

Early Castles in the Medieval Landscape of Rutland

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This paper reviews evidence for medieval castles in the historic county of Rutland during the period *c.* 1066-1216, using a combination of archaeological, historical and topographical data. The siting of individual castle sites is analysed, the possibility of antecedent occupation is explored, and particular attention is devoted to the relationships between castle sites and associated features within the medieval landscape, including parish churches, settlement patterns and manorial earthworks. Throughout, it is emphasised that medieval castles can be understood most appropriately within the context of contemporary rural landscapes and urban townscales.

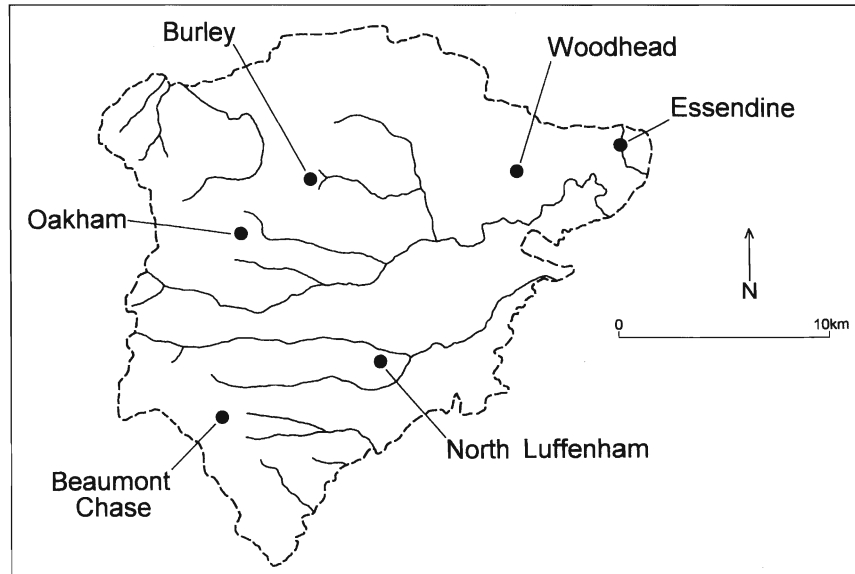
Introduction

Traditional archaeological and historical studies of early castles have tended to put disproportionate emphasis on their presumed military significance and defensive characteristics. This paper emphasises that as well as being sites that were defensible and iconic manifestations of medieval lordship, many early castles can be understood as centres of manorial administration and demesne cultivation, and central places within wider estate networks. Accordingly, this study adopts a broad spatial frame of reference in order to relate medieval castles to associated features in the medieval landscape, such as earthworks and parish churches, and where possible to integrate them within urban and rural settlement histories.

Early castles in Rutland

The medieval castles of Rutland have previously been studied only as components within nationally-based surveys of castle sites (Renn 1968; King 1983, pp.417-18), or within general accounts of Rutland's archaeology (VCH Rutland I 1908, xxx, pp.107-19; Brown 1975; Hartley 1983). This paper analyses the castles of Rutland as a coherent group of medieval sites in their own right, and is intended to augment an earlier study of Leicestershire castles (Creighton 1997). Five 'early' castle sites, with likely occupation in the period 1066-1216, can be identified in Rutland (illus. 1), whilst an additional site identified traditionally as a motte (North Luffenham), is recorded here as a post-medieval earthwork.

In addition, it is uncertain whether the bishop's palace known as the Bedehouse at Lyddington can be classified as a fortified medieval site. Although Bishop Burghersh of Lincoln was granted licence to crenellate his palace at Lyddington in 1336, the present structure exhibits no evidence of defensive architecture, suggesting superficially that any fortified building was superseded by the fifteenth century episcopal complex (VCH Rutland II 1935, p.189). However, the licence may well have been emblematic; serving to formalise existing quasi-fortified status rather than signalling a



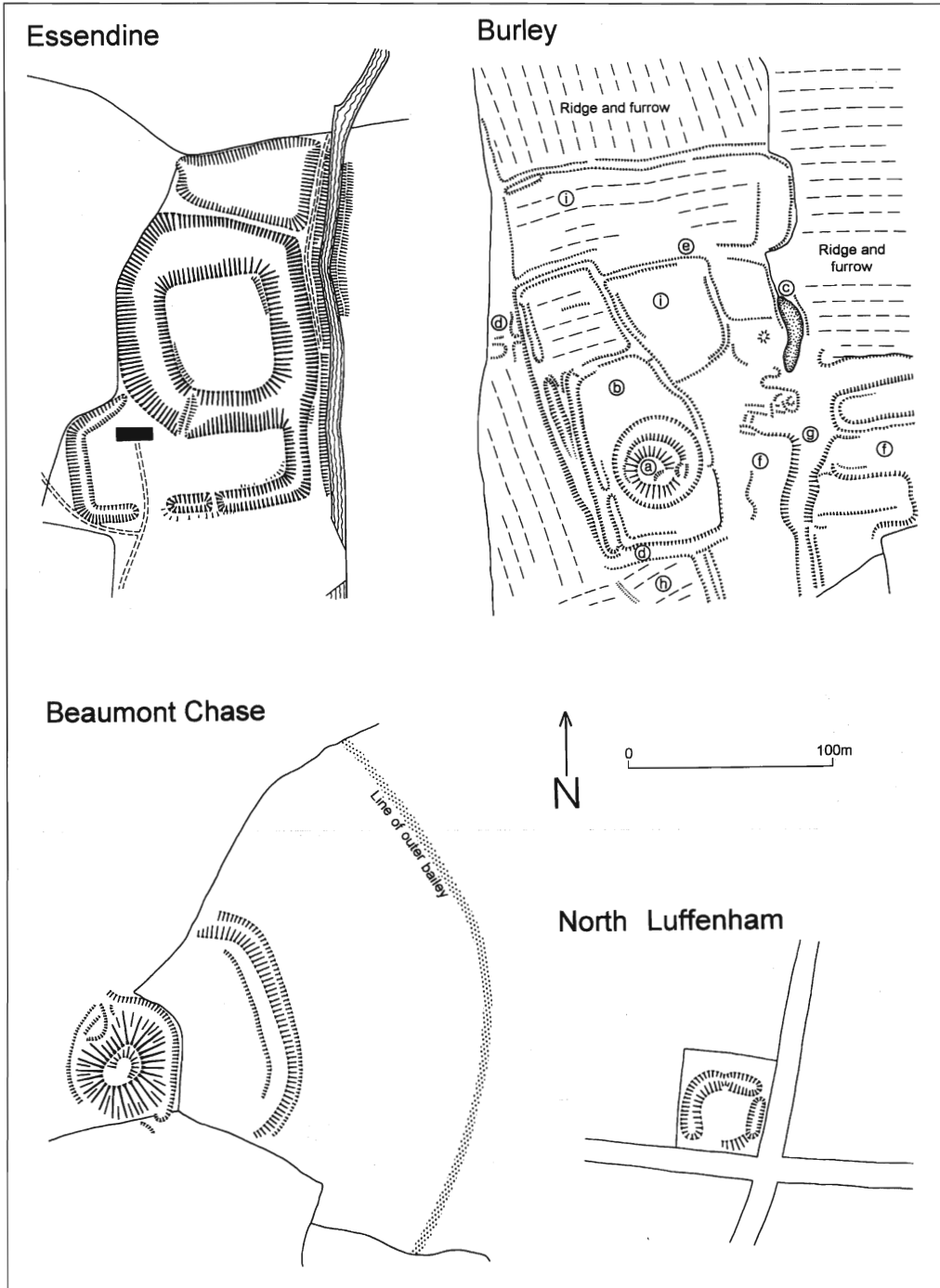
1. Distribution of castle sites and possible castle sites in Rutland

programme of mid-fourteenth century fortification, particularly as rescue excavation has demonstrated the palace to have been enclosed by a moat from at least the late twelfth century (Woodfield and Woodfield 1981-82, pp.3-5).

Whilst this paper is concerned with castles lying within the present county boundaries of Rutland, the county was not as rigidly defined as a territorial entity at the time of the Norman Conquest. Indeed, the Domesday text suggests that a portion of late-eleventh century Stamford and its hinterland was administratively part of the liberty of Rutland in the immediate post-Conquest period. The evidence centres on the 70 messuages in the hands of Edith, Edward the Confessor's queen, which are said to have belonged in 1066 to the territory of *Roteland* (Domesday, f. 336d). What is essential here is the likely physical correlation between this group of tenements and the distinct zone of the townscape occupied by the original parish church of St. Peter's and the Norman castle (Mahany and Roffe 1982, pp.201-06). The likely scenario is that the castle was raised in the period c. 1068-70 during the initial wave of Norman castle building designed to seal off the rebellious North and subdue centres of population and commerce. Notably, archaeological evidence suggests that the motte may itself have been raised on the site of a late-Saxon proto-castle which lay at the hub of what was, in 1066, an important royal estate and a detached part of Rutland (Mahany 1977, pp.232-33; 1978, pp.10-11). However, a drastic Norman re-casting of Stamford's administrative geography ensured that in 1086 the inconsistency of having a military/administrative centre in a separate estate to Stamford borough had been rationalised by bringing the entire town within the shire of Lincoln (Roffe and Mahany 1986, pp.8-9).

'Isolated' castle sites

The artificial mound known as the Morcott Spinney earthwork in **North Luffenham** parish (SK 928 023) has been identified as a small motte, traditionally thought to have



2. Early castle earthworks in Rutland

been re-employed as a Civil War artillery position (VCH Rutland I 1908, pp.111-12; King 1983, p.418). Given the circumstances of North Luffenham Hall's siege by Parliamentary forces in 1642, when Lord Gray's artillery pieces were positioned on the north-facing slopes of the Chater valley (Irons 1905-06, p.204), it not inconceivable that the earthwork was employed as a gun platform. Nonetheless, detailed morphological analysis of the earthwork, combined with scrutiny of its landscape context, recommends that it may have origins as a post-medieval, non-military feature.

First, the earthwork has the appearance of a low artificial platform constructed on sloping ground as opposed to a genuine medieval motte (illus. 2). The plan of the feature suggests that the circular platform, c. 22m in diameter and artificially raised c. 1.5m, was originally accessed via a broad earthen causeway from the south, whilst the profile of neither mound nor ditch demonstrate evidence of substantial erosion. If the site is indeed a medieval defensive earthwork it can only be unfinished, as the associated ditch flanks the feature on three sides only. Second, from a locally prominent ridge-top position the platform overlooks a former zone of post-medieval designed landscape known as 'the Parks' around North Luffenham Hall. The immediate environs of the hall featured at least two moated garden earthworks fed from the Chater; 'the Motts' (SK 928 032) and 'the Cutts' (SK 935 028), whilst the house was associated with a stone-faced ha-ha (Brown 1975, p.19; Hartley 1983, p.28). As such, the Morcott Spinney 'earthwork' seems to have origins as a viewing platform or prospect mound of probable seventeenth century date, constructed so as to overlook a gentry seat and its designed landscape setting.

The previous mis-identification of such earthwork features as mottes is undoubtedly a reflection of the period-based specialisms of twentieth-century archaeological field-workers. Indeed, it is only relatively recently that modern archaeological survey has emphasised the ubiquity of formal garden earthworks in the region (RCHME 1979, lxiv; Everson *et al.* 1991, pp.54-55). Elsewhere, considerable difficulties exist in differentiating isolated mottes from post-medieval prospect mounds, as both classes of field monument tend to occupy similar topographical positions, and are often found in the vicinity of medieval/post-medieval manor houses and halls. However, other examples of prospect mounds potentially mis-identified as mottes can be suggested, such as Scraftoft, Leics. (see Creighton 1997, pp.27-29).

The early castle earthworks at **Beaumont Chase** (SK 850 005) are formed through skilful adaptation of a naturally defensible triangular promontory (illus. 2). A conical motte with a flat summit c. 12m in diameter occupies the western limit of the steep-sided eminence, isolated from the level terrain to the east by a semi-circular ditch with signs of a counterscarp. This feature was clearly rendered superfluous on the mottes's west flank, where precipitous slopes afforded adequate natural defence, although here the contours were presumably supplemented with a stockade. To the east, two trapezoidal courts in line were formerly defined by curving embankments and ditches constructed transversely across the promontory. Although the inner defensive perimeter can be defined at present, the outer bailey defences - visible in aerial photographs of 1925¹ - were eroded through ploughing by 1969.²

The peripheral position of the site relative to medieval settlement is emphasised by its location at the junction of Uppingham and Beaumont Chase parishes (the motte is in

¹ RAF/CPE/UK/1925/4051

² Hunting Surveys Ltd/1969/96/881-882

the former, the baileys in the latter); Beaumont Chase itself was extra parochial until the late eighteenth century (Cox 1994, p.177). Despite a prominent natural setting, the motte is situated not to dominate any arterial routeways of strategic significance, nor, as far as the documentary record suggests, to secure any coherent block of estates in the immediate post-Conquest period. However, rather than a temporary, adulterine fortification as often suggested (VCH Rutland II 1935, p.61), the site, overlooking the hunting recourse of Beaumont Chase, seems to have had a more permanent rôle within medieval land management as the seat of an appointed royal forester. A surface assemblage recovered from the site includes Lyveden/Stanion ware indicative of activity into the thirteenth century,³ in addition to an extensive scatter of iron-working slag. Notably, evidence of *in situ* medieval iron-working debris was recovered during limited excavation of the nearby motte and bailey at Hallaton, Leics. (Dibbin 1876-78, p.319; Creighton 1997, p.34), perhaps hinting at a centralisation of key industrial processing within seigneurial sites in the immediate post-Conquest period.

Beaumont Chase was one of two bailiwicks of the Forest of Rutland (the other being Braunston), each under the control of two appointed foresters by the mid thirteenth century (VCH Rutland I 1908, p.253; Cantor 1980, pp.14-15). The *foresta de Bellomonte* ('Beautiful Hill') is first mentioned in 1203 (Cox 1987, p.229; 1994, p.177), and the place-name reflects well the characteristic association between Norman nomenclature and particular features of the post-Conquest landscape; namely fortified sites and hunting resources. The chase occupied an area of the Eye Brooke valley; it lay immediately west of the ridge which the castle straddles, and was centred upon Wardley Wood and Stoke Wood, which were contiguous as recently as 1840 (Rut. Loc. Hist. Soc. 1982, p.2). The motte and bailey at Beaumont is thus less a military site *per se*, as a component within the machinery of medieval forest management, sited to facilitate the accommodation of hunting retinues and presumably as a centre for the operation and dispensation of Forest Law.

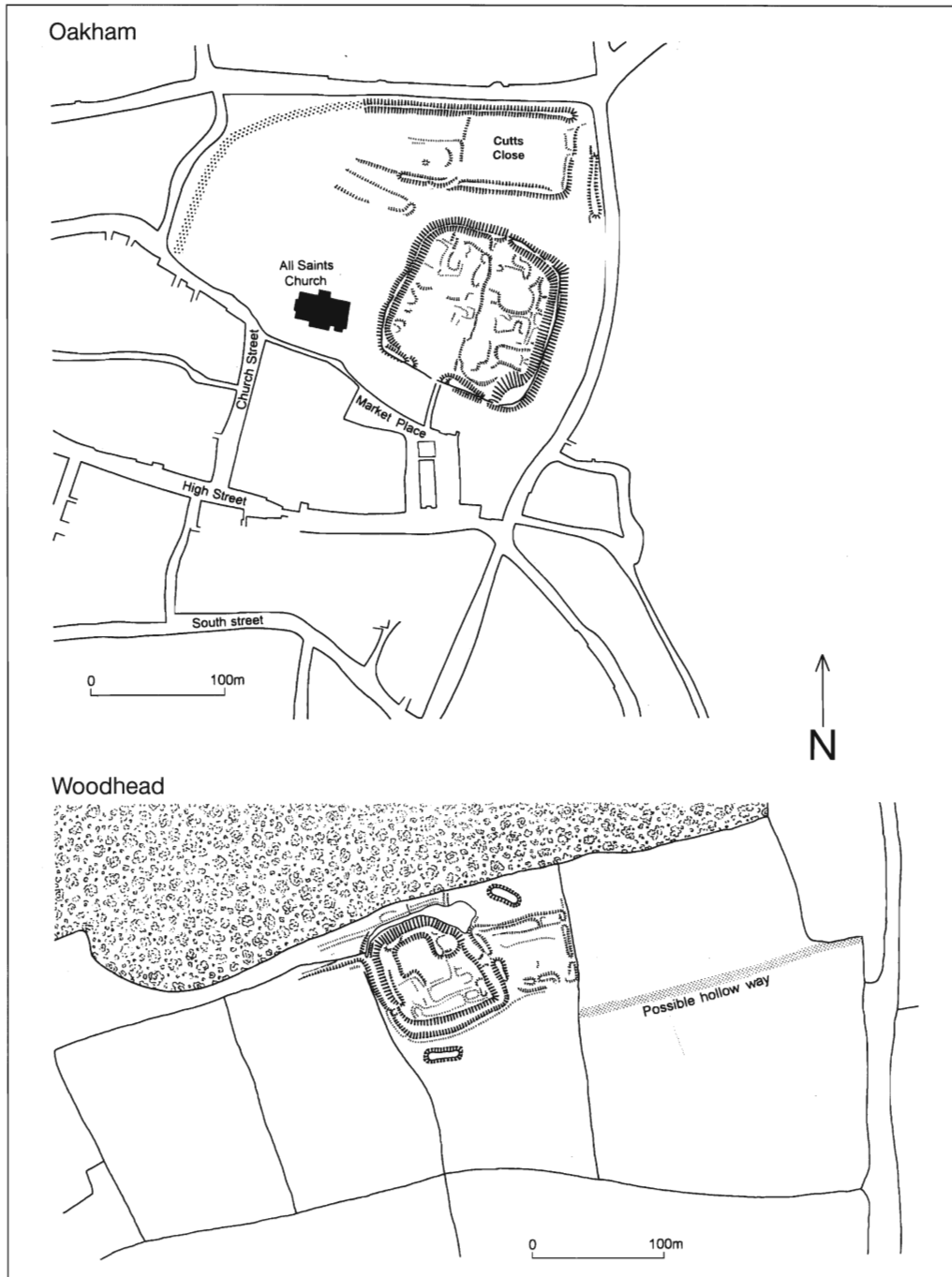
Castles and village topography

The medieval fortified site of **Woodhead** (SK 997 116) occupies a prominent ridge-top position, c. 1.7km north-east of the York-Stamford Roman road. The earthworks presently abut a zone of woodland to the north (illus. 3), and given that the place-name *Wod(e)heved* ('headland or eminence with a wood') is recorded as early as 1263 (Cox 1994, p.131), this topographical relationship is clearly of some antiquity. The present field monument comprises a sub-rectangular ringwork with vestiges of an appending enclosure to the east, and surface collection in the immediate area has yielded a substantial volume of tile and a fragment of Collyweston slate, in addition to medieval pottery.⁴ The substantial nature of the stony bank that defines the ringwork perimeter is suggestive of masonry defences which have grassed over, whilst a series of internal earthworks demonstrate the presence of domestic structures. The entire complex was formerly encompassed by a spring-fed moat, and evidence of fishponds to the north and south may indicate a secondary phase of manorial expansion.

Despite its present isolation as a landscape feature, the castle appears to have spawned a dependent hamlet or settlement, although its population is subsumed within that of Great Casterton in medieval taxation returns, thus rendering estimation of its

³ Rutland County Museum, Acquisition No. 1977.56

⁴ Rutland County Museum, Acquisition Nos. 1975.22, 1977.55 and Leics. A4.1982



3. Oakham castle and town plan, based on 1787 estate plan (top), and Woodhead castle and deserted medieval settlement, based on 1798 estate plan (bottom)

size problematic. The manor of Wodhead is absent from Domesday; however, in 1286-87 a toft and croft at Woodhead are specified in the endowment of a chapel here (Irons 1917, pp.50-51; VCH Rutland II 1935, p.235), and the antiquarian Wright mentions '...Woodhead, formerly a village and chapelry, now only one house, and that in ruins' (1684, 36). The precise location and plan of this settlement remains obscure, yet a 1798 estate plan of Bridge Casterton by J. Baxter⁵ depicts four squarish enclosures in line to the south of the castle earthworks which are associated with the field-name *Woodhead Closes*. These features may well indicate a series of amalgamated peasant crofts, subsequently overlain by ridge and furrow cultivation, whilst a superficial depression leading east from the castle may indicate a former hollow way (illus. 3). Although the desertion of the settlement can be dated no earlier than Wright's late-seventeenth-century reference, the castle was certainly ruinous by 1543, when it is documented positively for the first time (VCH Rutland II 1935, p.232).

The fortified medieval site at **Essendine** (TF 049128) also appears to represent an early ringwork and bailey, subsequently remodelled to form the basis of the extensive manorial complex described in an extent of 1417 (Blore 1811, p.201). The site was formerly associated with a series of fish stews to the north and south, and earthworks to the east of the central moated platform, suggestive of a mill race, indicate that the manorial mill documented from Domesday may have been integrated within the moated defences (illus. 2). Tradition dictates that the castle was raised by the Bussey family, lords of Essendine from c. 1159, or their successors, the de Viponts (VCH Rutland II 1935, p.250). However, the foundation of the castle is not documented directly, and its origins may well relate to the initial post-Conquest phase of Norman estate confiscation. In 1086 the manor was in the hands of Walter Espec, whose only other holding in Rutland comprised a composite manor centring on Lyddington (Domesday f. 221a). Although Walter was technically a sub-tenant of the Bishop of Lincoln, the circumstances of the manorial descent recommend that *de facto* the manor was held in chief (VCH Rutland II 1935, p.251). Espec's principal centre of lordship lay at Helmsley, N. Yorks., where the earliest castle took the unconventional form of a sub-rectangular ditched and embanked enclosure (Wilson 1989, pp.29-30), mirroring the arrangement at Essendine, although on a massive scale.

The present parish church of St. Mary's lies entirely within a rectangular enclosure appended to the site (illus. 4), offset immediately to the west of an earthen causeway linking former ringwork and bailey. However, the medieval ecclesiastical topography of Essendine is complicated by the identification of what may have been a second church within the village at TF 0467 1314. Here, ecclesiastical fabric, including windows of probable thirteenth century date, is built into the end of a cottage, and earthworks indicative of underlying stone footings can be identified adjacent.⁶ As there is no evidence - topographical or documentary - to suggest that the parish was ever subdivided, the field evidence recommends one of two alternative scenarios: either the castle site was imposed adjacent to an extant parish church and another church subsequently built to provide for the village, or the present church originated as a castle chapel and grew to assume parochial status whilst the other (presumably pre-existing) church became disused and was eventually abandoned. A combination of evidence suggests that the latter scenario is more likely.

⁵ Northants. CRO: Map No. 4134/2

⁶ Ordnance Survey Antiquity Model No. TF 01 SW 2



4. Outer enclosure ditch of Essendine castle (foreground) and castle chapel/parish church (background), looking north-east

Topographically, the postulated second church appears integrated within the medieval village of Essendine, as indicated by a series of abandoned crofts, suggesting the main village axis to have been oriented north-south (Hartley 1983, p.15, 18). In contrast, the castle appears to have occupied a low-lying and peripheral position within the settlement, with the River Glen feeding its moated defences. That St. Mary's is positioned not only within the bailey, but sited explicitly at the interface between the inner and outer moated enclosures further suggests a private foundation as a castle chapel. A grant to the monks of St. Andrew's, Northampton, in the reign of Henry II mentions exchange of 12 acres of demesne in return for a permanent chaplain at Essendine, and a chapel is also described, apparently in physical association with the capital messuage, in the extent of 1417 (Wright 1684, pp.62-64; Blore 1811, p.201). Architectural analysis further suggests a link of patronage, with a number of panels depicting hunting scenes (Rut. Loc. Hist. Soc. 1988, pp.36-37), reflecting directly the position of the castle on the fringe of a seigneurial deer-park which is documented from the thirteenth century (VCH Rutland II 1935, 250; Brown 1975, 10). Despite early assertions that the *tympanum* above the south doorway is of pre-Conquest date (Rut. Arch. and Nat. Hist. Soc. 1903-04, p.103), on architectural grounds elements of the church can be dated no earlier than *c.* 1130-60, and the majority of the structure is of thirteenth-century date (Pevsner 1985, pp.466-67). Presuming church to be secondary to castle, the structure effectively forms a *terminus ante quem* for occupation on the castle site, thus confirming its status as a Norman fortification.

The series of earthworks centring on the motte known as Alstoe Mount at **Burley**

(SK 894 120) are a complex and multi-phase piece of field evidence (illus. 2). The site raises three essential questions: the origins of the motte, its chronological and functional relationship with the associated earthworks, and the connection between this site and the documented deserted medieval settlement of *Alsthorpe*.

That Domesday records Alstoe as a Hundred indicates a place of some significance; however, the suggestion that the mount is a Saxon moot mound as opposed to a motte (Cox 1994, p.4), finds little support from archaeological evidence. The feature (illus. 2: a) is certainly unconventional for a motte, being relatively low, and encompassed entirely by a weak sub-rectangular bailey adjoined by a series of irregular enclosures. Excavations on the motte summit failed to recover evidence of a timber superstructure (Dunning 1936, pp.397-401), yet post-occupational processes could have eradicated structural evidence, whilst the shortcomings of excavation techniques in 1935 may have rendered the recognition of ephemeral post-holes unlikely. However, the dimensions of the encircling ditch, demonstrated by Dunning to be 25 ft wide and 10ft deep (c. 7.5 x 3m), with indications that this was spring-fed, confirm a defensive aspect to the site. In addition, the core of the mound was constructed, in classic motte-like fashion, as a series of compressed, alternate horizontal layers, with clear evidence that the base of the feature was raised by forming an initial ring of piled material derived from the surrounding ditch, as paralld widely at excavated mottes elsewhere (Higham and Barker 1992, pp.197-98). Whilst the motte was thus raised within the vicinity of a place of local administrative significance, there is little solid evidence to suggest it was formed from an earlier earthwork.

This hypothesis is substantiated by morphological analysis of the earthwork complex in the immediate environs of the mount. In addition to the sub-rectangular bailey enclosure (b), two large enclosures lie to the north (the one closer to the motte subdivided into a number of compartment units), and the entire complex was flanked by a spring-fed watercourse (c) providing a natural boundary to the east. Although now much denuded, these earthworks were at least partially defensive in nature, as the bailey bank is only supplemented by a ditch on its southern and western sides (d); to the north and north-west the outworks must have formed a defensive perimeter, as here alone are the banks associated with external ditches. In addition, the comparative profile of the inner and outer enclosures (e) suggests at least two phases of construction. The motte and bailey lies on the periphery of a zone of deserted medieval settlement earthworks comprising two roughly parallel rows of crofts (f) fronting on to a central hollow way (g), which formerly continued further to the south, where it has been ploughed out (Brown 1975, 5).

The comparative profile of the motte and bailey relative to the tofts and crofts to the east is undoubtedly suggestive of secondary imposition within an extant medieval community. This hypothesis is supported by evidence that the castle site was also raised over an area of former open field agriculture, as zones of ridge and furrow cultivation oriented east-west clearly antedate the motte and bailey. This is particularly evident to the south of the motte, where the bailey truncates a block of ridge and furrow (h), and within the enclosures to the north, where small areas of earlier ridge and furrow can be noted (i). Comparable earthworks elsewhere have been linked to the Anarchy (c. 1139-45), when intense political turbulence could make property literally disposable, as is illustrated well at Burwell and Rampton, Cambs. (RCHME 1968, pp.41-42; Brown and Taylor 1977, pp.97-99). However, on the basis of archaeological and historical data, the process of imposition at Burley can not be dated more closely than some time prior to the mid twelfth century (Dunning 1936, p.402), and in the absence of more

detailed archaeological information, there is little to choose between an immediate post-Conquest or mid-twelfth-century context for the motte. Elsewhere, the enclosures to the north of the site clearly represent the later medieval subdivision of an outer bailey, rather than the 'fortified settlement' postulated by the excavator (Dunning 1936, p.399). This evidence clearly supports the notion of 'manorialisation' of an early castle site, implying the post-military re-organisation of the motte and bailey as a series of manorial paddocks, as paralleled at sites such as Yelden and Meppershall, Beds. (Baker 1982, p.45).

Although combined with Burley in late medieval taxation returns, *Alsthorpe* was formerly a separate manor recorded from Domesday, and a hamlet with a chapel by 1312 (VCH Rutland II 1935, p.112, 116; Beresford 1954, p.383). The site of *Alsthorpe* is identified traditionally as having lain in the vicinity of 'Chapel Farm', c. 300m north-west of the castle (Cox 1994, p.11), where a pair of thirteenth/fourteenth century windows are incorporated into farm buildings.⁷ Furthermore, an ecclesiastical building is depicted clearly at *Aulthort*, between Burley and Cottesmore on Jansson's 1646 map of Rutland, and slight settlement earthworks can be identified in the area on aerial photographs.⁸ The identification of two probable foci of medieval settlement - one closely associated with the motte and bailey and another at Chapel Farm - may suggest that medieval *Alsthorpe* took an attenuated or polyfocal form, occupying both sides of the road (Rut. Loc. Hist. Soc. 1979), although the settlement was never more than a hamlet and the local medieval settlement pattern in this part of Rutland was based on tight nucleations. Alternatively, we may see a successive occupation of sites. Indeed, the field evidence is consistent with the abandonment/displacement of the Alstoe focus of settlement upon or shortly after the imposition of the castle, whilst the Chapel Farm nucleus was not deserted until the seventeenth century as a result of enclosure (Cain 1987, p.21).

Oakham: castle and urban topography

That the majority of academic literature relating to **Oakham** castle (SK 862 088) has focussed predominantly upon the remarkable twelfth century hall (e.g. Thompson 1911-12; Holland Walker 1925a), has tended to deflect attention away from the structure's context within an extensive and multi-phase complex of defensive and non-defensive earthworks (illus. 3). The site's archaeology is summarised in full elsewhere (Gathercole 1958; Wilson and Hurst 1957, p.157; 1958, p.195; 1959, p.308; Nenck *et al.* 1991, p.201; Sharman and Sawday 1990), and the relevant documentation published (VCH Rutland II, pp.8-10; Clough 1981, pp.14-23). Here, two essential yet neglected questions are relevant: the possibility of antecedent Saxon occupation on the site, and the context of the castle within the medieval townscape of Oakham.

Claims that Oakham castle is a fortified medieval manor as opposed to a castle (Cox 1994, li) may be appropriate in light of its later medieval form as a series of domestic structures contained within a walled enclosure complete with fishponds and gardens. However, the earliest identifiable phase comprised a motte at the south-east corner of a single, squarish bailey, although only vestiges of the motte survive. This feature was clearly raised in the immediate post-Conquest period at a place of prior administrative significance with regal connotations. Oakham lay at the heart of the fertile Vale of

⁷ Ordnance Survey Antiquity Model No. SK 81 SE 3

⁸ RAF/CPE/UK/F22/1954/0079-0080

Catmose and marked the gravitational centre of a well-defined territorial unit of early-medieval origins, comprising the dower land of the Anglo-Saxon queens of England (see Phythian Adams 1980). Oakham was certainly a sizeable estate centre at the time of the Conquest; in 1066 the manor was associated with five berewicks and was the key manor within the dower land, retained by Edith, widow of Edward the Confessor, until her death in 1075 (Holland Walker 1925a, pp.33-34; Clough 1981, pp.5-6). However, Domesday testifies to a subsequent fragmentation of Oakham's teneucial geography. Whilst a portion of the manor, including the church, passed to the Abbot of Westminster (hence Oakham Deanshold township), the majority of the holding, including the area occupied by the castle (Oakham Lordshold), was retained by William I, and in the later medieval period formed the administrative centre of Oakham barony (VCH Rutland II 1935, pp.10-11).

It is unclear from the Domesday text whether the hall mentioned at Oakham in association with two of the king's ploughs (*ad aulam*: Domesday f. 293d) was a structure raised in the period *c.* 1075-86, or a pre-Conquest manorial site; it certainly predates the existing late-twelfth century Great Hall. In the absence of large-scale excavation, the precise nature of antecedent Saxon occupation on the castle site at Oakham must remain a matter for conjecture, yet Radford (1955, p.183) has postulated that the enclosure known as Cutts Close, forming the northern part of the later castle complex, may represent vestiges of a Saxon *burh*, as demonstrated by its profile relative to the bailey, which implies the latter to be a secondary imposition. Cutts Close was undoubtedly used as a kitchen garden and fishpond associated with the castle by the fourteenth century, as indicated in *inquisitions* of 1300 and 1340 (VCH Rutland I 1908, p.116; Holland Walker 1925a, pp.37-39), yet its origins are less certain. Instructively, a limited series of test trenches in the area between the north bailey rampart and Cutts Close have yielded a small quantity of middle-Saxon pottery, yet indicated a total dearth of medieval material (Sharman and Sawday 1990, p.94).

Whilst Gathercole (1958, p.23) has dated the southern bailey rampart to *c.* 1100 on the basis of Stamford and St. Neot's ware found within and beneath it during excavation on the Post Office site, vitally, this does not detract from the hypothesis of an antecedent *burh*-like site at Oakham. Rather, archaeological and topographical sources make it likely that the eleventh century motte and bailey was *imposed within*, rather than *remodelled from* a pre-existing earthwork; it is only the eastern side of the bailey that may perpetuate the line of an earlier circuit. Given the extensive post-medieval remodelling of the surviving earthworks defining the perimeter of the castle site (Clough 1981, p.8), we may question the value of Radford's hypothesis, which is advanced largely on the basis of morphological evidence. However, a 1787 estate map of Oakham not known to these earlier writers⁹ depicts clearly the marked difference in profile between the plan of Cutts Close and the castle bailey, in addition to demonstrating that the northern enclosure formerly continued to the west, where it has since been truncated by a nineteenth century extension to Church Street (illus. 3). Furthermore, this cartographic evidence demonstrates with certainty that the parish church of All Saints was enclosed within the *enceinte*. Architectural analysis and limited archaeological evaluation have failed to demonstrate that the present structure contains any pre-twelfth century fabric (Holland Walker 1925b, pp.50-55; Pollard and Cox 1996, p.169), yet the mention of a Domesday church makes it likely that the site was extant at the time of the castle's construction, when it was embraced within what became effectively an outer bailey.

⁹ LLRRO: Map No. DE 3443 (DG7)

Physically, the castle is closely associated with Oakham Market Place, which forms a rectangular open space at the castle gate, now largely infilled by buildings (illus. 3). A market at Oakham is first recorded in 1249, and burgess tenements by 1285 (VCH Rutland II 1935, p.7, 10). However, these documents almost certainly formalise existing arrangements, and the market is undoubtedly a seigneurial plantation, which given the pre-Conquest importance of Oakham, may well represent a *re*-planning of urban topography, indicating both the significance of the castle as a magnet for trade and settlement, and the economic ambitions of the castle lord. What remains unclear is the precise relationship between this core element of the town plan and the provision of medieval urban defences, which were themselves presumably re-modelled from an earlier Saxon enclosure. That the north side of Cutts Close (Station Road) and the east boundary of the castle defences (Burley Road) formed two sides of a defensive circuit seems clear. The west side of the circuit has been obliterated by later urban development, although, as we have seen, the church was presumably enclosed. Place-name evidence indicates the presence of town gates on High Street in the medieval period (Cox 1994, xlix-lii), and excavations on South Street have revealed a very large ditch, oriented east-west which may indicate the outer line of a defensive circuit (Jones 1995, p.118). Whilst this scenario constitutes a working hypothesis, it is only through future excavation, however, that the plan of Oakham's medieval defences, and their relationship with earlier Saxon works and the town plan can be understood.

Conclusions

The focus of this paper has been to adopt a broad approach to castle studies in order to re-integrate the medieval castles of Rutland within contemporary landscapes, both social and physical. The underlying conclusion is that castles are but a single physical manifestation of the operation of medieval lordship. More specifically, the study has highlighted the value of three potential avenues of enquiry. First, a number of important temporal and spatial relationships exist between castles and churches/chapels. In certain cases the juxtaposition of castle and ecclesiastical site may reflect the foundation of a castle chapel as an appendage to a seigneurial site, although the chapel could later assume parochial status. Elsewhere, a similar spatial relationship could reflect the incorporation of an extant ecclesiastical site within the defences of a castle, with possible implications of high status pre-castle occupation. Second, castles were fully integrated within both urban and rural settlement patterns, either as non-nucleated settlement forms in their own right, as elements within village morphology, or as manifestations of seigneurial presence and economic ambition within town plans. Third, castles were integrated elements within teneurial landscapes, usually serving as central places in close association with manors held in demesne, yet occasionally fulfilling more specialised functions such as the administration of hunting resources.

However, at present we have insufficient knowledge of how these key castle-landscape relationships may vary in different regions of medieval Britain. Ultimately, the castles of Rutland are themselves only part of a wider pattern of castles, and it is only through intensive and interdisciplinary studies of groups of castles based on regions, counties or smaller units that a clearer picture will emerge.

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