Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society

(incorporating the Cambs and Hunts Archaeological Society)

Volume XCIX
for 2010
Recent Publications of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society

Proceedings XCVI, 2007: Price £12.50 for members, £14.50 for non-members
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Christopher Taylor and Ashley Arbon: The Chronicle Hills, Whittlesford, Cambridgeshire
Christopher Evans, Mark Knight and Leo Webley: Iron Age settlement and Romanisation on the Isle of Ely: the Hurst Lane Reservoir site
Leo Webley: Prehistoric, Roman and Saxon activity on the Fen hinterland at Parnwell, Peterborough
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Chris Jakes: Recent Accessions to the Cambridgeshire Collection

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Cambridge Antiquarian Society
Report for the Year 2009

Membership: there are now 382 members, 49 Affiliated Societies and 67 subscribing institutions.

Meetings: There were 4 Council meetings and 9 Ordinary meetings, at which the following lectures were given:

- Gabriel Moshenska: The School Air Raid Shelter: History, Archaeology and Memory
- Prof. Stephen Oakley: How Latin Texts Survived from Antiquity to the Age of Printing (In association with the Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies)
- Richard Buckley: A Tale of Two Towns: recent discoveries from Roman and Medieval Leicester
- Prof. Ronald Hutton: The History of Prehistory: Megaliths and the Modern Imagination
- Dr Catherine Hills: Skeletons in the Garden – Romans and Anglo Saxons at Newnham College
- Ben Robinson: Revealing Peterborough – New Explorations in an Ancient Cathedral City
- Dr Stephen Alford: Finding Nicholas Berden: the career of an Elizabethan spy
- Prof. Simon Keynes: John Mitchell Kemble (1807–57): Apostle, Revolutionary, and Anglo-Saxonist
- Richard Mortimer & Alex Pickstone: Further Excavations at the War Ditches, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge (In association with the Prehistoric Society)

In addition the following two conferences were held:

- 21st November 2009: Recent archaeological work in Cambridgeshire
- 17th April 2010: Past Relations: different approaches to the dead over time

Excursions: The Programme for 2010 consisted of the following visits:

Chatham Historic Dockyard, Saturday 15 May:
One of the country’s foremost naval dockyards for 300 years, Chatham has been in the care of the Historic Dockyard Trust since 1985. As well as three historic vessels — HMS Gannet (1878), HMS Cavalier (1944) and HM Submarine Ocelot (1962) — it has a spectacular Victorian Ropery and a galaxy of other permanent and temporary exhibitions and displays, including ‘The Wooden Walls’ (a recreation of the dockyard in 1758) and the RNLI Lifeboat Collection. It also has the largest single concentration of listed buildings (military, civil and religious) in the UK.

Cherry Hinton, Saturday 26 June:
A morning was spent exploring the historical and archaeological landscape of Cherry Hinton Hall and its surroundings, under the guidance of Ms Michelle Bullivant. Outwardly Victorian, the park nonetheless has many features that bear witness to former land uses and industrial activity. Also investigated was the Lime Kiln Hill area and the newly-opened to the public East Pit.

Spalding, Lincolnshire, Wednesday 14 July:
The highlight of this excursion was a visit to the Spalding Gentlemen’s Society, founded in 1710 and one of the oldest learned societies in the country. The Society has the UK’s second oldest museum collection, containing many rare items of both local and national interest, and a fine library.

The medieval riverside at Ely, Wednesday 15 September:
The riverside was a centre of activity in the Middle Ages attracting trades dependent on the river, and those requiring water such as brewing. The area was developed after the diversion of the river to its present course, probably in the twelfth century, thereby incorporating Ely into the fenland river network.

This walk, led by Mrs Anne Holton-Krayenbuhl, explored the area between the river and Broad Street, bounded by Waterside to the north, looking at sites of former watercourses, hithes, and buildings. The tour also included two medieval houses in Broad Street.

Moggerhanger Park, Bedfordshire, Wednesday 6 October:
Relatively little-known, perhaps due to its long period of use as a local authority TB sanatorium and then orthopaedic hospital (from 1919 to 1987), Moggerhanger was designed by Sir John Soane for Sir Godfrey Thornton, a director of the Bank of England, and built between 1790 and 1816. Listed Grade 1, it is regarded as perhaps the best complete surviving example of Soane’s work, and epitomises many of his architectural ideas. The grounds were laid out by Humphry Repton. Now in the care of a Trust, which stepped in to avert the threatened demolition of the house and construction of a housing estate on the site, this excursion enabled members to see the current state of an ongoing and ambitious programme of restoration.
**Cambridge Antiquarian Society Accounts for the Year Ended 31/12/2009**

Registered Charity 299211 • Founded 1840

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**Notes**

The presentation of the accounts conforms to guidance provided by the Charity Commission. Comment on some of the entries is given in the following notes:

a. The cost of mailing details to members has been attributed to the event.

b. A credit of £894.83 with Mailing Distributor arose in 2008 and was used in 2009.

c. Adding the attributable postage credit makes the 2009 figures comparable to earlier years.

d. This figure is influenced by a credit with the mailing distributor (b) and the exceptional expenditure on redesigning the Web site (h); excluding these amounts the surplus from the normal activities of the Society in the year 2009 is £254.17.

e. In 2005 the Council reviewed the policy for the reserves held by the Society and concluded that the cash funds less liabilities (f) should be maintained in the range £10,000 to £20,000; on 31 December 2009 the reserves were £16,644.

f. Planned expenditure; PCAS Vol XCIX £8000, Ladd's Bequest (g) £840, Small Grants £500 and a grant of £500 to Cambridgeshire Archives towards the cost of purchasing the Fen Drainage Papers; total £9,840.

g. Includes Ladd's bequest earmarked for events associated with Huntingdon; with interest the sum is now £840.

h. Exceptional expenditure on the design of a new Web site.

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C. B. Pritchett, Hon Treasurer

B. Cloke, Independent Examiner
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The Old Rectory Kingston: A Short Note on its Origins
Susan Oosthuizen

Summary
The importance of symbolising lordly authority in the landscape through buildings and the landscapes that surround them has become an archaeological commonplace. Very wealthy medieval lords constructed moated ‘castles’, while the lesser nobility and gentry more frequently had to be content with a large timber-framed (or, for the more affluent, stone) house frequently also surrounded by a moat (cf. RCHM 1968, lxi–lxvi; Liddiard 2005, 97–100). The landscape around such buildings was as carefully designed, with manor and church strategically placed in relation to dependent tenements in order to showcase and emphasise a lord’s power, wealth and status (cf. Everson et al. 1991, 22–5). This short note explores the relevance of this archaeological context in interpreting the origin of buildings.

The Old Rectory at Kingston in west Cambridgeshire stands immediately east of Kingston parish church (Plate 2), at the northern end of a small rectangular green (Plate 3, Figure 1). It was interpreted in 1968 as a medieval aisled hall to which a stone cross-wing was added in the fourteenth century, and which was later modernised by the insertion of a central chimney-stack with two hearths in the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century (RCHM 1968, 155–6; see below for later views) (Plate 4). ‘Old’ was probably added to the name of the building when it was secularised in 1931 (VCH 5, 118). On the basis of its name, and for lack of any other evidence, it has been assumed always to have been in the hands of the church.

There are, however, some problems with the identification of the building as a medieval rectory. This short note will describe the building, and then outline the problems concerning its origin; it will in conclusion suggest that the house was originally constructed for a secular owner, and only later acquired a new purpose as a rectory.

Description
The most imposing component of the Old Rectory during the middle ages was a fine stone-built structure of two stories and three-and-a-half bays (Figure 2a).1 It was built to the highest standards of medieval luxury, including ground and first floor fireplaces with chimneys (rebuilt in the sixteenth century), a stone spiral stair to the first floor, and a first-floor garderobe (in the half-bay). The structure was originally interpreted as a cross-wing added to an earlier hall in the early to mid-fourteenth century, but it has since been suggested that it may in fact have been the earliest building on the site, constructed in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century (Beacon Planning 2010, 5).

A timber aisled hall with outer stone walls stands at right angles to the stone hall. It was at first thought to have been constructed in the mid-thirteenth or fourteenth centuries, but later revision has suggested dates a century earlier, that is, the mid-twelfth or thirteenth centuries (DoE 1984, 65). Two and a half bays of the original open-hall structure survive – parts of two arcade posts have been identified, and the crown- or king-post roof shows general signs of smoke blackening. It is at present uncertain whether the aisled hall or the stone hall is the earliest part of the house.

Around 1600, a brick chimney was inserted into the central bay of the aisled hall, dividing it into two rooms. The fireplace in the new central room has a fine carved clunch surround with a substantial overmantel, and that in the room above it at first floor level also has a clunch surround (Mr J. Wilkinson 2002, pers. comm.).

Problems with an identification as a medieval rectory
The Old Rectory at Kingston was undoubtedly a high status building throughout the medieval period. The stone cross-wing in particular is outstanding not only

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1 Unless otherwise noted, this section is based on RCHM 1968, 155–6 and DoE 1984, 65.
for its size, but more especially for the clunch, clunch rubble and field stone that was used in its construction (Plate 5). There is no readily available building stone in Cambridgeshire, apart from the field stones usually seen in the walling of the medieval parish churches of the county, and as a medieval stone domestic structure in rural south Cambridgeshire the Old Rectory is unique (for comparable examples in Cambridge, see below). It is difficult to emphasis the wealth and sophistication that this building represented in its period, or how atypical it is of the vernacular tradition within which it stands. From this, it follows that there are difficulties in its identification as a medieval rectory.

The few buildings of this type and status in Cambridgeshire are manorial or the homes of men of great wealth. The number of secular medieval stone buildings in Cambridgeshire can be counted on one hand: the twelfth-century town house in Cambridge, now known as Merton’s Hall, and the fourteenth-century residence of the appropriator of St Andrew’s Church, Chesterton (RCHM 1959, 290, 377–9, 381–2). The stone tower at Chesterton, although superficially of similar origin, has a quite different pedigree. Chesterton was an exceptionally wealthy royal living. It was given by Henry III to the Papal Legate, Cardinal Gualo, who in turn donated it to the church of St Andrew at Vercelli in Italy (RCHM 1959, 290). The fourteenth-century stone tower in Chesterton was not the home of the vicar of Chesterton church, but that of the procurator of the abbot of Vercelli (RCHM 1959, lxviii). The contemporary timber-framed aisled hall at Manor Farm, Bourn belonged to Barnwell Priory, one of the richest in the county (RCHM 1968, 24–5). The similar hall at Ryder’s Farm, Swavesey, like the aisled halls at Barrington and Ickleton, is believed to have been built for an affluent merchant (Davis 1984; Bray 1993; RCHM 1968, 9–10; Mrs E. Davis 2002, pers. comm.).

The question therefore arises whether the incum-

2 The twelfth-century Manor House at Hemingford Grey is, of course, in Huntingdonshire.
bents at Kingston had sufficient wealth to construct and later extend a building of the luxurious standards of the Old Rectory. Professor Pounds has commented that 'the majority of priests could barely make ends meet before the Reformation' (2000, 172). This certainly seems to be true of Kingston, whose rector was one of the poorest of his neighbours in the Bourn Valley during the thirteenth century. As Table 1 shows, the living at Kingston ranked second from bottom in value in 1217, not much better in 1254, and well below the averages for the area throughout (VCH 5, parish essays). Such poor gleanings would have been exacerbated by the deduction of the vicarial tithes from the church's income, leaving only about two-thirds of the value of the benefice for the rector (Pounds 2000, 53). Table 1 indicates that it was unlikely that the incumbent at Kingston was wealthy enough from the mid-twelfth to the fourteenth centuries to be able to afford to build and then extend a house of the palatial standard of the Old Rectory.

This conclusion is supported by a comparison with the surviving medieval vicarages at Comberton and Caldecote and against documentary evidence for others in the Bourn Valley. Comberton was a much wealthier living than Kingston, while Caldecote was comparable in income. However, in both cases, the medieval vicarages in these parishes consisted of a modest timber-framed hall with a single cross-wing (RCHM 1968, 33, 52). Comberton's hall was of two bays, and the cross wing of one-and-a-half; the whole would have fitted into the aisled hall at the Old Rectory alone (Figure 2b). This is consistent with similar evidence from Caxton. When the vicarage there was rebuilt in 1351 (in a parish with a far higher income than that at Kingston), it comprised a hall, a chamber and a kitchen – very like that which still stands at Comberton (VCH 5, 34; RCHM 1968, 52). Surviving local medieval vicarages in the locality therefore conform to Pounds' view that 'during the Middle Ages the parsonage was a typical hall house, such as would have been occupied by a fairly well-to-do peasant or yeoman' (2000, 177).

Documentary evidence tends to support this interpretation, though it should be read bearing in mind the sensibilities of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century rectors and vicars who had by that time become – or aspired to be – members of the local gentry, and would not be impressed by the idea of living in a medieval hall and cross-wing. The vicarage at Great Eversden was 'a mean cottage' in 1783 and 'occupied by a labourer' in 1836; the rectory in Hardwick was described as 'deplorable' in 1790 and 'unfit' for the rector in 1836; the vicarage at Caxton was 'totally unfit for residence' in 1838 and 'miserable and dilapidated' in 1868 (VCH 5, 66, 103, 34). The high style of the Old Rectory at Kingston seems pretty atypical of the dwellings of vicars or rectors in the Bourn Valley in the period of the house's heyday from the mid-twelfth to the early fourteenth centuries.

On the other hand, if the medieval rectors of Kingston were rich and well-connected in their own right, such objections might fall away. And indeed, it seems that many medieval rectors of Kingston were of good social standing, and many held in plurality, so they may well have had the necessary income to build an opulent house.

The earliest information about rectors at Kingston dates from the fourteenth century. Most seem to have lived elsewhere, employing a curate to perform their duties. The conveyance in 1360 of just one acre of glebe with the advowson also suggests that the living was served by a curate (VCH 5, 118). Thomas Alblaster held the living from before 1357 until 1374 and lived in Coventry, while in 1378 John Podington 'was accused of neglecting his duties'; most subsequent medieval rectors, generally also pluralists, also lived outside the parish (VCH 5, 118). Although there is no information about earlier rectors, the pattern of absenteeism makes it possible that they also lived away from the parish and that it is unlikely that they were involved in the kind of substantial building works required for the construction of the Old Rectory.

**An alternative explanation**

The Old Rectory lies immediately east of the parish church (Figure 1). Such sites are as frequently

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### Table 1. The value of benefices around Kingston in the thirteenth century (VCH 5, parish essays).

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parish</th>
<th>Vicarage or Rectory</th>
<th>Glebe (acres)</th>
<th>Tax paid on church 1217</th>
<th>Tax paid on Church 1254</th>
<th>Value of benefice 1291</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bourn</td>
<td>Rectory</td>
<td>219a. in 1842</td>
<td>20 marks</td>
<td>28 marks</td>
<td>42 marks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vicarage</td>
<td>2a. in 1279</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15 marks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caldecote</td>
<td>Vicarage</td>
<td>32-34a.</td>
<td>5 marks</td>
<td>5 marks</td>
<td>24 marks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caxton</td>
<td>Vicarage</td>
<td>3a. in 1650</td>
<td>27 marks</td>
<td>56 marks (1268)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comberton</td>
<td>Rectory</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12 marks</td>
<td>12 marks</td>
<td>30 marks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vicarage</td>
<td>7a.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gt Eversden</td>
<td>Vicarage</td>
<td>1a. (17thC)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lt Eversden</td>
<td>Rectory</td>
<td>15a. (1279)</td>
<td>12 marks</td>
<td>20 marks</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hardwick</td>
<td>Rectory</td>
<td>40a.</td>
<td>10 marks</td>
<td>12 marks</td>
<td>16 marks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingston</td>
<td>Rectory</td>
<td>1a. 1306</td>
<td>6 marks</td>
<td>8 marks</td>
<td>16 marks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toft</td>
<td>Rectory</td>
<td>29a.</td>
<td>7¾ marks</td>
<td>8 marks</td>
<td>12 marks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>15a.</strong></td>
<td><strong>c. 13 marks</strong></td>
<td><strong>c. 18 marks</strong></td>
<td><strong>c. 22 marks</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
occupied by a manor as by a vicarage or rectory. Both church and house are integral to the medieval settlement plan (cf. Everson et al. 1991, 41-2). They stand on the highest ground in the settlement, at the northern end of a small rectangular green which forms the focus of the planned village, and down which they had a commanding view. On the western and eastern sides of the green, common front and back boundaries and properties of conforming widths preserved in maps, air photographs and in current hedge-lines indicate an origin as planned tofts for tenants of different social standing – the larger areas of those to the west indicating a higher status than those to the east (CA Q/RDz7, Q/RDc25; CUULM AGW46). A tentative interpretation of the western tofts surviving in 1811 indicates that around 10 units may have been located here. It is tempting to identify these with the ten sokemen owing commendation to the king before the Norman Conquest, nine of whom were reduced to villeinage in 1066, the antecessors of nine tenants in 1279 (DB, 32:21; Rot. Hund. II, 515-6; VCH 5, 114). Three boundary ditches running up to a common back ditch survive as earthworks to the east of the green. They suggest that there was room for around seven tofts here, perhaps those of the seven villeins on the royal manor in 1086, the antecessors of seven villeins in 1279 (Rot. Hund. II, 516; VCH 5, 114). The location of the Old Rectory in this plan – beside the church, commanding the green, and flanked by free and customary tenants – is characteristically manorial for its location in a landscape carefully designed to enhance the status, wealth and power of its inhabitants (Everson et al. 1991, 22-5, 41-2).

The field immediately east of the Old Rectory was

![Figure 2a. The Old Rectory, Kingston (RCHM 1968, 155; permission of English Heritage National Monuments Record, permission number 1472).
Figure 2b. The Old Vicarage, Comberton (RCHM 1968, 52; permission of English Heritage National Monuments Record, permission number 1472).]
known as Bustage in 1791 and as the Burystead in 1680 (CUL QC 17/18; F. Reynolds 2002, pers. comm.). The name is a compound of burh (often associated with a manorial site) and sted 'place' (Reaney 1943, 314, 344). If this were the site of a medieval manor, which one was it? It cannot be that of Kingston Wood, established immediately after the Norman Conquest, which appears to have lain from the time of its creation on its present location some way to the south of the village (Taylor 1973, 85, 99; VCH 5, 114). The only other possibility is the manor of the king, which was already 'ancient demesne' in 1086, and seems to have come into the hands of the St George family by the later twelfth century at the latest (DB, 1:5; VCH 5, 114).

On the other hand, it has been suggested that the royal manor was located at Moat House Farm (RCHM 1968, 160; VCH 5, 115; see Figure 2). No evidence is given to support this proposal, however, and it may be that it was made on the assumption that the Old Rectory had always been in the hands of the church. That is unlikely since Moat House Farm has been identified with the manor of Debden's which was created by the family of Geoffrey of Soham, a prosperous thirteenth-century freeman, in a period in which moat-building was at its peak (Rot. Hund. II, 514; Evelyn-White n.d., 52–3; VCH 5, 114–5). The geography of the site supports this interpretation. The moat around Moat House Farm appears to have been dug across several consolidated customary or freeman properties in a peripheral location which appears to be a later addition to the existing settlement, rather than integrated into it as one might expect the royal manor to have been (especially as the latter predated the Norman Conquest).

By 1182 the royal demesne at Kingston appears to have passed into the hands of the St George family, perhaps after some time in administration by Picot, the Norman sheriff of Cambridge, and his descendants, the Peverels (VCH 5, 114). The St Georges were substantial landowners in Cambridgeshire. They lived at Kingston, and appear to have had considerable social pretensions. They were frequently grantors of land to monastic houses, and apparently enjoyed the perquisites of wealth: in 1269, for example, Baldwin St George held a deer park in Kingston (almost certainly in the south of the parish and detached from his manor, which was not unusual) (VCH 5, 114; see also Rot. Hund. II, 515). They continued to hold the manor until it was sold in 1556, and in 1559 another sale amalgamated it with Kingston Wood Manor. The medieval grandeur of the Old Rectory would provide an adequate foil for what is known about the social ambitions of the St George family, whose appearance at Kingston is roughly contemporary with the construction of the earliest parts of the Old Rectory.

It is possible, therefore, that the splendid stone hall at the Old Rectory was built by members of the St George family on the site of the former royal manor in Kingston, either before or after the ailed hall, the two together providing a sumptuous setting. Perhaps after the amalgamation of their manor with that of Kingston Wood in the mid-sixteenth century, the building – increasingly old-fashioned but nonetheless substantial – was no longer required as a lordly dwelling, and was sold or given to house the rector or his curate after the Reformation. Clerical living standards rose after 1549 and incumbents might expect to be better educated, and 'to live in a better house than the cottager or even the more substantial husbandman or yeoman' (Pounds 2000, 180, 159).

This interpretation of the house and its landscape deals adequately with the problems outlined above: the high status implied by the building compared with the low income of the living; the centrality of the house to the planned settlement with which it is integrated; the location of the most ancient manor in the parish, that originally belonging to the king; and the Burystead field-name. It also encapsulates the reasons for the survival of the Old Rectory into the modern period: from the mid-twelfth century it was occupied by those rich enough to be able to afford a degree of opulence which was still enviable by the end of the middle ages; and from the mid-sixteenth century by those who were too poor to change it substantially. This small case study may, too, make a small contribution to the argument that an analysis of the history of buildings of all kinds benefits from an exploration of the wider landscapes within which they stand.

Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to Mr John Wilkinson (since sadly passed away), to Mr Peter Reynolds, to Mrs Beth Davis and Mrs Barbara Clarke for the generous spirit in which they have shared their expert knowledge of Kingston and the Old Rectory, and for their comments on this note. Miss Charmain Hawkins of Beacon Planning kindly allowed me access to the building and provided me with a report on the structure. Miss Isabel Tacq took the photographs. It goes without saying that the conclusions drawn here, and any mistakes and misunderstandings, are entirely my own.

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Plate 2. Thirteenth century parish church at Kingston from the south-west, its antiquity accentuated by its raised churchyard and the hollow-way which approaches it.

Plate 4. The Old Rectory, Kingston from the south: the aisled hall faces the road, and the stone hall appears as a cross-wing on the left-hand side of the building.

Plate 5. External view from the west of the stone hall at the Old Rectory, Kingston, showing fieldstone and rubble walling and clunch thirteenth-century window opening.
Proceedings Volume XCIX, 2010

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