisan and often whimsical account of the siege in *L'Histoire de Guillaume le Marechal*, it is therefore likely that the underlying story has at least some basis in historical reality and that royal forces did indeed besiege a garrison at 'Newbury'. It is impossible to be certain whether the defences at Hamstead Marshall are those mentioned in the poem, but the idea is given further support by the apparent geographical confusion between sites provided by even contemporary authors during the twelfth century. The place of authorship of *L'Histoire de Guillaume le Marechal* is uncertain but it is not implausible that when describing the events at 'Newbury' the compiler, writing in the thirteenth century and potentially at some distance to the location depicted, is in fact describing the castles at Hamstead Marshall. The only contemporary chronicler to mention the siege is Henry of Huntingdon, who provides the bare fact that 'In the same year [1152] the king besieged and attacked the castle of Newbury, which is not far from Winchester, and eventually took it by assault' (*Henry of Huntingdon*, ed. Greenway 1996, 759). It should be noted that neither account of the siege mentions the construction of siege castles.

The interpretation of Castle I as a siegework was also favoured by the RCHME investigators, who surveyed the site in 1989 (Bonney and Dunn 1989, 178). The surveyors produced a hachured plan of visible earthworks, together with a description, and suggested that it is possible to see how the monument was constructed, arguing that material from the ditch was dumped upon and within a marking-out bank in order to raise the mound. The team further contended

that this work was abandoned before completion, citing that the substantial ditch extends only around the north-western portion of the defensive circuit. This evidence, together with the peripheral location of Castle I well away from the church and village, led the investigators to propose that the site is an incomplete siegework rather than an unfinished attempt to re-site an existing manorial centre (Bonney and Dunn 1989, 178–80). Until the present survey, the investigation by the RCHME was the only significant archaeological fieldwork carried out at the site, although the monument has also been located on aerial photographs by English Heritage (now Historic England) as part of the National Mapping Programme.

### Map Analysis

A survey of 1775 commissioned by the Craven family and undertaken by Matthias Baker depicts the site (Castle I)

as a mound, topped by numerous trees (*Survey and Map by Matthias Baker 1775*) (Figure 8.6). A structure is also located south of the castle along a crest on the interior of the linear feature traditionally dubbed the park pale. This feature is later labelled as ‘Sham Castle’ on the OS First Edition 25” (see below). Further west on Baker’s survey, Castle II and III are depicted in similar fashion to Castle I. The 1840 Tithe Map for Hamstead Marshall does not illustrate Castle I, and indeed the eastern part of the estate appears generally less well recorded than further west (Figure 8.7). The site and the surrounding landscape are simply recorded as Hamstead Park on the apportionment, and listed under ownership of Craven the Dowager. Castle II and III are depicted on the Tithe Map, however, and both monuments are named ‘The Mount’ in the award, with the land again owned by the Craven family. On the OS First Edition 25” published in 1880 the site is labelled as ‘Barrow’ and is depicted as a circular enclosure with



FIGURE 8.6: MATTHIAS BAKER’S 1775 MAP OF HAMSTEAD MARSHALL. THE SITE IS DENOTED AS A TREE-COVERED MOUND, LOCATED TO THE RIGHT OF THE PARK LAKE AND BELOW THE RIVER IN THE UPPER RIGHT OF THE IMAGE. CASTLES II AND III ARE ALSO SHOWN AS TREE-COVERED MOUNDS. TO THE SOUTH OF THE SITE A STRUCTURE DEPICTED IN RED INK IS ON THE SAME SITE AS A FEATURE LABELLED ‘SHAM CASTLE’ ON THE OS FIRST EDITION 25”. SURVEY AND MAP BY MATTHIAS BAKER 1775. REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION OF BERKSHIRE RECORDS OFFICE



FIGURE 8.7: 1840 TITHE MAP SHOWING THE HAMSTEAD MARSHALL ESTATE. ALTHOUGH CASTLE II AND III ARE BOTH DESCRIBED AS THE 'THE MOUNT', CASTLE I IS NOT DETAILED AND IS ASSESSED ONLY AS PART OF HAMSTEAD MARSHALL PARK. HAMSTEAD MARSHALL TITHE MAP, BRO. V. REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION OF BERKSHIRE RECORDS OFFICE

a raised platform extending from a break in the northern side into the interior. A structure located 120m south of the castle recorded in apparently the same location as that illustrated on Matthias Baker's map is described as 'Sham Castle' (Figure 8.8). The close association between the 'Sham Castle' and the castle earthworks — apparently misidentified as a barrow — is peculiar, but suggests that the monument may have at least attracted intellectual curiosity on the estate. The OS First Edition 25" Revision of 1899 comprises a similar depiction, although the earthwork is now labelled as 'Tumulus' rather than 'Barrow'. The site is mapped in a similar manner until the 1960s when a more accurate representation, including the break in the ditch-line along the western side of the monument, is noted and when it is also described as a 'Mound' rather than a 'Tumulus' (Figure 8.9). The 'Sham Castle' is again illustrated, although it now appears to straddle the linear bank often interpreted as the park pale and is not labelled. Castle I was also the subject of an early photograph by Henry Taunt, dating to either the late nineteenth or early twentieth century, and is shown featuring far less vegetation and tree cover compared to the present day (HEA No: CC97/02764) (Figure 8.10).

#### Earthwork Description and Interpretation

The surveyed earthwork complex at Hamstead Marshall (Castle I) consists principally of a large sub-circular

enclosure, with a number of additional earthwork features recorded to the south and east (Figure 8.11). As the monument is situated in an area of open parkland there was no clearly defined area that could be surveyed comprehensively, and the recorded zone represents only a small proportion of this landscape. Geologically the erosion of the clay-with-flint capping across the steep-sided slopes of this ridge appears to produce linear features that are difficult to differentiate from earthworks of archaeological origin, complicating survey in this area. The archaeo-topographical survey of the castle itself was, however, systematic and covered the whole enclosure.

The sub-circular enclosure, commonly accepted as a medieval castle, measures *c.* 75m in diameter including its outer ditch. The interior of the enclosure is made up of a raised western half, measuring up to 3m higher at its highest point than the lower ground of the interior of the eastern half of the enclosure. The raised western section descends and narrows at its southern end to form an enclosing bank that defines the eastern part of the enclosure that continues around to the north-east side, by which point the bank is only *c.* 5m wide and 0.4m high. There is a small break in the bank on the north-eastern side of this enclosing earthwork measuring 3m wide and a wider gap between the end of the bank and the beginning of the outer ditch on the northern side of the

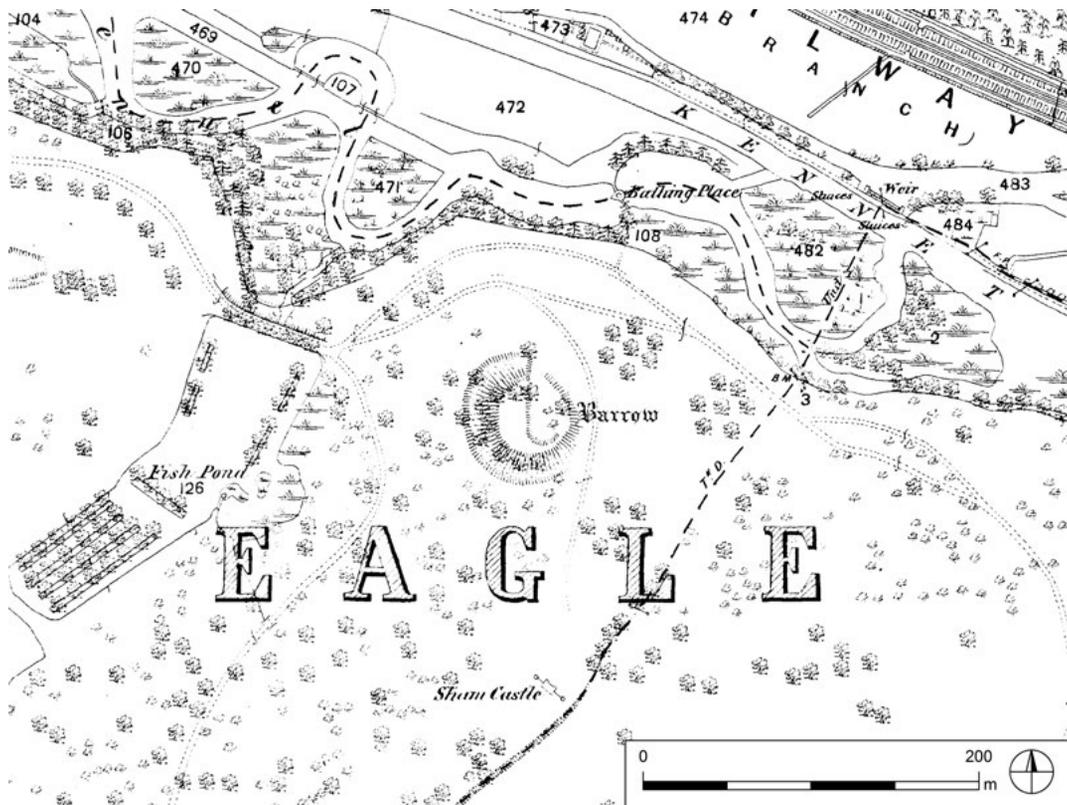


FIGURE 8.8: OS FIRST EDITION 25", PUBLISHED IN 1880. THE CASTLE EARTHWORKS ARE IDENTIFIED INCORRECTLY AS A 'BARROW'. THE STRUCTURE SOUTH OF THE SITE ALSO DEPICTED ON MATTHIAS BAKER'S SURVEY IS NAMED 'SHAM CASTLE'. EARTHWORKS LIKELY RELATING TO THE FEATURE WERE ALSO IDENTIFIED BY THE PRESENT SURVEY. © CROWN COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHT 2015. ORDNANCE SURVEY (DIGIMAP LICENCE).

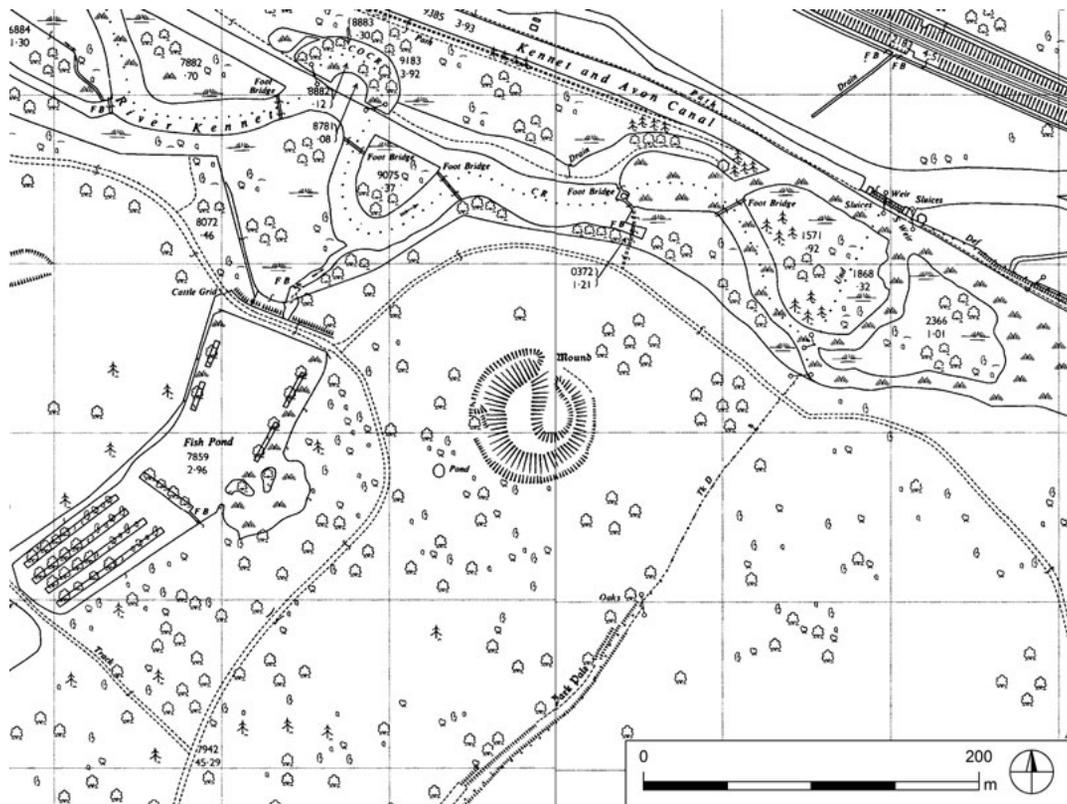


FIGURE 8.9: OS 25" MAP FROM 1969 SHOWING THE SITE, NOW LABELLED AS 'MOUND'. THE 'SHAM CASTLE' IS NOW DEPICTED STRADDLING THE LINEAR BANK TRADITIONALLY INTERPRETED AS THE PARK PALE RATHER THAN LYING JUST WITHIN ITS INTERIOR. © CROWN COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHT 2015. ORDNANCE SURVEY (DIGIMAP LICENCE).



FIGURE 8.10: EARLY PHOTOGRAPH OF CASTLE I, HAMSTEAD MARSHALL, LOOKING EAST. THE EARTHWORKS NOW FEATURE MUCH MORE EXTENSIVE TREE COVER (EHA No: CC97/02764). © ENGLISH HERITAGE ARCHIVE.

enclosure measuring 8m wide (Figure 8.11: ‘a’), either of which could represent entrances into the enclosure. On the raised, western side of the enclosure other more subtle features are visible. At its northern end is located a raised, sub-rectangular platform (Figure 8.11: ‘b’) measuring 8m by 9m and 0.2m in height, with evidence of erosion on its north-western side. Immediately south was a series of low outer terraces. On the southern bank of the enclosure are five small terraced areas on the upper edge of the slope. There are apparently no features in the lower eastern portion of the enclosure, where the ground slopes gently down toward the north.

On the southern and eastern sides of the enclosure the outer ditch is a relatively shallow feature measuring between 0.3m and 1m deep and *c.* 9m wide. On the north-western side of the enclosure a discrete and clearly defined deeper ditch has been dug that measured up to 12m wide and 3m in depth, and corresponds with the highest section of the adjacent raised western side of the enclosure’s interior, suggesting that the ditch spoil may have been used to create the raised western interior. On the north-eastern side of the enclosure there is no evidence of

an outer ditch, which ends abruptly to the west and fades out to the south-east. To the east of the enclosure is a series of small arching earthworks that are likely to be tree throws. Similarly the short linear features seen in this area may be linked to the hillslope erosion of the local drift geology, although interspersed with these are terraced platforms (Figure 8.11: ‘c’). At around 70m to the south-east of the enclosure is a long linear feature (Figure 8.11: ‘d’) formed in places by a bank or a south-east facing scarp, recorded for a distance of 140m and orientated north-east–south-west. To the west of this linear feature is a narrow ditch (Figure 8.11: ‘e’) measuring 2m wide and 0.3m deep, orientated south-east–north-west and recorded for a distance of 90m. A number of scarps led off from this feature, but these may be natural erosion features. To the south of this is an amorphous area of terraced cuts (Figure 8.11: ‘f’) that stands adjacent to a small feature recorded as a ‘Sham Castle’ on the OS First Edition 25” map (see above).

The large-sub-circular enclosure of Castle I could convincingly be interpreted as a medieval castle earthwork, although this survey raises the possibility

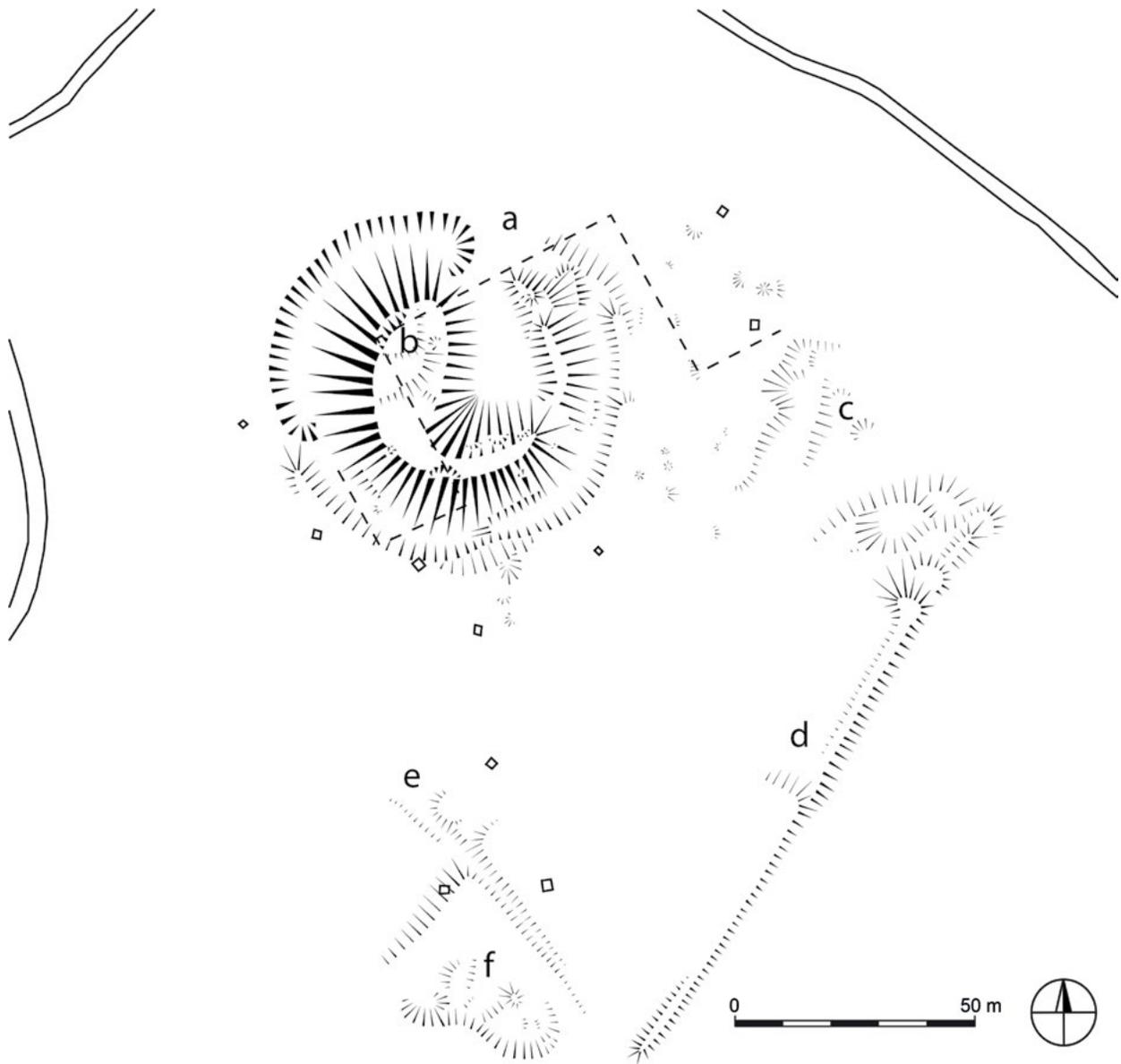


FIGURE 8.11: ANNOTATED EARTHWORK PLAN OF CASTLE I, HAMSTEAD MARSHALL.

that it might be complete in form rather than an 'unfinished' monument. There is a chance that rather than an obvious motte and bailey or ringwork form, Hamstead Marshall Castle I represents a combination of the two, with a ringwork defined on its eastern side, and the bank leading directly up on the southern side to a raised motte-like platform to the west. Overall there is limited evidence of earthworks relating to any form of structures, suggesting that occupation inside the enclosure was not on any extensive scale, or for a great duration. Additionally, the large, discrete ditch-cut on the north-western side of the enclosure, which as was noted above corresponds with the raised platform, may indicate that this was a second phase of construction, and the enclosure may have originally been built as a simple ringwork, or else originated as a pre-castle monument.

The large number of tree-throw earthworks in and around the enclosure corresponds with the parkland use of this landscape. The long linear feature (Figure 8.11: 'd') to the south-east of the enclosure is commonly represented as a park pale, although the evidence suggests that it is unlikely to have functioned as such, as the bank, where it exists, is a very small feature and what evidence there was of a ditch was external, rather than internal as would be expected of a park pale. The earthwork complex (Figure 8.11: 'f') adjacent to the 'Sham Castle' feature is also of some interest, not least as it suggests that there was an appreciation of the castle site as the area was landscaped during the post-medieval period. There is currently no evidence of what this complex was formed from or how it was utilized, but it offers an interesting area of future research.

**Geophysical Survey Results and Interpretation**

**Magnetometry**

The magnetometer survey identified several anomalies which are likely indicative of archaeological features (Figures 8.12 and 8.13). The most easily identifiable anomalies are the ditch (anomaly I) and exterior bank (anomaly II) of the monument which both extend for around 55m on the east side of the earthwork only. The eastern and southern sections of the ditch and outer bank are easily distinguished, but the western part of the circuit is not visible likely due to the high magnetic response caused by ferrous material surrounding standing trees. Anomaly III is a further prominent feature, located in the northernmost part of the survey area. A slightly curving anomaly, around 20m in length, equates with the visible earthwork (feature ‘b’) of the castle mound. Anomaly IV extends approximately 45m from the eastern edge of the survey into the interior of the monument, where it corresponds with an earthwork bank. It is paralleled for 20m of its eastern extent by anomaly V, although no part of the feature is visible as an earthwork. The character of anomaly IV and V is difficult to define, but it is possible that they represent features that pre-date castle construction, conceivably field boundaries.

Further south, anomaly VI comprises a linear feature around 25m in length orientated south-east to north-west. Visible as a ditch (feature ‘e’) for some of its length, the magnetometer survey detected that the scarp visible as a slight earthwork extended for another 15m in a north-easterly direction. This feature possibly represents a trackway leading from the site of the ‘Sham Castle’ illustrated on historic maps, the remains of which may be represented by anomaly VII — a linear feature extending for 20m in a broadly west-east alignment. Anomaly VII corresponds with a part of feature ‘f’ of the earthwork survey.

**Earth Resistance**

Earth resistance survey identified a series of anomalies of possible archaeological significance (Figures 8.14 and 8.15) and added much to the information provided by magnetometry. Anomaly r1 consists of a very clear band of low resistance which corresponds with the perimeter ditch. Anomaly r2 is a patch of higher resistance and corresponds well with an earthwork platform identified in the topographic survey (Figure 8.11: ‘b’). This feature probably represents the remains of a building. Anomaly r3 is a crescent of low-resistance, probably formed by a tree throw. It may also be related to anomaly r4, which

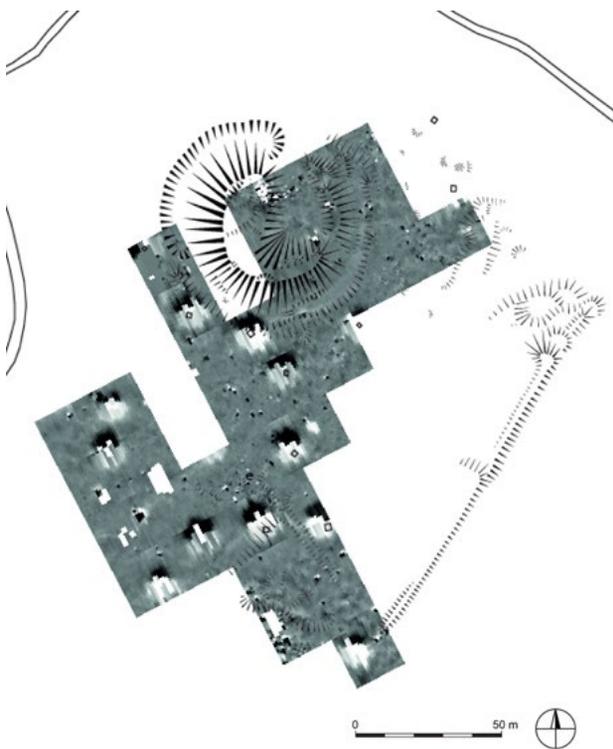


FIGURE 8.12: RESULTS OF THE MAGNETOMETRY SURVEY AT CASTLE I, HAMSTEAD MARSHALL, PLOTTED AGAINST THE HACHURED EARTHWORK PLAN. MANY ANOMALIES LOCATED BY THE MAGNETOMETER SURVEY CORRESPOND WITH STANDING EARTHWORKS, BUT SOME BURIED FEATURES WERE ALSO IDENTIFIED.

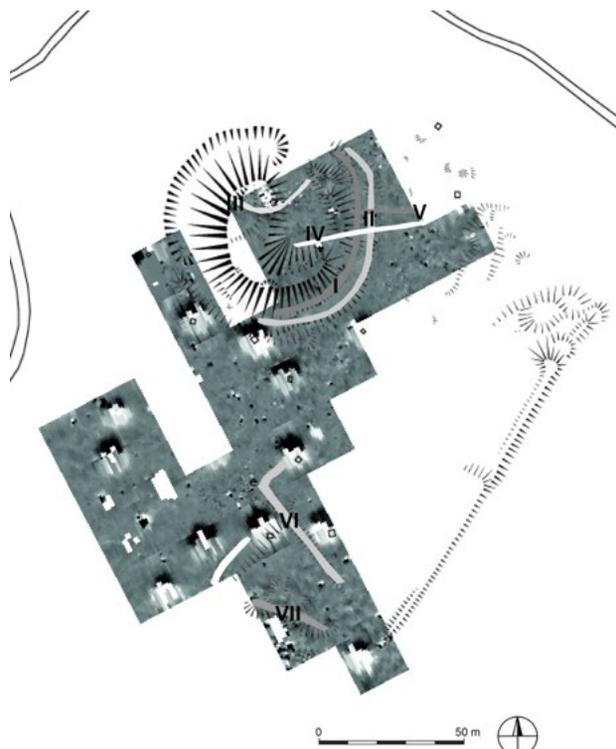


FIGURE 8.13: INTERPRETIVE PLOT OF MAGNETOMETRY SURVEY OF CASTLE I, HAMSTEAD MARSHALL, PLOTTED AGAINST THE HACHURED EARTHWORK PLAN.

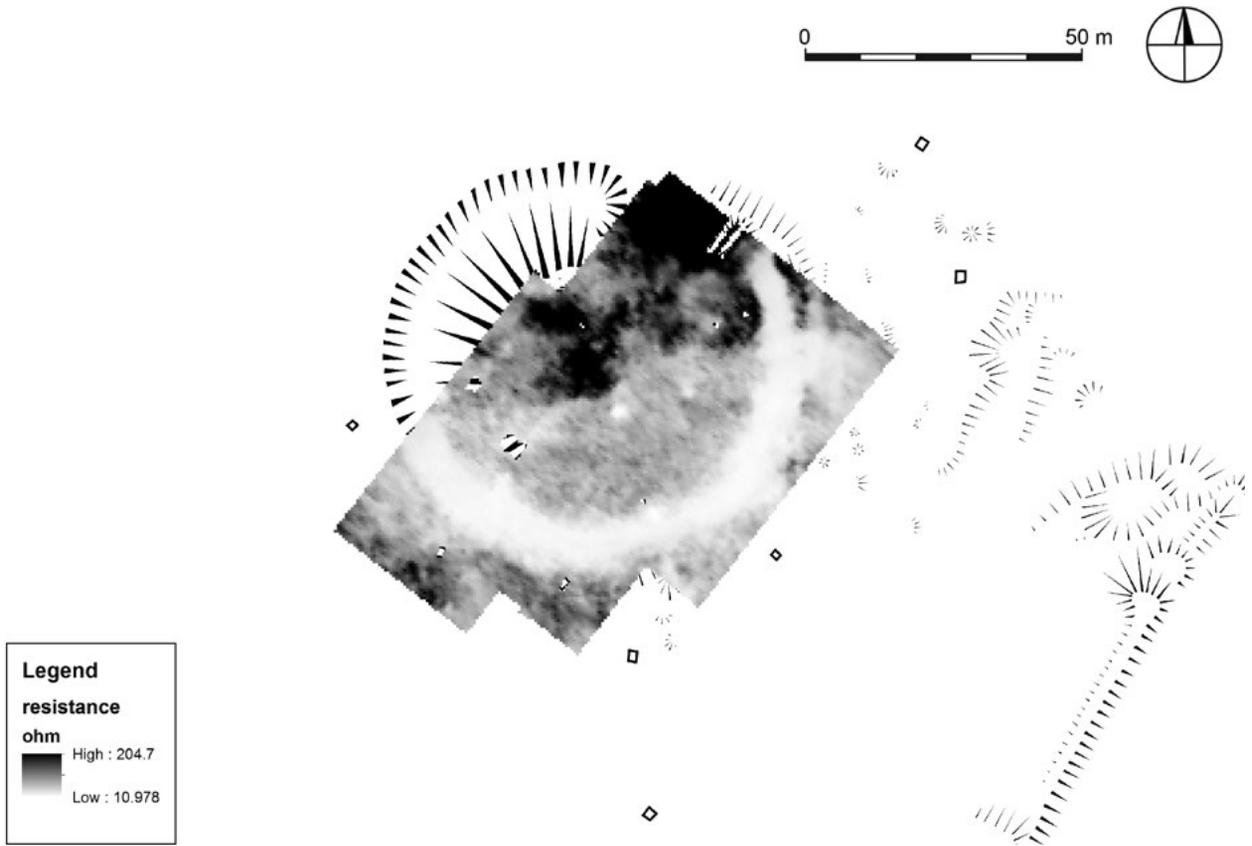


FIGURE 8.14: RESULTS OF THE EARTH RESISTANCE SURVEY AT CASTLE I, HAMSTEAD MARSHALL, OVERLAID ON HACHURED EARTHWORK PLAN.

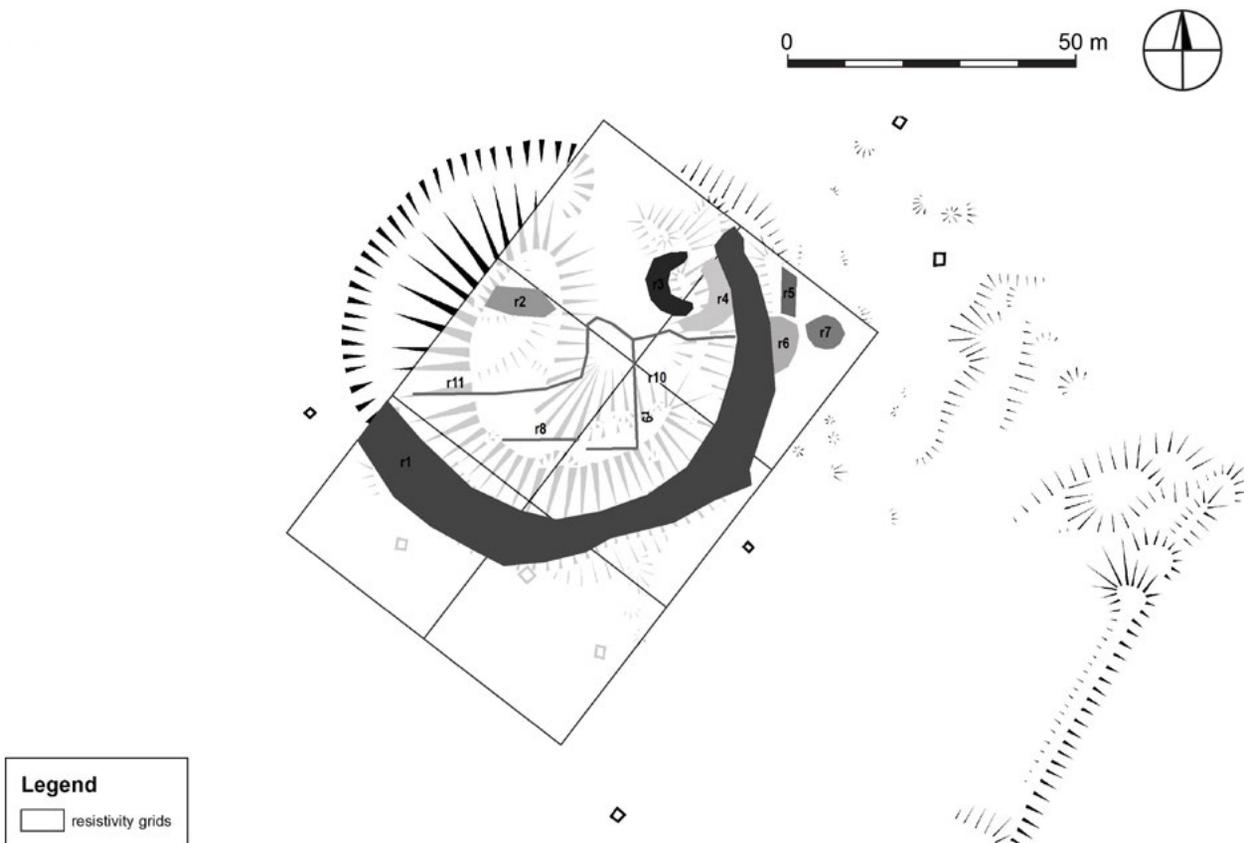


FIGURE 8.15: INTERPRETATION OF ANOMALIES IDENTIFIED BY EARTH RESISTANCE SURVEY AT CASTLE I, HAMSTEAD MARSHALL.

is similarly crescentic in form but is characterised by high-resistance. Anomaly r5 is a linear low-resistance anomaly representing a subsurface ditch, of unknown origin. Anomalies r6 and r7 are sub-circular anomalies of low resistance c. 7m across which merge with the ditch in terms of geophysical response and therefore may also represent deep, cut features. Anomalies r8 and r9 are the apparent edges of a coherent band of lower resistance responses orientated east–west across the enclosure, with a dog-leg halfway along its length. This may represent archaeology, although it may also be the result of a natural geological response. There are slight indications that anomaly r8 might extend eastwards and underlie anomaly r1 (the ditch). Anomaly r10 is a discrete circle of low-resistance which may indicate a pit, or perhaps a post-hole. Anomaly r11, similar to r8 and r9 is a clear edge in the geophysical response, possibly representing the boundary of an archaeological feature. Alternatively, and given the local drift geology, it may also be a boundary of higher-resistance clay-with-flints.

### Discussion / Conclusion

The combination of geophysical and earthwork survey undertaken at Hamstead Marshall Castle I has revealed several new features of archaeological interest, and enhances our understanding of the monument and its environs. Magnetometer survey of the site and land to the south identified several elements of the monument visible as earthworks, as well as the possible remains of pre-castle features. Further south, the results of the magnetometer survey corresponded well with the recorded earthworks, with both techniques identifying a possible trackway and potentially remains relating to the post-medieval ‘Sham Castle’ recorded on historic mapping. Earth resistance survey clearly detected the perimeter ditch, and also highlighted a number of anomalies within and outside the enclosure which may be archaeological. Of particular interest are a number of anomalies within the interior which may represent the remains of buildings. The earthwork survey revealed that the character of the large sub-circular enclosure is consistent with the existing interpretation of the monument as the remains of a castle, although it may not represent an unfinished work as previously believed. The likelihood remains that this is an incomplete monument, although the earthwork survey suggests that Castle I might have been conceived as a hybrid motte and bailey/ringwork form. Buildings or other structures seem to have lain within the enclosure, although the form of the earthworks indicates that occupation was either small-scale or of limited duration, a conclusion which is consistent with previous views that have interpreted the remains as a siegework.

Indeed, the purpose of Castle I and its relationship with the two motte and bailey sites of Castle II and Castle III have been the subject of significant conjecture. Instances of multiple castles located in close proximity to each other

have usually been explained in three main ways — as the product of separate ownership, a change of site, or as evidence of siege warfare (Cathcart King 1983, xxix–xxx; Creighton 2005, 54–4). At Hamstead Marshall, the close association of Castle II and III is not suggestive of separate ownership, and there is nothing in the documentary record to indicate that the manor was divided. The very close proximity of Castle II and III also makes them unlikely candidates for siegeworks — Renn (1959, 110) asserts that siegeworks were usually constructed between 180m and 270m away from a defending castle. The final and indeed most likely possibility is that either Castle II or III acted as a replacement for the other, with Bonney and Dunn (1989, 179) postulating that the less well developed site of Castle II was replaced by the more substantial and heavily defended Castle III. It was most likely topographical restrictions which led to the development of a wholly new site, as the narrow spur would not have accommodated straightforward enlargement of Castle II. Supporting the premise that Castle III is the later foundation are settlement earthworks within the western bailey which may represent the remains of the thirteenth-century and later manor house (Bonney and Dunn 1989, 179).

The subsequent phases of Castle III clearly represent the primary lordly focus in the Hamstead Marshall district, with the evidence pointing to prolonged occupation well into the post-medieval period. The evidence from Castle I, however, suggests a markedly different history of use — the slight evidence from earthworks relating to likely structures suggesting that the site was occupied for only a brief period. This short life span is consistent with the potential role of Castle I as a siegework of Castle II or III as has previously been suggested (e.g. Bonney and Dunn 1989, 180). Located 800m east of the double motte and bailey remains, Castle I is unlike many other medieval siegeworks which are often located just out of bowshot of their besieged garrison. At Corfe Castle, for instance, the likely twelfth-century ringwork and bailey known as ‘the Rings’ (this volume, Chapter 4) is located approximately 300m from the remains of the castle which it was besieging. Castle I would not have represented such a visible and practical restriction in the immediate landscape of Castles II or III. Located at the end of a spur overlooking the Kennet valley the fortification could, however, have monitored east–west arterial river and road movement. Indeed, viewshed analysis for the site demonstrates that at 0m elevation from the centre of the monument the best field of view extends north and east in the direction of these routeways. It is noteworthy, however, that at an elevation of only 2m — slightly above standing height — the site commands views directly west and includes the motte of Castle II (Figure 8.16). Perhaps of greater significance than the intervisibility between sites, the construction of Castle I would also have been a challenge to the lordly authority of the established centre at either Castles II or III, and was likely constructed as much for its symbolic potency than for purposes of military practicality.

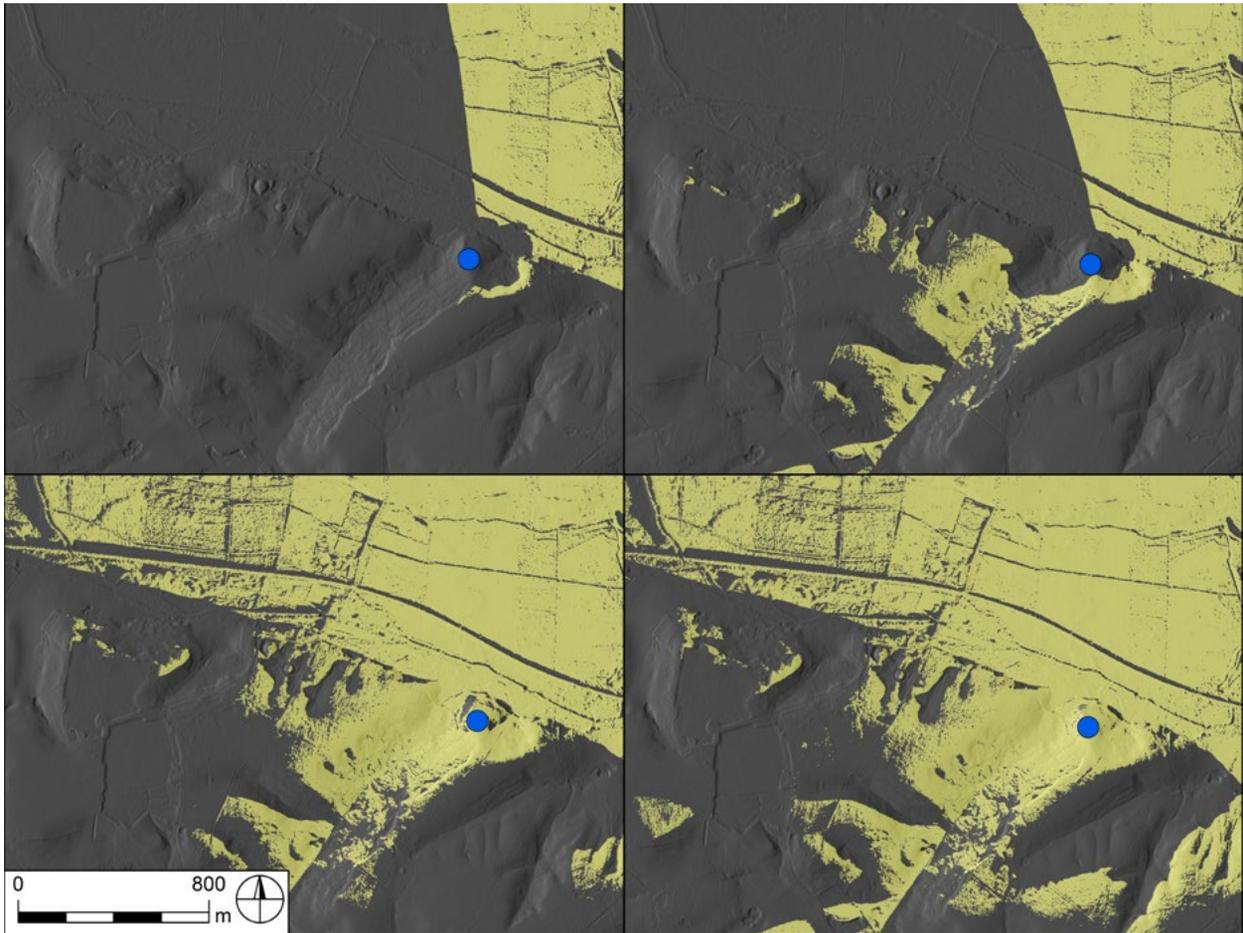


FIGURE 8.16: VIEWSHED ANALYSIS FOR CASTLE I, HAMSTEAD MARSHALL. THE DOT INDICATES THE SITE AND THE LIGHTER SHADING THE FIELD OF VIEW FROM THE CENTRE OF THE MONUMENT AVAILABLE AT (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT) 0M, 2M, 5M AND 7M ELEVATION. © CROWN COPYRIGHT. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. ENVIRONMENT AGENCY.

Establishing a firm chronology for the development of the castles in Hamstead Marshall Park is more problematic, but an intriguing possibility is that the ‘lost’ castle of Newbury was in fact located at Hamstead Marshall. Newbury castle has traditionally been associated with the area of Newbury Wharf at the east end of Wharf Street on the south bank of the River Kennet in the centre of the market town (Astill 1978, 51, 56; Oxford Archaeology 2005, 9). Quite extensive archaeological evaluation and excavation in the area between 1979 and 1990 has found no evidence of a castle, however, instead revealing reclamation layers as well as a quantity of re-deposited medieval pottery (Williams and Richards 1988; Adam and Hawkes 1990; Vince *et al.* 1997). Re-assessment of the historical evidence for Newbury ‘castle’ also finds little positive evidence for the site, as Astill’s reference to timber being removed from the Castle in 1672

(actually 1627) actually talks of a plot of land known as ‘the Castle’ as opposed to a ruinous structure (Canon 1990). Noting the lack of physical case for a castle in the immediate environs of the market town, Higgott (1998) has suggested that the ‘lost’ castle can be more convincingly associated with the remains in Hamstead Marshall Park. The evidence from Hamstead Marshall is certainly consistent with the written sources, and it is possible that the account in *L’Histoire de Guillaume le Marechal* describes a royal force based at the site now known as Castle I, besieging the Marshal family seat located at either Castle II or III in the campaign of 1152–53. While such interpretations must remain somewhat conjectural, the weight of evidence suggests that Hamstead Marshall Castle I originated as a siegework constructed by King Stephen’s forces during the civil war of the mid-twelfth century.

# Chapter 9

## Malmesbury, 'Cams's Hill', Wiltshire

Duncan Wright, Michael Fradley and Oliver Creighton

### Summary

*Cam's Hill is an isolated ringwork located on a hilltop close to the town of Malmesbury, Wiltshire. Just less than one hectare of pastoral farmland was subject to earth resistance and topographic survey, including the Scheduled Monument and the surrounding landscape to the north and east. Earthwork analysis indicated two distinct phases and revealed that the monument stands at the head of a small spring that flows to the north. Earth resistance survey identified a number of anomalies which may represent activity both at the entranceway and within the interior of the ringwork. Located in a good strategic position overlooking the River Avon, it may be tentatively suggested that Cam's Hill was constructed or utilised as a siegework in the mid-twelfth century, perhaps during a documented siege of 1144 when a number of castles were built in the landscape around Malmesbury.*

### Introduction

The ringwork of Cam's Hill is located on the easterly crest of a north-south spur overlooking the River Avon, approximately 1.5km south of the town of Malmesbury, Wiltshire (centred ST 94058578) (Figure 9.1). The surveyed area includes the ringwork itself and adjacent land to the north-east, a total of 0.9 hectares which is currently under pasture (Figures 9.2, 9.3). The survey was undertaken between 7 and 9 October 2013 (for a further, supplementary discussion of the fieldwork and its results, see Wright *et al.* 2015b). The Cam's Hill ringwork is classified as a Scheduled Monument (National Monument No: 19038). Beyond the site, several features of the Malmesbury townscape are scheduled, including the abbey (National Monument No: 212609), the town walls (National Monument No: 1004681), and St John's Almshouses (National Monument No: 1269276). The monument lies between 90m and 95m above OD from where impressive views to the north-east and south-west are available, although vistas are most extensive in the south-easterly direction toward the chalk landscape of the Marlborough Downs. The Cam's Hill ringwork lies on Mid Jurassic Mudstone of the Kellaways Formation. Towards the base of the Avon valley, approximately 200m east of the site, the same mudstones are overlain by recent alluvial sands, clays, silts, and gravels.

### Historical and Archaeological Background

Cam's Hill lay within the medieval estate of Cowfold (later Cole Park), a property of Malmesbury Abbey, part of which was emparked by the thirteenth century and utilised in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as a royal farm and stud (VCH Wilts XIV 1991, 140). The origin story of Malmesbury Abbey, recorded in the twelfth-century *Eulogium Historiarum*, describes the foundation of a church by an Irish monk at a fortified *castellum* called *Caer Bladon* during the seventh century. While it would be reasonable to disregard the account in the *Eulogium* as fabrication by later scribes, recent archaeological evidence from Malmesbury supports the possibility that the abbey was established within an earlier Iron-Age hillfort (Longman 2006; Collard and Havard 2011). Early charters of both West Saxon and Mercian origin demonstrate the value which both royal houses placed on Malmesbury specifically and the north Wiltshire region generally. Malmesbury was later developed as a defensible place in the West Saxon network of *burhs*, and in 941 Æthelstan was buried in Malmesbury Abbey. By the time of Domesday Book Malmesbury is recorded as the wealthiest manor in Wiltshire, and a royal estate at the centre of a vast eponymous hundred (*Domesday Book, Wiltshire*, ed. Thorn and Thorn 1979, M). The administrative arrangement of the Cam's Hill area has been reconfigured since the medieval period following the creation of the municipal borough of Malmesbury in 1886 and the site is currently situated in the parish of St Paul Without. The modern parish incorporates the largely rural landscape around the southern fringes of Malmesbury, in addition to land which previously formed the parish of Westport St Mary. To the east of the site, the River Avon forms the boundary between St Paul Without and the civil parish of Lea and Cleverton.

The Cam's Hill earthwork may have first been recorded incidentally by John Aubrey who, in writing briefly about the Cole Park estate on which the monument is located, mentions an ancient mound on a hill above the estate (Aubrey and Jackson 1862, 266). During the 1950s the Victoria County History noted in the area rectangular and circular enclosures measuring 0.5 ha and 0.25 ha respectively (VCH Wilts I 1957, 269). The VCH identified both features as prehistoric and although the text does not provide precise geographical locations, it is likely that the circular enclosure referred

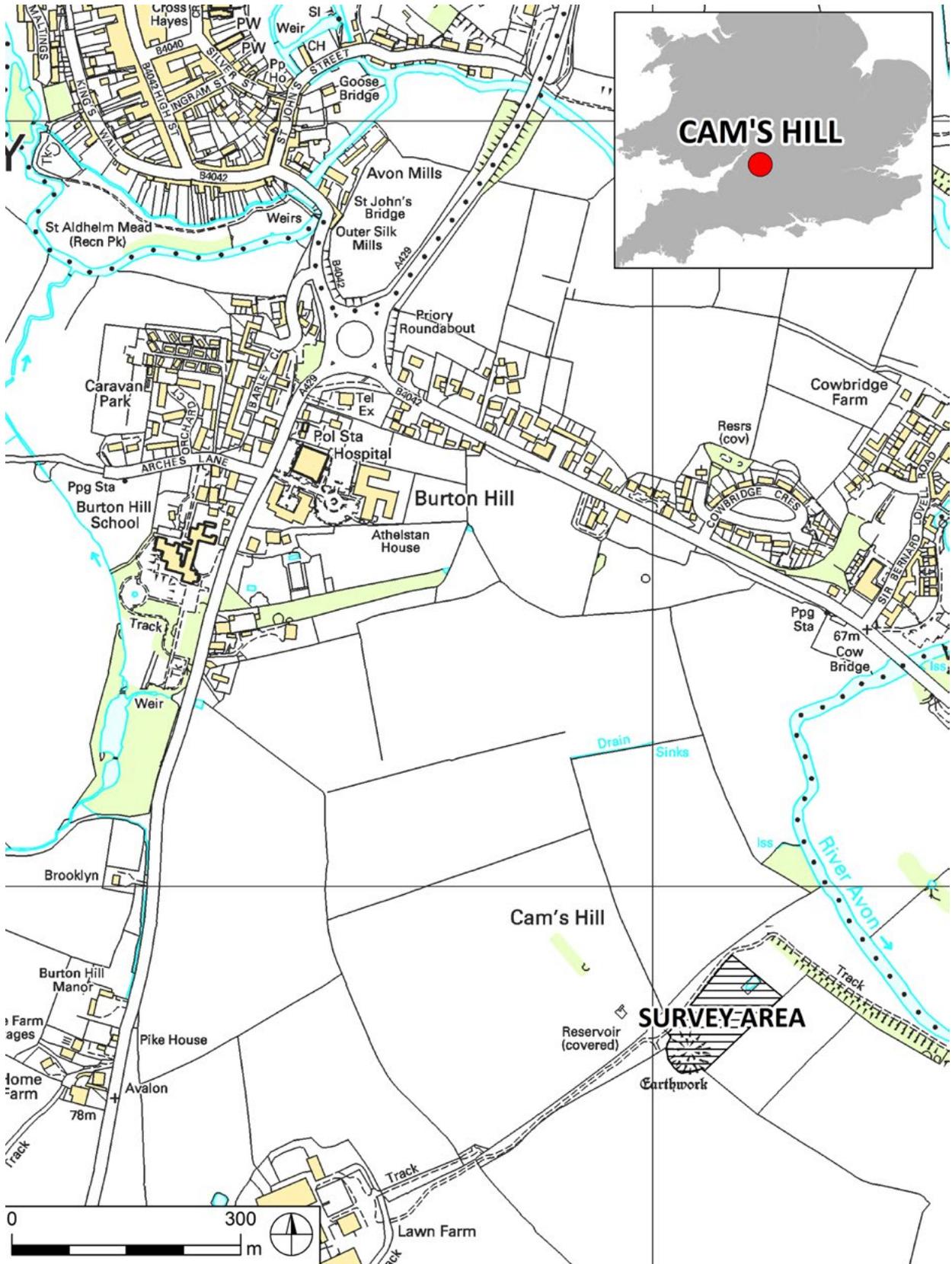


FIGURE 9.1: THE LOCATION OF CAM'S HILL IN SOUTHERN BRITAIN (INSET) AND IN RELATION TO MALMESBURY. © CROWN COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHT 2015. ORDNANCE SURVEY (DIGIMAP LICENCE).



FIGURE 9.2: THE CAM'S HILL RINGWORK LOOKING SOUTH-EAST.



FIGURE 9.3: AERIAL VIEW OF CAM'S HILL, LOOKING NORTH-WEST. PHOTOGRAPH BY ROBERT CLARKE.

to is the Cam's Hill ringwork. The first suggestion that the ringwork may date to the medieval period was apparently made by Cathcart King and Alcock (1969, 122), who forwarded that the earthwork represents the remains of a siegework erected to besiege Malmesbury castle, which was built close to the abbey by Bishop Roger of Salisbury in the mid-twelfth century. The premise that Cam's Hill is an Anarchy construction is primarily based upon one specific passage of the *Gesta Stephani* which details that in 1144:

*... the Earl of Gloucester quickly built three castles close to Malmesbury, while the king was occupied elsewhere in calming the disturbances of the kingdom, and not only carefully checked the garrison's wonted raids through the country but continually and firmly shut them in until they were in the extremity of hunger. (Gesta Stephani, ed. and trans. Potter and Davis 1976, 171).*

Malmesbury was also besieged in 1139 and 1153, although siegeworks are not documented (*Gesta Stephani*, ed. and trans. Potter and Davis 1976, 93, 231). The thesis that Cam's Hill is an Anarchy-period

siegework was subsequently reasserted by King who also postulated that linear earthworks situated at the base of the ridge between Cam's Hill and the Avon approximately 180m east of the site represent an associated siege-line, although the features in fact appear to be field boundaries or flood defences (see below) (Cathcart King 1983, 499; Creighton 2000, 108). The Cam's Hill ringwork was first scheduled in 1992, and has been mapped from aerial photographs as part of the Cotswold Hills National Mapping Programme.

### Map Analysis

The situation of Cam's Hill, within the Cole Park estate, has had a significant impact on the maps produced which detail the ringwork. The Wiltshire and Swindon History centre holds no estate maps relating to Cole Park, meaning that the earliest available map to include the area of Cam's Hill is the Tithe Map of 1840. Unfortunately, the estate is not shown in detail on the Tithe Map and is assessed as a single holding of approximately 500 acres (WSHC: Malmesbury Without, Tithe Apportionment). The earliest OS maps are more informative, however, and the 1840 County Series records a small circular

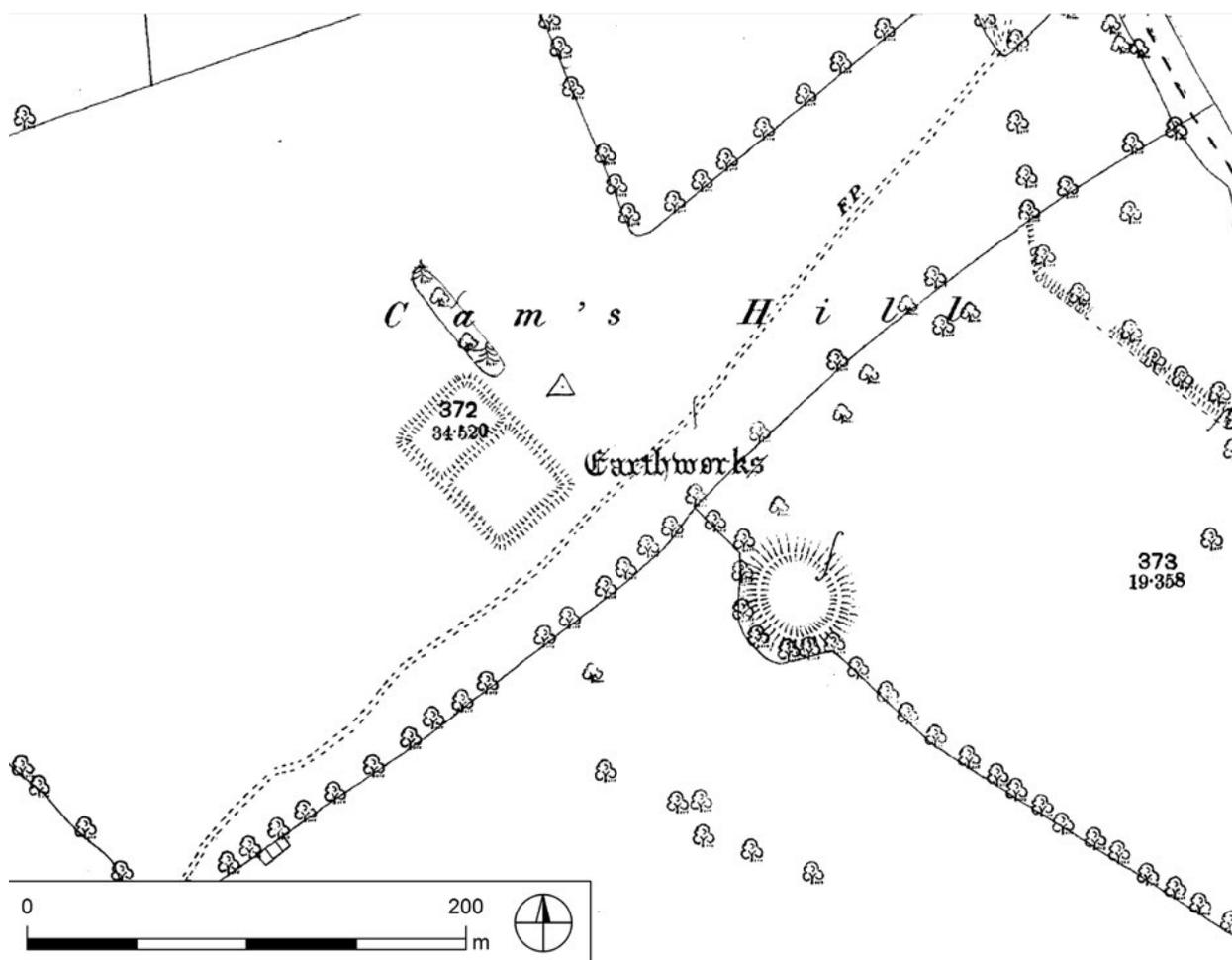


FIGURE 9.4: 1886 OS FIRST EDITION OF CAM'S HILL. NOTE THE CIRCULAR ENCLOSURE MARKING THE RINGWORK AND THE RECTILINEAR ENCLOSURE FEATURING AN INTERNAL SUB-DIVISION TO THE NORTH-WEST. THE FEATURES ARE PROBABLY THOSE RECORDED BY THE VICTORIA COUNTY HISTORY (SEE TEXT) WHO ASCRIBED BOTH PREHISTORIC ORIGINS. © CROWN COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHT 2015. ORDNANCE SURVEY (DIGIMAP LICENCE).

enclosure in the location of Cam's Hill, although there is nothing which distinguishes it as humanly created. The first time that the site is distinguished as earthworks is on the OS First Edition of 1886, when a rectilinear enclosure with an internal subdivision is also recorded 100m to the north-west — these two features most likely represent the enclosures later described by the VCH (VCH Wilts I 1957, 269) (Figure 9.3). The possible siege-line noted by King is also identifiable, although the likelihood that the earthworks are more recent is supported by the fact that they continue the line of an existing field boundary and indeed almost adjoin it at its south-eastern end. The OS First Edition Revision of 1900 identifies a well immediately south-east of the rectilinear enclosure, upon which a wind pump and reservoir were constructed in the first two decades of the twentieth century. By the last quarter of the twentieth century the rectilinear enclosure is no longer recorded, and was presumably ploughed out, although the Cam's Hill ringwork remains unaltered as far as can be determined.

## Geophysical Survey Results and Interpretation

### *Magnetometry*

The magnetic response variation across the site was extremely high, which negatively impacted the potential for archaeological feature evaluation through magnetometer survey; such a high response variation means that anomalies representing potential archaeological features were not possible to define within the data set. Such conditions determined that the investigators were reliant upon the results from the earth resistance survey alone to identify buried features of possible archaeological origin.

### *Earth Resistance*

Small variations in earth resistance were detected across the site producing a mottled effect on both raw and processed data (Figures 9.5). Several anomalous areas of resistance were identified within the survey area which represent features of possible archaeological origin (Figure 9.6). Anomalies a and b located on the eastern portion of the monument correspond to a break in the earthwork and comprise sub-circular areas of very high resistance measuring around 4m across at their greatest extents and each surrounded by a thin lens of markedly lower resistance no more than 0.5m in width. Anomaly c comprises an area of low resistance enclosing the ringwork bank along the northern and eastern extents and partly corresponds to the visible ditch surrounding the earthwork, although it is notable that the low resistance linear extends further north from the monument. Anomaly c is approximately 11m wide adjacent to the ringwork but tapers notably to only around 5m across at the north-eastern extent. Within the lowered interior of the earthwork, anomaly d is formed by an L-shaped linear

feature of high resistance. The longer extent of anomaly d measures 12m north-east to south-west but the shorter extent can only be traced for 1.7m (both extents are no more than 2.0m in width). Anomaly e is around 4.5m wide along its length and represents an extension further east of the low resistance forming anomaly c and equates with the ringwork ditch on its north-easterly side.

Located in the break of the ringwork bank, it may be tentatively suggested that anomalies a and b of the earth resistance survey relate to structural remains which enhanced a former entranceway. Anomaly c is clearly the ditch surrounding the ringwork which, while largely infilled, is still visible as an earthwork (see below) but, given that it extends beyond the monument it is also possible that it formed part of a hollow way at some point in its history. The ditch is also the only archaeologically significant feature detected by the magnetometer survey (anomaly I). There is a possibility that the high resistance of anomaly d provides evidence, albeit slight, of a structure previously located within the circuit of the ringwork. The identity of this structure cannot be determined with any degree of confidence, however, and the earth resistance suggests that the remains are ephemeral. The extension of low resistance which characterises anomaly e is more difficult to interpret but may be identified as the line of a buried hollow-way. These results derived from the geophysical survey at Cam's Hill are best understood when interpreted together with the earthworks on the site, the evidence for which is presented below.

### **Earthwork Description and Interpretation**

The earthwork at Cam's Hill comprises a circular enclosure bank, up to 18m wide at the base and averaging 1.8m high (Figure 9.7). This is surrounded by a substantial ditch averaging 4m wide and 1.5m deep, giving a total diameter for the site of some 50m. The ditch survives as an earthwork around the south and east sides only, but it is likely to exist as a buried feature around the north and west. The central area enclosed within the defences is characteristically small, having a diameter of only 20m, an area of some 0.03ha. This interior is raised slightly above the surrounding natural ground level to a height of 0.5m. The bank comes to a terminus on its northern side, the western section of the embankment coming to a particularly diffuse stop. This large opening appears to be a principal entranceway into the enclosure, and it is notable that the outer ditch is not apparent along this section. At the eastern end of this entrance there is evidence of a smaller, narrow hollowed way (Figure 9.7: 'a'), to the north of which there is a corresponding mound of material spread outside the monument.

There are few visible features in the additional area surveyed north of the monument. Some natural areas of collapse (Figure 9.7: 'b') denote an underground water course leading northwards down to the River Avon.

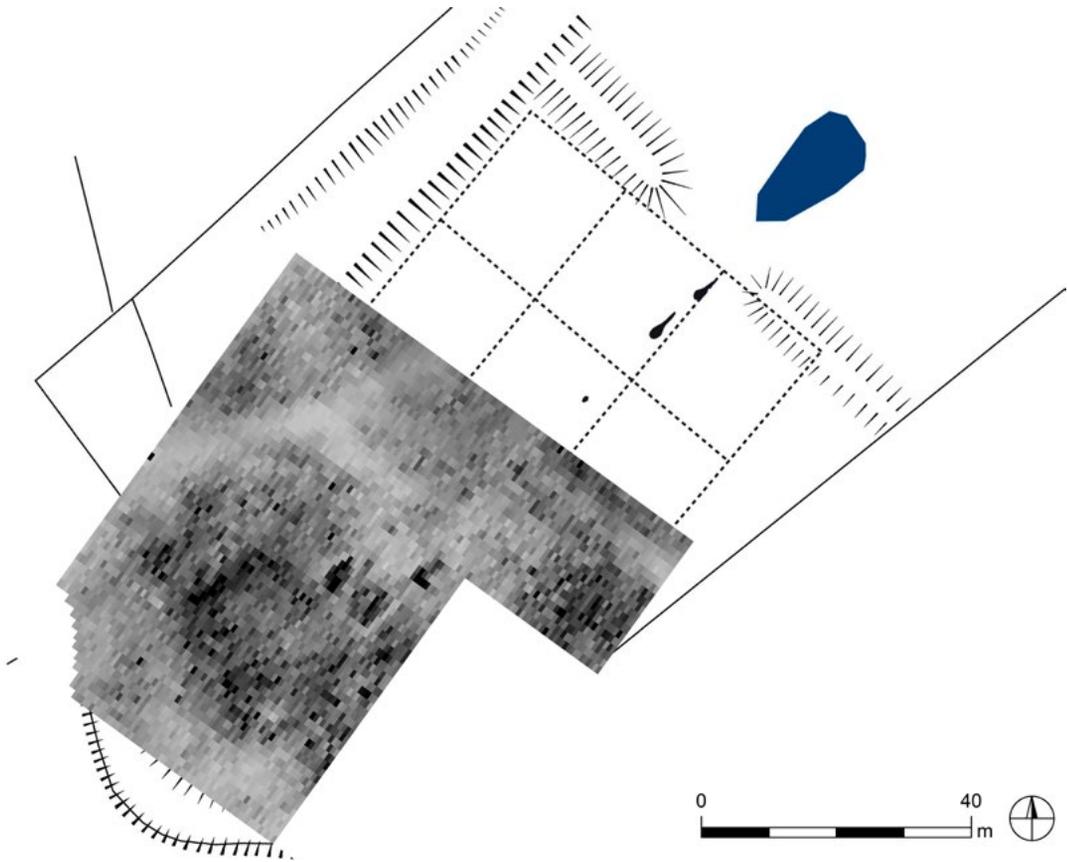


FIGURE 9.5: EARTH RESISTANCE PLOT OF CAM'S HILL.

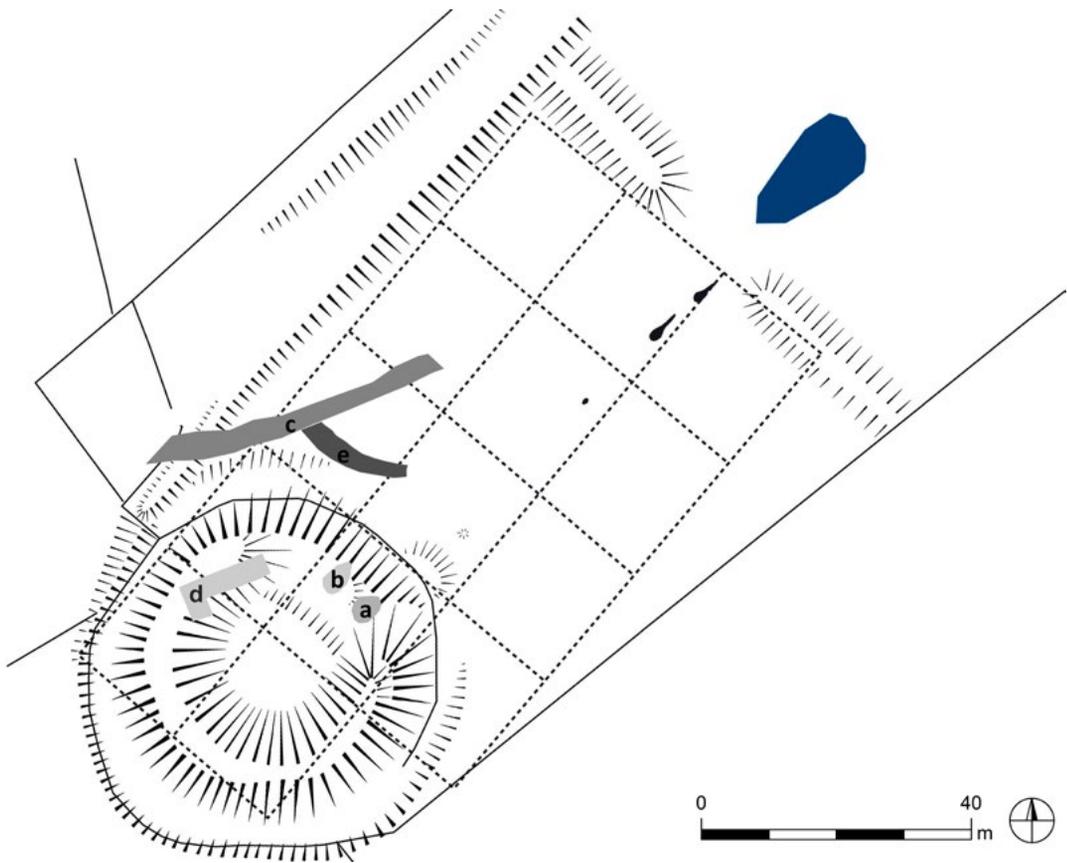


FIGURE 9.6: INTERPRETATION OF EARTH RESISTANCE SURVEY AT CAM'S HILL.

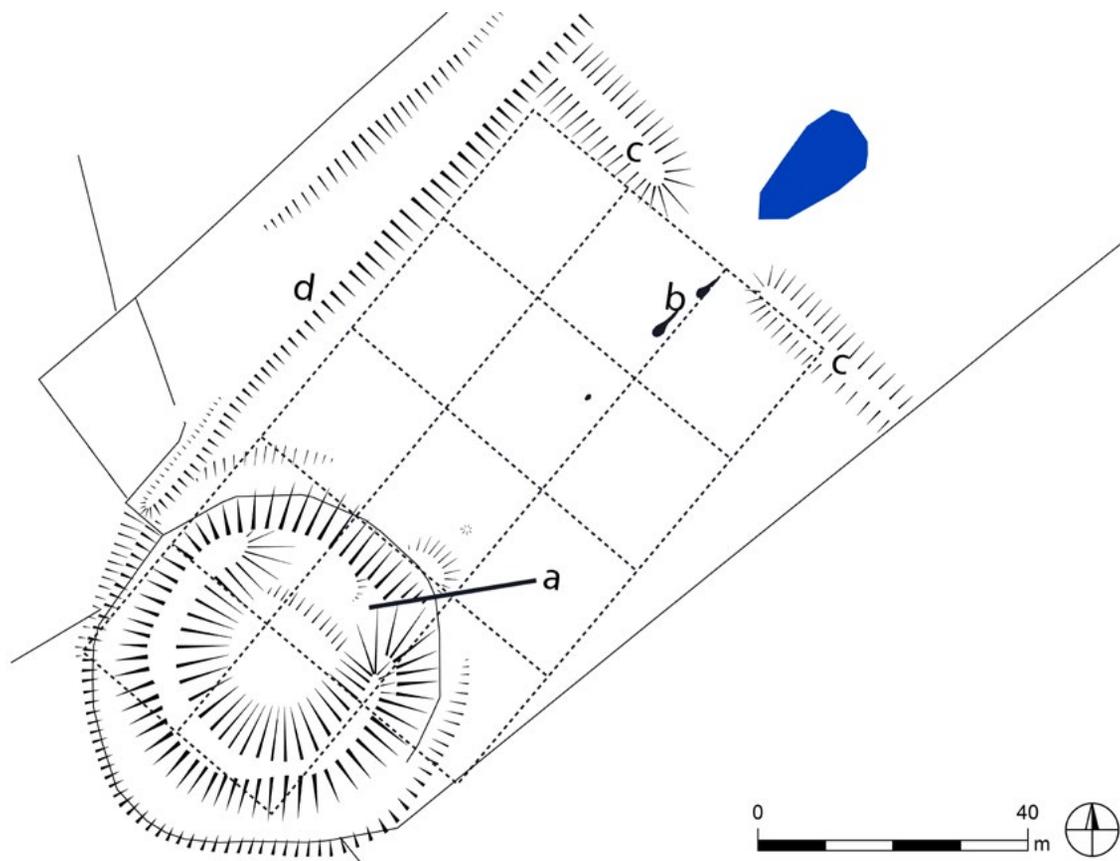


FIGURE 9.7: ANNOTATED HACHURED EARTHWORK PLAN OF CAM'S HILL.

Interestingly, the direction of the water course leads directly toward the monument, and it is possible that there is a winter-borne spring around that area. Further north there is evidence of a broad, spread bank up to 9m in width and 0.1–0.2m in height running north-west to south-east (Figure 9.7: 'c'). The feature is also visible on LiDAR images of the area, where it can be seen to swing to the north-east and continue on the other side of the River Avon (Figures 9.8 and 9.9). The incised cut of the winter-bourne water course cuts through the centre of this feature as surveyed, suggesting that it may not have functioned as a livestock boundary. Across the west side of the field in which the monument stands is a long continuous scarp (Figure 9.7: 'd') running northwards down the slope and apparently attached to a track-way in use at present, but potentially relating to landscaping linked to the development of the Cole Park estate. A smaller parallel section of scarp is also identifiable further west, close to the modern hedgerow.

### Discussion

The results of this survey suggest that the monument of Cam's Hill may have gone through two distinct phases of activity. The first phase saw the construction of a C-shaped enclosure consisting of a bank and outer ditch, with a large opening in the bank on its north side. The monument may have been raised over or next to a

spring head that flowed northwards to the River Avon. In terms of interpreting the monument as a twelfth-century fortification the large size of the original opening to the enclosure is problematic, as it would not have acted as a particularly defensible gateway. It is possible, however, that a much smaller entrance was created during a distinct second phase when a small hollow way developed on the east side of the original entrance. This is supplemented effectively by the results of the resistivity survey, which show two clear anomalies on either side of this proposed entrance (anomalies a and b), the scale of which suggests a gateway. Although the geophysical evidence is not clear, it could be conjectured that the remainder of the original entranceway was blocked by a continuous palisade around the remainder of the rampart. The character of anomaly c extending beyond the ditch which surrounds the earthwork suggests that the ringwork may have been located beside a hollow way, although whether the features were in contemporaneous use cannot be determined.

It is not clear what period of time elapsed before the outer ditch on the north side of the monument was infilled. The resistivity again shows convincingly that the ditch did previously continue around the north side of the monument. It is likely due to the surrounding topography, with the ground falling away to the north, that this section of ditch would infill naturally at a greater rate than the



FIGURE 9.8: LIDAR HILLSHADE IMAGE OF THE CAM'S HILL LANDSCAPE. THE RINGWORK IS CLEARLY VISIBLE IN THE CENTRE LEFT OF THE IMAGE. © CROWN COPYRIGHT. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. ENVIRONMENT AGENCY.

remainder of the circuit, but the complete disappearance of an earthwork on the north side suggests deliberate and complete infilling, while the mound of material outside the proposed second-phase entrance may even indicate that this occurred while the entrance was still in use.

Dating either of these proposed phases cannot be conclusive without further archaeological data. In light of the current reasons for its investigation, it is possible that the postulated second phase of use of the monument, with its narrow entrance and substantial gateway features, could belong to the periods of documented conflict around Malmesbury in the mid-twelfth century. Although it possesses a good vista over the River Avon, it is notable that the Cam's Hill ringwork is not situated along the ridge that represents the highest point in the vicinity (Figure 9.9). A direct view of Malmesbury would therefore only

have been possible with the construction of a tower or platform and it is tempting to relate the enigmatic anomaly of the earth resistance survey with such a purpose. Further archaeological investigation is undoubtedly required in order to characterise this feature and its potential function with greater confidence, however. The low spread bank north of the Cam's Hill enclosure is also enigmatic in that it was cut by the minor stream and may therefore have been ineffective as a livestock boundary. There is, however, nothing at present to connect it to the enclosure to the south. The terraced scarp recorded along the west side of the survey area appears to belong to a carriageway, potentially linked to a route from Cole Park, and may fit into a wider complex of post-medieval landscaped elements associated with the estate. It may have intentionally passed by the monument of Cam's Hill, whether as a local landmark or as an antiquarian association as suggested by the fact that John Aubrey was aware of the site in the seventeenth century.

There are other potential sites that could relate to the documented fortifications erected around Malmesbury in the twelfth century. West of Burton Hill is the field name 'Moors Castle' (ST 93198668), which in a position opposite the town itself is an interesting candidate (WSHC: Malmesbury Without, Tithes Apportionment). There is also a moated site noted by Aubrey at Brokenborough which overlooks the town from the north-west; this has presumably been infilled as it is not identifiable on the earliest OS maps of the area dating to the 1880s (Aubrey and

Jackson 1862, 210–1). To the north of Brokenborough are a group of 'Ringbury' field names (ST 92979077), while in the area south-east of the village is a riverside island depicted as a potentially stylised circular moat (WSHC: Brokenborough Tithes Apportionment). To the south-west of Malmesbury is an area known as Kingway (ST 91238247) which is surrounded by 'ditch' field names such as 'Ploughed ditch', and to the north-east beyond Charlton are the field names 'Bailey Hill' and 'Castle Mead' (WSHC: Brokenborough, Tithes Apportionment). Any one of these sites could potentially offer a location for one of the multiple siegeworks related to the military actions around Malmesbury of 1139 and 1153), although names such as 'Ringbury' suggest an early medieval or prehistoric origin, while others such as Kingway could potentially relate to sites utilised in the civil war of the seventeenth century.

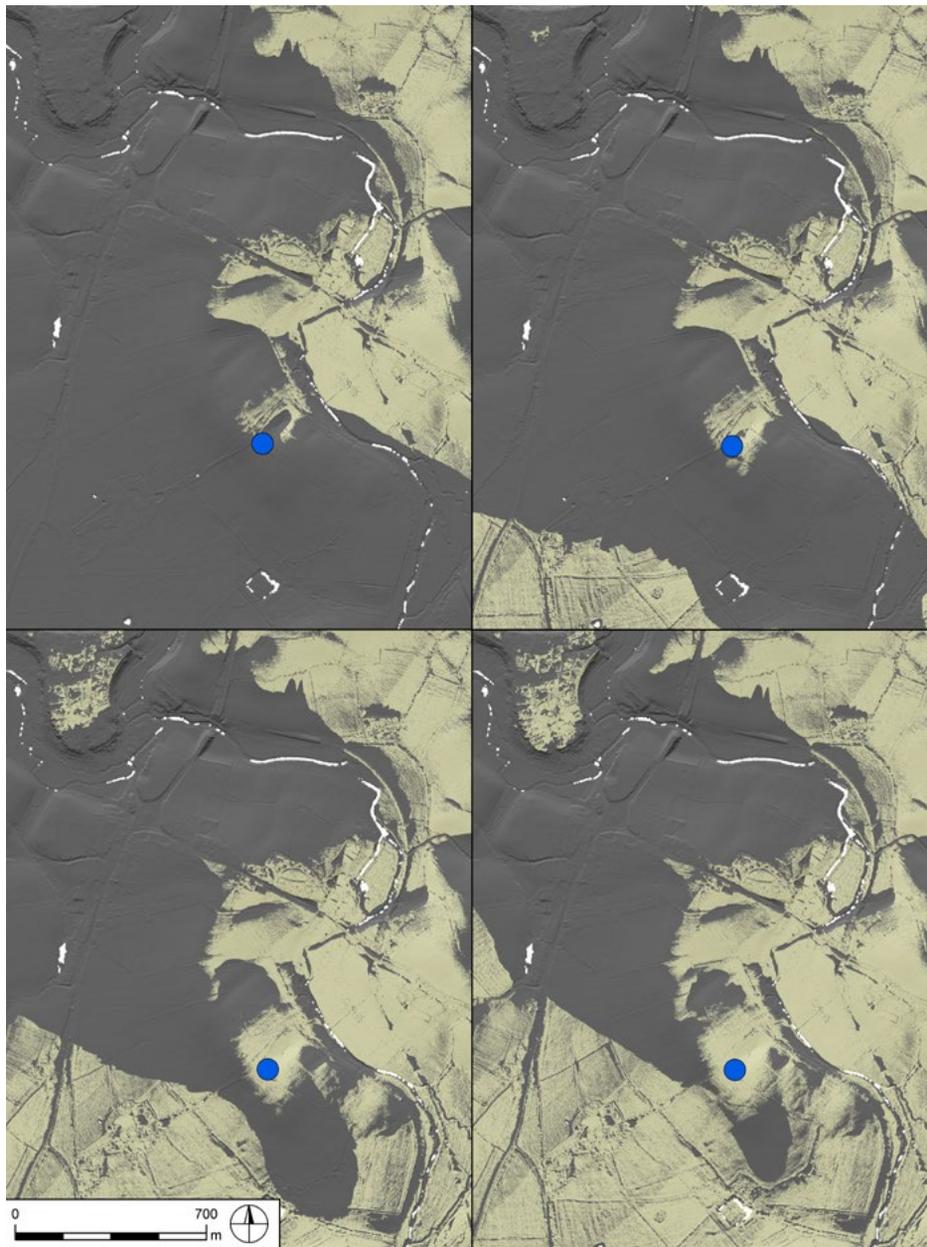


FIGURE 9.9: VIEWSHED DIAGRAMS OF CAM’S HILL (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT) AT 0M ELEVATION, 2M ELEVATION, 5M ELEVATION, AND 7M ELEVATION. THE DOT IS THE EARTHWORK AND LIGHTER SHADING REPRESENTS VISIBLE AREAS. NOTE THAT DESPITE THE BEST AVAILABLE VIEWS EXTENDING TO THE SOUTH-EAST, AT AN ELEVATION OF ONLY 2M THE AREA OF MALMESBURY ABBEY—AND THE CONJECTURED SITE OF MALMESBURY CASTLE—IS VISIBLE FROM CAM’S HILL. © CROWN COPYRIGHT. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. ENVIRONMENT AGENCY.

### Conclusion

The detailed geophysical and topographical survey of Cam’s Hill has identified a number of features which allow some tentative interpretations to be forwarded. The extant earthworks indicate that there may have been two identifiable phases of use, with the first phase witnessing the construction of a C-shaped enclosure. During the second phase, a much smaller entrance was created when

a small hollow was formed on the east side of the original entrance which was then apparently furnished with a gateway. Either in this second phase or in its subsequent disuse the northern ditch was largely in-filled. The monument appears to have been set on or near to a springhead that flowed on a steep incline northward. A structure of unknown character may at some point have been situated within the interior of the monument. It is possible that the ringwork was deliberately positioned on the line of a hollow way, although it cannot at present be determined if both features were in use contemporaneously. In the wider area, a potential landscaped carriageway may have passed by the Cam’s Hill ringwork purposefully to take in this ancient monument as an intellectual curiosity. The earthwork was certainly positioned to command a dominating view over the River Avon, and it is notable that the entranceway was created to face the line of the watercourse. Taken together the evidence from the Cam’s Hill survey suggests that the

site is a medieval siegework, a phase of which could potentially relate to the activity of Robert of Gloucester recorded in the *Gesta Stephani*. The identification of the entranceway in particular is certainly consistent with other Anarchy-period siege fortifications such as that at Danes Castle, Exeter (Higham and Henderson 2011), although without further archaeological evidence to detail the chronological sequence of the Cam’s Hill ringwork, such associations must remain speculative.



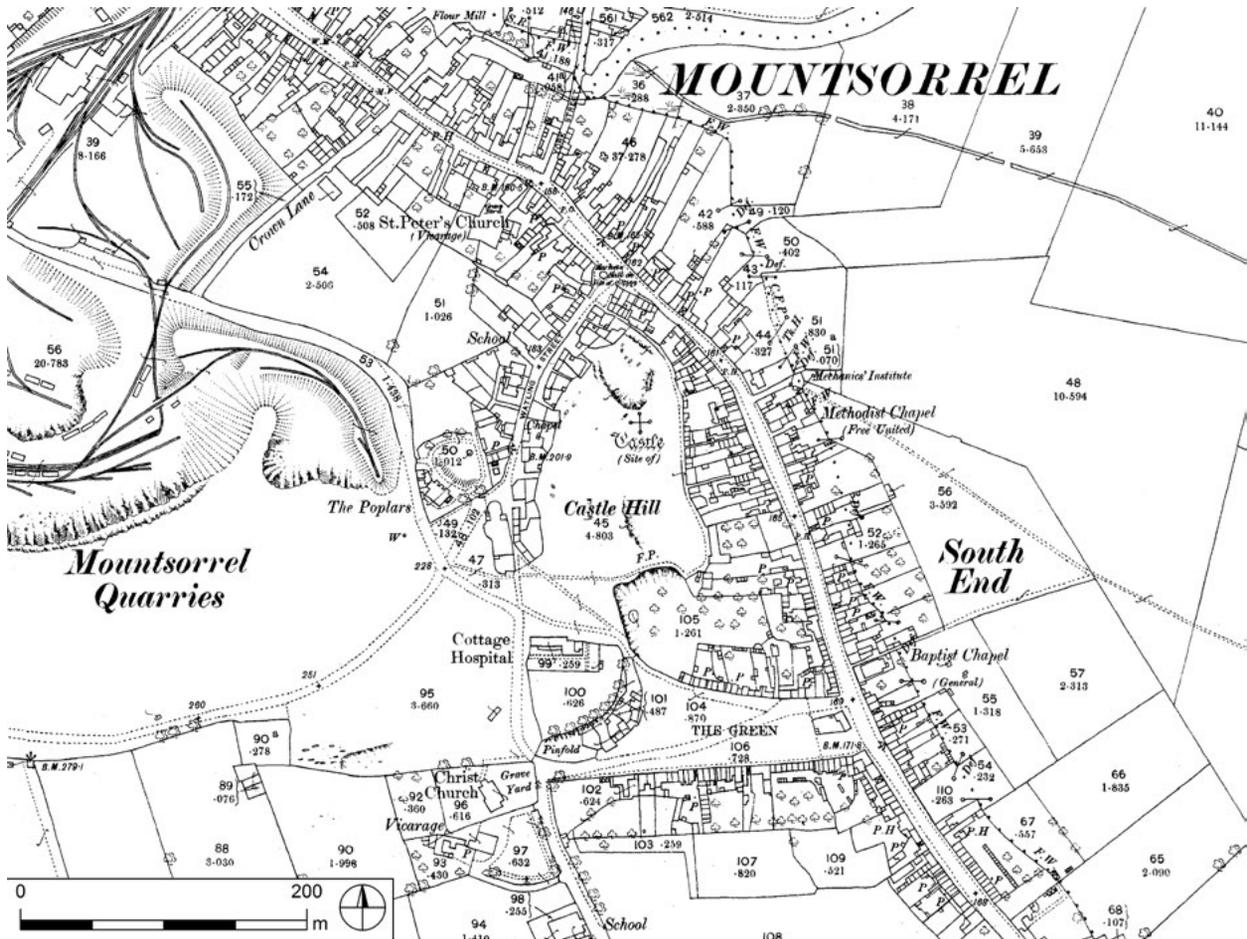


FIGURE 10.2: OS FIRST EDITION 25" MAP OF 1884 SHOWING MOUNTSORREL TOWN AND CASTLE. © CROWN COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHT 2015. ORDNANCE SURVEY (DIGIMAP LICENCE).

identified as a motte and bailey castle. Although the castle is not documented until the reign of King Stephen in the mid-twelfth century, when it featured in an important and unusual treaty between the Earls of Chester and Leicester, it was probably built in the late eleventh century and was occupied until its destruction in the early thirteenth century under the orders of Henry III. The pact or *conventio* between Ranulf, Earl of Chester, and Robert, Earl of Leicester, dating to some point between 1149 and 1153, details a series of castles, including Mountsorrel, that defined a region within which no castles were to be built, while a slightly earlier charter (of c. 1148) had granted or accepted Leicester possession of Mountsorrel castle and its settlement (King 1980; Coulson 1995). Castle Hill was selected as a case study primarily due to this securely documented Anarchy-period context, and because of the close and intriguing relationship between the castle and its settlement, which was also in existence in the mid-twelfth century.

The castle occupies a commanding position with a broad view over the Soar Valley and the important road leading north from Leicester, and rises dramatically above the town at its foot. No above-ground stonework exists and the castle survives as a series of fragmentary earthworks that have been heavily quarried in places. The site has

seen little detailed archaeological work apart from some limited and poorly recorded excavations in the 1950s. The current investigation represents the first comprehensive analysis of Mountsorrel castle within its settlement context, and collates the existing documentary and archaeological evidence for the site. Geologically, the Mountsorrel area comprises an igneous intrusion into the Precambrian and Cambrian rocks of the Charnwood group. Castle Hill itself is formed of Granodiorite, Ordovician-period rocks formed approximately 450 million years ago. Granodiorite is silica-rich magma cooled to form coarse-crystalline granitic batholiths and smaller dykes and sills, producing a red granite distinctive of Mountsorrel. To the east, down onto the floodplain of the River Soar, Mountsorrel town developed on the superficial deposits of clay, silt, sand and gravel of the Soar littoral, which overlies bedrock geology of sedimentary mudstones. The hard igneous rocks of the Mountsorrel area have been utilised from prehistory to the present day. The Broad Hill quarry, immediately west of Castle Hill, is a nationally important source of hard building stone; the product, hornblende granite, is primarily used in construction and road-repair (McAllister pers. comm.). A survey of historic quarrying in the Charnwood Forest suggests that Castle Hill was an early centre for extraction, and stone from the area can be

found within Roman buildings in Leicester, including the Jewry Wall (McGrath 2006, 242, 249). In the nineteenth century several local churches were also built or repaired using large blocks of Mountsorrel granodiorite.

### Archaeological and Historical Background

The Mountsorrel region is well represented in terms of prehistoric and medieval archaeology, attributable in part to the quarrying that has seen much developer-funded archaeological investigation. The prehistoric archaeology of the area is characterised in particular by evidence for funerary activity. On the western fringe of Castle Hill and adjacent to Watling Street, a Middle Bronze-Age funerary urn was excavated (HEA No: 317029), while at Rothley Lodge, 1km southeast of Castle Hill, commercial excavation revealed nationally important evidence for Neolithic and Bronze-Age cult activity (Hunt 2004). At Platts Lane, Cossington, 2.5km southeast of the site, excavation in advance of gravel extraction uncovered a multi-period focus including a Bronze-Age barrow cemetery, with goods including a rare faience necklace, and an Iron-Age roundhouse (Thomas 2005). Half a kilometre west of Castle Hill, the probable site of a Roman villa was discovered during granite quarrying in the late nineteenth century; in a Roman well were building debris, tesserae, roof and flue tiles (HEA No: 317164).

By comparison to the prehistoric evidence, the archaeology relating to early medieval activity in the vicinity of Castle Hill is relatively slight. Early medieval loomweights have been found at Mountsorrel Broad Hill Quarry, immediately west of the castle (Leics. HER: MLE6104), while at Cossington, 2.5 km southeast of the site, the place name *Hundehoge* indicates a Saxo-Norman moot mentioned in a document of 1124 (HEA No: 964666). Also at Cossington, at the Platt's Lane multi-period site (see above), early medieval furnished burials were inserted into prehistoric burial mounds (Thomas 2005). In 2006, excavations in the eastern part of the historic focus of Rothley, 2km south of Castle Hill, discovered a significant Anglo-Saxon and medieval cemetery in an outlying zone of the graveyard of the parish church, which went out of use in the thirteenth century (Upson-Smith 2008). Two hundred metres north of Castle Hill, near to the current boat yard, is the likely site of one of the three mills noted under Barrow-upon-Soar in Domesday Book (Leics. HER: MLE699).

### Mountsorrel Castle

The castle at Mountsorrel is first documented in the mid-twelfth-century, when it is named in a charter and subsequently in a famous treaty between the Earls of Chester and Leicester that defined a demilitarised zone in north Leicestershire. In the charter, of c. 1148, Ranulf, Earl of Chester, granted to Robert, Earl of Leicester, 'for

his homage', 'the village and castle [*villam et castellum*] of Mountsorrel'; in the treaty, drawn up between c. 1149 and 1153, the Earl of Leicester agreed to receive the Earl of Chester 'in the borough and the baileys [*in burgo et baliis*] of Mountsorrel, as in his fee, to make war on whomsoever he wishes' (King 1980, 2, 6–7; see also Coulson 1995, 66–7, 69–70). When the castle was first built remains uncertain, although this could have been earlier in the twelfth century or late in the eleventh. Mountsorrel was held against Henry II in 1173, and surrendered in 1174; it was besieged unsuccessfully in 1215 during the war between King John and his barons although abandoned by its garrison. In 1217 Henry III ordered the site to be destroyed as 'a nest of the devil and a den of thieves and robbers' after the Battle of Lincoln Fair (Renn 1968, 250; Cantor 1978, 55; Cathcart King 1983, 255, 257; Creighton 1997, 34).

Topographically, for the purposes of this report, Castle Hill can be divided into two areas: the 'upper plateau', comprising the northern and more elevated part of the site dominated by two granite eminences, and the 'lower plateau' stretching away to the south towards the open space known as 'The Green'. The OS First Edition 25" map of 1884 marks Castle Hill as the site of an antiquity with a cross symbol and 'Castle' in gothic script (Figure 10.2). It makes no attempt to depict any of the earthworks, although the cross symbol is directly on top of a prominent mound on the upper plateau, now the location of the war memorial, commonly regarded as the 'motte' (Leics. HER: MLE714). From the 1960s OS large-scale maps depict the 'bailey ditch' to the south, which is also shown on later OS mapping. Castle Hill has yielded miscellaneous artefacts recorded on the Leicestershire Historic Environment Record: a prick spur and several 'pieces of old coin' were recovered in 1787 (Leics. HER: SK51SEW); a bronze cauldron leg was discovered when the memorial was built in the 1920s (Leics. HER: MLE714); and a medieval copper alloy buckle fragment was found 'near the hill to the rear of Christ Church' in the 1980s (Leics. HER: MLE6666).

In 1952 a local antiquarian, Frederick Ardrone, conducted a survey of the hill and its surrounds, accompanied by small-scale excavation. These interventions were later written up in note form and deposited in the Leicestershire Historic Environment Record (Ardrone 1982). Ardrone investigated an alleged tunnel on the southern cliff face of Castle Hill, uncovered a spring-fed well in the garden of Poplars (a larger property on the west side of Castle Hill), and carried out limited excavations in the vicinity of the most southerly granite eminence on the upper plateau. Here, a narrow trench '... revealed what appear to be foundations and the soil on the hill is covering a considerable deposit of rubble, building material — granite, tiles, pottery/sherds & nails. Trial trenches on the hilltop brought to light a large quantity of fallen building material, slates & tiles (both roof and floor) many sherds of twelfth-/

thirteenth-century pottery. Some sherds had the usual medieval green glaze. But on the whole the pottery was of very poor quality' (Ardron 1982). Although this evidence was thought by the excavator to represent a destruction horizon, the recovery of green glazed wares recommends the deposit to be later than the documented slighting of 1217 (McWhirr and Winter 1978–79, 74). This might well point towards continuing manorial occupation of the castle site following its decommissioning in the early thirteenth century.

Other discoveries in local gardens might also conceivably relate to castle-period features. In 1976, in the back garden of 31 Watling Street, on the western side of Castle Hill, residents found walls made from rough granite blocks. An archaeologist visited and recorded a section of wall, some 1.7m long, made of granite blocks bonded with red clay. The wall was faced with a rough plaster finish. A smaller section of walling was discovered a little to the northwest, of the same constitution, on an alignment slightly off from that of the existing cottage. The visiting archaeologist considered the wall to be in line with the ditch across the bottom of Castle Hill (Rutland *et al.* 1976). Research carried out by this project indicates these observations relate to the berm between the base of the upper castle and its ditch (see below). In 1997, in the garden of 4 Castle Hill further discoveries were made when the garden was cleared for landscaping and a large granite wall footing running north-south was recorded as well as a raised platform to the east with building foundations under turf. The Leicestershire HER postulates that the east-west orientation could indicate the position of the castle chapel or else defensive works across the southern part to the castle, and that the garden is on a platform that probably represents a third element of the bailey area (Leics. HER MLE714).

The war memorial on Castle Hill was erected in 1926, designed by Shirley Harrison and constructed by Mountsorrel Granite Co. Ltd. from blocks of Mountsorrel granite. To facilitate its construction, a narrow-gauge track was laid up Watling Street and up the northwest slope of the crag. The granite blocks were put in small wagons and pushed and pulled to the top. It is one of four Leicestershire memorials made from Mountsorrel granite (Foster 2014).

### **Mountsorrel Town**

Mountsorrel is not listed in Domesday Book and the area later covered by the town is presumably subsumed within the great estate of Barrow (upon Soar). The estate was held by Harold Godwinson before 1066, with Barrow itself acting as the site of both caput and mother church (*Domesday Book, Leicestershire*, ed. Morgan 1979, 43,1). The place name of Mountsorrel is Norman in origin and therefore probably indicative of a *de novo* post-Conquest foundation: *Munt Sorel*

(‘sorrel-coloured hill’) refers to the pink-coloured granite of Castle Hill (Watts 2004, 425). The historic town is arranged around a linear high street (‘Leicester Road’, running into ‘Market Place’ to the north). It occupies a narrow gravel river terrace capped with Keuper marl that curves between the granite outcrop of Castle Hill to the west and the Soar floodplain to the east. Notably, excavations within the medieval town at 13 The Market Place, and 1 and 3 Leicester Road (respectively north and north-north-east of Castle Hill) have demonstrated that the medieval town was artificially raised and traversed by a network of drainage gulleys indicative of an unfavourable and poorly drained site, attributable both to the volume of surface run-off from Castle Hill and the proximity of the floodplain. The earliest activity from these excavations in the town dated to the twelfth century (Lucas 1987).

The first references to a settlement at Mountsorrel are in the aforementioned charter and treaty between the earls of Chester and Leicester; the *c.* 1148 charter mentions a ‘village’ [*villam*] and the *c.* 1149–53 treaty a ‘borough’ [*burgo*] (King 1980, 6–7; Coulson 1995, 66–7), although the precise meanings of these terms are debatable. It is not until 1292 that the grant of a market and fair is recorded, although apparently reinforcing the existence of an extant urban institution, and Mountsorrel was taxed as a borough in the fourteenth century (Beresford 1967, 462–3; Letters 2016). All the indications are, therefore, that Mountsorrel originated as a castle-dependent nucleus, with settlement and trading at the castle pre-dating the formalisation of urban status (Creighton 1997, 31).

An estate map of 1816 is the only pre-OS map held by the Leicestershire Record Office that depicts the town and castle morphology in detail (Map of George Watkinson Estates 1816) (Figure 10.3). The indication of burgage plots along Market Place and Leicester Road does not differ significantly from the later OS First Edition 25” map of 1884, although some plot division had occurred between 1816 and 1884. Castle Hill is shaded as two distinct mounds capped by rocky outcrops, probably representing the two granite eminences on the upper plateau. Two distinct zones of plots can be identified within the town plan: one apparently planned block is recognisable immediately south of the castle, in a lower area known as The Green, while a second regular zone of plots flanks the castle to the north. An archaeological watching brief on the eastern edge of The Green in 2007 located an area of cobbling but suggested that the green itself had always been an unoccupied open space (Richards 2007). A marked widening of Leicester Road north of the castle is known as the Market Place, where Sibley Road crosses the Soar to join the Leicester Road. It is near here that a market-cross stood before being



FIGURE 10.3: MAP OF GEORGE WATKINSON ESTATES (1816), INCLUDING MOUNTSORREL CASTLE. REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION OF THE LEICESTERSHIRE RECORD OFFICE, REF: DG9/MA/362/6

moved to Swithland in 1793 (Leicestershire HER: SK 51 NE G). The street name Bond Lane to the north presumably marks the limit of the area of free tenure.

Ecclesiastical provision for medieval Mountsorrel was unusual, reflecting that the town was established at the junction of two pre-existing parishes: Barrow to the north and Rothley to the south. The medieval town was served by two chapels: St John's (now St Peter's) lay within 'Mountsorrel Inferior', comprising the lower northern part of the town, while St Nicholas' (now lost, but standing south of the castle) served 'Mountsorrel Superior', encompassing the castle zone and the settlement to its south (see King 1980, 6). According to the antiquarian John Nichols, Mountsorrel Inferior was also known as 'Mountsorrel Burgh' and belonged to the Earls of Chester, while Mountsorrel Superior belonged to the Earls of Leicester (Nichols 1800 III, i, 85).

### Earthwork Description and Interpretation

Topographically, Castle Hill is a complex site (see Figure 10.4) located on top of a granite outcrop towering 30m above the main thoroughfare of Leicester Road to the east and the curving line of Watling Street to the west. On the north side there is a sheer cliff above the Market Place, but on the eastern side there is a more gradual grassed slope with occasional rocky outcrops. To the south-east the cliff face has been quarried, creating an artificially sheer rock face above The Green. The upper plateau of the hill is generally regarded as the heart of the castle complex, and the site of an alleged motte (Leics. HER: MLE714). Two dominant mounds can be discerned in this area, one to the north (Figure 10.5), above the sheer cliff and now the site of the war memorial, and one 40m south, with a saddle of lower ground between them. In this saddle are further natural outcrops of rock and many topographic pock-marks.

Due to summer vegetation, tree obstacles, and rock faces, only the more open grassed areas were accessible for survey. The source information for the hachure plan was a combination of the collected survey data, and an existing plan by Hartley (1989, 10, 25) for the areas inaccessible to the present survey.

Using the collected GPS point data, a 3D model was developed and laid over 2m resolution LiDAR data (Figure 10.6). Although the present survey was restricted by thick vegetation, the LiDAR data show that this upper plateau forms an elliptical area 30m wide and 70m long. At the southern end, this upper plateau drops in a remarkably homogenous 45 degree slope down to a lower plateau, 10m below. This is generally regarded as the bailey area, and like the upper plateau possesses many earthworks, both anthropogenic and natural. A staircase has been constructed by the local council to facilitate access between these plateaux. On either side of these steps are notable dips in the topography, especially on the southern side where there is a deep rock-pit below a sheer face of rock.

The lower plateau is around 60m wide. Quarrying has created a sheer drop in the south-east quadrant down to



FIGURE 10.4: ANNOTATED PLAN OF EARTHWORKS AT CASTLE HILL, MOUNTSORREL.

housing around The Green. It is uncertain how much of this lower plateau has been quarried away but it is possible that it formerly extended further eastwards. North to south it measures 50m until it is cut by Castle Hill road. South of the road the ground continues at the same level and could possibly be an extension of the bailey area. This ground is now occupied by two private properties with extensive gardens. A rough stone wall found in the garden of 4 Castle Hill in 1997 may represent a structure relating to the castle, although it may equally date to the hospital or a school for poor boys which later occupied the same site. To the west of these houses is another area of ground on the same level, which could be a further bailey extension. OS mapping indicates earthworks in this area, although it is uncertain whether this is simply landscaping associated with the adjacent road ('The Navins'). This is a potential area for future survey.

### Upper Plateau

At the northern end of the upper plateau is a mound, whose flat summit is 10m across, and today is occupied by the war memorial which sits on a substantial stone base 6.5m square (Leics. HER: 13296) (Figure 10.4: 'a', and Figure 10.5). This mound is around 2m higher than the ground to the south. The morphology of this part of the hilltop before construction of the war memorial is uncertain. This area is commonly identified as the castle motte, including in the Scheduled Monument description for Castle Hill. This could be argued to be the most defensible position within the site, with a sheer drop to the north and steep ground to the east and west. If the feature can be characterised as a motte then it was clearly created by modifying an existing rocky eminence rather than by constructing an artificial mound. Between this northern mound and the southern mound of the upper plateau there is a saddle of lower ground with many undulations in topography and outcrops of granite. Some of these have iron splitting rods *in situ* in the clefts, indicating historic opportunistic quarrying. The position of these rocks within a few metres of the postulated motte would theoretically have restricted movement in this important area during castle occupation, although it is not inconceivable that the ground was once level and the rocks have been grubbed out to facilitate quarrying.

Feature 'b' (Figure 10.4) is a subtle east-west depression, between two areas of outcrop, around halfway between the two mounds of the upper plateau. There is a noticeable change in vegetation here, and a corroborative geophysical response suggesting it is an east-west ditch half way across the upper plateau (see below). Feature 'c' (Figure 10.4) is a noticeable groove in the topography, in a north-south direction, 5m wide, around 0.5m deep and extending 23m. The feature is difficult to interpret but its linearity may suggest a foundation trench for a wall. The geophysical response is low resistance for much of its length (see below) suggesting it is a cut feature that has subsequently filled up with fine, silty soil. It may also represent a hollowed out path since it coincides with the modern path to the war memorial, and possibly connects to feature 'e', discussed below.

Feature 'd' (Figure 10.4) denotes the southern of the two mounds on this upper plateau. It is difficult to define this as a separate, anthropogenic earthwork since the LiDAR data suggest that this end of the plateau naturally rises up. On the ground much of this area is obscured by thick scrub covering rocky outcrops and areas of cliff. This 'mound' also features smaller topographic features carved out of it. Looking at the geophysical response however, this area is low resistance, suggesting that it is a large dump of earth. It is another candidate for the possible motte or perhaps a tower, since this position overlooks the proposed bailey area to the south. Feature 'e' (Figure 10.4) is one of the small pits within the southern mound of this upper plateau. It is 5m in diameter and *c.* 0.2m deep. Its interpretation is uncertain although it might conceivably relate to the excavations that took place on this part of the hilltop in 1952. Feature 'f' (Figure 10.4) is a subtle linear depression 5m wide, 8m long and around 0.2m deep. Its linearity, together with its continuation of the path of the modern steps up from the lower plateau, suggests that it is best interpreted as a hollowed path that possibly connects to feature 'c', another hollow linear. From this evidence we may suggest that the modern steps from the lower plateau follow an historic route up to the higher level, and that when this upper plateau was occupied during the medieval period, movement was routed east, then northwards along the linear marked at 'c' (Figure 10.4).

### **Lower Plateau**

Feature 'g' (Figure 10.4) is a substantial bank, 14.5m wide, running in an east-southeast direction for 36m. Half-way along it tapers down to 7.5m in width. Its southern face is a sharp 45 degree slope, whereas its northern slope is longer and gentler, following the contour of the hill. It appears to run parallel to the ditch, and would normally be assumed to be the bank accompanying the ditch made from the upcast, although it sits back some 5m from the lip of the ditch. The front (south-facing) face of this bank is relatively sharp compared to the gentle slope of the (north-facing) rear, suggesting there may have been a revetment at the front or that it has been quarried for soil. The LiDAR evidence shows that this bank extends westwards, around the contour of the hill, and is apparently preserved in the gardens of Watling Street (Figure 10.6). Feature 'h' (Figure 10.4) is a curvilinear depression. Its morphology is similar to a hollow way but its interpretation is uncertain.

The large ditch across this lower plateau (Figure 10.5: 'i') is often regarded as the bailey ditch (Leics. HER: MLE714). It is *c.* 50m in length, *c.* 15m wide and *c.* 1.5m deep. Quarrying to the east has almost certainly truncated it in this direction. The western terminus of this feature is a very clean vertical section and the earlier plan by Hartley (1989, 10) indicates that it formerly continued



FIGURE 10.5: VIEW ACROSS UPPER PLATEAU OF MOUNTSORREL CASTLE FROM SOUTH TO NORTH, SHOWING THE PROMINENT MOUND.

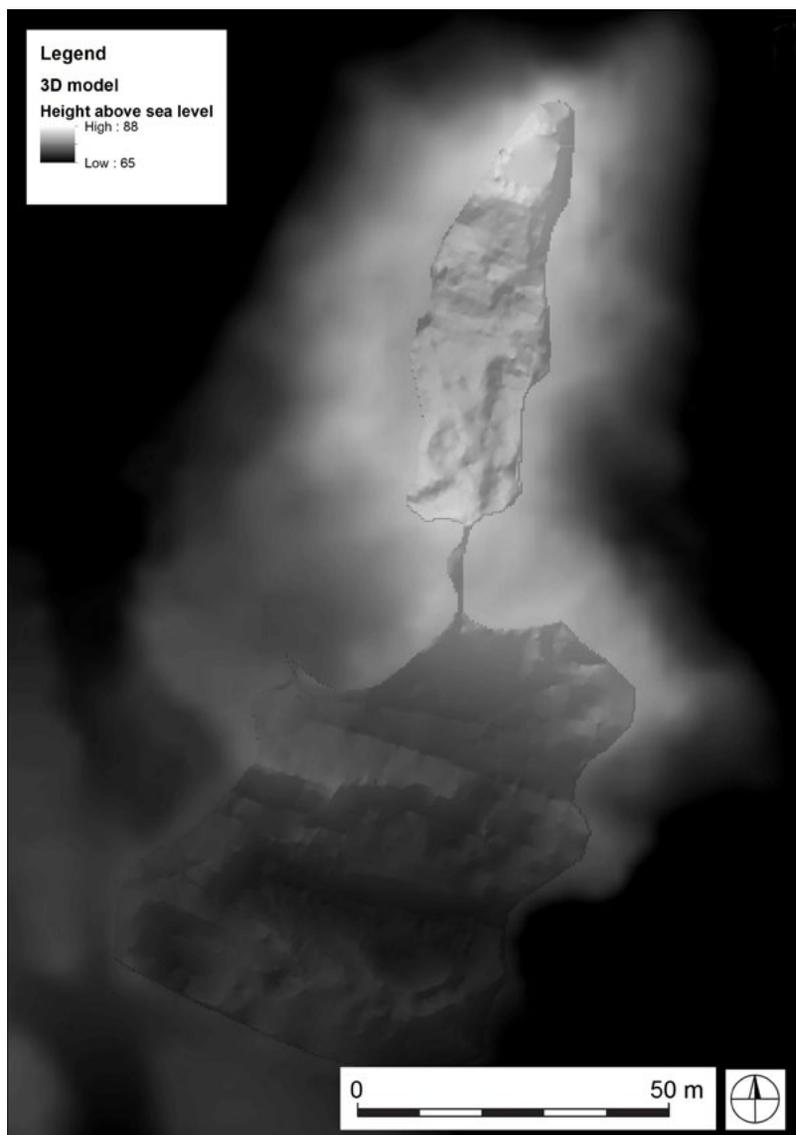


FIGURE 10.6: LIDAR DIGITAL TERRAIN MODEL OF CASTLE HILL REVEALING THE EXTENSION OF BANK AND DITCH THROUGH WATLING STREET.

westwards. The extant remains suggests a linear east-west stretch of ditch but the geophysics (see below) and feature 'j' (Figure 10.4 and see below) indicate a curving ditch following the hill contours like the bank (Figure 10.4: 'g'). The LiDAR terrain model supports this theory; it appears that alignment of the upper end of Watling Street follows that of the castle ditch, with the buildings and house plots fronting along the routeway (see Figure 10.7). Watling Street (previously known as Barn Lane or Baron Lane) was traditionally used to delineate the extent of the Earl of Leicester's property (Potter 1842, 65).

Feature 'j' (Figure 10.4) is also a curvilinear depression not readily explained. The geophysical response is the same as the ditch edge, suggesting that it is the northern scarp of the curving ditch that has at some time in the past been filled in, most likely when shoring up the cliff face

of the quarry. This is supported by OS maps from the 1960s which depict a ditch in this position revealing that a portion of this Scheduled Monument has been lost to quarrying since the 1960s. Feature 'k' (Figure 10.4) is an egg-shaped depression in the southern scarp base of the ditch (Figure 10.4: 'i'), measuring 8m by 14m. The identify of this feature is uncertain. Its morphology is similar to an explosion crater and the feature may be the remains of dynamiting of the bedrock in this location, since the geophysics indicate bedrock at the surface here.

Feature 'l' (Figure 10.4) is a clearly defined deep, narrow, curvilinear runnel in the ground surface heading from the northern part of the hill, across the ditch and swinging westwards. It is 3.6m wide and 0.5m deep and can be seen clearly on aerial photography heading off the lower plateau on to the crossroads of The Navins and Watling Street, and possibly continuing across the scrub land to the west towards lower ground. Given its narrowness and depth it is interpreted as a track for wheel barrows, possibly carrying quarried granite blocks down to a working area. Local knowledge suggests that the road name 'The Navins' derives its name from navvies who built the road (Hynd pers. comm.). Features 'm' and 'n' are shallow curvilinear depressions of uncertain interpretation although they may be the result of natural weathering. Features

'o' and 'p' (Figure 10.4) are circular pits of small and large magnitude respectively, and are also of uncertain interpretation. This is also the point where the majority of walkers enter and exit the hill, causing erosion.

#### Earth Resistance Results and Interpretation

Earth resistance survey at Castle Hill, Mountsorrel, was carried out in two blocks, one on the upper plateau, and one on the lower plateau (Figure 10.7). The steep slope separating these two areas was omitted due to it comprising mostly bedrock, cliff and woodland zones, and posing safety issues to the survey team. The upper survey block covered as much ground as possible in this supposed core zone of the castle grounds, although as with the topographic survey the area available was limited by encroaching summer vegetation and by the large war memorial platform at the northern end. The



FIGURE 10.7: LOCATION OF THE EARTH RESISTANCE SURVEY GRIDS ON THE UPPER AND LOWER PLATEAUX OF MOUNTSORREL CASTLE.

lower survey block consisted of a column of grids from the steep scarp of the upper plateau to Castle Hill road to the south, including the large ditch and accompanying bank. In both areas some grids were partial due to vegetation or other obstructions.

The results of the earth resistance on the Upper Plateau of Castle Hill are presented in Figure 10.8, and an interpretation of anomalies is offered in Figure 10.9. A description and interpretation of identified anomalies is also presented in Table 10.1. The earth resistance survey for the Lower Plateau is plotted in Figure 10.10, with interpreted anomalies outlined in Figure 10.11.

Earth resistance survey detected a number of high and low-resistance anomalies some of which are likely to represent archaeology. Interpretation has been hindered to a degree, however, due to the soils on the

hilltop exhibiting a limited range of responses. An example of this is that the response from the ditch, where one would expect very low-resistance, is almost identical to that of the bank, which one would expect to be re-deposited topsoil and subsoil exhibiting a mid-range response. Interpretations therefore must remain tentative. No clear examples of built structures were found, although on the upper plateau there are a number of low resistance features which may represent robbed-out foundation trenches. Also here were geometric features within the areas of bedrock suggesting rock-cut features. Unfortunately the area around the northern mound did not exhibit any anomalies, only a gently undulating mid-range response typical of background geology. In the lower plateau the large ditch was detected, as was the accompanying bank, although the latter did not spatially overlap tightly with the bank. It can only be assumed that the bank was not constructed in layers of the same material, but in sections using different soils. The geophysical survey provides more detail on the ditch that isolates the upper plateau from the lower unit. This extended in a curving fashion eastwards and has been quarried away there, and also probably extended westwards too, again curving around the hill contours, since the edges of the continuation of the filled-in ditch can be discerned in the geophysical

response. Interestingly the ditch, which is some 1.5m deep presently, appears to extend deeper into the soils of the hillside, since the geophysical response does not show evidence of near-surface bedrock. This suggests that despite the bedrock outcropping in various places, there are deep deposits of soil, backing up Ardron's findings that there are 'considerable deposits' on the plateaux. Future geophysical survey may choose to target the large area of grassland to the southwest which may be an extension to the bailey area, and appears untouched by modern development and historic quarrying.

#### Discussion

Mountsorrel castle was built in a prime location overlooking an important north-south route of communication through Midland England where it passed through a narrow gap between wild granite countryside to the west and the

Anomaly	Description	Interpretation
r1	Large homogenous area of very high resistance.	Near-surface bedrock.
r2	Large homogenous area of high resistance.	Near-surface bedrock.
r3	Consistent linear of low resistance, 1.7m across.	Possible rock-cut ditch.
r4	Roughly circular area of low-resistance, 7.5m in diameter. Corresponds with topographic depression with square edges.	Cut feature. Possibly a building platform with robbed-out foundations.
r5	Low resistance area, 2.2m wide, heading outside survey area.	Cut feature.
r6	Low resistance area, 5.5m in diameter. Corresponds with depression in topographic survey.	Cut feature.
r7	Amorphous low-resistance area, 13m wide, corresponding with the southern mound of the plateau, which exhibits many small topographic pockets and grooves.	Pits and ditches within this larger topographic feature. Possibly incorporates Ardron's backfilled trench.
r8	Curvilinear area of low resistance, 2.2m wide, c. 10m long.	Cut feature. Possible ditch around southern mound.
r9	Block of very-high resistance, with a consistent geometric edge.	Natural bedrock of the crag. The unnatural, linear southern edge of this is due to the bank (r14) being deposited in an orderly fashion.
r10, r11	Amorphous area of very high resistance.	Natural bedrock near the surface.
r12	Curving block of low-resistance, 10–15m wide, with an outline of even-lower resistance. Corresponds with large ditch of topographic survey.	Ditch that has filled with low-resistance material. Silty initial infill marks the edges of the feature. Enlargement on SE section maybe an area of later quarrying in the wall of the ditch.
r13	U-shaped anomaly of low-resistance, in line with r12. Exhibits same response as edges of r12.	Continuation of ditch evidenced at r12.
r14	Large low-resistance area. Overlaps with the bank north of the ditch, although not symmetrically.	Bank. Redeposited topsoil and subsoil from the ditch.
r15	Long, narrow, low-resistance curvilinear feature, c. 1m wide. Corresponds with topographic feature 'k'.	Barrow track that has cut into bedrock and subsequently filled with low-resistance material.
r16	High-resistance linear feature, c. 1.5m wide, c. 10m long.	Possible wall, partly robbed-out. Possible near-surface bedrock.

TABLE 10.1: DESCRIPTION AND INTERPRETATION OF EARTH RESISTANCE SURVEY ANOMALIES IDENTIFIED AT CASTLE HILL, MOUNTSORREL.

Soar floodplain to the east. The site offered advantages for defence, surveillance and display and topographically bears some resemblance to other Leicestershire castles at Belvoir, Castle Donnington, and Whitwick (Cantor 1978, 33; Creighton 1997, 31). The topographic context of Castle Hill is the sort of promontory-type site that was exploited by Norman castle-builders at locations such as Hastings (East Sussex), Lydford (Devon) Castle Neroche, Richmond, and East Harptree (all Somerset) (Davison 1973; Brown 2008). At some such sites, castles were abandoned at relatively early dates and had little impact on the longer-term development of the settlement pattern, although at Mountsorrel the castle was accompanied from an early stage by a settlement that outlived it.

Assessing the form of the castle during the medieval period is challenging given issues of preservation and the sporadic character of previous archaeological work, although the data derived from the current survey allow the following tentative interpretation. There is little evidence to support the premise that the castle had a motte and bailey form as neither of the two mounds on the upper plateau are convincing candidates as artificial

mottes; instead, the whole of the upper plateau at one time had motte-like qualities, with the natural rocky topography providing a pre-positioned raised platform with steep sides. This raised area measured 30m x 70m and, given the geological setting atop a hilltop quarried from prehistory to the present, is likely to have been furnished with a curtain wall from an early stage. On the upper plateau one or both of the mounds may have been furnished with towers or adapted as strongpoints on the curtain wall. Lying near the point of the promontory, and thus on or near the putative curtain wall, the northernmost mound commands particularly extensive views over the Soar valley and the Leicester Road, as viewshed analysis shows (Figure 10.12). This area would also have been the best location in terms of being seen from the wider landscape, and the castle would have acted as a conspicuous symbol of lordly power in the area.

The topographic and geophysical survey both provide evidence of a ditch running east-west mid-way across the upper plateau, sub-dividing it into two distinct units, with the southernmost mound forming another strongpoint or the base for a tower within the southern half and overlooking the bailey below it. The geophysical

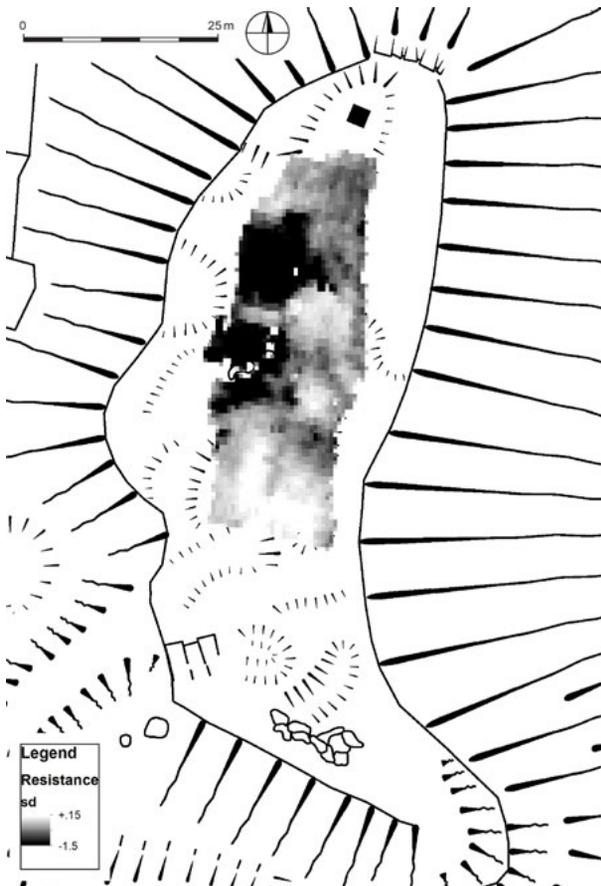


FIGURE 10.8: RESULTS OF THE EARTH RESISTANCE SURVEY IN THE UPPER PLATEAU OF MOUNTSORREL CASTLE.

response of the area around the southern mound is low resistance with even lower resistance pockets within it, suggesting an area of built up soil that has had trenches and pits dug into the top. No obvious evidence of buildings was detected although circular and linear low resistance anomalies circling the mound may indicate surrounding structural works. The plan is unconventional for an early castle, suggesting the moulding, scarping and adaptation of an exceptionally strong natural site rather than the imposition of a more 'standardised' defensive arrangement of a motte and bailey.

The ditch of the lower plateau skirts around the base of the crag, with upcast from it made into a bank in the berm between the ditch and the crag. If one were to reconstruct the position of a medieval causeway across the ditch it would perhaps be at the bottom of the modern steps up the side of the crag, since this is the most gradual part of the slope. Alternatively, the current causeway across the ditch may preserve the medieval access point. It is likely that the bailey would have extended southwards onto a natural extension of the lower plateau, perhaps to the lip of the cliff above The Green some 70m further south, while the flat ground to the west of The Navins may have also been utilised. Earthworks here visible in the LiDAR strongly suggest the presence of archaeology, although

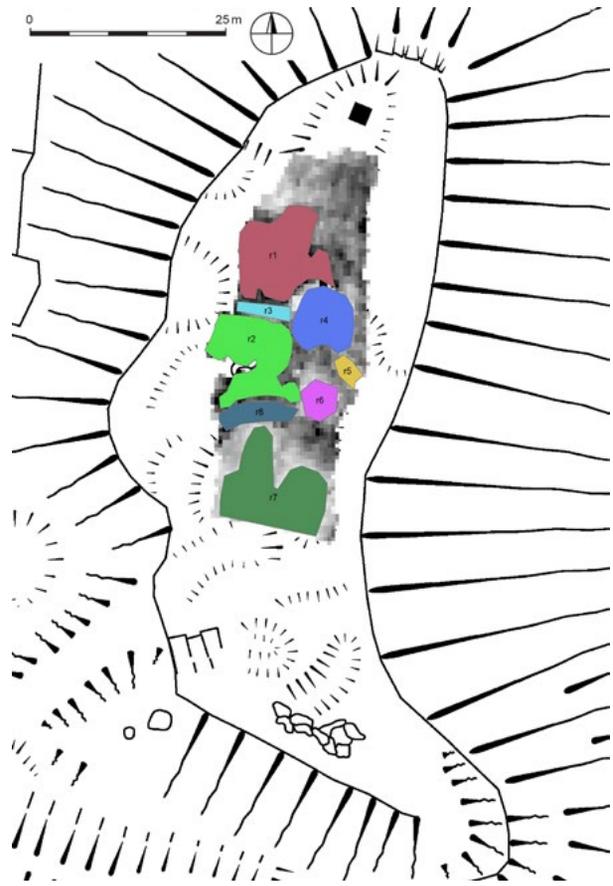


FIGURE 10.9: ANOMALIES WITHIN THE RESISTANCE SURVEY OF THE UPPER PLATEAU OF MOUNTSORREL CASTLE. SEE TABLE 10.1 FOR DESCRIPTION AND INTERPRETATION.

presently undated. Given the lack of physical remains or tight archaeological dating evidence, clear phasing of the castle is difficult, although it seems clear that the upper plateau was always the heart of the castle complex, with the site growing in complexity either through accretion or sub-division. Another consideration is that occupation on Castle Hill may not have ceased entirely following the castle's documented slighting; the green-glazed ceramics found by Ardron in 1952 may well suggest some kind of continuing manorial occupation on the demilitarised site.

In terms of the form of the castle and its setting in the 'Anarchy', it is clear that by the time of the 1149–1153 pact a settlement existed at Mountsorrel that was very closely associated with the castle, but also that the castle itself comprised two distinct units. The treaty granted the Earl of Chester with his company [*familia*] access to the 'borough and baileys' [*burgo et baliis*] but also stipulated that Ranulf alone shall be received into the 'capital castle' [*in dominico castro*] subject to the Earl of Leicester making him an oath of fidelity (Coulson 1995, 66–7; see also King 1980, 2, 6–7). Given the very clear division of the castle complex into upper and lower areas, as indicated by this investigation, it seems very likely that the 'baileys' denotes the lower plateau (and maybe the attached settlement), while the 'capital castle' was the

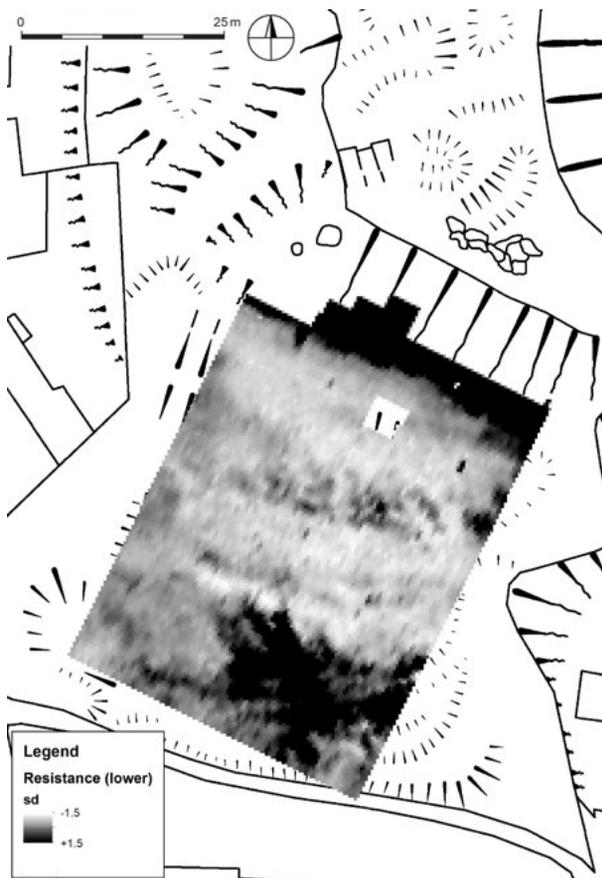


FIGURE 10.10: RESULTS OF EARTH RESISTANCE SURVEY OF THE LOWER PLATEAU OF MOUNTSORREL CASTLE.

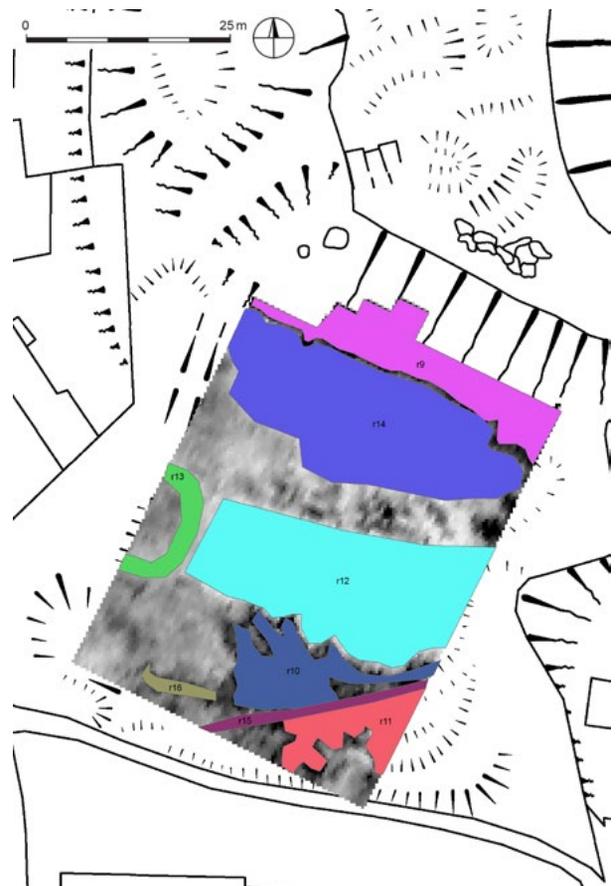


FIGURE 10.11: ANOMALIES IN THE RESISTANCE SURVEY OF THE LOWER PLATEAU OF MOUNTSORREL CASTLE. SEE TABLE 10.1 FOR DESCRIPTION AND INTERPRETATION.

upper plateau, with different protocols of access operating for each zone. To Coulson, commenting on the context of these arrangements within the treaty: ‘... entry to, and even of refuge from pursuit in, a subject’s castle was stipulated not out of excessive fear but to ensure the exercise of the necessarily arbitrary rights of superiority’ (Coulson 1995, 67). In other words, the Earl of Chester’s tenorial relationship with Leicester was played out through his different rights of access to separate elements of the castle and its associated settlement. As such, the archaeology of Castle Hill provides valuable physical tangibility to the celebrated pact between the earls that tells us so much about contemporary political climate and lordly protocol.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, the archaeological remains of the castle at Mountsorrel are fragmentary to the extent that to the casual visitor it has ‘vanished without trace’ (Cantor 1978, 33). The current survey has, however, highlighted that while some parts of the castle landscape have been lost as recently as the last century, the extant remains are more extensive and intelligible than previously thought. Additionally the evidence suggests that substantial medieval deposits remain sealed within Castle Hill, and adjacent grassland, offering prime ground for future archaeological investigation.

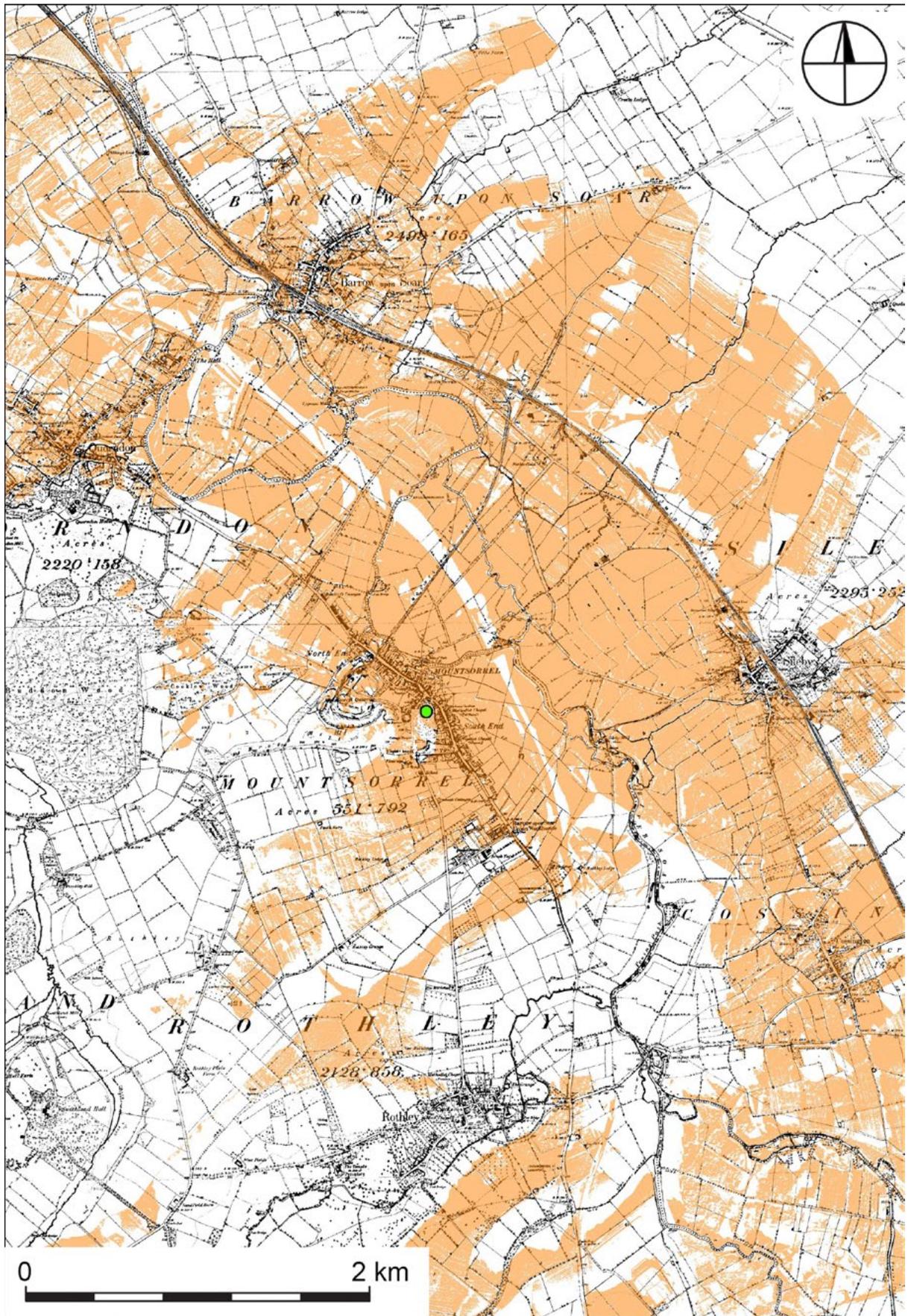


FIGURE 10.12: VIEWSHED ANALYSIS FROM A THEORETICAL TOWER 8M HIGH ON CASTLE HILL LOCATED WHERE THE WAR MEMORIAL CURRENTLY STANDS. THE DOT IS THE OBSERVER POINT AND THE ORANGE SHADING IS VISIBLE GROUND.

# Chapter 11

## Rampton, ‘Giant’s Hill’, Cambridgeshire

Duncan Wright, Steven Trick and Oliver Creighton

### Abstract

*The site known as Giant’s Hill, Rampton, was the subject of geophysical and topographic survey. Giant’s Hill comprises a trapezoidal earthwork platform surrounded by a water-filled ditch, located at the eastern edge of the village of Rampton, Cambridgeshire. The site has previously been identified as a castle of King Stephen, constructed during his fenland campaign of 1143–44 in order to restrict the activities of Geoffrey de Mandeville, who was using the Isle of Ely to launch raids into the surrounding countryside. While there is little direct archaeological evidence to convincingly corroborate this theory, the location of the site suggests that it was positioned in order to control movement between the southern fen edge and Ely. The form of Giant’s Hill also bears some resemblance to Burwell castle which can be more confidently dated to the Anarchy, although the chronological sequence of both sites is complicated by their subsequent use as manorial residences. At Rampton it is possible that the original castle was furnished with a tower, but the fortification may never have been finished and military occupation is likely to have been brief. Giant’s Hill later emerged as the moated residence of the de Lisle family, who in the late thirteenth century probably promoted a market immediately outside their lordly precinct.*

### Introduction

Located at the eastern end of the village of Rampton, Cambridgeshire, lie earthworks known as Giant’s Hill (centred TL 43016808) (Figure 11.1). The complex is situated to the east of the parish church of All Saints’ in pastoral land between 5m and 7m above OD on the southern edge of the fens. The monument and surrounding landscape were subject to an archaeological survey undertaken in two stages between 25 and 26 January 2014 and between 27 and 28 October 2014. The earthworks of the castle and associated features are classified as a Scheduled Monument (National Monument No: 20452). While all of the scheduled area is located to the north of the main thoroughfare of Church End, a series of further earthworks extending to the south of the road have also been mapped by the OS. Giant’s Hill is located on Late Jurassic mudstones of the Ampthill Clay Formation, but is immediately bounded to the east by Kimmeridge Clay mudstones. Extending northward from Rampton parish, the peat fens are underlain by similar

mudstone geology to the site, but were deposited following the retreat of Quaternary glaciations.

### Historical and Archaeological Background

Relatively little archaeological investigation has been undertaken in Rampton parish, especially compared to the neighbouring parishes of Cottenham and Oakington (Mortimer 2000; Sayer *et al.* 2011). Evidence from elsewhere around the southern fen edge suggests a well-settled prehistoric landscape, but relatively little material has been recovered from Rampton parish itself. The earliest evidence for human activity in the area comprises two Neolithic flint axes found during the sinking of building foundations in the southern part of Rampton village (Cambs. HER: 05183). Iron-Age archaeology is better-represented in the area, however, with extensive settlements which continued in use into the Romano-British period found in the parishes bounding Rampton to the south at Oakington and Longstanton (Cambs. HER: MCB16351; MCB16370). In the south-west part of Rampton parish ceramics dating to the third and fourth centuries AD have also been found (Cambs. HER: 05285). It is unlikely that the dearth of archaeological evidence in Rampton parish dating from before the medieval period is merely a product of chance, especially when the significant material found elsewhere is considered. Rather, it seems likely that Rampton’s close proximity to the fen edge prevented extensive or prolonged settlement before the early medieval period — prehistoric and Romano-British communities instead settled further south in a landscape which still allowed them to take advantage of fen resources, while being less liable to flooding.

It is only during the early medieval period that Rampton appears to have developed as a more permanent, and perhaps even a high-status, settlement focus. Fragments of at least five Anglo-Saxon grave covers and parts of a probable cross-shaft have been found during the restoration of All Saints’ church (Fox 1922). In the pre-Conquest period such stone sculpture is usually only associated with high status sites, and an ecclesiastical context at Rampton is hinted at by recovery of the cross-shaft fragments. Significantly, written sources indicate that Rampton was a holding of the minster at Ely by at least the tenth century, possibly as a dependent settlement of the more extensive community at Willingham. Settlements on the fen edge like Rampton are apparently associated with monastic foundations

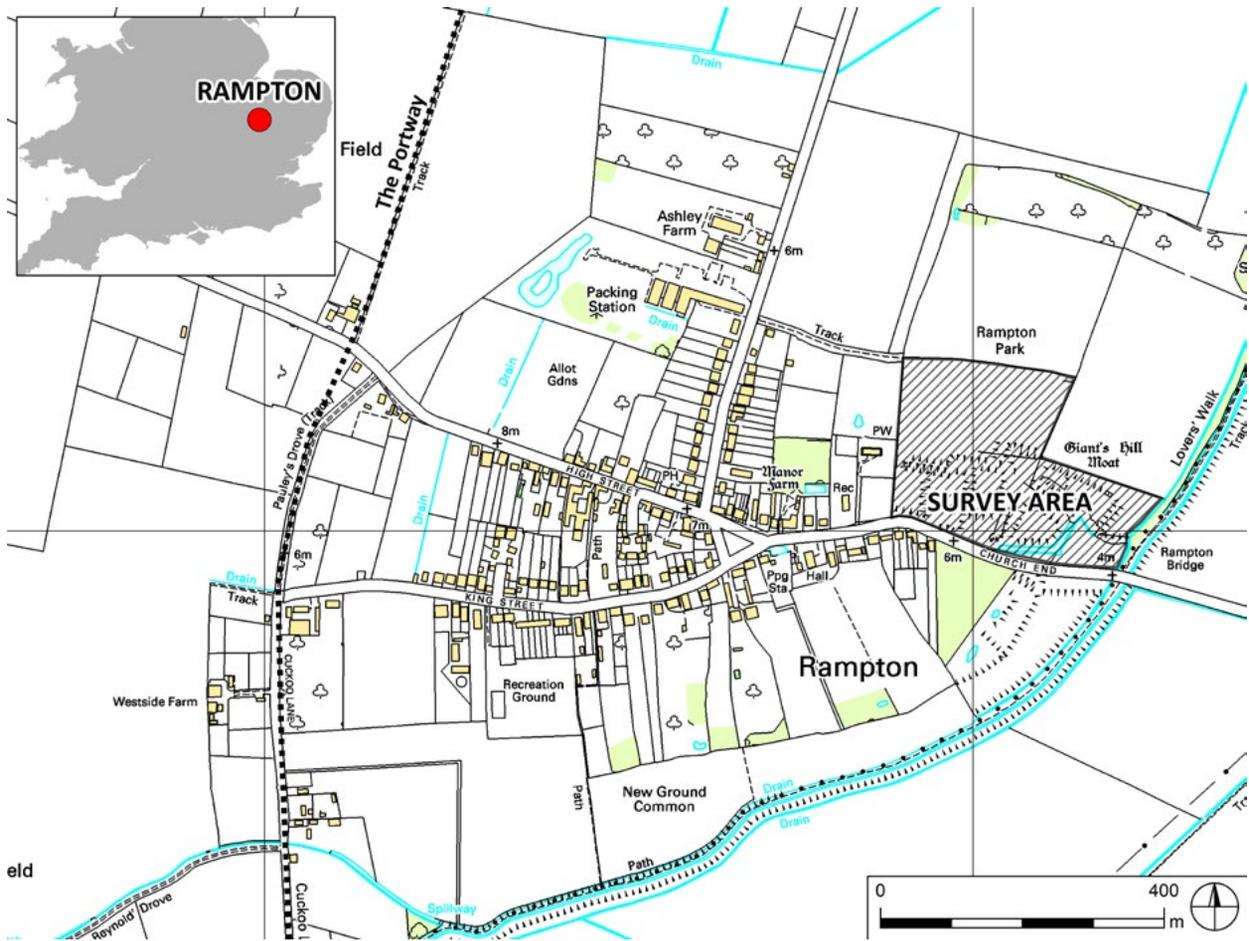


FIGURE 11.1: LOCATION OF THE SURVEY AREA IN THE LOCAL LANDSCAPE AND RAMPTON IN SOUTHERN BRITAIN (INSET). THE SURVEY AREA IS SHADED AND THE DASHED LINE TO THE WEST OF THE VILLAGE REPRESENTS THE ORIGINAL ALIGNMENT OF THE HISTORICAL ROUTE KNOWN AS THE PORTWAY. © CROWN COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHT 2015. ORDNANCE SURVEY (DIGIMAP LICENCE).

from the Middle Saxon period, when the dependent holdings of a minster were key to sustaining monastic communities (Wright 2010; 2015). The earthworks immediately east of All Saints' church may relate in part to pre-Conquest settlement. At the time of the Domesday Survey the manor of Rampton, held by the tenant Roger from Picot, Sheriff of Cambridge, was of moderate value compared with surrounding estates (*Domesday Book, Cambridgeshire*, ed. Rumble 1981, 32,31). Around 1092, the church was included in Picot the sheriff's foundation grant to the Augustinian canons of Cambridge, later Barnwell priory, together with two thirds of his under-tenant's demesne tithes (VCH Cambs. IX 1989, 216).

The castle at Rampton has been identified by previous commentators as a campaign fortification of King Stephen that was built in 1143–44 during his action against the rebellious Earl of Essex, Geoffrey de Mandeville, who was leading a fenland revolt (e.g. Brown and Taylor 1977, 97–9; Purton 2009, 272). Clear parallels can be drawn between the site and similar earthworks at Burwell, Cambridgeshire, some 15km to the south-east, which were the subject of another survey as part of this project (this volume, Chapter 2). Unlike

Burwell, however, a castle at Rampton is not specifically referenced in twelfth-century written sources, but the morphological resemblance of the site to Burwell, in addition to its strategic location (see below), suggests that it was built as part of the same campaign. It has been suggested that the fortifications built around the southern fen edge of Cambridgeshire rapidly became obsolete following de Mandeville's death, and at Rampton as at Burwell it is likely that castles had not been finished by the time they became surplus to immediate military requirements (e.g. RCHME 1972, 41–2).

Also comparable to the situation at Burwell, it is thought that the construction of the castle at Rampton led to at least partial desertion of pre-existing settlement (e.g. Creighton 2005, 200). The earthwork remains of what have been interpreted as crofts underlie the fortification at Giant's Hill, which was apparently established towards the eastern limits of the settlement, which extended at least as far as the church of All Saints' and possibly further west. The wider landscape context of Giant's Hill suggests that the primary motivation for locating the castle was its proximity to a north-south causeway running across the fens, 1km to the west.

The route, known as ‘the Portway’, was the main road from Cambridge to Ely during the medieval period. Entering Rampton parish via Histon, to the immediate north of the parish the Portway joined up to the Aldreth Causeway, which together with the Earith and Stuntney Causeways, represented one of only three overland routes onto the Isle of Ely before the draining of the fens (see below; Smail 1972). Control of the Portway and the Aldreth Causeway to the north would therefore have been of fundamental importance in controlling movement into and out of Ely, and given its context as a likely blockading fortress against Geoffrey de Mandeville, is likely the main reason behind the siting of a castle in Rampton.

Seemingly built or re-built around the time that Giant’s Hill was established, the nearby parish church of All Saints includes elements of twelfth-century work including parts of the tower and jambs in the chancel arch, used during a subsequent phase of rebuilding (Pevsner 1954, 432). Possibly encouraged by the construction of the castle, the focus of settlement at Rampton shifted to the south-west of All Saints around a Y-shaped street pattern which also encompasses a village green. The green is associated with a series of regular tofts still visible on nineteenth-century maps. The village appears to have retained its somewhat moderate size throughout the post-medieval and later periods, in comparison to nearby centres such as Cottenham and Willingham which underwent more significant expansion.

In the later medieval period the manor of Rampton was the site of a residence of the Lisle family. In 1270 Robert de Lisle was granted a market and fair at Rampton, and a domestic chapel was licensed for John de Lisle in 1344 and for Roger le Scrope in 1403 (VCH Cambs. IX 1989, 214–16). An unusual reference in Close and Patent rolls dating to 1343 alludes to a chamber ‘in the moat’, suggesting at least part of the manorial complex was located at Giant’s Hill. The premise that Giant’s Hill was also a later medieval manorial focus is further supported by reports of building foundations which were still visible at the site in 1908 (VCH Cambs. IX 1989, 214). A park apparently adjoined the moat and a building named Hall Barn stood just outside it in 1754. Like many manorial sites in Cambridgeshire, it appears that the focus of the elite residence at Rampton shifted to drier ground at some point in the late medieval or early post-medieval periods (Ravensdale 1974, 6–10). During the Second World War Giant’s Hill was utilised as a spigot mortar emplacement by the home guard and a one metre diameter concrete pier was set into the top of the castle mound near the south-western corner. In 1942 excavation for the emplacement revealed foundations of rubble and bricks, thought to date from the fifteenth century (Cambs. HER: 01771). The earthworks of Giant’s Hill and its surrounding fields are today used for a combination of community recreation and pastoral farming.

## Map Analysis

The earliest available map for Rampton is held in the Cambridgeshire archive and consists of a plan originally dating to 1718 but redrawn in 1754 (Cambridgeshire Archive: No KTR/324/3/18). A reproduction of the map could not be obtained, but the Victoria County History for the area includes a composite plan based on the original (VCH Cambs. IX 1989, 210–12, fig. 13). The map depicts a trapezoidal moated site at Giant’s Hill, immediately bounded by a field labelled ‘Park’ to the north. This presumably represents the park associated with the manorial residence recorded in the written sources. A distinctive Y-shape pattern, assumed to be the product of a process of deliberate settlement planning during the medieval period, is depicted with narrow strip fields emanating from the plots to the north and south. Slightly confusingly, buildings and plots are also depicted in the area now occupied by the village green, a place previously thought to represent the site of the market recorded from the thirteenth century and where the medieval market cross still stands. It is possible that the area was subject to gradual infilling as the population of the village expanded in the post-medieval period, or an alternative possibility is that the market and fair were only held sporadically. A further previously unrecognised market place site, and one which may predate the re-planning of Rampton into its distinctive Y-shaped village pattern with central green, is also detectable immediately outside of the earthwork remains of Giant’s Hill. The eighteenth-century map illustrates a notable widening of the street known today as Church End, a typical morphological trait of former market-place sites (Taylor 1982, 21–5). Markets formed the focus for commercial activity outside many castle gates, providing areas where lords could foster economic and social development close to their power bases (Creighton 2005, 163), and it seems possible that the widening of the road adjacent to Giant’s Hill reflects such an initiative by the Lisle family.

The OS First Edition 25” map for the area dates to 1888 and provides a more detailed depiction of Rampton and its hinterland (Figure 11.2). Giant’s Hill is depicted as a trapezoidal platform with a surrounding ditch labelled ‘Moat’. The south-west corner of the ditch counterscarp is shown as extending for approximately 60m into the neighbouring field. To the north of the ditch a series of rectilinear earthworks are shown projecting in a roughly north to south orientation, and to the north-west of the main complex a circular mound is illustrated. The First Edition also labels the field to the north of the survey area as ‘Rampton Park’, consistent with earlier mapping. Significantly, the major east to west thoroughfare now known as Church End is labelled ‘Hall Lane’, probably referencing the former site of the manorial residence at the castle. In the southern part of the parish the line of the Portway is preserved, although the southern extent was by this time called ‘Cuckoos Lane’ in the south. The

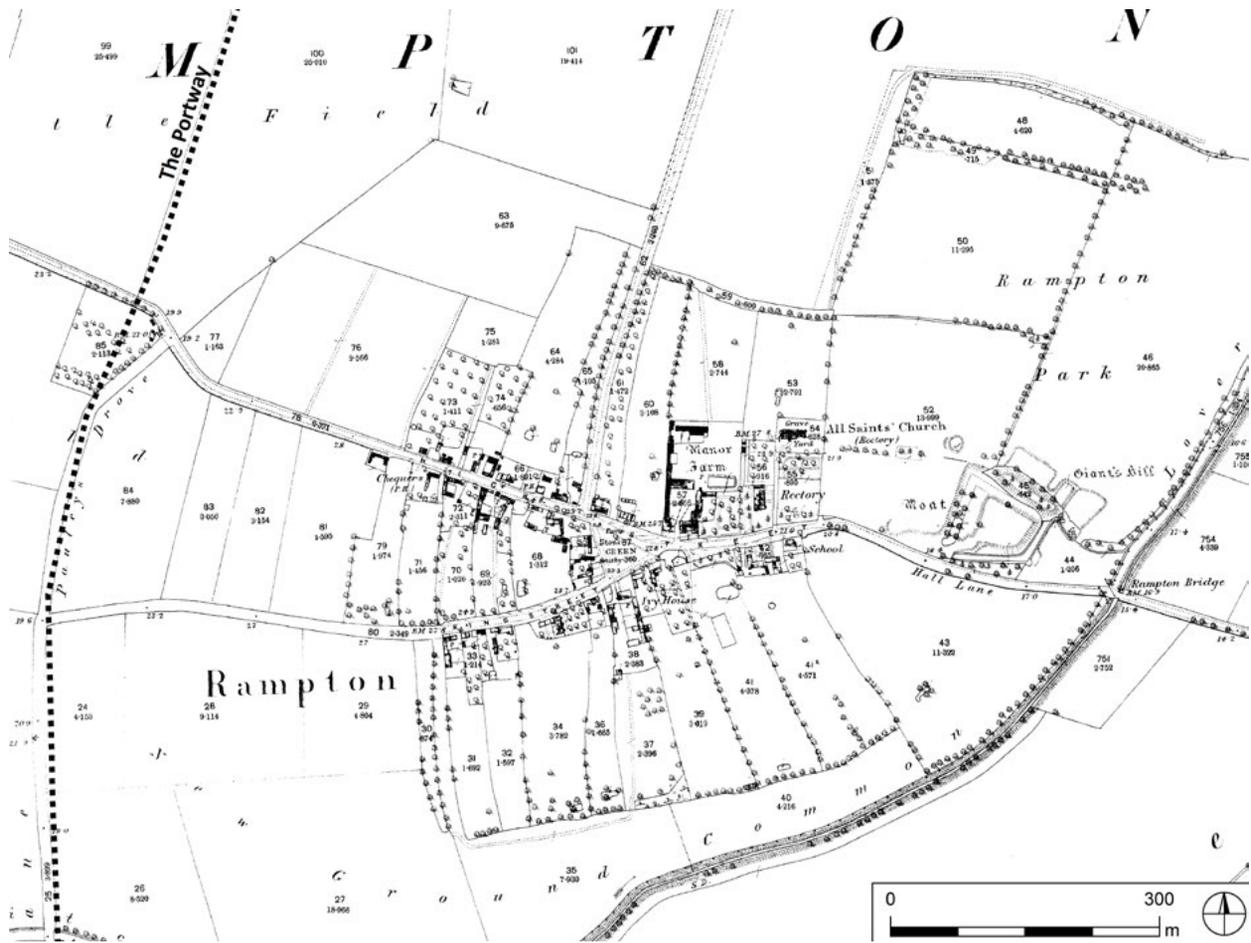


FIGURE 11.2: OS FIRST EDITION 25" MAP OF RAMPTON (1888). THE SURVEY AREA IS SHADED, AND THE LINE OF THE PORTWAY DASHED.  
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section of the Portway immediately west of the village is labelled 'Panley's Drove' but the route terminates where it meets the east-west orientated High Street. The northerly extension of the historic route to Ely was by the late nineteenth century preserved for around 500m as a field boundary, and today it continues to be perpetuated as a farm track (Figure 11.1). Giant's Hill is illustrated in almost identical fashion in subsequent OS mapping throughout most of the twentieth century, although on more recent editions a complex of earthworks is shown on the southern side of Church End. The earthworks mirror almost identically the alignment of the historic settlement pattern of Rampton, and analysis of LiDAR data indicates that they can be confidently identified as a more easterly extension of former tenement plots (see below).

#### Earthwork Description and Interpretation

Situated 200m east of the parish church, Giant's Hill comprises an irregular moated island (Figure 11.4), approximately quadrangular in form, with maximum dimensions of 50m N-S and 45m E-W (Figure 11.3: 'a'). In plan the north and west sides of the island are straight while the east and south sides are curving. Much of the

interior of the island is obscured by vegetation, although this appears relatively flat. The position of a Second World War spigot mortar emplacement in the south-west corner of the moat (Figure 11.3: 'b') is marked by a 1m wide circular concrete feature. The emplacement was surrounded by a ditch, slight traces of which also survive, although these are not mapped in detail. While raised approximately 1.5m above the surrounding landscape, the island is certainly not a motte, as sometimes claimed (see for example the Scheduled Monument Description: National Monument No. 20452). A broad flat-bottomed ditch, partly water-filled and averaging 20m in width (Figure 11.3: 'c'), surrounds the moat. A land drain feeds the north-east corner of the moat (Figure 11.3: 'd') and an artificial ramped causeway (Figure 11.3: 'e') provides access from the south-west corner. On the north side of the moat an irregular linear mound (Figure 11.3: 'f'), approximately 70m long, can confidently be identified as a spoil heap comprising upcast from the excavated moat. A series of three rectangular enclosures (Figure 11.3: 'g', 'h', 'i'), defined by earthwork banks up to 0.75m high and 2–4m across, occupy the zone immediately to the north. The easternmost two enclosures are smaller ('h' is 30m east-west and 20m north-south, 'g' is 22m east-west and 30m north-south) and immediately adjoin

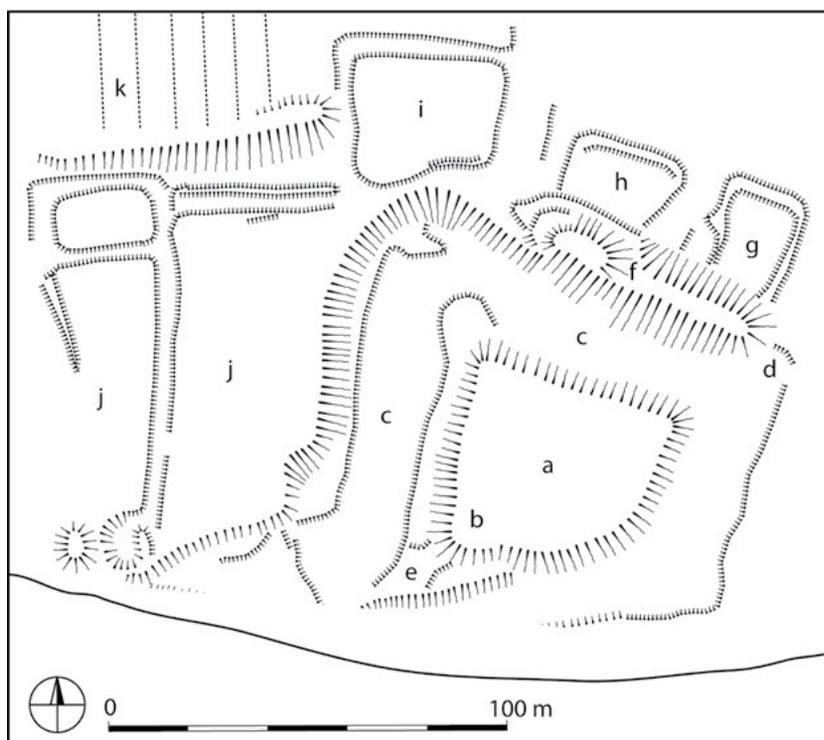


FIGURE 11.3: ANNOTATED EARTHWORK PLAN OF GIANT'S HILL, RAMPTON.

and may underlie the linear mound; the western enclosure (Figure 11.3: 'i') is larger (40m east–west and 35m north–south). Two much larger rectangular enclosures (Figure 11.3: 'j'), both with internal sub-divisions, lie west of the moat, and further enclosures lie between this area and the parish church to the west. Ridge and furrow (Figure 11.3: 'k') on a north–south alignment runs up to a field boundary to the north side of the two enclosures (Figure 11.3: 'j'). Measured earthwork survey at Giant's Hill has therefore identified numerous features, indicating the complex functional and chronological development of the site.

#### Geophysical Survey: Methodology, Results and Interpretation

Geophysical investigation at Giant's Hill consisted of an earth resistance survey, undertaken on accessible areas of the central moated 'island' and the earthworks on its immediate periphery to the north and east. Survey was undertaken in three zones: Area A on the moated island; Area B focussing on earthworks to the north of the ditch; and Area C on earthworks to the east (Figure 11.4). Survey identified a number of anomalies of likely archaeological potential which enhance our understanding of the historic development of Giant's Hill (Figures 11.4–11.10).

#### Area A

Area A is characterised by a largely flat grassed area, the southern half of which features the circular platform of the Second World War spigot mortar emplacement with

its surrounding trench. This has apparently destroyed any underlying archaeology. The north-western corner of the survey extended down the bank and included a small area at the base of the ditch. The results of the survey are shown in Figure 11.6, with identified anomalies shown in Figure 11.7. The description and interpretation of the anomalies are detailed in Table 11.1, below.

#### Area B

Area B comprises a 150m-long area of land running roughly east–west across a concentration of earthworks to the north of the moat. The results of the survey are shown in Figure 11.8, with identified anomalies shown in Figure 11.9. The description and interpretation of the anomalies is detailed in Table 11.1. Interpretation of the geophysical plot of Area B was made more challenging by the ground conditions, which were

generally waterlogged and characterised by very low resistance of around 5 ohms. This background of low resistance makes the identification of low-resistance features very difficult and while anomalies do appear more clearly when contrasted with neighbouring high-resistance areas, caution is necessary in assuming that these are true archaeological elements rather than background-level resistance.

#### Area C

Area C comprises a small area in a paddock to the east of the ditch where a series of subtle earthworks are visible. The anomalies identified are shown in Figure 11.10.

#### Summary

Earth resistance survey was successful in detecting a number of anomalies of likely archaeological origin. In Area A rectilinear responses identified anomalies consistent with rectilinear structures and enclosures on the castle mound (especially anomalies r5–8). In Area B the very low background resistance (5 ohms) reduced the resolution of the survey, but investigation suggests that the enclosures have compacted interiors which may represented metallurgy. Within these interiors a series of lower-resistance anomalies suggests further features, although their identity is uncertain. Survey in Area C identified concentric low-resistance anomalies, although the limited survey makes it difficult to determine whether these are archaeological or geological features.

Anomaly	Description	Interpretation
r1	Curving low-resistance anomaly coinciding with earthwork around the WWII spigot mortar emplacement.	Ditch of spigot mortar emplacement.
r2	Meandering high-resistance anomaly 1.5m wide. WWII ditch appears to have cut through.	Stone-lined or stone-packed field drain emptying into moat.
r3	Rectangular area of high-resistance.	Uncertain. Possible continuation of field drain.
r4	Meandering high-resistance anomaly c. 1.5m wide, widening to 4m at end.	Field drain of same constitution as r2.
r5	Vague high-resistance linear, c. 2m wide, 8m long.	Possible wall or continuation of a field drain system.
r6	Right-angled high-resistance anomaly.	Wall of structure, or part of field drain system.
r7	Low-resistance right-angled edge.	Perimeter ditch or robbed wall foundation.
r8	High-resistance linear c1m wide.	Uncertain, possible field drain.
r9	Low-resistance edge coinciding with edge of castle mound.	Same as r7 or eroded subsoils in the section of the castle mound.
r10	Linear, c. 95m long, LiDAR shows flanked by ditches.	Former causeway.
r11	High-resistance area.	Possible surfacing.
r12	High-resistance area.	Possible surfacing.
r13	High-resistance area.	Possible surfacing.
r14	High-resistance area.	Area of possible surface.
r15	Block of parallel high-resistance linears.	Modern raised causeway.
r16	Amorphous area of background resistance within a high-resistance zone.	Inter-enclosure drainage ditch (northern linear part). Southern end uncertain.
r17	Sub-rectangular uniform area of low-resistance.	Activity area.
r18	Looping area of uniform low-resistance.	Activity area.
r19	Linear of background resistance within high-resistance zone.	Drainage/wall slot.
r20	Broad linear low-resistance anomaly. Corresponds spatially with toft-edge depicted on OS First Edition.	Drainage ditch or ditch associated with modern causeway r15.
r21	Curving low-resistance anomaly c. 5m wide. Similar shapes are possibly visible towards the eastern end of Area C.	Natural geology or ditch.
r22	Curving low-resistance anomaly running concentric to r21.	Natural geology or ditch.

TABLE 11.1: DESCRIPTION AND INTERPRETATION OF GEOPHYSICAL ANOMALIES AT GIANT'S HILL, RAMPTON.

## Discussion / Conclusion

The investigations undertaken by the current research enhance our understanding of the historic development of Giant's Hill and the wider fen-edge landscape and have highlighted numerous areas which would repay further work. Earthwork survey supports previous research in identifying topographical features consistent with an apparently 'unfinished' medieval castle, although with later phases of manorial re-use. Although no written sources reference the construction of a fortification at Rampton, its close resemblance with the documented site at Burwell strongly suggests that Giant's Hill too represents a campaign fortress built by King Stephen in the early 1140s. The *Gesta Stephani*, our most informative source for Stephen's reign, indicates that the king built a series of fen-edge fortresses surrounding the Isle of Ely in order to contain the disruptive raids of

Geoffrey de Mandeville (this volume, Chapter 2). In this regard, the landscape context of Giant's Hill also supports an Anarchy date for original construction as the castle appears to have been built in order to monitor movement along the north-south route historically known as The Portway. Located 1km to the west of Giant's Hill, The Portway was the primary road between Cambridge and Ely throughout the medieval period. Immediately north of Rampton parish the line of The Portway previously skirted the prehistoric enclosure of Belsar's Hill to join the Aldreth Causeway. Controlling movement along The Portway and the Aldreth Causeway beyond would thus have been fundamental for any campaign which sought to prevent access to and from the Isle of Ely.

The particular concern with movement along The Portway to the north of Giant's Hill towards the direction of Ely is highlighted by viewshed analysis for the site

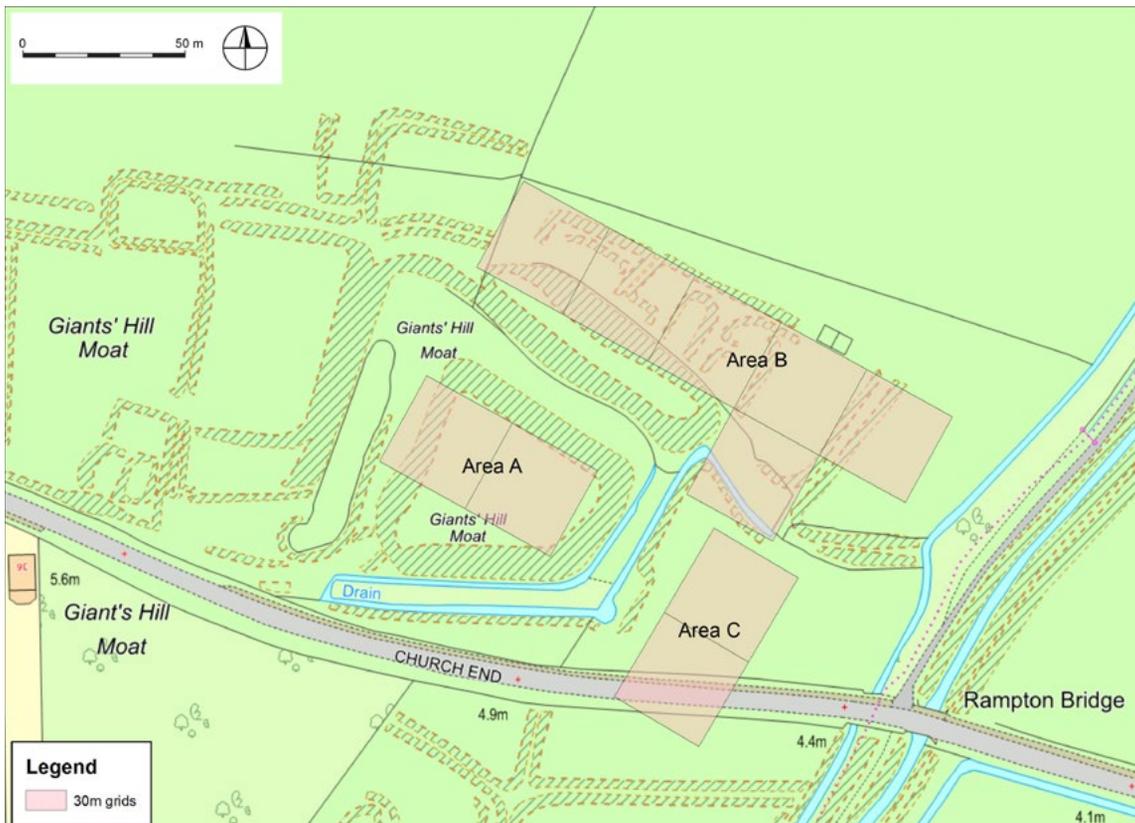


FIGURE 11.4: AREAS OF GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY AT GIANT'S HILL, RAMPTON. © CROWN COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHT 2015. ORDNANCE SURVEY (DIGIMAP LICENCE).



FIGURE 11.5: RESULTS OF THE EARTH RESISTANCE SURVEY AT GIANT'S HILL, RAMPTON. © CROWN COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHT 2015. ORDNANCE SURVEY (DIGIMAP LICENCE).

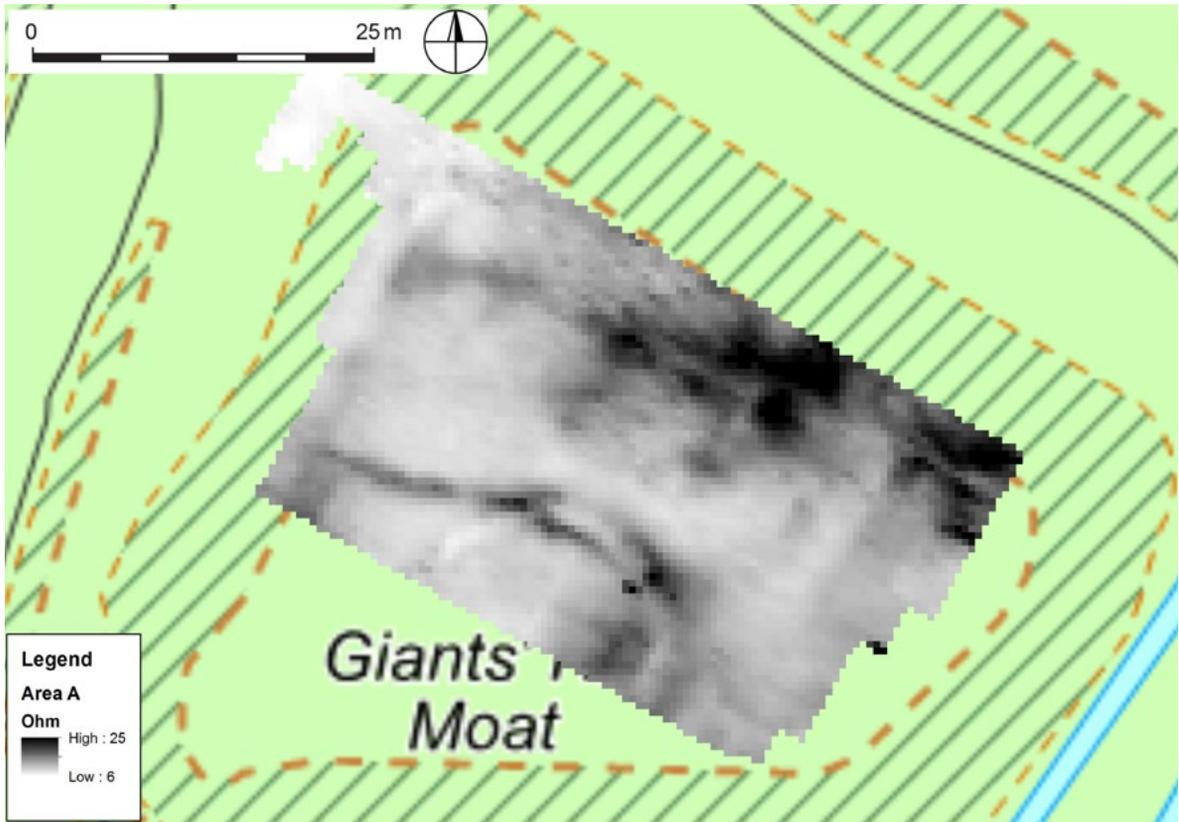


FIGURE 11.6: AREA A EARTH RESISTANCE RESULTS AT GIANT'S HILL, RAMPTON. © CROWN COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHT 2015. ORDNANCE SURVEY (DIGIMAP LICENCE).

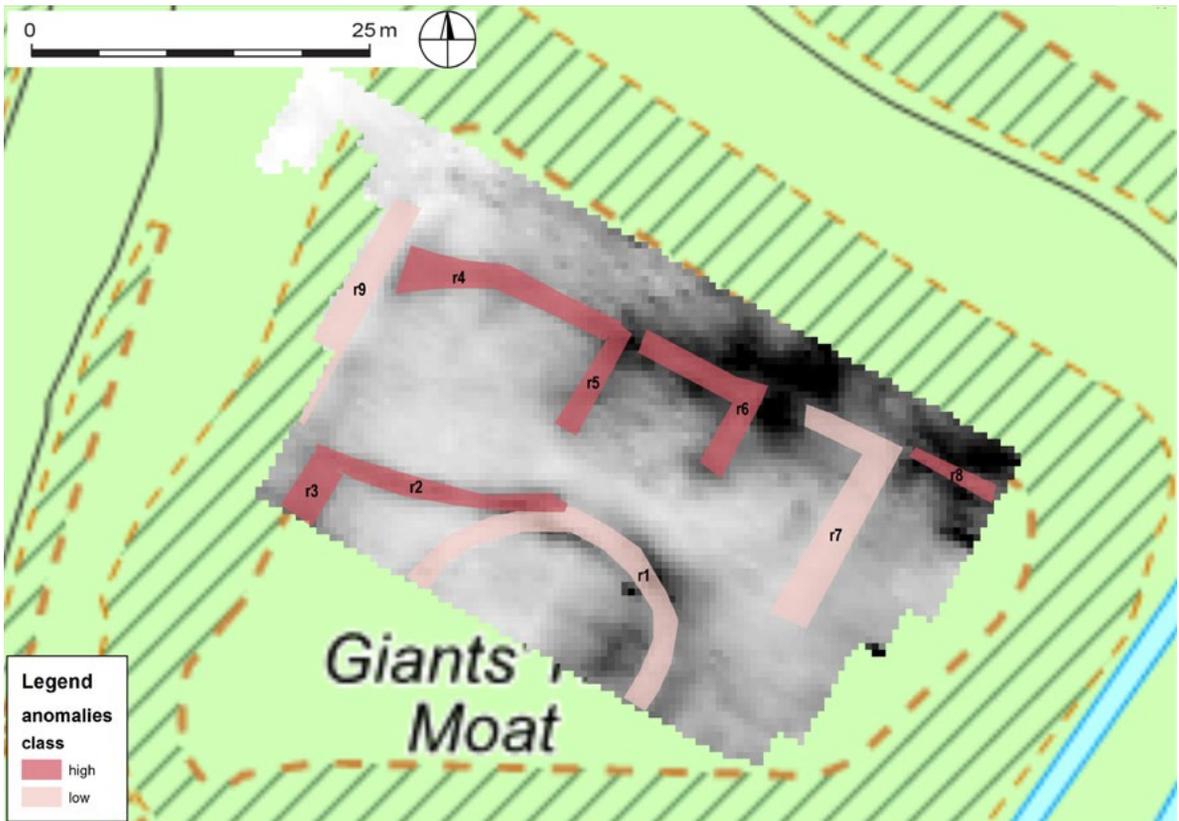


FIGURE 11.7: INTERPRETATION OF ANOMALIES IN AREA A AT GIANT'S HILL, RAMPTON. © CROWN COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHT 2015. ORDNANCE SURVEY (DIGIMAP LICENCE).

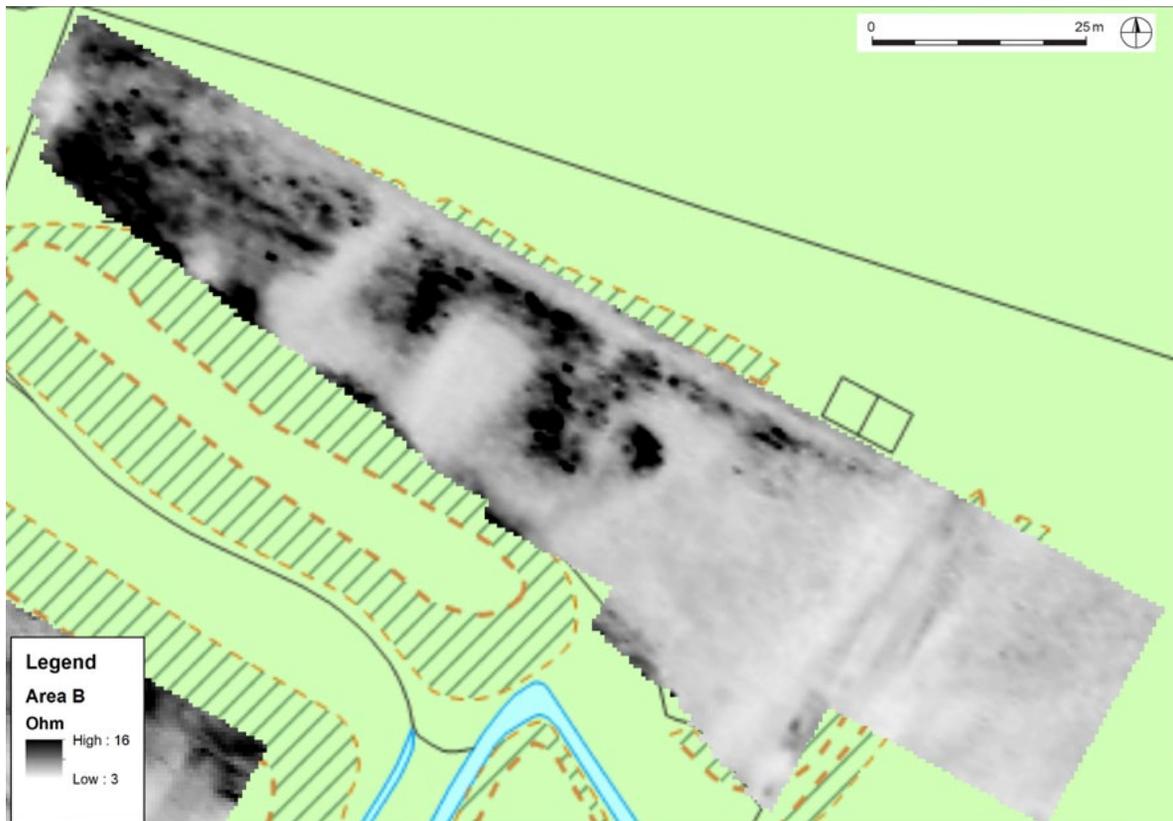


FIGURE 11.8: EARTH RESISTANCE RESULTS IN AREA B AT GIANT'S HILL, RAMPTON. © CROWN COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHT 2015. ORDNANCE SURVEY (DIGIMAP LICENCE).



FIGURE 11.9: INTERPRETATION OF ANOMALIES IN AREA B AT GIANT'S HILL, RAMPTON. © CROWN COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHT 2015. ORDNANCE SURVEY (DIGIMAP LICENCE).

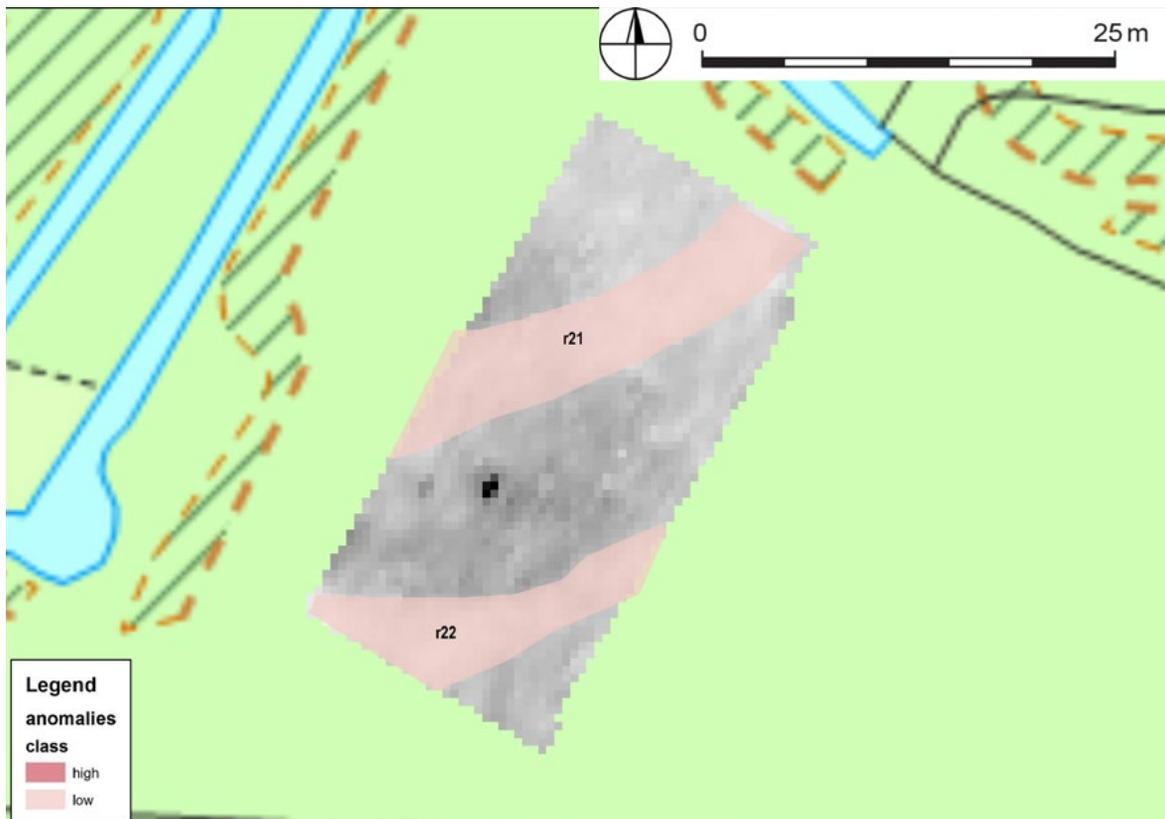


FIGURE 11.10: ANOMALIES IDENTIFIED IN AREA C AT GIANT'S HILL, RAMPTON. © CROWN COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHT 2015. ORDNANCE SURVEY (DIGIMAP LICENCE).

(Figure 11.11). The model shows that at an elevation of only 2m (slightly above standing height), the castle mound provides vistas along the entirety of The Portway in the northern portion of Rampton parish. The view afforded further south is comparatively poor, however, and further supports the premise that the primary stimulus for castle building was to exert power over the fenland landscape to the north. Identification of structures on the castle mound may indicate that the original castle was, although unfinished, enhanced with built structures. A comparable situation seems to have occurred at Burwell, where recent research has also demonstrated that the earliest castle may have been furnished with stone-built structures despite never being completed. At Rampton, anomaly r6 in Area A bears particular close resemblance to the rectangular structure excavated at Burwell by T.C Lethbridge (1936, 128–33). The excavator interpreted the remains as a keep, although its slight form is more consistent with the foundations of a tower. It is therefore possible that the earliest castle at Giant's Hill also possessed masonry elements, perhaps indicating that it was envisaged as a single rectangular ward walled in stone, although this interpretation can only be tentative. At both Rampton and Burwell the original twelfth-century castles were later used as manorial sites, and it may be telling that the stone walling identified at Giant's Hill in the 1940s was believed to be of fifteenth-century date.

Comparable problems of identification are also encountered when considering the archaeological evidence beyond the castle mound. Earthworks to the north of the castle ditch have hitherto been repeatedly interpreted as the remains of tofts which were abandoned when the castle was constructed, but the evidence from the current survey suggests such an assessment is far from certain. The form of the enclosures does not compare closely with a typical croft and toft arrangement, although it must be considered that medieval settlement character may differ in fen-edge environments such as Rampton. Perhaps more informative is the contrast between the enclosures to the north of Giant's Hill with the probable remains of further settlement between the castle and the parish church of All Saints'. The enclosure earthworks to the north of the castle ditch are far more pronounced, and while this may be the result of differential preservation, it more likely indicates an alternative origin. Furthermore, the current survey has found little information to support the premise that the banks of the enclosures project beneath the castle, and are thus earlier than the twelfth-century monument. While earth resistance survey indicates that the interior of the enclosures may be surfaced and indeed may relate to occupation, two alternative scenarios believed to be more compatible with the archaeological evidence are forwarded here.

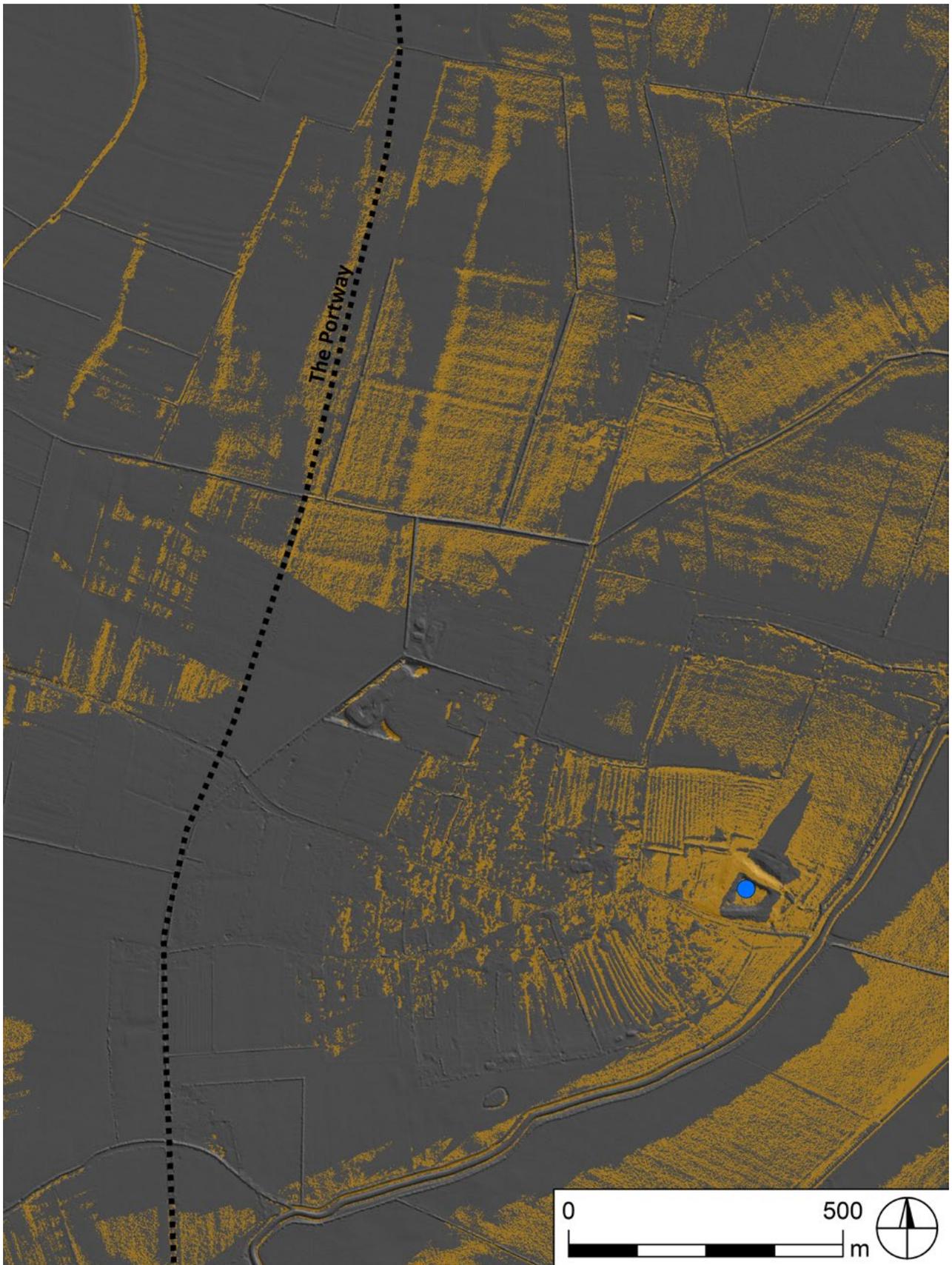


FIGURE 11.11: VIEWSHED OF GIANT'S HILL, RAMPTON. THE DOT REPRESENTS THE OBSERVER, LOCATED AT AN ELEVATION OF 2M. THE ORANGE SHADING REPRESENTS VISIBLE AREAS, AND THE DASHED LINE THE ROUTE OF THE PORTWAY. THE CASTLE CLEARLY AFFORDS BETTER VIEWS TO THE NORTH. © CROWN COPYRIGHT. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. ENVIRONMENT AGENCY.

First, the enclosures north of the castle may be the product of the original phase of castle building, perhaps representing the remains of settlement for some of the workforce which was not levelled when construction was halted. A similar suggestion has been forwarded at Burwell, where recent research has similarly demonstrated that enclosures previously believed to be tofts and crofts in fact more closely resemble paddocks/pens (this volume, Chapter 2). A second possibility would be to view the enclosures at Rampton as the product of medieval or post-medieval activity associated with the later manor house known through written records to have occupied the site. It may be significant that the parkland of the elite residence was located to the north of the castle, and documentary sources indicate that at least one structure named 'Hall Barn' stood somewhere immediately outside of the imparked area in the middle of the eighteenth century. Given the preservation of the earthworks the weight of probability makes it most likely that this post-medieval phase did indeed involve the construction of the enclosures, perhaps in order to accommodate subsidiary buildings of the manor. 'Hall Barn' may therefore have been the sole survivor of a complex of structures associated with the manorial complex at Giant's Hill, which maintained and developed the earthworks of the incomplete twelfth-century castle.

It therefore seems most likely that the earliest medieval settlement at Rampton was focussed to the west of Giant's Hill and to the east of the church of All Saints', a probable early medieval foundation which was rebuilt during the twelfth century. While the original military motivation behind castle building quickly subsided thus leaving the fortification unfinished, the site may never have been entirely abandoned. Indeed, this investigation has shown that the medieval residence may have stimulated the development of a market place immediately outside of its gates, probably the consequence of at least a reasonably permanent lordly presence. At some point in the medieval period the village of Rampton appears to have been re-planned, resulting in the distinctive Y-shaped plan of the historic settlement pattern with long thin strip fields still visible emanating to the north and south. Whether this arrangement was arrived at wholesale in a single phase or whether it was reached more piecemeal is uncertain, but at some point the medieval settlement between church and castle was abandoned and an alternative market site was probably established at the village green. Isolated from the main area of settlement, Giant's Hill continued to represent a focus of lordly power, albeit one of a different character to its original genesis as a royal campaign castle.

# Chapter 12

## Wellow, Nottinghamshire

Steven Trick, Duncan Wright and Oliver Creighton

### Abstract

Topographic and geophysical survey were undertaken in and around the village of Wellow, Nottinghamshire, including the substantial earthwork around the settlement known as the Gorge Dyke, areas of open land, and features in the surrounding vicinity. Topographic survey characterised the plan and profile of the Gorge Dyke, agricultural features both on the interior and exterior of the dyke, and what have been interpreted as water runoff management embankments on the hillside to the north of the village. Earth resistance survey recorded high-resistance anomalies within the Gorge Dyke bank suggesting it is constructed from a stone core made from upcast from the adjacent rock-cut ditch. Survey results from open land in the village interior suggest that some parts of Wellow were never occupied. The character of

the Gorge Dyke hints that it was probably developed for a combination of stock control, water management and defensive purposes. The chronology of Wellow's development is difficult to ascertain accurately, although written sources suggest that it may have been established by the monks of nearby Rufford Abbey in the middle years of the twelfth century, during or in the immediate aftermath of the civil war of King Stephen's reign.

### Introduction

The village of Wellow is located in central Nottinghamshire, 30km north of Nottingham, between Mansfield and Newark-on-Trent (Figure 12.1). The village is situated 60m above sea level on a tributary of the River Maun as it bisects low hills before running north to the Maun Valley. Wellow is unusual in that it

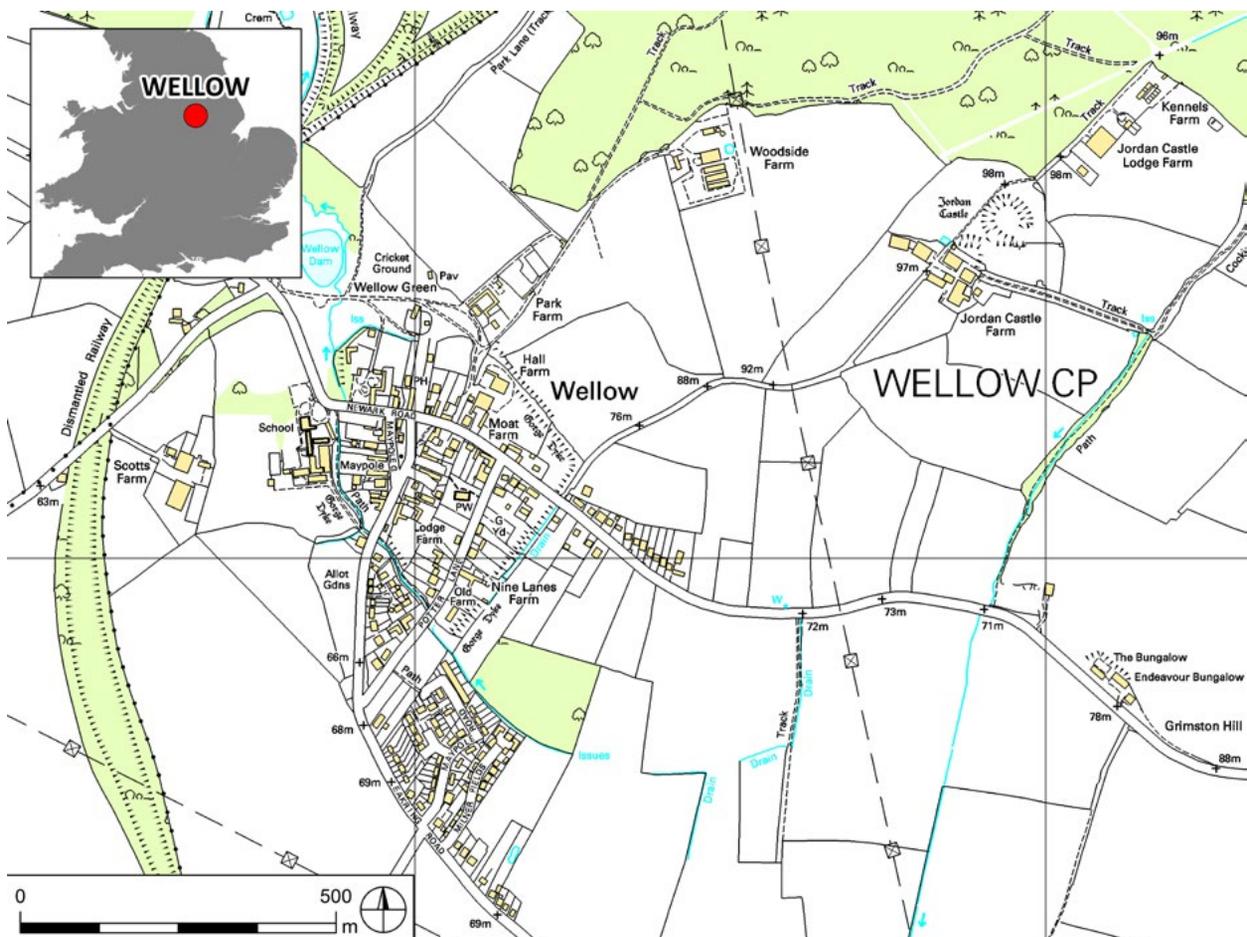


FIGURE 12.1: THE LOCATION OF WELLOW WITHIN SOUTHERN BRITAIN (INSET), AND IN THE LOCAL LANDSCAPE. © CROWN COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHT 2015. ORDNANCE SURVEY (DIGIMAP LICENCE).

comprises a small rural settlement which is enclosed by a substantial bank-and-ditch earthwork around its historic perimeter. The embankment surrounding the village, known as the Gorge Dyke, is a Scheduled Monument (National Monument No: 320335). Approximately one kilometre to the north-east of the village is a circular earthwork called Jordan's Castle which is also a Scheduled Monument (National Monument No: 320332). Earth resistance and topographic survey were undertaken in and around the village of Wellow between May 19 and May 23, 2014.

Wellow is situated on the Tarpoley Siltstone Formation, part of the Mercia Mudstone Group. It is comprised of siltstone, mudstone and sandstone, which were deposited in coastal lakes and lagoons during the Triassic period. It is underlain by pebbly sandstones of the Nottingham Castle Sandstone formation, part of the Sherwood Sandstone group, and overlain by mudstones of the Mercia Mudstone Group. The boundary between the Mercia Mudstone Group and the Sherwood Sandstone Group lies to the west of Wellow. The mudstones which outcrop over much of eastern Nottinghamshire contain nationally important deposits of gypsum. Within these are sometimes found alabaster blocks, an attractive and easily worked material. In the medieval period, votive figures carved from such alabaster blocks were exported from England all over Europe (Barley 1957; McAllister pers. comm. 2014).

### Historical and Archaeological Background

While the entry in Domesday Book for 'Creilage' is sometimes equated with Wellow, the area occupied by the village was probably included under the assessment for the manor of Rufford, which was held in lordship by Gilbert of Ghent and was worth 60s in 1086 (*Domesday Book, Nottinghamshire*, ed. Morris 1977, 17,4, 17,12). The place name Wellow is first recorded in 1207, in a Pipe Roll, as *Welghag*, a compound of Old English *wielle* and *haga*, meaning 'an enclosure near a spring' (Gover *et al.* 1940, 64). The most likely period for the initial development of Wellow as a nucleated settlement seems to be during the mid-twelfth century, when

it was a possession of the Cistercian abbey of Rufford, a daughter house of Rievaulx founded c. 1146–8 by Gilbert de Gaunt, Earl of Lincoln (VCH Notts II 1910, 101). Shortly after the establishment of the abbey, land in the surrounding area was apparently cleared under the direction of the clerics; evidence for such an act of landscape transformation is found in a cartulary, dated by the list of witnesses to between 1145 and 1153, which details compensation given by the Abbot of Rufford to the local population:

*Be it known to all present and to come that this is the agreement between the monks of Rufford and the men who had dwelt there...that these men of the monks have quitclaimed to the monks the land which they had in that vill. (Rufford Cartulary, trans. Barley 1957, 80).*

In an important article on the historic settlement of the region, M.W. Barley has identified the probable locations of the cleared villages alluded to in the documentary sources, using medieval parliamentary perambulations of Sherwood Forest and an estate map of Rufford dating from 1637 (Figure 12.2) (*A Survey of the Lordship of Rufford 1637*) (Barley 1957). Topography and place names indicate that settlements named Rufford and Cratley were cleared and a settlement at Grimston was

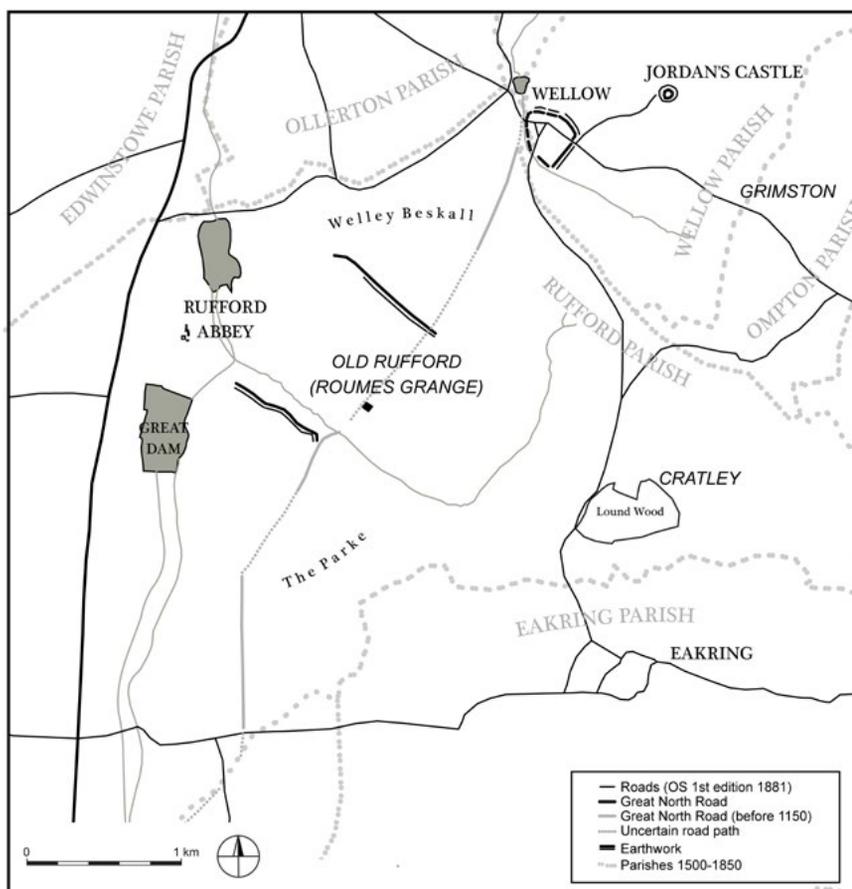


FIGURE 12.2: RUFFORD PARISH SHOWING THE DISAPPEARED VILLAGES OF GRIMSTON, CRATLEY AND OLD RUFFORD, AND THE OLD LINE OF THE GREAT NORTH ROAD (ADAPTED AFTER BARLEY 1957, 81).

also abandoned, although perhaps at a later date. The site of Rufford is likely preserved in ‘Roumes Grange’ recorded on historic maps, an area now known as ‘Kennels’ (SK 656641). Barley suggests that its location was partly due to the local transport infrastructure as, prior to 1150, the Great North Road passed through Roumes Grange, skirting the western perimeter of Wellow. The route has subsequently been altered, and its modern line is some 2km further west, preserved by the A614. The village of Cratley is preserved in field names on the 1637 map, a location now occupied by Lound Wood. The location of Grimston persists in the Wellow Enclosure map of 1842, where a parcel of land east of the village is named ‘Grimston Green’. On the Newark Road east of Wellow there is an incline which also retains the name ‘Grimston Hill’ (Barley 1957, 75–80).

In addition to identifying the sites of deserted settlements, Barley raises the possibility that Wellow was founded as a *de novo* village on the recently cleared estate of Rufford (Barley 1957, 83). While no written documents record the establishment of Wellow, its location in the southwest edge of the parish of Grimston supports the premise that the village was a secondary foundation which post-dated the creation of the parish boundaries. Wellow had certainly been established by 1207 as a Pipe Roll of such a date details the costs of monks constructing huts between their wood and Wellow in order to discourage illicit hunting (Barley 1957, 86). The ‘hays’ of Wellow are also referred to in perambulations of Sherwood Forest. An example from 1232 refers to the settlement, and perambulations frequently specify that the enclosure of *Welhagh* ‘is without the forest’. The same perambulation suggests that it was a royal hay: ‘saving to the king the hay of *Wellag* and all his demesne lands ... lying westwards’ (cited in Barley 1957, 83). On 22 October 1268, Richard Foliot was granted a market and fair to be held at the manor of Wellow, although the place was never recognised as a borough and there are no known records of burgesses (Letters 2016; Barley 1957, 85; Notts. HER: M4095).

Located at some distance from the village centre, the earthworks known as Jordan’s Castle comprise a circular bank with external ditch and associated hollow way. The monument has been interpreted as a ringwork, monuments which are usually dated to a broad range spanning between the late Anglo-Saxon period to the later twelfth century. The origins of Jordan’s Castle, however, have been traditionally associated with Richard Foliot who is recorded as possessing a license to crenellate within Grimston Manor in 1264 (Speight 1994, 67–8; see also Crook 2008). In 2005 a commercial archaeological unit carried out a topographical and geophysical survey, the results from which are discussed below (Bunn and Masters 2005). In the wider region of Wellow, a number of further fortifications of medieval origin have been identified. Barley notes that there are five such motte

and bailey castles within 12km of Wellow, most of which have been classed as ‘adulterine’ — a now unfashionable term to indicate castles constructed without royal consent. Fortifications are located at Bothamsall Castle 5.6 km north of Wellow (SK 67097320), at Laxton 5.1km east-northeast (SK 72046746), at Eganton 6.4 km east-northeast (SK 73526896), at Haughton 5.8 km north (SK 68207178), and at Cuckney 12km north-west of the village (SK 56657142).

### Map Analysis

Parts of Wellow parish are depicted on a 1637 estate map of the lordship of Rufford, although the morphology of the village is not recorded in detail until the Tithe Map of 1845 (*Wellow Tithe Map and Apportionment 1845*). Wellow is illustrated as featuring a large number of undeveloped tenement plots, with a settlement arrangement focussed on a central green and St Swithin’s church immediately to its east. Immediately north of the village lies a large external green (‘Wellow Green’) and a fishpond known as ‘Wellow Dam’. The OS 25” First Edition map of 1885 is the first survey to produce a hachured plan of the Gorge Dyke. The village is similarly illustrated on the OS 6” 1887 map, and in comparable fashion on maps throughout the twentieth century, albeit with a steady growth of both intramural and extramural buildings. The historic maps suggest that Wellow developed with the Gorge Dyke bounding the historic core of the village. Detached to the east side of the green is the church of St Swithin’s, a multi-phase building, with significant quantities of twelfth-century built fabric in its tower (Notts. HER: M4131). The most substantial earthworks remains in the area comprise the bank and external ditch around Wellow village known as the Gorge Dyke, which is described below, although there are many other, slighter earthworks in and around the village, some of which have been identified and described as a result of the Nottinghamshire County Earthwork Surveys I and II carried out in the 1990s (Baddeley pers. comm.).

Figure 12.3 presents a depiction of the historic morphology of Wellow village, which is worth considering in detail. The principal road passing through Wellow is the east–west Newark Road, making for Newark to the east, and Sheffield, through Ollerton, to the west. Gaps in the Gorge Dyke where this road enters the village appear to be original gateway or entrance points. Entering the village from the south through a third, apparently original, gap in the Gorge Dyke, is the Eakring Road. As it makes its way north through the village to the junction with Newark Road it splits to demarcate the triangular area that is today the village green. Another road (‘Potter Lane’) between Eakring Road and Newark Road integrates the church of St Swithin’s into the village network and forms the basis for an approximately rectilinear and roughly gridded

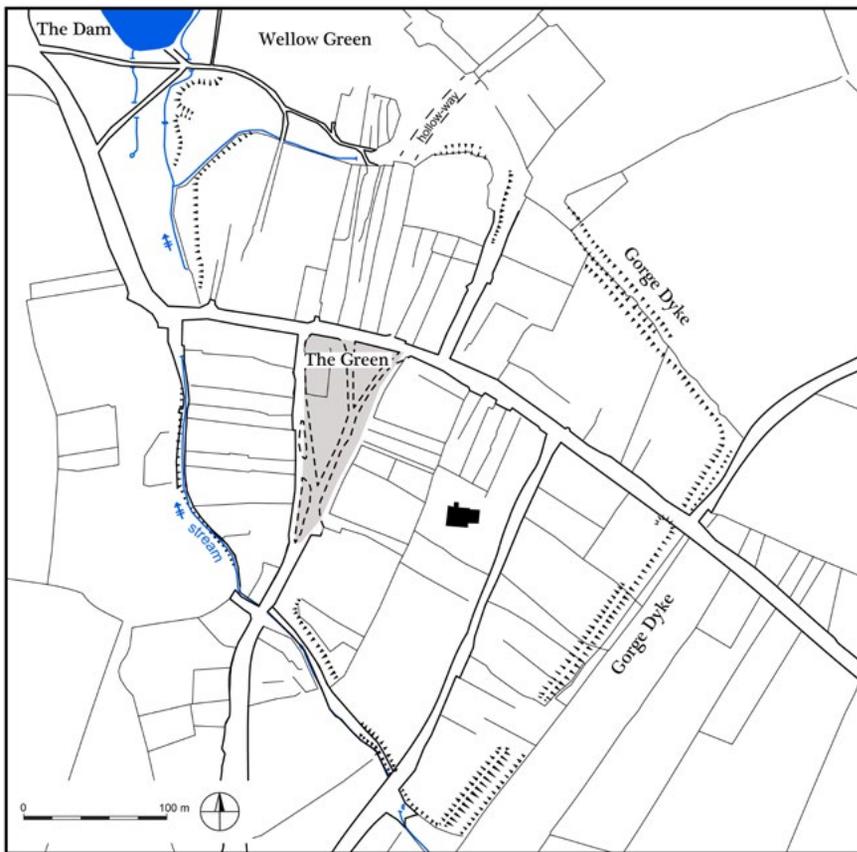


FIGURE 12.3: PLAN ELEMENTS OF WELLOW BASED ON OS 25'' FIRST EDITION MAPPING. THE FORM OF THE GORGE DYKE IS DERIVED FROM OS AND ARCHIVAL MAPS, AND PROJECT FIELDWORK.

arrangement of plots. The minor road/track heading north from Newark Road between Highfield House and Hall Farm House through the fourth entrance point through Gorge Dyke preserves a route into the village from the north. Here, the arrangement of property boundaries gives the appearance of the external green known as Wellow Green 'funneling in' towards the gap or entranceway through the Gorge Dyke.

The property plots within Wellow show a consistent suite of characteristics. Within the core of the village the tenement plots are long and thin, with the buildings fronting on to the street. Several of these plots feature buildings at the plot front that then continuously append to other sub-buildings stretching backwards, suggesting an historic accretion of development backwards from the frontage. Although this arrangement resembles burgage plots, Wellow was never recognised as a borough and no medieval burgesses are recorded. On the west side the plots stretch between the Green and the Gorge Dyke. North of Newark Road the tenements stretch from the road to the Gorge Dyke. In the eastern and south-eastern parts of the village several open plots indicate that the settlement here has either shrunk or, more likely, that plots were never occupied. A central core of tenements is bounded by Eakring Road and Potter Lane, where plots feature uniform north-south divisions. The impression from this central arrangement is that there is a degree

of planning in the property layout, with an ideal plot size of around 20m x 60m. The north-south division within the central block is paralleled in the arrangement of field boundaries extending eastward of the village, suggesting that the layout of Wellow may have been based on existing field boundaries.

#### **Earth Resistance Survey: Results and Interpretation**

Two prominent accessible open areas within the village were selected for earth resistance survey: a paddock known locally as 'Stonebank' (Figure 12.4), and an unnamed field south of St Swithin's church (see Figure 12.5). Earth resistance was chosen as it is suitable for providing detailed results from confined areas such as municipal land parcels that incorporate frequent obstructions.

#### **Stonebank**

The first area selected was a field named 'Stonebank', located on the eastern edge of the village and incorporating a section of the Gorge Dyke within its east boundaries. As this field is currently undeveloped it was hoped that it may preserve earlier activity, and also inform research regarding the composition of the Gorge Dyke and the presence of any ancillary features. Stonebank is joined to the field to the east, known as 'Nine Lanes', which consists of a long, northeast-southwest oriented plot, currently used for pasture. Figure 12.6 shows the results of the earth resistance survey in Stonebank, and Figure 12.7 offers an interpretation of the results. Table 12.1 presents a description and interpretation of the anomalies identified.

#### **Unnamed field, south of St Swithin's church**

The second area selected for geophysical survey was the field immediately south of the churchyard of St Swithin's, in a central location within the village. This field is currently used for pasture and according to a local resident has never been subject to development. It was hoped that this area may preserve evidence of property divisions which could provide an insight into the medieval village layout. Three 20m x 20m grids were surveyed in the field; Figure 12.8 shows the results. The geophysical response from this field is not straightforward



FIGURE 12.4: VIEW OF STONEBANK FIELD, LOOKING EAST AND SHOWING THE BANK OF THE GORGE DYKE AT THE REAR OF THE VIEW.

to interpret, since there are no obviously clear anomalies of archaeological origin, and the response as a whole is a continuous gradual change suggestive of natural geology. Some subtle anomalies can be discerned, however, and these are illustrated in Figure 12.9. Table 12.1 offers a description and interpretation of these anomalies.

### Summary

Earth resistance survey provides valuable details of the constitution of the Gorge Dyke, which has previously only been subject to very limited archaeological intervention. The results suggest that the bank has a stone core, and that it was originally accompanied by an external ditch which was deeper than at present. Geophysics also indicate that some land parcels within the village bounds have seen little or no development, suggesting Wellow was not comprehensively settled during the medieval or later periods.

### Earthwork Description and Interpretation

#### Gorge Dyke

The Gorge Dyke earthwork consists of a bank and external ditch delineating the historic core of Wellow village, forming an irregular diamond-shaped plan. The northeast and southeast sections are well preserved, with gaps only occurring in order to accommodate roads or where subsequent property construction has interrupted the circuit (such as Nine Lanes Farm). There is broad interruption

around the northern part of the settlement, where the earthwork has possibly been levelled and the ditch infilled. The alignment of the Gorge Dyke may be preserved, however, by a small stream (a minor tributary of the River Maun) and the modern road alignment. The western limit of the Gorge Dyke's circuit is defined by a canalised stream, which occupies a narrow, deeply incised channel. There is some higher banking at intervals along the river suggesting that the channel and bank have been augmented to form a more imposing boundary. The Victoria County History identified the earthwork as the rampart and ditch of a rectangular village enclosure but provided no plan (VCH Notts I 1906, 314). In E.A. Downman's (1909) *Ancient Earthworks in Nottinghamshire*, the author sketched a complete circuit of the dyke, giving measured profiles in seven different places along the circuit. In the north-east section of the earthwork perimeter, for example, the height from the bottom of the ditch was illustrated at c. 2.5m. Downman noted that the north section was a wet ditch, but that on the east it was generally dry (Downman 1909, 8).

In 1994 development works in the grounds of a property called The Hermitage, located at the break in the Gorge Dyke where the Newark Road enters from the east, provided the opportunity for keyhole archaeological excavation of the bank. The bank was found to comprise red clay, 0.53m thick, with a buried ploughsoil beneath. The bank was substantial and the edge was thought to be several metres to the west. A pottery sherd was found in the upper part of the clay layer, which was broadly dated to the medieval period (JSAC 1994). The

Anomaly	Description	Interpretation
r1	Band of low-resistance, corresponding to the ditch of the Gorge Dyke.	A cut ditch that has filled up with material of better water-holding ability than the surrounding soil. Closer proximity to the water table may also be a contributing factor. The owner of the adjacent property tells us there is a clay-packed drainage pipe in the ditch (Dalton pers. comm.)
r2	High-resistance anomaly with a linear shape. Spatially it corresponds with the line of the top of the bank of the Gorge Dyke.	This may suggest there is a hard core to the bank, perhaps of stone quarried from the ditch. Why this is exhibited only on the top of the bank and not on the sides is not certain; possibly due to differential weathering of the top of the bank, and the bank and side remain clad in lower-resistance material, perhaps turves.
r3	Linear high-resistance anomaly, at least 25m in length. On the ground, this anomaly coincides with a narrow, linear depression running down the gentle slope towards the road.	Given the ground circumstances and in the light of discussions with the owner of the neighbouring property this is almost certainly a field drain (Dalton pers. comm.).
r4, r5	Subtle high-resistance, linear anomalies.	After discussions with Mr Dalton, these are almost certainly the remnants of late twentieth-century building foundations later abandoned when planning permission on this field was revoked (Dalton pers. comm.).
r6, r7	Amorphous, high-resistance zones.	Given their location, under overhanging vegetation, and adjacent to a fence and immediately beyond that pavement and a road, it is suggested they are caused by drier hedge/tree-line soils possibly be mixed with building materials associated with the fencing and pavement.
r8	Low-resistance, horse-shoe-shaped anomaly which appears to continue across the fence line.	A shallow oval ditch, almost certainly the gable end of a long building visible on the OS First Edition map that has since disappeared.
r9, r10	Narrow, linear high-resistance anomalies of 5 and 3m in length respectively	The shared alignment with the present field boundaries may suggest that they represent the remnant fabric of a former division of this parcel of land.
r11–r14	Series of circular, doughnut-shaped rings of lower resistance, amid a generally higher resistance area.	Possibly shallow pits, with a higher resistance nucleus of some kind. The neighbour reported that there was once a pond at the southern edge of this field in this area, and that there was also a horse burial in the northwest corner. These could therefore be former ponds, with built-up centres. Alternatively they could represent burials, positioned close to the consecrated ground of the graveyard to the north. A further explanation is that they are former positions of circular stock feeders.

TABLE 12.1: DESCRIPTION AND INTERPRETATION OF EARTH RESISTANCE ANOMALIES IDENTIFIED AT WELLOW.

evidence suggests that the dyke was constructed on land previously under cultivation, probably at some point in the post-Conquest period.

This research undertook a topographic survey of the Gorge Dyke, assessing the whole of the undeveloped Stonebank field, and also the back garden of an adjacent property (Figures 12.10 and 12.11). In this area of the village the Gorge Dyke bank measures about 1.5m in height above the bottom of the ditch (Figure 12.13). Elucidating the chronology and function of the Gorge Dyke is not straightforward, and the recovery of a medieval pottery sherd (see above) provides the only archaeological dating evidence. The form of the earthwork, comprising a substantial bank and external ditch, is not indicative of any specific function and it may have been constructed for any number of purposes such as drainage, stock management or defence. The geophysical survey suggests the ditches have silted up over time and the name ‘Gorge Dyke’ implies that it may once have been a deep, cut ditch with rocky sides. Indeed, geophysical survey strongly indicates the likelihood that the ditch was originally rock-cut and

that this hard material forms the core of the bank. The bank may also have been supplemented with a bank-top palisade, which together would have formed a barrier in excess of 3m from the bottom of the ditch, which may have been utilised for a defensive purpose.

An alternative explanation is that the Gorge Dyke was primarily constructed for purposes of water management. If Wellow was an establishment of the monks at Rufford Abbey, as seems likely, it is tempting to associate the Gorge Dyke with a planned system undertaken by the Cistercians, an order well-known for their expertise in water management. Fresh water supplies were essential for maintaining monastic houses, and the ability of Cistercians in particular to meet such needs is well-documented. Although Wellow is a rural settlement and not a monastery, it must be considered a possibility that the monks at Rufford implemented a scheme of water management by constructing a dyke around the village, together with enhancing the surrounding natural watercourses. Analysis of the topographic situation of Wellow in GIS indicates that runoff from the hills to the north would naturally flow down the eastern stretch of



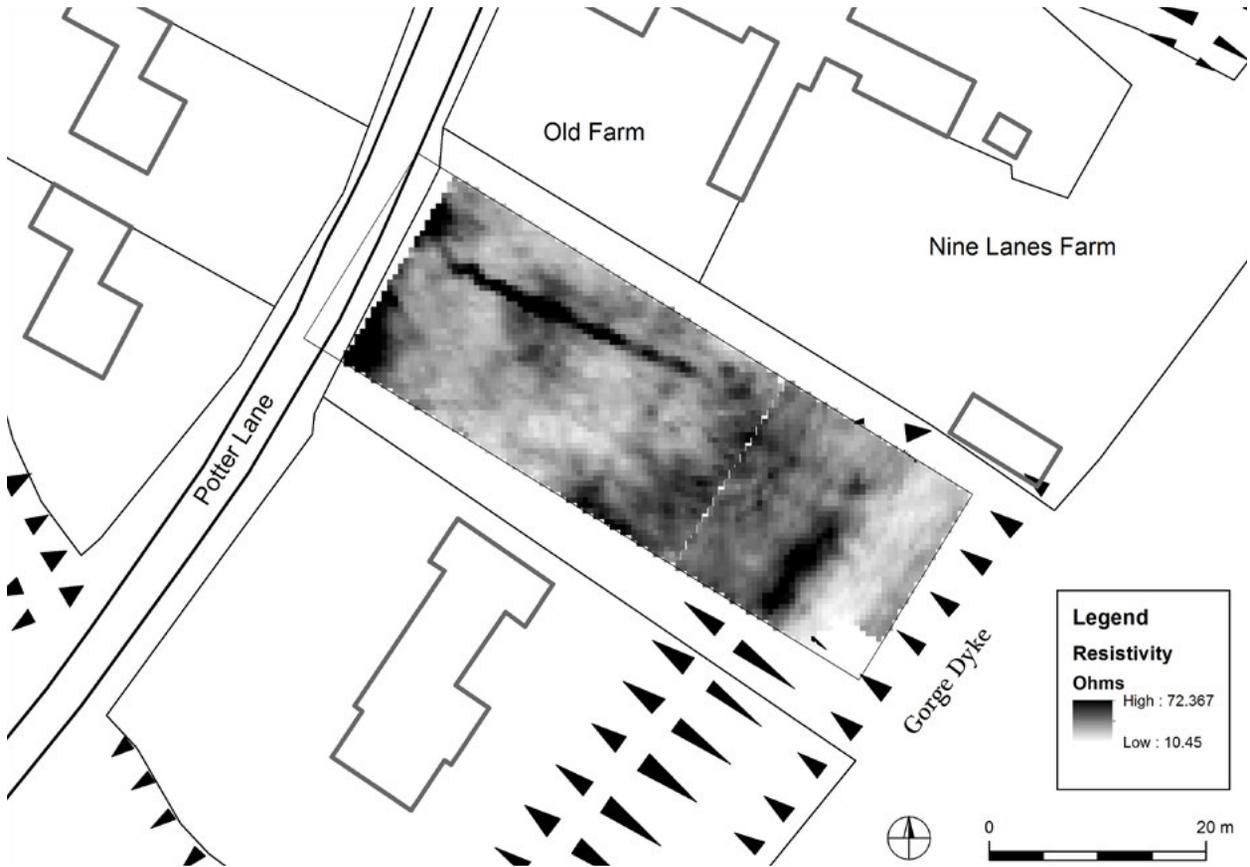


FIGURE 12.6: THE EARTH RESISTANCE SURVEY RESULTS FROM STONEBANK FIELD, OVERLAID ON HACHURED EARTHWORK PLAN.

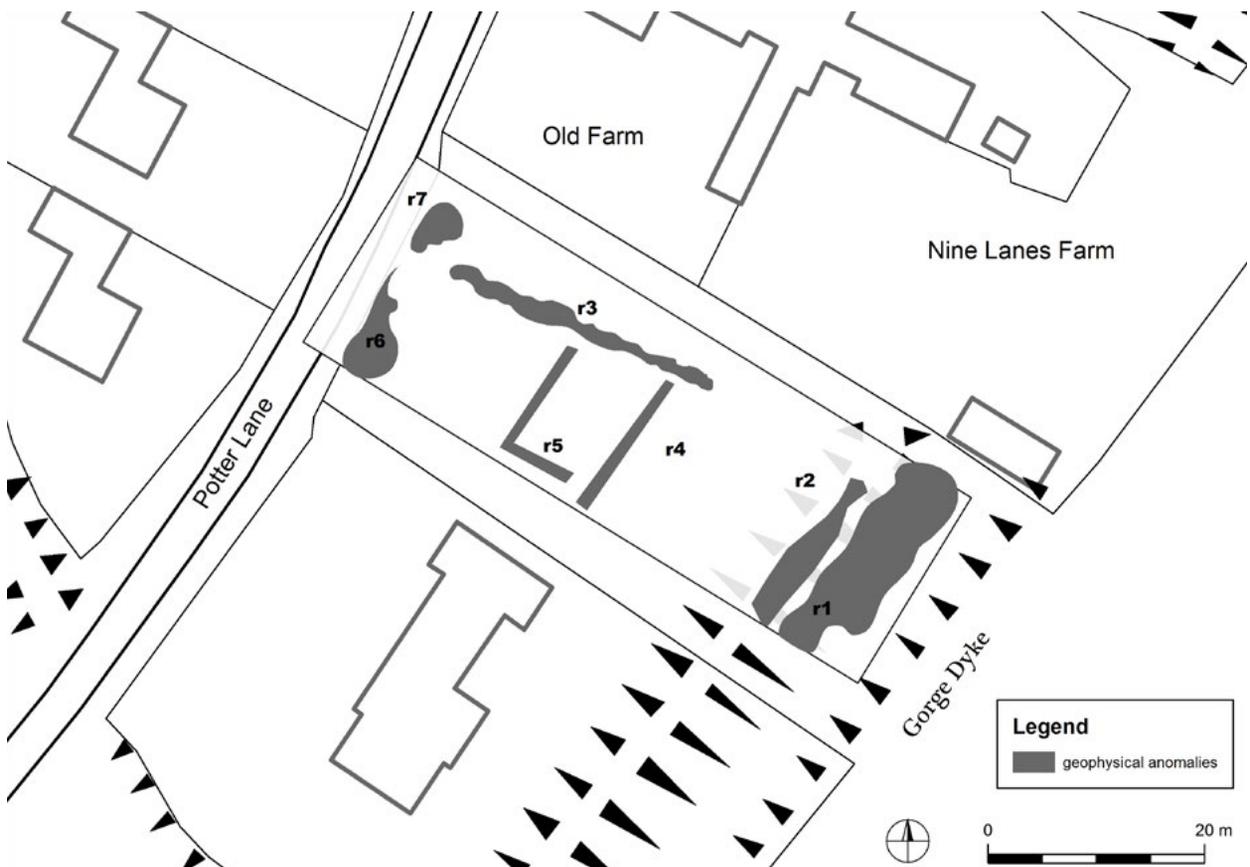


FIGURE 12.7: INTERPRETATION OF THE EARTH-RESISTANCE SURVEY RESULTS AT STONEBANK FIELD OVERLAID ON HACHURED EARTHWORK PLAN.



FIGURE 12.8: EARTH RESISTANCE SURVEY RESULTS OF FIELD SOUTH OF ST SWITHIN'S CHURCHYARD.

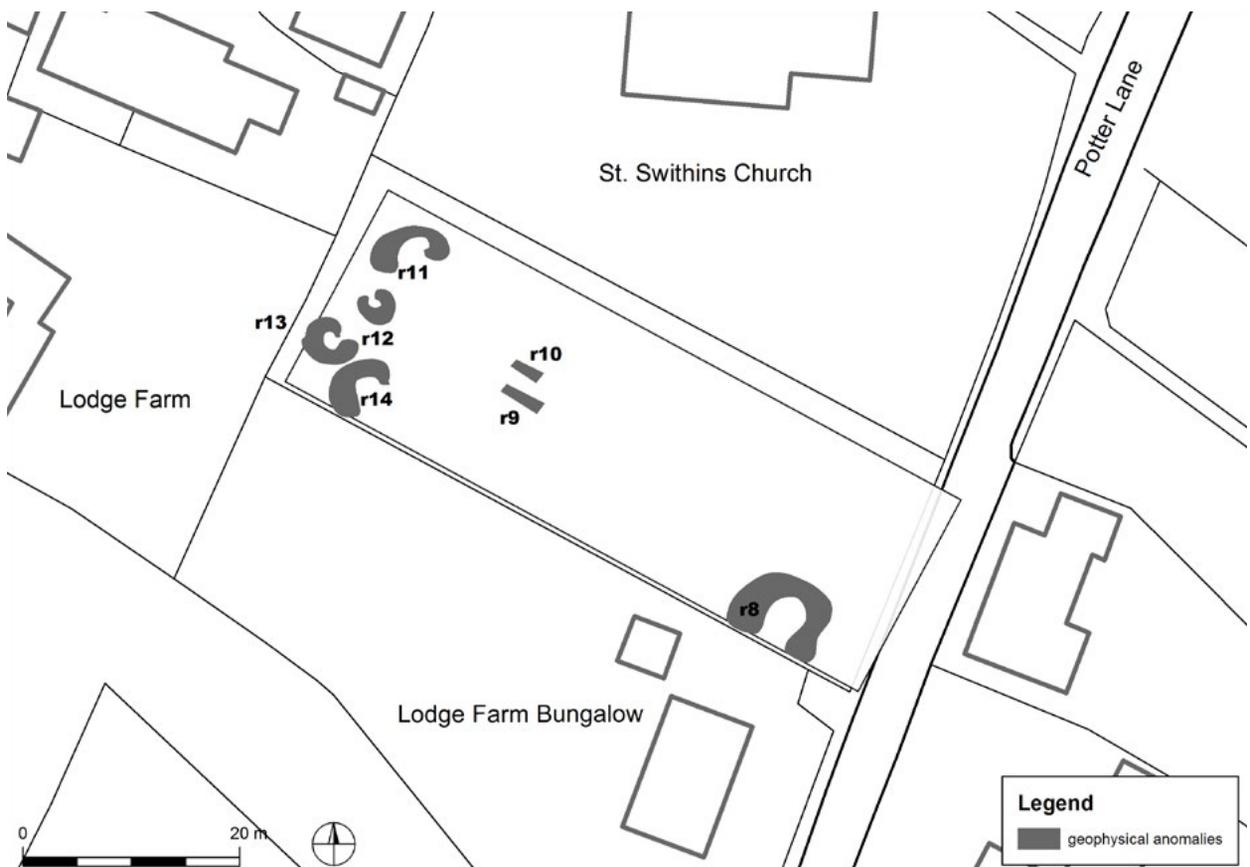


FIGURE 12.9: INTERPRETATION OF THE EARTH RESISTANCE SURVEY RESULTS SOUTH OF ST SWITHIN'S CHURCH OVERLAID ON HACHURED EARTHWORK PLAN.

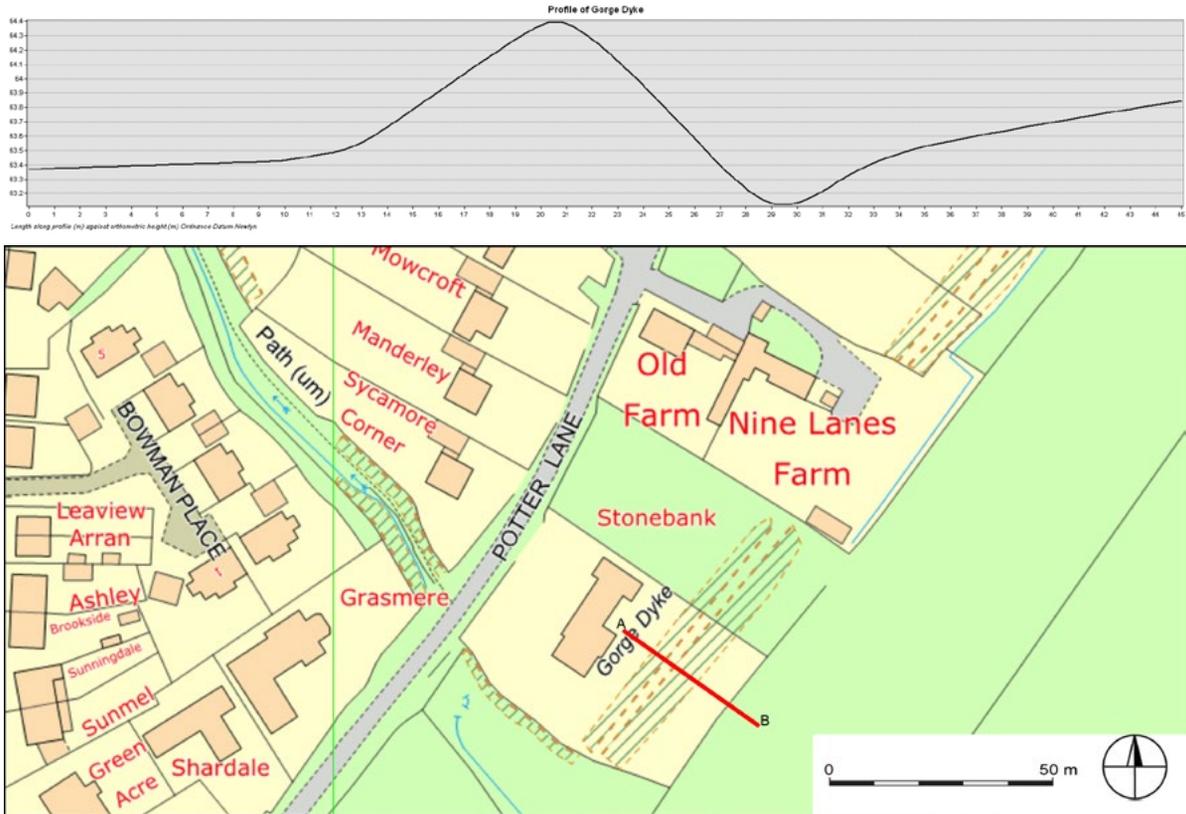


FIGURE 12.10: THE PROFILE OF GORGE DYKE AS RECORDED BY TOPOGRAPHIC SURVEY. THE MAIN IMAGE SHOWS WHERE THE PROFILE WAS RECORDED, AND THE INSET IMAGE THE PROFILE WITH A ON THE LEFT AND B ON THE RIGHT. © CROWN COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHT 2014, ORDNANCE SURVEY (DIGIMAP LICENCE).



FIGURE 12.11: EARTHWORK SURVEY BEING UNDERTAKEN IN THE BACK GARDEN ADJACENT TO STONEBANK FIELD, LOOKING NORTH-EAST. THE PROFILE OF THE GORGE DYKE IS CLEARLY VISIBLE.

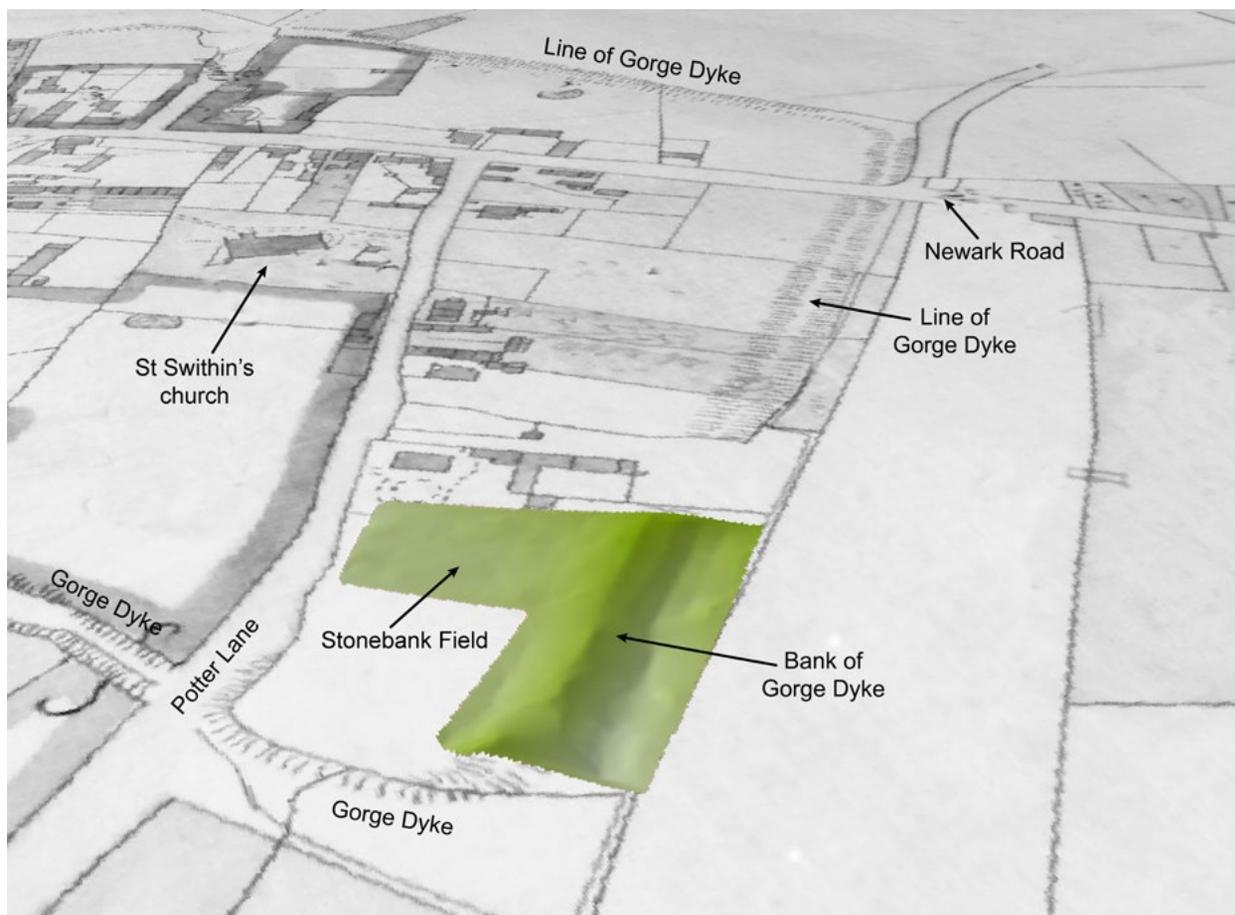


FIGURE 12.12: SURFACE MODEL OF THE SOUTHEAST SECTION OF THE GORGE DYKE EARTHWORK (GREEN AREA IN RELIEF). BACKGROUND MAPPING IS THE 1887 FREEHOLD PLAN, REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION OF THE NOTTINGHAMSHIRE ARCHIVES.

Gorge Dyke into the stream feeding Wellow Dam. It is therefore a distinct possibility that the Gorge Dyke is a product of informed fluvial engineering from the outset.

Irrespective of its date, the likelihood that the Gorge Dyke was constructed in order to carry water is supported by the 1842 Enclosure Award for Wellow which states ‘... and it is further enacted that the said commissioner or commissioners should and might scour out and widen and alter all such ancient ditches drains watercourses tunnels gates and bridges in the respective open common arable meadow or pasture lands or fields...’ (*Wellow with Wellow Green Enclosure Award 1845*). This statute suggests that clearing the ditch was an important obligation, and although only first recorded in the nineteenth century is probably of far greater antiquity. In addition to the Gorge Dyke, evidence of possible water management features has been identified to the north of the village (see below). The Gorge Dyke is not the only rock-cut ditch in Wellow, as an archaeological watching brief in the grounds of Frandor property in 1999 recorded a linear rock-cut ditch with steeply sloping sides (Notts. HER: L11384). Frandor is located on the Newark Road, on the eastern side of the village, adjacent to The Hermitage property. The rock-cut ditch was on the same alignment

as the Newark Road and may be some embellishment of the Gorge Dyke along the roadside.

### **Nine Lanes**

East of Nine Lane’s Farm is a long, northeast-southwest running field called Nine Lanes. Well-preserved ridge-and-furrow earthworks run south-west-north-east along the long axis of the field (Figure 12.13). The field once extended all the way up to the Newark Road, as shown on the First Edition OS map of 1885. There are exactly nine ridges in the field, hence the origin of the local name ‘Nine Lanes’. While it has been speculated that their function is to facilitate drainage (Dalton pers. comm.), the typical ridge and furrow form of the features suggests instead that they represent relict medieval ploughing.

### **Woodside Farm**

On the hillside north of the village, adjacent to the track up to Woodside Farm, there is a series of earthworks, including a linear dry channel that comes directly down the hillside to meet the village bank and ditch at the bottom of the slope (Figure 12.14). A handful



FIGURE 12.13: RIDGE AND FURROW EARTHWORKS IN NINE LANES FIELD.

of earthworks form an L-shaped arrangement that coincides with an old field boundary marked on the OS First Edition map, which has presumably since been largely destroyed (Figure 12.14: 'a'). A further feature depicted on the Enclosure Award map of 1842 as a field boundary is detectable as a low earthwork (Figure 12.14: 'b'). A dry channel, apparently the line of a winterbourne water course diverting runoff from the hillside was also located. The earthworks recorded along the stream's course are perhaps water management features, serving a function as sluice gates (Figure 12.14: 'c' and 'd'). An alternative possibility is that they may be 'pond bays' forming elements of a controllable fish pond. On the 1887 Freehold plan of Wellow, the bottom of the adjacent field to the east is depicted as a body of water: this suggests the bottom of the slope here is a natural sink for local water drainage, and that it was controlled in the past (*Plan of freehold property in Wellow village 1887*). The Nottinghamshire Historic Environment Record, however, suggests that these elements may represent parts of a relict quarry (Notts. HER: L7691).

### Northern Hollow Way

In woodland north of the village, west of Woodside Farm, the Historic Environment Record records 'Triple Ditches' and speculates that they may be a boundary to Rufford Park, or that they are possibly old roads or erosion gullies (Notts. HER: L5515). On inspection these earthworks were found to take the form of three parallel ditches with rounded bases, the central one being very deep (around 2m), with the flanking ones much shallower. Their morphology is not comparable to a park pale or other boundary, however, but they instead appear to represent a series of now disused local hollow ways. The central feature seemingly represents the primarily used thoroughfare and the flanking ones are probably more recent, alternate tracks following the same course. The hollow ways exit the wood in a south-westerly orientation, towards the village centre of Wellow. The continuation can be seen in the trackway on the west side of Park Farm, where the profile of the hollow way is clear. The slight bank continues across Wellow Green to gardens on the northern side of the village (Figure 12.14). Perhaps significantly, the bank and ditch of the Gorge Dyke are not present in this area, suggesting that the route may have once entered the village via a lane

between the narrow plots, not inconceivably heading past the 'Old Coach House'. In the other direction, it is clear that the route follows the high ground of a ridge heading north-east to the plateau occupied today by Birkhill Wood, an area which nineteenth-century maps illustrate was criss-crossed with pathways. The thoroughfare has been mistakenly identified as leading to Jordan's Castle, although it seems more likely to have led to Laxton (see Oswald 1939, 15).

### Jordan's Castle

Approximately one kilometre to the north-east of Wellow is Jordan's Castle, a ringwork enclosure formed by a bank and ditch. The central mound is roughly circular with its perimeter slightly higher than the centre, and the ditch is about 2m deep in most places. From the south-western part of the complex a hollow way projects southwards where it joins another wider routeway which snakes up from the south and turns west before heading northwards, along the western side of the earthworks. A topographic and geophysical

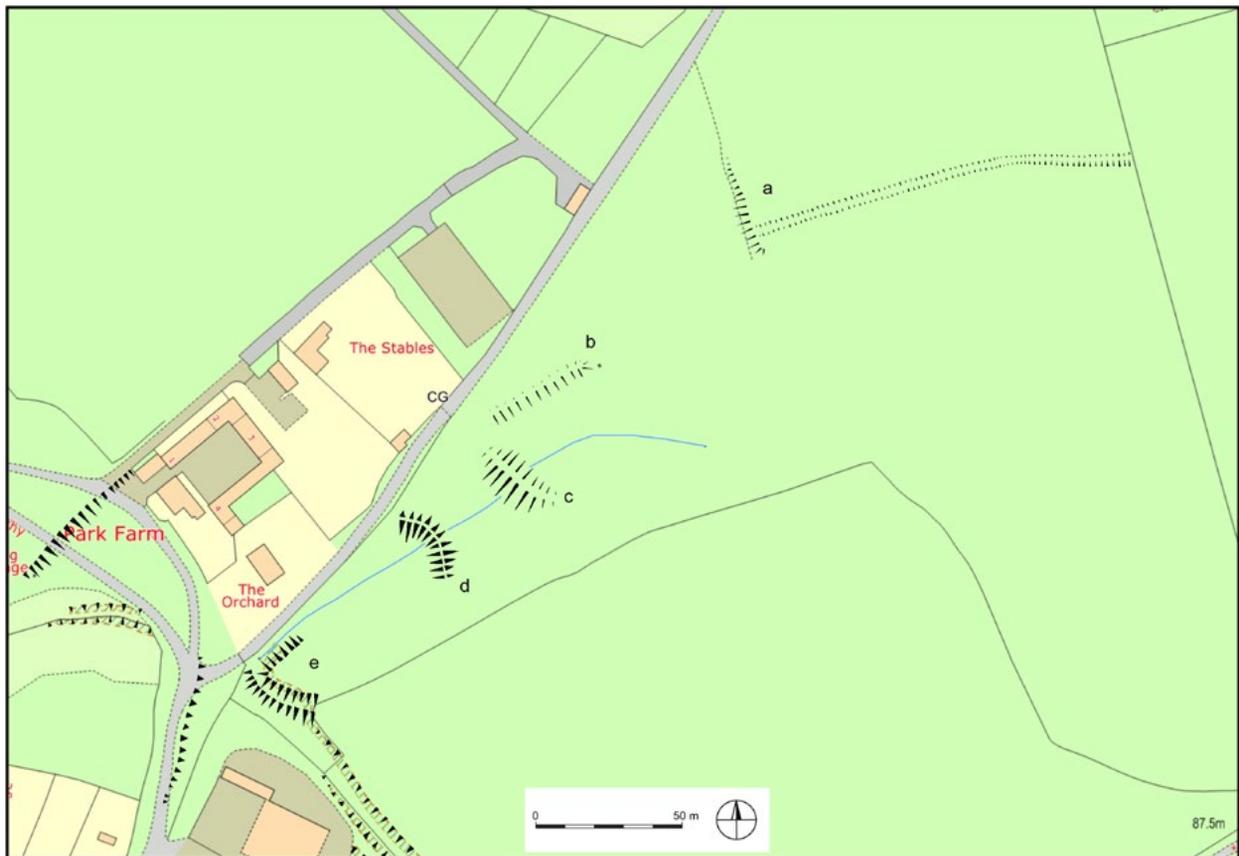


FIGURE 12.14: EARTHWORKS RECORDED AT WOODSIDE FARM, AND THE HOLLOW WAY ON WELLOW GREEN. THE DRY CHANNEL IS MARKED AS A BLUE LINE. © CROWN COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHT 2014, ORDNANCE SURVEY (DIGIMAP LICENCE).

survey of Jordan's Castle was carried out by Pre-Construct Geophysics in 2005 (Bunn and Masters 2005). The topographic survey identified a series of phases, including a significant amount of ridge and furrow which was developed after the ringwork was abandoned. Speight has argued that Jordan's Castle is a thirteenth-century moated site, and that the bank-and-ditch served a utilitarian rather than defence purpose (Speight 1994, 67–8). An alternative interpretation is that the site was originally developed as a ringwork and bailey that was subsequently 'demilitarised' and transformed into a manorial residence. Jordan's Castle has traditionally been associated with Jordan Foliot, whose licence to crenellate in Grimston manor is usually thought to refer to Jordan's Castle (Notts. HER: M4096). The name 'Jordan's Castle' is first recorded in 1826, however, and it is possible that the association may be an antiquarian back-projection (Gover *et al.* 1940, 66).

#### **Moat Farm**

At Moat Farm, in the easternmost corner of Wellow village, there are a series of earthworks located in a paddock currently used for animal pasture (Figure 12.15). The Nottinghamshire Historic Environment interprets the earthworks as building platforms (Notts. HER: L5477), but earthwork survey by this research

strongly suggests that this is instead an area of ridge-and-furrow. The features appear somewhat denuded and run parallel to the flank of the Gorge Dyke. Determining the chronological relationship of the ridge-and-furrow with the bank of Gorge Dyke is not straightforward as the ridge and furrow abut against the bank. If it is assumed that the ridge-and-furrow is later, it is not clear how the plough team swung around without having to mount the bank, and the feature shows no significant evidence of erosion. The most likely interpretation therefore is that the bank post-dates the ridge-and-furrow. There is a large crater in the middle of the field which appears to cut through the ridge-and-furrow, and a hollow way heads southwest from the crater towards the road. These features may represent the remains of opportunist quarrying.

#### **Other earthworks**

There are a number of other earthworks in and around Wellow village. Many of these are recorded as part of the Nottinghamshire Villages Earthworks Survey (1994–96) which was undertaken as part of an HER-enhancement exercise (Baddeley pers. comm.). In a wooded area south of Wellow Dam, the Nottinghamshire Historic Environment Record records a 'terraced area', possibly a 'northwest extension to the village defences known as the Gorge Dyke' (Notts. HER: L7688). Although omitted on OS First Edition maps, these have been depicted on later cartography, where

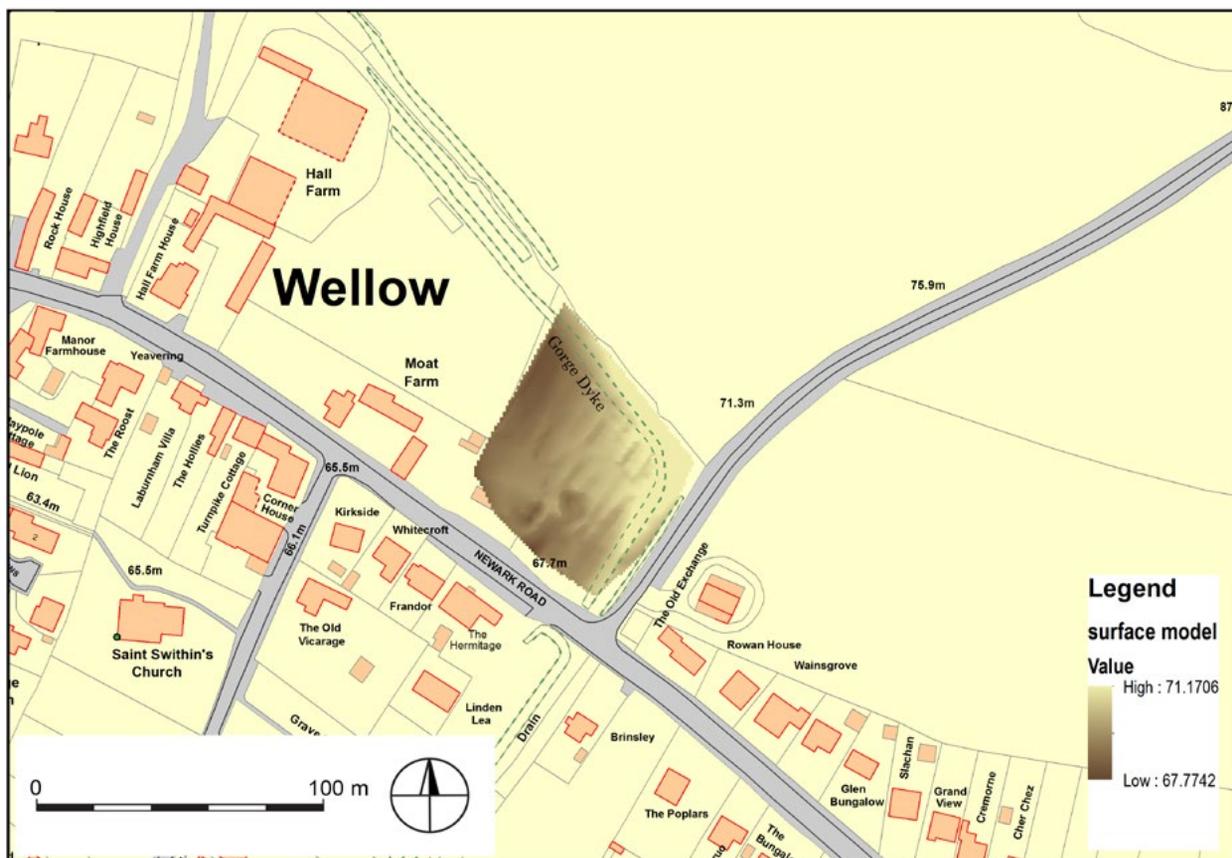


FIGURE 12.15: SURFACE MODEL OF EARTHWORKS AT MOAT FARM. INSET: MODEL IN 3D (LOOKING NORTH). © CROWN COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHT 2015. ORDNANCE SURVEY (DIGIMAP LICENCE).



they are shown as a pair of convex banks (see Figure 12.3). Morphologically these elements resemble the elaborate earthworks located at the entranceway to large Iron-Age hillforts. It is tempting to see the features, together with the Gorge Dyke, as parts of a defensive system for Wellow which was used to channel and control access to the village. Despite the lack of existing evidence for a road or track, when one looks outward from Wellow through the gap, the junction of the road from Rufford, the road from Ollerton, the Newark Road, and presumably the Great North Road, are all visible.

A low-linear bank, 7m wide, is recorded at the southern end of the village, just west of the river (Notts. HER: No. L7693). This area currently comprises playing fields of the Wellow House School, although the First Edition

OS map depicts criss-crossing footpaths in this area. The Nottinghamshire Historic Environment Record also records possible building platforms in the northern part of the village, in the gardens of the property known today as 'The Old Stables' (Notts. HER: No. 7696). It is difficult to interpret these further but the OS First Edition shows there were buildings in this area. The Nottinghamshire HER also records earthworks around the village green (Notts. HER: L7687). These include a linear bank across the front lawns of the properties on the west side of the village green, and a building platform on the west side of Eakring Road, next to the chapel. These earthworks show that this central area of village topography has slowly changed over time, including the encroachment of gardens on the west side of the green, grassing over of roads on the east, and disappearance of buildings on the northern edge.

### Discussion

The data derived from this archaeological survey of Wellow, alongside other available evidence, provide important insights into the development of the village and its landscape. Of central importance to the assessment of Wellow is dating the settlement sequence. Wellow is not included in Domesday Book but as the survey records manors and not actual settlements this does not preclude the existence of the village by the late eleventh century.

Documentary evidence makes clear that a village had certainly been established by the early thirteenth century, but it seems most likely that settlement at Wellow was initiated following land clearance of the region in the middle of the twelfth century organised by Rufford Abbey. Established as a daughter house of Rievaulx Abbey in the mid-1140s, it appears that the clerics of Rufford Abbey undertook a project of settlement and landscape re-planning following their arrival in the region. A cartulary dating to the middle of the twelfth century details compensation granted by the Abbot of Rufford to displaced populations, as the new monastic community apparently sought to create a *tabula rasa* by clearing villages in their surrounding landscape. There is no specific reference to Wellow in the cartulary text, but Barley (1957) was the first to recognise the likelihood that a new settlement framework would have probably been founded on Rufford's freshly cleared estate.

The possibility that Wellow was established *de novo* by the monks of Rufford in the middle of the twelfth century is supported by archaeology from the village and its landscape. In addition to the regularity of the property arrangement detectable across the village, which may relate to this initial phase of settlement planning, the slight dating evidence from the Gorge Dyke — albeit comprising only a single pottery sherd — supports a broad medieval date of origin. It is possible that the earthwork itself is referred to in the village place name; the *hag* element of *Welhag* first recorded in 1207 is derived from the Old English *haga* denoting an enclosed or hedged area. It must be borne in mind, however, that *haga* is a very common English place-name element in the Sherwood Forest region, and no other village which features the suffix possesses an enclosing earthwork akin to Wellow. Indeed, there seem to be few sites of comparable character to Wellow in Nottinghamshire, although Barley has suggested *Iverishagh* as a potential parallel (Barley 1957, 83). Located 13.5km south-south-west from the site, north of the village of Oxton, *Iverishagh* is an archaic name for the monument known locally as 'Old Ox'; a bank and ditched enclosure situated in a lowland landscape. Despite sharing a similar oval shape to Wellow, Old Ox is much smaller and does not enclose a settlement. Old Ox is in fact a multivallate Iron-Age hillfort, which was used as the assembly point for the wapentake of Thurgaton from at least the twelfth century (National Monument No: 320283).

The likelihood that Wellow was developed as a dependent settlement by a local monastic community in the twelfth century provides a crucial historical context with which the settlement and its environs can be interpreted. The construction of a substantial enclosure — the Gorge Dyke — around Wellow during or shortly after the civil war of King Stephen's reign may hint that its construction was at least in part a reaction to the turbulent contemporary social, economic and political climate of the Anarchy. This survey demonstrates that the Gorge Dyke consists

of a rock-cut ditch whose spoil forms the core of the bank. It is conceivable that the enclosure was enhanced with a palisade, not detectable using the present survey methods, which would have helped to create a substantial barrier around the settlement space. Indeed, that Wellow was developed in an unstable landscape maybe alluded to by the high concentration of early castles in the surrounding region. Wellow stands out as remarkable, however, as it is the only clear example of a medieval defended village without a castle in England (Creighton 2005, 212; Creighton and Higham 2005, 79). In contrast to Wellow, embanked and defended medieval villages in England were typically appended to castles, with their fortifications in effect extensions of the castles' defences. The reason for this difference seems to be Wellow's origins as a settlement planned by a monastic rather than a secular lord. Although there is a castle site within the parish (Jordan's Castle), this was geographically distinct from the settlement, lying 800m north-east of the village. There is also no conclusive evidence that the two sites were built or occupied contemporaneously.

Wellow's village bank is much more substantial than the sorts of embankments that surround many Midland deserted medieval settlements, which served to divide occupation from the surrounding open fields. The bank and ditch were therefore probably constructed, at least in part, with a defensive purpose in mind. The possible monastic context of Wellow's development must also be considered when interpreting the Gorge Dyke, however. If Wellow was indeed founded by the clerics of Rufford Abbey, it is possible that the Gorge Dyke was constructed as a water management system by Cistercian engineers well-known for their expertise in such projects. A further consideration is that the enclosure could have equally been used to control the movement of people and stock. Access into and out of the settlement certainly seems to have been regulated, as evidenced by the channelled entranceway in the north-westernmost part of the circuit. Wellow's location within the local transport network may even suggest that the village was strategically positioned for such a purpose; situated immediately east of the Great North Road, Wellow was also located on the Sheffield to Newark Road. From the south too, the road from Eakring entered Wellow and from the north, possibly from Laxton, a further thoroughfare entered the village. Wellow thus acted as a nodal point for travel from various directions during the medieval period, and the foundation may represent a desire to integrate within regional networks and profit from the economic outputs of trade and industry. The importance of space along the major routes is perhaps represented by the plots fronting on to Newark Road, which show evidence of subdivision and accretion of backwards development from the frontage. In addition to these economic benefits, the earthworks of Wellow would have also been a conspicuous statement of power in the landscape, symbolically as much as physically demonstrating the authority of the settlement's clerical overlords.

## Conclusion

The evidence presented by this research therefore suggests that the village of Wellow most probably developed during or immediately after the Anarchy. Dating the sequence of Wellow has been especially challenging, however, and while written sources strongly advocate a twelfth-century origin for the village we cannot be sure that settlement and other landscape components such as the Gorge Dyke were developed contemporaneously. It seems most likely that the Gorge Dyke was built partly as a response to perceived threat within a politically unstable landscape in the mid-twelfth century, but it would also have served to control movement of people and stock throughout the medieval and later periods. The intra-mural space within the enclosure was seemingly never entirely filled with settlement, as evidenced by the preserved ridge and furrow in the north-eastern corner of the village; instead the focus appears to have been around the central green and St Swithin's church where the oldest vernacular buildings still stand. The

motivations behind Wellow's establishment are also difficult to define, but must have in part been a result of the economic pressure created by the growth of an ecclesiastical community, some elements of which were not engaged in agricultural production. The clearing of pre-existing settlements allowed the coalescence of the local population into a single focus with greater proportions of more easily accessible agricultural land — indeed, it has been argued that nucleated villages emerged in the midlands of England in order to more effectively use short plough-windows on clay soils susceptible to waterlogging (Williamson 2003, 141–59; 2013, 196–7). In addition to meeting new needs in terms of agricultural output, Wellow's position as a nodal point in local and regional transport networks generated further economic growth. Beyond practical considerations, Wellow's establishment also allowed the Cistercian community of Rufford Abbey to make an ideological statement as the village represented a conspicuous symbol of power by monastics, perhaps responding to their vulnerable position as a nascent community in an unstable landscape.

# Chapter 13

## Woodwalton, 'Church End', Cambridgeshire

Duncan Wright, Michael Fradley and Oliver Creighton

### Abstract

*Earthworks at Church End in the parish of Woodwalton, Cambridgeshire were the subject of an analytical earthwork and magnetometer survey. These assessments challenge existing interpretations of the site, which have viewed the earthwork as the remains of a motte and bailey, and instead suggest that the hill is a largely natural formation that was furnished with a ringwork castle. An arrangement of enclosures was identified, suggesting that the castle may have been developed over existing settlement which utilised the outcrop of dry land on the edge of Woodwalton Fen. The only documentary reference to a castle at Woodwalton is in 1144, when Ernulf de Mandeville, son of the rebellious Earl of Essex, Geoffrey de Mandeville, withdrew his forces to it. Two alternative possibilities of castle development are forwarded: either that it was left unfinished, or that it was slighted after its use. The establishment of nearby Sawtry Abbey in 1147 may have been linked to castle building, in an attempt to bring tenurial stability to a contested landscape.*

### Introduction

Immediately north of houses forming the small hamlet of Church End in the northern extent of the parish of Woodwalton, Cambridgeshire (in the historic county of Huntingdonshire), lie earthwork remains known as Castle Hill (TL 21088278) (Figures 13.1 and 13.2). The monument has traditionally been identified as a motte and bailey castle, associated with other earthworks including former fishponds and agricultural features (RCHME 1926, 298). The earthworks and surrounding landscape were subject to a topographic and magnetometry survey which was undertaken in two stages between 11 and 12 December 2013 and between 5 and 6 February 2014. The earthworks of the castle and associated features are classified as a Scheduled Monument (National Monument No: 27186). The earthworks were previously surveyed by Brown and Taylor (1978, 63–4). The 2014 survey complements and builds upon this earlier work with a revised topographical survey supported by the first geophysical assessment of the site, coupled with comprehensive historical and cartographic analyses.

During the medieval period Church End represented one component within a dispersed and fluid fen-edge settlement pattern. The hamlet of Church End, within which the castle site is situated, displays

earthwork evidence of settlement shrinkage and lies approximately 600m north-north-east of the parish church of St Andrew's, a predominantly medieval structure which features a number of twelfth-century tombstones in the west wall of the nave. A larger settlement focus is located at Woodwalton c. 2km to the south of the castle which also possesses evidence of shrinkage (VCH Hunts. III 1936, 236–41; Hall 1992, 38–40; Hall and Coles 1994, 132). The remains of a medieval moated site within Woodwalton village is a Scheduled Monument (National Monument No: 27185). Of particular relevance to this study are the remains of the Cistercian abbey of Sawtry, founded in 1147 and located a little over a kilometre west of the Church End earthwork complex (National Monument No: 363933) (VCH Hunts. I 1926, 391). A further 2km south-west of the abbey are located the remains of Sawtry Judith Manor, a medieval village which was probably occupied until the fourteenth century (National Monument No: 363918). Sawtry Judith is likely to have originally developed as a monastic grange farm serving the nascent Cistercian community during the twelfth century (see below). The artificial river cut known as Wheatley's Drain flows west to east immediately north of the survey area, and approximately 650m to the west of the site the East Coast Mainline railway runs in a north to south orientation.

The Church End earthworks and the surrounding landscape are located on a bedrock of mudstones of the Oxford Clay Formation which were formed in the Jurassic era. Around 250m north of the site, the mudstones are overlain by more recent peat deposits. Formed during the Quaternary era, the peat represents the southerly extension of Woodwalton Fen, an area which itself is part of the lowest and most westerly extremity of the East Anglian Fens. In the medieval period Church End and Woodwalton lay on a promontory projecting out into this extensive fen (Hall 1992, 33). One possible reason that has been suggested for the castle's positioning is the existence of the 'Monk's Lode', a fenland canal running north-south that terminates to the west of the castle site, and which has been suggested to have a Roman origin (Brown and Taylor 1978, 63). More recent archaeological survey and assessment suggests limited evidence for a Roman presence in the immediate landscape, however, and the lode seems much more likely to have been first cut following the foundation of Sawtry Abbey and was probably enhanced later, in the 1160s or 70s, when the castle had in all probability fallen into disuse (Hall 1992, 40).

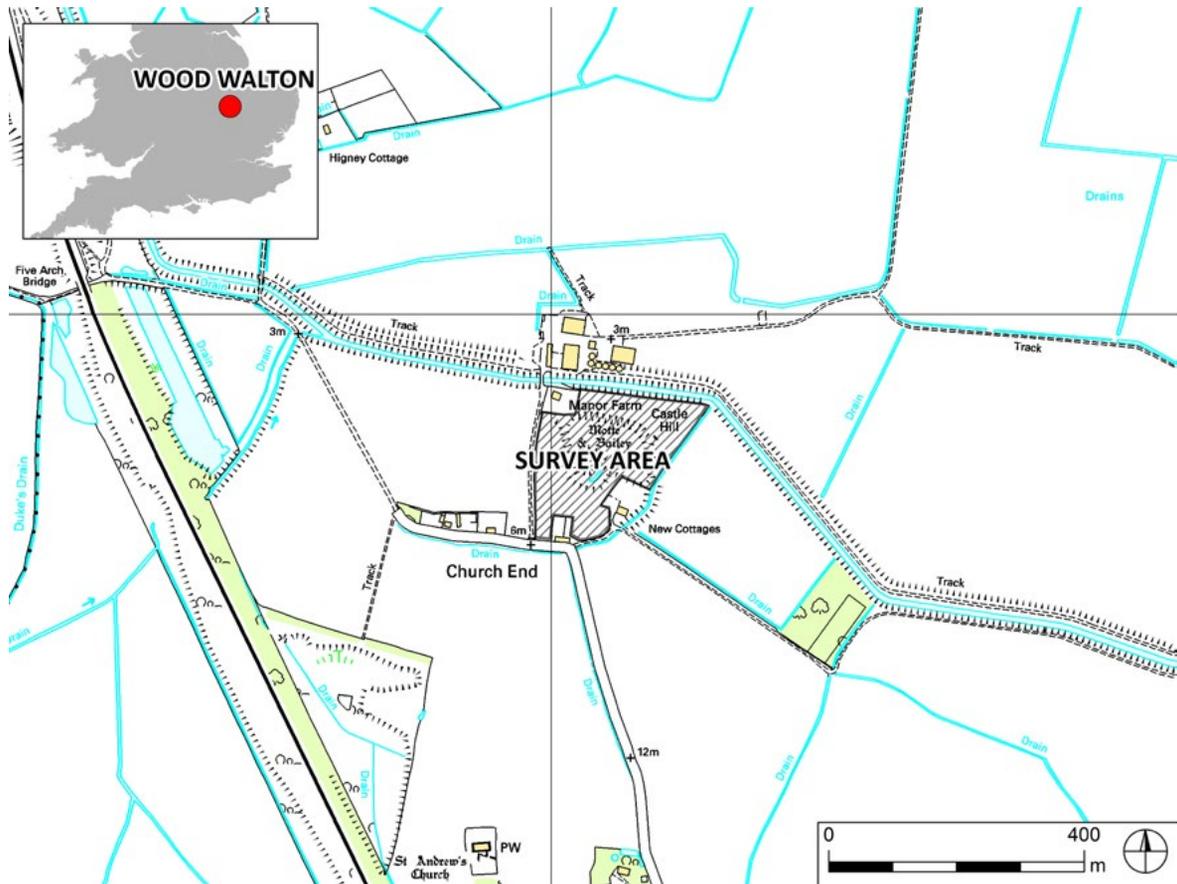


FIGURE 13.1: LOCATION OF CHURCH END, WOODWALTON, IN SOUTHERN BRITAIN (INSET), AND WITHIN THE LOCAL LANDSCAPE. © CROWN COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHT 2015. ORDNANCE SURVEY (DIGIMAP LICENCE).



FIGURE 13.2: VIEW OVER THE CHURCH END EARTHWORKS, LOOKING NORTH AND SHOWING THE SITE TRADITIONALLY IDENTIFIED AS THE VESTIGES OF A MOTTE AND BAILEY CASTLE ON A LOW HILLTOP.

## The Castle

There is only a single fleeting reference to a castle at Woodwalton, dated to the middle of the twelfth century in the *Chronicle of Ramsey Abbey*. In 1144, upon the death of Geoffrey de Mandeville, Earl of Essex, following a wound sustained while attacking the castle of Burwell (Cambridgeshire) (this volume, Chapter 2), his son, Ernulf de Mandeville, consented to withdraw his soldiers from Ramsey ‘to the castle of Walton, which he had built’ (*qui castellum quod am fecerat apud Waltone*) (*Chronicle of Ramsey Abbey*, ed. Macray 1886, 332). The earthworks at Church End are identified by most scholars as a motte or motte and bailey, and it is assumed this castle represents the one mentioned in the chronicle as built by Geoffrey de Mandeville or his son Ernulf c. 1144 (VCH Hunts. I 1926, 290–1; III 1936, 236; Hall 1992, 40; Lowerre 2005, 238).

## Historical and Archaeological Context

The earliest evidence for human activity from the Church End landscape consists of a Mesolithic chisel and tranche handaxe recovered from Woodwalton parish (Cambs. HER: 01752). Further Mesolithic flint flakes were found during fieldwalking by the Fenland Project near Wennington Lodge Farm in the neighbouring parish of Wentworth, 3km south-south-east of the site (Cambs. HER: 07711) (Hall 1992, 33–8). These assemblages suggest that the fen edge was being more consistently exploited during the Mesolithic period, complementing evidence from elsewhere in Cambridgeshire that illustrates a changing settlement pattern combined with increased human impact on the environment, characterised in particular by deliberate burning of woodland (e.g. Smith *et al.* 1989). A side scraper (Cambs. HER: 01748) and various flint axeheads (Cambs. HER: 01742; 01922) all found in Woodwalton parish, and a discoidal flint knife recovered from Castle Hill itself (Cambs. HER: 01739), imply that the mixed resource base of the fens continued to attract human activity into the Neolithic, data which again help to corroborate a broader regional picture (e.g. Smith *et al.* 1989).

Stray finds demonstrate the area continued to represent a focus of activity throughout the Bronze Age and Iron Age, but it is only during the Romano-British period that evidence of more permanent occupation has been located. A Romano-British settlement has been identified adjacent to St Andrew’s church, 500m south of Castle Hill (Cambs. HER: 05645; Silvester 1984, 6; Brown and Taylor 1985, 78–9), and a further habitation site at Alconbury 5km south-south-west of Church End (Cambs. HER: 00837; Garrood 1946). More detailed investigations were undertaken by J.R. Garrood between 1929 and 1933, who excavated a Romano-British settlement at Stocking Close 3km south-west of the site

(Cambs. HER: 01566a; Garrood 1933). Archaeological evidence from the early medieval period is more sparse, although the find of a single coin of Coenwulf (AD 796–819) complements written records which indicate that this area — part of the kingdom of East Anglia — was subject to sporadic Mercian overlordship from the late seventh century. The manor of *Walton* is recorded during the reign of Edward the Confessor as being held by Saxi of Walton, kinsman of Leofric (*Chronicle of Ramsey Abbey*, ed. Macray 1886, 146). The place name *Waltune* is probably derived from the OE *waell-tūn*, meaning ‘wall enclosure’ or ‘enclosure by the wall’ (Mawer and Stenton 1926, 225).

*The Chronicle of Ramsey Abbey* claims that on Saxi’s death the manor should have passed to their religious community, but by the time of the Domesday Survey of 1086 *Walton* is listed under the ownership of Hugh de Bolbec (*Chronicle of Ramsey Abbey*, ed. Macray 1886, 332; VCH Hunts. III 1936, 236). *Walton* was Hugh’s only manor in Huntingdonshire and contained 19 villagers with 4 ploughs, a church, meadow and woodland pasture, and was worth 100s, the same as in 1066 (*Domesday Book, Huntingdonshire*, ed. Morris 1975, 14, 1). Hugh de Bolbec’s heir Walter de Bolbec held the manor until c. 1134 when the estate was gifted to Ramsey Abbey to hold by the service of two knight’s fees and the castle ward. The first sub-tenant of the monks appears to have been named Remelin, whose daughter and heir was Aubrey, wife of Eustace de Sella (*Cartulary of Ramsey Abbey* i, 153–7). Despite Aubrey granting the manor back to Ramsey in her widowhood, during the reign of King Stephen her sons seized it and claimed it as two knight’s fees. Only during the supremacy of Abbot William (1161–77) was *Walton* recovered, when he arranged for his brother to marry the widow of one of the de Sella sons (*Cartulary of Ramsey Abbey* iii, 220–4). The illegal seizure of the manor during King Stephen’s reign is reflective of the impact that the turbulent political climate of the Anarchy had upon Woodwalton.

The unstable conditions of the Anarchy were also acutely felt in the wider Woodwalton region as the earldom of Huntingdon was held by King David I of Scots, uncle of Empress Matilda and one of the leading supporters of the Angevin cause. In 1136 David granted the earldom to his son Henry who continued to forge strong links with powerful local tenants such as David Olifard. Two years later, however, the Scots’ support of the Angevins led to the confiscation of the earldom by King Stephen, who granted it instead to one of his own men, Simon de Senlis II. Olifard rebelled against the new arrangement, leading to the confiscation of his fee in Sawtry, the neighbouring manor to Woodwalton. It was here that de Senlis established a Cistercian abbey in 1147, with the intention surely in part at least that the community of monks would prevent Olifard from regaining his estate at a later date (Stringer 1980, 325–34; Burton 1994, 74).

Indeed, the desire to prevent the reclamation of estates through the foundation of monastic houses was a feature of the 1140s and 1150s. During a period when the legal status of land was often uncertain, the establishment of church communities in the landscape represented a means of materialising the patrons' rights, as well as providing a symbol of lordly power and status (Burton 1986, 30–1). The continued political importance of the house at Sawtry is underlined by another grant of King Stephen, who bestowed a further 200 acres of land at Gamlingay to the monks during the nascent years of the abbey.

The abbey at Sawtry, located only 1km to the west of Church End, was founded as a granddaughter house of Rievaulx, North Yorkshire, by monks from Warden Abbey, Bedfordshire. The complex was excavated between 1907 and 1912 by S. Inskip Ladds who identified the building plan within a precinct defined by ditches enclosing an area measuring approximately 400m by 300m (VCH Hunts. I 1926, 391; Inskip Ladds 1914). Ladds had previously believed that the site of a pre-existing village had been cleared when the abbey was founded. The parish was not entirely deserted for the benefit of the Cistercians, however, but rather the focus of settlement was probably

shifted 2km to the south-west of the precinct where pottery finds suggest the village of Sawtry Judith was occupied into the later medieval period (Delve 1980). The foundation of Sawtry Abbey would have had a profound impact on the local landscape, and in addition to establishing two nearby granges at Grange Farm and Archer's Wood, the close proximity of Sawtry Abbey to the site at Church End is likely to be significant. Castles and churches were the two most prominent symbols of Anglo-Norman power, and their close proximity in the Woodwalton area suggests that they may have formed two parts of an overarching scheme of seigneurial landscape development (e.g. Creighton 2005, 282–3).

### Map Analysis

On the earliest available mapping of the area, the Tithe Map of 1840, the site is depicted as two plots (Figure 13.3). One of the plots is recorded as 'Castles Hill with Farmhouse' (Figure 13.3: 155), and the other as simply 'Farmhouse and Homestead' (Figure 13.3: 156). To the east of Castle Hill a plot recorded as 'Mill Piece' on the apportionment is illustrated with a windmill (Figure 13.3: 154). Other elements of interest within Woodwalton

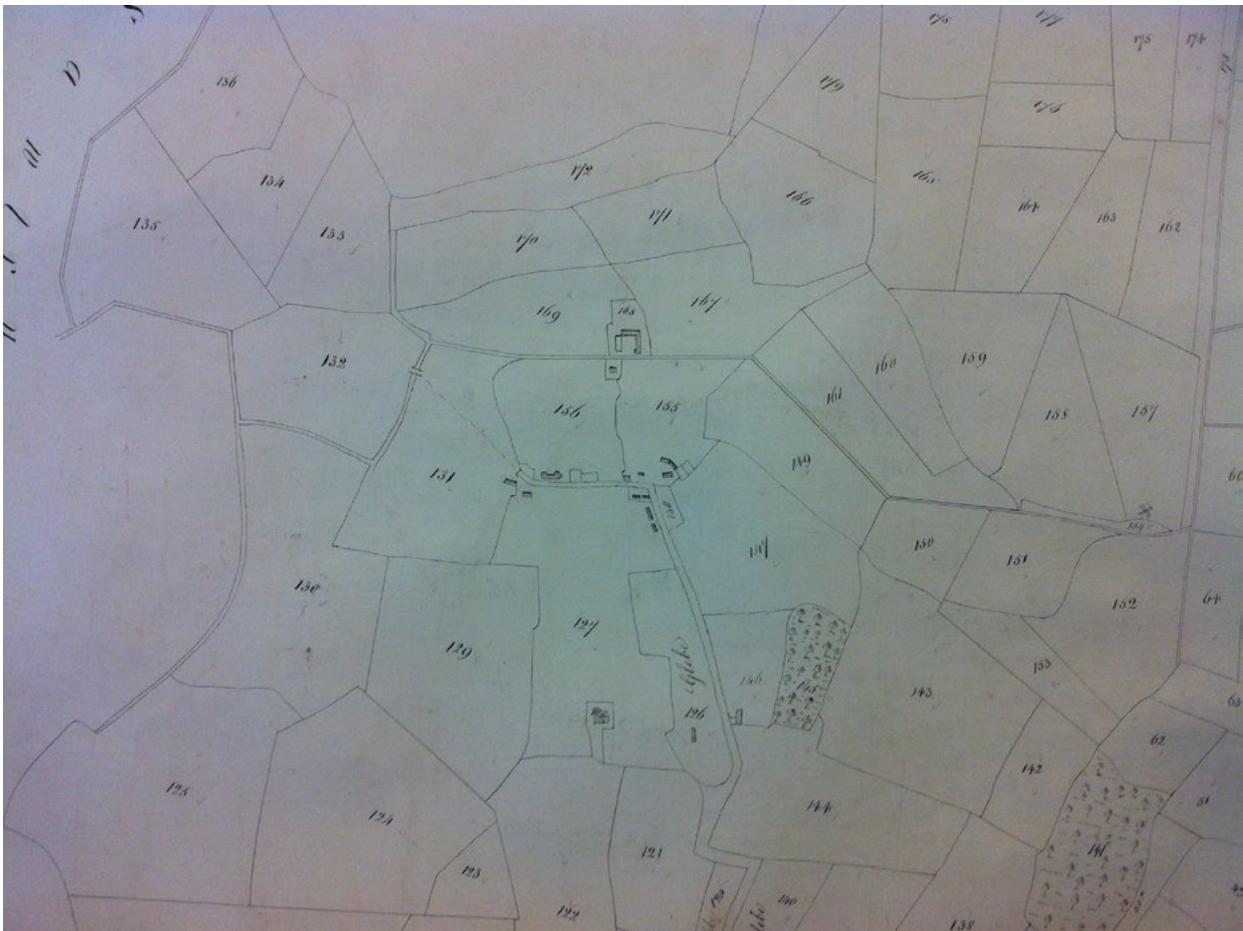


FIGURE 13.3: 1840 TITHE MAP OF CHURCH END AND SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE. THE SITE OCCUPIES PLOT 155, LISTED AS 'CASTLES HILL WITH FARMHOUSE' ON THE APPORTIONMENT AND PLOT 156. TO THE EAST OF THE SITE PLOT 154 IS RECORDED AS 'MILL PIECE' AND A WINDMILL IS ILLUSTRATED ON THE MAP. ST ANDREW'S CHURCH IS ALSO DEPICTED. REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION OF THE HUNTINGDONSHIRE ARCHIVES, REF: MAP 363

parish are the field names ‘Barrow Field’ (Figure 13.3: 147), and ‘Barrow Wood’ (Figure 13.3: 145). Previous ownership of land by Sawtry Abbey is hinted at by the field names of Abbey Field, Little Abbey Field, and Great Abbey Field, all located on the western side of the parish where it meets Sawtry parish. The moated site on the edge of Woodwalton village is recorded as ‘Moat Close’. One further field name of note is ‘Tothill Ground’, located in the south-eastern portion of the parish. ‘Tot’ and ‘toot’ names are sometimes associated with castle mounds and/or Anglo-Saxon beacons, and it is possible that the place name in this instance preserves the memory of an earlier site.

The OS Edition 25” map, dated to 1888, presents Castle Hill as a sub-oval prominence with a pond in its south-eastern corner (Figure 13.4). Further ponds are recorded, including four in the north-eastern portion of the survey area. A trackway is depicted extending from the north-western part of the site in a south-easterly direction where it is lost in the earthworks of Castle Hill. The ditch and hedge-line bordering the east of the site are labelled as ‘moat’ in archaic script, suggesting that the surveyors recognised the antiquity of the earthworks. Also hinting at the historical significance of Castle Hill are the farm

names of ‘Manor Farm’ to the north of the survey area, and the ‘Old Manor House’ to the south-west. The style of the Second Revision 25” map of 1926 Castle Hill does not lend itself well to depicting earthworks, and if anything the detail provided is less than that of the First Edition (Figure 13.5). The sub-oval prominence with internal pond is recorded, however, although the rise is inaccurately illustrated as uniform on all sides. To the north of the site, Manor Farm is depicted as featuring a tramway which enters the property from the east and presumably developed for the benefit of agricultural activities.

**Earthwork Description and Interpretation**

The monument at Church End offers evidence of a range of probable medieval earthwork forms. The site is situated on the rise of a small hill overlooking a fenland edge landscape to the north. At a broad level the site can be broken down into fragments of a large, sub-oval enclosure running around the base of the hill and measuring c. 180m east-west and c. 120m north-south. At the crest of the hill there are the partial remains of some form of ringwork enclosure, and a number of small rectilinear enclosures to the north and east (Figure 13.6).

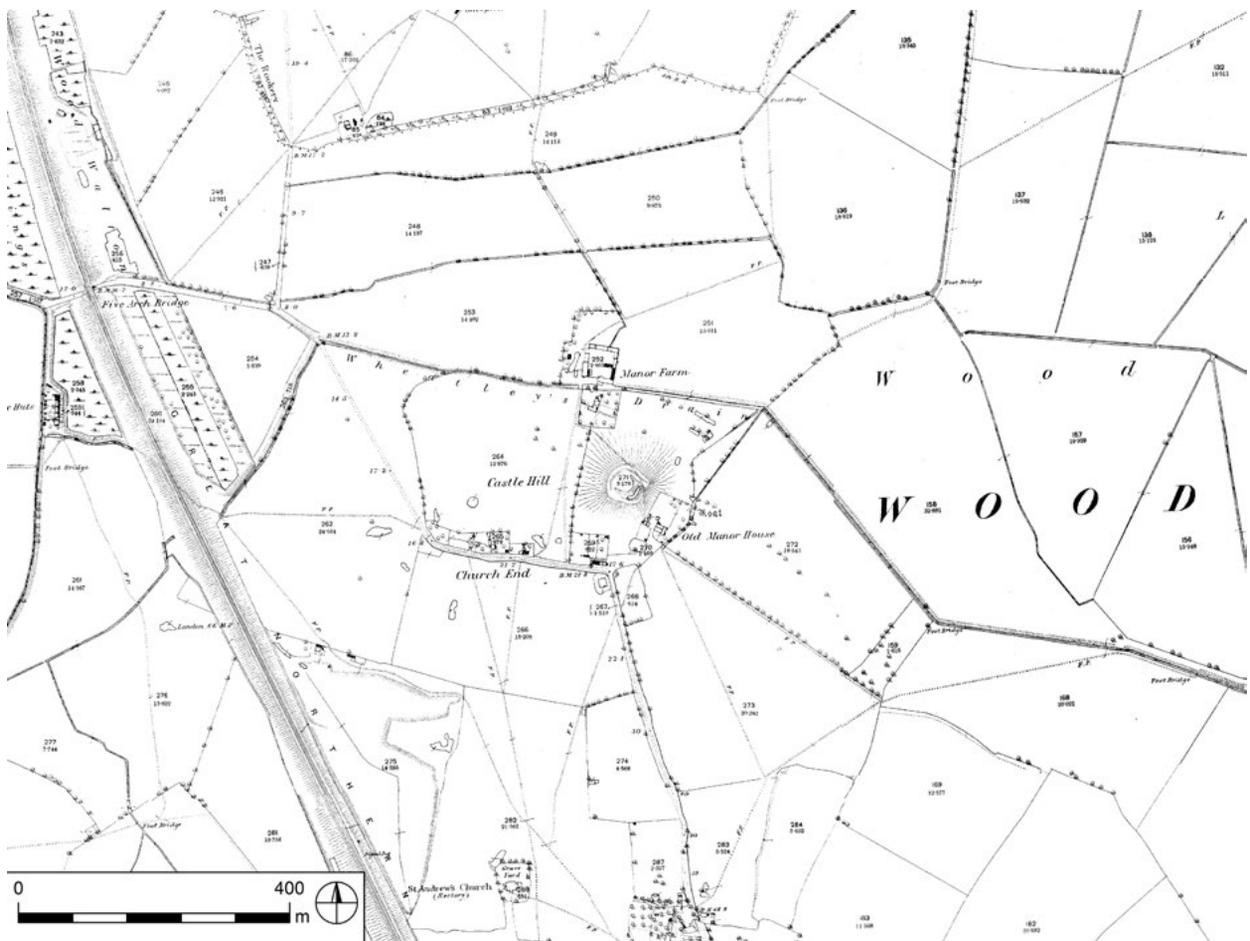


FIGURE 13.4: OS FIRST EDITION 25” MAP (1888) OF THE CHURCH END EARTHWORKS AND THE SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE. © CROWN COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHT 2015. ORDNANCE SURVEY (DIGIMAP LICENCE).

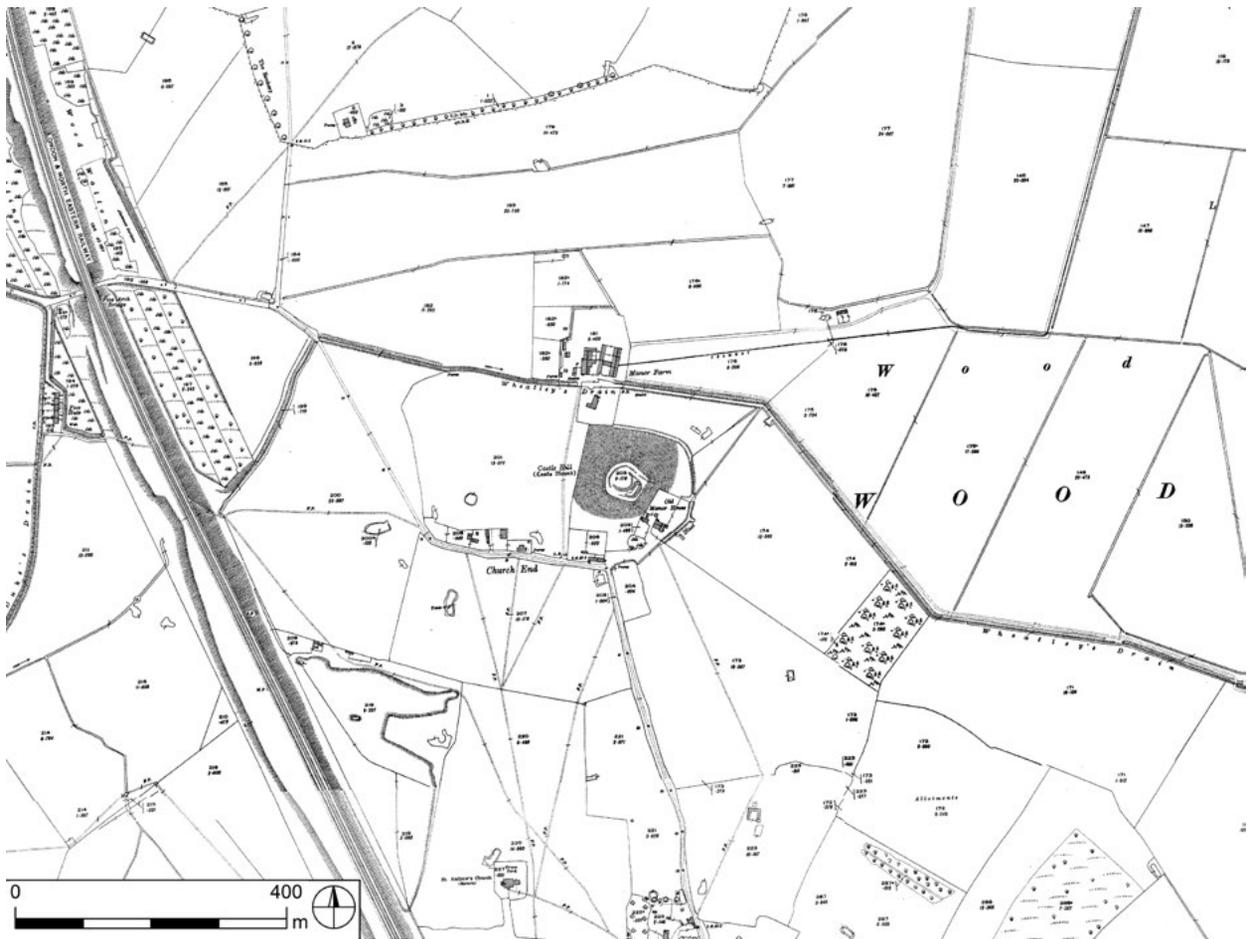


FIGURE 13.5: OS SECOND REVISION 25" MAP (1926) OF THE CHURCH END EARTHWORKS AND THE SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE. © CROWN COPYRIGHT AND DATABASE RIGHT 2015. ORDNANCE SURVEY (DIGIMAP LICENCE).

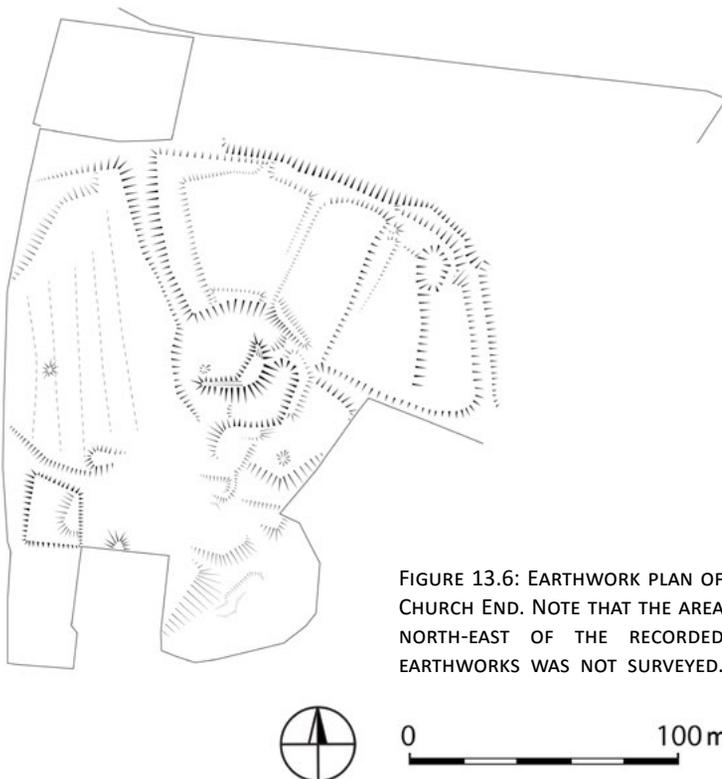


FIGURE 13.6: EARTHWORK PLAN OF CHURCH END. NOTE THAT THE AREA NORTH-EAST OF THE RECORDED EARTHWORKS WAS NOT SURVEYED.

The large sub-oval enclosure is made up of a number of scarp features that are conjectured to form part of a single overall unit (Figure 13.7: 'a'). On the eastern and north-eastern side of the enclosure this feature is marked by the presence of a double scarp (Figure 13.7: 'b') with a small terraced area between the two scarps, possibly the by-product of creating the internal rectilinear enclosures discussed further below. The large sub-oval enclosure is bisected by a linear hollow-way feature (Figure 13.7: 'c') which measures 3–10m wide and up to 1m in depth, entering the enclosure from the north-west on a north-west to south-east orientation. It may be continued to the east in a similar feature (Figure 13.7: 'd') that extends south-eastwards beyond the survey area. In the intervening area is a large circular depression measuring 40m in diameter and 1–1.5m in depth (Figure 13.7: 'e'). A circular section

of bank (Figure 13.7: 'f') measuring up to 8m wide and 1.8m in height was recorded in the south-eastern corner of this circular area with a corresponding section of parallel ditch 20m wide and 2m deep to the south-east. This feature can be identified as the vestiges of a ringwork, rather than the motte depicted on OS maps. A small shallow pit measuring 1.5m in diameter was also recorded alongside the bank (Figure 13.7: 'g').

In the area north-east of the central, circular depression is a group of at least three large sub-rectangular raised platforms (Figure 13.7: 'h') up to 30m in width and 60m in length, running down the hillside. There is no evidence of internal features within these areas, suggesting an agricultural function, although the two westernmost enclosures have low banks at their southern ends where they abut the central circular depression, suggesting that these were formed when the depression was excavated, and therefore implying that the enclosures pre-date the central depression. A pond or quarry pit was cut just beyond the north-eastern corner of the easternmost enclosure (Figure 13.7: 'i') that measures 11m wide, 18m long and 1.5m deep. Further boundary ditches and pit features were observed in the adjacent area to the north and north-east but were omitted from the present survey. To the south-east of the circular depression is part of an enclosure with a shallow pit measuring 2.5m in diameter (Figure 13.7: 'j'). In addition, to the south-west are a number of smaller terraces and possible small building platforms. To the west of the central circular depression is an area of residual ridge and furrow earthworks (Figure 13.7: 'k') of probable medieval date orientated north-south.

To the south of the hill is an area of potentially accentuated natural terraces, with possible inlets derived from drainage channels or humanly created walkways. At the base of this terrace and running parallel to it is a short section of a narrow, meandering water channel (Figure 13.7: 'l'). To the west of this area is a sub-rectangular platform (Figure 13.7: 'm') measuring c. 20m by 28m and 0.8m high, with a low, sub-rectangular raised area at its eastern end that may be the remnant of a structure.

### Magnetometry Results and Interpretation

A magnetometer survey of 1.4ha of land at Church End was undertaken as outlined in the project design submitted to English Heritage. The results of the magnetometer survey indicate the presence of several features of likely archaeological origin (Figures 13.8 and 13.9). These anomalies primarily consist of linear features, some of which are visible as earthworks. Anomalies I-IV are of comparable form, each extending for approximately 85m in a north-south orientation and measuring 1–2m in width. The anomalies are also visible as earthworks (Figure 13.7: 'k') and are residual ridge and furrow features, likely bounded by an oval enclosure (Figure 13.7, 'a') the southern extent of which is a likely headland (anomaly XVII, see below). Extending radially in a northern projection, anomalies V-VIII measure around 40m in length and 1–2m in width. Anomalies V, VII and VIII correspond to the enclosures of feature 'h' identified by the earthwork survey. Anomaly VI is not visible as a surface feature and is probably a subdivision of one of the enclosures. Anomaly IX is around 35m long and 2–3m wide, and, mirroring the orientation of the ringwork, may be an outwork ditch of the castle. An indistinct group of responses form anomaly X, running for 20m in a south-east to north-east alignment and then turning in a north-easterly direction for around 7m.

A series of small sub-oval responses characterise anomaly XI, extending for 10m in a north-east direction before turning a near right-angle and extending for around 15m in a north-westerly orientation. The responses are consistent with post-holes and their orientation suggests either the presence of a staggered fence-line or some other structure. Anomaly XII extends for approximately 90m curving from the north-east to the north-west, where it then straightens and projects southward for around 45m. The north-eastern part of the anomaly corresponds with feature 'e' of the topographic survey — the earthwork ditch of the castle. The magnetometer survey, however, demonstrates that the ditch also exists as a buried feature in the west and south, suggesting that it probably once

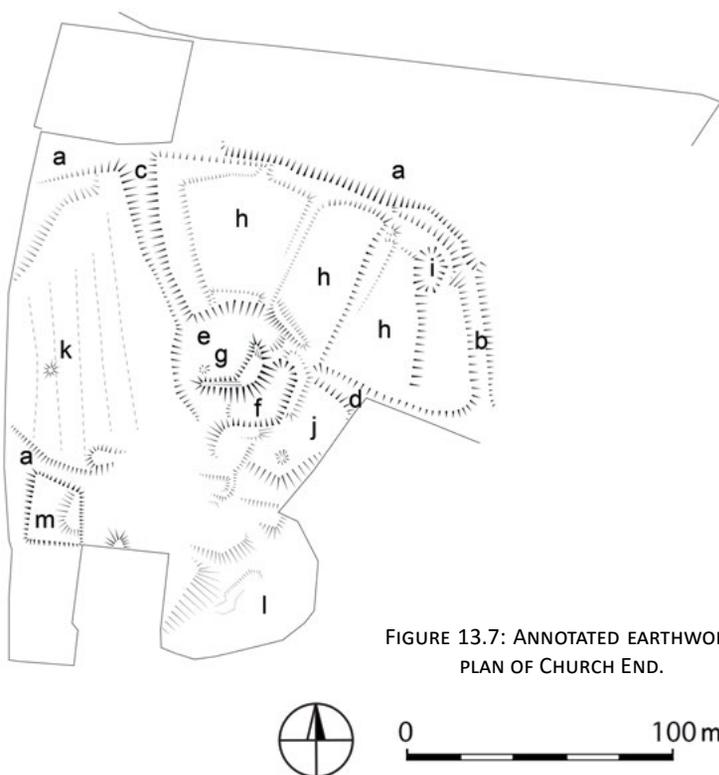


FIGURE 13.7: ANNOTATED EARTHWORK PLAN OF CHURCH END.

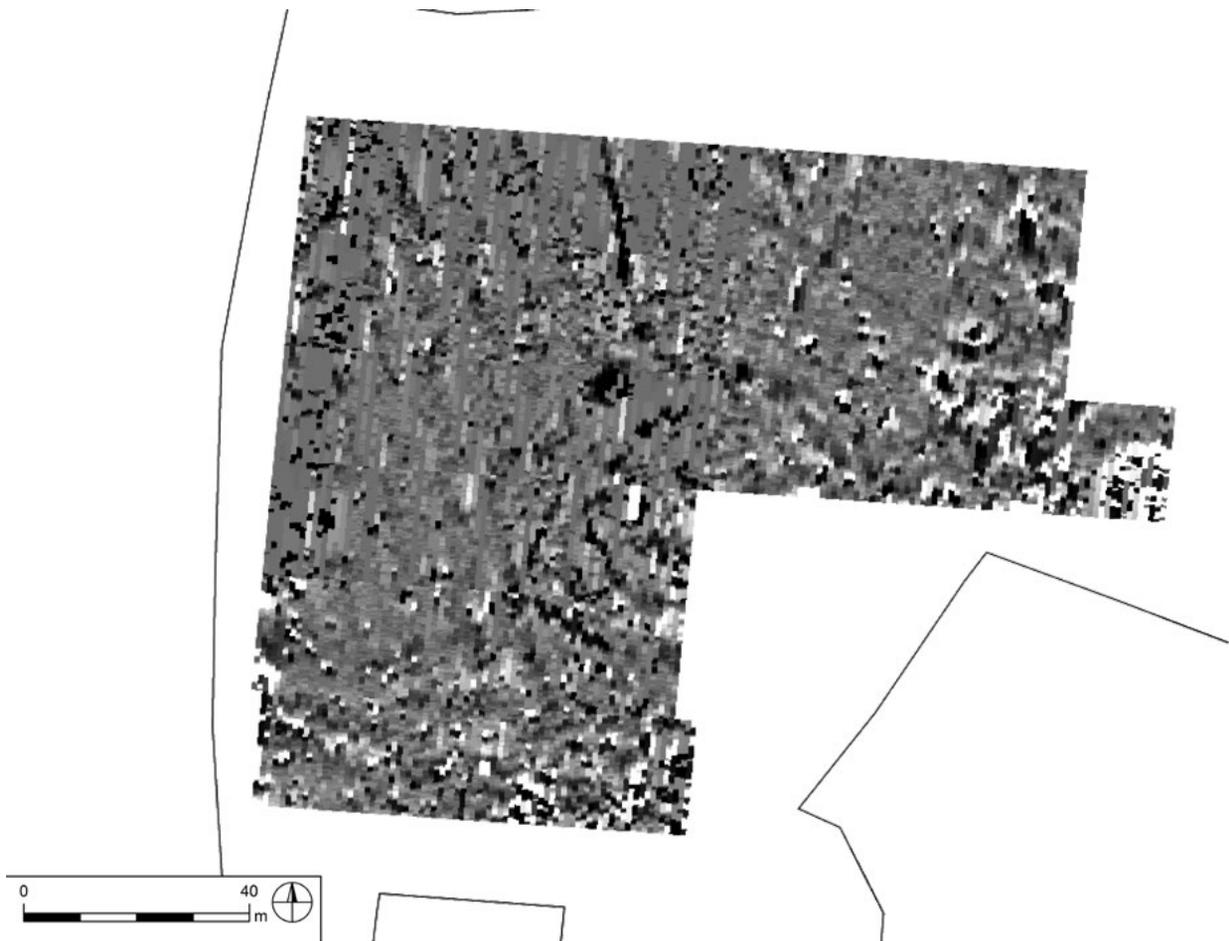


FIGURE 13.8: PLOT OF MAGNETOMETRY RESULTS AT CHURCH END, OVERLAID ON HACHURED EARTHWORK PLAN.

extended around the entirety of the monument. Anomaly XIII is visible as an earthwork feature 'f', the ringwork bank measuring up to 8m wide and extending in a circular fashion. A small linear response, 2m wide and 5m long, orientated in a south-east to north-west direction located within the interior of the ringwork bank may be tentatively interpreted as the remains of a structure.

Anomaly XV is not detectable as an earthwork and its alternative response suggests that it is of different origin to the features which make up the ringwork. The anomaly projects for 25m in a north-east to south-west direction, and then for 20m in a south-easterly orientation. Measuring approximately 1–2m wide the anomaly may relate to an agricultural structure or building platform. Anomaly XVI emanates from anomaly XII and at 2–3m wide is of comparable form — the relationship to the southern extension of anomaly XII is uncertain, but the curving character of anomaly XVI suggests that it forms part of the original ringwork ditch. Anomalies XVII and XVIII project in a roughly west to east direction for 40m and 60m respectively, and measure 3–4m in width. Anomaly XVII corresponds to feature 'a' of the earthwork survey, an enclosure bank or possibly a headland of the ridge and furrow located to the north. Anomaly XVIII is not visible as an earthwork.

### Discussion

There is only a single fleeting reference to a castle at Woodwalton, in the *Chronicle of Ramsey Abbey*, in 1144, when Ernulf de Mandeville retreated to the castle upon the death of his father, Geoffrey de Mandeville, who had been leading a fenland revolt (see above). This survey has challenged previous interpretations of the site as a motte and revealed that it instead represents a ringwork. The form of the ringwork presents two possibilities: first, its partial nature might suggest that it represents an unfinished and rapidly abandoned work; second, the earthworks might indicate a slighted castle site, where half of the ringwork bank has been cast down. Support for the first premise can be found in the earthwork survey, which recorded the enclosure as a bank and partial ditch (Figure 13.7: 'f' and 'g'), although the evidence from the magnetometer survey hint that these features may extend to the south and west as buried deposits (Figure 13.9, Anomalies XII and XVI). Irrespective of whether the castle was incomplete or slighted following its use, it is clear that the outer enclosure previously interpreted as the castle bailey is part of an earlier feature. Its consistent lack of bank or ditch is clear evidence against the likelihood that it ever functioned as a bailey enclosure.

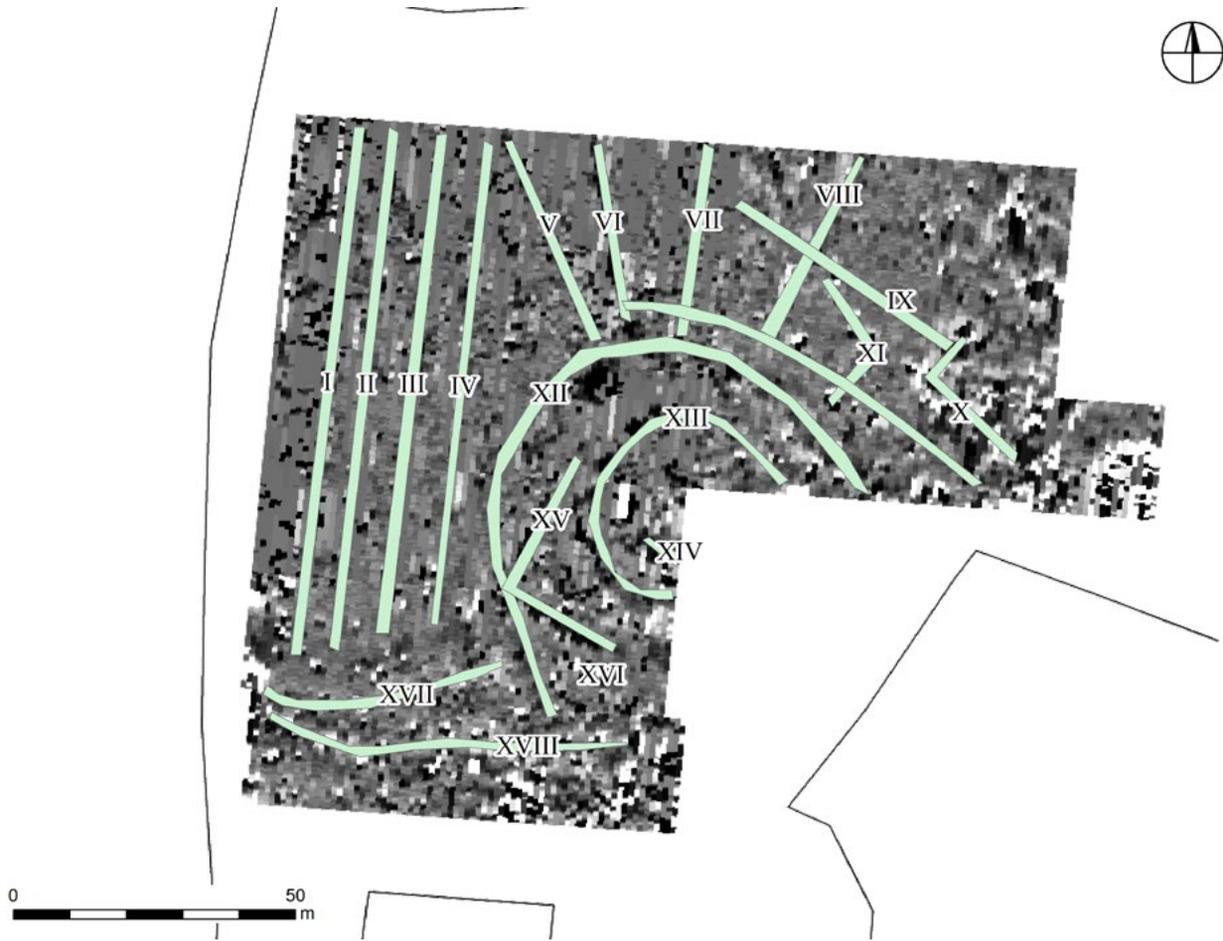


FIGURE 13.9: INTERPRETATION OF MAGNETOMETRY SURVEY AT CHURCH END.

The present survey therefore offers a re-appraisal of the earthwork evidence (Figure 13.10), with a conjectural phasing that begins with the creation of the large oval enclosure at an undetermined date, although this might feasibly represent a pre-castle manorial enclosure (for another example of an Anarchy-period castle built within an earlier enclosure see Burwell, this volume, Chapter 2). The lack of bank and ditch, as well as the fact that this feature is largely set at the base of the hill, seem to argue against it functioning as a principally defensive site. It is then suggested that raised field platforms were subsequently created in the eastern half of this oval enclosure, with the later date of construction based on the fact that the platforms do not join directly to the outer oval enclosure. In turn a hollow-way developed, running up and over the hillside on a roughly north-west to south-east orientation, and a depressed area was excavated out of the crest of the hill. Finally a ringwork feature was built within this enclosure. The small enclosures and possible building platforms to the south of this ringwork may date to any of these phases, while the rectilinear platform in the south-west corner of the site is thought to be of a later date due to its careful, rectilinear form. When the cap of the hill was furnished with a ringwork it was either left incomplete or rendered unusable through the partial levelling of its banks and ditches.

In conclusion, a number of different dates of construction and tenorial contexts are possible for the castle site at Church End. It is not out of the question that it was established by the de Bolebec family, who held the manor of Walton from Domesday Book until 1134, although it seems to have been an isolated estate rather than the centre of the sort of small lordship where private castle-building might be envisaged at this time. Another possible, though equally unlikely, scenario, is that it was raised by the Abbey of Ramsey, or a tenant, at some point shortly after 1134, although an earth and timber castle on a monastic estate would be unusual. On balance an Anarchy-period context for the castle seems most likely, which presents another two possibilities. It could have been built by the de Sellas, who seized and claimed the manor during the early part of the civil war, or by Geoffrey de Mandeville and/or his son, who retreated to the castle, which the *Chronicle of Ramsey Abbey* implies was built by the family, before or during 1144. Both interpretations of the castle as either unfinished or slighted are supported by the chronological context of the Anarchy. The landscape of the fen edge had become highly contested and heavily militarised in the mid-twelfth century, and it is possible that Woodwalton was either hurriedly furnished with a castle that was



never completed, or that it suffered slighting in order to decommission a symbol of political rebellion. With the castle rendered unusable, the establishment of Sawtry Abbey in 1147 might be seen as part and parcel of the same very public strategy of either maintaining or restoring order to a devastated and contested zone through religious endowment by a man loyal to the king, Simon de Senlis.

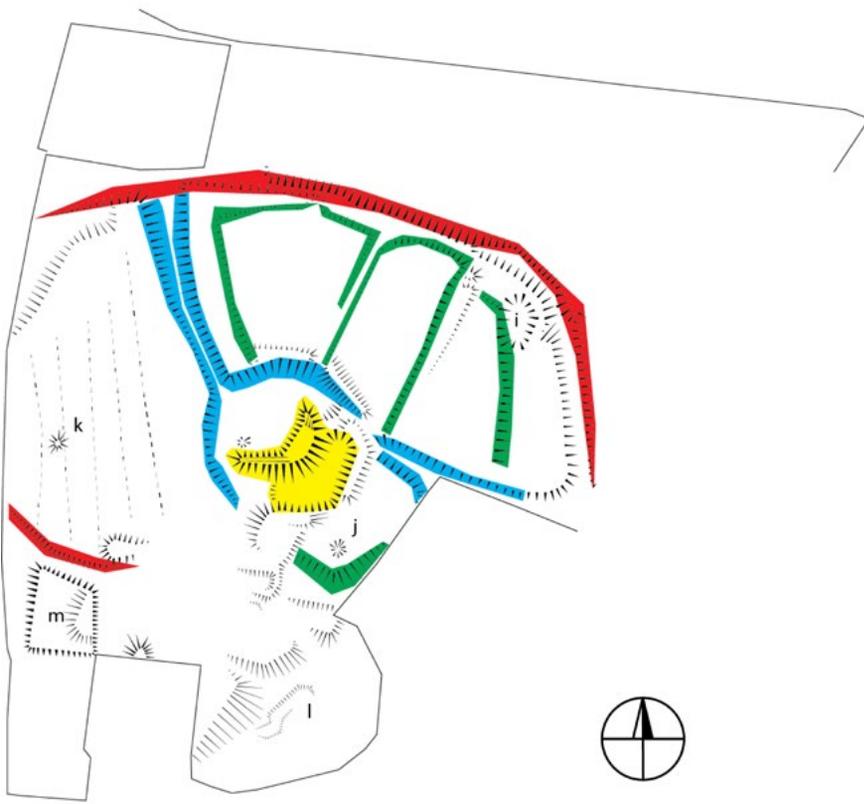


FIGURE 13.10: INTERPRETIVE PLAN OF EARTHWORKS AT CHURCH END.

## Chapter 14

### Conclusion

The twelve reports presented within this volume encapsulate something of the importance and great potential of researching the archaeology of the conflict of the mid-twelfth century popularly known as the Anarchy. Within the broad site types of *Castles, Siegeworks and Settlements* it is clear that there lies a great deal of physical variation and chronological complexity, and thus it would be unwise to attempt to characterise the archaeological profile of the period too definitively. Conversely, there are some clear commonalities shared by many of the studied sites, and there can be little doubt that the conflict imparted a tangible and significant inheritance upon English society and landscape. Complementing analysis of the material record with documentary, cartographic and other sources has proved a fruitful research avenue and ensures an inter-disciplinary relevance and impact for the picture derived from the archaeological evidence. Adopting an archaeological approach to the conflict has also presented challenges, however, and this research has sought to retain an awareness of the limitations and shortcomings of the evidence available. This chapter presents a short summary of both the insights and the difficulties of the investigations presented in this volume, before closing with an outline of possible areas for future research.

#### Surveying the Civil War: Results and Implications

A period of history which the documentary sources define as one of bitter conflict, political turmoil and social upheaval, it is little surprise that castles and their landscapes often provided the stage for numerous key events of the civil war of Stephen's reign. Castles were not central to the narrative solely as a result of their function as defensible military structures, however, but because they also represented the essential apparatus of lordly authority and territorial control. By the 1130s England already possessed a significant number of castles, their distribution the combined result of early Norman power consolidation, but more recently a consequence of localised tenurial, defensive and administrative factors. The impact of castles upon landscape and community was profound, and throughout the medieval period they were utilised as powerful and evocative emblems of the seigneurial classes. Writing in the late twelfth century, the chronicler William of Newburgh described royal castles as forming 'the bones of the kingdom' (*Historia Rerum Anglicarum*, ed. Howlett 1884, 331), reflecting their conceptual role as the scaffold around which royal authority was built. The building of castles outside accepted conventions was conversely viewed as a direct affront to both the physical and ideological embodiment

of royal authority and during Stephen's reign the fortifications of disaffected lords came to be viewed by contemporaries as beacons of rebellion in the landscape around which opponents of the king could muster.

Given their military and symbolic importance, a number of castles and siegeworks were chosen for study by the *War and Status* project. Many castles in use during the Anarchy, however, possess prolonged and complex earlier and later histories which make assessment of their twelfth-century phases extremely difficult, as reflected in the results of research at Sudeley Castle, for example. While written sources make reference to an Anarchy-period castle and military activity at Sudeley, our investigation did not find convincing evidence of twelfth-century phases, which were largely obliterated by later remodelling, and the findings, which cast new light on the later elite landscape at the site, will be published separately (Fradley *et al.* forthcoming).

The situation at Sudeley is hardly an exception, and even at the fairly well-known Anarchy-period site of Burwell castle, subsequent developments make identifying the twelfth-century phases challenging. Indeed, investigation at Burwell castle has shown that the fortification was built at a place that had seen a significant history of use well before the 1100s, first as the location of a Roman temple and then later as the likely site of an early medieval thegnly residence. Inherited landscapes such as these are likely to have played a significant part in the siting of castles, and at Burwell it is plausible that Stephen inserted the monument into a pre-existing high status enclosure for both practical and symbolic purposes. This research has shown that, although abandoned before its completion, Burwell castle is likely to have already been enhanced by at least the footings of a stone curtain wall. The extent to which Burwell represents a 'typical' Anarchy castle is hard to assess, however, given the unique circumstances of the fenland campaign. The duplicity of Geoffrey de Mandeville, combined with the potentially large resources available to the earl, made him exceptionally dangerous to Stephen's authority. As a result, the king's strategy to contain de Mandeville, comprising a series of fortifications constructed around the fen edge, was also exceptional and it is likely that castles such as Burwell were built both with a rare singularity of purpose and with unprecedented access to royal capital and manpower. These factors explain the departure from the more usual practice of building siege castles and campaign castles as compact ringworks in favour of the more ambitious designs seen at Burwell and, perhaps, Rampton. While Burwell castle was established as a short-lived royal campaign castle, this research

has also shown the continued impact that monument building had on Burwell, and the way in which the site was subsequently used throughout the medieval and later periods.

At Church End, Woodwalton, we have an exceptionally rare example of an Anarchy-period castle probably built either by de Mandeville himself, or his son Ernulf, seemingly re-using a pre-existing manorial complex. Again located on the edge of the East Anglian Fens, the lordly agency behind the building of Church End may have led to its slighting and abandonment either during the civil war or shortly afterwards. There is a rapidly expanding body of archaeological data demonstrating the way in which Norman castles were often developed from Late Saxon elite defended residences (Creighton 2005, 70–1; Baker and Brookes 2013, 106–117). This mode of reuse seems especially characteristic of the Norman Conquest, but the evidence from Burwell, and perhaps also Woodwalton, demonstrates the same process in action during Stephen's reign. Good parallels for Anarchy-period upgrades to thegnly enclosures as illuminated by archaeological excavation are Goltho, Lincolnshire (Beresford 1987, for summary of re-dating, see Creighton 2005, 21–7) and Trowbridge, Wiltshire (Graham and Davies 1993).

If the conditions of the fenland campaign made the construction of Stephen's castle network here unique, the furnishing of castles with buildings before earth moving had been completed may not have been uncommon. It is possible that the siegework at Hamstead Marshall, for instance, was supplemented with structures even though the earthwork (perhaps a hybrid of motte and bailey and ringwork types) does not appear to have been finished. The construction of buildings seemingly in parallel with the development of earthwork features demonstrates the efficiency and urgency with which Anarchy-period castles and siegeworks are likely to have been built — during a civil war which was typified by regular, often contemporaneous, military events occurring across large geographic areas. Another type of castle-building that may have been characteristic of the mid-twelfth century that is not represented by any of the sites covered in this volume was the construction of an earthen mound around a small central tower structure, as seen at sites such as Ascot D'Oilly and Middleton Stoney (both Oxfordshire) (Kenyon 1990, 40–3).

The civil war's dynamic strategic environment, in which rebellion constantly bubbled up in numerous locations, ensured that the construction of royal siege castles was quite widespread. The strategy enabled a commander to inhibit the actions of a garrison within a town or castle through blockade while allowing elements of a besieging force to remain mobile. The documentary sources contain myriad examples of commanders building siegeworks,

only to rapidly vacate them in order to engage with other military activities. During the first siege of Wallingford, for instance, the *Gesta Stephani* recounts how Stephen hurriedly built two castles to besiege the castle and town, freeing him to campaign westwards into Wiltshire (*Gesta Stephani*, ed. and trans. Potter and Davis 1976, 91–3). One of Wallingford's siegeworks has been identified through excavation at the eastern end of Wallingford Bridge in Crowmarsh Gifford (Laban 2011; 2013). Either a small ringwork or a motte with a depressed central area, investigation to the north of Crowmarsh Castle by this research project suggests the siegework may have also possessed a bailey. During which of Wallingford's three sieges Crowmarsh Castle was actually built is difficult to tell, but it may have originally been constructed in 1139, only to be re-garrisoned in subsequent episodes as something of a 'traditional' siege location. The compact ringwork castle of Danes castle, Exeter, Devon, positioned to prey upon nearby Rougemont castle, is the other clear example of a royal siegework of the period that has been revealed through excavation; it was almost certainly constructed during King Stephen's bitter three-month siege of the city in 1136 (Higham and Henderson 2011).

Another siegework that can be dated to the Anarchy with relative confidence is the Rings at Corfe Castle, where a ringwork and bailey was initially erected by Stephen to besiege the forces of the Angevin sympathiser Baldwin de Redvers. The site's importance to the archaeology of the Anarchy period is captured in *The History of the King's Works*' description of the Rings as '... the only surviving fortification which can be identified as the work of Stephen' (Colvin *et al.* 1963, 42), although the current project has produced new evidence for several more, and others still await serious archaeological investigation. The Rings was clearly positioned to provide excellent panoramas over Corfe Castle and any associated settlement, but crucially the siegework also lay outside the range of enemy bowshot. Such concerns do not appear to have always been of primary importance when choosing the site of siegeworks during the war, however, and it does not appear that they were consistently positioned with the aim of directly impinging the activities of garrison or townsfolk. Rather, a more consistent trait appears to be the intervisibility between besiegers and besieged, as well as the tendency of siegeworks to command vistas over key routes in local transport networks. At both Hamstead Marshall and Cam's Hill, siegeworks were located at significant distances from their intended target, yet overlooking river and road routes which would have provided key means of access. Perhaps of equal importance to monitoring transport infrastructure was the symbolic statement made by constructing a siegework. While the removed positioning of some siege castles suggests that besiegers may have sought to avoid sanguinary clashes, monument construction nevertheless represented a direct challenge to the authority of lords

holding well-established castles or towns. Greatly emphasised by contemporary chroniclers, the military role of Anarchy-period siegeworks was only part of their total repertoire of functions. Rapidly built and highly visible counter-castles were also statements of resolve that radiated royal authority in otherwise uncertain times and signalled the imperilment of rebellious garrisons and townsfolk. The fieldwork programme has had rather less success in locating and understanding twelfth-century siegeworks that were described by contemporary sources as encircling their targets, as at Crowmarsh and, especially, Faringdon. Such works seem to be especially ephemeral, and there is a good chance that they were never completed as envisaged and/or soon slighted into oblivion. At Faringdon the site traditionally identified as an Angevin castle of the 1140s may rather be a compact royalist siegework built against it.

The importance of castles as symbols of seigneurial authority and status is no better reflected than at Hailes in Gloucestershire, where Ralph of Worcester constructed a castle within the earthworks of an Iron-Age hillfort at the same time as building a private church in the valley below. The possibility that Worcester seized the land for his project from the monks of Winchcombe Abbey reveals just one example of lords using the turbulent tenurial conditions of Stephen's reign to forward their personal claims to land and wealth. Worcester's efforts do not appear to have been successful in the long-term, although his church was later incorporated and utilised by the wealthy and successful clerics of Hailes Abbey.

In addition to their military and symbolic functions, this volume has also illustrated that castles could also act as stimuli for settlement. At Castle Carlton, an earlier, perhaps twelfth-century, castle precipitated extramural settlement before a new town was developed on nearby virgin territory in the 1220s. The castle at Mountsorrel too appears to have formed the nucleus for settlement, with occupation and trading at the castle gate pre-dating the eventual formalisation of urban status. The archaeology of Mountsorrel Castle has been shown to reflect something of the historical reality of the celebrated 1149–53 pact between the Earls of Chester and Leicester: the upper plateau of Castle Hill seems to have acted as the 'capital castle' mentioned in the texts, and the lower plateau as the 'baileys'. Access to each zone within the castle was carefully controlled and choreographed, with the social, political and tenurial status of visitors reflected in the degree of movement permitted to each area. These conditions demonstrate that the castles used during the Anarchy cannot be viewed as homogenous in plan, form or in symbolic and military function. Although the archaeological record may often present us with consistent features with apparently comparable uses, the castles of the period may have been viewed and used in a multiplicity of ways by different individuals and communities.

As much as castles could provide an impetus for the development of settlement, conversely they could negatively impact pre-existing patterns of tenure and land use. While the enclosure network to the north of Burwell castle cannot be confidently associated with peasant plots as previously believed, at Church End the stratigraphic relationship between settlement remains and castle strongly suggest that the fortification was superimposed upon existing property. It seems likely that construction of the castle at Church End would have resulted in the desertion of tenements, as well as causing significant disruption to local people and resources, which must have been typical of most castle building.

While in many instances the sites investigated by this project reflect the intimate relationship between the development of castle and settlement, at Wellow the planned medieval village originated without an associated lordly residence. Indeed, Wellow represents a nationally unique example of a defended medieval village which is not dependent on a castle. Dating the emergence of the diamond-shaped enclosure of Wellow, and indeed the settlement contained within it, is challenging but the slim evidence available suggests that it was probably developed by the monks of nearby Rufford Abbey either during or in the immediate aftermath of the Anarchy. Yet, even at a site such as Wellow, which has a number of important and insightful written sources relating to it, attempts by this study to firmly date archaeological sites and features to the civil war have remained problematic. In addition to the lack of distinctive material culture datable to the Anarchy, the legacy of the civil war is also central to the problem of revealing its archaeology. A period of twenty years represents a mere flicker of time in archaeological terms, yet paradoxically the Anarchy boasts an impressive and lasting legacy with the monuments and landscapes of the twelfth century commonly reused and reshaped by later generations. Unpicking these later phases is central to recognising the archaeology of the Anarchy, and future research must continue to adopt the critical approaches utilised by this study in order to further our comprehension of the period.

### **The Future of the Anarchy: Further Research Avenues**

This collection of reports has revealed the great potential of an archaeologically orientated research programme to the so-called Anarchy of Stephen's reign based on investigative fieldwork on and around the sites of castles, siegeworks and settlements of the mid-twelfth century. Some other avenues for study are covered in the complementary volume *The Anarchy: War and Status in 12th-century Landscapes of Conflict* (Creighton and Wright 2016), including the evidence of material culture (including the coinage), battlefields, ecclesiastical patronage and the rural and urban landscapes more generally. There remains, however, a wide variety of

novel and exciting opportunities for future study of the period through archaeological fieldwork. The *War and Status* project attempted to thoroughly investigate a representative range of sites, yet there are many other locations which would benefit from further research. In particular, future investigators may want to consider further assessment of northern England, as the geographical bias of this research has been weighted towards the south and east of the country. Yorkshire and those parts of Northumbria and Cumbria attacked and occupied by Scottish forces during the conflict hold especially great potential for detailed study in this regard. This project did not investigate any battlefield sites of Stephen's reign and, as discussed, large-scale clashes of arms were rare despite the conflict's intensity and duration. Of the recognised battlefields of the period, the site with outstanding potential for archaeological survey and analysis is the Battlefield of the Standard (1138), near Northallerton, North Yorkshire. Largely undeveloped, this battlefield is a prime contender for systematic archaeological study on account of the large scale of the action (with the likelihood of massive artefact loss), the presence of mass burials on the site, and the contrasting tactics and material culture used by the opposing English and Scottish armies.

While the geophysical and topographic methods adopted by *War and Status* allowed for relatively rapid and non-destructive assessment, a perennial problem has been the assigning of appropriate chronologies to the identified archaeology. Whereas interdisciplinary efforts can provide valuable insights, particularly through careful use of documentary sources, such circumstances will only be improved by recovering more closely datable

archaeological evidence. Such data are only likely to be recovered via meticulous and targeted excavation, but further work must appreciate that the corpus of material culture diagnostic of the Anarchy is exceptionally slight. Another future avenue where archaeology can make a significant contribution to understanding the civil war is through measured building survey, particularly of churches. The chronicles are full of references to the fortification of churches, but it is uncertain whether individual buildings were actually remodelled and enhanced or otherwise only used to garrison soldiers. A future project may seek to negate this significant lacuna, and provide a more comprehensive insight into the impact of the Anarchy upon the Church as an institution and churches as physical structures. Likewise, we know relatively little about the earliest phases of many monastic sites founded in the period, while the question of how, and how often, religious houses were militarised during the civil war remains a contentious area. Another profitable avenue for future research could be to apply the approaches adopted in this project to other medieval conflicts in Britain and Europe, while the methods of environmental archaeology hold untapped potential to illuminate the impact (or otherwise) of destructive conflict episodes on the landscape. While battlefield archaeology is a booming area of research, this project has highlighted that archaeology can help reconstruct and understand other modes and methods of conflict, especially siege warfare. Whatever form future archaeological studies of the Anarchy take, it is hoped that the work of the *War and Status* programme provides a useful springboard either for further investigation of *Castles, Siegeworks and Settlements* or, indeed for research in other, as yet unexplored areas.

## References

### Abbreviations

BRO: Berkshire Records Office  
Cambs. HER: Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record  
Gloucs. HER: Gloucestershire County Council Historic Environment Record  
HEA: The Historic England Archive (formerly the English Heritage Archive)  
Leics. HER: Leicestershire Historic Environment Record  
Lincs. HER: Lincolnshire Historic Environment Record  
Notts. HER: Nottinghamshire Historic Environment Record  
OHC: Oxfordshire History Centre.  
Oxon. HER: Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record  
RCHME: Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England.  
WSHC: The Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre  
VCH: Victoria County History

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