

Deer Parks of Suffolk 1086–1602



Rosemary Hoppitt

Foreword by Professor Tom Williamson

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1086-1602



Wood pasture: pollarded oaks in Staverton Park.

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The Suffolk Institute of Archaeology & History

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Front cover: Lothbrok, king of the Danes hunting a deer with a greyhound in a park.
Image from John Lydgate's *The Lives of SS Edmund and Fremund*, early fifteenth century.
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Back cover: Fallow deer at Helmingham

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Any errata will be published at <http://www.hoppitt.com/suffolkparks>

Foreword

Deer parks were of immense importance in the medieval and early post-medieval periods, in social, economic and environmental terms, and their significance extended well beyond their effective demise, as an institution, in the years around 1700. They were arguably one of the key influences shaping the landscape parks of the eighteenth century; while they provided one of the ways in which wood-pastures – grazed woodlands, habitats of great ecological importance – survived into the present, at places like Staverton in south-east Suffolk. Parks thus have a relevance not only to historians and archaeologists studying the middle ages, but to geographers, ecologists and others.

Serious research on parks began in the 1970s with the work of L.M. Cantor and J. Hatherley, but this was followed by a series of more detailed studies, including ones which extended and deepened our understanding through the intensive investigation of particular geographical areas. These included Anne Rowe's work in Hertfordshire and Susan Pittman's in Kent. But Rosemary Hoppitt's research on parks in Suffolk, undertaken for her PhD at the University of East Anglia, submitted in 1992, was the first. This groundbreaking work took Cantor's essential approach but extended it much further, informed by a deep knowledge of Suffolk's history and environment. It concentrated not just on the evidence provided by central government records and county maps, but employed a mass of more local sources - documentary and cartographic – to chart the development of parks over time. Such an approach not only increased the number of known parks in the county but also, more importantly, allowed a more rigorous analysis of their distribution, chronology, and changing character. Suffolk's parks were placed firmly within their complex social, economic and environmental contexts, and within their wider landscape framework, drawing in subtle ways on the kinds of models developed by previous scholars like Alan Everitt.

Rosemary's PhD broke new ground both theoretically and methodologically, and has been an important influence on all those who have read it. But, while some of its principal conclusions have appeared in print, in the form of chapters in edited volumes, the full work remained unpublished, and thus difficult for many interested people to access. Now, much refined and with yet new insights, and benefitting from much further thought and reflection, it appears in this important volume.

Although this book will be essential reading for all those interested in the history of Suffolk, it has a much wider relevance. The patterns it describes are not shared by all parts of England – it is becoming apparent that every region of the country has its own distinct history of park-making. But these different histories are all variations on a number of shared, key themes, many of which were first identified, and described, in Rosemary Hoppitt's monumental study of Suffolk.

Tom Williamson
Professor of History
University of East Anglia

Acknowledgements

My interest in historical geography and medieval landscape was fed as an undergraduate at Birmingham University through the enthusiastic teaching of Professors Harry Thorpe, Philip Rahtz and Chris Dyer, and I have much to thank them for. They melded together geography, archaeology and history at a time when medieval archaeology and landscape history were in their infancy; fieldwork days in the Warwickshire countryside laid the foundations for much of the work presented here – always looking for features ‘writ large in the landscape’. Their passion gave me the desire to continue to maintain a deep interest in the subject areas after graduating.

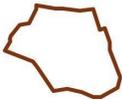
This book is the culmination of investigation over the last 35 years. The initial research was presented as my PhD in 1992, supervised at UEA by the equally enthusiastic and inspirational Tom Williamson and Roger Virgoe and added to by further research from 2006. I must thank the staff of the Record Offices (Archives) of Suffolk, whose quiet and unstinting work in the background enables research of all kinds into the county’s history; also to staff at the National Archives, British Library and other county archives. I must also acknowledge the work of those organisations which through digitisation have made so much research material easily, quickly and in many cases freely available to those of us who live away from easy access to research libraries.

Suffolk has a lively and generous community of local historians and researchers, and I am immensely grateful for their help and input over the years. The late Peter Northeast and John Ridgard passed on many ‘park’ references as I began this work, Diarmaid MacCulloch and the late Oliver Rackham generously shared their own listings of parks. Tom Williamson and Rob Liddiard from UEA have provided on-going guidance and encouragement. Others have shared their own research, in particular Val Dudley, Diane Maywhort, Philip Kett, John Rainer, Jean Sheehan and Prof. Richard Smith. Special thanks to Stephen Podd for allowing me to include his work on Helmingham Park, to Edward Martin for his work on Great Bricett and to Melvyn Jones for allowing me to adapt for Suffolk his ‘model’ deer park. Thanks to David Addy and Cliff Hoppitt for producing the maps and John Rainer for preparing LiDAR images. Sue Andrews, Adrian Donaghey and Tim Holt-Wilson have been willing readers of early drafts of the text, improving the quality along the way. Edward Martin, through his encyclopaedic knowledge of Suffolk’s history and landscape has kept me firmly on the straight and narrow. His reading of, and comments on the text have been of immeasurable help. Nick Amor, Chairman of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History, has been supportive through the publication process and I must thank the Institute for funding the publication. Thanks also to many Suffolk landholders for their interest, for allowing me access to their property for fieldwork, and to make use of maps and documents in their possession.

Lastly, thanks to my family: to my parents and sister for sowing the seeds of my interest in history and landscape and to my children Ed and Laura for putting up with my obsession during their early years. Finally, I thank my husband Cliff for his endless patience and forbearance, enduring tramping across the clarty fields and along the muddy lanes of High Suffolk, being there with camera in hand, for providing essential IT support at all stages and especially for being there at times of despair and frustration.

Rosemary Hoppitt

Map Conventions

	Park
	Other adjacent parks
	Wood
	Tithe-free area
	Green
	Parish boundary
	Hundred boundary
	Other boundary
	Banks and ditches
	Water course
	Moats and fishponds
	Tracks and routeways
	Buildings (farm, manor house, lodges etc.)

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Abbreviations

BAR	British Archaeological Reprints
BARBS	British Archaeological Reprints British Series
BL	British Library
<i>Cal. Inq. Misc.</i>	<i>Calendar of Inquisitions Miscellaneous</i>
<i>CCbR</i>	<i>Calendar of Charter Rolls</i>
<i>CCR</i>	<i>Calendar of Close Rolls</i>
<i>CIPM</i>	<i>Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem</i>
<i>CPR</i>	<i>Calendar of Patent Rolls</i>
CRO	Cambridgeshire Record Office
CUL	Cambridge University Library
Farrer, 1923	SROI S712.644: Farrer, E., 1923, Suffolk Deer Parks
<i>Feet of Fines for Suffolk</i>	Rye, W., 1900, <i>A Calendar of the Feet of Fines for Suffolk</i> , Ipswich
G.R.	Grid Reference
HA	Hadleigh Archives
<i>Historical Atlas of Suffolk</i> , 1988	Dymond, D. and E. Martin (eds), 1988, <i>An Historical Atlas of Suffolk</i> , Ipswich
<i>Historical Atlas of Suffolk</i> , 1999	Dymond, D. and E. Martin (eds), 1999, <i>An Historical Atlas of Suffolk</i> (3rd edition), Ipswich
HMC Reports	Historical Manuscripts Commission, 1888, <i>Calendar of the manuscripts of the most Hon. Marquis of Salisbury, K.G.</i> Part II, London
<i>IPM</i>	<i>Inquisitions Post Mortem</i>
KCAR	King's College (Cambridge) Archives
<i>LDB</i>	<i>Little Domesday Book</i>
<i>Letters and Papers, Henry VIII</i>	<i>Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII</i> , 21 vols., London
LiDAR	Light Detection and Ranging
<i>Manors of Suffolk</i>	Copinger, W.A., 1905-11, <i>The Manors of Suffolk</i> , 7 vols., London & Manchester

NRO	Norfolk Record Office
NRS	Norfolk Records Society
O.E.	Old English
OSD (O.S.)	Ordnance Survey Drawings (draft Ordnance Survey maps from the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century: British Library)
PCC	Prerogative Court of Canterbury
<i>Pipe Rolls</i>	Pipe Roll Society, <i>Great Rolls of the Pipe 1884-1915</i> , 37 vols., London
<i>PSLAH</i>	<i>Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History</i>
<i>Rotuli Chartarum</i>	<i>Rotuli Chartarum in Turri Londinensi</i> 1837, vol. I Part 1 1199-1216, London
<i>Rotuli Hundredorum</i>	Illingworth, W. and J. Caley (eds), 1812-18. <i>Rotuli Hundredorum</i> temp. Hen. III et Edw. I, vol. 2, London
SROB	Suffolk Record Office, Bury St Edmunds (now Suffolk Archives)
SROI	Suffolk Record Office, Ipswich (now Suffolk Archives)
SROL	Suffolk Record Office, Lowestoft (now Suffolk Archives)
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
<i>Statutes</i>	<i>Statutes of the Realm</i> , 1810, vols. i and iv
<i>Suffolk Chorography</i>	MacCulloch, D.J.N. (ed.), 1976, <i>The Chorography of Suffolk</i> , Suffolk Records Society, vol. XIX
TNA	The National Archives
<i>TRE</i>	<i>Tempore Regis Edwardi</i> (in the time of King Edward)
<i>Valor Ecclesiasticus</i>	<i>Valor Ecclesiasticus Temp. Henr. VIII auctoritate regia institutus</i> 1817, vol. 3, London
<i>VCH Suffolk</i>	Victoria County History for Suffolk: Page, W. (ed.), 1907, <i>A History of the County of Suffolk</i> , 2 vols., London

Units of Measurement and Money

Other than heights above sea-level (which are given in metres) most distances, areas, dimensions and quantities are rendered in Imperial units (being the measures in use in the period covered by the book).

Conversions

Linear measures

1 foot	= 0.305 metres
16½ feet	= 1 perch, rod or pole
1 perch	varied from area to area: commonly 16½ feet, 18 feet or 21 feet
1 mile	= 1.6 kms
1 league	= 3 miles

Measurement of Area

40 perches	= 1 rod or rood (¼ acre)
4 roods	= 1 acre (0.404 hectares)
640 acres	= 1 square mile
1 square mile	= 259 hectares

Weight

1lb (pound)	= 0.45kg
28lbs	= 1 quarter (12.7kg)
4 quarters	= 1 hundredweight (cwt) (50.8kg)
20 cwt	= 1 ton (1.02 tonnes)

Capacity

1 bushel	= 8 gallons (36.4 litres)
----------	---------------------------

Money:

12d (pence)	= 1 shilling (modern 5p)
20s (shillings)	= £1 (pound)
1 mark	= 13s 4d
½ mark	= 6s 8d

Chapter 1 Introduction

Background to the study of parks

Suffolk, located in the southern half of East Anglia is a county with a rich history, particularly in the Middle Ages. At that time it was one of the most densely populated parts of England. Agriculture was productive. Farming and the landscape were partly under the control of landed estates held by the aristocracy and ecclesiastical institutions, but at the same time, there was a large population of free tenant farmers whose responsiveness and flexibility to economic challenges and change enabled them to prosper. As the Middle Ages progressed the county also flourished commercially, in the sixteenth century becoming industrialised and highly urbanised as a result of the successful cloth industry and the county's trading position across the North Sea from Europe. Much of the county's wealth we can still see evident, having been invested in houses and particularly in churches. Less evident today, but which would have figured large both in the landscape and people's lives, were parks. During the period covered here, there were over one hundred and thirty parks in the county – Suffolk was one of the more heavily imparked counties in England. Taken together the parks would have represented well over 25000 acres of exclusive enclosed land. Not all the parks were extant at the same time, many came and went in the landscape relatively quickly, others endured longer and figured in local life for hundreds of years – a few for as long as five hundred years.

What was a park?

The term park when used in an historical context usually brings to mind a landscape of open grassland dotted with trees and lakes and populated by grazing animals, all enclosed by some sort of boundary in the form of a bank, fence or wall. Such landscape parks were frequently designed to appear naturalistic, whilst still incorporating occasional decorative structures of an often fanciful nature, such as banqueting houses, 'temples', grottoes and other kinds of shelters. This genre of parks, many created in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, were designed to enhance the setting of a large house and provide exclusive places in which

landowners and guests could enjoy their private and largely peaceful leisure time in Arcadian surroundings. However, these types of parks came late into the English landscape. Parks have their origins much earlier as enclosures for wild and exotic animals, including deer, some of which were kept for hunting. It is even possible that such enclosures were present in Britain as early as the Roman period.¹ The Anglo-Saxons enjoyed hunting and during the ninth century, Asser, King Alfred's biographer states that Alfred was a 'keen huntsman... without equal in his skill and good fortune in that art'.² However, it is only in documents of the later Anglo-Saxon period that the first historical references to deer parks occur, one of the first being a will of c.1043-5 which suggests that a deerhagh (or deer enclosure) located at Ongar in Essex may have been an early form of deer park.³ Domesday Book (1086), referring to the time of King Edward (*i.e.* before 1066), distinguishes between the arrangements for the king to hunt at Shrewsbury within the park of *Marssetlie* (?Marsley), and outside of it. For hunting in the park the sheriff was required to find thirty-six men for eight days 'by custom', but when hunting outside of the park, thirty-six men on foot were provided 'for heading off the game' as long as the king was there.⁴

Most medieval parks, in which deer were kept for the hunt, make their first documentary appearance after the Norman Conquest of 1066. The earliest references are found in Domesday Book and this has led to an assumption that in concept they were a Norman import.⁵ The parks of southern Italy and Sicily would have been familiar to the Normans who conquered that area in the eleventh century and it is possible that they imported both the idea of such enclosures, and the fallow deer from there.⁶

¹ L.J.M. Columella, *De Res Rustica*, vol. II, Book IX, ed. E.S. Forster, 1954, Cambridge Ma., 420-7. Columella was writing in the first century AD regarding rural matters including keeping wild animals in enclosures.

² D. Whitelock (ed.), 1979, *English Historical Documents AD500-1042*, 2nd edition, London, 291.

³ In his will Thurstan bequeaths to his servants 'the wood at Ongar, except the deer enclosure (*derbage*) and the stud which I have there': D. Whitelock (ed.), 1930, *Anglo-Saxon Wills*, Cambridge, no. XIII. The deer enclosure may have survived as Ongar Great Park: O. Rackham, 1987, *The History of the Countryside*, London, 122-9. For discussion on the matter of Anglo-Saxon parks see also: D. Hooke, 1981. *Anglo-Saxon landscapes of the West Midlands, the Charter Evidence*, BARBS 95, Oxford, 234-5; R. Liddiard, 2003. 'The deer parks of Domesday Book', *Landscapes*, vol. 4 no.1, 4-23; S.J. Wager, 2017, 'The hays of medieval England; a reappraisal', *Agricultural History Review*, vol. 65 Part II, 176.

⁴ A. Williams and G.H. Martin (eds), 2002, *Domesday Book: A Complete Translation*, London, f.252, 688.

⁵ Rackham, 1987, 122-9.

⁶ Red and roe deer are indigenous species to Britain, and both were hunted. Fallow deer (the common park deer) are not a native species: N. and D. Chapman, 1970, *Fallow Deer*, British Deer Society Publication no.1, 5. It has been suggested that fallow deer in England were not brought from Normandy by the Normans after the conquest in 1066, but were a direct import from the Mediterranean and Sicily: N.J. Sykes, 2007, 'Animal Bones and Animal Parks' in R. Liddiard (ed.), *The Medieval Park: new perspectives*, Macclesfield, 59-61.

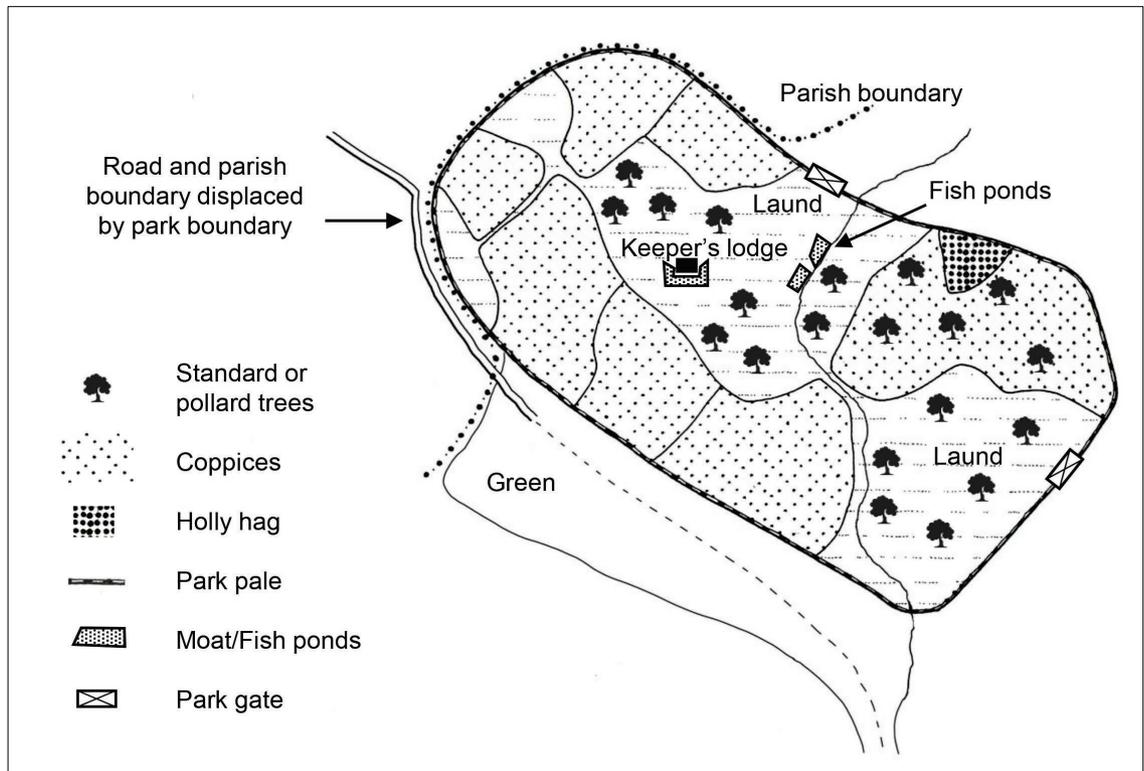


Fig. 1.1 Diagrammatic plan of a medieval deer park (adapted with permission after Melvyn Jones, 1996, 'The medieval deer park at Kimberworth' in M. Jones (ed.), *Aspects of Rotherham*, Barnsley, 115-35).

Medieval parks varied in size but usually covered about 200-300 acres (Fig. 1.1).⁷ The largest in England extended to over 1000 acres, but in Suffolk the largest (Hundon and Framlingham) were around 600 acres, with Lavenham Park in *c.*1602 recorded as containing 900 acres.⁸ They were private enclosed areas with a mixture of land uses, primarily woodland and grazing, and as such afforded a suitable habitat for deer, a source of prestige meat (venison) as well as the opportunity for sport; other grazing animals, cattle, sheep and horses were also to be found within them (Fig. 1.2). Parks were generally enclosed with paling fencing or a hedge on top of an earthen bank; in some instances internal ditches which gave additional height to the barrier were added to prevent deer escaping.⁹ At various points

⁷ M. Jones, 1996, 'The medieval deer park at Kimberworth' in M. Jones (ed.), *Aspects of Rotherham*, Barnsley, 115-35.

⁸ S.A. Miles, 2009, *Parks in Medieval England*, Oxford, 3. Examples of the variation in Suffolk: Eye Park (first recorded 1086) about 100 acres; Wetheringsett (1251) 200 acres; Glemsford (1251) 36 acres; Wissett (1302) 100 acres; Huntingfield (1313) 400 acres; Benhall 60 acres in 1388, then by 1538 about 400 acres; Old Park Hoxne (1326) about 180 acres; Shimpling (1328) 210 acres; Pond Hall, Hadleigh (1369) about 180 acres; Lavenham (*c.*1602) 900 acres.

⁹ In contrast, woods usually had a ditch on the outside of the bank to prevent deer getting in. O. Rackham, 1976, *Trees and Woodland in the British Landscape*, London, 115-17. Some royal and high status parks or

around the perimeter, gates punctuated the boundary to give access. In some areas (particularly in areas of royal forest or private chases) deer leaps (*saltatoria*) were constructed in the boundary to allow deer to enter but not to exit the park.¹⁰ Around the exterior of the park there was sometimes a designated zone, the freeboard, maintained to allow access to the outside of the pale. Also within this zone, any trees were usually considered the property of the park-owner, and anyone found taking deer (escapeses for example) within the freeboard would be considered to be poaching.¹¹



Fig. 1.2 Fallow deer grazing in the park at Helmingham.

In addition to these relatively large parks which were intended to contain herds of animals, there are also references to 'Little Parks', small parks which were often attached or adjacent to the castle, mansion house or palace of a noble or high ranking ecclesiastic. In some cases they appear to have been smaller intimate places, more akin to ornate pleasure gardens,

parks in areas with an abundance of suitable stone, were enclosed with walls. In Suffolk only later parks had walls constructed from brick and flint.

¹⁰ Deer leaps may also have been present in the form of funneled boundaries giving an offset or zig-zag form to the boundary: G. Cooper, 2014, *Salts (Deer-Leaps) in Historical Deer-Park Boundaries: A case study employing a 1608 dispute map of Leagram park in Bowland, Lancashire*, 21-50. In Suffolk a late reference to a deer leap occurs in 1633 in Badingham: 'A stable leepe or stippstyle for deer to valte and leap out of the said enclosed peece into the aforesaid great lawnd'. TNA E 134/9&10 ChasI/Hil34.

¹¹ Details of the freeboard at Framlingham are given in R. Loder, 1798, *The History of Framlingham*, Woodbridge, 390.

perhaps with a small number of animals or birds, such as peacocks, largely kept for decorative or symbolic purposes.¹² In general the parks examined here are the larger hunting parks which usually, but not always, contained or had contained deer.

The varied use to which land was put within a park often resulted in its division into ‘compartments’ — different areas with distinct land uses. For instance, parks frequently contained areas of fenced coppice-woodland alongside areas of pasture-woodland with pollarded trees, or a mixture of coppiced and standard trees (Fig. 1.3). The vegetation also provided cover for the deer and for fawns in late spring and early summer (although grazing animals would be temporarily excluded with hedging or fencing). Open spaces (launds) offered areas for grazing, and hay meadows could also be present to provide additional feedstuff for the deer and other stock. In addition other valuable resources such as rabbit warrens, fishponds and dovecotes were frequently sited within the relatively secure location of the park in order to protect them from poachers.



Fig. 1.3 Felsham Hall Woods (probably the fourteenth-century Felsham Park): coppice-with-standards. In the foreground stools coppiced ‘last year’ and now re-growing. In the distance coppiced stools of two years ago, and to the right coppice of a number of year’s growth. Interspersed are young trees left to mature as standard trees for timber, with their trunks stripped of side branches.

¹² S. Landsberg, 1995, *The Medieval Garden*, London, 21-5. Little parks at Shelley and Melford Hall may have been of this type.

Within the park, often centrally located, there was usually a lodge, sometimes moated, providing a residence for the park keeper or, where the park was distant from the manorial centre, a place that could be used by hunting parties as a base for resting, dining and overnight accommodation (Fig. 1.4). Other buildings included kennels, gate lodges, stores and deer shelters as well as structures used during hunting such as viewing stands.¹³ The relatively high costs of wages, construction and year-round maintenance of parks were offset to some extent by income generated from the production and sale of timber, smallwood, fuel, fodder and bedding, from renting out grazing (agistment) and when it occurred, pannage (feeding on acorns) for pigs. On the whole, the deer brought in no income, although there was a black market for poached venison, as occurred at Halesworth in 1452.¹⁴ Overall a park was an expensive luxury for most landholders, and thus initially the prerogative of the wealthiest. Indeed in Domesday Book sixty per cent of those lords recorded holding parks were of the highest rank.¹⁵ However, over time park ownership began to descend the social scale to include the knightly and gentry classes.¹⁶



Fig. 1.4 Lavenham Park Lodge:
detail from Israel Amyce's map of
1580 at Melford Hall.
Courtesy Sir Richard and Lady
Hyde Parker.

¹³ Two 'standings' or viewing platforms and 'high seats' or tree hides are visible on the 1613 map of Melford Park (see below Figs. 9.17 and 9.18).

¹⁴ J. Birrell, 1992, 'Deer and deer farming in medieval England', *Agricultural History Review*, vol. 40 Part II, 114-16. Thomas Schawer, Thomas Barker and others were indicted for breaking the park at Huntingfield, killing deer and taking the venison to Halesworth market to sell: KB9/118/1.

¹⁵ C.W. Hollister, 1987, 'The Greater Domesday Tenants-in-Chief', in J.C. Holt (ed.), *Domesday Studies*, Woodbridge, 290. Tenants-in-chief with demesne holdings of over £300 ranked as Class A.

¹⁶ Mileson, 2009, 45-6; R. Hoppitt, 1992, 'A Study of the Development of Parks in Suffolk from the Eleventh to the Seventeenth Century', vol. 1, unpublished PhD thesis, University of East Anglia, 77.

The study of parks

In the nineteenth century E.P. Shirley's *Some Account of English Deer Parks* included a county-by-county account of ancient and then-extant deer parks. Although not concerned consciously with topography, he nevertheless was fully aware of the landscape impact of parks and illustrated his book with relict features such as lodges, boundary banks, pales and deer leaps.¹⁷ In the 1920s Edmund Farrer researched the deer parks of Norfolk and Suffolk, publishing his findings in a series of articles.¹⁸ Not only did he record the history of a large number of parks but he also attempted to locate those that were no longer in existence using field names and field boundaries as well as evaluating the 'park-like appearance' of the landscape as possible indicators of a long-lost park. He also utilised negative evidence, through the examination of areas which were unlikely to have been the location of former parks owing to the presence of other landscape features. This was a pioneering study; parks and their associated topographical features would not attract the interest of landscape historians again until the 1950s and 1960s when Hoskins, Crawford and Beresford all included the study of parks in their work on English landscape history and archaeology.¹⁹ An important contribution of these later writers was the recognition that some early parks had an elliptical or sub-rectangular form, fossilised in the landscape as continuous field boundaries and in some cases as substantial earthworks.

Over the past 50 years medieval parks have been subject to increasing study. Much of this research has focussed on finding the location and extent of parks mentioned in extant documents, piecing together their history, and compiling gazetteers. During the 1960s and 1970s a large number of county-based studies were undertaken by Leonard Cantor and others, culminating in Cantor's *The Medieval Deer Parks of England, A Gazetteer*, published in 1983.²⁰ His contribution to the field of study cannot be underestimated; however, the focus of his research was the English Midlands and Dorset, and particularly those areas formerly dominated by royal forest.²¹ Throughout the 1980s other researchers continued these explorations but as with much of the early work, the focus continued to be on the

¹⁷ He writes that neither in the sixteenth nor the seventeenth centuries 'has, I believe any work appeared which... professes to give any account of the numerous parks for which England has been long distinguished from the rest of Europe': E.P. Shirley, 1867, *Some Account of English Deer Parks*, London, viii.

¹⁸ Rev. Edmund Farrer, Rector of Hinderclay 1896-1915. His articles are also to be found in the volumes of the *East Anglian Miscellany* under the initials 'E.F., Hinderclay (or Botesdale)'. The set of articles referring to Suffolk are assembled together as SROI S712.644.

¹⁹ O.G.S. Crawford, 1953, *Archaeology in the Field*, London; W.G. Hoskins, 1955, *The Making of the English Landscape*, London; *ibid.*, 1967; *Fieldwork in Local History*, London; M. Beresford, 1957, *History on the Ground*, London; *ibid.*, 1958, *Medieval England, an Aerial Survey*, Cambridge.

²⁰ L. Cantor and J. Hatherly, 1979, 'The Medieval Deer Parks of England', *Geography*, vol. 64, 71-85; L. Cantor (ed.), 1982, *The English Medieval Landscape*, London, 56-85; L. Cantor, 1983, *The Medieval Deer Parks of England, A Gazetteer*, Loughborough. County studies with other authors include parks of Dorset, Staffordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Rutland and Leicestershire.

²¹ Areas of royal forest were subject to a specific set of regulations called forest law. The purpose was to protect the king's game (venison) and their environment (vert) from damage. Within the 'metes and bounds' of forest areas it was a requirement to have permission or a licence from the Crown to create a park, but not so outside.

identification of parks from the documentary sources, locating these parks and their relict features in the landscape, mapping distributions, compiling chronologies of imparking, and producing descriptive accounts of the history of individual or groups of parks.²²

This study of Suffolk's parks emerged out of this historical and topographical background and at its core is initial research undertaken in the 1980s and 1990s, the specific purpose of which was to extend research to examine a county that lay beyond Cantor's main Midland focus and which had not been dominated by royal forest. As a study in historical geography, it had the aim to understand the county-wide distribution of parks through an analysis of their distribution patterns and landscape context which, in contrast to other counties where forests and parks often occupied poorer soil regions, were on the more fertile soils. Suffolk's particular wealth of unpublished manorial manuscripts also presented opportunities for exploring the detail of the individual histories of parks more closely and for investigating the chronology of imparking which, for much of the work undertaken elsewhere, had been based largely on published, calendared documents of medieval government.²³

Since the 1990s the study of parks has moved on. As well as further county and regional studies, a new generation of researchers has shifted the focus away from function, distribution, location and chronology to examining social meaning and the role of parks as status symbols within a society that viewed hunting and its associated ritual as an essential mark of nobility. In addition, recent research has explored the wider context of the creation and meaning of the features and landscapes fashioned within some parks (including the manipulation of buildings, their layout and approaches, water features and gardens) to produce grand designs that would be pleasing to the eye, would impress, and through imagery could communicate messages about status and power to those experiencing them.²⁴

²² For example: C.J. Bond, 1981, 'Woodstock Park under the Plantagenet kings; the exploitation and use of wood and timber in a medieval deer park', *Arboriculture Journal*, vol. 5, 201-13; F. Woodward, 1982, *Oxfordshire Parks*, Woodstock; A.E. Squires and W. Humphries, 1986, *The Medieval Parks of Charnwood Forest*, Melton Mowbray; E. Roberts, 1988, 'The Bishop of Winchester's Deer Parks in Hampshire, 1200-1400', *Proceedings of the Hampshire Field Club Archaeological Society*, vol. 44, 67-86; S. Neave, 1991, *Medieval Parks of East Yorkshire*, Hull; K.G. Watts, 1996, 'Wiltshire deer parks; An Introductory Survey', *Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine*, vol. 89, 88-98; T. Way, 1997, *A Study of the Impact of Imparkment on the Social Landscape of Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire from c.1080 to 1760*, BARBS; C.J. Bond, 1998, *Somerset parks and gardens*, Tiverton.

²³ Hoppitt, 1992, *passim*.

²⁴ C. Coulson, 1992, 'Some analysis of the castle of Bodiam, East Sussex' in C. Harper-Bill and R. Harvey (eds), *Medieval Knighthood IV*, Papers from the 5th Strawberry Hill Conference 1990, Woodbridge, 51-107; C.C. Taylor, 1998, *Parks and Gardens of Britain: a landscape history from the air*, Edinburgh; P. Everson, 2003, 'Medieval gardens and designed landscapes' in R. Wilson-North (ed.), *The Lie of the Land: aspects of the archaeology and history of designed landscapes in the south west of England*, Exeter, 24-33; S.A. Miles, 2007, 'The sociology of park creation in medieval England', in Liddiard, (ed.), 11-26; T.B. James and C. Gerrard, 2007, *Clarendon: Landscape of Kings*, Macclesfield; A. Richardson, 2007, 'The King's chief delights: a landscape approach to the royal parks of post-conquest England', in Liddiard (ed.), 27-48; O. Creighton, 2009, *Designs upon the Land*, Woodbridge; J. Fletcher, 2011, *Gardens of Earthly Delight*, Oxford. Other recent county studies include: M.W. Hanson, et al., 2004, *Essex Parks*, London; C. Manning, 2006, *Deer and Deer Parks of Lincolnshire*, Horncastle; M. Wiltshire and S. Woore, 2009, *Medieval Parks of Derbyshire*, Ashbourne; A. Rowe, 2009, *Medieval Parks of Hertfordshire*, Hatfield; *ibid.*, 2019, *Tudor and Early Stuart Parks of Hertfordshire*, Hatfield. In Ireland: F. Beglane, 2015, *Anglo-Norman Parks in Medieval Ireland*, Dublin.

This book examines those parks that were established in Suffolk between 1086 (Domesday Book) and c.1602, when a list of parks was included in a descriptive account of the county, *The Chorography of Suffolk*.²⁵ This is not an exhaustive account, there are still many opportunities for research; there are almost certainly parks still to be discovered, others to be investigated further, and many documents yet to be examined. However, this work has important resonances for the continuing wider study of deer parks across England and offers a unique perspective on the development and history of the Suffolk countryside.

The first part of the book looks at the background to the subject, beginning with a brief account of hunting and its place in society, and the range of sources from which the evidence for parks has been compiled. This is followed by an exploration of the pattern and process of imparking in the county, including a consideration of the chronology and geography of park creation and decline set against the background of the physical landscape as well as the economic and social changes that occurred over time. The second part of the book focuses on the parks themselves, categorised by landowning group and by time; it comprises six chapters. The first two look at the earliest parks; these are followed by chapters dealing with the later parks of the lay aristocracy, followed by a consideration of those parks created and held by religious organisations throughout the county. The final chapter examines the later, mainly Tudor, parks. A map and summary gazetteer of Suffolk's parks is to be found on pages 280-8.

Hunting

Hunting game has been an occupation and sport of man from the very earliest of times. By the medieval period all levels of society and both sexes hunted. In 1342 Elizabeth de Burgh of Clare was constructing a new building at the castle at Clare for her huntsman and hounds, and Edward II's queen, Isabella, had her own hounds and falcons. She took 15 greyhounds with her to France in 1314, and in 1325 boarded her hounds with the prior of Canterbury while she again went to France.²⁶ Hunting was a part of everyday life, although the supreme quarry – the boar and the deer – were reserved for the nobility.²⁷ For the lower classes hunting may have been mainly about supplementing diet, but for the aristocracy it also offered an enjoyable leisure activity.²⁸ Hunting cross-country and the thrill of the chase would bring exhilaration; the competitive elements of showing off one's horses, horsemanship and hounds would bring excitement and delight to be shared with one's

²⁵ D.J.N. MacCulloch (ed.), 1976, *The Chorography of Suffolk*, Suffolk Records Society, vol. XIX, 24.

²⁶ J. Ward (ed.), 2015, *Elizabeth de Burgh, Lady of Clare (1295-1360) Household and Other Records*, Suffolk Records Society, vol. LVII, Woodbridge, 104; A. Weir, 2012, *Isabella, She Wolf of France*, London, 80, 96 and 170.

²⁷ For detailed accounts of medieval hunting and its significance see R. Almond, 2003, *Medieval Hunting*, Stroud; J. Cummins, 2003, *The Art of Medieval Hunting*, London and J. Fletcher, *Gardens of Earthly Delight*, 2011, Oxford.

²⁸ In 1337, at Tattingstone there is a record of a certain tenant, Adam (and his heirs), being granted the right 'to hunt and chase freely' along a way (*via*) six feet in breadth in *Smyriesfield*. C. Harper-Bill (ed.), 1998, *Dodnash Priory Charters*, Suffolk Charters, vol. XVI, Woodbridge, no. 199. For those involved in poaching, there was also an element of social protest, particularly clear during the period of the Great Rising of 1381 when many parks were broken into: N.J. Sykes, 2007, 57.

companions.²⁹ However hunting was more than this; it was seen as an art, a social accomplishment and a defining mark of nobility.³⁰ It had a role in preparation for warfare through the opportunity to develop and maintain fitness, practice skills of horsemanship, use of weapons, and team-working. As a noble sport it developed a sophisticated ritual and vocabulary, and handbooks were written to inform and instruct.³¹

Hunting occupied a prominent position in aristocratic life and ideology, as can be seen by its prominence in the literature and the visual arts of the period.³² For example, detailed and vivid narrative accounts of three hunts occur in the fourteenth-century English poem *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.³³ Hunting provided authors with settings in which to place action such as romance or adventure, as well as enabling the development of characterisation such as courage, foolishness or courtliness.³⁴ In addition to the handbooks noted above, many manuscripts are embellished with images of animals that were hunted – boar, deer, hares and rabbits – as well as hunting scenes.³⁵ John Lydgate's *Lives of SS Edmund and Fremund* made most probably at Bury St Edmunds in the early-fifteenth century for the young Henry VI, has accounts and illustrations of using birds of prey and hunting with hounds in a park as examples of the types of activity expected of a king (Fig. 1.5).³⁶

The household accounts of Sir John Howard of Stoke by Nayland (later duke of Norfolk) give an indication of the amount of time and money that nobles spent on hunting. In 1461, on 20th and 21st August, Sir John went hunting in Rising Chase (at Castle Rising in Norfolk). He gave 6s 8d to the two keepers of the chase – a generous tip, as the wages of a park keeper at this time were about 3d a day. In 1465 he went hunting over a period of about two weeks between 12th and 17th of August, and then again from 21st to 28th August with the

²⁹ J. Meddings, 1999, 'Friendship among the Aristocracy', *Anglo-Norman Studies* XXII, 200-1.

³⁰ For example in the early-fifteenth century poem *Sir Degrevant*, his status is defined by the fact that amongst other attributes he devoted himself to sport and after attending mass would head off to hunt. He had greyhounds for hunting red deer and fallow deer, falcons and hawks, and a park. Part of the plot surrounds a neighbouring landowner breaking into his park and stealing game. <<https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/kooper-sentimental-and-humorous-romances-sir-degrevant#f2>> [accessed September 2019].

³¹ For example: W. Twiti, 1327, *The Art of Hunting*, ed. B. Danielson, 1977, Stockholm. Twiti was a huntsman of Edward II; one of the most spectacular examples is the *Livre de Chasse* written by Gaston count of Foix between 1387 and 1389. A selection of images from MS. Français 616 in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris were published as G. Bise, 1978, *The Hunting Book*, London, with translated text. Many images are also published on line. The *Livre de Chasse* was plagiarised by Edward duke of York and published in the fifteenth century: W.A. and F. Baillie-Grohman (eds), 1909, *The Master of Game*, London; G. Turberville, 1576, *The Noble Art of Venerie or Hunting*, Tudor and Stuart Library reprint, Oxford, 1908.

³² Mileson, 2009, 17.

³³ B. Stone (ed.), 1974, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, London: the deer hunt: verses 46-7 and 53-4, the boar hunt: verses 56-8 and 62-4 and the fox hunt: verses 68-9 and 76-7.

³⁴ A. Rooney, 1993, *Hunting in Middle English Literature*, Woodbridge, 95-100; Mileson, 2009, 16-21.

³⁵ For example: The *Taymouth Hours* (English, fourteenth century: BL, Yates Thompson MS 13, ff. 67-83) has a series of illustrations of ladies hunting a variety of animals, with bows, nets and hounds. The *Master of Game* includes an illustration of an enclosed park containing game (Bodleian Library, MS. Bodley 546 f. 3v). The Bayeux Tapestry, produced in England in the eleventh century depicts Harold Godwinson with his hawk and hounds as he rides to Bosham and sails to Normandy.

³⁶ BL Harley 2278. ff. 37 and 43v.

earl of Oxford at Lavenham at a cost to himself of £2 18s 2d.³⁷ In September 1467 he spent fifteen days hunting, recording in his own hand his costs as £7 2s 0d.³⁸ However, while parties of nobility did hunt in parks, it is clear that lords also employed professional huntsmen to take deer and other game and park keepers killed deer to order and delivered them according to the lord's direction by written warrant.³⁹



Fig. 1.5 Lothbrok, king of the Danes hunting a deer with a greyhound in a park.
Detail from John Lydgate's *The Lives of SS Edmund and Fremund*.
© The British Library Board MS Harley 2278 f.43v.

³⁷ A. Crawford, 1992, *The Household Books of John Howard Duke of Norfolk 1462-1471, 1481-1483*, Stroud: I, 277 and 300. This was John, thirteenth earl of Oxford, who would have been about 23 years old. In 1462, John Howard had been appointed to administer the de Vere estates after the execution of the twelfth earl: J.M. Robinson, 1983, *The Dukes of Norfolk: A Quincentennial History*, Oxford, 5.

³⁸ Crawford, 1992, I, 423.

³⁹ For example, the abbot of Bury St Edmunds employed huntsmen, (John Whatele, Richard le Foulere and William Hunte) who hunted at both his parks of Chevington and Redgrave in the fourteenth century: SROB E3/15.3/2.6b.

To possess or have access to hunting grounds was an important signal of nobility. As well as providing venison for the table, a park was also a useful means of honouring one's guests, conveying or returning social or political favours and bestowing largesse by distributing gifts of live deer and venison.⁴⁰ John Howard's accounts for example, tell us that on 4th January 1461 he received venison brought to him from Colne Park in Essex, and on 29th November 1465 a doe was brought to him from Lavenham.⁴¹

Large amounts of money were spent also on the accoutrements of hunting – bows, arrows, clothing, hounds, hawks, horses and other hunting-related paraphernalia (Figs. 1.6 and 1.7). In 1465 Howard paid John Smith, saddler of London, 8s for a new hunting saddle, a pair of stirrups and pair of leathers, and further items of saddlery brought the total bill to 30s 2d. In 1467 he paid 16d for a hawk's bag, 2s 4d for a *tabere* (a hood) for a hawk, and 4d for two hawk's bells.⁴² Hounds also were greatly valued, and were often given as gifts, or even as bequests.⁴³



Fig. 1.6 A tooled and stained leather box decorated with hunting motifs. On the top of the box are a lion, a stag, a wolf or dog, and what is possibly a unicorn. On the base (shown here) are three dogs and in the fourth quarter is an oak tree. A prestige object probably commissioned by a high ranking individual. From York, 1200-1400.

Courtesy York Museums Trust.

There were several methods of hunting deer.⁴⁴ Hunting cross country, on horseback with hounds (*par force de chiens*), was only really possible in wide open spaces such as forests and chases, not within smaller parks. Sometimes park deer could be released and hunted across

⁴⁰ J.M. Ridgard (ed.), 2009, *Great Framlingham in Suffolk and the Howard Dukes of Norfolk*, Blaxhall, 18-53. The parker's account of 1509-17 itemises gifts of venison to the neighbouring nobility, gentry, towns, guilds and *religiosi*. Ridgard notes 'the list of non-recipients would make almost as intriguing a study as those actually on the gift list'. MacCulloch notes that the Brandons of Henham were 'consistently ignored', Sir Robert only receiving a buck twice in ten years compared to the thirty-eight bucks and thirty-five does received by the Willoughbys of Parham the other 'resident peer': D.J.N. MacCulloch, 1986, *Suffolk and the Tudors*, Oxford, 56. Shorter lists exist for other of the county's parks, for example for the bishop of Norwich's park at South Elmham: SROL HA12/C2/77.

⁴¹ Lavenham and Colne were parks of John de Vere, twelfth earl of Oxford, who was married to Elizabeth Howard, Sir John Howard's cousin.

⁴² Crawford (ed.), 1992, I, 324 and 431.

⁴³ Cummins, 2003, 5.

⁴⁴ Park deer were usually fallow deer; red deer were also kept in parks. Native roe deer were generally not kept in parks. For accounts of medieval hunting, see Almond, 2003 and Cummins, 2003.

open country. Within and outside parks, hounds or beaters could be used to drive deer past huntsmen (hidden or camouflaged) located at points along or at the end of the drive with bows and arrows at the ready.⁴⁵ In 1277, such ‘bow and stable’ hunting led to a fatality recorded in the park at Fakenham (Suffolk).⁴⁶ In the later Middle Ages this method became more formalised through the use of an enclosed or ‘parrock’ course along which hounds drove the deer so that they could be brought down as they approached the end of the course. In this method of hunting, the focus was not always on bringing down or killing the quarry, but also on the speed of the hounds, on which bets were laid, as with modern greyhound racing and hare coursing.⁴⁷

Fig. 1.7 A glazed lobed cup in Hambleton Ware with two stags which would have appeared to be swimming when the cup contained liquid. Dated thirteenth century or later, probably from York.

Courtesy York Museums Trust.



In the fifteenth century the place-name *parrock* occurs in documents relating to Redgrave; and in the sixteenth century there was a deer course at the north end of the park at Hawstead also called ‘The Parrock’.⁴⁸ An early-seventeenth century document from Yoxford refers to a meadow and pasture called ‘from old’ *le Parrock hills*. However the term, as with *park*, may simply be referring to an enclosure.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ The drive would be enclosed by fencing or toils (strong netting) to contain the deer.

⁴⁶ Two friends, William Gernun and John Boydy went hunting in the park. Having hidden behind trees opposite one another, William shot his arrow at a deer that ran between them; however the arrow glanced off a branch, and went right through John’s body killing him outright. It was judged to be an accidental death and Gernun was pardoned: *Cal. Inq. Misc.*, vol. 1, no. 2214; a slightly different version is quoted by E. Powell (ed.), 1910, *A Suffolk Hundred in the Year 1283*, Cambridge, 83. The pardon is listed in *CPR 1272-1281*, 235.

⁴⁷ C.C. Taylor, 2004, ‘Ravensdale Park, Derbyshire, and Medieval Deer Coursing’, *Landscape History* 26, 37-57.

⁴⁸ SROB HA 240/1/364; 369; 382 and 395; J. Cullum, 1784, *The History and Antiquities of Hawstead in the County of Suffolk*, London, 210. The word may derive from O.E. *pearroc* meaning an enclosed field or paddock: see P. Cavill, 2018, *A New Dictionary of English Field-Names*, Nottingham, 315.

⁴⁹ SROI HD 30: 312/134.

Sources of evidence

Documents and topography provide the two main types of evidence which can be used to establish the existence of a park at a given date, to compile its history and to locate it in the landscape. In some cases additional information may come from ecology and archaeology.

Documentary evidence

In Suffolk, documentary references confirm the existence of at least one hundred and thirty parks during the period covered by this study.⁵⁰ Some of these parks remained in use for a very long time. At Redgrave, for example, the park is documented over a period of eight hundred years; those at Eye and Hundon were extant for at least five hundred years, and about another dozen parks remained intact for around three hundred years. Such longevity means that they impacted significantly on both the landscape and the lives of the communities in which they were located. On the other hand, some parks were more ephemeral. For instance, early parks at Semer and Chelsworth may only have existed for a very short period of time around the end of the twelfth century.

In seeking documentary evidence for the existence of parks some places, such as Chevington and Earl Soham, have substantial and sometimes long runs of documentary material that provide a wealth of detail. However, other parks occur in only occasional and intermittent references. Documents generated by central government, in particular the Patent Rolls and the Inquisitions *Post Mortem* have provided a solid basis for a great deal of research. Originally compiled in the form of rolls in handwritten Latin, most are accessible in printed calendared translations with edited highlights and many are now available on-line.⁵¹

The Patent Rolls

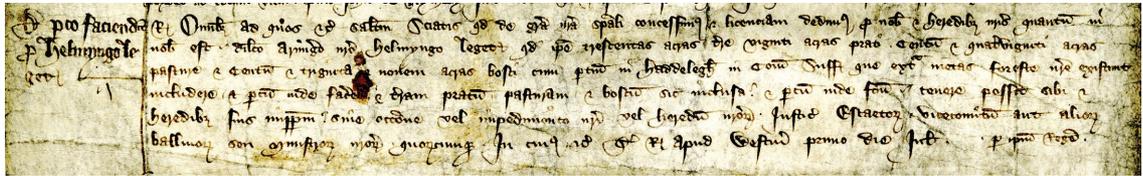
The Patent Rolls provide three main types of evidence in relation to parks: grants of permission, or licences to impark; security in law in respect of park breaking and other land disputes; and grants of keepership.

Licences to impark were a requirement in areas subject to forest law, in that the enclosure of land into parks had the potential to impact (usually adversely) on the king's hunting preserves. Suffolk, however, lay outside the metes and bounds of royal forest, thus licences to impark were not required. Despite this, licences were still occasionally sought and granted, including two in the fourteenth century. The first was obtained by Helming Leget for Pond Hall near Hadleigh (Fig. 1.8). Having purchased the manor in 1360, Leget was granted a licence to impark in 1369; two years later he was granted a licence to crenellate (embattle) his mansion called 'Le Ponde'. The second, in 1385, permitted Michael de la Pole

⁵⁰ In the fourteenth century, it is suggested there may have been as many as 3200 parks in England: Mileson, 2009, 109.

⁵¹ For example through the Hathi Trust digital library: <<https://www.hathitrust.org/>> [accessed September 2019].

to impark at Wingfield, Stradbroke and Sternfield and to crenellate at Wingfield, Stradbroke, Sternfield and Huntingfield. He had acquired these properties through marriage to Katherine, the daughter and heiress of Sir John Wingfield, a member of the household of Edward the Black Prince, son of Edward III. Two further licences were recorded in the sixteenth century. In 1510 Sir Robert Drury was granted a licence to impark at Hawstead and a licence to crenellate; Thomas Kitson was granted a licence to crenellate at Hengrave in 1540 and a licence to impark in 1587. Such licences were still being applied for in the seventeenth century, for example in 1612 Sir Thomas Savage was granted a licence to impark at Long Melford.⁵²



Making a park for Helmyng le get

Line 2:

[Permission to] ‘our beloved armiger Helmyng Leget’ to enclose and impark ‘three hundred acres of land, twenty acres of meadow, one hundred and eighty acres of pasture and one hundred and thirty nine acres of wood with appurtenances in Hadleigh in the county of Suffolk, which are outside the metes of our forest.....’

Sealed at Westminster first day of July (1369)

Fig. 1.8 Enrolled licence to make a park at Pond Hall, Hadleigh (1369).
The National Archives, Ref. C66/279.

The question arises why these individuals found it necessary to apply for such licences. The fact that three of the licences to impark are closely linked (in time) with licences to crenellate suggests that these cases of imparking may have formed part of a wider plan by these landholders to aggrandise their buildings and associated landscapes. There is also another underlying pattern, in that none of these individuals applying for permissions were noble by birth. Helming Leget was a king’s esquire, who rose to hold various roles at court including constable of Windsor castle and keeper of the king’s jewels. He seems also to have been a successful businessman with interests in many quarters, and property in the city of London.⁵³ Michael de la Pole was the son of wealthy wool merchant William de la Pole of Kingston upon Hull. They were both in their own time favourites at court; Michael de la Pole rose to be Lord Chancellor and was created earl of Suffolk in 1385, the same year in which he obtained his licence. The Drury family had accumulated land in Hawstead. Robert Drury

⁵² Pond Hall: *CPR 1367-1370*, 259 and *CPR 1370-1374*, 54; Wingfield, Stradbroke, and Sternfield: *CPR 1381-1385*, 555; Hawstead: *Letters & Papers Henry VIII*, vol. I, no. 414; Hengrave: *CPR 1586-1587*, 159; SROB HA 528/30(a) (b); Long Melford: L. Boothman and Sir. R. Hyde Parker (eds), 2006, *Savage Fortune*, Suffolk Records Society, vol. XLIX, Woodbridge, Document 13, 30-2.

⁵³ S. Andrews and R. Hoppitt, 2011, ‘Helming Leget, Royal Servant, and a possible designed landscape at Pond Hall, Hadleigh’, *PSLAH*, vol. XLII, 300-24.

was knighted in 1497 and was a distinguished lawyer; he became speaker of the House of Commons and a privy councillor to Henry VII. Thomas Kitson came from a provincial merchant family who on moving to London amassed a fortune, became Sheriff of London, and was knighted. His son, also Thomas, was granted his licence to impark at Hengrave in 1587, some nine years after Queen Elizabeth was entertained there during her East Anglian progress of 1578.⁵⁴ Thus all these landholders acquired property either through marriage or by purchase – not as part of some ancient fiefdom of their blood-line. They moved in court circles, achieved high social standing, rank and riches; with the exception of Helming Leget, they were each rewarded with titles, and thus the mark of that high rank. The granting of licences to impark and crenellate (and thus the means to establish outward symbols of their rank) may have been part of a strategy to obtain secure and public confirmation that a place in the upper echelons of society had been achieved. Alternatively, it has been suggested that by obtaining such licences these individuals sought to ‘reinforce or even sometimes invent their pedigree as established landowners within a district’.⁵⁵ In a sense they were seeking to write their own history.

Park breaking – entering a park and hunting without permission – was a continuing problem for park owners; obtaining a grant of permission to impark may have enhanced their security in law. A number of thirteenth-century statutes gave owners of parks recourse to law if their parks were broken into and property seized or damaged. Commissions of *oyer* and *terminer* [hear and determine] were set up, and the Patent Rolls note the appointment of commissioners to investigate complaints.⁵⁶ These were serious cases – going beyond common poaching. In some cases incursions were undertaken by organised groups, at times constituting a deliberate attack on the property of political or social rivals. They often took place during periods of absence: while the owners were away at war, during times of the minority of the heir, or vacancies of bishoprics. It was at such times, when the focus of government or estate management was elsewhere that levels of insecurity increased, and opportunists could take their chance.⁵⁷ In 1283, a commission inquired into ‘the persons who broke the parks’ of the earl of Norfolk in Norfolk and in Suffolk and ‘there and in his free warrens in the said parks hunted and carried away deer and hares’ during his absence on the king’s service and under the king’s protection in Wales. The earl was busy at the time with his responsibilities as Marshall mustering troops and provisions for the campaigns of Edward I in Wales.⁵⁸ In 1314 Richard de Amoundeville’s park at Okenhill in Badingham

⁵⁴ Z. Dovey, 1996, *An Elizabethan Progress*, Stroud, 104.

⁵⁵ Mileson, 2009, 99-115; *ibid.*, 2005, ‘The importance of parks in fifteenth-century society’, in L. Clarke (ed.), *The Fifteenth Century V*, Woodbridge, 33.

⁵⁶ A commission of *oyer* and *terminer* sat to enquire into treason and felony, with commissioners (justices) appointed by the king.

⁵⁷ *Statutes*, i, 4: Statute of Merton, 1236 ‘The lords demand imprisonment for those taken in their parks and fishponds’; *ibid.*, 32: Statute of Westminster I 1275: Trespassers in parks and fishponds are (a) to make great amends depending on their offence, (b) to suffer three years imprisonment and fine at the king’s pleasure. If they are fugitives, they are to be outlawed; *ibid.*, 111-12: Statute of Trespassers in Parks, 1293: Any parker, forester etc. who finds evildoers in a park who will not yield will not be proceeded against if he kills them.

⁵⁸ *CPR 1281-1292*, 73.

(near Framlingham) was broken into by a gang of local men.⁵⁹ Fourteen years later, following Richard's death, his widow Elizabeth recorded a similar complaint in which at least one of the same men seems to have been involved.⁶⁰ At Letheringham, in 1448, the park of Sir Robert Wingfield was broken into and deer hunted and stolen by a gang led by John de Mowbray, third duke of Norfolk. This was a politically-motivated revenge attack following Wingfield's defection away from the duke of Norfolk to the faction led by the duke of Suffolk.⁶¹ Similar incursions 'with force and arms' in the 1450s took place at the duchess of Suffolk's parks at Wingfield, Huntingfield, Westhorpe, Wyverstone and Eye following the death of her husband William de la Pole.⁶² In the early sixteenth century, there were incursions into the park of the countess of Oxford at Lavenham, when game was killed and the keeper assaulted.⁶³ A statute of 1562/3 made the offence of park breaking liable to three months imprisonment.⁶⁴

Savage's licence of 1612 for Long Melford states that no-one may enter the park, or hunt in it or remove anything from it, under penalty of a fine of £10. The licence also anticipates a potential problem with holders of common rights over the newly enclosed land by annulling the right of any persons who may have had a claim to common pasture on the land which was to be taken into the park; thus it provided the landowner with the legal means to fend off and deal with potential complainants and park-breakers.⁶⁵

The Patent Rolls recorded frequent grants of keeperships of parks to courtiers and members of the royal household. An example occurs in 1387 when William at Lee and subsequently Thomas Upton were granted the keeperships of Croyley Park (Lidgate) and Badmondifield Park (Wickhambrook) at a time when the manors were in the king's hands during minority of the landholder John de Hastings, earl of Pembroke.⁶⁶ Such grants were significant perks, bringing income and status as well as the opportunity to hunt oneself and to grant favours to others.

Inquisitions *Post Mortem* (IPMs)

IPMs were investigations as to the property of deceased landholders, the king being interested to know who held land, by what arrangements and the status of the heir. Park references in IPMs are found in the manorial extents which describe the property in detail. As with the park-breaking complaints these entries confirm the existence of a park, but not its date of origin. In some cases the calendared IPMs give a little added detail taken from the extents, such as the size, value and condition of the park. For example, Gilbert de Clare's

⁵⁹ CPR 1313-1317, 235-6.

⁶⁰ CPR 1327-1330, 157.

⁶¹ CPR 1446-1452, 236.

⁶² TNA KB 9/270/2. The men were armed with swords, lances, cudgels and arquebus, and chased, hunted and killed large numbers of deer (for example 20 bucks and 20 does at Westhorpe).

⁶³ TNA STAC 2/27/113 and STAC 2/28/2.

⁶⁴ *Statutes*, iv, 449-50; J. Langton, 2014, 'Forest fence: enclosures in a pre-enclosure landscape' *Landscape History*, vol. 35, 19.

⁶⁵ Boothman and Hyde Parker, 2006, 30-2.

⁶⁶ The earl would have been fifteen years old at this time. CPR 1385-1389, 354; CPR 1388-1392, 204.

IPM in 1296 refers to ‘a great park of 600 acres’ at Hundon; at Lavenham, in 1332, the earl of Oxford’s park at Overhall manor ‘contained 200 acres’.⁶⁷ In 1350, Eleanor Ferre’s manor of Benhall included a hall with chapel and grange, a park, turbary and two coney warrens.⁶⁸ Later, in 1370, the *IPM* of Robert de Ufford, earl of Suffolk, records that the same manor included a ‘small park with deer’ and an undated memorandum of c.1382 notes that the timber there was worth 500 marks (over £333) – a massive sum.⁶⁹ At Haughley, the *IPM* of Edmund earl of Cornwall in 1300 states that the parker, Hugh de Troye, was paid 45s 6d a year plus a robe or half a mark.⁷⁰ The park at Staverton (near Butley) was listed in 1382 as being ‘without deer, now greatly broken down’, possibly having been despoiled by protesters during the Great Rising in 1381.⁷¹ An element of caution needs to be exercised however as there are examples where there is no mention of a park in the calendared summary, but one is mentioned in the original extent. For example, the calendared *IPM* of Roger Bigod in 1270 lists no park for Framlingham. However the actual extent includes pasture in *magno parco*, the Great Park.⁷² Therefore to rely entirely on the calendared documents for evidence of a park’s existence would be unsafe

Other documents

Other published rolls and documents of government include the *Pipe Rolls*, *Charter Rolls*, *Close Rolls*, *Inquisitions Miscellaneous*, *Originalia Rolls* and *Letters and Papers of Henry VIII* all of which contain occasional references to parks. For example, the *Pipe Rolls* indicate that repairs were made to the park at Eye in 1176; *Charter Rolls* record a park at Dennington in 1206; the *Close Rolls* refer to re-stocking of the park at Eye in 1329; the park at Kentwell is mentioned in an extent of the manor in 1251 included within the *Inquisitions Miscellaneous*; in 1330 the *Originalia Rolls* record the appointment of Walter Faucoun as custodian of the manors of Eye and Haughley with the park.⁷³ In March 1510, *Letters and Papers* record the licence to impark at Hawstead.⁷⁴ Where parks had been broken into, cases also appear in records of the Court of King’s Bench as at Eye, Rishangles and Wingfield in the fifteenth century (see above). A number of other significant documents also record the existence of parks throughout the county. The earliest source is Domesday Book (1086), which identifies the presence of parks on manors at Bentley, Ixworth, Leiston, Dennington and Eye.⁷⁵ A few hundred years later in 1535, the *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, prepared before the dissolution of the monasteries, recorded five parks belonging to ecclesiastical landholders: two parks at Hoxne and two parks at South

⁶⁷ Hundon: *CIPM*, vol. III, no. 371; Lavenham: *CIPM*, vol. VII, no. 379.

⁶⁸ Benhall: *CIPM*, vol. IX, no. 380

⁶⁹ *CIPM*, vol. XII, no. 424, *CIPM*, vol. XV, no. 255.

⁷⁰ *CIPM*, vol. III, no. 604.

⁷¹ *CIPM*, vol. XV, no. 624. One of the demands of the peasants was the right to hunt freely.

⁷² *CIPM*, vol. I, no. 744, 1296/70; TNA C132/38.

⁷³ *Pipe Rolls* 22 Henry II 1176; *Rotuli Chartarum 1199-1216*, 177b; *CCR 1327-1330*, 433; *Cal. Inq. Misc.*, vol.1, no. 113; *Originalia Rolls* vol. II, 41.

⁷⁴ *Letters and Papers Henry VIII* vol. I, no. 414.

⁷⁵ A. Rumble (ed.), 1986, *Domesday Book Suffolk*, 2 vols. Chichester. Domesday references throughout are cited as *LDB* (Little Domesday Book) followed by the folio number of the entry. *LDB* Bentley: 287a; Leiston: 311b; Eye: 319b; Dennington: 328a; Ixworth: 438b.

Elmham, all of the bishop of Norwich, Staverton Park (Butley Priory) and possibly a park at Great Barton (abbey of Bury St Edmunds).⁷⁶ About 1560, a manuscript list of twenty-four parks was drawn up (Fig. 1.9). The list's authorship is unknown and the reasons for its compilation are obscure.⁷⁷ Curiously, this list omits some parks (such as those at Benhall and Hoxne) whose contemporaneous existence can be confirmed from other independent sources. Shortly after this, in 1575, Saxton's map of Suffolk was published, on which he marked the location of twenty-eight parks.⁷⁸ As with the 1560 list, Saxton's map also omits a number of parks known to be then extant – including the queen's park at Eye, and the park at Hawstead, which, having been granted a licence in 1510 was visited by Queen Elizabeth in 1578. In about 1602, thirty parks were listed in the *Suffolk Chorography*, once again some parks known to be extant at that time were omitted from this list (for example Hengrave and Pond Hall, Hadleigh).⁷⁹ The reasons for the omission of parks from such lists and maps may relate to their status. Parks without deer, it has been suggested, were deemed to be 'disparked' and therefore no longer had the status of a park.⁸⁰ Indeed, Farrer in 1923, writing of Hawstead says 'it is not marked on Saxton's map in 1576 [*sic*], so we must presume that at the time there were no deer in it'.⁸¹ However, the nature of the evidence for this period, with little in the way of detailed accounts illustrating activity in Suffolk's parks, makes it impossible to be certain. There is evidence of deer present in a number of the 'missing' parks, but not necessarily at the same time as these documents.

Suffolk is also fortunate to have a number of other published transcriptions and translations of documents in which park references occur. In *Feudal Documents from the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds* three of the Abbey's parks at Semer, Chelsworth and Bradfield St Clare are listed in an early-twelfth-century document; a park at Homersfield was mentioned in a letter of Herbert de Losinga, bishop of Norwich, and H.M. Doughty's *Chronicles of Theberton* includes the only reference to the 'lord's park' at Fordley.⁸² John Ridgard's publications of Framlingham documents provide valuable detail concerning the parks at Framlingham and Saxtead as well as the complete transcript of the very rare sixteenth-century parker's account.⁸³

⁷⁶ *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, vol. 3, 1817: Hoxne and South Elmham, 282; Staverton, 422; Great Barton, 460.

⁷⁷ SROB Hengrave manorial records 449/5/31/36. Possible reasons relate to the requirement of park owners to keep horses, the interest of government to know which (Roman Catholic) landowners could assemble horses ahead of a possible rebellion, scouting ahead for a progress by Queen Elizabeth into Suffolk, or the compiling of a list to include in a book such as the *Suffolk Chorography*.

⁷⁸ Christopher Saxton, Map of Suffolk, 1575, SROB, 612/43.

⁷⁹ *Suffolk Chorography*, 24.

⁸⁰ Rowe, 2019, 4.

⁸¹ Farrer, 1923, 89, 91.

⁸² D.C. Douglas (ed.), 1932, *Feudal Documents from the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds*, London, 112; G. M. Goulbourn and H. Symonds (eds), 1878, *The Life, Letters and Sermons of Herbert de Losinga* vol. II, Oxford, 170; H.M. Doughty, 1910, *Chronicles of Theberton*, London, 32. There was a park recorded at Theberton from the early-sixteenth century.

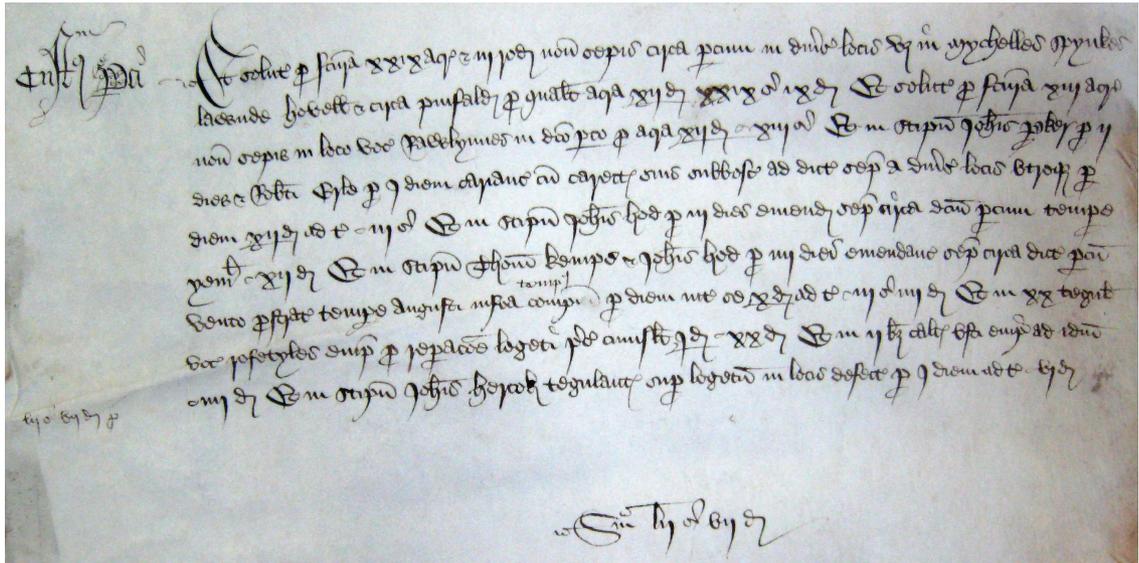
⁸³ J.M. Ridgard (ed.), 1985, *Medieval Framlingham: Select Documents 1270-1524* Suffolk Records Society, vol. XXVII; *ibid.*, 2009.

Parks (with their Distances from Bury) & Names of all
 in Suff. I call the parks in Suff. distant from Bury
 The Duker's ^{at o. g. r. in n. w. d. n.} Hanning in 2 lb. 20. miles
 The La. Sumers. Somers 2 lb. 18 miles
 The L. willowby. Dunghm 2 lb. 22 miles
 The Swon. Gopden. ⁺ Westwode. 2 lb. 24 miles
 The Bote. Wymysid. ^{at o. g. r. in n. w. d. n.} Wymysid 2 lb. 20 miles
 The La. Gimming. ^{at o. g. r. in n. w. d. n.} Gimming 2 lb. 22 miles
 M^r Jo. Waston. ^{at o. g. r. in n. w. d. n.} Gimming 2 lb. 22 miles
 M^r Glomfins. Glomfins 2 lb. 24 miles
 M^r Sawmff. Lenton 2 lb. 17 miles
 The La. Bodmyfid. Dunghm 2 lb. 16 miles
 The Gony for myn. Wymysid 2 lb. 18 miles
 The J. Snyhand. ⁺ ^{at o. g. r. in n. w. d. n.} Wymysid 2 lb. 12 miles
 The Quenos mat. Westhorst 2 lb. 15 miles
 The Quenos mat. Key 2 lb. 16 miles
 The Cornwallis. Westhorst 2 lb. 12 miles
 M^r Doyles. pond Gall 2 lb. 15 miles
 The J. Brouns. G. 2 lb. 16 miles
 The Erbe. of opnd. Lanam 2 lb. 10 miles
 The Quenos mat. Gunden 2 lb. 12 miles
 The La. Drowye. ⁺ ^{at o. g. r. in n. w. d. n.} Gunden 2 lb. 2 miles
^{at o. g. r. in n. w. d. n.} ⁺ ^{at o. g. r. in n. w. d. n.} ⁺ ^{at o. g. r. in n. w. d. n.}
^{at o. g. r. in n. w. d. n.} ⁺ ^{at o. g. r. in n. w. d. n.} ⁺ ^{at o. g. r. in n. w. d. n.}
 M^r Luffin. G. ^{at o. g. r. in n. w. d. n.} ⁺ ^{at o. g. r. in n. w. d. n.} ⁺ ^{at o. g. r. in n. w. d. n.}
^{at o. g. r. in n. w. d. n.} ⁺ ^{at o. g. r. in n. w. d. n.} ⁺ ^{at o. g. r. in n. w. d. n.}

Fig. 1.9 List of Suffolk parks c.1560.

Reproduced by kind permission of Suffolk Archives (Bury St Edmunds), Ref. 449/5/31/36.

The Suffolk Charters series affords access to a huge corpus of land grants and charters contained in the cartularies of Suffolk's religious houses. Occasionally these documents can be found to contain information about abutments, thereby helping to locate parks within the landscape. In one such example, the abuttal of a piece of land in Badingham gives important clues to the location of the park in Dennington in the adjacent parish, and another provides an early date for the park of *Butenbagh* in Saxtead.⁸⁴



Costs of the park

Item payment for making 29 acres 3 rods of new fencing around the park in various places that is to say in Mychelles, Spynkes / lawnde, Hovells and around the pinfold, for each acre 12d, 29s 9d. And payment for making 13 acres / of new fences in the place called Rawlynnes in the said park per acre 12d, 13s. And in stipend to John Parker for 2 / days and Robert Erle for one day carrying with their carts underwood for the said fences from various places each per / day 12d for the task 3s. And in stipend to John Hod for 3 days mending fences around the said park in time of / the winter 12d. And in stipend to Thomas Kempe and John Hod for 4 days mending fences around the said park / blown down by the wind in August- time within the time of the account per day between them 10d to the task 3s 4d. And in 20 tiles / called roof tiles bought for repairing of the little lodge (logetus) each piece 1d, 20d. And for 2 bushels of lime bought for the same / 4d. And in stipend to John Hercocock tiling over the little lodge in the damaged places for one day to the task 6d.

Sum 52s 7d.

Fig. 1.10 Part of an account roll (1444/5) for South Elmham St Cross, manor of the bishop of Norwich. Reproduced by kind permission of Suffolk Archives (Lowestoft), Ref. 741 HA12/C2/70.

⁸⁴ V. Brown (ed.), 1992, *The Eye Cartulary and Charters Part I*, Suffolk Charters, vol. XII, Woodbridge, no. 259, 196; P. Brown (ed.), 1986, *Sibton Abbey Cartularies and Charters Part 2*, Suffolk Charters, vol. VIII, Woodbridge, nos. 125 and 102.

Manorial documents, particularly account rolls, rentals, extents and court rolls – the majority still in manuscript form – can also provide a rich source of detail for individual parks. Account rolls, whilst rarely mentioning deer or hunting, bring to life a vivid picture of the yearly round of activity and uses of parks. They include for example, references to costs of maintenance and wages, agistment of stock, and sales of timber and smallwood.⁸⁵ The parks of Earl Soham, Chevington and South Elmham are particularly rich in this context (see Fig. 1.10 above).⁸⁶ Court rolls often provide evidence of poaching or damage within the park, such as at Staverton where Robert Mannys caused damage in the park with his sheep and Alex Blancheflower who ‘did damage in the lord’s park with his dogs’.⁸⁷ Court rolls, rentals and extents sometimes provide details of appointments of parkers, where these were part of tenurial arrangements. At South Elmham (palace and park of the bishop of Norwich) a rental of c.1500 records that the heir of Fosters tenement ‘by ancient consent ought to be parker in the lord’s park and is relieved of all customary works’.⁸⁸

Topographical evidence

Although the documentary sources can establish the existence of a park in time, and may give detail of its management and land use, they rarely offer a precise location. Topographical sources therefore are vital in providing the means to locate and establish the extent of parks in the landscape. Additionally, the landscape in which the parks existed can provide important clues as to the date at which they may have been enclosed, and potentially establish a pre-document chronology for a particular park.

There are three main groups of topographical information available to the researcher: place and field names, field boundaries and earthworks. The majority of the evidence comes from maps and plans, fieldwork, aerial images and remote sensing.

Estate maps from the sixteenth century onwards, tithe maps and apportionments from the early-nineteenth century, and early Ordnance Survey maps are all important sources for place names, field names and field boundaries. When investigating place-name evidence, however, it is important to exercise considerable caution. Place-names cannot always be taken at face value; it may be that the name included on a map is an adaptation of its earliest form or it could be a later appellation. The title *park* as indicated above may in some cases have meant nothing more than an enclosure and need not indicate the presence of a former hunting park at all. In fact, by the nineteenth century almost every large ornamental garden was named by its owner as a park. That said, place names do act as important pointers; there are numerous *Park Farms*, *Park Woods* and *Lodge* names across the county and many can be linked with a former park or park lodge. Names such as *Park Field* or *Park Meadow* are often indicative of an abuttal onto a park and where the *park* component

⁸⁵ Agistment is the renting of grazing to individuals. Thus manorial tenants could pay to have their animals grazed in the park at different times of the year.

⁸⁶ Documents deposited in SRO at Ipswich, Bury St Edmunds and Lowestoft.

⁸⁷ SROI 1538/357.

⁸⁸ Bodleian Library, MS. Top. Suffolk d. 15. Relief from customary works meant that he did not have to do the work on the manor that was normally required of a tenant in return for his land – the job of parker was considered to be his due.

is a suffix, such as *Long Park* or *Wood Park* it is frequently the case that these parcels of land were located within the area of a former park. Other names, which may have occurred in documents associated with a particular park, can sometimes be tracked down in the modern place-names. For example, at Wetheringsett one of the fifteenth-century park gates, *Scottesgate*, may be linked to the present Scotts tenement; while at Hundon many of the field names in the tithe apportionment can be identified with areas on seventeenth-century maps of the parks.

Examples of manuscript maps of former Suffolk parks include a map of 1588 for the newly enclosed park at Hengrave and a plan of Badingham Hall dated 1614 which shows the site of a park first recorded in the fourteenth century. In 1619 a plan of the New Park at Hoxne shows the extent of the park and the complex of buildings associated with the former bishop's palace. A seventeenth-century plan of Hawstead Place shows the location and extent of the sixteenth-century Great and Little Parks. A survey of 1601 of the property of Sir Michael Stanhope provides an excellent representation of the park at Staverton (Fig. 1.11).⁸⁹

Continuous field boundaries enclosing park-sized areas with discordant boundaries inside and out may have been former park boundaries.⁹⁰ Further supporting evidence may be found in landholding patterns from tithe apportionments. It is apparent that some former parks were maintained as separate land-units long after they had been converted into fields. At Hundon this is evident from earlier maps, and it also seems to be so elsewhere, for example at Rishangles (in Thorndon), South Elmham Hall, Huntingfield and Old Park Farm, Hoxne. In addition, the tithe surveys show that the areas occupied by former parks were sometimes completely or partially exempt from paying tithe. In some cases, a *modus* or composition, a sum of money agreed between the landowner and rector in *lieu* of tithe, would be paid; in others a lesser tithe would be agreed upon. The reasons for this may relate to the park being enclosed from productive land and thus no longer producing titheable outputs. The rector was thus being compensated for his loss with a money payment or payment in kind (usually 'a buck and a doe'). Alternatively, in the past the land may have been former monastic demesne (which was exempt) or woodland. Woodland was considered 'part of the inheritance of the land' (*i.e.* natural) and therefore not liable for tithe; however once it was cleared and the land brought into production it then became liable for tithe payments.⁹¹ Consequently, when parks were disparked, the rector of the parish could then claim the tithe income that was due from the newly productive land; often leading to disputes.⁹² When mapped, the extent of tithe-exempt land can sometimes give an indication as to the former extent of a park, as at Redgrave and Wetheringsett (see pages 202 and 212).

⁸⁹ Hengrave: SROB P746/1; Badingham: SROI P462:6392; Hoxne: SROI HD 40:422; Hawstead: SROB E8/1; Staverton: SROI V5/22/1.

⁹⁰ That is, the boundaries of fields within the park boundary do not relate to those outside the park boundary.

⁹¹ J. Selden, 1618, *The Historie of Tithes*, London, 120-1; H.W. Clarke, 1867, *The History of Tithes*, London, 98; W. Eagle, 1830, *A Treatise on the Law of Tithes*, vol. 1, London, 221-86.

⁹² For example: Lavenham, disparked in the late-sixteenth century: BL Harley 97 ff 111-12.



Fig. 1.11 Staverton Park from John Norden's Survey of 1601.
 Reproduced by kind permission of Suffolk Archives (Ipswich), Ref. V5/22/1.

Generally speaking with regard to Suffolk parks, significant earthwork remains in the form of boundary banks are few and far between. It is clear from the documents that many parks were surrounded by banks and ditches, and topped with paling fences or hedges. This is borne out at Redgrave, where the substantial banks and ditches of the outer circuit of the park still survive in some places to a depth of two metres (see below, Fig. 8.7). At Wetheringsett an account roll in 1431 states that the ditch at Scottesgate was scoured (perhaps to improve drainage on this flat clayland or to reinstate it to its original size), and another notes underwood used in order to create new hedging, which perhaps suggests a dead hedge.⁹³ Sections of bank remain along the eastern boundary of Framlingham Park

⁹³ SROI HD 1538/416.

(Fig. 1.12) as well as at Staverton. At Kelsale there are sections of boundary banks and a large fishpond dam which may have formed part of the boundary of the park. Whilst at South Elmham and Eye (Fig. 1.13) the subsequent development of small areas of scrub seems to have allowed the survival of what might have been elements of the former park boundary, and at Cockfield where the construction of an airfield in the mid-twentieth century devastated the landscape, there remains still partial evidence of the banked boundary belonging to the former park. Unfortunately, Suffolk has long been subject to intense arable farming practices and it seems probable that these are largely responsible for the loss of most of its medieval boundaries. However, crop marks and soil marks on aerial images, and data from remote sensing can still identify the location of former structures or ditches and LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) data provides fine detail of the topography, even when shrouded beneath vegetation.

Fig. 1.12 Park boundaries: extant earthworks. Framlingham: the eastern boundary.



Fig. 1.13 Park boundaries: extant earthworks. Eye: SE corner of the park looking west, the bank preserved in scrubby woodland.



Ecology and archaeology

Suffolk was well-wooded in the distant past, but by medieval times had become less wooded than many other counties.⁹⁴ In spite of this, ‘ancient woodland’ does still survive, in some cases because early on, it was incorporated into parks. Examples can be found at Staverton, Holbrook and Barking. Wood was an important manorial resource: for building, for implements and vehicles, for furniture, for fuel for heating and cooking and for the production of charcoal. Entries in account rolls suggest that a range of woodland species could be found throughout the parks of Suffolk. Oak features most frequently, but there are also references to hornbeam, chestnut, elm, ash, maple and poplar.⁹⁵ As well as timber (usually listed as ‘large wood’) there are frequent references to ‘cropping’ (pollarding) and ‘small wood’ (the result of coppicing). Shredded branches (cut to maintain standard trees) were used as fodder, and small wood most commonly was cut for fuel and made into kindling and faggots, as well as being utilised for hedging and fencing (Figs.1.14 and 1.15).

Most parks have long since been broken up into arable farmland, and so ecological evidence is limited. However, palaeobotanists have been able to identify indicator species which may help identify ancient woodland, and similar indicator species exist for invertebrates (such as certain types of beetles) and epiphytes (e.g. mosses, lichens and liverworts). Where detailed field work has been undertaken (as at Staverton) or could be undertaken, such relict species may be useful in helping to identify the site of early woodland areas which may have been part of former parks.⁹⁶

Although buildings such as lodges, kennels, stables, storage buildings, standings and deer shelters would have been present in parks, and are recorded in documents and on maps, there has been little co-ordinated exploration of such sites across the county. A number of sites close to or associated with parks have been excavated, but most of these have been unable to suggest a direct link with the use of the park itself.⁹⁷ In the adjacent county of Essex, a hunting lodge (or possibly banqueting house) has been excavated at Wormingford which was associated with the park of the de Waldegrave’s house at Smallbridge, which lies just across the River Stour in Suffolk.⁹⁸ Many former parks do still have standing buildings

⁹⁴ O. Rackham, 1999, ‘Medieval Woods’, in *Historical Atlas of Suffolk*, 64-5.

⁹⁵ The presence of hornbeam in parks is interesting in that the deer do not forage on it, but ignore it. It is extremely hard, but it is a ‘poor timber tree and produces no nuts or fibre and no herbal cures’: D. Hooke, 2010, *Trees in Anglo-Saxon England*, Woodbridge, 276. However it was important for cogs for gear wheels for mills, poles, ox yokes, wheels and charcoal. For discussion of the nature and concept of ‘ancient woodland’, see: G. Barnes and T. Williamson, 2015, *Rethinking Ancient Woodland*, Hatfield, *passim*.

⁹⁶ G.F. Peterken, 1968, ‘Development of vegetation in Staverton Park’ *Field Studies*, vol. 3, 1-39.

⁹⁷ R. Carr, 1987, ‘Archaeological Investigations at Westhorpe Hall’, *PSLAH*, vol. XXXVI, 320; N. Smedley and E. Owles, 1973, ‘Excavations at the Old Minster, South Elmham’, *PSLAH*, vol. XXXII, 1-16; D. Gill and R. Goffin, 2008, ‘Excavations 2007. Chevington Hall’, *PSLAH*, vol. XLI, 369.

⁹⁸ Excavation results at Wormingford have concluded that the lodge was constructed in the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries: H. Brooks, A. White and F. Nicholls, 2010, *The Lost Tudor Hunting Lodge at Wormingford: The Story of the Archaeological Dig*, Colchester Archaeological Group; see also P.A. Rahtz, 1969, *Excavation at King John’s hunting lodge at Writtle, Essex 1955-7*, Society for Medieval Archaeology Monograph Series no. 3; J.M. Hunter, 1993, ‘King John’s hunting-lodge at Writtle’, *Essex Archaeology and History*, vol. 24, 122-4; M. Brudenell, 2003, *The Lordship Campus, An Archaeological Desk Based Assessment, Writtle Agricultural College, Essex*, Cambridge Archaeological Unit Report no. 627.

on what are likely to be former lodge sites. Examples of this occur at Melford Park Farm, Hundon Great Park Farm, Hoxne Park Farm and Kelsale Lodge and these structures may well incorporate earlier building fabric, however few present-day buildings can be dated back to the origins of the parks themselves. Nevertheless, recent work at Letheringham Lodge suggests that it was constructed as a moated pleasure pavilion (*pleasance*) or banqueting house around 1472 within the bounds of Letheringham Park, which was probably imparked or extended at about the same date.⁹⁹ Geophysical survey work has the potential to confirm or identify the location of structures long-since disappeared, but only excavation can confidently provide the date of construction and suggest their purpose. Recent remote sensing and trial excavation at Kelsale may have provided evidence indicative of park activity.¹⁰⁰



Fig. 1.14 Coppiced stools protected by a dead hedge
(Reydon Wood near Southwold: probably the former Reydon Park).

⁹⁹ A banquet at this time (in contrast to a modern banquet) was a small gathering of select diners at which delicacies such as marzipan, jellies and other sweetmeats were served after the main meal of the day. It may also have involved other pleasures of a more intimate nature. G. Markham, 1623, *Country Contentments, or the English Huswife*, London, 111-17; E. Martin and P. Aitkens, 2016, 'Letheringham Lodge; our current understanding of the architecture of a unique structure', *Eavesdropper, The Newsletter of the Suffolk Historic Buildings Group*, no. 54, Autumn, 19-20.

¹⁰⁰ J. Rainer, 2017, *Simpsons Fromus Valley Nature Reserve – survey of meadows central to the site of the Bigod's medieval deer park at Kelsale, Report on geophysical survey 2014-2016*, Suffolk Archaeological Field Group.



Fig. 1.15 Poles and brushwood: products of coppicing in Reydon Wood.

Field-walking in the north of the county has also contributed important evidence which could be used to help identify the location of former parks. In the Elmhams, *lacunae* (blank areas) were revealed within the distribution of material which marked medieval domestic sites and these *lacunae* coincided with the known sites of the two medieval parks in South Elmham St Cross and South Elmham St James.¹⁰¹ Whilst it is often dangerous to draw too many conclusions from an absence of evidence, in the case of parks this lack of domestic activity (particularly if confirmed by other source material) may help corroborate the presence of a former area of parkland. However, as with some of the ecological techniques discussed above the viability of this approach remains very much dependant on future research programmes.

Together these sources can be used to identify, locate and tell the story of individual parks. They also aid the analysis and understanding of the broader patterns and processes of imparking and the changes that have occurred through time, and as such can feed into the wider national trends. A further component in understanding these patterns and processes however, is the setting of individual parks into the broader geography – the physical and cultural landscape of the county. This will be examined in the following chapters.

¹⁰¹ M.J. Hardy and E.A. Martin, 1986, 'Archaeology in Suffolk; report on South Elmham St Cross and South Elmham St James', *PSLAH*, vol. XXXVI, 147-50.