

WHAT CAN DOMESDAY BOOK TELL US ABOUT THE ISLE OF WIGHT?

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Abstract: *The purpose of the Domesday survey is discussed and accessible printed editions reviewed. Information about individual manors and larger estates is examined and links between manors investigated. Inferences from comparisons between and within manors are presented which inform a case study of Arreton parish. Evidence for the form of rural settlement is presented before assessing the Domesday Book entries for incipient medieval towns. A case study of Carisbrooke culminates with a reconstruction of its morphology in 1086 and evidence for the development of individual manors with the fragmentation of extensive estates is outlined. Domesday Book's value and limitations in informing about eleventh-century Wight is summarised.*

Keywords: Domesday Book, manors, settlement, land use, population

Introduction

The records that were compiled for the King in 1086 and later known as Domesday Book contain a wealth of information. They are, however, written in abbreviated form using technical terms. This paper will provide the background to when and why the survey was commissioned, provide a guide to accessible versions and translations, explain the information contained within individual entries and inferences that can be made from comparing various statistics, then explore the origins of our medieval towns and the development of medieval manors.

What was Domesday Book for?

Domesday Book was commissioned by William the Conqueror at midwinter 1085 whilst with his council at Gloucester. In the words of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (E):

Then he sent his men all over England into every shire and had them ascertain how many hundreds of hides there were in the shire, or what land and livestock the king himself had in the land, or what dues he ought to have in 12 months from the shire. Also he had it recorded how much land his archbishops had, and his diocesan bishops, and his abbots and his earls, and ... what or how much each man had who was occupying land here in England, in land or livestock, and how much money it was worth. He had it investigated so very narrowly that there was not one single hide, not one yard of land, not even ... one ox, not one cow, not one pig was left out, that was not set down in his record. And all the records were brought to him afterwards

(Swanton 1996, 216).

The 'records ... brought to him afterwards' were condensed into Great Domesday (other less contracted versions do exist, but not for our area). Great Domesday is not quite as detailed as the quote from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle would suggest, with few explicit mentions of individual oxen and cattle. Much academic ink has been spent in ascertaining exactly what Domesday Book was for. The Chronicle does, however, tell us: Domesday Book was a record of who held what, their assets, and its value for taxation (geld).

Domesday Book in print

The Domesday survey was conducted in circuits. The Isle of Wight was enumerated as part of Hampshire, (the south-eastern circuit also included Berkshire, Kent, Surrey and Sussex), explaining why modern

translations of Domesday Book entries for the Island appear in volumes entitled 'Hampshire'. Phillimore published their Hampshire volume in 1982.

This included a type-set version of the original text, which had been produced in 1783 (Munby, 1982). The Alecto Domesday Hampshire volumes (Williams and Erskine, 1989) consist of a photographic reproduction of the folios and a translation based upon that first published in the Victoria County History of Hampshire volume 1 (Doubleday, 1900). This is the version that is preferred by the present author as technical terms have been preserved in the translation. The Alecto edition was also used by John Medland (2015) in his *Discovering Domesday Wight*. A complete translation of Great Domesday has also been published by Alecto (Williams and Martin, 1992). The pages of Domesday Book are usually referenced by folio numbers or verso folio numbers for each county (for example 53 and 53v). This system will be followed in the present paper.

Brook - a Domesday Manor

Domesday Book enumerated a total of 124 named landholdings on the Island. Most of the entries follow the following format which can be used to illustrate the information contained within. The example chosen here of a 'typical' entry is that of Brook:

King William holds BROOK [Broc] in demesne. Earl Tostig held it. [It was] then [assessed] at 3 hides; now at 1 hide. There is land for 6 ploughs. In demesne are 2 ploughs; and 3 villans and 7 bordars with 2½ ploughs. There are 9 slaves, and a mill rendering 15d., and 6 acres of meadow. TRE it was worth £7; and afterwards £6; now £7; and yet it renders £7more [52].

The constituent parts of this particular Domesday Book entry will be examined in turn to illustrate what can be learned about an individual landholding.

The Manor

Brook was not specifically referred to as a manor in the text but would have been seen as one. The term manor (Latin *manerium*) was introduced by the Normans after the Conquest of 1066 and was used to denote an estate or an estate centre (Williams and Martin, 1992, 1433)

Place-Names

Domesday Book is an invaluable source for place-names. Although Anglo-Saxon land charters record some place-names, Domesday Book was the first

systematic survey of the Island with many names being recorded for the first time. An example of this is the 27 Island *tūn* (-ton, -tone) place-names that were documented in 1086, compared with only two in the tenth century (Margham, 2017, Table 1). All Domesday place-names on the Island can now be identified with reasonable confidence. Names such as *Sandford* and *Broc* have remained the same or similar whereas others such as *Scaldeford* are not recognisable today. Some Domesday place-names would have been of recent origin, such as *Niton* (*Neeton*) 'the new *tūn*', and *Knighton* (*Chenistone*) 'the farmstead or estate of the young thanes or retainers' (Mills 1996, 64) where Domesday Book itemises six landholders before the Conquest, each having a share in the mill (39v). It is quite possible that *Knighton* was known as *Linlande* in 951x955, named in a fragmentary charter whose bounds would fit this location (Margham 2007, 119-20).

Landholders

Domesday Book tells us that in 1086, in the time of King William (*TRW*: Latin *Tempore Regis Willelmi*), *Brook* was held as part of the king's demesne (royal lands). In or before 1066 (*TRE*: *Tempore Regis Edwardi*) it had formed part of Earl Tostig's West Wight estate, although Tostig had gone into exile in 1065. Another example of an apparently anachronistic *TRE* 'owner' was Earl Godwine who died in 1053 but was recorded as the ultimate landholder of *Bonchurch*, *Wroxall* and *Ulwartone* (*Woolverton* in the *Bembridge Isle*). *Brook* was a manor which was not subinfeudated as no subtenants are mentioned *TRE* and *TRW*. An example of a subinfeudated manor is *Lamore* (*Fulford*) where

'The same William [fitzStur] holds MOOR, and Anскеitel [holds] of him. 3 free men held it of King Edward' (53).

Hidage

A hide was originally an area of land sufficient to support an extended family, but by the eleventh century was used to assess tax (*geld*). It was **not** an area of 120 statute acres, an oft-quoted figure. The area of a hide was variable, dependent upon the productivity or perceived potential of the land (Margham 2003). Thus intensively-used land of one hide such as arable was a much smaller area than a hide of extensive wood-pasture. The majority of Island manors had small hidages, the most common recorded *TRE* being of one hide, with 30 instances. The term 'virgate' (Latin *virgata*) is also to be found amongst Island Domesday Book entries, being a quarter of a hide.

Ploughlands

The hide was an antiquated assessment by 1086. It would appear that by then the ploughland was succeeding the hide as a unit of assessment, based on arable resources within a manor. Sally Harvey (1985, 92) has argued that

'ploughland figures are, first and foremost, contemporary fiscal assessments of 1086-7. As such, they will naturally often reflect agricultural or simply arable capacity'.

Thus, like the hide, the area of a ploughland would have been variable, dependent on factors such as soil fertility.

The Demesne and Manorial Population

Medieval manors frequently consisted of demesne land, the 'home farm' run directly from the manorial centre, and lands beyond this mainly farmed by villans and bordars which in the Anglo-Saxon period was known as 'warland' (Faith 1997, 89-125). This type of structure cannot be seen explicitly at *Brook*, but two examples can be cited here: *Arreton* (39v) had five ploughlands, three ploughteams and seven slaves within the demesne, and 10 ploughteams, 10 villans and 12 bordars outside the demesne; whereas *Chale* (52v) had one ploughland, one ploughteam and four slaves in the demesne, and one ploughteam and four bordars outside. The three categories of household heads recorded from the Island were villans, bordars and slaves. A bordar was

'a cottager: a peasant of lower economic status than a villan' whereas a villan was 'A peasant of higher economic status than a bordar'

(Williams and Martin, 1992, 1431, 1436).

Apart from slaves, the only addition to this categorization of population was the single instance of

'A certain vavasour, having 2 cows' in Adgestone (53), a vavasour being 'a retainer of lower status than a vassal' (Williams and Martin, 1992, 1436),

and eight 'men' within *Bowcombe* manor (52). The recorded numbers of heads of households in Domesday Book can be shown to be not comprehensive, as illustrated by anomalies mentioned below, and through studies of other areas such as the Fenland of eastern England (Oosthuizen 2017, 16-19).

Manorial Assets

Slaves, the least free of the Domesday working population, were enumerated as part of the assets of a manor, as can be seen at *Brook* where the nine slaves were listed alongside the mill and the six acres of meadow. Other manorial assets within Island manors were a bakehouse at *Cheverton*, herbage in *Sandford* with *Week*, several instances of (water) mills, salt-pans within *Bowcombe*, *Watchingwell* and *Whitefield*, a fishery at *Preston*, and many instances of woodland. The 'ploughs' enumerated would have been ploughteams which usually consisted of eight oxen. This explains the fractions of 'ploughs' recorded from some manors, for example at *Duton* where 'In demesne is half a plough' (54).

Changing Values

Domesday Book records changing values of manors from 1066 to 1086. Some manors increased in value, such as one of the *Luton* manors which 'was worth 10s.; now 12s' (54). *Brook* is an example of a manorial value being the same *TRE* and *TRW* at £7, but its value dropped 'afterwards' (in the intermediate period, probably between 1066 and 1070: Darby, 1977, 232) to £6. Several manors lost value between the Conquest and 1086, such as *Mottistone* 'TRE it was worth £10; and afterwards, as now, £6' (53v).

Calbourne and the Bishop of Winchester

As we have seen, many Island manors had relatively small hidages and were of limited extent. There were, however, exceptions to this. Seven manors

were rated at four or more hides *TRE*: the four hides of Afton, Arreton and Bowcombe (39, 52), Wroxall five (39v), Shalfleet six (53v), Freshwater 15 (52) and 32 in the bishop of Winchester's Calbourne (52v). The Calbourne estate can be taken to be representative of a more extensive Domesday Book entry for an Island manor:

Walkelin, Bishop of Winchester, holds CALBOURNE [Cavborne] in demesne. It always belonged to the monastery. There are 32 hides; but it only paid geld TRE, as now, for 17 hides. There is land for 25 ploughs. In demesne are 6 ploughs; and 27 villans and 15 bordars with 14 ploughs. There are 11 slaves, and 2 mills rendering 6s. 3d., and 8 acres of meadow, [and] woodland for 20 pigs.

Of this land Robert holds 6 hides, Herpul 2 hides, and Alsige 3½ hides. 7 aloderes held these hides of the bishop, and could not withdraw elsewhere or from him. There are 3½ ploughs; and 3 villans and 22 bordars with 5 ploughs. There are 12 slaves, and 15 acres of meadow. Mauger holds the church of this manor, with half a hide, and there he has 1 plough with 1 bordar.

The whole manor, TRE and afterwards, was worth £16. Now what the bishop has [is worth] £30; and yet it is at farm for £40, but it cannot bear or render it. What the men hold [is worth] £7; [what] the church [holds], 30s [folio 52v].

Whilst the first part of this account has much in common with the more typical Domesday Book entries for the Island, four items can be highlighted for further comment: the enumeration of hides, woodland and pigs, the mention of a church and the existence of un-named manorial sub-holdings.

Beneficial Hidation

The entry for Winchester's Calbourne estate illustrates an apparent discrepancy between the actual number of hides, i.e. 32, and the hides that were liable to pay geld: 17. This difference is an example of 'beneficial hidation', the only explicit example on the Island of an official reduction of the tax burden. The royal manor of Bowcombe (52v) is a further example which can be deduced from its extensive area which also included much of the later parish of Northwood, in contrast with it being assessed at only four hides *TRE* and then 'now at nothing' in 1086. Through a comparison of the ratio of 15 ploughlands at Domesday to the hidages of other manors it can be suggested that it consisted of seven or eight hides (Margham, 2025, 204). Some manors were not given a hideage rating, for example Yaverland where 'The King holds YAVERLAND. King Edward held it. It was not assessed in hides' (39v). In addition to Bowcombe, several manors had a significant reduction or even abolition of their geld liability by 1086, for example from one hide to half a virgate at William fitzStur's *Hardley* (near Bembridge; 52v) and from 1 hide to nothing at nearby *Woolverton* (39v), held by King William. Such instances were usually associated with crown lands or those of the Conqueror's 'new men' from over the Channel (see below: Changing Landholders).

Woodland

The assets of the Calbourne estate included 'woodland for 20 pigs'. We should not envisage that there were only 20 pigs in the wood-pasture of the claylands to the north of Calbourne as this appears to be a number denoting a fraction of the herd for taxation purposes. A similar situation existed in the neighbouring extensive landholding of Shalfleet, where there was also woodland for 20 pigs (53v). Most Island woodland was of smaller extent, for example woodland for one pig at Barnsley, woodland for fencing at Ningwood, and woodland without pannage at Pan (53v, 54; Map 5 below).

The Church

Calbourne had a church which along with half a hide was held by a certain Mauger. It is not specified whether Mauger was the priest, but this appears likely on an ecclesiastical estate. Neighbouring Shalfleet also had a church listed amongst its assets. Domesday Book explicitly mentions other churches: Arreton where 'The Abbey of Lyre holds the church of this manor' (39v), Bowcombe (Carisbrooke), also held by the monks of Lyre (52), and St Nicholas within Carisbrooke Castle which we know about through the Domesday Book entry 'St Nicholas has of King William 1 hide in Shalcombe' (52v). A church at Bonchurch is attested by its place-name *Bonecerce* (53) and Freshwater church is implied as 'Of these 15 hides the Abbey of Lyre holds 3 virgates' (52). Thus, Domesday Book documents the existence of seven churches. This is not a complete tally, however, as there is evidence of several more churches by 1086. Domesday Book states that 'The Abbey of Saint-Marie of Lyre has in the Isle of Wight 6 churches, to which belong 3 hides and 2½ virgates of land' (52v). It would appear from later evidence that the Norman Abbey of Lyre had been 'given' a total of seven churches on the Island by its patron William fitzOsbern between 1067 and his death in 1071. A document in the Cartulary of Carisbrooke Priory of 1155-58 itemising 'the gift of earl William' lists the churches of *Caresbroc*, *Arretona*, *Freskwatre*, *Godeshull*, *Wippingeham*, *Necherche* (Newchurch) and *Neuton* (Niton) (Hockey 1981, 11). Along with the non-Lyre churches of Bonchurch, Calbourne, Shalfleet and St Nicholas this brings the total to 11. There is also physical evidence for the

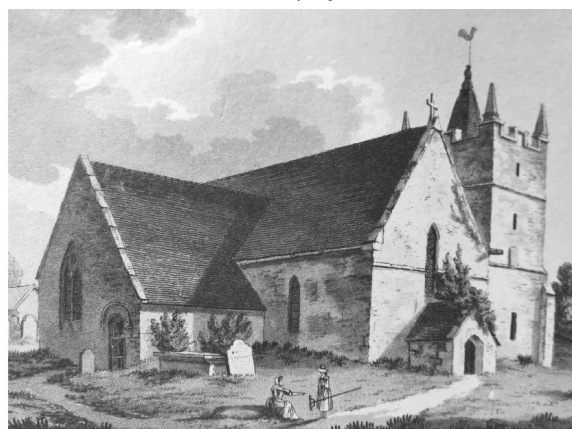


Fig. 1: Calbourne church from the north-west. Mauger would have been familiar with the former hood-moulded doorway of Anglo-Saxon proportions depicted here, the position of which suggests a church with a cruciform ground plan in the eleventh century (Tomkins 1796).

existence of Brading church by c.1100 (Margham 2016).

Sub-holdings

The account of the bishop of Winchester's Calbourne estate also includes the un-named sub-holdings held by Robert, Herpul and Alsige. Robert's six hides can be identified with Limerstone and the other two were plausibly *Uggaton* and Wayte's Court, also to the south of the chalk ridge (Margham, 2024). A total of 12 Island Domesday manors had sub-holdings, ranging from instances in Shalfleet of 2½ virgates, half a hide and one hide (53v), one of which would have been Chessell, to smaller areas such as the half virgate in Knighton (39v).

Links between manors

Domesday Book documents links between manors. These can be categorized as adjoining land-holdings with the same place-name, links between manors with differing names over varying distances, and connections with mainland manors. These will be explored in turn.

Shared Place-Names

The bishop of Winchester's estate was not the only one named Calbourne. A second entry for *Caveborne* of a little less than 3 hides *TRE* was not held by the bishop (52v). This can be identified as Westover, adjoining Calbourne village. The loss to Winchester not long before 1066 is implied by the identical place-names. A similar process of the hiving off of part of an estate can be seen in the two instances of Shanklin: *Selins* (53) and *Senclinz* (53-53v). The one hide of Nettlestone had been divided into three equal parts by 1066 (39v, 53v) whereas the three instances of *Scaldeford* (39v, 53), identifiable as Hyde, Ninham and lost *Selbournes*, consisted of one manor of half a hide and two of one virgate *TRE*, another example of a former one-hide estate (Margham, 2019). Other shared place-names are Adgestone, Appleford, Atherfield, Barnsley, Chale, Chillerton, Chilton, Freshwater, Hamstead, *Huffingford* (Blackwater), Lessland, Luton, Merstone, Shide, Shorwell, Standen, Whippingham, Whitefield and Yaverland.

Linked Manors

Linked manors, single Domesday Book entries consisting of two or more different place-names, can be categorized as those being within two miles of each other: Atherfield, Dungewood and Walpan; Borthwood, Branstone and Lessland; Puckpool and *Etharin* (St Helens); and Sandford with Week (Godshill Park) (52v, 53v, 39v), and those of five miles or more apart: Niton and *Abla* (Apse); *La Done* and Bathingbourne; Knighton and *Done*; and Stenbury and Whippingham (40, 39v). The first category appears to reflect the lumping together of nearby manors by the new landholders after 1066: King William, in three of the above entries, and William fitzStur's Borthwood, Branstone and Lessland. Of the linked manors which were further apart, Knighton and *Done*, and *La Done* and Bathingbourne, both reference the Down Court area high up on the Island's southern chalk downland (Kökeritz, 940, 252-3). In the fragmentary charter of King Eadred of 951x955 the bounds of

Bathingbourne include '*and the outlying pasture common with other men*' referring to this same area of downland. The charter also includes *Linlande* whose bounds mention '*the outlying pasture and the woodland pasture common to other men*' (Margham, 2007, 117-120) which when compared with the Domesday Book entry for Knighton and *Done* reinforces the identification of *Linlande* with Knighton mentioned above. Stenbury (and Whippingham) and Niton (and *Abla*) also reference the southern chalk downland. As already mentioned, the place-name Niton appears to have been of relatively recent origin in 1066 so it can be suggested that Niton, and perhaps even Stenbury, represent the intensification of land use and development of settlement in this downland area which were recognised as manors in the Domesday survey whilst retaining links with manorial centres elsewhere.

Mainland Connections

Various links between mainland manors and the Isle of Wight were documented in Domesday Book. Some of these were concerned with royal and ecclesiastical administration. The royal manor of Amesbury (Wiltshire) collected the farm of one night (a levy of produce to support the king's household) to which Bowcombe manor contributed (52; Williams and Martin, 1992, 162). The bishop of Winchester's Calbourne estate appears to have been administered from his estate at Downton (Wiltshire) (Margham, 2006, 96-8). The folios relating to mainland Hampshire document un-named landholdings on the Island: Breamore one hide, Eling two berewicks (outlying portions), Holdenhurst seven hides, Ringwood an unspecified area, and the canons of Holy Trinity of Twynham (Christchurch) one hide (Margham, 2006, 96-100). The most distant connection was with Shepshed (Leicestershire) where

'from this land come £6 as farm by order of the Bishop of Bayeaux for the service on the Isle of Wight'
(Williams and Martin, 1992, 629)

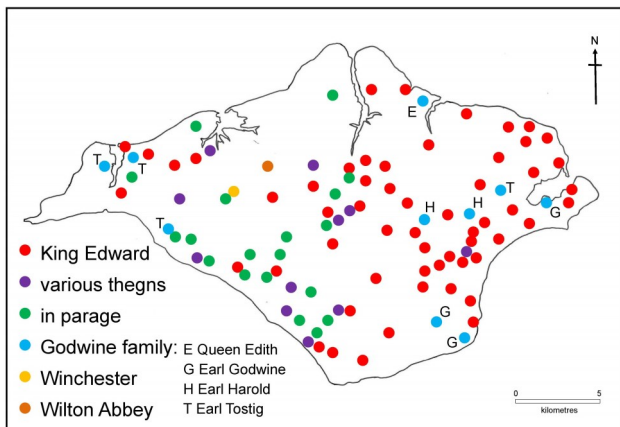
a contribution for the defence of the Island ordered by bishop Odo, William the Conqueror's half brother.

Comparisons between manors

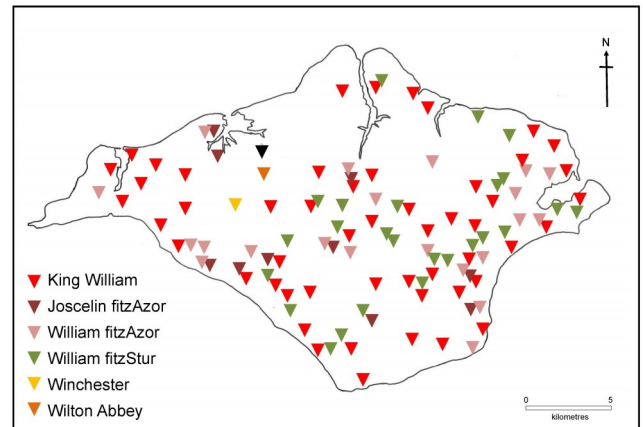
So far, much of the above has concerned individual manors on the Isle of Wight although some wider connections have been made. The following section examines what can be learned through making comparisons between *TRE* and *TRW* and through comparing statistics within and between Domesday Book entries.

Changing landholders

The period after the Norman Conquest saw a revolution in landholding throughout England with the widespread granting of manors to William I's 'new men'. On the Island these were William fitzOsbern, who as mentioned above died in 1071, William fitzStur and the father of William and Joscelin fitzAzor. FitzOsbern was granted royal authority over the Island due to its important strategic situation. His estates were inherited by his son Roger of Hereford, but these reverted to the crown a year after the latter's rebellion in 1075 (Margham, 1994, 8-13).



Map 1: Primary landholders in or before 1066 (Margham 2025, map 3.5). Parage means shared ownership of land by kinsmen (Williams and Martin 1992, 1434).



Map 2: Major landholders in 1086 (Margham 2025, map 3.6)

King Edward had many estates on the Isle of Wight (Map 1). Thirty-one of these were held by King William in 1086, probably coming to him via William fitzOsbern and his son Roger (Map 2). William also held most of the manors that had belonged to the Godwinsons (the sons of Earl Godwine), on the Island these being Tostig and Harold. The King also held Wootton, which was formerly Queen Edith's, Godwine's daughter. All 23 of William fitzStur's Island manors had belonged to King Edward but these may have devolved to him via fitzOsbern. Most of the manors held by the fitzAzors in 1086 had belonged to King Edward. Several of these were apparently inherited from their father Azor, suggested by the equal division between the brothers of properties with the same place-name: Chillerton, Chilton, Hamstead and Scaldeford, with Shankin and Shide divided less equally (53, 53v).

The pre-Conquest landholders were not, however, completely dispossessed. The Bishop of Winchester and the Abbess of Wilton retained their estates of Calbourne and Watchingwell. There were nine separate individuals with Old English personal names mentioned *TRW*. Sixteen manors were associated with such names, eight of which were primary landholders (not tenants). Examples of these are Wulfnorth at Lea (now Sandown airport) and Alfric at Sheat (53, 53v), both of whom had been primary landholders *TRE*, and Alsige at Thorley (53v) who had succeeded Earl Tostig.

'Productivity'

Margaret Gelling (1992, 191) pioneered the mapping of *TRE* hides against historic parish boundaries 'on the assumption that there is likely to be some relationship between hidage assessment, area, and the quality of the land'. This approach to 'productivity' of contrasting landscapes was developed by the present author for the Isle of Wight (Margham, 2003, table 2). In the West Wight it was possible to reconstruct Domesday manorial boundaries, but elsewhere historic parish boundaries were used.

There are caveats in the reliability of this approach on the Island: the degree of coastal erosion, manors not assessed in hides, and the unknown locations of lands administered from mainland Hampshire

manors. It does, however, provide evidence for the 'productivity' for much of the Island before 1066. Assuming it is correct that Domesday ploughlands were a current assessment in or just before 1086, and that hidage assessments were then antiquated (Harvey 1985, 92; Rippon 1994, 242), the calculated figures for acres per *TRE* hide should be relevant for some time in the late tenth or early eleventh century, rather than in 1066 (Margham, 2003, 39-40). There is a wide range of values in the case studies undertaken by Margham (2025, 259-95), from the most productive, the Freshwater Isle at 190 and Brighstone 204 acres per *TRE* hide respectively, through to Bembridge (Brading parish detached) at 790. Middling values can be illustrated by Gatcombe parish 467 and St Helens at 421. These values are dependent upon three factors: the potential of the land determined by the physical background, human agency, and access to more than one landscape region (for example chalk downland and lower-lying clayland). In a similar analysis of tenth-century estates defined by charter bounds the latter was identified as a significant factor in increasing productivity as it permitted access to a range of complementary resources (Margham, 2003, 33-5).

Ploughlands and Hides

The comparison of *TRE* hidage and *TRW* ploughlands was developed by Stephen Rippon (1994, 242; 1997, 176-8):

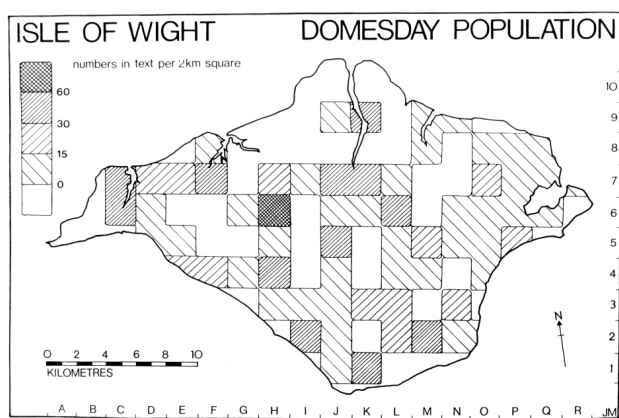
'The hypothesis presented here, is that where the eleventh-century ploughland assessment exceeds the older hidage, there may have been an increase in the agricultural productivity of that area, most obviously, an expansion of the cultivated area; this in turn implies late Saxon reclamation' (Rippon, 1994, 242).

The data from the Island, with 39 manors (30%) having two ploughlands per hide and 19 (15%) having one, suggests a degree of artificiality. Despite this, there is apparent value in making comparisons as both hidage and the number of ploughlands was dependent on soil quality. Assuming that one hide, assessed in the late tenth or early eleventh century, was broadly equivalent to one ploughland assessed in or just before 1086 (Harvey 1985, 92) there was much expansion of arable land-use in the eleventh

century up to the time of Domesday Book. This is particularly marked for clayland manors north of the lateral chalk ridge, such as Briddlesford and Ningwood, and some manors to the south of the ridge, namely Adgestone, Appleford, Sandford and Scaldeford. There was no evidence using this analysis for such expansion within the Freshwater Isle, implying the development of its open field system before the hidage assessment was made.

Population- distribution and structure

The recorded Domesday population of the Island was 1,068 (Welldon Finn, 1962, 314). This figure represents heads of households. The population distribution has been presented in map form using 2x2km squares (Map 3: Margham 1989, Fig. 1; 2012, Fig. 1). There are caveats with such a map: the unknown numbers within landholdings administered from mainland manors and the under-recording of individuals. An example of the latter is Alverstone (53) where two ploughlands and a mill were apparently managed by only one bordar! A further issue is that extensive manors were not restricted to an area of 2x2km: the Calbourne village site appears to have a high population density whereas in reality the figures plotted relate to a wider area particularly to the north. The map does, however, give an impression of the relative distribution of the Island's population in 1086, highlighting areas of higher population densities and conversely areas of sparse population such as parts of the northern claylands and the dissected chalk plateau to the west of the Medina.



Map 3: The Domesday population of the Isle of Wight (Margham, 1989 Fig. 1)

Categories of working people can be related to manorial structures. Sally Harvey (1988, 45) wrote that

'Relatively little attention has been given to the structure of Domesday manors except by Russian historians, yet the consistent record of both plough-teams in the demesne and of the peasants enables county-wide comparisons'.

Mention of demesnes (home farms) are to be found in 102 of the 124 Island Domesday Book entries and many of these provide information about population numbers within and outside demesnes. Where specified, the vast majority of villans were to be found beyond demesnes, although there were exceptions such as Lessland and Witestone (Hill Farm in Brading) (39v, 53). Some bordars were to be

found within demesnes, but predominantly outside, a phenomenon we shall return to below. Slaves were located largely within demesnes, but there were exceptions at Roud, Shanklin, one of the Shide manors and one of the Whitefields (53, 53v).

The role of bordars in 1086 was multifarious (see Carisbrooke case-study below) but

'The word may imply a role on the border or edge so perhaps men active in assarting [the taking in of woodland for arable use] and the exploitation of woodland and waste'

(Higham 1993, 206).

Bordars were associated with substantial areas of population, or active expansion particularly in woodland areas, or both of these (Harvey 1979, 109). A high proportion of bordars associated with areas of such 'colonization' can be supported by evidence from the Isle of Wight. Manors with centres within the northern claylands - Briddlesford, Ningwood, Shalfleet and Watchingwell - have proportions of bordars in excess of 50%. The same is true for the Bembridge area (Brading parish detached) and the two manors within or largely within the Undercliff, Bonchurch and Luccombe, seemingly documenting the development of peripheral areas of the Island in the eleventh century.

Population and Plougteams

Comparison of recorded population numbers and the number of plougteams is based on the observation by Darby (1977, 133-4, Fig. 44) that there were significant differences in this ratio between contrasting counties. Analysis of the Island data at a localised scale suggests that manors having access to more than one landscape type (e.g. chalk downland and clayland or greensand lowlands) had a relatively high proportion of working people per plougteam, whereas manors restricted to one lowland landscape type had lower proportions. A tentative conclusion is that manors with four or more people per plougteam were less dependent on arable agriculture than manors with a ratio of less than three. This was apparently due to having access to other landscape resources such as chalk downland or the dry heathland gravel 'islands' adjoining the Island's north coast where pastoral farming was a significant factor.

Plougteams and Ploughlands

A comparison of the number of plougteams and ploughlands on the Island is based on the assertion that the ploughland was used as a unit by which to measure the area of arable in 1086 (Higham 1990, 36). Higham (1990, 42) concluded that

'In general terms, there is a broad similarity between areas where the creation of large-scale and often township-wide open fields was early and where Domesday ploughs and ploughlands closely correspond. Conversely, areas where ploughs frequently exceed ploughlands regularly coincide with irregular field systems or systems which were reorganised at a date which could well have been later than 1086.'

On the Isle of Wight, there is a reasonably equal distribution of the differences between the numbers of ploughlands and plougteams within individual manors, with (plough)lands greater than ploughs

21%, lands equalling ploughs 28%, lands less than ploughs 24%, and incomplete data 27%. Much of the Island consisted of dispersed settlement in the eleventh century, so perhaps we would expect a higher proportion of manors where ploughlands exceeded the number of ploughs. One of the few areas which would appear to have had a well-developed open field system by 1086 was Freshwater. However, there were 16 ploughlands and only 11 ploughteams. This discrepancy can perhaps be seen as consistent with Higham's observations but the situation in other manors where ploughlands exceeded ploughteams has to be explained.

Kapelle (1979, 166-169) provided an alternative explanation for manors where the number of teams exceeded the number of lands in 1086, which he described as 'overstocked manors': 'The obvious inference from the excess team and a half [in Handsworth] is that the arable land of the village had been expanded, not that there was a floating corps of plowmen [sic]' (Kapelle 1979, 167), and

'In these areas [of Yorkshire] the Normans increased agricultural production in an attempt to augment their own wealth by expanding the arable of existing villages and probably by redeveloping nearby waste holdings. This is the meaning of the extra plows [sic]'

(Kapelle, 1979, 169).

Whilst much of Kapelle's discussion is concerned with the response of landholders to the 'Harrying of the North' by William the Conqueror, it may have a relevance to the expansion of arable agriculture into formerly non-arable areas. This would certainly have been appropriate for manors within the northern claylands of the Island. It may be significant that Briddlesford and Great Whitefield were both apparently 'overstocked' and saw an increase in their value between 1066 and 1086.

Land Use

The statistics for land-use TRW can be depicted to enable comparisons and the identification of



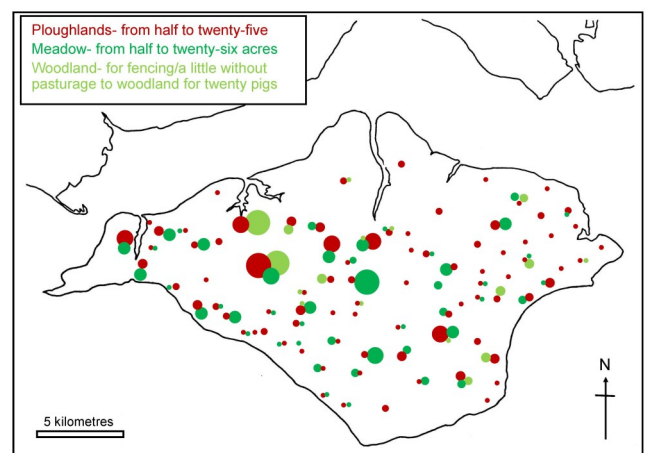
Fig. 2: Hill Farm (Brading parish), on the margins of a gravel plateau, was *Witestone* in 1086. Such locations within the claylands of north-east Wight had populations dominated by villans and few bordars, ratios of ploughteams/ploughlands of one or fewer, and ploughlands/*TRE* hides ratios of about 1.5 implying some expansion of arable during the eleventh century.

patterns (Map 4). Domesday Book itemised three categories of land-use: ploughlands (arable), meadow and woodland. Other components of the Island's landscape are known from place-names, environmental and other documentary evidence, but were not mentioned as manorial resources in Domesday Book: These were the extensive wood-pastures and wet heathlands of the northern claylands, and the dry heathlands of the gravel 'islands' adjoining the northern coast and to the south of the lateral ridge in the Hale Common area. The only instance of a deer park was documented in an area of wood-pasture with some meadowland: at Watchingwell (52v)

'TRE it was assessed at 3 hides; now at 2½ hides, because half [a hide] is in the king's park The meadow is in the park'.

The number of ploughlands reflects the size of manorial holdings, for example in comparing the bishop of Winchester's Calbourne with the profusion of small manors in north-east and south-east Wight. As with other land-uses, symbols have been plotted at manorial centres which may be inaccurate for large manors but plausibly reflect the existence of arable cores not far from these centres which can be demonstrated from later evidence within Freshwater and Calbourne. This may also have been the case at Watchingwell and Whitefield, which were clayland manors with significant numbers of ploughlands, suggesting the development of arable agriculture to complement woodland and heathland resources.

Unlike the plotting of ploughlands, in several instances meadowland would have been located further away from manorial centres. Those of Gatcombe, the largest area at 26 acres (52v), and Appleford, were alongside the Medina, whilst Afton and Freshwater's were nearer at hand along the Western Yar, and Thorley's adjoining the former Thorley Haven. Likewise, Heasley's meadowland would have been alongside the Eastern Yar. Other instances of meadows further from manorial centres were within manors in the area of Wealden Clays adjoining the south-west coast: Brook and Mottistone having the larger areas.



Map 4: Recorded ploughlands, meadow and woodland plotted at manorial centres. The mapping of quantities of woodland is problematic due to differing descriptions and measures in the text (Darby 1977, 172-88) so only relative amounts can be plotted.

Woodland was enumerated in terms of pigs or woodland for fencing (above). Substantial areas were to be found within the extensive estates of Calbourne and Shalfleet, with lesser quantities in Watchingwell. The lack of recorded woodland in north-eastern Wight is surprising, as this area is relatively well-wooded in the modern landscape. This may reflect differences in recording of woodland assets between the two halves of the Island (see below - Hundreds: East and West) or woodland beyond manorial demesnes not being recorded. There being no recorded woodland within Bowcombe is also notable, as substantial areas within the northern claylands of this manor would be expected. It is uncertain whether the formerly extensive Parkhurst (Alvington) Forest was established by 1086. If so, this could account for Bowcombe's apparent lack of woodland if this area was not enumerated in Domesday Book (Vicky Basford, personal communication).

Values

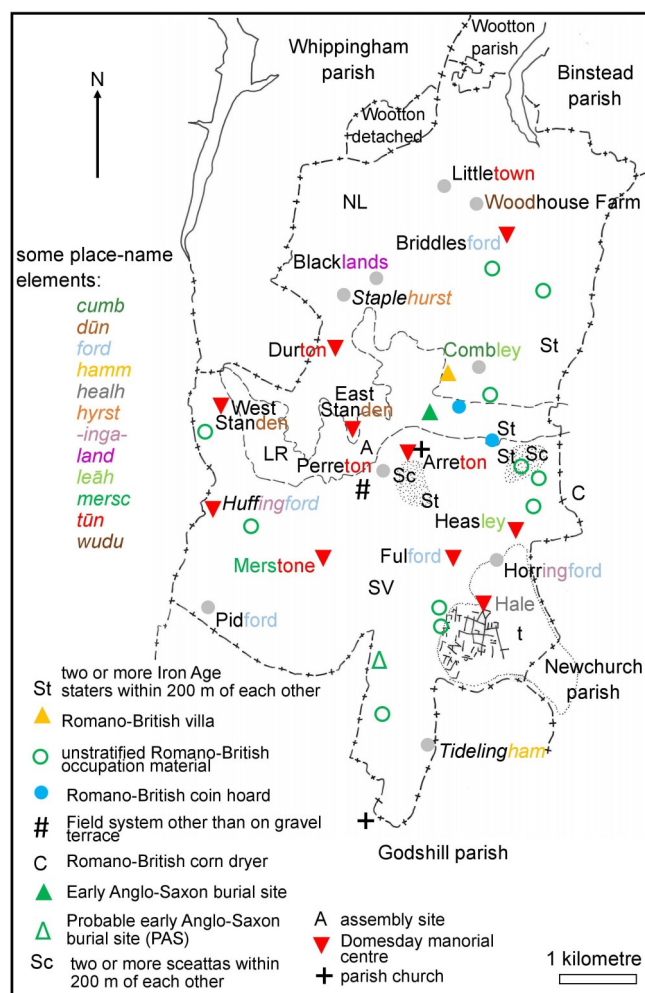
The analysis of changing values between 1066 and 1086 is not straightforward. As Welldon Finn (1973, 82) pointed out

'Manors given identical values in Domesday Book display amazing variations in their equipment ... But such details are not necessarily totally illogical. The character of the soil, the richness of the pasture, and the extent and condition of the livestock may have shown considerable variation'.

On the Isle of Wight, 16% manors saw an increase in value between 1066 and 1086, 41% remained the same, 33% had a decrease in value, and 10% recorded a value for 1086 only. Of the nineteen manors which increased in value, 11 were within the claylands north of the lateral chalk ridge or were manors such as the two Calbourne manors centred on the margins of these two areas. Most of the remaining manors within the northern claylands retained their value, but there are a few exceptions such as Puckpool and Barnsley that declined in value. The situation in the northern claylands can be contrasted with that of the lowlands to the south of the lateral ridge, where from a total of 60 manors within this vale or on its margins, 25 (42%) decreased in value and 24 (40%) retained their value. These statistics indicate that there is a relationship between the changing value of manors and their location in relation to landscape regions.

A Case Study: Arreton parish

The various strands of evidence outlined above can be brought together in a case study of the historic parish of Arreton (Map 5). Twelve Domesday Book entries describe manors within an area of 9,192 acres. The parish as mapped in 1862/3 consisted of 29% clayland to the north of the downs, 19% chalk downland, and 52% greensand vale to the south. The latter also included the gravel terrace alongside the River Yar at Hale Common, 7% of the parish area. The 'productivity' of Arreton parish in the eleventh century was 634 acres per *TRE* hide: the parish was far from being the most productive on the Island, which can be explained by the former presence of extensively-used wet heath and wood-pasture in the



Map 5: Arreton parish- settlement and place-names. The dashed line is the 250ft contour. The stippled areas indicate concentrations of late Romano-British material (Portable Antiquities Scheme). NL- Northern Lowlands (clayland); LR- Lateral Ridge (mainly chalk downland); SV- Southern Vale (mainly lower greensand); t- extensive gravel terrace within the Southern Vale with area of rectilinear crop marks depicted. Sceattas are eighth-century silver coins (Margham 2025, map 8.18).

north, and dry heath and low-lying 'moors' in the south. The four *TRE* hides of Arreton and Heasley's three hides formed the core of the parish, with all other Domesday manors rated at 1½ hides or fewer. The duplications of the names *Huffingford*, *Merstone* and *Standen* imply the recent division of these estates in 1066. A significant increase in arable productivity during the eleventh century is suggested by the ratios of ploughlands per *TRE* hide for one of the *Standens* and *Huffingfords*, *Fulford* and *Hale*, and four ploughlands per hide at *Briddlesford* implying the most expansion in the wet claylands in the north of the parish. More modest expansion can be suggested for *Arreton* and *Heasley*. This apparent expansion would also appear to be reflected in the rise in manorial values at *Durton* and *Standen*, and the doubling of *Briddlesford*'s value. The ratio of 29:13 for the recorded population to ploughteams at *Arreton* may signify its diverse agrarian base, accounted for by pasturing on the chalk downland and on the 'moors' of the greensand vale. This observation is compatible with the evidence for irregular field systems (Higham, 1990) or 'overstocked' manors

(Kapelle, 1979) at Arreton, also at Merstone, Fulford and Hale. These manors can be contrasted with the ratio of ploughlands to ploughteams (4:4) within Heasley implying the existence of extensive open fields.

Something of the structure of individual manors can be seen in instances where population figures and ploughteams were enumerated both within and outside demesnes. These can be illustrated by Arreton and Heasley manors. Arreton had three ploughteams and seven slaves in demesne, and 10 ploughteams with 10 villans and 12 bordars beyond. Neighbouring Heasley had two teams and 15 slaves in demesne, and four villans and four bordars outside. The proportion of bordars outside these demesnes suggests that they had a role in the taking in of woodland and wood-pasture to the north of the downland, and of dry heathland to the south. It can be inferred that the villans of these manors had their own landholdings outside the demesnes, whilst owing labour services within to complement the work of the slaves. The most dynamic manor in terms of evidence for expansion was Briddlesford where, as we have seen, there is evidence in Domesday Book for development through the eleventh century which apparently continued up to 1086 with the doubling of its value from *TRE*. The ratio of bordars to villans of 1:1 outside the demesne also supports this scenario. A parallel for this 'clayland colonization' can be cited from Ningwood, where the Domesday place-name *Lenimcode* means

'The wood that has been partly enclosed or taken into cultivation' (Mills, 1996, 76).

Clayland Briddlesford can be contrasted with Hale (53): There is also evidence of arable expansion there during the eleventh century, but this was seemingly outwards from the gravel terrace of Hale Common. The profusion of cropmarks there suggests that this was the arable core within the demesne with its one ploughteam. Expansion of arable land-use onto the adjoining clayland and beyond the demesne can be envisaged, worked by four bordars with a second ploughteam.

Hundreds: West and East

The Isle of Wight was divided into two hundreds (a sub-division of a shire) of approximately similar areas either side of the Medina estuary and river. From the twelfth century these were known as West and East Medine. In 1086, the western half of the Island was known as Bowcombe Hundred, but the name of the eastern half was not recorded. The delineation of these two hundreds *TRW* is not explicit but can be reconstructed from a close examination of the text (Margham, 2013, 8-9). There were also two anomalous hundreds within Bowcombe Hundred:

- *Hemreswell* was a relatively small area consisting of the non-adjacent manors of *Ermud* (Yarmouth), *Soete* (probably Shate in Brighstone) and *Lemincode* (Ningwood) (Kökeritz, 1940, 2).
- Calbourne Hundred in 1086 would appear to be coterminous with the bishop of Winchester's estate as defined in the charter purporting to have dated from 826 (Margham, 2013, 8).

A total of 192 hides were enumerated for the Island *TRE*. Including the hidages of *Hemreswell* and the ecclesiastical hundred of Calbourne, this figure consisted of 110¼ in Bowcombe Hundred and 81¾ of the un-named hundred later known as East Medine. After unhided manors in the eastern half of the Island are taken into account, there would have been a similar number of hides either side of the Medina (Margham, 2013, 13).

The Landscape of Settlement

With the exception of Carisbrooke, the Island's only town in the eleventh century, there is little direct evidence in Domesday Book for types of settlement, whether these be isolated and dispersed or nucleated. However, inferences can be made from the text for rural settlement and of developing settlements that were recognised as towns at a later date, as well as permitting a reconstruction of Carisbrooke's morphology. These will be examined in turn.



Fig. 3: The site of Luccombe farmhouse would have been a manorial centre in the later eleventh century. In 1086 Luccombe was held by King William paying geld for half a hide. There was one ploughland, a ploughteam in the demesne and a recorded population of six bordars and two slaves (39v).

Rural Settlement

Domesday Book is an account of manors rather than individual settlements so provides little evidence of settlement forms. However, many rural settlements would have been small sites. *Celvercote*, now Cheverton in Brading parish, had a recorded population of one bordar and was worth only 5s (53v) and would thus appear to be an example of a small rural settlement as suggested by the *-cote* 'cottage' place-name. An example of a slightly larger settlement is Luccombe with its six bordars and two slaves (39v), although Domesday tells us nothing of how population was distributed within the manor (Fig. 3). It is quite likely that church sites such as Calbourne at an estate centre would have been the focus of some form of settlement nucleation. The Domesday Book entry for the bishop of Winchester's Calbourne itemises 27 villans, 15 bordars and 11 slaves to the north of the chalk ridge. It is inherently very unlikely that all these heads of households were living in the area of the present village and much more plausible that many, in particular villans and bordars, were living to the north of the village with a

scattered settlement pattern akin to that documented in the manorial survey of 1630 (Margham, 2025, 329-39). A similar reconstruction can be made for the south-east Wight area to the south of the Yar and north of the southern chalk downs (Margham, 2025, 339-51). Other inferences can be made through comparing Domesday Book entries with local topography. Gatcombe *TRE* had three sub-tenants who were brothers each occupying a 'hall'. This, along with the recorded *TRW* population of six villans, 15 bordars and six slaves suggests that much of the contemporary settlement was spread out along the 'coombe' here, similar to the irregular two row settlement pattern depicted on the Ordnance Survey map of 1793/4 (52v; Margham, 1985, Fig.4). A similar observation can be made for Wroxall with the manorial centre being within a restricted valley (39v).

The 'Prehistory' of our medieval towns

There is evidence within the folios of Domesday Book that three locations recognised as towns in the twelfth century and later can be seen as 'proto-urban' sites. Newport was formally created by Richard de Redvers 1189x1191 (Bearman, 1994, no. 66). It was apparently founded within the manor of Bowcombe but on the western side of the Medina gap where there were three manors *TRW* all named Shide. William fitzAzor held one of these which had been assessed at 5 virgates *TRE*. It had a recorded population of 15 bordars and 4 slaves (53v), providing a population density of 15 per hide, relatively high for a rural manor. This was then worth 60s, an increase from 40s *TRE*, whilst the adjoining Shide manor held by Joscelin fitzAzor increased from 40s to 50s. These figures may represent development of a settlement soon after the Conquest near or on the later site of Newport. The fitzAzor brothers were also involved in the development of Carisbrooke after the Conquest and would appear to have had commercial interests alongside the Medina.

Yarmouth was founded by Baldwin de Redvers 1180x1186 (Bearman 1994, no. 54) The Domesday Book entry for *Ermud* suggests a typical small rural vill:

Ælfric and Wihtlac have 1 hide and 2½ virgates in YARMOUTH [Ermud]. They themselves held it in parage of King Edward. It was then, as now, assessed at 1 hide and 2½ virgates. There is land for 2 ploughs. There are 7 villans and 2 bordars having 2 ploughs. It was worth 12s., now 25s [54].

However, the area assessed at 1 hide and 2½ virgates is on a very restricted site, with the later parish of Yarmouth comprising 58 acres (Page, 1912, 286) with much of this being the area later known as Yarmouth Common. This high hidage on a relatively small site may suggest that Yarmouth had a function beyond that of a typical rural manor. Its situation on the Solent at the mouth of an estuary may very well have been a landing site with associated service settlement which was reflected in its geld liability and significant increase in value.

Brading was recognisable as a small town from the late thirteenth century when Edward I had granted a market on Wednesdays and a fair lasting for four

days (Page, 1912, 159). It is likely that this grant formalised an existing market. It is possible that Brading had a marketing function by the eleventh century with the church there previously having provided a stimulus. The Domesday Book entry for Brading describes a small manor rated at only three parts of a virgate (i.e. ¾ virgate) with four bordars held from William fitzAzor by his nephew (53). Two aspects of the Domesday Book entry can be noted: the connection with William fitzAzor as at Shide and Carisbrooke, and the apparent population density, suggesting a small settlement nucleation. Brading as a manor appears to have been subsumed by the neighbouring manor of Whitefield, being referred to as 'Breding, a member of the king and queen's manor of Whytefeld' at the time of Edward I's market grant (Page, 1912, 158). Inferences from Domesday Book receive support from the observation that eighteenth-century estate maps depict plots within Brading which were held by Whitefield Manor (Basford, 2013, 217). It has been argued that these represent the foundation of Brading as a town by William fitzStur who held both Whitefield manors in 1086 (Webster 1994), but William fitzAzor can also be seen as being instrumental in its development.

The Town of Carisbrooke

Carisbrooke had a castle by 1086. The evidence for this is to be found in the Domesday Book entry for Alvington where

'[It was] then [assessed] at 2½ hides; now at 2 hides, because the castle stands on 1 virgate' (52v)

and Shalcombe belonging to St Nicholas as mentioned above. Carisbrooke was also the site of the only substantial nucleated settlement on the Island. The evidence for this is to be found in the Domesday Book entry for Bowcombe, the record of a toll of 30s and

Of the land of this manor William fitzStur holds half a virgate. There is 1 plough with 1 villan. It is worth 10s. Joscelin and William his brother hold 1 virgate, which before them rendered rent; but these men have not paid it.

The monks of Lyre hold the church of this manor, with 1 virgate of land.

Of this virgate of land Humphrey holds a portion where he has 8 men paying 5s., and William fitzAzor 2½ acres where he has 4 houses. They hold without the consent of the priest. There belong to this church 20 bordars' messuages, and they render 14s (52).

This information can be analysed through examining what was meant by Bowcombe manor, the location of its church within an extensive enclosure, the significance of the toll, the landholdings of King William's 'new men', and the presence of bordars' messuages belonging to the church. These will be examined in turn before the presentation of a reconstruction of Carisbrooke's topography in 1086.

The manor of Bowcombe encompassed an extensive area, extending from the Bowcombe Valley over much of the area to the north up to the Solent in the eleventh century. Whilst the manorial centre can be identified with Bowcombe Farm, the church and associated settlement were located down the valley in the area later known as Carisbrooke. This spatial

division of 'high status' functions was typical of late Anglo-Saxon England, when the Bowcombe/Carisbrooke area can be identified as a 'central area' for the Island (Margham, 2025, map 9.9). Carisbrooke church was a 'minster', a superior church responsible for the pastoral care of a large area extending from the Solent to the English Channel before the development of local churches (Margham, forthcoming). A 'minster enclosure' has been identified at Carisbrooke, with a street frontage extending the whole length of the High Street (Margham, 2025, 166-8; Map 6 below) which as Domesday Book tells us included 20 messuages (house plots) belonging to the church.

The only Island manor to record a toll in 1086 was Bowcombe. This reference means that there was a market within the manor. The most plausible location for this would be at Carisbrooke in the shadow of the church, which as a 'minster place' would have attracted commercial activity (Blair, 2005, 505-12). Into this location came William fitzAzor who had four houses on church land. It is quite likely that the church land where Humphrey had a portion with eight men was also here, along with the virgate held by the fitzAzor brothers. This concentration of 'new men' is typical of a Domesday castlery, such as at Clifford and Ewyas Harold in Herefordshire, also associated with William fitzOsbern, where

we have specially good examples of the practice of Norman barons by which they assigned to their knightly tenants small estates around their

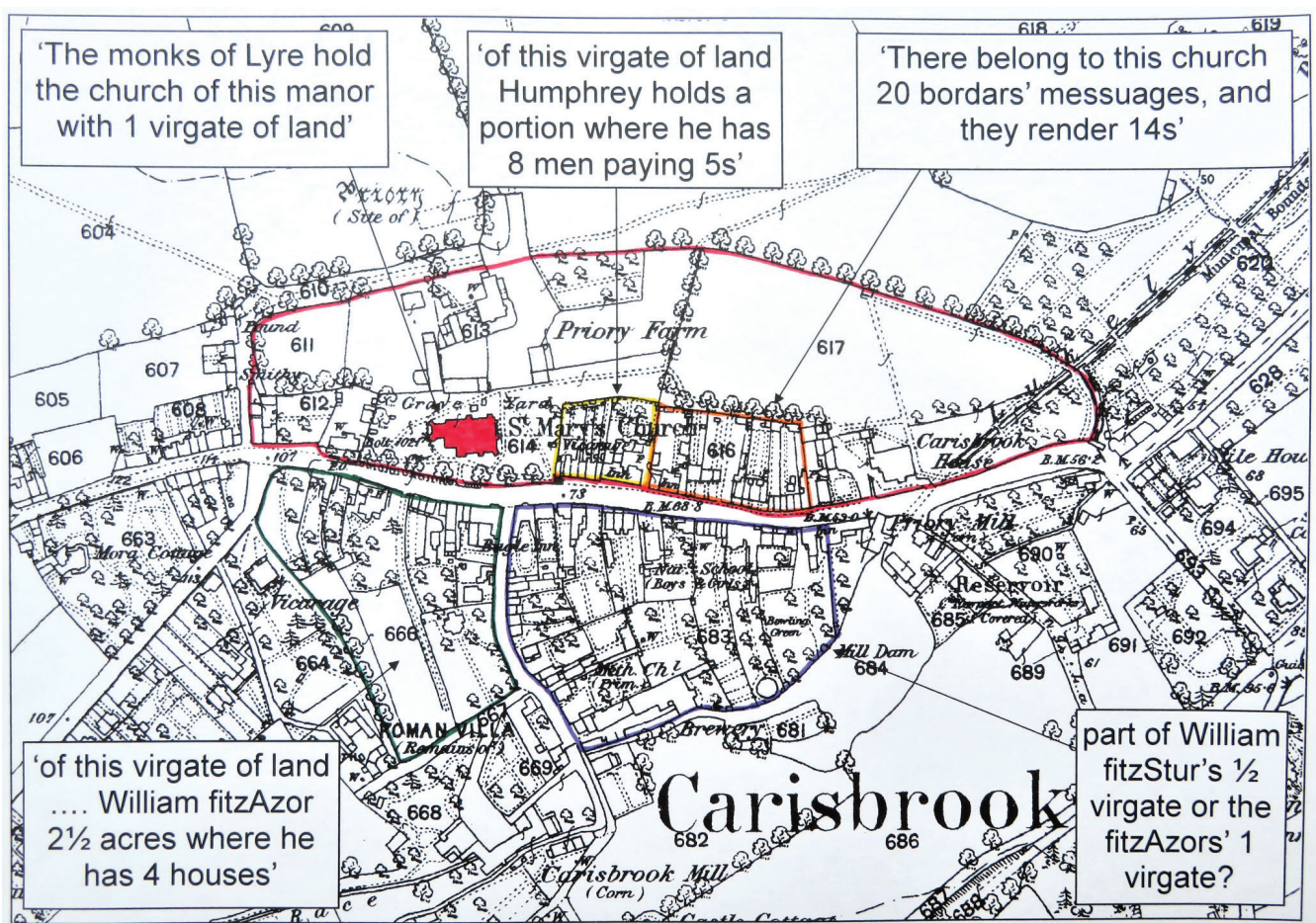
own castles. We find this practice illustrated at Carisbrooke, the chief seat in the Isle of Wight of Earl William fitzOsbern and at Montacute Castle in Somerset. (Page 1908, 273)

A further strand of evidence is the presence of bordars within a nucleated settlement. Dyer (1985, 100) examined Domesday Book establishing 'the existence of numerous cottars and bordars and cottage settlements in and around more than forty early boroughs'.

He argued that these smallholders aid the identification of urbanisation and urban origins (Dyer, 1985, 102). The number of bordars recorded in the Bowcombe Domesday entry is significant here. A total of 59 villans, bordars and slaves were enumerated, 25% being bordars, some of whom would have been living beyond the confines of Carisbrooke. We can, however, add to this number the 20 bordars' messuages belonging to the church, giving us 35 bordars from a total population of 79. Only Bowcombe has this high proportion of bordars with a specific mention of bordars' messuages in the Isle of Wight Domesday folios.

The information within the Domesday Book entry for Bowcombe can be combined with nineteenth-century mapping by the Ordnance Survey to reconstruct the topography of the town of Carisbrooke in 1086 (Map 6).

The 'minster enclosure' extended the length of Carisbrooke High Street. Within this enclosure there



Map 6: A tentative reconstruction of Carisbrooke in 1086 mapped onto the 1862/3 Ordnance Survey 25-inch survey (Margham, 2025, map 9.7)



Fig. 4: View from Carisbrooke church tower looking eastwards over the messuages of Humphrey's 8 men and the church's 20



Fig. 5: View from Carisbrooke church tower looking southwards over the probable site of William fitzAzor's 4 houses

were 20 bordars' messuages belonging to the church and the portion held by Humphrey with eight men held without the priest's consent. To the south of the High Street William fitzAzor had four houses also held without permission from the church. The map is not intended to be definitive, as can be shown by the uncertainty over who held the block of land to the east of Castle Street. Regardless of exactly where these landholdings of William I's 'new men' were, they can be shown to have had a significant influence in the identification of Carisbrooke as a town. Carisbrooke would have remained the Island's market town until the foundation of Newport in the twelfth century.

From Extensive Estates to Medieval Manors

Domesday Book documents a profusion of manors with a wide range of sizes. It provides us with a snapshot of a time when extensive estates were being fragmented into smaller manors. This process had developed at differing rates: 'Conservative' Calbourne can be contrasted with the abundance of small manors within the former mother parish of Brading which was also formerly a large estate extending from the Solent to the English Channel (Margham, 2025, 218-9, 226-8). However, even the bishop of Winchester's Calbourne estate had lost territory to smaller independent manors by 1086, in the area to the south of the chalk ridge and nearby Westover, and the un-named sub-holdings such as that later identified as Limerstone were on their way to becoming self-contained manors (Margham, 2024, 13). Other relatively large manors remained in 1086 such as Freshwater and Sandford, but the general trend was towards smaller landholdings. As John Blair (2018, 4) has explained there was a transition from extensive estates

'based on established connections between broad ecological zones' to 'the dynamic exploitation of confined ones'.

What Domesday Book does and does not tell us

Domesday Book tells us a lot about the Isle of Wight in the eleventh century: landholding, place-names, individual manors and the wider landscape. It informs us about landscape resources, manorial

structures and a changing world with the development of individual manors. There are, however, things that it does not tell us: it does not provide a comprehensive record of churches, nor a complete account of the population and of manorial resources such as the woodland of north-east Wight and does not give direct information about the form of settlement. The present paper is offered as a contribution to the study of Domesday Wight, but further analysis is possible, particularly when the text is examined in conjunction with other sources of information from the early medieval and later periods.

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